

# EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

## Public Authority 2011 – 2012 Annual Progress Report on:

- **Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and**
- **Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order (DDO) 2006**

This report template includes a number of self assessment questions regarding implementation of the **Section 75 statutory duties** from *1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012 (Part A)*.

This template also includes a number of questions regarding implementation of **Section 49A of the DDO** from the *1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012 (Part B)*.

Please enter information at the relevant part of each section and ensure that it is **submitted** electronically (by completing this template) and in hardcopy, with a signed cover letter from the Chief Executive or, in his / her absence, the Deputy Chief Executive to the Commission **by 31 August 2012**.

In completing this template it is essential to focus on the application of Section 75 and Section 49. This involves progressing the commitments in your equality scheme or disability action plan which should lead to outcomes and impacts in terms of measurable improvement for individuals from the equality categories. Such outcomes and impacts may include changes in public policy, in service provision and/or in any of the areas within your functional remit.

**Name of public authority** (Enter details below)

**Public Prosecution Service (PPS)**

**Equality Officer** (Enter name and contact details below)

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DDO (if different from above):

## **Part A: Section 75 Annual Progress Report 2011 - 2012**

### **Executive Summary**

- What were the key policy / service developments made by the authority during this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations and what outcomes were achieved? **(Enter text below)**

The Public Prosecution Service (PPS) was established in 2005 by the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002 and designated as a public authority for the purposes of S75 compliance in 2006. Since that time, the Service has changed from a centrally based organisation to a regionally based operation in line with the recommendations of the Criminal Justice Review.

Regional offices have been established in Londonderry, known as Foyle Chambers, Belfast (which also serves as the headquarters of the PPS), Ballymena, Lisburn, Omagh and Newry. The provision of regional offices has allowed the Service to better assess and address local issues through increased accessibility to local community and voluntary organisations. Each of these offices has a dedicated Community Liaison Team which provides information to victims and witnesses regarding the progress of their case, arranges their attendance at court and can direct people to appropriate support throughout what can be a stressful process.

Following the devolution of policing and justice matters in April 2010, the PPS was established as a non-ministerial government department. In accordance with Section 42(1) of the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002 the functions of the Director are exercised by him independently of any other person.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires public authorities 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 Act. It must be noted that matters relating to the prosecution of offences are excluded from Section 75 by Section 38 of the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002.

## **Corporate Activity**

As outlined within the PPS's Corporate Plan for the period 2011-2014, incorporating the Annual Business Plan for 2011-12, the PPS continued to implement the agreed objectives for 2011-14 as set out in the Disability Action Plan and Equality Action Plan.

A new PPS Equality Scheme, which sets out how the Service proposes to fulfil its obligations under s.75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, was drafted and issued for consultation between 8 July 2011 and 7 October 2011. Following consideration of the comments made the Equality Scheme was submitted to the Equality Commission for approval. The new scheme was approved by the Equality Commission on 28 March 2012.

The PPS's Corporate Plan also contained a commitment to produce the Equality Scheme by 30 September 2011 and this target was achieved.

The Service has published a detailed Equality Action Plan, based on an audit of key inequalities, as identified by the Service, covering the period to the end of the 2013-14 financial year.

The Service also published its Disability Action Plan (DAP) which covers the three year period to 31 March 2014. The plan sets out a range of actions through which the Service will seek to implement its disability duties in areas such as communication, partnership working and staff training.

A copy of the new Equality Scheme, Action Plan and Disability Action Plan are available on the PPS website at <http://www.ppsni.gov.uk/Equality-5023.html>.

In order to improve the services provided to victims and witnesses the Service participated in the rollout of the Young Witness Referral Scheme. The Service has also carried out a review of information provision to victims and witnesses. The purpose of this review was to produce correspondence in an easily read format, using plainer language and in an empathetic style that is more appropriate. Both of these milestones were achieved during this reporting period. The new/revised letters have been forwarded to PPS ICT Branch so that the necessary changes can be made to the Case Management System.

## **Equality and Diversity Steering Group (EDSG)**

The Service's Equality Officer is a member of the PPS Equality and Diversity Steering Group (EDSG), chaired by the PPS Equality Champion. The EDSG is a group consisting of staff representing key business areas within the PPS. The role of the EDSG is to provide assurances to the Director and Management Board that the PPS complies with all its statutory obligations in relation to equality and diversity and DDA.

## **Section 75 Outcomes / Impacts**

A number of measures within the PPS Equality Action Plan address key inequalities. For example, the review of letters affected a number of Section 75 groups. As a result of this review letters will be in a more easily read, simplified format with a more empathetic style which should contribute to increased satisfaction and confidence of service users.

## **Screening / Consultations**

The Service continued to screen policies for equality and good relations impacts and carried out full equality impact assessments as appropriate. During 2011/12 equality screening exercises resulted in eight policies being screened out. From January 2012 full screening documents were placed on the PPS Website. An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) was carried out on the Recruitment and Use of Panel Counsel. This EQIA issued for consultation on 27 May 2011 and closed on 19 August 2011.

The Service also consulted on a number of policies throughout the year.

## **Training**

Equality and Diversity remained a key training priority for the Service during the year 2011-12.

At the end of this reporting period, 89% of current staff had completed Diversity training (classroom and on-line based training). One staff member attended an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) workshop.

Opportunities were also taken throughout the year to raise awareness of the Service's Section 75 obligations.

Other training provided included Victim and Witnesses' Awareness Seminars provided by Victim Support NI assisted by a volunteer who also runs SAMM (NI) (Support after Murder and Manslaughter) and a Mental Health Seminar (McKelvey Associates).

## **Communication**

The main channel for communicating information to service users on the PPS's Section 75 commitments is the dedicated equality section on the PPS website at <http://www.ppsni.gov.uk/Equality-5023.html>. The site includes background information on our Section 75 commitments, including our Full Equality Scheme. This site was updated regularly and expanded with suitable information, for example, Annual Progress Reports and Equality Screening Updates. This page will continue to be regularly updated.

During May / June 2011 a number of events were held at PPS Headquarters to mark the official launch of several policies, including the PPS Policy on Hate Crime which directly impacts upon certain s.75 groups.

Staff have been updated on progress or developments within the PPS to fulfil the Section 75 obligations and the Disability Discrimination Order 2006 duties for example, through regional Roadshows, the PPS intranet, Business Managers' Forum and Staff Brief.

## **Data Collection and Analysis**

The PPS has continued to develop its research capacity, focusing primarily on the development of internal (staff) and external (stakeholder) surveys such as the Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey and NICS Staff Attitude Survey.

Other data collected included information provided through membership of, and engagement with, a large number of interagency groups and through other meetings with external voluntary and community organisations; complaint follow-up questionnaires; and the monitoring arrangements which have been established to record the numbers and types of outreach events which the PPS has delivered or supported.

## **Information Provision, Access to Information and Services**

The Service has undertaken a number of initiatives / steps during the year to improve access to services; including provision of information in accessible formats, such as the PPS Victim Care Working Group, and Review of Letters to Victims and Witnesses.

## **Complaints**

Complaints regarding compliance with the PPS Equality Scheme are dealt with separately as set out in the Equality Scheme document (see Section 9).

## **Consultation and Engagement**

The Service continued to progress its Community Outreach Strategy during the reporting period and has taken an active role in a wide range of community outreach events such as engagement with statutory, voluntary and community sectors, schools and universities, health professionals and the wider public.

The Service continued to support the 'Employee Support Volunteering' programme through Business in the Community. This involves participating in three events each year.

- What are the main initiatives planned in the coming year to ensure the authority improves outcomes in terms of equality of opportunity and good relations for individuals from the nine categories covered by Section 75?

During 2012/13 the Service will continue to monitor progress on the agreed objectives detailed in the new Equality Scheme, Equality Action Plan for 2011-2014 and the Disability Action Plan (DAP) which covers the three year period to 31 March 2014. Copies of these documents are available on the PPS Website at <http://www.ppsni.gov.uk/Equality-5023.html>.

The Service will carry out a review of court witness expenses during 2012-13. It is recognised that some groups, for example people with certain types of disability may require more support than other

witnesses in order to be able to attend court. Issues such as this will be explored as part of the review and as part of the evaluation of the Victim and Witness Care Unit initiative which is to be piloted for Belfast Magistrates' Court cases from November 2012.

The Service will continue to screen policies for equality and good relations impacts and carry out full equality impact assessments as appropriate.

The Service will continue to prioritise Equality and Diversity training during the year 2012-13.

The PPS website will be updated regularly with suitable information, for example, Annual Progress Reports and equality screening updates. Equality screening updates are now issued quarterly to consultees.

The Service will continue to participate in a series of outreach events and activities and will play an active role in various forums, groups, interagency groups etc.

The Service is planning a series of information events at which disability equality speakers will address key staff within the organisation with the aim of increasing the knowledge and understanding of the attitudinal barriers facing staff and/or service users.

The Service will continue to support the 'Employee Support Volunteering' programme through Business in the Community.

Staff will be updated regularly on progress or developments within the PPS to fulfil the Section 75 obligations and the Disability Discrimination Order 2006 duties through, for example, the regional Roadshows and Staff Brief.

Proposals to implement Victim and Witness Care Units (VWCUs), similar to those in England and Wales, are being piloted for Belfast Magistrates' Court cases from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2012. The purpose of the VWCU concept is to manage the care of victims and witnesses from the date an accused is charged (or reported to PPS), eventually extending to both the Crown and Magistrates' Courts. It is anticipated that the service to victims and witnesses will include:

- Communicating by a victim or witness's preferred means where possible;
- A detailed three stage needs assessment for all victims and witnesses, for example to identify specific support requirements;
- Continuous review of victim and witness needs throughout the case;
- Greater communication and contact with witnesses throughout the prosecution process; and
- An evaluation of the victim / witness's level of satisfaction with the VWCU service.

The Service's Equality and Diversity Steering Group will continue to meet on a regular basis.

The Equality Officer will review and maintain the Service's Section 75 consultation list on an ongoing basis.

### **Planned Policy Development**

A new PPS Policy on Human Trafficking is to be published during Autumn 2012-13. A Policy in relation to prosecuting Youth Offenders has been deferred to 2012-13 due to competing demands on PPS Policy and Information Section. Both policy statements will set out clearly the standards and levels of service which all stakeholders can expect and will be subject to a period of public consultation.

### **New / Revised Equality Schemes**

- Please indicate whether this reporting period applies to a new or revised scheme and (if appropriate) when the scheme was approved?  
**(Enter text below)**

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland approved the PPS's revised Equality Scheme on 28 March 2012 following a period of consultation between 8 July 2011 and 7 October 2011. Consequently, this report refers to the old and new Equality Schemes.

## **Section 1: Strategic Implementation of the Section 75**

### **Duties**

- Please outline evidence of progress made in developing and meeting *equality and good relations objectives*, performance indicators and targets in corporate and annual operating plans during 2011-12.  
**(Enter text below)**

The new Corporate Plan for the period 2011-2014, incorporating the Annual Business Plan for 2011-12 was published in June 2011. This sets out the 4 strategic priorities of the Service. These are:

- Delivering an efficient and effective prosecution service;
- Building the confidence and trust of the community we serve;
- Strengthening our capability to deliver; and
- Building the capability of our people.

Strategic priority 2 “building the confidence and trust of the community we serve” includes objectives to “provide an enhanced service to victims and witnesses” and “to engage effectively with stakeholders and the wider community”. Performance against these objectives / milestones is outlined below:

### **Strategic Priority 2:**

#### **Building the confidence and trust of the community we serve**

<b>2011-12 Objective / Milestone</b>	<b>Target Date for Completion</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>Objective 2.1 To provide an enhanced service to victims and witnesses</b>		
- Rollout of the Young Witness Referral Scheme completed.	In line with agreed timetable	<b><u>Achieved</u></b>
- Review of information provision to victims and witnesses completed.	30 September 2011	<b><u>Achieved</u></b>
- Review of PPS Court Witness	31 March 2012	<b><u>Deferred to</u></b>

payments completed.		<u>2012-13</u>
<b>Objective 2.2</b> <b>To engage effectively with stakeholders and the wider community</b>		
- Equality Scheme produced.	30 September 2011	<u>Achieved</u>
- Achievement of agreed objectives for 2011-14 as set out in the Disability Action Plan and Equality Action Plan.	31 March 2014	<u>Ongoing</u>
	31 March 2014	<u>Ongoing</u>
- Revised arrangements for the Handling of complaints implemented.	31 March 2012	<u>Achieved</u>

### **Equality Scheme / Action Plan**

A new PPS Equality Scheme, which sets out how the Service proposes to fulfil its obligations under s.75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, was drafted and issued for consultation between 8 July 2011 and 7 October 2011. Following consideration of the comments made the Equality Scheme was submitted to the Equality Commission for approval. The new scheme was approved by the Equality Commission on 28 March 2012.

The Service has published a detailed Equality Action Plan, based on an audit of key inequalities, as identified by the Service, covering the period to the end of the 2013-14 financial year. The draft action plan was published for consultation via the PPS website.

The Service has continued to implement the agreed objectives for 2011-14 as set out in the Equality Action Plan.

### **Disability Action Plan**

The Service published its Disability Action Plan (DAP) which covers the three year period to 31 March 2014. The plan sets out a range of actions through which the Service will seek to implement its disability

duties in areas such as communication, partnership working and staff training. The draft DAP was published for consultation via the PPS website.

The Service has continued to implement the agreed objectives for 2011-14 as set out in the Disability Action Plan (see section Part B).

A copy of the new Equality Scheme, Action Plan and Disability Action Plan are available on the PPS website at <http://www.ppsni.gov.uk/Equality-5023.html>

### **Other Corporate Milestones**

In order to improve the services provided to victims and witnesses the Service participated in the rollout of the Young Witness Referral Scheme. The Service has also carried out a review of information provision to victims and witnesses (see page 14). Both of these milestones were achieved during this reporting period. The new/revised letters have been forwarded to PPS ICT Branch so that the necessary changes can be made to the Case Management System.

A planned review of court witness expenses was deferred until 2012-13. This was to allow the Finance Team to focus on the detailed preparatory work needed to join Account NI.

A copy of the PPS's Annual Report and Resource Accounts 2011-12 is available on the PPS Website at <http://www.ppsni.gov.uk/Annual-Reports---5077.html>.

### **Equality and Diversity Steering Group (EDSG)**

The Service's Equality Officer is a member of the PPS Equality and Diversity Steering Group (EDSG), chaired by the PPS Equality Champion. The EDSG is a group consisting of staff representing key business areas within the PPS. The role of the EDSG is to provide assurances to the Director and Management Board that the PPS complies with all its statutory obligations in relation to equality and diversity and DDA.

## **Section 2: Examples of Section 75 Outcomes / Impacts**

Given the renewed focus of Section 75 aiming to achieve more tangible impacts and outcomes and addressing key inequalities; please report in this section how the authority's work has impacted on individuals across the Section 75 categories. Consider narrative in the following structure:

- *Describe* the action measure /section 75 process undertaken.
- *Who* was affected across the Section 75 categories?
- *What impact* it achieved?

One of the measures within the PPS's Equality Action Plan was to review all letters issued by the PPS to victims and witnesses in order to simplify them where possible. Section 75 categories affected included race, disability and age (including younger and older people).

The purpose of this review was to produce correspondence in an easily read format, using plainer language and in an empathetic style that is more appropriate. Special focus has been given to reaching young offenders and those with reduced literacy skills. In doing so, the views of legal and administrative staff and a range of victims' representatives were sought and taken into account. This review is now complete and formal consultation has taken place with other agencies, including Victim Support, Youth Justice Agency and CJINI in order to advise as to the preferred content and to quality assure all final documents. The new/revised letters have been forwarded to PPS ICT Branch so that the necessary changes can be made to the Case Management System. These new/revised letters are to be implemented by the end of December 2012.

As a result of this review letters will be in a more easily read, simplified format with a more empathetic style which should contribute to increased satisfaction and confidence of service users.

In addition one of the key inequalities identified was that advocates appointed to Junior and Senior Counsel Panel were not allocated an equal share of available work. All s.75 categories were potentially affected. Revised procedures were put in place during 2011 for staff responsible for allocation of the briefs. For example, 'mini panels' were established in each region. These arrangements, which are

subject to ongoing monitoring, ensure a fairer distribution of available work.

- Please give examples of changes to policies or practices using **screening or EQIA**, which have resulted in **outcomes or impacts for individuals**. If the change was a result of an EQIA please indicate this and also reference the title of the relevant EQIA.  
**(Enter text below)**

### **Screening**

1. Improved knowledge for PPS staff on the procedures and constraints regarding the use of ICT resources.
2. Improved knowledge for PPS staff on the procedures on how PPS handles various aspects of information security.
3. Improved knowledge for both staff and external contractors on the permitted principles and practices of monitoring of activity on PPS IT systems.
4. Improved knowledge for PPS staff on the department's approach to Information Assurance and Risk by setting out responsibilities, governance procedures and linking the suite of policies and procedures and contribute to Information Assurance.
5. Improved knowledge for PPS Staff on best procurement practice and a better and more effective way of working.
6. Improved knowledge for PPS staff on how the PPS implements the National Security Vetting Policy.
7. Improved knowledge for PPS staff and service users on the Community Outreach Strategy for the PPS which supports the achievement of strategic objectives.
8. Improved knowledge for PPS staff and service users on the arrangements and procedures which the PPS will follow in responding to complaints from members of the public regarding the standard of service provided.

### **EQIA – Recruitment and the Use of Panel counsel**

This EQIA considered the appointment process and the constitution of the two Panels of junior and senior independent Counsel that are called upon to work on PPS cases. It also considered the policy

around the allocation of such available work amongst these Panel members since the Panels were established.

Revised arrangements as set out in the EQIA remain in place. A process has been commenced to constitute new panels of Senior and Junior Counsel from Autumn 2012.

### **Section 75 obligations**

Section 75 obligations have been embedded across all business areas of the PPS and are taken into account at the earliest possible stage of policy development and continue throughout the whole process.

- Please give examples of **outcomes or impacts on individuals** as a result of any **action measures** undertaken as part of your Section 75 action plan:

**(Enter text below)**

Complete measures from the 2011-14 Equality Action Plan are listed below:

Key Inequality identified	Evidenced by	Section 75 Group(s)	Action Measure	Performance Indicator/Outcome	Lead Responsibility & Timescale
1. <b>Communications with victims and witnesses and the information channels used do not always meet their needs</b>	<p>CJINI report on the Care and Treatment of Victims and Witnesses (Chapter 3) December 2011</p> <p>Qualitative feedback from external stakeholders eg Victim Support, NSPCC</p> <p>NI Victims and Witnesses Surveys</p> <p>Engagement with voluntary groups via Community Outreach Programme</p> <p>Statistical information regarding the use of interpreters by PPS in 2010-11</p> <p>Experiences and feedback from PPS staff in contact with victims and witnesses</p>	<p>Race</p> <p>Disability</p> <p>Age (includes younger and older people)</p> <p>and will benefit everyone with limited reading and writing skills</p>	<p>A review of all letters issued by PPS to victims and witnesses will be carried out in order to simplify these where possible</p>	<p>Letters will be in a more easily read, simplified format with a more empathetic style which contributes to increased satisfaction of service users.</p> <p>Increased level of response from youth offenders to youth conferencing invitations at an early stage.</p>	<p><b>Head of Policy and Information Section</b></p> <p>Review completed.</p> <p>Revised letters to be implemented by end December 2012</p>

	The Director of Public Prosecutions gave a commitment to deliver specific training in response to criticism levelled at the Service through various media events	All groups	Training delivered for PPS legal and administrative staff on communicating and engaging with victims and witnesses delivered by external organisations - Victim Support and SAMP NI (Support after Murder and Manslaughter)	Staff will better appreciate the experiences of victims and witnesses going through the criminal justice system. Staff will understand the benefits of a good relationship and consider ways to improve contact, communication and engagement with victims and witnesses in all types of cases.	<b>Head of Policy and Information Section</b>  Completed 29/2/2012
<b>Key Inequality identified</b>	<b>Evidenced by</b>	<b>Section 75 Group(s)</b>	<b>Action Measure</b>	<b>Performance Indicator/Outcome</b>	<b>Lead Responsibility &amp; Timescale</b>
<b>4. Advocates appointed to the current Panels of Junior and Senior Counsel may not all be assigned an appropriate amount of the work available</b>	PPS internal monitoring of in year work distribution (financial and operational)  CJINI report on The Use of Legal Services, June 2011 (para 4.58)  NIAO PPS Audit Results Report 2010-11  Feedback from staff who brief Counsel	All groups	Introduction of revised procedures and clarity of process put in place for staff responsible for the allocation of briefs – mini Panels established in each Region.  Monthly reports presented to Senior Management Group and Management Board re: financial and operational performance.	All Panel Members are offered appropriate briefs which will ensure a fairer distribution of work during the life of a Panel in line with briefing guidance issued to staff	<b>Senior Assistant Director (Finance and Resources)</b>  Introduced during 2011 and will be subject to ongoing monitoring

A copy of the Equality Action Plan is available on the PPS website at <http://www.ppsni.gov.uk/Equality-5023.html>

- Please give examples of **outcomes or impacts on individuals** as a result of any **other Section 75 processes** e.g. consultation or monitoring:  
**(Enter text below)**

The PPS consulted on the following during the period from 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012:

- Draft Disability Action Plan, which issued on 28 March 2011 and closed on 31 May 2011;
- Recruitment and Use of Panel Counsel – Equality Impact Assessment, which issued on 27 May 2011 and closed on 19 August 2011;
- Draft Equality Scheme, which issued on 8 July 2011 and closed on 7 October 2011;
- Draft Equality Action Plan / Community Outreach Strategy / Making a Complaint about the PPS which issued on 31 January 2012 and closed on 20 April 2012.

Copies of these documents are available under the ‘consultation archive’ section of the PPS Website [www.ppsni.gov.uk](http://www.ppsni.gov.uk) .

### **Draft Equality Scheme / Draft Equality Action Plan / Community Outreach Strategy / Making a Complaint about the PPS**

A number of detailed comments were received as part of these consultation exercises. Careful consideration was given to the comments raised and a number were actioned within the documents. A summary of the comments raised together with the PPS’s response is available on the PPS Website.

In addition representatives from the PPS attended an Equality Coalition event on the 28 September 2011 to seek views of their member organisations on the draft new Equality Scheme / proposed action plan. This event allowed the organisations to raise their issues regarding the PPS and some of these were able to be addressed subsequently in the

Action Plan. This event was attended by NIACRO, Disability Action, NICEM, CAJ and Rainbow.

### **Section 3: Screening**

- Please provide an update of new / proposed / revised policies screened during the year.

For those authorities that have started issuing of screening reports in year; this section may be completed in part by appending, to this annual report, a copy of all screening reports issued within the reporting period.

Where screening reports have not been issued, for part or all of the reporting period, please complete the table below:

<b>Title of policy subject to screening</b>	<b>What was the screening decision? E.g. screened in, screened out, mitigation, EQIA...</b>	<b>Were any concerns raised about screening by consultees; including the Commission?</b>	<b>Is policy being subject to EQIA? Yes/No If yes indicate timeline for assessment.</b>
PPS ICT Usage (Internal)	Screened out	None	No
PPS Information Security Incident Reporting	Screened out	None	No
Monitoring at Work	Screened out	None	No
PPS Information Assurance and Risk Policy	Screened out	None	No
Procurement and Purchasing Policy and Strategy	Screened out	None	No

Information Security Vetting Policy	Screened out	None	No
Community Outreach Strategy 2012-14	Screened out	None	No
Making a Complaint about the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland	Screened out	None	No

## **Section 4: Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)**

Please provide an update of policies subject to EQIA during 2011-12, stage 7 EQIA monitoring activities and an indicative EQIA timetable for 2012-13.

- EQIA Timetable: April 2011 - March 2012

Title of Policy EQIA	EQIA Stage at end March 2012 (Steps 1-6)	Outline adjustments to policy intended to benefit individuals and the relevant Section 75 categories due to be affected.
Recruitment and Use of Panel Counsel	Step 5, moving to Step 6	<p>This EQIA considers the appointment process and the constitution of the two Panels of junior and senior independent Counsel that are called upon to work on PPS cases. It also considers the policy around the allocation of such available work amongst these Panel members since the Panels were established.</p> <p>Revised arrangements as set out in the EQIA remain in place. A process has been commenced to constitute new panels of Senior and Junior Counsel from Autumn 2012.</p>

Where the EQIA timetable for 2011-12 (as detailed in the previous annual S75 progress report to the Commission) has not been met, please provide details of the factors responsible for delay and details of the timetable for re-scheduling the EQIA/s in question.

**(Enter text below)**

None scheduled within the 2010/11 Annual Report.

- Ongoing EQIA Monitoring Activities: April 2011- March 2012

Title of EQIA subject to Stage 7 monitoring	Indicate if differential impacts previously identified have reduced or increased	Indicate if adverse impacts previously identified have reduced or increased
NONE APPLICABLE		

Please outline any proposals, arising from the authority’s monitoring for adverse impacts, for revision of the policy to achieve better outcomes the relevant equality groups:

**(Enter text below)**

2012-13 EQIA Timetable

Title of EQIAs due to be commenced during April 2012 – March 2013	Revised or New policy?	Please indicate expected timescale of Decision Making stage i.e. Stage 6
NONE CURRENTLY SCHEDULED		

## **Section 5: Training**

- Please outline training provision during the year associated with the Section 75 Duties / Equality Scheme requirements including types of training provision and conclusions from any training evaluations.  
**(Enter text below)**

### **Equality and Diversity training**

Equality and Diversity remained a key training priority for the Service during 2011-12. PPS staff are civil servants, recruited through the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) process. The Centre for Applied Learning (CAL) is contracted to provide a range of generic training courses to the whole of the NICS.

At the end of this reporting period, 89% of current staff had completed Diversity training. CAL introduced an e-learning training package in March 2011 to enable staff to undertake mandatory 'refresher' training on equality and diversity at 3 yearly intervals, with classroom training remaining in place for new entrants to PPS. The completion rate for those staff identified for on-line training was 90%.

Feedback from the classroom training remains positive. The course itself was assessed by Corporate HR, the Equality Unit in OFMDFM and the Departmental Solicitor's Office.

One staff member attended an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) workshop.

One staff member also attended a Disability seminar run by the Equality Commission.

### **Awareness Raising**

Opportunities were taken throughout the year to raise awareness of the Service's Section 75 obligations. All Section 75 progress reports and guidance are made available to all staff on a designated Equality section of the PPS intranet.

Senior Management within the PPS present regional Roadshows on a regular basis throughout the year which all staff are expected to attend.

The Roadshows are used to keep staff up-to-date with developments within the organisation at a corporate level, for example, to provide updates on community outreach activities. The Roadshows will continue to be a valuable method of communicating with a large number of staff and will be utilised in 2012/13 to raise staff awareness of the new Equality Scheme/Action Plan, Disability Action Plan and disability equality legislation.

## **Corporate Induction**

New members of PPS staff, whether recruited externally or transferring from another NICS department, participate in the Corporate Induction Programme.

Seventeen new entrants attended the Corporate Induction programme during the course of the last year. The programme makes all new staff aware of key policies in relation to areas such as ICT, S75, Human Rights and Freedom of Information.

The main objectives of the training are to provide new staff with:

- The opportunity to network and meet people from across the organisation
- A welcome to the organisation and to inform them how that their role contributes to the PPS
- To provide details of key corporate responsibilities

Attendees continue to comment positively on the programme.

## **Victims and Witnesses Training**

Victim Support NI assisted by a volunteer who also runs SAMM (NI) (Support after Murder and Manslaughter) delivered regional sessions to PPS staff in respect of Victims and Witnesses Awareness. In total 314 staff attended this training.

Evaluation on this training is ongoing with a follow up evaluation planned to measure the effectiveness of the training particularly as to how it has helped staff carry out their roles in dealing with victims and witnesses.

Of the staff that completed the training evaluation to date, 86% reported that they feel that the training objectives were fully met with the remaining 14% indicating that they were partially met. The evaluation sheets received from staff immediately after the training were used to make changes to the programme for future sessions.

Further training is being planned for 2012/13.

### **Mental Health Seminar (McKelvey Associates)**

One member of staff attended this seminar on 19 December 2011.

## **Section 6: Communication**

- Please outline how the authority communicated progress on delivery of the Section 75 Duties during the year and evidence of the impact / success of such activities.  
**(Enter text below)**

### **External Communication**

The main channel for communicating information to service users on the PPS's Section 75 commitments is the dedicated equality section on the PPS website at <http://www.ppsni.gov.uk/Equality-5023.html>.

The site includes background information on our Section 75 commitments, including our Full Equality Scheme and also a summary version; the Annual Progress Reports; Disability Action Plan; Equality and Human Rights Screening Forms and Equality Screening Updates. The site will continue to be updated and expanded with suitable information, for example, the new PPS Equality scheme (including an Easy Read Version), summary of consultation responses, further progress reports, EQIAs and others. Details of our textphone and a specific equality 'mailbox' have been provided in our Equality Scheme, as well as names and direct contact details of the staff responsible within PPS for equality issues. A 'public consultations' area is also available on the website and is used to publicise policy consultations as they issue. Updates to section 75 consultees providing information on all policy screening decisions, forthcoming EQIAs and consultations are issued regularly, with full screening documents being made available on request. From January 2012 full screening documents were also available on the PPS website. Updates will now be issued quarterly in line with the PPS's commitments within the new equality scheme.

The External Communications Strategy recognises the need to develop systems to ensure that information is available in accessible formats, where it is appropriate and practicable to do so. Where necessary, the PPS will also consult with relevant interested parties. The PPS is fully committed to meeting its equality obligations and its communications will be timely, inclusive and informed.

The PPS Section 75 Consultation List was updated as appropriate

throughout the course of the year.

## **Community Outreach**

The PPS Community Outreach Strategy for 2012-2014 was published for consultation in January 2012. The document includes a number of key milestones which the Service will seek to achieve over the next three years in order to deliver on the strategy.

Over the course of 2011-12 there was a series of outreach events and activities. These included:

- Policy launches at PPS Headquarters;
- A PPS presence at cultural events and festivals, including Pride in July 2011 and the Belfast Mela in August 2011;
- Presentations to Victims' and Voluntary Sector Groups, such as Victim Support, Women's Aid, Rape Crisis and the NSPCC;
- Presentations to local District Policing Partnerships;
- Presentations to school groups and students;
- Provision of training to police and other Criminal Justice Organisations;
- Articles in newspapers and journals;
- Television and radio interviews carried by the local media; and
- Keynote speeches by the Director at events held by the Committee on the Administration of Justice, Belfast Solicitors' Association and Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland.

## **Policy Launches**

During May / June 2011 a number of events were held at PPS Headquarters to mark the official launch of several PPS policies, including the policies on hate crime, the prosecution of road traffic offences and the prosecution of offences of rape. Guests at the events included representatives from organisations across the criminal justice system and the voluntary sector.

## **Internal Communication within the PPS**

The staff intranet site has a dedicated equality section. This makes available our Annual Progress Report, Disability Action Plan, Equality Scheme, Section 75 Consultation List and minutes from the Equality and Diversity Steering Group. For staff in policy areas who are involved in screening or equality impact assessment, the site provides other useful information on Section 75 implementation, together with links to other organisations' websites, for example the Equality Commission, Participation Network, and to specific equality publications and good practice guidance. There is also a dedicated area on the staff website for diversity issues. Staff are encouraged to provide ideas for inclusion on the site.

Staff continued to be updated on progress or developments within the PPS to fulfil the Section 75 obligations and the Disability Discrimination Order 2006 duties for example, through regional Roadshows, the PPS intranet and Staff Brief. Other internal communication forums, for example the Business Managers Forum and e-mail are used to communicate with, and seek the views of, staff where issues have a more localised focus.

## **Section 7: Data Collection & Analysis**

- Please outline any systems that were established during the year to supplement available statistical and qualitative research or any research undertaken / commissioned to obtain information on the needs and experiences of individuals from the nine categories covered by Section 75, including the needs and experiences of people with multiple identities.

**(Enter text below)**

### **PPS Research**

The PPS has continued to develop its research capacity, focusing primarily on the development of internal (staff) and external (stakeholder) surveys. The key surveys conducted during 2011/12 included the following:

#### **Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey**

In January 2012, the PPS commissioned questions for inclusion in the Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey, which is carried out by the Central Survey Unit of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). A total of seven questions were included in the survey to gauge public awareness of the PPS and its role. Seven-tenths (70%) of those who had heard of the PPS were very or fairly confident regarding the fairness and impartiality of the Service. This compared with 67.5% in 2011.

The results of the survey are being considered by the Management Board and will help to inform the development of PPS policy.

#### **Staff Survey**

The PPS participate in the NICS Staff Attitude Survey. It provides all members of staff with an opportunity to put forward their views about the PPS, its work and their role within the organisation and the wider Civil Service. The findings of the latest survey, conducted in September 2011, have been made available to all staff.

The results of the latest survey were positive. For just under half of the questions respondents in PPS had higher levels of satisfaction /

agreement than the NICS as a whole. Only one in ten of the questions showed a lower level of satisfaction / agreement in PPS, with the remainder similar to the NICS

The findings are also informing the ongoing development of the PPS Organisational Development Action Plan.

### **PPS Victim and Witness Survey**

As part of the Department of Justice's NI Victim and Witness Survey 2011-12 (NIVAWS), the PPS included a series of questions designed to determine respondents' views on whether the services and information provided by PPS met their needs.

The results of the survey are now available and are being considered in detail by an internal review team which has been set up to examine victim and witness services provided the PPS.

### **PPS Staff Composition: Publication of Statistics**

Information on the gender and community background of PPS staff (as is the case for all Northern Ireland civil servants) up to 31 March 2012 has been forwarded to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

### **Informal Feedback**

PPS policy team staff have developed a wide network of informal contacts through their membership of, and engagement with, a large number of interagency groups and through other meetings with external voluntary and community organisations. These contacts provide qualitative data to the PPS team which is used to inform policy development on an ongoing basis and is shared with other criminal justice partners where appropriate.

### **Complaint Follow-up questionnaire**

The PPS is committed to ensuring that the complaint handling arrangements are effective. Therefore on completion of each complaint case, a short follow-up questionnaire is sent to complainants asking them to provide feedback on the way their complaint was handled.

Monitoring is undertaken in a confidential way. All information provided is held securely and questionnaires can be submitted anonymously. In addition complainants are asked to provide some information about themselves (for example, age and gender). Monitoring of complaints is essential in this regard and can assist the PPS to deliver a better service.

## **Community Outreach**

Monitoring arrangements have been established to record the numbers and types of outreach events which PPS has delivered or supported. These results are analysed on a monthly basis to ensure consistency of approach, to identify particular sectors of the community with which PPS has not engaged and to ensure that the widest possible audience is reached.

- Please outline any use of the Commission's Section 75 Monitoring Guide.  
**(Enter text below)**

The Equality Commission's Section 75 Monitoring Guide is available to staff within the PPS. The publication can also be accessed on the Intranet site.

## **Section 8: Information Provision, Access to Information and Services**

- Please provide details of any initiatives / steps taken during the year, including take up, to improve access to services; including provision of information in accessible formats.  
**(Enter text below)**

### **PPS Victim Care Working Group**

A working group has reviewed various aspects of the services PPS provide to victims and witnesses. A key work area has been the revision of existing correspondence issued by PPS to ensure that all letters are clear, easier to read and address the information needs of victims and witnesses. The working group also commenced a review of the current PPS Victims and Witnesses Policy to bring it up to date with current practice and legislative and policy changes. In examining the policy statement, the working group is also taking on board the various recommendations made by CJINI in their December 2011 report on the services provided to victims and witnesses across the CJSNI. The updated policy document will be published for consultation.

### **Review of Letters to Victims and Witnesses**

Work began towards the end of 2010/11 on a systematic review of the format and content of 55 letters and forms that PPS issues to victims and witnesses. The purpose of this review was to produce correspondence in an easily read format, using plainer language and in an empathetic style that is more appropriate. Special focus has been given to reaching young offenders. In doing so, the views of legal and administrative staff and victims' representatives were sought and taken into account. This review is now complete and formal consultation has taken place with other agencies, including Victim Support, Youth Justice Agency and CJINI in order to advise as to the preferred content and to quality assure all final documents. The new/revised letters have been forwarded to PPS ICT Branch so that the necessary changes can be made to the Case Management System. The new/revised letters are to be implemented by the end of December 2012.

## **Complaints**

In the last year there have been no complaints in relation to access to PPS services.

## **Section 9: Complaints**

- Please identify the number of Section 75 related complaints:
  - received and resolved by the authority (including how this was achieved);
  - which were not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant;
  - which were referred to the Equality Commission.

**(Enter text below)**

No Section 75 complaints were received in the period April 2011 to March 2012.

No complaints were referred to the Equality Commission.

## **Section 10: Consultation and Engagement**

- Please provide details of the measures taken to enhance the level of engagement with *individuals* and representative groups during the year.
- Please outline any use of the Commission's guidance on consulting with and involving children and young people.

**(Enter text below)**

PPS has further developed and prioritised its Community Outreach Strategy during the reporting period. Under the community outreach initiative, senior staff across all regions and business areas undertake a series of events throughout the year in order to provide a clearer understanding of the work of the PPS and the role of the prosecutor via engagement with the statutory, voluntary and community sectors, schools and universities, health professionals and the wider public.

Regional Prosecutors are involved in a wide range of community activity at a local level, having established links with Court User Forums, Community Relations Forums and other community groups, for example groups working with victims of sexual or domestic violence. A senior member of the PPS legal staff visited Down High School to engage in discussion with 6<sup>th</sup> Form pupils about the role of the PPS in the context of the criminal justice system. During May / June 2011 a number of events were held at PPS Headquarters to mark the official launch of several PPS policies, including the policies on hate crime, the prosecution of road traffic offences and the prosecution of offences of rape. The policies were finalised after extensive public consultation and

having considered a wide range of views expressed by representative groups. Guests at the events included representatives from organisations across the criminal justice system and the voluntary sector.

Presentations were made to a number of local District Policing Partnerships, schools and to other organisations within the community/voluntary sector.

Senior Policy and Information Section staff also continued to take an active role in outreach engagement throughout the year. They participate in a wide range of interagency groups, many of which cut across the criminal justice organisations and also include voluntary sector representation, for example Victim Support NI, NIACRO, Barnardos. Policy Section staff represent the Service on, for example, the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) Project Group in addition to other Domestic and Sexual Violence subgroups, all of which include voluntary sector organisations, such as Women's Aid, NSPCC.

Policy and other senior staff have regularly attended a wide range of conferences and events arranged by voluntary and community sector organisations during the year, particularly to hear about issues which impact on the service provided by the PPS. These include events relating to persons within the criminal justice system who present with disabilities, mental health issues, hate crime and racism. One event of this nature was the launch of the campaign "Stand by Me", which aims to tackle hate crime experienced by people with a learning disability, led by Mencap and Victim Support NI.

The Service continues to work closely with the Youth Justice Agency to address issues that affect young offenders.

Where appropriate, senior staff will meet with members of the public to address issues of particular concern. An example would be where someone seeks an explanation for a decision taken in a particular case.

Between April 2011 and March 2012 a total of 407 outreach activities and events were recorded, involving a total staff contribution of nearly 1,700 hours.

The Service continued to support the 'Employee Support Volunteering' programme through Business in the Community. This involves participating in three events each year.

## **Section 11: The Good Relations Duty**

- Please provide details of additional steps taken to implement or progress the good relations duty during the year. Please indicate any findings or expected outcomes from this work.

**(Enter text below)**

The PPS works in partnership with the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service, the Northern Ireland Prison Service, the Probation Board for Northern Ireland, the Youth Justice Agency and the Department of Justice, as part of the Criminal Justice System Northern Ireland.

The Director is a member of the Criminal Justice Board which comprises the Heads of these Services. Its shared purpose is to deliver a criminal justice system which serves and protects the people of Northern Ireland and in which the whole community can have confidence.

The provision of a regionally based service has provided new opportunities for Regional Prosecutors and their senior legal staff to increase direct engagement with community and voluntary groups and local criminal justice partners. 2012-14 Community Outreach Strategy sets out the Service's commitment to strengthen and widen its engagement with all sections of the community. Through the outreach programme, the Service works to increase confidence across the whole community in the PPS as an organisation which provides an independent, fair and effective prosecution service to every section of society.

To this end, the PPS continues to work with its partner agencies such as the police and the NI Courts and Tribunals Service to help ensure that the whole criminal justice process brings perpetrators of hate crime to justice. The procedures set out in the Hate Crime policy (which was published in December 2010) will ensure consistency of approach in prosecuting hate crime and particularly in making the Court aware of its enhanced sentencing powers in relation to offences aggravated by hostility. Effective implementation and monitoring of this policy should

improve the confidence of the affected Section 75 groups and should therefore increase the reporting levels of such incidents.

- Please outline any use of the Commission's Good Relations Guide.  
**(Enter text below)**

The Equality Commission's Good Relations Guide is available within PPS. In addition, it is also available on our Intranet site along with much other reference material on the statutory duties that are placed on public authorities.

### **Section 12: Additional Comments**

- Please provide any additional information/comments.  
**(Enter text below)**

**Part B: 'Disability Duties'**  
**Annual Report 1 April 2011 / 31 March 2012**

**1. How many action measures for this reporting period have been**

4

Fully  
Achieved?

Partially  
Achieved?

3

Not  
Achieved?

2. Please outline the following detail on **all actions that have been fully achieved** in the reporting period.

2 (a) Please highlight what **public life measures** have been achieved to encourage disabled people to participate in public life at National, Regional and Local levels:

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs <sup>1</sup>	Outcomes / Impact <sup>2</sup>
National <sup>3</sup>	The PPS does not have any responsibility for public appointments.		
Regional <sup>4</sup>			
Local <sup>5</sup>			

<sup>1</sup> **Outputs** – defined as act of producing, amount of something produced over a period, processes undertaken to implement the action measure e.g. Undertook 10 training sessions with 100 people at customer service level.

<sup>2</sup> **Outcome / Impact** – what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action? Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training.

<sup>3</sup> **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments

<sup>4</sup> **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level

<sup>5</sup> **Local** : Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.

2(b) What **training action measures** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1			
2			
3			
4			

2(c) What Positive attitudes **action measures** in the area of **Communications** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	A yearly request will be issued to staff to invite them to provide HR with confidential disability declarations.	PEEPs Forms – all staff were circulated and where appropriate advised to complete the form.	Improved data held and increased awareness of individual needs. Increased levels of staff confidence.
2			
3			

4			
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2 (d) What action measures were achieved to ‘**encourage others**’ to promote the two duties:

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Set out our commitment to disability equality in the Corporate and Business Plans, of which this action plan forms a part.	The Corporate Plan 2011-14 and Annual Business Plan 2011-12 include commitments to take forward Equality and DDA requirements.	Key PPS documents take account of, and reinforce commitment to implementation of the disability duties and other requirements under DDA legislation.
2			
3			
4			

2 (e) Please outline **any additional action measures** that were fully achieved other than those listed in the tables above:

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1	The Equality and Diversity Steering Group will monitor delivery of the actions within the	Regular updates are provided to the Management Board and Senior Management Group.	Commitment of senior management / policy makers will ensure a top down

	Disability Action Plan and report to the Management Board/Senior Management Group		approach to embedding the disability duties and encouraging positive attitudes across the organisation.
2	Use will be made of staff Roadshows, core briefs and other regular staff forums to maintain the awareness of disability equality legislation and PPS Disability Action Plan.	Staff are regularly updated via for example the staff brief.	Staff are aware of the continuing need to create and maintain a harmonious working environment and to ensure equality of service provision.
3			

3. Please outline what action measures have been **partly achieved** as follows:

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones <sup>6</sup> / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1				
2				
3				
4				

4. Please outline what **action measures have not been achieved** and the reasons why?

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	Review the Terms of Reference and the membership of the PPS Equality & Diversity Steering Group. PPS staff who have an awareness of issues affecting disabled people through their own experiences or through caring for dependants with disabilities will be encouraged	There was some delay in taking this forward due to the busy schedule of the EDSG. Terms of reference have now been reviewed and a review of membership is underway.

<sup>6</sup> **Milestones** – Please outline what part progress has been made towards the particular measures; even if full output or outcomes/ impact have not been achieved.

	to join the group.	
2	PPS will seek the views of disabled people and their representative organisations within its review of the Court Witness Expenses policy.	Due to resource pressures the SRO suspended this project. It has been deferred to 2012/13.
3	PPS will allocate a proportion of the overall Corporate Training Budget for provision of disability equality related training and will consider the use of external disability organisations to deliver training whether this may be appropriate.	Disability Training was reviewed by members at the last Equality and Diversity Steering Group (EDSG). It is planned that all members of the group will attend Disability Awareness for Frontline Staff training conducted by the Centre of Applied Learning. This is with a view to assessing the effectiveness of the training for other PPS staff. Obviously other options may have to be considered should the CAL training not meet the needs of the organisation.

5. What **monitoring tools** have been put in place to evaluate the degree to which actions have been effective / develop new opportunities for action?

(a) Qualitative

Progress with the implementation of the Disability Action Plan is overseen by the Equality Officer and the Equality and Diversity Steering Group (EDSG) throughout the life of the plan. The EDSG consists of managers from across a wide range of business areas and includes both administrative and legal staff. In addition, volunteer staff with an interest in diversity issues are members. The group is chaired by the

Equality Champion, who is a member of the Management Board. Regular reports are made to both the Senior Management Group and the Management Board.

(b) Quantitative

The PPS is committed to ensuring that the complaint handling arrangements are effective. Therefore on completion of each complaint case, a short follow-up questionnaire is sent to complainants asking them to provide feedback on the way their complaint was handled.

Monitoring is undertaken in a confidential way. All information provided is held securely and questionnaires can be submitted anonymously. In addition complainants are asked to provide some information about themselves (for example, age and gender). Monitoring of complaints is essential in this regard and can assist the PPS to deliver a better service.

6. As a result of monitoring progress against actions has your organisation either:
- made any **revisions** to your plan during the reporting period or
  - taken any **additional steps** to meet the disability duties which were **not outlined in your original** disability action plan / any other changes?

Please delete: No

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

7. Do you intend to make any further **revisions to your plan** in light of your organisation's annual review of the plan? If so, please outline proposed changes?

No

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