

Equality and Social Need Steering Group Meeting

10.30am, Wednesday 20th June 2007

Room E4.02, Castle Buildings

Minutes

Present:

Gerry Mulligan	OFMDFM (Chair)
Anthony Carleton	DCAL
Mervyn Langtry	DEL
John McGuinness	DEL
Irene McAllister	DETI
Ann Torrens	DFP
Seamus Camplisson	DHSSPS
Alex Boyle	DOE
Margaret Langhammer	DRD
Donna Knowles	NIO
Stephen Donnelly	OFMDFM/NISRA
Jim Breen	OFMDFM
Carol McCabe	OFMDFM
Bernie Duffy	OFMDFM
Catherine McCool	OFMDFM
Liz McMeekin	OFMDFM
Grainia Long	ECNI
Michelle Furphy	NISRA

Apologies:

Sharon Lawlor	DE
Lynn Hayes	DE
David Malcolm	DSD

1. Apologies and Introductions

- 1.1 Gerry Mulligan welcomed members to the meeting and gave a brief background history of the Steering Group for the benefit of new members.

2. Minutes of 13 February 2007 & Matters Arising

- 2.1 Members approved the minutes from 13 February as an accurate record of the meeting.
- 2.2 Gerry advised that the minutes would be posted on the Central Anti-Poverty unit website as previously agreed.

Action: Linsey Farrell

- 2.3 There were a number of matters arising from the previous meeting, particularly around the provision of Equality and Human Rights training. It was agreed that this was an issue to be taken forward by the Equality Practitioners' Group (EPG).
- 2.4 Bernie agreed to get a clear articulation from the Centre for Applied Learning as to its current position in relation to Equality Training. Members would be advised of the outcome of this through the channel of EPG.

Action: Bernie Duffy

- 2.5 As requested at the February meeting, details of the membership of the Ministerial Poverty and Social Inclusion Forum had been circulated to ESNSG for information.
- 2.6 Anne Hunter had been in touch with DFP and colleagues in Central Appointments Unit regarding common text for the Disability Action Plans. This text had been circulated to departments.
- 2.7 With regard to Disability Action Plans, Alex Boyle advised members that the DOE Statutory Committee had expressed interest in the Disability Action Plan and was keen to be kept informed regarding its implementation.

3. Section 75 Effectiveness Review – Grainia Long

- 3.1 Gerry welcomed Grainia Long from the Equality Commission and thanked her for taking the time to give a presentation to the group.

- 3.2 Grainia's presentation to members covered the various stages of the Effectiveness Review and what its implications would be for departments.
- 3.3 Members were reminded of the meeting planned between ECNI and public authorities on 4 July.
- 3.4 In response to Grainia's presentation, Gerry invited comments and questions from the group. He also outlined that EPG would be looking at the outcomes of the review and considering a collective response from departments as one option for responding to the consultation.
- 3.5 In response to Alex Boyle's query regarding guidance on monitoring, Grainia confirmed that guidance was almost finalised and would shortly be going to the printers.
- 3.6 In terms of monitoring impacts of policy, Stephen Donnelly highlighted the need for departments to work together and link up in building a good research infrastructure. He pointed out a specific piece of work being carried out by Alan McClelland in developing a high level model of research on policy impacts.
- 3.7 General discussion took place around the potential for extending section 75 (ii). Grainia advised that the Equality Commission would be happy to take views on this during the consultation period.

4. Research Priorities

- 4.1 Gerry invited Stephen Donnelly to address the group on research priorities.
- 4.2 Stephen referred members to the two papers that had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting.
- 4.3 Members noted the research budget profile for 2007/08 and agreed to fund the Northern Ireland Longitudinal Study proposal submitted by NISRA, noting the potential research areas that could be addressed and the importance of the NILS as equality relevant research.
- 4.4 In addition, members agreed that the transfer of research funds to bidding departments should happen as soon as the Group endorsed the project.
- 4.5 Members noted the imminent publication of: the millennium cohort study; a paper on child poverty estimation; two LGBT publications on 2 July and the publication of the revised research and information strategy in July. Members would be copied into submissions.

- 4.6 Members agreed to promote the use of ESRC research fellowships through utilisation of the ESNSG budget.

5. Policy & Legislation Updates

- 5.1 Gerry referred members to the update papers that had been circulated in advance of the meeting. In particular, he drew attention to Lifetime Opportunities and thanked departments for agreeing on OFMDFM's proposed approach to bringing the strategy before the Executive Committee for approval.
- 5.2 In respect of the ongoing work of the PSI Working Group on Lone Parents, Gerry advised that the report and recommendations would be submitted to ESNSG for consideration and approval in the Autumn. It was important that members were content before the final report went to Ministers.
- 5.3 In relation to the PSI Working Group on Disability, Gerry confirmed that all recommendations would be agreed with the relevant departments before going to Ministers.
- 5.4 Gerry welcomed Carol McCabe and invited her to address the group in relation to the Gender Goods and Services Directive and the FETO Monitoring and the Specification Order.

Gender Goods & Services Directive

- 5.5 Carol reminded members that a paper had gone to Ministers (a) seeking their approval of the policy proposals for implementing the Directive and (b) to agree to bringing the proposals to the Executive for approval to consult publicly. It was hoped that the Executive would clear the paper by 5 July, in order to allow for a consultation and legislation process to proceed so as to meet the 21st December deadline for the implementation of the Directive. Carol advised that it is likely that the Executive paper will make its way to departmental officials for comment and confirmed that the proposals were the same as those provided to Departments in March.
- 5.6 Carol also advised that OFMDFM will be conducting a trawl across Departments seeking assurances that existing legislation complies with the proposals and will aim to issue a note to Departments in July. Carol encouraged departments however in the meantime to begin work on this if not already started.

Fair Employment & Treatment Order (FETO)

- 5.7 Carol also took the opportunity to remind members of this annual exercise and that OFMDFM will again this year be contacting Departments seeking details of new or amended names of public

sector organisations to be specified in the legislation for fair employment monitoring purposes. Departments were reminded of the potential implications of changes resulting from the roll-out of RPA on this exercise.

6. Northern Ireland Survey of Activity Limitation and Disability

- 6.1 Gerry welcomed Michelle Furphy to the meeting and invited her to update members on the Disability Survey.
- 6.2 Michelle advised members of the process that had been undertaken from the outset of the survey and updated them on the headline results relating to adults and children.
- 6.3 Michelle advised that the top-line results would go public on Thursday 5th July allowing PSI subgroups to meet over the summer to finalise recommendations in light of the survey results. It was intended that a presentation to the wider sector should be held at some stage in late September.
- 6.4 Michelle agreed that the research submission would be copied to other Ministers when it was sent to the DFP Minister for information.

Action: Michelle Furphy

7 Any Other Business

- 7.1 No items were identified under any other business.

8. Date of Next Meeting

- 8.1 Members were advised that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday 10th October. Linsey Farrell would be in contact in due course with further details.