

***Equality Scheme for Livestock and Meat
Commission for Northern Ireland***

***Drawn up in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of
the Northern Ireland Act 1998***

Approved by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland on 27 February
2013

***This document is available in a range of formats on request.
Please contact us with your requirements***

Fiona Brogan-Quin
Corporate Governance Officer
Livestock and Meat Commission
Lissue House
31 Ballinderry Rd
Lisburn
Northern Ireland
BT28 2SL

TEL: 02892 633 000
FAX: 028 92 633001
TEXT PHONE: 18001 028 92 633023
EMAIL: FBrogan-Quin@lmcni.com
www.lmcni.com

Foreword

We are pleased to present the new Equality Scheme for the Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC). The Equality Scheme sets out how LMC propose to fulfil the Section 75 statutory duties.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations across a range of categories outlined in the Act¹.

We will commit the necessary resources in terms of people, time and money to make sure that the Section 75 statutory duties are complied with and that the equality scheme is implemented effectively, and on time.

We commit to having effective internal arrangements in place for ensuring our effective compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties and for monitoring and reviewing our progress.

We will develop and deliver a programme of communication and training with the aim of ensuring that all our staff and board members are made fully aware of our equality scheme and understand the commitments and obligations within it. We will develop a programme of awareness raising for our consultees on the Section 75 statutory duties and our commitments in our equality scheme.

We, Pat O'Rourke Chairman and Ian Stevenson Chief Executive of, the Livestock and Meat Commission are fully committed to effectively fulfilling our Section 75 statutory duties across all our functions (including service provision, employment and procurement) through the effective implementation of our equality scheme.

We realise the important role that the community and voluntary sector and the general public have to play to ensure the Section 75 statutory duties are effectively implemented. Our equality scheme demonstrates how determined we are to ensure there are

¹ See section 1.1 of our Equality Scheme.

opportunities, for people affected by our work, to positively influence how we carry out our functions in line with our Section 75 statutory duties. It also offers the means whereby persons directly affected by what they consider to be a failure, on our part, to comply with our equality scheme, can make complaints.

On behalf of the Livestock and Meat Commission and our staff we are pleased to support and endorse this equality scheme which has been drawn up in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Commission guidelines.

Signed



**Mr. Pat O'Rourke
Chairman
Livestock and Meat
Commission**

**Mr. Ian Stevenson
Chief Executive
Livestock and Meat
Commission**

Date

31 October 2012

Contents

Please note: Foreword and Appendices 3 and 4 form part of this equality scheme.

| | Page |
|--|------|
| Foreword | 2 |
| Chapter 1 Introduction | 7 |
| Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 | |
| How we propose to fulfil the Section 75 | |
| duties in relation to the relevant functions of | |
| the Livestock and Meat Commission | |
| Who we are and what we do | |
| Chapter 2 Our arrangements for assessing our compliance with the Section 75 Duties | 11 |
| Responsibilities and reporting | |
| Action plan/action measures | |
| Chapter 3 Our arrangements for consulting | 15 |
| Chapter 4 Our arrangements for assessing, monitoring and publishing the impact of policies | 20 |
| Our arrangements for assessing the likely impact adopted or proposed to be adopted | |
| on the promotion of equality of opportunity of | |
| policies | |
| Screening | |
| Equality impact assessment | |
| Our arrangements for publishing the results | |
| of the assessments of the likely impact of | |
| policies we have adopted or propose to | |
| adopt on the promotion of equality of | |

| | | |
|------------|---|----|
| | opportunity | |
| | What we publish | |
| | How we publish the information | |
| | Where we publish the information | |
| | Our arrangements for monitoring any adverse impact of policies we have adopted on equality of opportunity | |
| | Our arrangements for publishing the results of our monitoring | |
| Chapter 5 | Staff training | 29 |
| | Commitment to staff training | |
| | Training objectives | |
| | Awareness raising and training arrangements | |
| | Monitoring and evaluation | |
| Chapter 6 | Our arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and services we provide | 32 |
| | Access to information | |
| | Access to services | |
| | Assessing public access to information and services | |
| Chapter 7 | Timetable for measures we propose in this equality scheme | 34 |
| Chapter 8 | Our complaints procedure | 35 |
| Chapter 9 | Publication of our equality scheme | 37 |
| Chapter 10 | Review of our equality scheme | 39 |
| Appendix 1 | Organisational chart | 40 |
| Appendix 2 | Example groups relevant to the Section 75 categories for Northern Ireland purposes | 41 |
| Appendix 3 | List of consultees | 42 |

| | | |
|------------|---------------------------------|----|
| Appendix 4 | Timetable for measures proposed | 45 |
| Appendix 5 | Glossary of terms | 46 |
| Appendix 6 | Action plan | 57 |

Chapter 1 Introduction

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

1.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires the Livestock and Meat Commission to comply with two statutory duties:

Section 75 (1)

In carrying out our functions relating to Northern Ireland we are required to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation
- men and women generally
- persons with a disability and persons without
- persons with dependants and persons without.

Section 75 (2)

In addition, without prejudice to the obligations above, in carrying out our functions in relation to Northern Ireland we are required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

“Functions” include the “powers and duties” of a public authority².

This includes our employment and procurement functions.

Please see below under “Who we are and what we do” for a detailed explanation of our functions.

How we propose to fulfil the Section 75 duties in relation to the relevant functions of the Livestock and Meat Commission.

1.2 Schedule 9 4. (1) of the Act requires the Livestock and Meat Commission as a designated public authority to set out in an equality scheme how it proposes to fulfil the duties imposed by Section 75 in relation to its relevant functions. This equality scheme is intended to fulfil that statutory requirement. It is both a

² Section 98 (1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

statement of our arrangements for fulfilling the Section 75 statutory duties and our plan for their implementation.

1.3 The Livestock and Meat Commission is committed to the discharge of our Section 75 obligations in all parts of our organisation and we will commit the necessary available resources in terms of people, time and money to ensure that the Section 75 statutory duties are complied with and that our equality scheme can be implemented effectively.

Who we are and what we do

The Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland (LMC) is a Non-Departmental Public Body, which was established by Statute (The Livestock Marketing Commission Act [Northern Ireland] 1967) to assist the development of the livestock and livestock products industries. LMC's sponsor body is the Department for Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD).

The specific functions of LMC as set out in the 1967 Act are:

Examining the structure of the livestock industry and the livestock products industry.

Encouraging the making of better arrangements for the movement and marketing of livestock and livestock products.

Advising DARD on the classification and grading of carcases of livestock.

Advising DARD on the characteristics that livestock should possess in order to be readily marketable.

Disseminating information in the livestock industry and livestock products industry about prices for livestock (whether in Northern Ireland or elsewhere) and livestock products and about the trends of those prices and the requirements of markets for livestock and livestock products.

Conducting market research, or causing such research to be conducted, into the requirements of markets (whether in Northern Ireland or elsewhere) for livestock and livestock products.

Improving and expanding trade in livestock produced in Northern Ireland and in livestock products so produced.

Giving advice and information to DARD on the efficient layout and operation of the livestock auction markets and slaughterhouses.

Carrying out such functions in relation to the livestock and livestock products industries as DARD may specify in a direction to the Commission.

LMC collects statutory levies from beef and sheep producers and slaughterers in Northern Ireland and in return provides a range of services to the industry. LMC also advises DARD on matters relating to the sector.

LMC has recently been the subject of a major strategic review of its role, responsibilities and structures. As a consequence of this review LMC has developed a new vision and mission statement which are as follows:

Vision

LMC's vision is for a sustainable and profitable future for the Northern Ireland beef and sheep meat industry at all levels of the supply chain.

Mission

LMC's mission is to support, examine & inform the marketing and development of the Northern Ireland beef and sheep meat industry.

During 2011/12, LMC, in response to the Strategic Review and in consultation with its stakeholders, refocused and reprioritised the services it provides to industry and government to best meet their needs going forward.

LMC services can now be categorised into four broad strategic areas of work, namely:

Provision of the Northern Ireland Beef & Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (FQAS);

Market Information Services;
Education & Consumer Promotion Services, and;
Industry Development Services.

The Chief Executive is the named Equality Officer and has overall responsibility for all Equality matters in the LMC. The Corporate Governance Officer assists the Chief Executive in the implementation of the Section 75 duties and is the main point of contact in this regard.

Chapter 2 Our arrangements for assessing our compliance with the section 75 duties

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (a))

2.1 Some of our arrangements for assessing our compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties are outlined in other relevant parts of this equality scheme, for example, monitoring arrangements page 31 5.6, page 20 Chapter 4, assessment of impact of policies arrangements page 23 4.16, consultation page 15 Chapter 3, publication page 37 Chapter 9, complaints page 35 Chapter 8 etc.

In addition we have the following arrangements in place for assessing our compliance:

Responsibilities and reporting

2.2 We are committed to the fulfilment of our Section 75 obligations in all parts of our work.

2.3 Primary Responsibility for the effective implementation of our equality scheme lies at Board level with the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive is accountable to the Board for the development, implementation, maintenance and review of the equality scheme in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, including any good practice or guidance that has been or may be issued by the Equality Commission.

2.4 If you have any questions or comments regarding our equality scheme, please contact in the first instance Fiona Brogan-Quin at the address given below and we will respond to you as soon as possible:

Fiona Brogan-Quin
Corporate Governance Officer
Livestock and Meat Commission
Lissue House
31 Ballinderry Road
Lisburn
Northern Ireland
BT28 2SL

TEL: 02892 633 000
FAX: 028 92 633001
EMAIL: FBrogan-Quin@lmcni.com
TEXT PHONE: 18001 028 92 633023
www.lmcni.com

2.5 Objectives and targets relating to the statutory duties will be integrated into our strategic and operational business plans³.

2.6 Employees' job descriptions and personal objectives reflect their contributions to the discharge of the Section 75 statutory duties and implementation of the equality scheme, where relevant. The personal objectives are subject to appraisal in the annual performance review.

2.7 LMC prepares an annual report on the progress we have made on implementing the arrangements set out in this equality scheme to discharge our Section 75 statutory duties (read our Annual Equality Progress Reports).

LMC's Section 75 Annual Progress Report will be sent to the Equality Commission by 31 August each year and will follow any guidance on annual reporting issued by the Equality Commission.

Progress on the delivery of Section 75 statutory duties will also be included in our (organisational) annual report.

2.8 The latest Section 75 annual progress report is available on our website see link below or by contacting us.

Fiona Brogan-Quin
Corporate Governance Officer
Livestock and Meat Commission
TEL: 02892 633 000
FAX: 028 92 633001
EMAIL: FBrogan-Quin@lmcni.com
TEXT PHONE: 18001 028 92 633023
www.lmcni.com

³ See Appendix 4 'Timetable for measures proposed' and section 2.11 of this equality scheme.

2.9 The LMC liaises closely with the Equality Commission to ensure that progress on the implementation of our equality scheme is maintained.

2.10 Due to the nature of the LMC's business there are limitations in terms of how the organisation can enhance the promotion of equality and good relations. However, notwithstanding the nature of the functions undertaken by LMC, equality and good relations obligations are mainstreamed across the organisation. LMC has also taken a proactive approach to promoting equality and good relations in their internal and external functions.

Senior management have been trained in Section 75 and are responsible for ensuring that the Section 75 statutory duties are taken fully into account in developing, reviewing and implementing policy decisions across their business remit.

Day-to-day responsibility for overseeing the Equality Agenda and monitoring compliance across LMC lies with the Corporate Governance Officer. This officer reports directly to the Chief Executive who as the named Equality Officer with overall responsibility for all Equality matters.

Action plan/action measures

2.11 The LMC has developed an action plan to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. This action plan is set out in Appendix 6 to this equality scheme.

2.12 The action measures that will make up our action plan are relevant to our functions. They have been developed and prioritised on the basis of the audit of inequalities. The audit of inequalities collates and analyses information across the Section 75 categories⁴ to identify the inequalities that exist for our service users and those affected by our policies⁵.

2.13 Action measures will be specific, measurable, linked to achievable outcomes, realistic and time bound. Action measures

⁴ See section 1.1 of this equality scheme for a list of these categories.

⁵ See section 4.1 of this equality scheme for a definition of policies.

will include performance indicators and timescales for their achievement.

2.14 We will develop any action plans for a period of between one and five years in order to align them with our corporate and business planning cycles. Implementation of the action measures will be incorporated into our business planning process.

2.15 We will seek input from our stakeholders and consult on our action plan before we send it to the Equality Commission and thereafter when reviewing the plan as per 2.16 below.

2.16 We will monitor our progress on the delivery of our action measures annually and update the action plan as necessary to ensure that it remains effective and relevant to our functions and work.

2.17 LMC will inform the Commission of any changes or amendments to our action plan and will also include this information in our Section 75 annual progress report to the Commission.

2.18 Once finalised, our action plan will be available on the LMC website or by contacting:

Fiona Brogan-Quin
Corporate Governance Officer
Livestock and Meat Commission
Lissie House
31 Ballinderry Road
Lisburn
Northern Ireland
BT28 2SL

TEL: 02892 633 000
FAX: 028 92 633001
EMAIL: FBrogan-Quin@lmcni.com
TEXT PHONE: 18001 028 92 633023
www.lmcni.com

If you require it in an alternative format please contact us on the details provided.

Our progress on our Audit of Inequalities Action Plan targets will be reported in our Section 75 Annual Progress Report to the Equality Commission.

Chapter 3 Our arrangements for consulting

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (a)) - on matters to which a duty (S75 (1) or (2)) is likely to be relevant (including details of the persons to be consulted).

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (b)) on the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted by us on the promotion of equality of opportunity.

3.1 We recognise the importance of consultation in all aspects of the implementation of our statutory equality duties. We will consult on our equality scheme, action measures, equality impact assessments and other matters relevant to the Section 75 statutory duties. We will also consult on our Audit of Inequalities and its accompanying Action Plan.

3.2 We are committed to carrying out consultation in accordance with the following principles (as contained in the Equality Commission's guidance '*Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010)*':

3.2.1 Consultations will seek the views of those directly affected by the matter/policy, the Equality Commission, representative groups of Section 75 categories, other public authorities, voluntary and community groups, our staff and their trades unions and such other groups who have a legitimate interest in the matter, whether or not they have a direct economic or personal interest.

LMC will monitor its approach to consultation, to ensure that it is open and encourages participation; and that it continues to reach out to representative groups and to those individuals directly affected by the matter / policy.

Initially all consultees (see Appendix 3), as a matter of course will be notified (by email or post) of the matter/policy being consulted upon to ensure they are aware of all consultations. Thereafter, to ensure the most effective use of our and our consultee's

resources, we will take a targeted approach to consultation for those consultees that may have a particular interest in the matter/policy being consulted upon and to whom the matter/policy is of particular relevance. This may include for example regional or local consultations, sectorial or thematic consultations etc.

3.2.2 Consultation with all stakeholders will begin as early as possible. We will engage with affected individuals and representative groups to identify how best to consult or engage with them. We will ask our consultees what their preferred consultation methods are and will give consideration to these. Methods of consultation could include:

- Face-to-face meetings
- Focus groups
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- Questionnaires
- Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/opt out of the consultation
- Internet discussions or
- Telephone consultations.

This list is not exhaustive and we may develop other additional methods of consultation more appropriate to key stakeholders and the matter being consulted upon.

3.2.3 We will consider the accessibility and format of every method of consultation we use in order to remove barriers to the consultation process. Specific consideration will be given as to how best to communicate with children and young people, people with disabilities (in particular people with learning disabilities) and minority ethnic communities. We take account of existing and developing good practice, including the Equality Commission's guidance *Let's Talk Let's Listen – Guidance for public authorities on consulting and involving children and young people* (2008).

LMC is committed to achieving effective communication with its customers and with the public. We will ensure that we provide a wide range of accessible communication channels to suit the needs of our customers, and we will also take action to promote the availability of our accessible services too. We will work to

make our information services accessible through a range of different formats, and will seek feedback from our customers and as appropriate, review and enhance our service provision.

Particular care will be taken to ensure that we take account of the specific communication needs of people with disabilities, older people and children and young people.

Information will be made available, in a timely fashion and in accessible formats in consultation with the affected groups. Normally within 30 days. We will ensure that such consultees have equal time to respond.

3.2.4 Specific training is provided to those facilitating consultations to ensure they have the necessary skills to communicate effectively with consultees.

3.2.5 To ensure effective consultation with consultees on Section 75 matters we will develop a programme of awareness raising on the Section 75 Statutory duties and the commitments in our Equality Scheme by undertaking the following:

- Issue of a news item on the website
- Direct contact with all statutory consultees

3.2.6 The consultation period lasts for a minimum of twelve weeks to allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves as part of the process of forming a view. However, in exceptional circumstances when this timescale is not feasible (for example implementing EU Directives or UK wide legislation, meeting Health and Safety requirements, addressing urgent public health matters or complying with Court judgements), we may shorten timescales to eight weeks or less before the policy is implemented. We may continue consultation thereafter and will review the policy as part of our monitoring commitments⁶.

Where, under these exceptional circumstances, we must implement a policy immediately, as it is beyond our authority's control, we may consult after implementation of the policy, in order to ensure that any impacts of the policy are considered.

⁶ Please see below at 4.27 to 4.31 for details on monitoring.

3.2.7 If a consultation exercise is to take place over a period when consultees are less able to respond, for example, over the summer or Christmas break, or if the policy under consideration is particularly complex, we will give consideration to the feasibility of allowing a longer period for the consultation.

3.2.8 We are conscious of the fact that affected individuals and representative groups may have different needs. We will take appropriate measures to ensure full participation in any meetings that are held. We will consider for example the time of day, the appropriateness of the venue, in particular whether it can be accessed by those with disabilities, how the meeting is to be conducted, the use of appropriate language, whether a signer and/or interpreter is necessary, and whether the provision of childcare and support for other carers is required.

3.2.9 We make all relevant information available to consultees in appropriate formats to ensure meaningful consultation. This includes detailed information on the policy proposal being consulted upon and any relevant quantitative and qualitative data.

3.2.10 In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, we take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy.

3.2.11 We provide feedback to consultees in a timely manner. A feedback report is prepared which includes summary information on the policy consulted upon, a summary of consultees' comments and a summary of our consideration of and response to consultees' input. The feedback is provided in formats suitable to consultees. (Please see also 6.3)

3.3 A list of our consultees is included in this equality scheme at Appendix 3. It can also be obtained from our website at www.lmcni.com

or by contacting:

Fiona Brogan-Quin
Corporate Governance Officer
Livestock and Meat Commission
Lissie House

31 Ballinderry Road
Lisburn
Northern Ireland
BT28 2SL

TEL: 02892 633 000
FAX: 028 92 633001
EMAIL: FBrogan-Quin@lmcni.com
TEXT PHONE: 028 92 633023
www.lmcni.com

3.4 Our consultation list is not exhaustive and is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains relevant to our functions and policies.

We welcome enquiries from any person/s or organisations wishing to be added to the list of consultees. Please contact the person below to provide your contact details and have your areas of interest noted or have your name/details removed or amended.

Fiona Brogan-Quin
Corporate Governance Officer
Livestock and Meat Commission
Lissue House
31 Ballinderry Road
Lisburn
Northern Ireland
BT28 2SL
TEL: 02892 633 000
FAX: 028 92 633001
EMAIL: FBrogan-Quin@lmcni.com
TEXT PHONE: 028 92 633023
www.lmcni.com

Please also inform us at this stage if you would like information sent to you in a particular format or language.

Chapter 4 Our arrangements for assessing, monitoring and publishing the impact of policies

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (b); Schedule 9 4. (2) (c); Schedule 9 4. (2) (d); Schedule 9 9. (1); Schedule 9 9.(2))

Our arrangements for assessing the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted on the promotion of equality of opportunity (Schedule 9 4. (2) (b))

4.1 In the context of Section 75, ‘policy’ is very broadly defined and it covers all the ways in which we carry out or propose to carry out our functions in relation to Northern Ireland. In respect of this equality scheme, the term policy is used for any (proposed/amended/existing) strategy, policy initiative or practice and/or decision, whether written or unwritten and irrespective of the label given to it, eg, ‘draft’, ‘pilot’, ‘high level’ or ‘sectoral’.

4.2 In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, we take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy, as required by Schedule 9 9. (2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

4.3 LMC uses the tools of **screening** and **equality impact assessment** to assess the likely impact of a policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations. In carrying out these assessments we will relate them to the intended outcomes of the policy in question and will also follow Equality Commission guidance:

- the guidance on screening, including the screening template, as detailed in the Commission’s guidance ‘*Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010)*’ and
- on undertaking an equality impact assessment as detailed in the Commission’s guidance ‘*Practical guidance on equality impact assessment (February 2005)*’.

Screening

4.4 The purpose of screening is to identify those policies that are likely to have an impact on equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

4.5 Screening is completed at the earliest opportunity in the policy development/review process. Policies which we propose to adopt will be subject to screening prior to implementation. For more detailed strategies or policies that are to be put in place through a series of stages, we will screen at various stages during implementation.

4.6 The lead role in the screening of a policy is taken by the policy decision maker who has the authority to make changes to that policy. However, screening will also involve other relevant team members, for example, equality specialists, those who implement the policy and staff members from other relevant work areas. Where possible we will include key stakeholders in the screening process.

4.7 The following questions are applied to all our policies as part of the screening process:

- What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? (minor/major/none)
- Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?
- To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? (minor/major/none)
- Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

4.8 In order to answer the screening questions, we gather all relevant information and data, both qualitative and quantitative. In taking this evidence into account we consider the different needs,

experiences and priorities for each of the Section 75 equality categories. Any screening decision will be informed by this evidence.

4.9 Completion of screening, taking into account our consideration of the answers to all four screening questions set out in 4.7 above, will lead to one of the following three outcomes:

1. the policy has been ‘screened in’ for equality impact assessment
2. the policy has been ‘screened out’ with mitigation⁷ or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted
3. the policy has been ‘screened out’ without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.

4.10 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is ‘minor’ in respect of one, or more, of the equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, we may on occasion decide to proceed with an equality impact assessment, depending on the policy. If an EQIA is not to be conducted we will nonetheless consider measures that might mitigate the policy impact as well as alternative policies that might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

Where we mitigate we will outline in our screening template the reasons to support this decision together with the proposed changes, amendments or alternative policy.

This screening decision will be ‘signed off’ by the appropriate policy lead within LMC.

4.11 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is ‘major’ in respect of one, or more, of the equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, we may subject the policy to an equality impact assessment. This screening decision will be ‘signed off’ by the appropriate policy lead within LMC.

4.12 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is ‘none’, in respect of all of the equality of opportunity and/or good

⁷ Mitigation – Where an assessment (screening in this case) reveals that a particular policy has an adverse impact on equality of opportunity and / or good relations, a public authority must consider ways of delivering the policy outcomes which have a less adverse effect on the relevant Section 75 categories.

relations categories, we may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is ‘screened out’ as having no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations, we will give details of the reasons for the decision taken. This screening decision will be ‘signed off’ by the appropriate policy lead within LMC.

4.13 As soon as possible following the completion of the screening process, the screening template, signed off and approved by the senior manager responsible for the policy, will be made available on our website and on request.

Fiona Brogan-Quin
Corporate Governance Officer
Livestock and Meat Commission
Lissue House
31 Ballinderry Road
Lisburn
Northern Ireland
BT28 2SL

TEL: 02892 633 000
FAX: 028 92 633001
EMAIL: FBrogan-Quin@lmcni.com
TEXT PHONE: 18001 028 92 633023
www.lmcni.com

4.14 If a consultee, including the Equality Commission, raises a concern about a screening decision based on supporting evidence, we will review the screening decision.

4.15 Our screening reports are published quarterly [see below at 4.20 - 4.22 and 4.23 for details].

Equality impact assessment

4.16 An equality impact assessment (EQIA) is a thorough and systematic analysis of a policy, whether that policy is formal or informal, and irrespective of the scope of that policy. The primary function of an EQIA is to determine the extent of any impact of a policy upon the Section 75 categories and to determine if the impact is an adverse one. It is also an opportunity to demonstrate

the likely positive outcomes of a policy and to seek ways to more effectively promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

4.17 Once a policy is screened and screening has identified that an equality impact assessment is necessary, we will carry out the EQIA in accordance with Equality Commission guidance. The equality impact assessment will be carried out as part of the policy development process, before the policy is implemented.

4.18 Any equality impact assessment will be subject to consultation at the appropriate stage(s). (For details see above Chapter 3 “Our Arrangements for Consulting”).

Our arrangements for publishing the results of the assessments of the likely impact of policies we have adopted or propose to adopt on the promotion of equality of opportunity

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (d); Schedule 9 9. (1))

4.19 We make publicly available the results of our assessments (screening and EQIA) of the likely impact of our policies on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations.

What we publish

4.20 Screening Reports

These are published quarterly on the LMC website. Our screening reports will include:

- Details of policies screened by LMC over the three month period
- A short statement about the aim(s) of each of the specific policy / policies which have been screened
- Details of the consideration given to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact
- Details of the consideration given to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity;

- Details about each screening assessment made, i.e:
 - whether the policy has been ‘screened in’ for equality impact assessment
 - whether the policy has been ‘screened out’ with mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted
 - whether the policy has been ‘screened out’ without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.
- Where applicable, a timetable for conducting equality impact assessments
- A weblink to each of the completed screening form(s).

4.21 Screening templates

For details on the availability of our screening templates please refer to 4.13.

4.22 Equality impact assessments

EQIA reports are published once the impact assessment has been completed. These reports include:

- A statement of the aim of the policy assessed
- Information and data collected
- Details of the assessment of impact(s)
- Consideration given to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact
- Consideration given to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity
- Consultation responses
- The decision taken
- Future monitoring plans.

How we publish the information

4.23 All information we publish is accessible and can be made available in alternative formats on request. Please see 6.3 below.

Where we publish the information

4.24 The results of our assessments (screening reports and completed templates, the results of equality impact assessments) are available on our website www.lmcni.com or by contacting:

Fiona Brogan-Quin
Corporate Governance Officer
Livestock and Meat Commission
Lissue House
31 Ballinderry Road
Lisburn
Northern Ireland
BT28 2SL

TEL: 02892 633 000
FAX: 028 92 633001
EMAIL: FBrogan-Quin@lmcni.com
TEXT PHONE: 18001 028 92 633023
www.lmcni.com

4.25 In addition to the above, our screening reports (which set out details about the policies we have screened over a 3 month period) are sent out by email link to our consultees on a quarterly basis. Hard copies of our screening reports can also be made available, on request.

4.26 We will inform the general public about the availability of this material through communications such as press releases where appropriate.

Our arrangements for monitoring any adverse impact of policies we have adopted on equality of opportunity

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (c))

4.27 Monitoring can assist us to deliver better public services and continuous improvements. Monitoring Section 75 information involves the processing of sensitive personal data (data relating to the racial or ethnic origin of individuals, sexual orientation, political opinion, religious belief, etc). In order to carry out monitoring in a confidential and effective manner, the LMC follows guidance from the Office of the Information Commissioner and the Equality Commission.

4.28 We monitor any adverse impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity of policies we have adopted. We are also committed to monitoring more broadly to identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations in line with Equality Commission guidance.

4.29 The systems we have established to monitor the impact of policies and identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations are:

- The collection, collation and analysis of existing relevant quantitative and qualitative data across all nine equality categories on an ongoing basis
- An audit of existing information systems within one year of approval of this equality scheme, to identify the extent of current monitoring and take action to address any gaps in order to have the necessary information on which to base decisions
- Undertaking or commissioning new data if necessary.

4.30 If over a two year period monitoring and evaluation show that a policy results in greater adverse impact than predicted, or if opportunities arise which would allow for greater equality of

opportunity to be promoted, we will ensure that the policy is revised to achieve better outcomes for relevant equality groups.

4.31 We review our EQIA monitoring information on an annual basis.

- Where necessary internal and or /external specialist assistance is used to provide guidance to business areas on the completion of equality impact assessments and arrangements to undertake appropriate equality monitoring;
- Our Section 75 Annual Progress Report to the Equality Commission includes an update on the equality monitoring actions we have undertaken and the outcomes from this action;
- Complaints are regularly monitored to ensure satisfaction with services is maintained and that any issues raised by customers and stakeholders are addressed promptly and satisfactorily.

Our arrangements for publishing the results of our monitoring (Schedule 9 4. (2) (d))

4.32 Schedule 9 4. (2) (d) requires us to publish the results of the monitoring of adverse impacts of policies we have adopted. However, we are committed to monitoring more broadly and the results of our policy monitoring are published as follows:

4.33 EQIA monitoring information is published as part of our Section 75 annual progress report [see 2.7].

4.34 Our consultees will be advised by direct contact when our Annual Progress report is published. Hard copies can be made available on request.

4.35 All information published is accessible and can be made available in alternative formats on request. Please see below at 6.3 for details.

Chapter 5 Staff training

(Schedule 9 4.(2) (e))

Commitment to staff training

5.1 We recognise that awareness raising and training play a crucial role in the effective implementation of our Section 75 duties.

5.2 Our Chief Executive wishes to positively communicate the commitment of the LMC to the Section 75 statutory duties, both internally and externally.

To this end we have introduced an effective communication and training programme for all staff and will ensure that our commitment to the Section 75 statutory duties is made clear in all relevant publications.

Training objectives

5.3 A training plan for staff will aim to achieve the following objectives:

- to raise awareness of the provisions of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, our equality scheme commitments and the particular issues likely to affect people across the range of Section 75 categories, to ensure that our staff fully understand their role in implementing the scheme.
- to provide those staff involved in the assessment of policies (screening and EQIA) with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively.
- to provide those staff who deal with complaints in relation to compliance with our equality scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to investigate and monitor complaints effectively.
- to provide those staff involved in consultation processes with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively.
- to provide those staff involved in the implementation and monitoring of the effective implementation of the LMC equality scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively.

Awareness raising and training arrangements

5.4 The following arrangements are in place to ensure all our staff and the Commissioners are aware of and understand our equality obligations.

- We will develop a summary of this equality scheme and make it available to all staff.
- We will provide access to copies of the full equality scheme for all staff; ensure that any queries or questions of clarification from staff are addressed effectively.
- Staff in LMC will receive a briefing on this equality scheme within three months after the approval of the Scheme.
- The Section 75 statutory duties form part of induction training for new staff.
- Focused training is provided for key staff within the LMC who are directly engaged in taking forward the implementation of our equality scheme commitments (for example those involved in research and data collection, policy development, service design, conducting equality impact assessments, consultation, monitoring and evaluation).
- Where appropriate, training will be provided to ensure staff are aware of the issues experienced by the range of Section 75 groups.
- When appropriate and on an ongoing basis, arrangements will be made to ensure staff are kept up to date with Section 75 developments.
- We will provide training for staff on people who request information in alternative formats to ensure they have equal time to respond.

5.5 Training and awareness raising programmes will, where relevant, be developed in association with the appropriate Section 75 groups and our staff.

In order to share resources and expertise, LMC will, where possible, work closely with other bodies and agencies in the development and delivery of training.

Monitoring and evaluation

5.6 Our training programme is subject to the following monitoring and evaluation arrangements:

- We evaluate the extent to which all participants in this training programme have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve each of the above objectives.
- The extent to which training objectives have been met will be reported on as part of the Section 75 annual progress report, which will be sent to the Equality Commission.

Chapter 6 Our arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and services we provide

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (f))

6.1 LMC is committed to ensuring that the information we disseminate and the services we provide are fully accessible to all parts of the community in Northern Ireland. We keep our arrangements under review to ensure that this remains the case.

6.2 We are aware that some groups will not have the same access to information as others. In particular:

- People with sensory, learning, communication and mobility disabilities may require printed information in other formats.
- Members of ethnic minority groups, whose first language is not English, may have difficulties with information provided only in English.
- Children and young people may not be able to fully access or understand information.

Access to information

6.3 To ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, we provide information in alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable. Where the exact request cannot be met we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided.

Alternative formats may include Easy Read, Braille, audio formats (CD, mp3 or DAISY), large print or minority languages to meet the needs of those for whom English is not their first language. The LMC liaises with representatives of young people and disability and minority ethnic organisations and takes account of existing and developing good practice.

- We will respond to requests for information in alternative formats in a timely manner usually within 30 days

6.4 In disseminating information through the media we will seek to advertise in the press where appropriate.

Access to services

6.5 LMC are committed to ensuring that all of our services are fully accessible to everyone in the community across the Section 75 categories.

6.6 LMC provides market information to producers via a number of alternative formats. The weekly Bulletin service is available in printed form, text or email, on our website and also via our answer phone facility.

Our Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (FQAs) Liaison Service is available via telephone, text, and face to face in local marts. The FQAs Newsletter is available by post or via the website.

LMC provides Educational Services to secondary school pupils via the Food4Life website and through an annual School Cookery Demonstration Programme both of which are aimed at post primary school children studying Home Economics. Recipes and information are provided on the website in text and video format. All schools listed with the Department of Education are offered the opportunity to partake in School Cookery demonstrations.

LMC also conducts retail sampling in conjunction with a variety of retailers across the region to promote the Farm Quality Assurance label and to educate shoppers on the merits of local produced high quality beef and lamb products.

LMC also adheres to the relevant provisions of current anti-discrimination legislation.

Assessing public access to information and services

6.7 LMC monitors where necessary across all its functions, in relation to access to information and services, to ensure equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted.

Access to information and services is monitored on a quarterly, annual or bi-annual basis as detailed within Appendix 4.

6.8 The Corporate Governance Officer will review requests on an ongoing basis to ensure a quality service is maintained.

Chapter 7 Timetable for measures we propose in this equality scheme

(Schedule 9 4. (3) (b))

- 7.1 Appendix 4 outlines our timetable for all measures proposed within this equality scheme. The measures outlined in this timetable will be incorporated into our business planning processes.
- 7.2 This timetable is different from and in addition to our commitment to developing action plans/action measures to specifically address inequalities and further promote equality of opportunity and good relations. We have included in our equality scheme a commitment to develop an action plan. Accordingly, this commitment it is listed in the timetable of measures at Appendix 4. For information on these action measures please see above at 2.11 – 2.18.

Chapter 8 Our complaints procedure

(Schedule 9 10.)

8.1 LMC are responsive to the views of members of the public. We will endeavour to resolve all complaints made to us.

8.2 Schedule 9 paragraph 10 of the Act refers to complaints. A person can make a complaint to a public authority if the complainant believes he or she may have been directly affected by an alleged failure of the authority to comply with its approved equality scheme.

If the complaint has not been resolved within a reasonable timescale, the complaint can be brought to the Equality Commission.

8.3 A person wishing to make a complaint that LMC has failed to comply with its approved equality scheme should contact:

Fiona Brogan-Quin
Corporate Governance Officer
Livestock and Meat Commission
Lissue House
31 Ballinderry Road
Lisburn
Northern Ireland
BT28 2SL

TEL: 02892 633 000
FAX: 028 92 633001
EMAIL: FBrogan-Quin@lmcni.com
TEXT PHONE: 18001 028 92 633023
www.lmcni.com

8.4 We will in the first instance acknowledge receipt of each complaint within ten working days.

8.5 LMC will carry out an internal investigation of the complaint and will respond substantively to the complainant within one month of the date of receiving the letter of complaint. Under certain circumstances if the complexity of the matter requires a longer period, the period for response to the complainant may be

extended to two months. In those circumstances, the complainant will be advised of the extended period within one month of making the complaint.

8.6 During this process the complainant will be kept fully informed of the progress of the investigation into the complaint and of any outcomes.

8.7 In any subsequent investigation by the Equality Commission, the LMC will co-operate fully, providing access in a timely manner to any relevant documentation that the Equality Commission may require.

Similarly, the LMC will co-operate fully with any investigation by the Equality Commission under sub-paragraph 11 (1) (b) of Schedule 9 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

8.8 The LMC will make all efforts to implement promptly and in full any recommendations arising out of any Commission investigation.

Chapter 9 Publication of our equality scheme

(Schedule 9 4. (3) (c))

9.1 LMC's equality scheme is available free of charge in print form and alternative formats from:

Fiona Brogan-Quin
Corporate Governance Officer
Livestock and Meat Commission
Lissue House
31 Ballinderry Road
Lisburn
Northern Ireland
BT28 2SL

TEL: 02892 633 000
FAX: 028 92 633023
EMAIL: FBrogan-Quin@lmcni.com
TEXT PHONE: 18001 028 92 633023
www.lmcni.com

9.2 Our equality scheme is also available on our website at
www.lmcni.com

9.3 The following arrangements are in place for the publication in a timely manner of our equality scheme to ensure equality of access:

- We will make every effort to communicate widely the existence and content of our equality scheme. This may include press releases, prominent advertisements in the press, the internet and direct mail shots to groups representing the various categories in Section 75.
- We will email a link to our approved Equality Scheme to our consultees on our consultation lists. Other consultees who prefer written communication or do not have an e-mail address will be notified by letter that our Equality Scheme is available on request. We will respond to requests for the Equality Scheme in alternative formats in a timely manner usually within 30 days.

- Our equality scheme may be made available on request in alternative formats such as Easy Read, Braille, large print, audio formats (CD, mp3, DAISY) and in minority languages to meet the needs of those not fluent in English.
- A summary of our Equality Scheme will be prepared and circulated for distribution.

9.4 For a list of our stakeholders and consultees please see Appendix 3 of the equality scheme, visit our website at www.lmcni.com or contact

Fiona Brogan-Quin
Corporate Governance Officer
Livestock and Meat Commission
Lissie House
31 Ballinderry Road
Lisburn
Northern Ireland
BT28 2SL

TEL: 02892 633 000
FAX: 028 92 633023
EMAIL: FBrogan-Quin@lmcni.com
TEXT PHONE: 18001 028 92 633023

Chapter 10 Review of our equality scheme

(Schedule 9 8. (3))

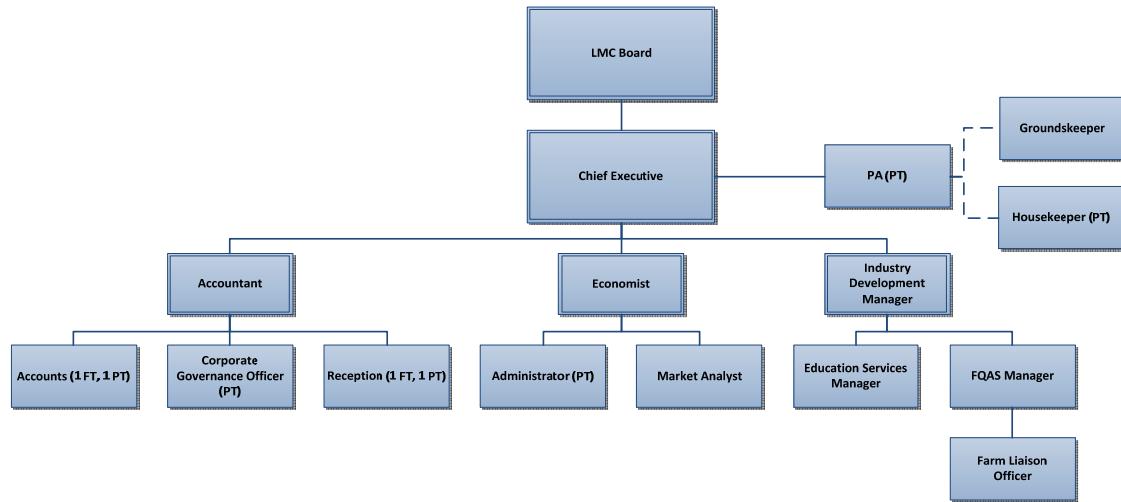
10.1 As required by Schedule 9 paragraph 8 (3) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 we will conduct a thorough review of this equality scheme. This review will take place either within five years of submission of this equality scheme to the Equality Commission or within a shorter timescale to allow alignment with the review of other planning cycles.

The review will evaluate the effectiveness of our scheme in relation to the implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties relevant to our functions in Northern Ireland.

10.2 In undertaking this review we will follow any guidance issued by the Equality Commission. A report of this review will be made public on the LMC website, with consultees notified by email and sent to the Equality Commission.

Appendix 1 Organisational chart

LMC Organisational Structure



Appendix 2 Example groups relevant to the Section 75 categories for Northern Ireland purposes

Please note, this list is for illustration purposes only, it is not exhaustive.

| Category | Example groups |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Religious belief | Buddhist; Catholic; Hindu; Jewish; Muslims, people of no religious belief; Protestants; Sikh; other faiths. For the purposes of Section 75, the term “religious belief” is the same definition as that used in the <i>Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order</i> ⁸ . Therefore, “religious belief” also includes any <i>perceived</i> religious belief (or perceived lack of belief) and, in employment situations only, it also covers any “ <i>similar philosophical belief</i> ”. |
| Political opinion ⁹ | Nationalist generally; Unionists generally; members/supporters of other political parties. |
| Racial group | Black people; Chinese; Indians; Pakistanis; people of mixed ethnic background; Polish; Roma; Travellers; White people. |
| Men and women generally | Men (including boys); Trans-gendered people; Transsexual people; women (including girls). |
| Marital status | Civil partners or people in civil partnerships; divorced people; married people; separated people; single people; widowed people. |
| Age | Children and young people; older people. |
| Persons with a disability | Persons with disabilities as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. |
| Persons with dependants | Persons with personal responsibility for the care of a child; for the care of a person with a disability; or the care of a dependant older person. |
| Sexual orientation | Bisexual people; heterosexual people; gay or lesbian people. |

⁸ See Section 98 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, which states: “*In this Act... “political opinion” and “religious belief” shall be construed in accordance with Article 2(3) and (4) of the Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998.*”

⁹ ibid

Appendix 3 List of consultees

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (a))

- Age NI
- Age Sector Reference Group
- Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute
- Alliance
- An Munia Tober
- Autism NI
- AWARE Defeat Depression
- Baha'i Council for NI
- British Deaf Association (NI)
- Belfast Jewish Community
- British Dyslexia Association
- Cara-friend
- Carers NI
- Children's Law Centre
- Chinese Welfare Association (CWA)
- Church of Ireland Board for Social Responsibility
- Coalition on Sexual Orientation (CoSO)
- Committee on the Admin of Justice (CAJ)
- Community Foundation for NI
- Community Relations Council (CRC)
- Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
- Disability Action
- Down's Syndrome Association
- DUP
- Employers' Forum on Disability
- Equality Coalition
- Equality Commission for NI - Statutory Duty Team
- Equality Forum NI
- Farmers for Action
- Gay Lesbian Youth NI (GLYNI)
- Gingerbread NI
- GMB Trade Union
- Green Party
- Indian Community Centre
- Lesbian Line
- MENCAP

- Methodist Church in Ireland
- Multi-Cultural Resource Centre
- National Beef Association
- National Sheep Association
- NI Agricultural Consultant's Association (NIACA)
- NI Anti-Poverty Network
- NIACRO
- Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health (NIAMH)
- NI Commissioner for Children and Young People
- NI Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM)
- NI Council for Voluntary Action
- NI Human Rights Commission (NIHRC)
- NI Islamic Centre
- N.I Local Government Association (NILGA)
- NI Livestock Auctioneers Association
- NIAPA
- NIMEA
- NI Rural Women's Network
- NIPSA
- Northern Ireland Youth Forum
- NSPCC
- Polish Association NI
- Presbyterian Church in Ireland
- PUP
- Queer Space
- Rainbow Project
- RNIB
- Rural Community Network
- Rural Network NI
- Rural Support
- Roman Catholic Church
- SDLP
- Sinn Fein
- The Workers Party
- TUV
- Training for Womens Network
- Ulster Farmers' Union
- UNISON
- Ulster-Scots Agency
- UUP

- Womens Aid NI
- Young Farmers Clubs of Ulster
- Youth Council for NI

This consultation list is indicative and not exhaustive and is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains relevant to the Livestock and Meat Commission's functions and policies.

Appendix 4 Timetable for measures proposed

(Schedule 9 4.(3) (b))

| Measure (example) | Lead responsibility (example) | Timetable (example) |
|--|--|---|
| Section 75 Annual Progress Report | Chief Executive | 31 August each year |
| Action plan Consultation on draft action plan Finalised action plan published Arrangements for monitoring progress in place | Corporate Governance Officer Corporate Governance Officer Chief Executive | In line with consultation on equality scheme April 2013 July 2013 |
| Consultation list reviewed and updated | Corporate Governance Officer | Annually |
| Awareness Raising of New Equality Scheme | Corporate Governance Officer | Within three months of the publication of the scheme |
| Screening timetable Quarterly publication of screening reports | Corporate Governance Officer | As required |
| EQIA timetable Undertake EQIAs on new or revised policies Consultation on EQIAs Publication of EQIA reports | Corporate Governance Officer Corporate Governance Officer Corporate Governance Officer | As required As required As required |
| Monitoring Review of monitoring information | Corporate Governance Officer | Annually |
| Training Development, delivery | Corporate Governance Officer | Annually |

| | | |
|--|------------------------------|---|
| and evaluation of equality training | | |
| Assessing access to information and services | | |
| Market Information Services | Economist | Quarterly |
| Farm Quality Assurance Scheme | FQAS Manager | Annually |
| Education Services | Education Services Manager | Annually |
| Retail Sampling | Education Services Manager | 6 monthly |
| Communication of equality scheme | Corporate Governance Officer | Ongoing |
| Review of equality scheme | Corporate Governance Officer | Within five years of approval of the Scheme |

Appendix 5 Glossary of terms

Action plan

A plan which sets out actions a public authority will take to implement its Section 75 statutory duties. It is a mechanism for the realisation of measures to achieve equality outcomes for the Section 75 equality and good relations categories.

Action measures and outcomes

Specific measures to promote equality and good relations for the relevant Section 75 and good relations categories, linked to achievable outcomes, which should be realistic and timely.

Adverse impact

Where a Section 75 category has been affected differently by a policy and the effect is less favourable, it is known as adverse impact. If a policy has an adverse impact on a Section 75 category, a public authority must consider whether or not the adverse impact is unlawfully discriminatory. In either case a public authority must take measures to redress the adverse impact, by considering mitigating measures and/or alternative ways of delivering the policy.

Affirmative action

In general terms, affirmative action can be defined as being anything consistent with the legislation which is necessary to bring about positive change. It is a phrase used in the Fair Employment and Treatment Order(NI) 1998 to describe lawful action that is aimed at promoting equality of opportunity and fair participation in employment between members of the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities in Northern Ireland.

Article 55 Review

Under the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998, all registered employers must conduct periodic reviews of the composition of their workforces and of their employment practices for the purposes of determining whether members of the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities are enjoying, and are likely to continue to enjoy, fair

participation in employment in each employer's concern. These reviews, which are commonly known as Article 55 Reviews, must be conducted at least once every three years.

Audit of inequalities

An audit of inequalities is a systematic review and analysis of inequalities which exist for service users and those affected by a public authority's policies. An audit can be used by a public authority to inform its work in relation to the Section 75 equality and good relations duties. It can also enable public authorities to assess progress on the implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties, as it provides baseline information on existing inequalities relevant to a public authority's functions.

Consultation

In the context of Section 75, consultation is the process of asking those affected by a policy (ie, service users, staff, the general public) for their views on how the policy could be implemented more effectively to promote equality of opportunity across the 9 categories. Different circumstances will call for different types of consultation. Consultations could, for example, include meetings, focus groups, surveys and questionnaires.

Council of Europe

The Council of Europe, based in Strasbourg, covers virtually the entire European continent, with its 47 member countries. Founded on 5 May 1949 by 10 countries, the Council of Europe seeks to develop throughout Europe common and democratic principles based on the European Convention on Human Rights and other reference texts on the protection of individuals.

Desk audit

An audit of a draft equality scheme to ensure that the scheme conforms with the requirements on form and content as detailed in the Commission's Guidelines (the Guide).

Differential impact

Differential impact occurs where a Section 75 group has been affected differently by a policy. This effect could either be positive, neutral or negative. A public authority must make a judgement as to whether a policy has a differential impact and then it must determine whether the impact is adverse, based on a systematic appraisal of the accumulated information.

Discrimination

The anti-discrimination laws prohibit the following forms of discrimination:

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect Discrimination
- Disability Discrimination
- Victimisation
- Harassment

Brief descriptions of these above terms follow:

Direct discrimination

This generally occurs where a public authority treats a person less favourably than it treats (or, would treat) another person, in the same or similar circumstances, on one or more of the statutory non-discrimination grounds. A decision or action that is directly discriminatory will normally be unlawful unless: (a) in an age discrimination case, the decision can be objectively justified, or (b) in any other case, the public authority can rely on a statutory exception that permits it – such as a *genuine occupational requirement exception; or, a positive action exception which permits the employer to use “welcoming statements”* or to take other lawful positive action to encourage participation by under-represented or otherwise disadvantaged groups.

Indirect discrimination

The definition of this term varies across some of the anti-discrimination laws, but indirect discrimination generally occurs where a public authority applies to all persons a particular provision, criterion or practice, but which is one that has the effect of placing people who share a particular equality characteristic (e.g. the same sex, or religious belief, or race) at a particular disadvantage compared to other people. A provision, criterion or practice that is indirectly discriminatory will normally be unlawful unless (a) it can be objectively justified, or (b) the public authority can rely on a statutory exception that permits it. The definition of this term varies across some of the anti-discrimination laws, but indirect discrimination generally occurs where a public authority applies to all persons a particular provision, criterion or practice, but which is one that has the effect of placing people who share a particular equality characteristic (e.g. the same sex, or religious belief, or race) at a particular disadvantage compared to other

people. A provision, criterion or practice that is indirectly discriminatory will normally be unlawful unless (a) it can be objectively justified, or (b) the public authority can rely on a statutory exception that permits it.

Disability discrimination

In addition to direct discrimination and victimisation and harassment, discrimination against disabled people may also occur in two other ways: namely, (a) *disability-related discrimination*, and b) *failure to comply with a duty to make reasonable adjustments*).

(a) *Disability-related discrimination* generally occurs where a public authority, without lawful justification, and for a reason which relates to a disabled person's disability, treats that person less favourably than it treats (or, would treat) other people to whom that reason does not (or, would not) apply.

(b) *Failure to comply with a duty to make reasonable adjustments:*

One of the most notable features of the disability discrimination legislation is that in prescribed circumstances it imposes a duty on employers, service providers and public authorities to take such steps as are reasonable to remove or reduce particular disadvantages experienced by disabled people in those circumstances.

Victimisation

This form of discrimination generally occurs where a public authority treats a person less favourably than it treats (or, would treat) another person, in the same or similar circumstances, because the person has previously exercised his/her rights under the anti-discrimination laws, or has assisted another person to do so. Victimisation cannot be justified and is always unlawful.

Harassment

Harassment generally occurs where a person is subjected to unwanted conduct that is related to a non-discrimination ground with the purpose, or which has the effect, of violating their dignity or of creating for them an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment cannot be justified and is always unlawful.

Economic appraisal

An economic appraisal is a systematic process for examining alternative uses of resources, focusing on assessment of needs, objectives, options, costs benefits, risks, funding and affordability and other factors relevant to decisions.

Equality impact assessment

The mechanism underpinning Section 75, where existing and proposed policies are assessed in order to determine whether they have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity for the relevant Section 75 categories. Equality impact assessments require the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data.

Equality of opportunity

The prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between people on grounds of characteristics including sex, marital status, age, disability, religious belief, political opinion, dependants, race and sexual orientation. The promotion of equality of opportunity entails more than the elimination of discrimination. It requires proactive measures to be taken to secure equality of opportunity between the categories identified under Section 75.

Equality scheme

A document which outlines a public authority's arrangements for complying with its Section 75 obligations. An equality scheme must include an outline of the public authority's arrangements for carrying out consultations, screening, equality impact assessments, monitoring, training and arrangements for ensuring access to information and services.

Good relations

Although not defined in the legislation, the Commission has agreed the following working definition of good relations: 'the growth of relations and structures for Northern Ireland that acknowledge the religious, political and racial context of this society, and that seek to promote respect, equity and trust, and embrace diversity in all its forms'.

Mainstreaming equality

The integration of equal opportunities principles, strategies and practices into the every day work of public authorities from the outset. In other words, mainstreaming is the process of ensuring that equality considerations are built into the policy development process from the beginning, rather than being bolted on at the end. Mainstreaming can help improve methods of working by increasing a public authority's accountability, responsiveness to need and relations with the public. It can bring added value at many levels.

Mitigation of adverse impact

Where an equality impact assessment reveals that a particular policy has an adverse impact on equality of opportunity, a public authority must consider ways of delivering the policy outcomes which have a less adverse effect on the relevant Section 75 categories; this is known as mitigating adverse impact.

Monitoring

Monitoring consists of continuously scrutinising and evaluating a policy to assess its impact on the Section 75 categories. Monitoring must be sensitive to the issues associated with human rights and privacy. Public authorities should seek advice from consultees and Section 75 representative groups when setting up monitoring systems.

Monitoring consists of the collection of relevant information and evaluation of policies. It is not solely about the collection of data, it can also take the form of regular meetings and reporting of research undertaken. Monitoring is not an end in itself but provides the data for the next cycle of policy screening.

Northern Ireland Act

The Northern Ireland Act, implementing the Good Friday Agreement, received Royal Assent on 19 November 1998. Section 75 of the Act created the statutory equality duties.

Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA)

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) is an Executive Agency within the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP).

They provide statistical and research information regarding Northern Ireland issues and provide registration services to the public in the most effective and efficient way.

OFMdFM

The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister is responsible for providing advice, guidance, challenge and support to other NI Civil Service Departments on Section 75 issues.

PAFT

The Policy Appraisal and Fair Treatment (PAFT) Guidelines constituted the first non-statutory attempt at mainstreaming equality in Northern Ireland in January 1994. The aim of the PAFT Guidelines was to ensure that issues of equality and equity informed policy making and activity in all spheres and at all levels of government. PAFT has now been superseded by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Policy

The formal and informal decisions a public authority makes in relation to carrying out its duties. Defined in the New Oxford English Dictionary as ‘a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government party, business or individual’. In the context of Section 75, the term **policies** covers all the ways in which a public authority carries out or proposes to carry out its functions relating to Northern Ireland. Policies include unwritten as well as written policies.

Positive action

This phrase is not defined in any statute, but the Equality Commission understands it to mean any lawful action that a public authority might take for the purpose of promoting equality of opportunity for all persons in relation to employment or in accessing goods, facilities or services (such as health services, housing, education, justice, policing). It may involve adopting new policies, practices, or procedures; or changing or abandoning old ones. *Positive action* is not the same as *positive discrimination*. Positive discrimination differs from positive action in that *positive action* involves the taking of lawful actions whereas *positive discrimination* involves the taking of unlawful actions. Consequently, *positive action* is by definition lawful whereas *positive discrimination* is unlawful.

Qualitative data

Qualitative data refers to the experiences of individuals from their perspective, most often with less emphasis on numbers or statistical analysis. Consultations are more likely to yield qualitative than quantitative data.

Quantitative data

Quantitative data refers to numbers, typically derived from either a population in general or samples of that population. This information is often analysed by either using descriptive statistics, which consider general profiles, distributions and trends in the data, or inferential statistics, which are used to determine ‘significance’ either in relationships or differences in the data.

SACHR

The Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights (SACHR) has now been replaced by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission. SACHR, as part of its review of mechanisms in place to promote employment equality and reduce the unemployment differential, recommended that the PAFT Guidelines should be made a statutory requirement.

Screening

The procedure for identifying which policies will be subject to equality impact assessment, and how these equality impact assessments will be prioritised. The purpose of screening is to identify the policies which are likely to have a minor/major impact on equality of opportunity so that greatest resources can be devoted to improving these policies. Screening requires a systematic review of existing and proposed policies.

Schedule 9

Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 sets out detailed provisions for the enforcement of the Section 75 statutory duties, including an outline of what should be included in an equality scheme

Section 75

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act provides that each public authority is required, in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between:-

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status and sexual orientation;
- men and women generally;
- persons with a disability and persons without; and
- persons with dependants and persons without.

Without prejudice to these obligations, each public authority in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland must also have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

Section 75 investigation

An investigation carried out by the Equality Commission, under Schedule 9 of the NI Act 1998, arising from the failure of a public authority to comply with the commitments set out in its approved equality scheme. There are two types of Commission investigation, these are as follows:

1. An investigation of a complaint by an individual who claims to have been directly affected by the failure of a public authority to comply with its approved equality scheme;
2. An investigation initiated by the Commission, where it believes that a public authority may have failed to comply with its approved equality scheme.

Appendix 6 Action plan/action measures

THE LIVESTOCK AND MEAT COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND (LMC)
AUDIT OF INEQUALITIES AND ACTION PLAN

September 2012

INTRODUCTION

In April 2010 the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) published new guidance for public authorities on the implementation of the Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The guidance included a recommendation that:- "... public authorities include within their equality scheme a commitment to develop action measures/action plans which detail how they will undertake the promotion of equality of opportunity for the nine equality categories and good relations for the three good relations categories."

As part of the process of developing an action plan the guidance recommends that: "public authorities should:

- undertake an audit of inequalities to identify the range of key inequalities which the discharge of the public authority's functions is intended to or is likely to address;
- develop action measures based on functions and key inequalities identified."

In addition the Equality Commission drew attention to their own statement on key inequalities in Northern Ireland, highlighting the importance of equality of opportunity to the successful future of Northern Ireland and the imperative that all public bodies play their part in eroding inequalities in society.

The Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland (LMC) has developed its audit of inequalities and subsequent action against this background. The Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland (LMC) is a Non-Departmental Public Body, which was established by Statute (The Livestock Marketing Commission Act [Northern Ireland] 1967) to assist the development of the livestock and livestock products industries. The majority of our interfaces are with farming community, industries allied to meat production and promotion of meat products in Northern Ireland and with DARD. We have a limited wider public dimension with stakeholders outside of those mentioned above. Other avenues open to us to better promote equality and good relations are through our employment policies and practices. Notwithstanding the above comments all our policies are all subject to equality screening and equality and good relations are mainstreamed into the organisation.

As a public body we recognise that it is our duty to examine ways in which we can play our part in addressing inequalities and moving towards a better future for all.

AUDIT OF INEQUALITIES:

In considering how best to "*identify the range of key inequalities which the discharge of the public authority's functions is intended to or is likely to address*" we have focussed on Five key themes:

1. Information and support services to the sector
2. Our Advocacy Role
3. Marketing Promotions

4. Corporate Social Responsibility
5. Employment policy and practices

Each of these is considered separately.

INFORMATION AND SUPPORT SERVICE TO THE SECTOR

As part of the Annual Review submitted annually to the Equality Commission the LMC monitors information provision and access to information and services, as a consequence a number of areas have been identified where access to information and services to some of the Section 75 groups could be enhanced. In particular, not all members of the farming community such as older people and those with disabilities may be able to access market information or support services such as FQAS Liaison. In addition not all members of the farming community (from the Catholic or Nationalist community) may be readers of the News Letter Farming Life supplement where the LMC Bulletin is publicised.

ACTIONS

Implement appropriate software to ensure information is more accessible to older people and those with disabilities and monitor and review the online readership of LMC publications by September 2013.

To actively promote and ensure there is greater uptake of the text messaging service through targeting all farmers on the FQAS data base by March 2013.

To ensure the current FQAS farm liaison service is accessible to all sections of the community through mart clinics at livestock markets across Northern Ireland and monitoring the uptake by March 2013.

To monitor that information is accessible to the two main communities through the local press.

THE ADVOCACY ROLE

The main issues identified in relation to advocacy relate to promoting greater involvement of section 75 groups in LMC activities and promoting good relations through facilitating greater understanding of the beef and sheep supply chain.

ACTIONS

To be able to demonstrate through annual monitoring that the profile of Good Relations has been enhanced through the nature of participation and issues raised at the annual Northern Ireland beef and sheep market outlook conference.

Use the Red Meat Strategic Forum and annual stakeholder meetings to raise the profile of good relations and equality issues with stakeholders.

MARKETING/PROMOTIONS

Marketing of the industry to young people is an important aspect of our activities. We in LMC currently run an annual programme of cookery demonstrations for schools.

ACTIONS

LMC will continue to widely publicise this service and monitor the participation of schools in the cookery demonstrations programme and ensure fair opportunity for participation in terms of gender, religion and disability.

GOVERNANCE AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

In the newly restructured organisation good governance and an enhanced approach to stakeholder involvement in our activities is one of the key priorities. We will ensure that Section 75 activities become mainstreamed into the organisation and that compliance with Section 75 and promotion of equality and good relations is regularly assessed by the Board and the management team.

ACTIONS

Targeted stakeholder consultation will be used to integrate Equality and Good Relations actions and targets into the Corporate Plan and annual business plans commencing with the 2013/14 business planning year.

LMC Board and senior management team will review and report annually on performance in relation to Equality and Good Relations actions and targets in the LMC Annual Report.

EMPLOYMENT POLICES AND PRACTICES

Whereas the main issue with employment within the equality agenda in Northern Ireland has been in relation to community background (or religion), LMC also recognises the importance of employment and internal policies in promoting equality between people with disabilities and people without disabilities, different genders, those with and without dependants and people from different ethnic minority backgrounds and of different sexual orientation.

The LMC has undergone a major organisational review and re-organisation and our employment policies are currently under review. The monitoring information previously captured by the organisation is not reflective of the current workforce.

The first stage will therefore be to establish new base-line data in terms of the workforce and to implement new policies where necessary.

ACTIONS

LMC will continue to monitor its workforce on an annual basis in terms of religion, gender, and disability and will implement the affirmative action measures where necessary.

A training plan will be developed and implemented for all employees in relation to Equality and Good Relations by the end of October 2012

Awareness of equality and good relations matters among staff will also be promoted through the staff Newsletter and the levels of awareness assessed on an annual basis following the introduction of the Newsletter in September 2012

The review of our HR policies will include screening in terms of equality, good relations and the disability duties to establish if there are opportunities to better promote equality or good relations.