# Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order (DDO) 2006

Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI)

# ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2012 - 2013



## EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Public Authority 2012 – 2013 Annual Progress Report on:

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

This report template includes a number of self assessment questions regarding implementation of the **Section 75 statutory duties** from *1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013* (**Part A**).

This template also includes a number of questions regarding implementation of **Section 49A of the DDO** from the *1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 (Part B).* 

Please enter information at the relevant part of each section and ensure that it is **submitted** electronically (by completing this template) and in hardcopy, with a signed cover letter from the Chief Executive or, in his / her absence, the Deputy Chief Executive to the Commission **by 31 August 2013**.

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

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

Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI)

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

S75: Miss Linda M. Gogarty, Equality Officer, AFBI HR Unit, AFB I HQ, 18a Newforge Lane, Belfast, BT9 5PX. Tel No: 028 9025 5055 E-mail: Linda.Gogarty@afbini.gov.uk

DDO (if different from above): as above

# Part A: Section 75 Annual Progress Report 2012 - 2013

#### **Executive Summary**

- What were the key policy / service developments made by the authority during this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations and what outcomes were achieved?
- AFBI's first Equality Scheme:
  - was out for formal consultation to consultees, including S75 representative groups and AFBI staff, during Aug-Oct;
  - was submitted to the ECNI on 31-Oct-2012 and was approved on 27-Feb-2013;
  - was made available to staff via the Intranet;
  - o was published on the AFBI website;
  - was implemented in the AFBI Business Plan.
- Continual compliance with equal opportunity duties in AFBI procedures
- Establishment of Consultee list
- Completion and submission of reports for ECNI
  - Annual Fair Employment Monitoring Report (2012)
  - Annual Progress Report (11/12)
- Stress in the Workplace (SiW) Initiative initiated in conjunction with HSENI & NIPSA; 83% of AFBI staff participated in the survey; a draft report has been compiled by the HSENI; a policy and action plan have been developed by the SiW Steering Group. The survey raised some equality issues which will be addressed in an improvement plan.
- Morale & Motivation Survey launched (Nov 12); 53% of staff participated in the survey
- Equality section on the AFBI Intranet
  - Regularly maintained and updated to raise staff awareness of equality issues, updates
  - Equality events/issues promoted via the Intranet e.g. OHS information (disability issues; ECNI newsletters & reports (e.g. Do You Mean Me); changes to Disability legislation re Autism Act, SoMe website; help for domestic abuse.
- Equality section developed on AFBI internet website
- Inclusion of Equality news in quarterly AFBI Staff Newsletter
- Formal Equality Training attended by Equality Unit staff e.g. Recruiting Fairly, Bullying & Harassment at Work

- Equality events & forums (seminars, talks, workshops) attended by Equality staff, e.g. DARD Equality Steering Group, WELL programme, Getting a Fair Share, Good Practice on Trans Issues, Gender Equality, Talent Management through Inclusion – links developed and information dissipated to others
- Equality Awareness training provided to staff through AFBI Corporate Induction programme and Criteria Based Interview training programme
- Training provided to Harassment Officers (Sept 2012)
- Participation in Consultation/EQIA, responses provided to OFMDFM, DARD, LMC
- Equality networking links with ECNI, NICS departments and other organizations strengthened and developed
- Equality screening for eligibility criteria in recruitment (internal, external, temporary promotions). Suggestions and advice acted on by stakeholders where feasible.
- Ensuring recruitment panels are balanced re gender and community background
- Welcoming statement for RC applicants remained for external recruitment, evidence of increase in number of RC applicants
- Internal policies equality screened, no EQIAs required
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups guidance approved by SMT and placed on intranet for staff information and adherence. Has proved beneficial for staff involved in public events (e.g. zoo days, Balmoral show) and surveys
- Value of Equality Unit evident in the increased contact by staff to the unit for guidance and advice
- Promotion of facilities offered by staff Help sources, e.g. Charity for Civil Servants, Welfare, NICS WELL
- Regular updates on equality issues provided to Senior Management
- Staff engagement with S75 groups through various AFBI events and links, e.g. cross-border links (TEAGASC), EU (Dairyman conference), international visits and visitors; public/children events (Balmoral Show, Zoo days); STEM events, work/study placements; disability awareness through charity fundraising (cancer, autism)

- What are the main initiatives planned in the coming year to ensure the authority improves outcomes in terms of equality of opportunity and good relations for individuals from the nine categories covered by Section 75?
- Completion and submission of Article 55 Review (09-11)
- Completion and submission of reports for ECNI
  - Annual Fair Employment Monitoring Report (2013)
  - Annual Progress Report (12/13)
- Implementation of Equality Scheme
- Audit of Inequalities and Action Plan
- Diversity training for staff
- Review of internal procedures with a focus on equality of opportunity
- Maintenance & update of community background confidential records
- Continue formal equality screening for recruitment (job description, eligibility criteria)
- Regular progress reports to EMT/AFBI Board, including reports on Equality Scheme progress.
- Continue maintenance and update of equality section on Intranet and Internet
- Continue to promote equality issues through News Articles
- Continue to develop and establish links with ECNI, DARD and other bodies
- Update of Consultee list

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

• Please indicate whether this reporting period applies to a new or revised scheme and (if appropriate) when the scheme was approved?

AFBI submitted its first Equality Scheme to the ECNI on 31-Oct-2012. The Scheme was approved on 27-Feb-2013

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

• Please outline evidence of progress made in developing and meeting equality and good relations objectives, performance indicators and targets in corporate and annual operating plans during 2012-13.

Progress has been as indicated in S75 Executive Summary above.

However, the following should be noted:

- Since the inclusion of the Welcome Statement in AFBI's external recruitment adverts, the ratio of Roman Catholic : Protestant applicants has increased from approximately 1:1 to 3:2;
- Eligibility criteria for posts (external and internal) has been revised as necessary to avoid potential adverse impact on S75 groups, e.g. equivalent non-UK qualifications;
- Increased staff engagement with Equality Unit for advice;
- Increased hits to the equality intranet section since the publication of the Equality Scheme; sections visited most include those relating to staff equality responsibilities, information and advice.

# Section 2: Examples of Section 75 Outcomes / Impacts

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

- Describe the action measure /section 75 process undertaken.
- Who was affected across the Section 75 categories?
- What impact it achieved?
- Please give examples of changes to policies or practices using *screening or EQIA*, which have resulted in **outcomes or impacts** for individuals. If the change was a result of an EQIA please indicate this and also reference the title of the relevant EQIA. *As part of AFBI's recruitment process for internal and external posts, all eligibility criteria are equality screened in order to identify any potential discriminatory criteria, e.g. experience required, qualifications required. Where potential discrimination has been identified, e.g. in wording, qualifications, the*

No policies were identified as requiring any amendments following screening.

stakeholders have reconsidered criteria and/or proven justification.

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

Reasonable adjustments have been put in place to enable staff with a disability to return to work and/or carry out their duties in a way which is favourable to them, e.g. phased returns, putting Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans in place, arranging transfers to more suitable work areas, workplace adjustments, provision of specialist equipment.

• Please give examples of *outcomes or impacts* on individuals as a result of any other Section 75 processes e.g. consultation or monitoring:

Following AFBI's Article 55 Review, ECNI recommended that AFBI use a Welcoming Statement in all its external recruitment advertisements to encourage Roman Catholics to apply, as that group was identified as being underrepresented in AFBI.

From August 2011, a welcoming statement was included in AFBI's external recruitment competitions.

Prior to 2011, the ratio of Roman Catholic: Protestant applicants was approximately 1:1. Since the inclusion of a welcoming statement, the ratio of Roman Catholic: Protestant applicants increased to approximately 3:2, in favour of Roman Catholics.

## Section 3: Screening

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

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

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

Title of policy subject to screening	What was the screening decision? E.g. screened in, screened out, mitigation, EQIA	Were any concerns raised about screening by consultees; including the Commission?	Is policy being subject to EQIA? Yes/No If yes indicate timeline for assessment.
Visiting Worker Information Security Policy (and Guidelines) (updated Nov 12)	Internal Policy: Screened Out	Not required	Not required
Information Security Policy (updated Nov 12)	Internal Policy: Screened Out	Not required	Not required
Stress Management Policy (Draft)	Internal Policy: Screened Out	Not required	Not required

# Section 4: Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

Please provide an update of policies subject to EQIA during 2012-13, stage 7 EQIA monitoring activities and an indicative EQIA timetable for 2013-14.

#### Nil Return

• EQIA Timetable: April 2012 - March 2013

Title of Policy EQIA	EQIA Stage at end March 2013 (Steps1-6)	Outline adjustments to policy intended to benefit individuals and the relevant Section 75 categories due to be affected.
	Not Appli	cable

Where the EQIA timetable for 2012-13 (as detailed in the previous annual S75 progress report to the Commission) has not been met, please provide details of the factors responsible for delay and details of the timetable for re-scheduling the EQIA/s in question. *Not Applicable* 

• Ongoing EQIA Monitoring Activities: April 2012- March 2013

Title of EQIA subject to Stage 7 monitoring	Indicate if differential impacts previously identified have reduced or increased	Indicate if adverse impacts previously identified have reduced or increased
	Not Applicable	

Please outline any proposals, arising from the authority's monitoring for adverse impacts, for revision of the policy to achieve better outcomes the relevant equality groups: *Not Applicable* 

#### 2013-14 EQIA Timetable

Title of EQIAs due to be commenced during April 2013 – March 2014	Revised or New policy?	Please indicate expected timescale of Decision Making stage i.e. Stage 6
1	Vot Applicable	

#### Section 5: Training

- Please outline training provision during the year associated with the Section 75 Duties / Equality Scheme requirements including types of training provision and conclusions from any training evaluations.
  - Equality awareness has been included in AFBI Criteria Based Interviewing courses to ensure that panel members are aware of their legal obligations and duties regarding recruitment and selection. This was well received and feedback from staff indicated an increased awareness.
  - Inclusion of Equality Awareness within the Corporate Induction Programme.
  - Information and awareness of equality issues and event accessible to staff through the Intranet, e.g. LGB&T, Autism Act, Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups
  - Consultation with Equality Commission regarding AFBI's Equality Scheme.
  - AFBI Harassment Officers have received relevant training.
  - During 2012/13 the Equality Officer and other HR staff have attended
    - a range of Equality training provided by ECNI including: Recruiting Fairly, Bullying & Harassment at Work.
    - meetings, forums, talks, focus groups, workshops and seminars including DARD Equality Steering Group, ECNI discussion groups (Do You Mean Me?), Women's Engagement Group 'Getting a Fair Share', Good Practice on Trans Issues, Gender Equality at Executive Level, Talent Management Through Inclusion.

### **Section 6: Communication**

- Please outline how the authority communicated progress on delivery of the Section 75 Duties during the year and evidence of the impact / success of such activities.
  - Communication of equality duties and issues was provided through the Equality Section on the AFBI Intranet to maintain staff equality awareness.
  - News Articles were published through the Intranet to advise staff of any equality information and articles, including links to ECNI Newsletters, Disability Action, OHS Wellbeing information.
  - Reports and summaries were published on the intranet.
  - Monthly reports on the progress on the Equality Unit work circulated to Senior Management and AFBI Board.
  - A corporate message from senior management was issued to all staff as a reminder of their equality of opportunity and good relations duty and responsibilities at work-related events, and consequences which could apply should they not adhere to the guidance. No issues were reported.

## Section 7: Data Collection & Analysis

- Please outline any systems that were established during the year to supplement available statistical and qualitative research or any research undertaken / commissioned to obtain information on the needs and experiences of individuals from the nine categories covered by Section 75, including the needs and experiences of people with multiple identities.
  - Feedback questionnaires for internal recruitment were sought to highlight any action required to improve the recruitment process for staff, including reasonable adjustment needs.
  - Staff whose community backgrounds were recorded as missing or unknown were resurveyed.
  - DSE assessments are on-going through the H&S unit to identify adjustments required.
  - During May-August a stress survey was carried out by the Health & Safety Executive to identify causes of work related stress, one of which was inequality in the workplace. This will be addressed in the improvement action plan currently under development.
  - Reports are received from Welfare where a member of staff has sought help and advice in regard to an equality-related issue.
  - OHS reports are received by AFBI HR which identifies any reasonable adjustments required by staff due to a disability. Measures are put in place to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made.
- Please outline any use of the Commission's Section 75 Monitoring Guide.

Used for reference, background information, creating monitoring forms and letters and regarding decisions for residuarising community backgrounds.

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

• Please provide details of any initiatives / steps taken during the year, including take up, to improve access to services; including provision of information in accessible formats.

With the implementation of AFBI's Equality Scheme, AFBI has committed to provide information in accessible formats where required. No such requests were made during the reporting period.

# Section 9: Complaints

- Please identify the number of Section 75 related complaints:
  - received and resolved by the authority (including how this was achieved); No cases
  - which were not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant; No cases
  - which were referred to the Equality Commission. No cases

#### Section 10: Consultation and Engagement

- Please provide details of the measures taken to enhance the level of engagement with *individuals* and representative groups during the year.
- AFBI engagement with S75 groups through various AFBI events and links
  - Participation in BioBlitz (cross-border/public/other NI bodies)
  - Project involvement with TEAGASC and other cross-border links
  - Hosted International Dairyman conference
  - o *international visits and visitors*
  - o participation at public/children events e.g. Balmoral Show, Zoo days;
  - active participation at STEM events for schools, involvement of AFBI STEM Ambassadors
  - o employment of work/study placements in virology
  - o disability awareness through charity fundraising (cancer, autism)
- Responses provided on AFBI &Non-AFBI draft policy/guidance consultation:
  - Consultation: The National Minimum Wage (Low Pay Commission)
  - Consultation: The Livestock & Meat Commission Equality Scheme/Audit of Inequalities
  - AFBI Stress Policy (screened)
  - AFBI Visiting Worker Policy (screened)
  - AFBI Information Security Policy (screened)
  - o Consultation: DARD HQ Relocation
- Continued contact with ECNI.
- Equality Officer attendance at
  - DARD Equality Steering Group meetings
  - ECNI-related events including "Women's Engagement event: Getting a Fair Share", "Good practice on Trans Issues", "Gender Equality at Executive Level", "Talent Management through Inclusion"
- AFBI Officers had involvement in the "Gender Mainstreaming the Rural Development Programme".
- Individual advice and help offered to staff on Aspects of Discrimination, Sexual harassment, Offensive remarks, Equality employment issues, Reduced hours/maternity rights, Physical fitness/.medicals, Reasonable adjustments
- Please outline any use of the Commission's guidance on consulting with and involving children and young people.

Used for information and awareness.

#### Section 11: The Good Relations Duty

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

AFBI have retained the inclusion of a Welcoming statement in external recruitment advertisements to encourage applications from Roman Catholics.

The Roman Catholic : Protestant ratio prior to the inclusion of the statement was approximately 1:1. This increased to 3:2 for competitions since the inclusion of the statement.

• Please outline any use of the Commission's Good Relations Guide. Used for information and awareness.

## Section 12: Additional Comments

- Please provide any additional information/comments.
  - AFBI, as a Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by DARD, complies fully with the terms and conditions of the NICS. AFBI also adheres fully to all HR related policies and procedures operating within the NICS to ensure adherence to equality of opportunity in all aspects of our business.
  - The Equality Unit will ensure that AFBI is best placed to provide and promote equality of opportunity and good relations, working closely with the Equality Commission and other key stakeholders to achieve this.
  - AFBI will act on any recommendations and advice provided by ECNI and implement these, where feasible

# Part B: 'Disability Duties' Annual Report 1 April 2012 / 31 March 2013

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



Fully Achieved? Partially Achieved?

Not Achieved?

#### 2. Please outline the following detail on <u>all actions that have been fully achieved</u> in the reporting period.

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

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs <sup>1</sup>	Outcomes / Impact <sup>2</sup>
National <sup>3</sup>			
Regional⁴			
Local <sup>5</sup>	AFBI have established links with Ulster Sheltered Employment Ltd (USEL) to provide employment to persons with a registered disability.	Staff employed.	Potential opportunities for further staff to be employed through USEL.

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

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

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

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

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Criteria Based Interviewing Training included Reasonable Adjustment/Disability awareness.	Interview panels made aware of the requirements and legislation around reasonable adjustments and disabled candidates.	Panellist awareness.
2	Equality Officer attended seminar 'Talent Management through Inclusion' which included involving disabled in the workforce.	Session facilitated by Employers for Disability to provide an overview of best practice in this area.	Potential recruitment of disabled persons into specific posts.
3	Alternatives to trainer-led training put in place to accommodate disabled staff.	AFBI Learning and Development Unit co-ordinate one-to-one training as required.	Staff receive relevant training.

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

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

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Equality section, including area on disability/reasonable adjustments, maintained on AFBI Intranet.	Staff informed of this via Intranet and line management.	Staff awareness.
2	Changes to DDA re Autism Act published on intranet.	To make staff aware of change.	Staff awareness.
3	Equality Officer available for staff seeking advice and information.	Help and advice offered to staff.	Encourages harmonious workplace, benefits staff wellbeing.
4	Presentations adjusted for viewers with disabilities.	Presentation images amended to accommodate those with colour- blindness.	Staff/guest inclusion at presentations.

# 2(d) What action measures were achieved to 'encourage others' to promote the two duties?

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Line managers encouraged to discuss staff needs at appraisal meetings, management of attendance, return to work after sick leave in relation to disability.	Reasonable adjustments identified for staff where appropriate. HR, H&S, OHS, Welfare involvement where necessary.	Staff accommodated for disability; Staff wellbeing.
2	Staff encouraged to avail of help services such as Carecall, OHS, Welfare, Charity for Civil Servants.	Confidential help and advice provided to staff.	Staff wellbeing

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

	Action Managuran fully		
	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
	and specific public life measures)		
1	All staff who declare a disability or long- term health condition will be assessed to determine their needs in relation to workplace access assessment.	Managed through the Recruitment and Induction process for any cases identified/declared.	Appropriate adjustment made. AFBI continues to review its procedures in line with this measure.
2	All staff who declare a disability or long- term health condition will have their posts assessed to determine their needs in relation to their disability.	Managed through the Recruitment and Induction process for any cases identified/declared. Involvement of Disability Action where required.	Appropriate adjustment made, e.g. transfers, role changes, phased returns, working hours, specialised equipment. AFBI continues to review its procedures in line with this measure.
3	All staff who declare a disability or long- term health condition will be assessed to determine their needs in relation to building evacuation.	Personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEP) will provide individual support for all disabled staff.	Appropriate adjustment made. AFBI continues to review its procedures in line with this measure.
4	All job applicants who declare a disability or long-term health condition will be accommodated, as far as possible, in relation to applications and interviews.	Managed through HR & H&S if necessary.	Reasonable adjustments made.
5	Systems in place for disabled persons e.g Loop system, Ramps, Lifts, automatic doors, flashing alarm lights	Systems and aids in place in order to facilitate staff & visitors with disabilities. Maintained by Estates.	To facilitate disabled staff and visitors.

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

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones <sup>6</sup> / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	Provision of Disability Discrimination Act Awareness e-learning package.	To be made available to all staff via the Intranet.	To make staff aware of the Act.	Under development, still to be fully tested and agreed.
2	Review guidance for written communication policies, practices and procedures.	To ensure compliance with legislation and good practice.	To ensure compliance and promote awareness.	Under development.

#### 4. Please outline what action measures have <u>not been achieved</u> and the reasons why?

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	Formal training and guidance for staff on disability awareness and legislation.	AFBI has not had the resources to undertake this.
2	Establishment of an AFBI Disability Forum.	AFBI has not had the resources to undertake this.

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

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

(a) Qualitative

To be defined and agreed.

#### (b) Quantitative

To be defined and agreed.

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

Please delete: ¥es/No

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1			
2			

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

AFBI will develop its action plan in relation to its disability duties.