



Department of
**Health, Social Services
and Public Safety**

An Roinn

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

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**DEVELOPING A STRATEGY AND ACTION
PLAN TO PROMOTE EQUALITY AND
HUMAN RIGHTS**

**Stakeholder Consultation Workshop
Outcome Report**

29 November 2005

Working for a Healthier People



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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Context and Structure of the Workshop

1. The Department, in collaboration with its associated bodies (Boards, Trusts & Special Agencies), is currently in the process of developing a medium-term strategy and action plan to promote equality and human rights. This work is being taken forward by a Project Team made up of members of the Equality and Human Rights Steering Group which is made up of staff with equality and human rights expertise from Health and Social Services Boards, Trusts and Agencies.
2. The process is designed to be inclusive and participative and, to this end, a stakeholder consultation workshop took place on Tuesday 29th November 2005. The purpose of the workshop was to share progress to date and to offer key stakeholders the opportunity to help shape the strategy and action plan before it is presented for wider consultation. The event programme is set out in **Appendix A**.
3. The structure of the workshop was largely driven by the requirement to provide for the fullest possible participation by stakeholders. In the event 48 people attended the workshop (**Appendix B**). These were sub-divided into three working groups which were retained as a working structure throughout the day.
4. In preparation for the event, participants were sent a briefing paper designed to stimulate discussion and inform debate at the workshop. The paper set out proposals for shaping the strategy and action plan in terms of its overall aim, scope, key success factors and importantly a series of actions which were offered as a starting point towards delivering on the overall aim and strategic objectives. It also posed a number of questions to be addressed at the breakout sessions on the day.

5. Two presentations were delivered to set the scene for the breakout sessions which were designed to add more insight into the areas to be discussed.
6. The two breakout sessions considered the following areas:
 - Session (1): proposed aim, strategic objectives, approach to developing the strategy, its scope along with suggested key success factors.
 - Session (2): proposed action plan which set out 22 actions under 5 key themes.
7. In respect of each session, participants were asked to address the particular questions set out in the briefing paper and were assisted in their discussions by a facilitator and rapporteur who gathered feedback from the session.
8. The workshop agenda did not allow time for a detailed synthesis of the individual group discussions. While a brief summary comment was offered at the conclusion of each session, the purpose behind this report is to present an overview of the day by summarising the main points of discussion, synthesising the general tenor and direction of the debate and providing a sense of the conclusions reached.

Breakout Session 1 – Summary of Discussions

9. The purpose of this session was to seek views and responses to a number of pre-set questions about the proposed aim, strategic objectives, approach to developing the strategy, its scope and suggested key success factors.

Proposed Aim

“To promote equality and human rights within a health and social care system that offers choice, respects diversity and is equally accessible to all those who need it, through sustained collective effort.”

10. Summary of comments:

- There was general consensus among the groups that the aim needed to be stronger with more energy and commitment expressed.
- Each of the groups felt there was potential for confusion over the meaning of terms such as “sustained collective”, “respects diversity” and “offers choice”.
- It was suggested that plain English should be used to express the aim with some suggestions for alternative wording offered.
- Some members of the groups expressed a desire to see reference to deliverability, mainstreaming and resources in the aim.

Proposed Strategic Objectives

In order to achieve this aim we will:

- *learn from the experience of service users;*
- *refresh our sense of direction and make equality and human rights a priority;*
- *continue to implement our responsibilities under equality and human rights legislation;*
- *mainstream equality and human rights considerations into all our work and activity including strategy and policy development, legislation and spending plans, service design and delivery;*
- *take action to eliminate or mitigate any adverse impact identified in relation to equality of opportunity;*
- *train our staff so that they are better equipped to promote equality, human rights and good relations and to respect diversity;*
- *build trust between the HPSS and communities and individuals;*
- *operate in an open and accessible way;*
- *work with individual service users, communities and user groups to reduce inequalities in health and social care; and*
- *adopt a co-ordinated approach.*

11. Summary of comments:

- There was a general view that the objectives were not specific enough.
- Two groups felt they were expressed more like principles or values rather than objectives.
- It was also suggested that they were not innovative enough.
- One group felt there should be fewer strategic objectives.

- One of the groups highlighted the absence of reference to “carers” in some of the objectives.
- Two groups felt that the community development approach needed to be reflected.
- All three groups disliked the use of the word “refresh” in the second objective and suggested alternative wording.
- Changes were also suggested to the wording of some of the other objectives.

Approach

- *initiating action, where possible, during the development process (a ‘do-as-you-go’ approach);*
- *ensuring participation and ownership;*
- *agreeing realistic and achievable actions;*
- *making the linkages with and complementing and influencing other relevant strategies, policies and initiatives; and*
- *promoting a collective effort.*

12. Summary of comments:

- While there was general support for the “do as you go” approach, the importance of communicating the action taken during the process was stressed e.g. how the approach had influenced services.
- Again there were some concerns about the use of terminology such as “promoting collective effort”.
- One group was surprised that Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 was not mentioned.
- Other groups thought that Section 75 was the minimum which should be achieved.
- Two groups felt that there should reference to resources and positive outcomes.

- One group suggested that a continuous improvement approach was needed and that monitoring should also be included.

Proposed Scope

- *The strategy and action plan will encompass not only the nine distinctions given in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (age, disability, racial group, religious belief, political opinion, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, having or not having dependants) and the good relations duty, but also socio-economic inequalities, geographical inequalities (including rurality), and human rights.*
- *It will report on the actions taken during the strategy development process to address equality and human rights issues.*
- *It will establish a range of corporate equality and human rights actions that help to address some of the problems identified and to support its overall aim.*
- *It will not focus on the underlying determinants of inequalities as this is a longer term challenge more appropriately tackled by policies and strategies such as those initiated by the Investing for Health Strategy and those proposed in the regional strategy “a healthier future”. It will however complement and fully support the delivery of the aims and objectives of these strategies.*

13. Summary of comments:

- While two of the groups expressed broad support for the proposed scope (which they indicated should be more clearly linked to services), one believed it to be flawed as it did not focus on the underlying determinants of inequalities.
- Concern was expressed about the absence of reference to measuring progress or change resulting from section 75.
- There were mixed views about the various statements – some felt they were too wordy.

- Several changes were proposed to the structure and wording of the statements and general agreement about replacing the term “not focus” with more positive wording.
- Once again the importance of effectively communicating the actions taken during the strategy development process was stressed.

Proposed Key Success Factors

The following key success factors will support and underpin the strategy and action plan:

- *continuing senior management commitment to promoting equality and human rights;*
- *commitment to and ownership of strategy and action plan;*
- *good Partnership working;*
- *involving people;*
- *mainstreaming equality;*
- *continuous learning from research; and*
- *continuous review, feedback and evidence of results.*

14. Summary of comments:

- While there were no strong objections to the general thrust of the key success factors, there were a number of suggestions offered as to how they might be improved or added to.
- For example, one group felt that indicators were needed and that a statement on openness and transparency should be added.
- There was agreement about the need for clarification on what was meant by “partnership working”– it was suggested that this should be internal and external.

Breakout Session 2 – Summary of Discussions

15. The purpose of this session was to seek views and responses to a number of pre-set questions about the proposed action plan.

Proposed themes and key actions for inclusion in the Action Plan

See **Appendix C** for details.

16. Summary of comments:
- While accepting that the objectives were not finalised, the consensus was that the final versions needed to be more specific or SMART and that they should be reflected in Priorities for Action¹.
 - There was also agreement on the need for the strategy document to explain the rationale for selecting these particular actions.
 - Issues were raised as to how the 5 themes emerged.
 - One group highlighted the absence of any actions relating to Section 75 (2) covering good relations.
 - There were questions raised about ownership and accountability for delivering on the strategy and about resourcing it, particularly in light of the impact of the review of public administration.

¹ Priorities for Action sets out the Minister's expectations for the Health and Personal Social Services in the context of the Budget and the Secretary of State's priorities and plans for each year. It identifies the Minister's overall planning goals and the priorities for action necessary to secure their achievement.

- One group felt that carers had been overlooked in the action plan.
- There were also concerns that in some instances the themes did not appear to be consistent with the scope of the strategy.
- One Group thought that **theme 1** needed to be deeper/broader in terms of access to services and not just information.
- There were concerns expressed about the absence of specific actions under theme 1 to address access issues for e.g. older people, people of different sexual orientation, young people and people with mental health needs.
- One group felt that the interpreting service under theme 1 should also provide for deaf people who require signers.
- The action points on translation arrangements and the production of an information booklet were generally supported.
- Groups reported that they found it difficult to comment on the action under theme 1 to improve disabled people's access to services in the absence of more detail on the recommendations from the Disability Action report.
- In response to the action under delivering culturally competent services, one group commented that before producing a second edition of the Race Equality guide, it might be worthwhile taking stock of progress on implementing the first edition.
- One group suggested the need for a code of practice on delivering culturally competent services.
- While there was general support from the groups for the actions listed under **theme 2** covering mainstreaming equality and human rights, it was commented that some

of the actions were part of the core business of the Department anyway.

- There were some suggestions on alternative wording and calls for clarification on some of the actions, particularly on training and developing minimum standards.
- The groups felt that human rights training should have featured.
- **Theme 3** on engagement was supported by all of the groups.
- There was universal agreement that there must be systematic and clear feedback to consultees following consultation exercises.
- One group stated that stakeholders should be involved in the design of the proposed thematic workshops exploring issues affecting the specific groups listed.
- Another group felt that issues affecting all nine categories of people described under Section 75 should be addressed in the proposed thematic workshops and that recognition be given to multiple identities.
- As regards **theme 4**, it was suggested by two of the groups that this should be referred to as “social inclusion”.
- There were strong views expressed that there should be actions aimed at other excluded groups e.g. the homeless, carers, older people and those with a learning disability.
- It was suggested that the health projects approach (as described under Theme 4, Appendix C) may be a useful good practice model that could be applied to other excluded groups.
- One group described the actions under **theme 5** for promoting human rights as offering nothing radical that would make a difference.

- In welcoming the proposal to establish arrangements for learning from Human Rights case law, one group stressed the need for transparency on the methods for sharing this learning.
- It was suggested that human rights could be effectively mainstreamed into decision making processes by using existing tools e.g. checklist for decision making.

Conclusions and Implications

17. The implication of the comments and views expressed in the first breakout session suggested that further thought is needed specifically in relation to the scope, aim and strategic objectives of the strategy. In the case of the aim this may be a matter of rewording in order to strengthen it and to facilitate better understanding. As regards the strategic objectives, feedback suggested that they might be better presented as principles or values underpinning the strategy and perhaps with modification some of them could be translated into smarter objectives.
18. Feedback from session two clearly indicated that participants would have liked to have seen more specific actions covering a broader spectrum of people and issues. Given the time constraints and the general nature of the themes and actions proposed, the second breakout session was not going to produce a definitive set of additional specific actions. Nevertheless, some very useful points and suggestions were expressed about how to take forward some of the actions proposed which will be taken into account in the further development of the strategy and action plan.
19. In conclusion, this event provided a useful opportunity for key stakeholders to influence the strategy and action plan under development and importantly to hear about the actions taken forward during the process described on the day as a “do as you go” approach.

Next Steps

20. The proposals discussed at the workshop will be revisited in light of the feedback from participants.
21. The first draft of the strategy and action plan will then be produced.
22. After it is approved internally the draft strategy and action plan will be issued for wider consultation which is expected to happen before 31 March 2006.

(Sub-group)

10.40. Introduction to Breakout Session 1

Coffee

11.00. Breakout Session (1)

- Aim, Strategic Objectives, Scope
Approach and Success Factors

11.50. Feedback from Session (1)

12.20. Introduction to Breakout Session 2

Breakout Session (2)

- Proposed Action Plan

1.00 Lunch

2.00 Breakout Session (2) cont...

3.00 Coffee

3.15 Feedback from Session (2)

3.45 Where does the process go next? Seamus Camplisson

4.00. Workshop Close

Appendix B

List of Attendees

	<i>First Name</i>	<i>Surname</i>	<i>Organisation</i>
1	Alison	Annett	Homefirst Community HSS Trust
2	Marie	Austin	Craigavon & Banbridge Community HSS Trust
3	Wesley	Blair (Rev)	Irish Council of Churches
4	Laura	Bradford	DHSSPS
5	Sean	Brown	Eastern Health & Social Services Council
6	Sandra	Calwell	Northern Ireland Ambulance Service
7	Lyn	Campbell	Carers Northern Ireland
8	Elaine	Campbell	YouthNet
9	Seamus	Camplisson	DHSSPS
10	Hannah	Cavalleros	DHSSPS
11	Tin	Chan	Chinese Welfare Association
12	Eileen	Chan-Hu	Ballymena Community Forum
13	Barbary	Cook	Community Development & Health Network
14	Joanne	Crothers	DHSSPS
15	Adèle	Davidson	NI Fire & Rescue Service
16	Colin	Dunlop	DHSSPS
17	Andrew	Elliott	DHSSPS
18	Alison	Farr	North & West Belfast HSS Trust
19	Monica	Fitzpatrick	OFMDFM
20	Ann	Gallagher	Age Sector Reference Group Sub group member/ Craigavon & Banbridge Trust
21	Lynda	Gordon	
22	Derek	Hanway	An Munia Tober
23	Donna	Heaney	Equality Commission
24	Colin	Jackson	Green Park Healthcare HSS Trust
25	Anne	Johnston	Mater Hospital
26	Denis	Jordan	DHSSPS
27	Stewart	Love	DHSSPS
28	Thomas	Mahaffy	UNISON
29	Tre	Martin	DHSSPS
30	Agnieszka	Martynowicz	Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
31	Mimi	McAlinden	Eastern Health & Social Services Board

32	Maura	McCallion	Law Centre (NI)
33	May	McCann	CAUSE
34	Suzanne	McCartney	Down Lisburn Trust
35	Ian	McClure	DHSSPS
36	David	McConnell	Age Concern NI
37	Anne	McCormill	United Hospitals HSS Trust
38	Fiona	McDowell	Causeway HSS Trust
39	Elaine	McElduff	Children in Northern Ireland
40	Anne	McGlade	Eastern Health & Social Services Board
41	Paschal	McKeown	Mencap
42	Shirley	McReynolds	SHSSB
43	Anne Marie	O'Kane	Disability Action
44	Hilary	Sidwell	Western Equality & Human Rights Forum
45	Pat	Smyth	Northern Health & Social Services Board
46	Natalie	Strain	Children's Law Centre
47	Bill	Stewart	DHSSPS
48	Susan	Thompson	United Hospitals HSS Trust

Appendix C

Equality and Human Rights Action Plan

Proposed themes and key actions for inclusion in the Action Plan

Proposed **AIM:** To promote equality and human rights within a health and social care system that offers choice, respects diversity and is equally accessible to all those who need it, through sustained collective effort.

THEMES

1. Addressing access issues and respecting diversity

ACTIONS

Interpreting

Commitment by Dept to (i) the future development and maintenance of high-quality, appropriate interpreting capacity; (ii) effective arrangements for day-to-day procurement of interpreting, and (iii) promoting and assisting the effective use of interpreting services by Health and Personal Social Services (HPSS) organisations and agents of the HPSS (General Practitioners and Dentists etc.) The aim is to achieve equality of access to health and social care services, and assist the HPSS in delivering the highest quality care, for those members of black and minority ethnic communities, migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees, and their family members who do not have English as a first or competent second language, through the use of competent interpreters appropriate to the needs of the service user and the service provider.

Translation arrangements

Establish and maintain effective arrangements to assist the Department and HPSS bodies to procure cost-effective, high-quality translation of documents, to meet

	<p>identified and prioritised need, as initiated by the Equality and Human Rights Steering Group's Accessible Formats Project.</p>
	<p>Information for migrant workers and for Black, Minority Ethnic communities Production and dissemination of general & introductory information (e.g. booklets) on entitlements and access for migrant workers and minority language communities, as initiated by the Equality and Human Rights Steering Group's Accessible Formats Project.</p>
	<p>Improving disabled people's access to HPSS services Measures to be taken in response to Disability Action's findings & recommendations from their survey of how well HPSS is meeting DDA access requirements.</p>
	<p>Delivering culturally competent services Produce 2nd edition of 2003 good practice guide <i>Race Equality in Health and Social Care</i>, in 2006, taking into account the findings of the Centre for Cross Border Studies (CCBS) research on the experience of BME & migrant worker communities in RoI, NI and Scotland</p>
	<p>Contribute to CCBS research</p>
<p>2. Mainstreaming Equality and Human Rights</p>	<p>Section 75 training and awareness for staff To review equality and human rights training requirements taking account of the findings of the Disability Action report and the outcome of the 5 year reviews of Section 75 Equality Schemes.</p>
	<p>Equality and human rights minimum standards Develop a set of minimum standards for equality and human rights in conjunction with stakeholders.</p>

	<p>Good Practice To ensure that equality and human rights good practices are developed, recognised, disseminated and sustained e.g. through an annual showcase event.</p>
	<p>Follow-up to reviews of HPSS Equality Schemes Review Equality Schemes, as per statutory obligation, and address any areas of non-compliance.</p>
	<p>Further integration into policy review and evaluations Further / continued integration of equality and human rights considerations into DHSSPS policy review and evaluation programme</p>
	<p>Increased participation and learning Explore ways of involving more people in the screening and EQIA processes.</p>
	<p>Region-wide screening and EQIA programme Continuing implementation of the recommendations flowing from the review of region-wide EQIA programme & inclusion of screening in the programme (more comprehensive & systematic approach to screening)</p>
<p>3. Engagement with service users / stakeholders</p>	<p>Community engagement framework During 2006/7, develop an overarching policy for involving people and building caring communities, as part of implementation of <i>A Healthier Future – 20-year Regional Strategy for Health and Wellbeing</i>.</p>
	<p>Programme of cross-thematic workshops Targeted & cross-thematic workshops to explore specific sets of issues affecting e.g. LGBT community; ageing /older people in rural issues.</p>

4. Social Exclusion	Traveller Health projects	Maintain and develop 2 Department-funded Traveller health projects in SHSSB area & Belfast (SAAT and An Munia Tober)
		Explore & learn from other Traveller health projects in NI, RoI and GB
		Contribute to All-Ireland Traveller Health Study
		Develop HPSS contribution to NI Anti-Poverty Strategy (successor to New TSN)
5. Promoting Human Rights	Plan further human rights training and awareness-raising	
	Put in place arrangements to enable HPSS to learn swiftly from emerging human rights case law.	
	Continuing to be proactive by identifying vulnerabilities and being responsive by promoting and mainstreaming human rights into policy formulation.	