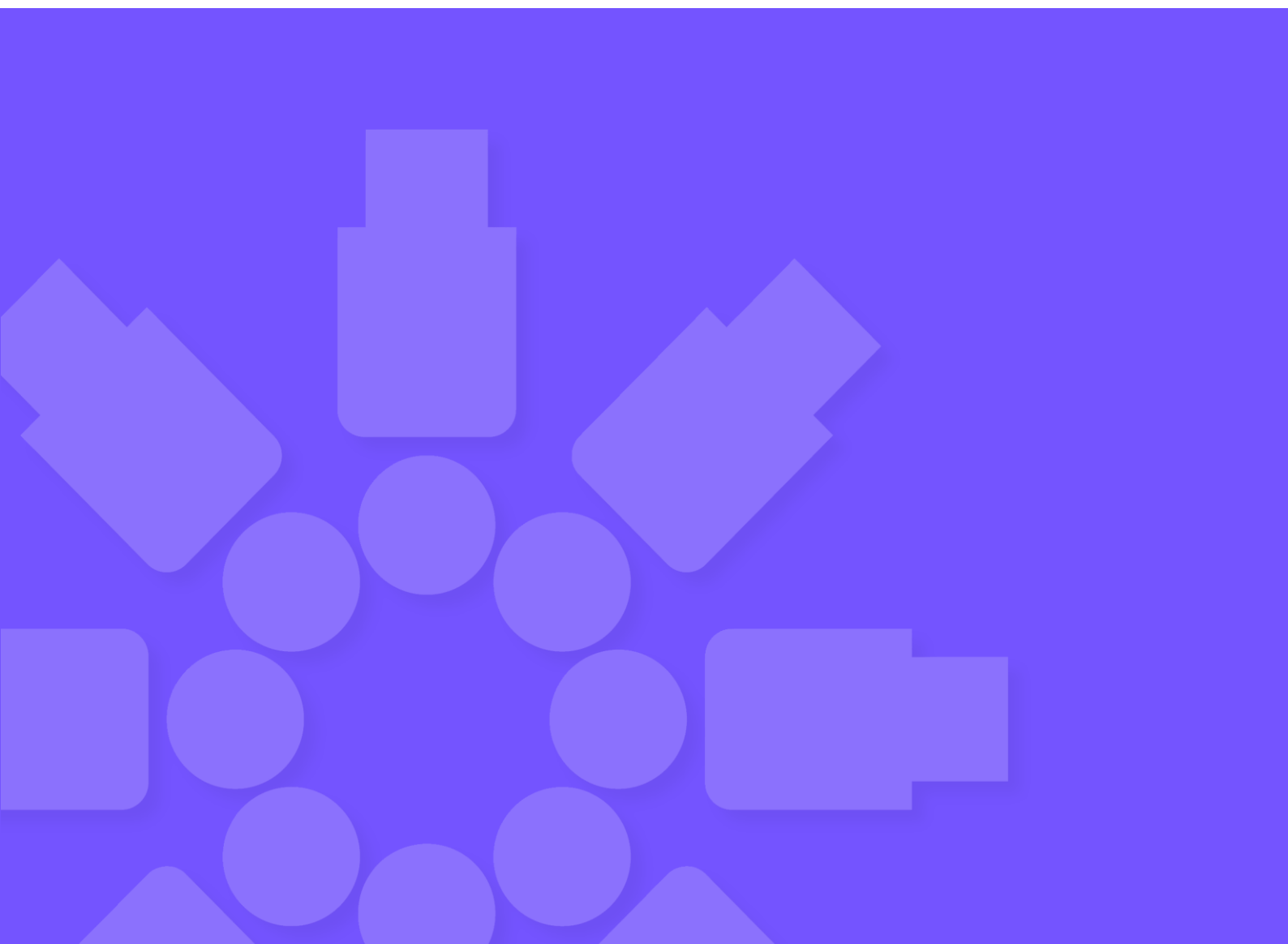


Equality Scheme for Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee



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

Foreword

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.

In our equality scheme ('the Scheme') we set out how Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC) proposes to fulfil its Section 75 statutory duties.

NILGOSC 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 will ensure that the results of its operation are reflected in our corporate plan. We will also monitor compliance with the Scheme on an annual basis and review the Scheme at the end of its first cycle. NILGOSC commits 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.

NILGOSC will develop and deliver a programme of communication and training with the aim of ensuring that all our staff and Committee 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, the Chairperson and Secretary of NILGOSC, 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 opportunities, for those affected by our services and policies, 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 NILGOSC 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.

Lindsay Todd
Chairperson
14 December 2021

David Murphy
Secretary
14 December 2021

.....

¹ See section 1.1 of our Equality Scheme.

Contents

Foreword	2
Contents	3
Chapter 1 - Introduction	4
Chapter 2 - Assessing Compliance with Section 75 Duties	6
Chapter 3 - Our Arrangements for Consulting	9
Chapter 4 - Our Arrangements for Assessing, Monitoring and Publishing the Impact of Policies	13
Chapter 5 - Staff Training	19
Chapter 6 - Our Arrangements for Ensuring and Assessing Public Access to the Information and Services we Provide	22
Chapter 7 - Timetable for Measures we Propose in this Equality Scheme	25
Chapter 8 - Our Complaints Procedure	26
Chapter 9 - Publication of our Equality Scheme	28
Chapter 10 - Review of our Equality Scheme	29
Appendix 1 - Organisational Chart	30
Appendix 2 - Example groups relevant to the Section 75 categories for Northern Ireland purposes	31
Appendix 3 - List of consultees*	32
Appendix 4 - Timetable for measures proposed	35
Appendix 5 - Glossary of terms	36
Appendix 6 - Action Plan 1 April - 31 March 2022	40

Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

- 1.1.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires NILGOSC to comply with two statutory duties:
- 1.1.2 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.
- 1.1.3 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.
- 1.1.4 “Functions” include the “powers and duties” of a public authority². This includes our employment and procurement functions. Please see below under section 1.3, “Who we are and what we do”, for a detailed explanation of our functions.

1.2 How we propose to fulfil the Section 75 duties in relation to the relevant functions of NILGOSC

- 1.2.1 Schedule 9 paragraph 4.(1) of the Act requires NILGOSC 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 statement of our arrangements for fulfilling the Section 75 statutory duties and our plan for their implementation.
- 1.2.2 NILGOSC is committed to the discharge of its Section 75 obligations in all parts of the organisation and 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 the equality scheme can be implemented effectively.

1.3 Who we are and what we do

- 1.3.1 NILGOSC is the administering body for the Local Government Pension Scheme in Northern Ireland. NILGOSC was set up by the Government in April 1950 to operate a pension scheme for the local councils and other similar bodies in Northern Ireland. The pension scheme is a defined benefit scheme, which provides retirement benefits to local government workers on a ‘career average salary’ basis.
- 1.3.2 The pension scheme is managed by a Committee (similar to a board of directors or trustees) which consists of a Chairperson, five members nominated by employers’ organisations, five members nominated by employees’ organisations and two independent members. Committee members are appointed by the Department for
-

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

Communities for a four year term. The Committee meets 9 times per year and its authority to manage the scheme is set out in the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014. The Secretariat is responsible for the day to day administration of the pension scheme and reports to the Committee on a regular basis. In accordance with the Local Government Pension Scheme (Governance) (Amendment) Regulations 2015, the Minister for Communities designated the Committee as the Pension Board for NILGOSC, effective from 1 April 2015. On 20 March 2020, the Minister for Communities confirmed this designation for a further period of five years.

- 1.3.3 The Secretary, as Accounting Officer and Chief Executive, is responsible for the operational management of the organisation and for providing strategic advice to the Committee. The Secretary is not a member of the Committee. NILGOSC has five departments, led by a manager reporting to the Deputy Secretary. These departments are Pensions Development, Pension Services, Investment, Governance and Support Services, and Finance.
- 1.3.4 The Committee has no discretion over the terms of the pension scheme as set out in the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations (the Regulations). The Department for Communities is responsible for the Regulations and will cover in its equality scheme the arrangements for equality impact assessments³ of the Regulations. NILGOSC will provide such information as may be required by the Department in carrying out those equality impact assessments and will co-operate with the Department on equality matters.
- 1.3.5 NILGOSC has two functions:
- i. To administer the Local Government Pension Scheme in compliance with the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 and Local Government Pension Scheme (Governance) (Amendment) Regulations 2015.
 - ii. To manage and maintain a fund out of which the benefits of the scheme are met.
- 1.3.6 In the discharge of its functions, NILGOSC carries out the following key sub-functions:
- The admittance of eligible employing organisations to the Scheme
 - The collection and investment of income
 - The calculation and payment of Scheme benefits
 - Provision of information to all stakeholders.
- 1.3.7 To support and implement the above functions and provision of services, NILGOSC has discretion within a number of policy areas:
- Administration of the Local Government pension scheme within the framework set out in the legislation. A major element of this policy is the method of communication with our stakeholders.
 - Investment of net income
 - Matters relating to employment
 - Procurement of goods and services.

.....

³ See section 4.3 of this equality scheme for a definition of an equality impact assessment.

Chapter 2 - Assessing Compliance with Section 75 Duties

2.1 Our arrangements for assessing our compliance with the Section 75 duties (Schedule 9 para 4. (2) (a))

- 2.1.1 Some of our arrangements for assessing our compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties are outlined in other relevant parts of this equality scheme.
- 2.1.2 NILGOSC will assess over a five year period how each of its policies and business functional areas can contribute to the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations. During this period, NILGOSC will liaise with the Equality Commission and the Community Relations Council, where relevant, with a view to ensuring such progress is maintained. We will respond constructively to proposals from those bodies relating to our compliance with the Section 75 obligations.
- 2.1.3 We monitor all complaints that NILGOSC has not fulfilled its Section 75 statutory obligations and will aim to respond to any complaints within 10 working days, in accordance with our Complaints Procedure (see Chapter 8 below). Should an individual believe they have been directly affected by a failure of NILGOSC to comply with its scheme, they will also be informed of the procedure for bringing such a complaint to the Equality Commission.
- 2.1.4 In addition we have arrangements in place for assessing our compliance, as set out in paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3 below.

2.2 Responsibilities and reporting

- 2.2.1 NILGOSC is committed to the fulfilment of its Section 75 obligations for all of its functions, powers and duties. Statutory responsibility rests with the Committee. Operational responsibility lies with the Secretary and he is responsible for the development, implementation, maintenance and review of administrative arrangements to ensure that the Section 75 duties are complied with, including good practice or guidance issued by the Equality Commission.
- 2.2.2 NILGOSC has specific administrative arrangements for the operation of its equality scheme.
- 2.2.3 Equality issues within NILGOSC will be co-ordinated by the Governance Manager (Equality Officer), who is the first point of contact for the Equality Commission, anyone requiring information regarding the Equality Scheme or making a complaint about the operation of the Scheme.

Post: NILGOSC, Templeton House,
411 Holywood Road, Belfast, BT4 2LP
Phone: (0345) 319 7320
Fax: (0345) 319 7321
Typetalk: 18001 0345 319 7320
Email: equality@nilgosc.org.uk

- 2.2.4 NILGOSC prepares an annual statement on the progress it has made in implementing the arrangements set out in this equality scheme to discharge its Section 75 statutory duties. This Section 75 Annual Equality Statement is prepared by the Equality Officer and presented to the Committee for review. An Annual Section 75 Progress Report is also prepared and submitted to the Equality Commission by 31 August each year.
- 2.2.5 Progress on the delivery of Section 75 statutory duties is also reported in NILGOSC's Annual Report. Copies of NILGOSC's Annual Report and Annual Equality Statements are available on our website at www.nilgosc.org.uk, or by contacting the Equality Officer at the above address.
- 2.2.6 The objectives and action plan relating to Section 75 duties, as outlined in this Scheme, will be reflected in the NILGOSC Corporate Plan. This plan is reviewed annually by NILGOSC to assess performance and set objectives for the forthcoming rolling 3 year period.
- 2.2.7 The implementation of the Corporate Plan is monitored and managed by the Senior Management Team which reviews progress on a quarterly basis as a standing item. The Secretary reports biannually ; to the Committee on the progress made in implementing the Corporate Plan. Progress made on equality issues, including those elements contained in the Corporate Plan, will form part of the annual report to the Equality Commission described at 2.2.4 above.
- 2.2.8 The Secretary, as Chief Executive, is responsible to the Committee for operating the Equality Scheme. The Secretary chairs the Senior Management Team which, in addition to the roles referred to above, considers each of the policies exposed to screening and oversees the impact assessment exercises. The Senior Management Team meets monthly.
- 2.2.9 Employee job descriptions and performance objectives reflect individual contributions to the implementation of the equality scheme, as relevant.

2.3 Action Plan

- 2.3.1 NILGOSC has developed an action plan to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. This action plan is set out in Appendix 6 of this document.
- 2.3.2 The action measures that make up our action plan are designed to be relevant to our functions. They were developed and prioritised, according to resources and external restraints, on the basis of an audit of inequalities completed in February 2018. This audit gathered and analysed information across the Section 75 categories⁴ to identify the inequalities that exist for our service users and those affected by our policies⁵.
- 2.3.3 NILGOSC aims to develop action measures which are specific, measurable, linked to achievable outcomes, realistic and time bound. All our action measures include performance indicators and timescales for their achievement.

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.

- 2.3.4 Our action plans are developed over a three year period, which is in alignment with our corporate and business planning cycle. Implementation of the action measures will continue to be incorporated into our corporate planning process.
- 2.3.5 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 set out in Chapter 10 below.
- 2.3.6 We will monitor our progress on the delivery of our action measures bi-annually and update the action plan as necessary to ensure that it remains effective and relevant to our functions and work. NILGOSC will use consultation responses and continue to gather its own evidence to ensure the action plan remains up-to-date.
- 2.3.7 NILGOSC will inform the Commission of any changes or amendments to its action plan and will also include this information in our Section 75 annual progress report to the Commission. Our Section 75 annual progress report will also incorporate information on progress we have made in implementing our action plans/action measures.
- 2.3.8 Once finalised, our action plan will be available on NILGOSC's website, www.nilgosc.org.uk or by contacting us directly. Should you require the action plan in an alternative format please contact us on the details provided in 2.2.3 above.

Chapter 3 - Our Arrangements for Consulting

- 3.1 NILGOSC has a statutory duty to consult on :
- i. matters to which a duty (S75 (1) or (2)) is likely to be relevant (including details of the persons to be consulted). Schedule 9 para 4.(2)(a)
 - ii. the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted by us on the promotion of equality of opportunity. Schedule 9 para 4.(2)(b)
- 3.2 NILGOSC recognises the importance of consultation throughout all aspects of the implementation of its statutory equality duties. We will consult on our equality scheme, action plan, screening, equality impact assessments and other matters relevant to the Section 75 statutory duties. In addition to consulting on equality issues, NILGOSC may from time to time have a need to consult on strategies, reviews and other documents. The bodies listed at Appendix 3 will be used for all relevant consultations.
- 3.3 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)*').
- 3.4 All 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. We consider our key stakeholders to be the members of the pension scheme, pensioners, deferred members, employing authorities, staff, suppliers and the Department for Communities.
- 3.5 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 consultees' resources, we will take a targeted approach to consultation, where appropriate, 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, sectoral or thematic consultations etc.
- 3.6 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 but are not limited to:
- 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.
- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 NILGOSC will consider the accessibility and format of every method of consultation it uses 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 will 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)*. NILGOSC recognises that members of some of the Section 75 categories may not wish to be publicly identified as belonging to a particular group and we will take this into account when determining the best methods of consultation.
- 3.9 Information will be made available, on request, in alternative formats⁶, in a timely manner, usually within 10 working days. We will ensure that such consultees have equal time to respond.
- 3.10 Specific training is provided to those facilitating consultations to ensure that they have the necessary skills to communicate effectively with consultees.
- 3.11 To ensure effective consultation with consultees⁷ 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:
- i. Issuing a Press Release when our equality scheme is updated for significant changes and approved by the Equality Commission
 - ii. Publication of the revised equality scheme on our website
 - iii. Notification (by email or letter as appropriate) to all consultees following approval by the Equality Commission.
 - iv. Include references to the revised equality scheme and action plan in stakeholder communications, including but not limited to Members' News, Deferred Members' News and Pensioner's News publications.

.....

⁶ See Chapter 6 of our equality scheme for further information on alternative formats of information we provide.

⁷ Please see Appendix 3 for a list of our consultees.

- 3.12 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 commitments⁸.
- 3.13 Where, under these exceptional circumstances, we must implement a policy immediately, as it is beyond NILGOSC's control, we may consult after implementation of the policy, in order to ensure that any impacts of the policy are considered.
- 3.14 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.
- 3.15 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.
- 3.16 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, including consultant reports.
- 3.17 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.
- 3.18 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.

⁸ Please see below at 4.8.1 to 4.8.6 for details on monitoring.

A list of our consultees is included in this equality scheme at Appendix 3. It can also be obtained from our website at www.nilgosc.org.uk or by contacting us directly by:

Post: NILGOSC, Templeton House, 411 Holywood Road, Belfast, BT4 2LP.
Phone: (0345) 319 7320
Fax: (0345) 319 7321
Typetalk: 18001 0345 319 7320
Email: equality@nilgosc.org.uk

- 3.19 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 us using the details above to provide your contact details and have your areas of interest noted, or have your name/details removed or amended. 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

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

- 4.1.1 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'.
- 4.1.2 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 para 9.(2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. NILGOSC will use consultation responses provided by Section 75 representative groups and affected individuals when assessing policies for equality considerations and will continue to gather evidence to inform these decisions.
- 4.1.3 NILGOSC 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)'.

4.2 Screening

- 4.2.1 The purpose of screening is to identify those policies that are likely to have an impact on equality of opportunity and/or good relations.
- 4.2.2 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.

- 4.2.3 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, the Equality Officer, those who implement the policy and staff members from other relevant work areas. Where possible we will include key stakeholders in the screening process.
- 4.2.4 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?
- 4.2.5 In order to answer the screening questions, we gather all relevant information and data, both qualitative and quantitative. This may include consulting relevant organisations on the list of consultees. 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.
- 4.2.6 Completion of screening, taking into account our consideration of the answers to all four screening questions set out above, will lead to one of the following three outcomes:
- i. the policy has been 'screened in' for equality impact assessment
 - ii. the policy has been 'screened out' with mitigation⁹ or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted
 - iii. the policy has been 'screened out' without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.
- 4.2.7 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 equality impact assessment 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 decision maker within NILGOSC.
- 4.2.8 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,
-

⁹ 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.

we will normally subject the policy to an equality impact assessment. This screening decision will be 'signed off' by the appropriate policy decision maker within NILGOSC.

- 4.2.9 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 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 decision maker within NILGOSC.
- 4.2.10 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 www.nilgosc.org.uk or on request. Where consultation has taken place with an organisation as part of the screening process, the consultee will be sent a copy of the approved screening template when published.
- 4.2.11 If a consultee, including the Equality Commission, raises a concern about a screening decision based on supporting evidence, we will review the screening decision.
- 4.2.12 Our screening reports are published quarterly (see below at 4.5).

4.3 Equality impact assessment

- 4.3.1 An equality impact assessment 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 equality impact assessment 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.
- 4.3.2 Once a policy is screened and screening has identified that an equality impact assessment is necessary, we will carry out the equality impact assessment 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.
- 4.3.3 Any equality impact assessment will be subject to consultation at the appropriate stage. (For details see above Chapter 3 "Our Arrangements for Consulting").

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

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

4.5 What we publish

4.5.1 The screening reports we publish quarterly detail:

- All policies screened by NILGOSC over the three month period
- A statement of the aim(s) of the policy/policies to which the assessment relates
- 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;
- Screening decisions, i.e.:
 - i. whether the policy has been 'screened in' for equality impact assessment.
 - ii. whether the policy has been 'screened out' with mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.
 - iii. 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 link to the completed screening template(s) on our website

4.5.2 We publish details of all equality impact assessments.

4.5.3 Equality impact assessment reports are published once the impact assessment has been completed. The 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.

4.6 How we publish the information

- 4.6.1 All information we publish is accessible and can be made available in alternative formats on request¹⁰.

4.7 Where we publish the information

- 4.7.1 The results of our assessments (screening reports and completed templates, the results of equality impact assessments) are available on our website www.nilgosc.org.uk or by contacting the Equality Officer at

Post: NILGOSC, Templeton House, 411 Holywood Road, Belfast, BT4 2LP.
Phone: (0345) 319 7320
Fax: (0345) 319 7321
Typetalk: 18001 0345 319 7320
Email: equality@nilgosc.org.uk

- 4.7.2 In addition to the above, hard copies of screening reports (electronic link or hard copy are made available on request if more suitable for recipients) which include all policies screened over a three month period, are sent directly to consultees who request these on a quarterly basis.
- 4.7.3 We will inform the general public about the availability of this material through our communications as appropriate.

4.8 Our arrangements for monitoring any adverse impact of policies we have adopted on equality of opportunity (Schedule 9 para 4. (2)(c))

- 4.8.1 Monitoring can assist us to deliver a better service and result in 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, NILGOSC follows guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office and the Equality Commission.
- 4.8.2 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.

¹⁰ NILGOSC makes its information accessible as per the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations that came into effect on 23 September 2018.

- 4.8.3 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 primary quantitative and qualitative data across all nine equality categories on an ongoing basis.
 - The collection, collation and analysis of existing relevant secondary sources of quantitative and qualitative data across all nine equality categories on an ongoing basis.
 - A regular review of all data held and information gathered, 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.
- 4.8.4 The functions performed by NILGOSC are limited in scope when compared to many other public bodies and our monitoring arrangements are reflective of both the nature of the organisation and the readiness of the local government workforce to supply the necessary information.
- 4.8.5 If over a two year period monitoring and evaluation shows 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.
- 4.8.6 We review our equality impact assessment monitoring information on an annual basis. Other monitoring information, such as pension scheme member and workforce data is collected and reviewed in line with the corporate planning cycle.

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

- 4.9.1 Schedule 9 para 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:
- Equality impact assessment monitoring information is included as part of our Section 75 annual progress report (see 2.2.4 above) which is available on request. The results of monitoring of adverse impacts of policies adopted (if applicable) will be published on our website www.nilgosc.org.uk.
 - The report on our Audit of Inequalities is publically available on our website www.nilgosc.org.uk or on request. The results of follow up reviews and specific monitoring exercises will also be made available on our website or on request.
 - All information published is accessible and can be made available in alternative formats on request. Please see 4.7.1 above for contact details.

Chapter 5 - Staff Training

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

5.1 Commitment to staff training

- 5.1.1 We recognise that awareness raising and training play a crucial role in the effective implementation of our Section 75 duties. NILGOSC is a small organisation and training on Section 75 duties forms part of the overall organisation training plan and budget.
- 5.1.2 The Chairperson and Secretary wish to positively communicate the commitment of NILGOSC 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 and scheme documentation.

5.2 Training objectives

- 5.2.1 NILGOSC has in place a training programme for its staff which 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 equality impact assessment) 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 equality scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively

5.3 Awareness raising and training arrangements

5.3.1 The following arrangements are in place to ensure all our staff and Committee members are aware of and understand our equality obligations.

- We will develop a summary of this equality scheme and make it available to all staff and Committee Members.
- We will provide access to copies of the full equality scheme for all staff and Committee members; ensuring that any queries or questions of clarification from staff are addressed effectively.
- Staff will receive a briefing on this equality scheme within six months of its approval by the Equality Commission.
- The Section 75 statutory duties form part of the induction training for new staff.
- NILGOSC will ensure that all staff receive training on the organisations Section 75 duties.
- Supervisory staff will receive more detailed training on the Equality Scheme, in particular their role in implementing the Scheme and promoting equality and good relations in the workplace.
- Focused training is provided for those staff who are directly engaged in taking forward the implementation of the equality scheme including but not limited to staff involved in research and data collection, policy development, complaint handling, screening, 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.

5.3.2 Training and awareness raising programmes will, where relevant, be developed in association with the appropriate Section 75 groups and our staff. Specifically, NILGOSC will make use of any training services provided by Disability Action and the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities, together with other relevant organisations, in order to make staff aware of the needs of the individuals these organisations represent.

5.4 Monitoring and evaluation

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

- A record of all staff training undertaken is retained by the Training Officer and reviewed as part of the wider staff training agenda.
- 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. Where necessary, the training programme will be revised to ensure that it remains relevant to the needs of the organisation.
- 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.
- The training process is subject to continuous review and will be revised to incorporate any issues raised during subsequent monitoring reviews or equality impact assessments.

Chapter 6 - Our Arrangements for Ensuring and Assessing Public Access to the Information and Services we Provide

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

6.1 NILGOSC 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.
- Some local newspapers are read predominately by members of one section of the community.

6.3 Access to information

6.3.1 To ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, NILGOSC provides information in alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable. Where the exact request cannot be met we will ensure that a reasonable alternative is provided. Information of the availability of alternative formats is included in all key NILGOSC publications, together with the appropriate contact details for any requests.

6.3.2 Alternative formats may include Braille, audio formats, computer disk, large print or minority languages to meet the needs of those for whom English is not their first language. NILGOSC will liaise with representatives of young people and disability and minority ethnic organisations and takes account of existing and developing good practice.

6.3.3 We will respond to requests for information in alternative formats in a timely manner, usually within 10 working days. If we are unable to provide information requested in an alternative format within this timescale, we will write to the individual advising them of the reason for the delay and provide an indication of when the information will be available.

- 6.3.4 In disseminating information through the media we will seek to advertise in the press where appropriate. Where NILGOSC has chosen to disseminate information through the local press, we will ensure that any press releases and advertisements are accessible to all members of the community.
- 6.3.5 NILGOSC has taken the following steps to ensure that its public documents are as accessible as possible:
- The use of plain English and the avoidance of unnecessary jargon in pension scheme publications.
 - Redesign of website in line with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations that came into effect on 23 September 2018.
 - Consideration of background colour to ensure that it is sufficiently lighter than text colour.
 - Increased font size used for communications specifically targeted at those members of the pension scheme currently drawing a pension, for example our Retirement Guide and Pensioners' News.
 - Availability of all publications via the website to allow for increased magnification and the use of screen reading technology.
- 6.3.6 NILGOSC publishes an Alternative Method of Communications leaflet which is made available to all members on joining the pension scheme through our website and online member portal – *My NILGOSC Pension Online*. The leaflet sets out our routine methods of communication, together with the alternative formats in which the information is also available. The leaflet invites requests for alternative methods of communication, which will be recorded on the pension administration system. Once an alternative communication request has been recorded, future NILGOSC communications will be tailored for the member where it is reasonable to do so.

6.4 Access to services

- 6.4.1 NILGOSC is committed to ensuring that all of its services are fully accessible to everyone in the community across the Section 75 categories. NILGOSC also adheres to the relevant provisions of current anti-discrimination legislation.

6.5 Assessing public access to information and services

- 6.5.1 We continuously monitor access to our information and services, to ensure equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted.

- 6.5.2 We issue an annual stakeholder satisfaction survey to all employing authorities and a sample of pensioners, deferred members and active members of the pension scheme. The survey seeks feedback on the different publications NILGOSC issues, including relevance of information, presentation, layout and ease of understanding. A key focus of the survey is the level of service members have received during the period and the responses are used to improve accessibility of information and service delivery going forward. The results of the annual satisfaction survey are reported in our Annual Report which is available both on our website and on request.
- 6.5.3 Alternative communication requests are recorded on the member record on the pension administration system. This data is monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure that NILGOSC's communications policy remains relevant to the needs of its members.
- 6.5.4 In addition, the outcome of each completed equality impact assessment will be reviewed to help identify any factors which may indicate that our information and/or services are less accessible to any of the Section 75 groups.

Chapter 7 - Timetable for Measures we Propose in this Equality Scheme

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

- 7.1 Appendix 4 sets out our timetable for all measures proposed within this equality scheme. The measures outlined in this timetable will be incorporated into our corporate 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 is listed in the timetable of measures at Appendix 4. For information on these action measures please see Chapter 2 section 2.3.

Chapter 8 - Our Complaints Procedure

(Schedule 9 para 10.)

- 8.1 The Committee has an official complaints procedure which applies to matters relating to the Equality Scheme as well as pension matters. A copy of the complaints procedure is available on our website at www.nilgosc.org.uk and also on request.
- 8.2 General complaints should be referred in the first instance to the appropriate member of staff or Manager. A complaint may be informal or formal and can be made by telephone, email, in writing, or in person. If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, the complaint may be escalated to the Deputy Secretary or Secretary. All complaints are recorded and monitored on NILGOSC's Complaint's Register.
- 8.3 A complaint concerning the operation of the Equality Scheme should be made directly to the Equality Officer at:
- Post: NILGOSC, Templeton House, 411 Holywood Road, Belfast, BT4 2LP
Phone: (0345) 319 7320
Fax: (0345) 319 7321
Typetalk: 18001 0345 319 7320
Email: equality@nilgosc.org.uk
- 8.4 Complaints received regarding the operation of the Equality Scheme will be treated and dealt with as formal complaints. Complaints can be made by telephone, email, in writing, or in person.
- 8.5 Formal complaints will be dealt with by the Secretary and will be answered within ten working days. Where this is not possible, an acknowledgement will be issued within ten working days to advise the complainant of when a reply will be sent.
- 8.6 If an individual remains dissatisfied with the Secretary's response, he/she can write to the Committee, at the same address, setting out the grounds of the complainant and requesting it to reconsider the matter. The Committee will reconsider the complaint and inform the individual, in writing, within 2 months, of its decision. NILGOSC's standard procedure is for formal complaints to be dealt with in writing. Where this is not possible, we are happy to make alternative arrangements to ensure that our Complaints Procedure is accessible to all.
- 8.7 If an individual wishes to make a complaint arising because they are a member of one of the nine Section 75 categories, but does not wish to be identified, a complaint can be made on their behalf by a representative.

- 8.8 Under Schedule 9 paragraph 10 of the Northern Ireland Act, an individual 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.
- 8.9 In any subsequent investigation by the Equality Commission, NILGOSC will co-operate fully, providing access in a timely manner to any relevant documentation that the Equality Commission may require. Similarly, NILGOSC 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.
- 8.10 NILGOSC 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 para 4. (3)(c))

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

Post: NILGOSC, Templeton House, 411 Holywood Road, Belfast, BT4 2LP.
Phone: (0345) 319 7320
Fax: (0345) 319 7321
Typetalk: 18001 0345 319 7320
Email: equality@nilgosc.org.uk

- 9.2 Our equality scheme is also available on our website at www.nilgosc.org.uk

- 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 without e-mail will be notified by letter that the scheme is available on request. We will respond to requests for the equality scheme in alternative formats in a timely manner, usually 10 working days. Where this is not possible, we will notify the individual making the request of a revised timescale together with the reason for the delay.
- Our equality scheme will be made available on request in alternative formats such as Braille, large print, audio formats, computer disk and in minority languages to meet the needs of those not fluent in English, where reasonably practicable. Where the exact request cannot be met we will ensure that a reasonable alternative is provided.
- A summary of our equality scheme will be prepared and circulated to groups and representatives of children and young people (where applicable), people with disabilities and minority ethnic groups. In preparing this summary we will take into consideration the specific issues we have identified in section 6 Access to Information.
- Once approved by the Equality Commission, we will publicise our equality scheme in our routine publications including our Annual Report, Members' News, Deferred Members' News and Pensioners' News.

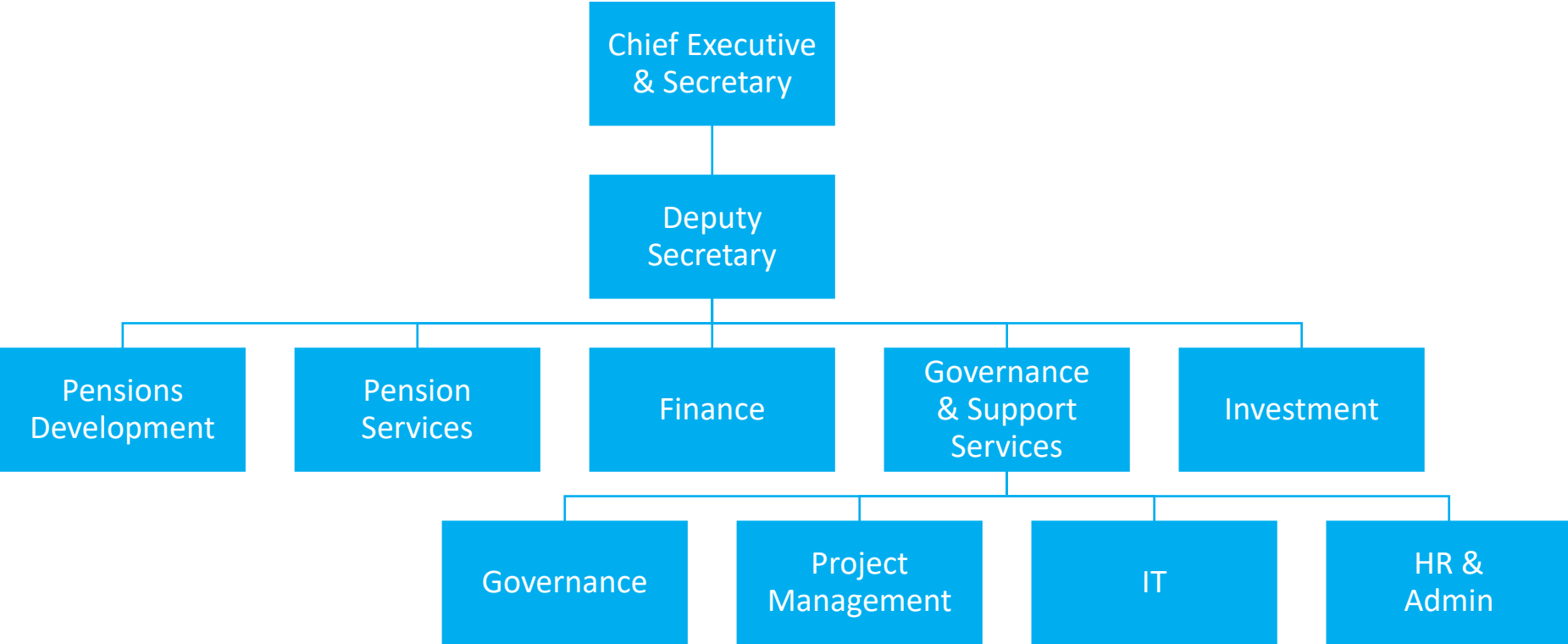
- 9.4 For a list of our stakeholders and consultees please see Appendix 3 of the equality scheme, visit our website at www.nilgosc.org.uk or contact the Equality Officer using the contact details above.

Chapter 10 - Review of our Equality Scheme

(Schedule 9 para 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 within five years of submission of this equality scheme to the Equality Commission, and will be reflected accordingly in our corporate plan.
- 10.2 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.
- 10.3 In undertaking this review we will follow any guidance issued by the Equality Commission and will consider all consultation responses received during the previous five years together with any new evidence that has been gathered. A report of this review will be made public on our website and sent via email to our consultees and the Equality Commission. Hard copies will be made available on request.

Appendix 1 - Organisational Chart



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> ¹¹ . 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 "similar philosophical belief".
Political opinion ¹²	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.

¹¹ 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."

¹² *ibid*

Appendix 3 - List of consultees*

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

NILGOSC has compiled the following list of consultees for all matters with a special emphasis on those who are affected by the pension scheme policies.

The list below is indicative rather than exhaustive and is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it remains relevant to NILGOSC's functions.

Abbey Christian Brothers G.S.	Controlled School's Support Council
Acorn Integrated P.S.	Corran Integrated P.S.
Amey Community Ltd	Council For Catholic Main. Schools
Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Covenanter Residential Association
Apex Housing	Cranmore Integrated PS
Apleona HSG Ltd	Dalriada School
Aquinas Diocesan G.S.	Derry City and Strabane District Council
Arbour Housing Limited	Dominican College, Belfast
Arc21	Dominican College, Portstewart
Ards and North Down Borough Council	Drumlins Integrated P.S.
Ark Housing Association N.I.	Drumragh Integrated College
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council	Education Authority
Armagh Observatory & Planetarium	Enniskillen Integrated P.S.
Arts Council Of N.I.	Enniskillen Royal Grammar School
Assumption Grammar School	Erne Integrated College
Ballymena Academy	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
Bangor Grammar School	Foyle & Londonderry College
Belfast and Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd	Friends School
Belfast Charitable Society	General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland
Belfast City Council	Graham Asset Management Ltd
Belfast High School	Greenwich Leisure Limited
Belfast Metropolitan College	Grove Community Housing Association Ltd
Belfast Royal Academy	Habinteg H.A. (Ulster) Ltd
Blackwater Integrated College	Hazelwood College
Braidside Int. Prim. & Nur.Sch	Hazelwood Integrated P.S.
Bridge Integrated P.S.	Hunterhouse College
Campbell College	Integrated College Dungannon
Capita Managed IT Solutions Ltd	Jordanstown Schools
Causeway Coast and Glens BC	Lagan College
CCEA	Larne Grammar School
Cedar Integrated P.S.	Libraries N.I.
Choice Housing Ireland Ltd	Linen Hall Library
Christian Brothers Gr. School	Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council
City of Derry Airport (Op) Ltd	Livestock & Meat Comm. N.I.
Coleraine Grammar School	Local Government Staff Comm.
Coleraine Harbour Commissioner	Loreto College

Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta	Loreto Grammar School
Connswater Homes Ltd	Loughview Integrated P.S.
Construction Ind. Training Bd.	Lumen Christi College
Maine Integrated P.S.	Royal Belfast Acad. Instit.
Malone College	Royal School, Armagh
Methodist College	Royal School, Dungannon
Mid and East Antrim Borough Council	Rural Housing Association
Mid Ulster District Council	Sacred Heart Grammar School
Middletown Centre For Autism	Saints & Scholars Int. P.S.
Mill Strand Integrated P.S.	Shimna Integrated College
Millennium Forum	Slemish Integrated College
Millennium Integrated P.S.	South Eastern Regional College
Mount Lourdes Grammar School	South Ulster H.A. Ltd
Mourne Heritage Trust	South West College
N.I. Community Relations Council	Southern Regional College
N.I. Co-Ownership H.A.Ltd	Sperrin Integrated College
N.I. Council For Int. Educ.	Spires Integrated P.S.
N.I. Federation Of Housing Associations	Sports Council for Northern Ireland
N.I. Fire & Rescue Service	St Colman's College
N.I. Fishery Harbour Authority	St Columb's College
N.I. Housing Executive	St Dominic's High School
N.I. Local Gov. Association	St Joseph's Grammar School
New-Bridge Integrated College	St Louis Grammar School
Newington Housing Association	St Malachy's College
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council	St Mary's Christian Brothers
North Belfast Housing	St Mary's Grammar School
North Coast Integrated College	St Mary's University College
North West Regional College	St Matthew's Housing Assoc Ltd
Northern Community Leisure Trust	St Michael's College
Northern Ireland Hospice	St Patrick's Academy
Northern Ireland Screen	St Patrick's Grammar School, Armagh
Northern Regional College	St Patrick's Grammar School, Downpatrick
Oakgrove Integrated College	St Ronan's College
Oakwood Integrated P.S.	Strangford College
OCS Group UK Limited	Stranmillis University College
Omagh Integrated P.S.	Strathearn School
Our Lady & St Pat's College	Sullivan Upper School
Our Lady's Grammar School	Thornhill College
Outdoor Recreation N.I.	Tourism NI
Phoenix Integrated Primary School	Translink
Portadown Integrated P.S.	Ulidia Integrated College
Probation Board For N.I.	University Of Ulster
Radius Housing Limited	Victoria College
Rainey Endowed School	Visit Belfast
Rathmore Grammar School	Visit Derry
Roe Valley Integrated P.S.	Wallace High School
Roe Valley Integrated P.S.	Windmill Integrated P.S.

Rowandale Integrated Primary	Woodvale and Shankill Housing Association
Action on Hearing Loss Northern Ireland	Members of the Scheme and Pensioners
Age NI	NIPSA
Committee on the Administration of Justice	Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders
Community Relations Council	Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People
Department for Communities	Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
Disability Action	Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
Equality Commission	Royal National Institute of Blind People Northern Ireland
Focus: The Identity Trust	Staff
GMB North West & Irish Region	UNISON NI
Irish Congress of Trade Unions (NI Committee)	Unite the Union

*Consultee list as at December 2021

Appendix 4 - Timetable for measures proposed

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

Measure	Lead responsibility	Timetable
Section 75 Annual Progress Report (2.2.4)	Equality Officer / Secretary	31 August (annually)
Consultation on draft action plan (2.3.5)	Equality Officer	January 2022
Finalised action plan published (2.3.8)	Equality Officer	April 2022
Arrangements for monitoring progress of action plan in place (2.3.6)	Equality Officer	Bi-annually
Consultation list reviewed and updated (3.20)	Equality Officer	September (annually)
Publication of Screening Reports (4.2.12)	Equality Officer	Quarterly
Publication of equality impact assessment Reports (4.5.3)	Equality Officer	Within two months of completion of equality impact assessment
Review of data and monitoring information held to identify gaps (4.8.3)	Equality Officer/ Senior Management Team	Review in line with timescales detailed in Action Plan
Annual review of EQIA monitoring information (4.8.3)	Equality Officer/ Senior Management Team	Annually in line with timescales in action plan
Development of summary scheme (5.3.1)	Equality Officer	Within one month of approval/revision of Equality Scheme
Development of detailed staff training programme (5.3.1)	Training Officer	Ongoing
Provision of updates and refresher training (5.3.1)	Training Officer	Annually
Evaluation of training (5.4.1)	Training Officer	Annually
Assessing access to information and services (6.5)	Equality Officer/ Senior Management Team	Annually (August)
Communication of equality scheme (9.3)	Equality Officer	Ongoing
Notification to consultees (9.3)	Equality Officer	Within two months of approval/revision of Equality Scheme
Review of equality scheme (10.1)	Equality Officer	Within five years of submission of Equality 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.

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.

Committee

The NILGOSC pension scheme is managed by a Committee (similar to a board of directors or trustees) which consists of a Chairperson, five members nominated by employers' organisations, five members nominated by employees' organisations and two independent members.

Consultation

In the context of Section 75, consultation is the process of asking those affected by a policy (i.e., 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.

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'.

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 Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC)

NILGOSC is the administering body for the Local Government Pension Scheme in Northern Ireland. NILGOSC was set up by the Government in April 1950 to operate a pension scheme for the local councils and other similar bodies in Northern Ireland.

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.

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.

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 1 April - 31 March 2022

Ref	Identified Inequality/ Area	Objectives/ Intended Impact	Action Required	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1	Staff Training (All 9 groups)	To improve staff awareness and skills of equality related issues	Deliver Equality and Good Relations individual e-learning training to new Committee Members	100% of new Committee members received training	Within 2 months of taking up post
2			Deliver Equality and Good Relations individual e-learning training to all new and existing staff	100% of staff completed module	New staff – within 1 month of taking up post Existing staff – annually
3			Deliver organisation-wide training to all staff on statutory equality obligations and NILGOSC's equality-related policies, including raising equality related concerns	100% of staff received training	31 Dec 2021
4	Potential barriers to members with alternative communication needs, particularly for people with a disability and/or whose first language is not English	Access to information is improved for people with a disability or whose first language is not English	Ensure NILGOSC's communications are clear and easy to understand, accessible and available in alternative formats	Number of alternative communication requests received and successfully completed Number of complaints received in relation to alternative communications	31 Dec 2021
5		Increase in number of requests for alternative communications	Ensure NILGOSC's website is accessible for people from	New website complies with the Public Sector Bodies (Website	30 Jun 21

Ref	Identified Inequality/ Area	Objectives/ Intended Impact	Action Required	Performance Indicator	Timescale
			s75 groups, including those with a disability	& Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018	
6	Underrepresentation of applicants and staff employed with disabilities*	To increase the number of applicants and staff employed from underrepresented groups	Positive targeting of underrepresented groups through job advertising	Increase in % of applicants applying and employed from underrepresented groups	31 Dec 21
7			Implement recruitment and selection actions in Disability Action Plan		31 Dec 21
8	Underrepresentation of males at management level in the workforce		Positive targeting of underrepresented groups through job advertising		31 Dec 21
9	Working/Office environment	To promote a positive working environment in NILGOSC for all existing and future staff	Issue an Equality and Good Relations survey to staff on the workplace environment/culture, following the refurbishment and review feedback	Positive/improved responses in staff survey	30 Sept 2021

Ref	Identified Inequality/ Area	Objectives/ Intended Impact	Action Required	Performance Indicator	Timescale
10		Improve accessibility of Templeton House for staff and the public	Implement recommendations from the accessibility audit report during the planned refurbishment, as considered appropriate	Refurbishment completed	In line with refurb project plan
11	Policy – Monitoring & Review	Keep equality related policies up-to-date and monitor and review the impact of positive action	Consult and Publish the updated Disability Action Plan	Plan issued for consultation and final version published and issued to consultees	31 August 2021
12			Undertake audit of inequalities to inform new Equality Action Plan	Audit of Inequalities completed and Action Plan agreed	31 Dec 2021
13			Review of Equality Scheme	Equality Scheme reviewed and published	31 Dec 2021

* Underrepresented by reference to the entire working population but not significantly different from local government and employer workforce statistics.