



Revised Equality Action Plan

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December 2014

INTRODUCTION

The Education and Library Boards' (Boards)/Staff Commission's revised Equality Schemes were approved by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland on 18 November 2011. The revised Equality Schemes each contained a commitment to conduct an Audit of Inequalities which would inform the development of an Equality Action Plan.

The first edition of the Audit of Inequalities informed the development of the Boards'/Staff Commission's Equality Action Plan (issued October 2011). In June 2012 a second edition of the Audit of Inequalities was prepared which took account of feedback received (both internal and external) to the initial Audit, the Equality Commission's 'Advice to Public Authorities Approaching an Audit of Inequalities'; research in the intervening period and the Boards'/Staff Commission's Equality Action Plan. These documents are available at <http://www.selb.org/about-us/regional-equality-unit/>

CONTEXT

On 22 November 2005, following the Review of Public Administration, Government announced details for the future management of the education sector. Central to this was to be the establishment of an Education and Skills Authority (ESA) by April 2008 with its primary function being to support the operational delivery of education across Northern Ireland and a new Northern Ireland Library Authority.

The new library authority, known as 'Libraries NI' was established on 1 April 2009. The establishment of ESA was not achieved. This year, the Minister for Education announced that agreement had been reached at the Executive to establish a single body to replace the five Education and Library Boards and their Staff Commission. A new Education Bill was drafted and presented to the Northern Ireland Assembly to give effect to this decision. Royal Assent was received on 11 December 2014.

The Boards/Staff Commission have now reviewed the Equality Action Plan to ensure that the actions contained in the plan remain current and appropriate. Although the changes highlighted above and the degree of uncertainty over many years has had a major impact on the Boards/Staff Commission in terms of reduced funding and reduced staffing levels, they are still committed to carrying out the duties within their Equality Schemes.

The original Equality Action Plan identified a number of broad themes which were common across a number of the equality grounds where key inequalities had been identified. They were:

- Supporting improved attendance;
- Tackling educational under-achievement;
- Supporting improved access;
- Promoting inclusion;
- Promoting mental health and wellbeing; and
- Promoting inclusion and diversity in employment.

Actions were classified as those which were generic to all five Boards/Staff Commission and those that were Board specific. It is important to note that some of the actions related to measures which were already in place, the continuation of which have had a positive impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity, disability equality and good relations.

In addressing key inequalities, the Audit of Inequalities (1st & 2nd editions) and other reports such as the NI Audit Office's 'Follow-Up' Report have identified evidence of inequalities amongst the following groups: -

- Early Years;
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender children and young people;
- Irish Traveller pupils;
- Pupils entitled to Free School Meals (FSMs);
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds;
- Newcomer children;
- Pupils with disabilities;
- School Age Mothers;
- Working class boys and in particular, Protestant working class boys;
- Young Carers; and
- Looked After Children

This revised Equality Action Plan provides a framework for action under our identified broad themes for targeting the identified groups and sets out the key actions which will be taken to support improving attendance; tackling educational under-achievement; improving access and inclusion. The plan is designed to be flexible and adaptable and as with our Audits of Inequalities is a 'work in progress' document.

We will report annually on the identified action measures. This report will be submitted to the Equality Commission annually and made available to Section 75 Consultees.

If you wish to comment on the revised Equality Action Plan please submit your comments on or before Friday 27 February 2015 to:-

Mrs Cathy Lavery or
Regional Equality Unit
CMSU, SELB HQ
3 Charlemont Place
The Mall, Armagh
BT61 9AX
Tel: 028 3751 2264
Fax: 028 3751 2217
Email: cathy.lavery@selb.org

Mrs Patricia Murray
Project Officer
Staff Commission for ELBs
Forestview
Purdy's Lane, Belfast
BT8 7AR
Tel: 028 9049 1461
Fax: 028 9049 1744
Email: Patricia.Murray@scelb.org.uk

It is anticipated that the new Education Authority will be established on 1 April 2015. The new Education Authority will be required to draft an Equality Scheme and associated documents. This revised Equality Action Plan will operate until the new Education Authority completes an Audit of Inequalities and develops an Equality Action Plan.

**Education & Library Boards'/Staff Commission for Education & Library Boards
Revised Equality Action Plan 2nd Edition**

Objectives are at a strategic level in support of the identified key themes.

Identified themes are cross cutting; therefore many of the actions will also address more than one theme.

Theme 1 - Supporting Improved Attendance (Protestant Working Class Boys; Irish Traveller Pupils; Newcomer Children¹; Young Carers and Looked After Children (LAC))			
Generic 5 Board Action / Objective	Lead Service	Service Plan (Link)	Planned Outcome
1.1 Implement actions to improve attendance at primary and post-primary school with attendance levels below 90%	Education Welfare Service (EWS)	Regional E&LBs' Action Plan	Reduction in primary and post-primary schools with attendance levels below 90% (annual Census data published in February each year) Current service delivery models reviewed across ELBs to ensure:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consistency of approach; • resources are deployed and targeted to schools with higher levels of need; • capacity building with schools
1.2 Contribute to an agreed Regional Action Plan to address the issues identified in the NI Audit Office Follow-up Report on Pupil Attendance (in preparation for the Department's Attendance Strategy to be published in autumn 2015)	Education Welfare Service		Implementation and roll out of the DE Regional Strategy to improve levels of attendance at school

¹ The term 'newcomer' pupil is used to refer to a pupil who has enrolled in a school but who does not have satisfactory language skills to participate fully in the school curriculum and does not have a language in common with the teacher

1.3 Deliver against Key Priority Area 1 'Attendance' of the Traveller Education Support Service (TESS) Regional Delivery Plan 2014/15 ²	Traveller Education Support Service (TESS)	TESS Regional Delivery Plan 2014/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved Traveller attendance as a result of joined up working with TESS and EWS staff across the 5 Boards; • Attendance will be improved by 5% (from 2013/14 baseline) in targeted schools; • Increased school referrals of Traveller pupils to EWS.
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Theme 2 - Tackling Educational Under-Achievement

(Protestant Working Class Boys; Irish Traveller Pupils; Newcomer Children; Pupils with Disabilities; Young Carers and LAC)

Generic 5 Board Action /Objective	Lead Service	Service Plan (Link)	Planned Outcome
2.1 Continued implementation of the School Improvement strategy - Every School a Good School (ESaGS)	Curriculum Advisory & Support Service (CASS)		All schools that are required to do so have an agreed action plan in place to address improvement identified by the Education & Training Inspectorate (ETI). In the case of catholic maintained schools, this support is provided in liaison with the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS)
2.2 Facilitate schools in the implementation of the Entitlement Framework	CASS		Compliance with statutory requirements for the Entitlement Framework in all grant aided schools
2.3 Support post primary schools for improving their pupils' attainment at the level of 5+ GCSEs at A* - C (or equivalent) including GCSEs in English and Maths	CASS		All schools have School Development Plans (SDPs) in place that promotes improvement and meets statutory requirements.
2.4 Improve levels of under-achievement in literacy and numeracy	CASS – WELB		Implementation of the Signature Project; Assessment of how effective the Signature Project has been in relation to targeting social change

² TESS Regional Delivery Plan is available at www.selb.org – tess/documents – September 2014

<p>2.5 Deliver against Key Priority Area 3 'Achievement' in the Traveller Education Support Services (TESS) Regional Delivery Plan for 2014/15</p>	<p>TESS</p>	<p>TESS Regional Delivery Plan 2014/15</p>	<p>Literacy and numeracy scores recorded for 65% of Traveller pupils in Northern Ireland; Progression of 8% (from the 2013/14 baseline) for Traveller pupils in schools who volunteer for the educational attainment tracking project over the time of the programme; 3% of current year 12 Traveller pupils to uptake further level education.</p>
<p>2.6 Achieving Belfast & Derry – Bright Futures Continue to implement the Achieving Belfast & Achieving Derry Bright Futures projects</p>	<p>CASS BELB & WELB</p>		<p>By September 2014 agreed action plan developed that addresses the ETI recommendations on Achieving Belfast & Derry Bright Futures, and the findings contained in relevant ETI school inspection reports; Progress delivered throughout 2014/15 against the actions in that plan in line with agreed timescales</p>
<p>2.7 Ensure that Extended Schools³ activities are embedded into SDPs and the schools target for raising standards</p>	<p>Extended Schools Regional Group</p>		<p>Evaluation of support and advice to schools involved in Extended Schools activities</p>
<p>2.8 Ensure that every looked after child referred to the LAC in Education Support Service has a Personal Education Plan</p>	<p>EWS/PPDS</p>		<p>Ensure that every looked after child has a Personal Education Plan following referral to the Board in line with the LAC review process</p>
<p>2.9 Early identification of young carers through work with schools</p>	<p>EWS</p>		<p>Improved ability of teachers to recognise and respond to the needs of young carers through the development of a toolkit/resource pack for education professionals</p>

³ The Extended Schools programme aims to reduce differentials and improving the life chances of children and young people, particularly from deprived and disadvantaged areas, who have limited access to current services.

Theme 3 - Improved Access

(Protestant Working Class Boys; Irish Traveller Pupils; Newcomer Children; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Children and Young People (LGBT); Pupils with Disabilities; Young Carers; LAC, Early Years and School Aged Mothers)

Generic 5 Board Action / Objective	Lead Service	Service Plan (Link)	Planned Outcome
3.1 Provide advice and support to schools regarding the provision for 'newcomer' pupils	Inter-Board Inclusion & Diversity Service	IDS Development Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of a Common European Framework of Reference for Languages training to schools⁴; • Common European Framework of Reference for Languages onto SIMS; • Production of a Co-ordination Training Tool.
3.2 Develop mechanisms to support entitlement for places in pre-school.	Inter-Board Transfer Officers Group		Provision of sufficient places by September 2015 for 100% of children in their final pre-school year, whose parents desire it, and engage fully with the admissions process to attend pre-school.
3.3 Ensure that all year 1 and year 8 pupils are placed through the effective and timely administration of the school admissions and transfer processes	Inter-Board Transfer Officers Group		By September 2015 ensure that all year 1 and year 8 pupils are placed through the effective and timely administration of the school admissions and transfer process
3.4 Maximise opportunities for increased uptake and inclusion in youth services for marginalised and disadvantaged groups of young people at risk of underachievement	Inter-Board Youth Panel	Inter-Board Equality Action Plan 2014-15	Scheme devised to support a minimum of 200 youth organisations to pilot work from April 2014 – March 2015
3.5 Work with schools to increase uptake of Free Schools Meals entitlement by pupils.	Inter-Board School Meals Group		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uptake levels of school meals maintained at (or greater than) current levels • Throughout 2014/15 increase uptake of FSM v entitlement by 1%** on 2013/14. <p>**This target is set by DE and varies between Boards.</p>

⁴ The Common European Framework of Reference is a set of benchmarks for second language acquisition which helps to plan for and monitor language learning.

<p>3.6 Deliver against Themes 4, 5, 6 and 7 (Partnership Working; Early Years; Special Educational Needs and Youth) in the Traveller Education Support Services (TESS) Regional Delivery Plan for 2014/15</p>	<p>TESS</p>	<p>TESS Regional Delivery Plan 2014/15</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved outcomes for Traveller pupils and their families; • Improved knowledge and understanding by Traveller Parents in regard to the Statementing Process; • Traveller children with identified additional needs will begin school with appropriate support in place; • Availability of accurate data identifying numbers of Traveller pupils on the Code of Practice broken down by Key Stages 1, 2, 3, and 4, shared with DE, schools and Board services; • Potential for the cross-tabulation between special educational needs, attendance and under-achievement identified; and • Increased uptake of Youth Services by young Travellers in the target areas.
<p>3.7 Continue to implement the Education Order (NI) 1996 and SENDO (NI) 2005</p>	<p>Assistant Senior Education Officers - Children & Young People's Services</p>		<p>All statutory assessments of SEN and reviews of SEN, carried out and completed within the time-frames set out in the SEN Code of Practice and the Supplement, subject to permitted exceptions.</p>
<p>3.8 A Regional Evaluation of the DE Capacity Building Pilots; Pilot A: Early Years Settings; and Pilot B: Level A Educational Testing</p>	<p>Regional Strategy Group</p>		<p>Pilot completed June 2014. Evaluation Report prepared by the end of December 2014</p>
<p>3.9 Provide support for pupils with Multiple Disabilities and Visual Impairment (MDVI)</p>	<p>IB Regional Visual Impairment Support Services</p>	<p>Recommendations from ETI Report Feb 2012 and subsequent Action Plan devised by Visual Impairment Support Staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved access and outcomes for pupils with Multiple Disabilities and Visual Impairment; and • Enhanced skills and knowledge by relevant Board and school staff, and other relevant professionals to meet the needs of these pupils.
<p>3.10 Support pupils with a disability and/or SEN moving from school to adult life</p>	<p>Inter-Board Transition Group</p>	<p>ETI's recommendation on its 'Evaluation of the Transition Arrangements from the Special School Sector to F E, Adult and Working Life'</p>	<p>Continue to implement the Education and Training Inspectorate's (ETI) recommendation on its 'Evaluation of the Transition Arrangements from the Special School sector to Further Education, Adult and Working Life' by focusing on the strategies which might help to prepare the leavers to use transport and gain greater access to the facilities in the wider community.</p>

3.11 Improve the learning environment for children and young people with a disability and/or SENs	Inter-Board Property Centre Co-ordinating Group		Ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual works are undertaken as a result of SEN adaptations; • account is taken of available research into (particular colour schemes) the characteristics of the learning environment and their effect on children with particular needs; • the contribution of CYPS and CASS staff in the design of accommodation; • disability access is included in new builds and refurbishment schemes; and the on-going programme of DDA audit and minor works to improve accessibility in the schools' estate continues
3.12 Continuation of the SAMs Programme	EWS		Provision of support services to school aged mothers in line with the Entitlement Framework
3.13 Implementation of the joint Board Action Plan to promote the uptake of STEM/CEIAG in response to the Executive's STEM Strategy	CASS		Joint Board Action Plan implemented

Theme 4 - Promoting Inclusion

Irish Traveller Pupils; Pupils from Minority Ethnic Backgrounds and Newcomer Children; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Children and Young People (LGBT); Children and Young People with Disabilities; Young Carers and LAC)

Generic 5 Board Action / Objective	Lead Service	Service Plan (Link)	Planned Outcome
4.1 Deliver on the DE's Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education' (CRED) policy	Inter-Board CRED Panel	CRED Inter-Board Business Plan 2014-15	Leadership training for full-time youth leaders who have specific roles in the local community tackling: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deprivation • Educational under-achievement • Sectarianism ➤ Developing leadership in a diverse society ➤ Developing leadership through partnership ➤ Developing leadership through young people

<p>4.2 Complete a 'Window in Practice' exercise on LGBT young people using the inter-sectoral Quality Assurance Framework</p>	<p>SELB Youth Service</p>	<p>Inter-Board Equality Action Plan</p>	<p>A Stakeholder Group of representatives from the CRED Inter-Board Panel, DE, SELB will be facilitated through a process to examine the context; roles and responsibilities within the organisation to develop the work for young people. Leading to a strategy which will be cascaded for implementation across the sector</p>
<p>4.3 Deliver against Theme 8 – 'Interculturalism and Anti-Racism' in the Traveller Education Support Services (TESS) Regional Delivery Plan for 2014/15</p>	<p>TESS</p>	<p>TESS Regional Delivery Plan 2014/15</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one Traveller trainer per sub-region identified, trained and have co-delivered one information session within a target school; • On-line learning module delivered; • New curriculum materials tested in at least 1 sample school; and • Sample action plans shared with clusters and made available to all schools via TESS webpages.
<p>4.4 Continued implementation of a regional approach to all aspects of anti-bullying at both prevention and intervention levels and provision of support to schools</p>	<p>Assistant Senior Education Officers - Children & Young People's Services/Behaviour Support Team Managers</p>	<p>NI Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF)</p>	<p>Implementation, across the Boards, of the NIABF resource pack "Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour", which provides a framework for appropriate Interventions in response to incidents of bullying.</p>
<p>4.5 Continue to build relations via networks such as the Joint Consultative Forum and LGBT Forum</p>	<p>Equality Officers' Group</p>		<p>Increased awareness of education and youth Services' statutory functions and operation of their services; Contribution to policy making process; and production of 'User-friendly' documents.</p>

Theme 5 - Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing
Boys; LGBT children and young people; Young Carers; LAC and EOTAS Pupils

Generic 5 Board Action / Objective	Lead Service	Service Plan (Link)	Planned Outcome
<p>5.1 Implementation of a range of programmes to promote the positive mental health and well-being in Children and Young People, including the DE's 'I Matter Programme' and Responding to Critical Incidents</p>	<p>Assistant Senior Education Officers – Children & Young People's Services/Behavioural Support Team Managers</p>	<p>Children & Young People's Services Plan/ Behaviour Support Plan</p>	<p>Improved pupil outcomes and pupil health and wellbeing through evidence based programmes and early intervention.</p>
<p>5.2 Support schools in the delivery of pupil based programmes for safeguarding mental health and well-being</p>	<p>Behaviour Support Team/Pastoral Care</p>	<p>Behaviour Support Plan</p>	<p>Build capacity in schools to foster pupil's resilience to deal with life challenges</p>
<p>5.3 To provide appropriate educational provision for EOTAS pupils</p>	<p>Assistant Senior Education Officers – Children & Young People's Services</p>		<p>Appropriate educational provision offered to all young people accepted for EOTAS provision.</p>

Theme 6 - Promoting Inclusion and Diversity in Employment

Generic 5 Board Action / Objective	Lead Service Contact Name	Service Plan (Link)	Planned Outcome
6.1 Raise awareness among staff of the Section 75 NI Act 1998 and Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order 2006; Explore the possibility of E-learning modules	Equality Officers' Group		Increased awareness by staff of the Section 75 and Disability Duties
6.2 Further mainstreaming of Section 75 objectives and targets into corporate policies and annual operational business plans	Chief Executives/Senior Management Teams		Ongoing integration of Section 75 objectives and targets into annual operational business plans
6.3 Ensure existing employees who are or who become disabled are supported and facilitated through the Boards'/Staff Commission's reasonable adjustment arrangements	Human Resources		Supportive culture for employees with disabilities within the Boards/Staff Commission
6.4 Using feedback from the regional school satisfaction survey on teacher training needs, produce an evaluation report by phase; sector; workforce type and type of training on the teacher training needs of individual school have been met during the 2013-14	Inter-Board Central Management Support Unit		Extent to which professional development and training needs are being met identified
6.5 Develop a regional Job Evaluation Scheme	Inter-Board Central Management Support Unit		Scheme, which reflects best practice developed in consultation with recognised Trade Unions and submitted to DE.