



Department of
Finance

An Roinn
Airgeadais

www.finance-ni.gov.uk



Department of Finance Section 75 Action Plan Disability Action Plan (2018-2023)

Consultation Document



March 2018

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1. INTRODUCTION



The Department of Finance looks after the financial business on behalf of the Executive.

It also provides a support service to the other departments.

The types of things the Department of Finance does includes:

- Monitoring the money spent in all of the Departments;
- Providing Human Resource services and policies to help manage the Government;
- Runs services including training, finance, ICT (computer support), property management, legal and statistical services, and procurement;
- Helps to make changes to improve how the public sector works;
- Runs NIDirect website;
- Manages Land and Property Services which does rates assessment, billing for rates, information around land and conveyancing etc.

The Department also runs the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

NISRA gathers data to help in policy making and research.

It also manages the system for recording births, adoptions, deaths and marriages and civil partnerships.





The Department of Finance have to send a report to the Equality Commission to show that we work in a fair way for everyone to promote equality and good relations for all areas of society.

The department carried out a review in 2017 and from this, has created a new “Section 75 Action Plan” for 2018-2023.

This is to make sure the Department does not treat any disadvantaged or vulnerable people (Section 75 groups) unfairly.

In addition, we decided to review our Disability Action Plan for 2018-2023.



The Disability Action Plan shows how we must make sure we promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage disabled people to take part in public life.

This document tells you about the changes we hope to make to these plans for 2018.



The Department of Finance will work towards the targets in these plans. Plans will be updated as new priorities and targets are approved by a new Minister and Executive.

All of the Government’s departments have to deliver the “Programme for Government” which is currently in draft format. This is a document which sets out what the Government wants to achieve for Northern Ireland in the next few years.



Once you read this document, we want to know what you think about our plans.

There are different ways you can tell us what you think.

You can write to us:

Strategic Equality Branch
Department of Finance
Room 25
Dundonald House
Upper Newtonards Road
Belfast
BT4 3SB



You can call us:

028 9052 0836



E-mail: equality@finance-ni.gov.uk





A paper copy of the consultation document, or a copy in a different format, can be sent to you if you ask.

You can also call us:

Making a call from a textphone: Dial 18001 + 028 90 520836

Making a call from a telephone: Dial 18002 + 028 90 520836



Or you can use Text-Relay:

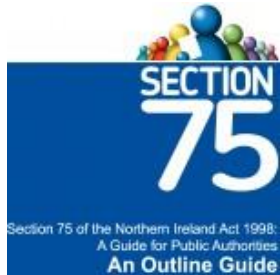
Text Relay Services – dial 0870 240 51 52 from a telephone.



Consultation on the review will finish on:

Friday 15th June 2018

2. Section 75



Section 75 means that public organisations have to be fair and be open to everyone.

This means that they must promote equality of opportunity to people of different:

- Religion
- Political Opinions
- Race
- Age
- Marital Status
- Sexuality

They also must promote equality of opportunity to:

- Men & women
- People with a disability and without a disability
- People who have dependants (people they care for) and people who do not have dependants.



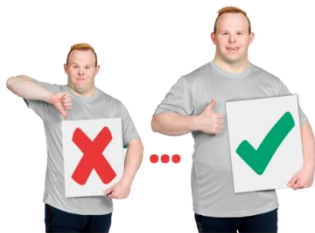
As well as this, they must try to get different groups to come together.

The Equality Commission has asked the Department of Finance to look at how they plan to make things better by having a “Section 75 Action Plan”.



We looked at all of the different things the Department does. We then checked to see if there was anything we needed to do. We want to make sure we are doing everything we can to be open and fair to all groups.

There has been a lot of work done to make things better, but we still need to make changes. To help us do this, we have updated our action plan for 2018-2023.



The Plan sets out;







- What is the problem
- Who is affected by this (Section 75 category);
- What we are going to do;
- How it links into the Draft Programme for Government;
- How we will know if things have changed;
- And when we will do it.


The next section is a summary of the actions we still need to take.


3. Section 75 Action Plan 2018-23

The following are changes we will make to internal processes:


The Section 75 Group.	What is the problem.	What we are going to do?	Link to programme for government	How we will know if things have changed.	When will this happen
Religious beliefs 	There are some jobs which do not have a fair split of people from different religious beliefs	The department will encourage people from these backgrounds to apply for jobs within the civil service.	Outcome 3: we have a more equal society.	There will be a fair mix of people from different religious backgrounds in the workplace.	Ongoing.
Men and Women 	There are some jobs which do not have a fair split between men and women.	The Department will encourage men or women to apply for jobs where the split is not fair.	Outcome 3: we have a more equal society.	There will be a fair mix of men and women in the workplace.	Ongoing.


The Section 75 Group.	What is the problem.	What we are going to do?	Link to programme for government	How we will know if things have changed.	When will this happen
Racial Group 	There are some jobs which do not have a fair split of people from different racial groups.	The department will encourage people from these backgrounds to apply for jobs within the civil service.	Outcome 3: we have a more equal society.	There will be a fair mix of people from different racial groups in the workplace.	Ongoing.
Changing Gender 	There is not enough support for staff who are changing their gender; for example from female to male.	Develop guidance around this for managers and staff.	Outcome 3: We have a more equal society.	A support document will be in place to help managers support their staff and let staff know what support they can expect.	By 31 st March 2019.


The Section 75 Group.	What is the problem.	What we are going to do?	Link to programme for government	How we will know if things have changed.	When will this happen
<p>Lack of information about people with disabilities, different racial backgrounds, people who have dependants and sexuality.</p> 	<p>We do not have enough information for people with a disability, people of different racial backgrounds, people who have dependants (people they care for) and sexuality.</p>	<p>We will gather more information from staff.</p>	<p>Outcome 3: We have a more equal society.</p>	<p>We will have more information about the staff we employ and we will be able to support them better.</p>	<p>By 31st March 2019.</p>



The Section 75 Group.	What is the problem.	What we are going to do?	Link to programme for government	How we will know if things have changed.	When will this happen
<p>Young people and the unemployed</p> 	<p>People who have been out of work for a long time and school leavers from all sections of the community are struggling to find work.</p>	<p>We use Recruitment Agencies to fill temporary administrative roles. We will ensure they fill 15% of these roles with people who have been out of work for a long time or leaving education.</p>	<p>Outcome 3: We have a more equal society.</p> <p>Outcome 6: We have more people working in better jobs.</p>	<p>15% of Administration Assistant and Administration Officer job roles recruited from the long-term unemployed and those leaving education.</p>	<p>By 31st March each year.</p>


The following are changes we will make to our interactions with customers:

The Section 75 Group	What is the problem.	What we are going to do?	Link to programme for government	How we will know if things have changed.	When will this happen
<p>Disabilities or older people</p> 	<p>We need to improve online access to services for people who have a disability or are older.</p>	<p>The Go ON NI programme has a number of programmes with the Libraries NI and other partners to help get people using online Government resources.</p>	<p>Outcome 11: We connect people and opportunities through our infrastructure.</p>	<p>Increased number of older people and people with disabilities using online services.</p>	<p>By 31st March each year.</p>

The Section 75 Group	What is the problem.	What we are going to do?	Link to programme for government	How we will know if things have changed.	When will this happen
<p>Disabilities or Older people</p> 	<p>We need to improve partnerships to deliver training on getting online to older people and people who have a disability.</p>	<p>Improving partnerships with organisations who help to deliver bespoke training, awareness and information sessions to the public. Continuing working with Belfast City Council and other organisations.</p>	<p>Outcome 11: We connect people and opportunities through our infrastructure.</p>	<p>Steering Group Meetings 4 times a year. Number of people trained through this group.</p>	<p>By 31st March 2019.</p>

The Section 75 Group.	What is the problem.	What we are going to do?	Link to programme for government	How we will know if things have changed.	When will this happen
<p>Disabled people or Carers</p> 	<p>Many Disabled people struggle to access online services and support.</p>	<p>We will deliver the Connectability Programme to provide computer sessions for those with a mental or physical disability or to those caring for a disabled person.</p>	<p>Outcome 11: We connect people and opportunities through our infrastructure.</p> <p>Outcome 8: We care for others and we help those in need.</p>	<p>Evaluation of IT sessions from people who did them.</p>	<p>By 31st March 2019.</p>

The Section 75 Group.	What is the problem.	What we are going to do?	Link to programme for government	How we will know if things have changed.	When will this happen
<p>Disability</p> 	<p>We need to increase accessibility in Stormont Estate Play park.</p>	<p>A new inclusive play park will be built at Stormont Estate.</p>	<p>Outcome 9: We are a shared and welcoming society that respects diversity.</p>	<p>We will have a play park that is suitable for children of all abilities.</p>	<p>By 31st December 2018.</p>
<p>Marital status, age, disabled people and people with dependents.</p> 	<p>We need to make sure benefits go to the people who need them most.</p>	<p>There will be support for those who may have difficulty using computers to access benefits.</p>	<p>Outcome 8: We care for others and we help those in need.</p>	<p>More people getting benefits who need them.</p>	<p>By 31st March each year.</p>

The Section 75 Group.	What is the problem.	What we are going to do?	Link to programme for government	How we will know if things have changed.	When will this happen
<p>Marital status</p> 	<p>The law in NI treats unmarried fathers differently from married and unmarried mothers.</p>	<p>We will consider changes to current laws.</p>	<p>Outcome 12: We give our children and young people the best start in life.</p>	<p>The government will need to follow recommendations on parent/child contact emerging from September 2017.</p>	<p>TBC – changes are still to be made.</p>

4. Disability Action Plan



The Disability Discrimination Act says that when carrying out its work, the Department of Finance must:

- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encourage disabled people to take part in public life.



The Department of Finance also has to give the Equality Commission a copy of its Disability Action Plan, showing how it plans to do this.

There have been a number of Disability Action Plans submitted in the past which can be found on the website:

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/dof-departmental-equality-scheme>



All of these plans have to be reviewed to see how much progress has been made and can be accessed on the website:

[Review of Disability Action Plan - 2013.](#)



When updating our Disability Action Plan;

- We looked at all of the different things the Department has been doing,
- If this has made any difference
- And how we could do things better.



There has been a lot of work carried out to improve how we treat disabled people but there are still changes which need to be made. To help us do this, we have updated our action plan for 2018-2023.



The Plan sets out;



- What we are going to do?
- How we will know if things have changed?
- By when?
- What will have changed as a result?






We have identified things to be put into our Disability Action Plan.

This is a summary of what we hope to change:

	What we are going to do?	How we will know if things have changed?	By when?	What will have changed as a result?
Awareness Raising and Training				
	A Diversity Advisory Group will work with people with disabilities to raise awareness of disability e.g. showcase and promote the positive contribution of our staff with disabilities.	Promotion articles/activities. Staff survey results.	31 st March 2019.	Staff will have more positive attitudes towards disabled people within the department.
	The Civil Service's Diversity Training which is called "Diversity Now" will be completed by all new staff (this will be replaced by a new course called 'Unconscious Bias' once a review is complete). Front-line staff will be trained to deal with customers with a disability.	We will know by the number of new staff trained and through customer feedback/surveys	We will train staff within 4 months of them starting work.	All new staff will know about the NICS Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy. Staff will understand their responsibilities, including the disability duties.

	What we are going to do?	How we will know if things have changed?	By when?	What will have changed as a result?
	<p>There will be a special training course on 'Reasonable Adjustments' for managers and those involved in recruitment.</p>	<p>We will know by the number of staff trained.</p> <p>We will get feedback from staff/applicants on the reasonable adjustments process.</p>	<p>'Reasonable Adjustments' training will be available in 2018/19.</p>	<p>Staff will have positive attitudes towards people with a disability – employees, customers, job applicants.</p>
	<p>Staff will be provided with advice and support on health related matters, including promoting positive mental health.</p>	<p>We will publish the NICS Well Newsletter 'Well Times'.</p> <p>We will hold a Conference for Well Champions.</p>	<p>We will produce a newsletter 4 times a year.</p> <p>We will hold a conference once a year.</p>	<p>There will be an increased awareness of health conditions and how to manage them.</p>

	What we are going to do?	How we will know if things have changed?	By when?	What will have changed as a result?
Recruitment and Development				
	<p>We will promote and develop the work experience programme for people with disabilities.</p> <p>This programme provides meaningful placements for people with disabilities with a wide range of disability organisations.</p>	<p>We will know by the number of people involved in the programme.</p> <p>We will know by the number of disability organisations who are involved.</p> <p>We will ask for feedback from participants and managers who are supporting placements.</p>	Ongoing every year	<p>More disabled people will have applied for jobs in the Civil Service.</p> <p>There will be more positive attitudes towards people with a disability within the Department of Finance.</p>

	What we are going to do?	How we will know if things have changed?	By when?	What will have changed as a result?
Participation and Engagement				
	<p>We will complete a plan for each new public appointment that will allow for diversity and encourage applications from disabled people.</p> <p>We will take on board any recommendations or actions from the diversity plan for public appointments.</p>	<p>We will know by the number of people with a disability who apply for and are appointed to public appointments.</p>	<p>Plan to be completed before the advert is created to advertise the posts.</p>	<p>More disabled people will have applied for public appointments.</p>
	<p>Awareness and practical programmes to help people get online will be specifically targeted at disabled people and their carers.</p> <p>These will be developed with disability organisations.</p>	<p>We will know this by the number of activities we plan. We will check to see how these are going and record how people feel about these.</p>	<p>Ongoing every year</p>	<p>We will encourage people with disabilities to make more use of online services.</p>

5. Freedom of Information Act (2000) – Confidentiality of Consultations



The Department will publish a summary of responses at the end of this consultation process.

A copy of what you have said, and all other responses to the consultation, may be given to anyone who asks for them.

The Department can only refuse to give information in “exceptional circumstances”.

Before you send us your Questionnaire, please read the paragraphs below...



The Freedom of Information Act gives everyone a right of access to any information held by a “public authority”. In this case, this would be the Department of Finance.

This right of access to information includes information provided in response to a consultation.

This means that if someone asks for it, your response to the consultation will most likely be given to the person asking for it.



However, it does have the responsibility to decide if information like your name and address should be made public or be treated as confidential.

For further information about confidentiality of responses please contact the Information Commissioner's Office:

Tel. 028 9027 8757 or 0303 123 1114

(or see website at: <http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk>)



This document has been produced by adults with learning disabilities on the CAN Plus Easy Read Committee.

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