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15 November 2005

Julie Stephenson
Equality and Rights Division
Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
Age Team
Room E3.18
Castle Buildings
Stormont
BELFAST
BT4 3SR

Dear Ms Stephenson

Consultation on Draft Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (NI) 2006

I refer to your letter dated 8 September 2005 regarding the above.

The Trust has considered the contents of the consultation documentation and would respond as follows.

The Trust welcomes the introduction of legislation in this area. It supports and further enhances the equality culture which the Trust strives to maintain and embed on an ongoing basis.

In creating and implementing any new legislation, it is important that there is clarity on the provisions contained therein and that supporting guidance clarifies any matters where there may be confusion.

Obviously the legislation will require employers to review current practices and procedures to ensure that they do not contain any discriminatory elements.

Perhaps one of the most significant changes will be the introduction of the 'duty to consider' procedure in the area of retirement.

The introduction of such a procedure will have implications for employers in terms of time and processes. It is vital that the procedure is clear and simple.

It is also vital that there is clear guidance and understanding of the employers role in circumstances where it is not possible to allow the employee to work beyond age 65 or the specified retirement age.



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I trust that you will find these comments beneficial.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Dornan', written over a horizontal line.

Mr Brian Dornan
Chief Executive