

# **Section 75 and Schedule 9 The Northern Ireland Act 1998**



- **Procedures on Recruitment and Selection**
- **Placing of Job Advertisements Policy**
- **Removal Expenses Policy**
- **Premature Retirement Policy**

## **Human Resources Equality Impact Assessments Belfast City Council Final Report**

**August 2004**

**Procedures on Recruitment and Selection  
Placing of Job Advertisements Policy  
Removal Expenses Policy  
Premature Retirement Policy**

**An Equality Impact Assessment**

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## **1.0 Procedures on Recruitment and Selection**

### **Placing of Job Advertisements Policy**

### **Removal Expenses Policy**

### **Premature Retirement Policy**

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

### **Executive Summary**

#### **Introduction**

Belfast City Council (BCC) remains committed to fulfilling its responsibilities under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. In its Equality Scheme, the Council gave an undertaking to carry out an equality impact assessment (EQIA) on each policy or group of co-joined policies where screening had indicated that there may be significant implications in relation to one or more of the nine equality dimensions.

The screening process indicated that each of the three policies above should be subjected to an EQIA.

#### **Consideration Of Measures To Mitigate Any Adverse Impact**

BCC has given careful consideration to the measures that might be taken to eliminate, or at least mitigate, the adverse impacts identified through the EQIA process.

#### **Monitoring**

Belfast City Council is committed to developing effective monitoring systems. Knowledge of the uptake of services provided by the Council and the impact of policies on different groups within the Section 75 categories will be of assistance in assessing progress towards equality of opportunity

As part of our ongoing development of monitoring systems the Council is considering both quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

**Procedures for Recruitment and Selection** – Belfast City Council's Recruitment and Selection procedures are based on the Local Government Staff Commission's (LGSC) Code of Procedures. The aim is to provide a best practice approach to recruitment and selection and to ensure consistency across Belfast City Council through the application of common procedures and in compliance with legislative requirements and standards.

The EQIA of this policy has identified that although there is some under

representation in certain job groups, the Council is addressing this through complementary policies.

**Placing of Job Advertisements Policy** – The purpose of Belfast City Council's Job Advertisement policy is to publicly advertise all vacancies, with the exception of those circumstances where circulating the post internally would directly mitigate a possible redundancy situation in the Council. All basic grade posts are advertised through the Training and Employment Agency's offices and more senior posts through placing advertisements in the Belfast Telegraph, the Irish News and the Newsletter in order to attract applications from all sections of the community across Northern Ireland and to ensure equality of access. In addition Technical Journals are used to attract potential applicants for specialist posts.

Although the EQIA has identified a number of differential impacts, no adverse impacts have been identified. Some proposed actions are included however to promote equality of opportunity further in respect of several categories.

**Removal Expenses Policy** – The Removal Expenses policy assists in the recruitment process by assisting newly appointed officers at certain designated grades to meet the costs of removal expenses, lodging and travelling expenses incurred through taking up their appointment. This policy is very limited in application and has only been used on a few occasions since the Council first introduced it in 1993. It is therefore difficult to assess how the Removal Expenses Policy may have adversely impacted on any of the nine equality categories.

**Premature Retirement Policy** – The Premature Retirement Policy applies in circumstances where employees have reached 50 years of age and can demonstrate that having to adapt to the changing demands of their jobs would have a detrimental effect on their well-being and that their early release would result in efficiencies within the service.

This policy was introduced in 1993 to facilitate those members of staff who found difficulty in adapting to the changing demands placed on them through the introduction of Compulsory Tendering (CCT). Under this policy the Council has the discretion to award added years under the Local Government Superannuation Regulations to enable individuals to receive early payment of their pension.

The policy is very limited in application and is likely to be subsumed in the near future under new Superannuation Regulations published this year. On the basis of the information available to the Council it does not appear that the policy has an adverse impact on any of the nine equality categories.

## **Conclusion**

BCC is committed to the principle of equality of opportunity and is confident

that the measures identified in this report will contribute to fair participation and fair treatment in employment and help BCC to achieve a diverse workforce.

# **Procedures for Recruitment and Selection, Placing of Job Advertisements Policy, Removal Expenses Policy, Premature Retirement Policy**

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Under the statutory duties contained within Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, Belfast City Council gave an undertaking to carry out an equality impact assessment (EQIA) on each policy or group of co-joined policies where screening had indicated that there may be significant implications in relation to one or more of the nine equality dimensions.
- 1.2 This report has been made available as part of the final stage of the EQIA relating to these policies.
- 1.3 Further copies of the EQIA Report are available on the Council's website at [www.belfastcity.gov.uk](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk)
- 1.4 If you have any queries about this document, and its availability in alternative formats (including Braille, disk and audio cassette, and in minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English) then please contact:

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## Section 75 and the Statutory Duties

1.5 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires each public authority, when carrying out its functions in relation to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between nine categories of persons, namely

- Between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- Between men and women generally;
- Between persons with a disability and persons without;
- Between persons with dependants and persons without

Without prejudice to its obligations above, the public authority must also have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

The Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is being carried out in accordance with the Procedure for Conduct of Equality Impact Assessment outlined in the Guide to the Statutory Duties. The seven separate elements of the EQIA are:

- Consideration of available data and research
- Assessment of Impacts
- Consideration of measures that might mitigate any adverse impacts and alternative policies that might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity
- Formal Consultation
- Decision by the Public Authority
- Publication of results of the EQIA
- Monitor for Adverse Impact

The purpose of conducting the Equality Impact Assessment is as follows:

- To identify adverse impacts and to consider mitigating factors which will eliminate adverse impact;
- To consider alternative policies which would better promote equality of opportunity.

1.6 The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland approved Belfast City Council's Equality Scheme in **April 2001**. The Scheme outlines how the Council proposed to fulfil its statutory duties under Section 75. Following approval of the Scheme, existing policies were screened to assess impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity using the following criteria:

- is there any evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by different groups?
- is there any evidence that different groups have different needs, experiences,

issues and priorities in relation to the particular policy issues?

- is there an opportunity to promote equality of opportunity between the relevant different groups, either by altering the policy, or by working with others in government or in the larger community, in the context of the policy?
- have consultations with relevant groups, organisations or individuals indicated that policies of that type create problems specific to any relevant group?

1.7 A report describing the results of the screening process is available from the Council's Equality Officer. (See Section 1.4)

1.8 Following screening, a schedule of EQIA's was drawn up and the EQIA's on the Procedures on Recruitment and Selection, Placing of Job Advertisements Policy and Removal Expenses Policy and Premature Retirement Policy were scheduled for assessment in Year Two.

## **2.0 Background**

2.1 Belfast City Council is the largest of the 26 District Councils in Northern Ireland, serving a population of 277,391 people (Registrar General's Office Statistics, 2001) The Council spends more than £100 million each year and directly employs more than 2,300 people.

2.2 The Council is responsible for the delivery of key services within Belfast and in particular those relating to:

- Refuse collection and disposal
- Street cleansing
- Health and environmental services
- Community development
- Indoor and outdoor leisure
- Parks and recreational facilities
- Support for the arts, tourism and economic development

2.3 The City Council is structured around seven departments, namely:

- Chief Executive's
- Client Services
- Contract Services
- Corporate Services
- Development
- Health and Environmental Services
- Legal Services

### **Background Statement in Relation to EQIA'S**

2.4 Pre-consultation

The extensive screening exercise undertaken by BCC has been used to target individuals or organisations who have commented specifically on any of the policies that have been subjected to EQIA. Phone calls have also been made to the individuals with an interest in any of the policies and meetings facilitated. The information generated through the informal consultation process has been used to inform the recommendations contained in the draft report.

2.4.1 The Human Resource Policies that have been subject to EQIA in Year 2 all have an Equal Opportunities dimension in relation to recruitment and selection.

2.4.2 The legislation shown below provides the legal framework relating to recruitment and selection:

- Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998
- Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976

- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Race Relations (NI) Order 1997

- 2.4.3 Appointment of the best person for the job is the fundamental principle underlying the legislation impacting on equality of opportunity. It is illegal to positively discriminate in the recruitment process to achieve a representative workforce. It is however legal to identify areas where minority groups are under-represented and to encourage these groups to apply for vacant posts. Those measures fall outside the scope of the EQIA on Procedures for Recruitment and Selection. The relevant policies that can be used to bring about changes in the workforce are the Community Outreach Programme, the Equal Opportunities Policy and the Policy on the Placing of Job Advertisements. Each of the above mentioned policy areas have been or will be subjected to separate EQIA's.
- 2.4.4 Under the Disability Discrimination legislation employers are not prevented from treating a disabled person more favourably than a non-disabled person. Moreover a non-disabled person is not able to challenge on the grounds of preferential treatment being given to a disabled candidate. Some of the measures taken by Belfast City Council to assist disabled persons to access the recruitment and selection process are as follows:
- Providing disabled applicants with access to a Disability Helpline and the offer of making reasonable adjustments in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995;
  - Applying only the eligibility criteria to disabled persons;
  - Providing signers during interviews if requested;
  - Ensuring where psychometric tests and assessment centres are used as part of the selection process that the test provider can make the necessary adjustments for disabled persons.
- 2.4.5 All those involved in the recruitment and selection process receive training in recruitment and selection procedures and related equal opportunities legislation. Additionally, all employees must attend equal opportunities awareness training.
- 2.4.6 The shortlisting and interview panel members do not have access to information contained on the Council's monitoring form.
- 2.4.7 The sources of data used in undertaking the EQIA's are as follows:-

#### **Qualitative Data Sources**

- Screening Report prepared by Belfast City Council
- Report of the consultation exercise with external representatives conducted by Belfast City Council
- Report of the consultation exercise with Council employees conducted by Belfast City Council.
- The findings and recommendations of the University of Ulster's School of Management's Equal Opportunities Audit carried out 1999-2000.

## Quantitative Data Sources

- Article 55 Review formerly Section 31 Review
- Annual Monitoring Returns
- DETI NI Labour Force Survey Data Set 2000
- Personnel Information System
- Reports on Readership Statistics produced by AV Browne
- Report on Sex Discrimination and Religious Discrimination cases found against Belfast City Council 1997-1999 – no recruitment related cases upheld.
- Census Data 1991 and 2001

2.4.8 The Council has included where relevant the Census data 2001 in the Appendices. This new Census data was not available at the time of drafting the EQIA and has not been used for comparative purposes as part of this analysis but it will however be used as part of the ongoing monitoring process.

2.4.9 Any discrepancies in the number of appointees in some of the tables within the EQIA reports are due to differences in the way the information is recorded in the Annual Monitoring Return and the applicant database. For example, the Annual Monitoring Return contains data on appointees who are still in post at 31.12 2001 while the internal applicant database includes appointees who may have left, for example seasonal workers, and hence the overall workforce figure will be greater.

2.4.10 The information held on BCC's applicant system relating to disability, ethnic origin, dependants and marital status refers only to job applicants and not to the workforce. BCC's system holds information on employees' gender, age and perceived religious affiliation.

## **3.0 Procedures on Recruitment and Selection**

### **3.1 Background to the Procedures on Recruitment and Selection**

- 3.1.1 The Policy and Procedures on Recruitment and Selection implemented by Belfast City Council are the 'Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection' issued by the Local Government Staff Commission to all Councils in September 2001 for implementation from January 2002.
- 3.1.2 Under Section 40 (4)(b) of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972 the Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland is statutorily bound to establish
- “...a code of procedure for securing fair and equal consideration of applicants to Councils by persons seeking to be employed by them as officers and fair and equal treatment of persons who are so employed.”
- 3.1.3 The Code applies to all Council appointments including full time and part-time posts, temporary, fixed term contract, permanent and secondments. The procedures provide a framework for best practice and may be supplemented by Councils through consultation with the Commission. It is however the responsibility of Belfast City Council to review the application of the procedures through the ongoing analysis of the implementation of their Human Resources policies and monitoring returns.
- 3.1.4 A separate Equality Impact Assessment of the application of the Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection across all 26 Councils is being undertaken by the Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC) during 2002-2003. By letter dated 6<sup>th</sup> November the Local Government Staff Commission advised Belfast City Council as follows:-.

“The Commission has commenced its equality impact assessments (EQIA) of its Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection and Observers. A working group comprising human resource practitioners, from the Councils and Commission Staff is conducting the EQIA “

(See Appendix 1: LGSC letter)

At its first meeting the working group agreed that:

- The Commission has responsibility for conducting an EQIA on the best practice guidance contained in the Code of Procedures.
- Each Council has responsibility for conducting an EQIA on how the Code of Procedures is implemented in their Council through their recruitment and selection procedures and the impact of those procedures on the different equality categories.”

3.1.5 The Procedures on Recruitment and Selection do not stand alone and are implemented in accordance with the Equality Commission's Statutory Codes of Practice and a range of Belfast City Council policies such as: the Community Outreach Programme, Placing of Job Advertisements policy, Training and Development and Succession planning initiatives.

## **3.2 Procedures on Recruitment and Selection**

### **3.2.1 Aim**

- The Local Government Staff Commission recommends the Code of Procedures on Recruitment & Selection for adoption and implementation in the District Councils in Northern Ireland in line with its statutory responsibility to establish:....."a code of procedure for securing fair and equal consideration of appointment to Councils by persons seeking to be employed by them as officers and fair and equal treatment of persons who are so employed." (1972 Local Government Act)

### **3.2.2 Associated objectives**

- To provide a best practice approach to recruitment and selection.
- To ensure consistency across Belfast City Council through the application of common procedures.
- To comply with legislative requirements and standards

### **3.2.3 Who implements the Policy**

- The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the effective implementation of the policy. The Head of Human Resources and the Human Resources Manager - Employee Resourcing implement the policy in conjunction with the clients in each Department.

### **3.2.4 Outcomes for BCC**

- To select the right person based on merit.
- To document the process for each stage of the recruitment exercise.

### **3.2.5 Main stakeholders**

- Elected Members
- Potential Job Applicants – Internal and External
- Client Departments
- Trade Unions

### **3.2.6 Outcomes for main stakeholders**

- That there is equality of access, fair participation, fair treatment, and selection on merit.

### 3.2.7 **Support for other policies/strategies**

- This policy is integral to all Human Resources policies and the Corporate Strategic Objectives.

### 3.2.8 **Interface with other organisations in relation to the implementation of the Recruitment and Selection Procedures.**

- The Department of the Environment
- Local Government Staff Commission
- Equality Commission
- Trade Unions

### 3.3 Assessment of Impacts

#### Religion

- 3.3.1 Belfast City Council has monitored the perceived religious affiliations of the workforce and applicants since 1990. The categories monitored include Protestant, Roman Catholic and non-determined. No information has been gathered on minority religious beliefs. (See Table 1)
- 3.3.2 The religious composition of the applicants and appointees to Belfast City Council as recorded in the Council's Annual Monitoring Return are shown in Tables 2 and 3 below. Table 4 shows applicants shortlisted and appointees from the internal database. In general the work force flow figures from application to appointment demonstrate that there is fair participation. The composition of the Councils workforce on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2002 at 59.6% Protestant and 35.8% Roman Catholic is close to the "mean percentage" travel to work figure and therefore deemed to represent fair participation between the two main communities. (See Table 5 which demonstrates workforce composition from the Annual Monitoring Return).

**Table 1 Protestant and other Denominations and Roman Catholics for Economically Active**

	Protestant & Others	Roman Catholic
Belfast District Council Area	55.7%	44.3%
Total Belfast TTWA	70.6%	29.4%
Northern Ireland Comparator	60.1%	39.9%
"Mean Percentage" ** BCC + Total Belfast TTWA	63%	37%

\*Travel to work area

\*\*For the purpose of the BCC Article 55 Review a "mean percentage" was taken between the Belfast District Council area figure and the Total Travel to Work Area. This produced a figure of 63% Protestant and 37% Roman Catholic.

**Source: Northern Ireland 1991 Census Data and BCC Article 55 Review.**

**Table 2 Religion of Applicants for posts 2001 by Standard Occupational Classification (SOC)\***

	Protestant	Roman Catholic	Non Determined	Total
SOC 1	52.0%	43.9%	4.1%	100%
SOC 2	47.8%	49.3%	2.9%	100%
SOC 3	49.1%	46.8%	4.1%	100%
SOC 4	48.3%	47.6%	4.1%	100%
SOC 5	53.4%	44.0%	2.6%	100%
SOC 6	55.8%	42.1%	2.1%	100%
SOC 7	53.6%	40.9%	5.5%	100%
SOC 8	66.7%	32.8%	0.5%	100%
SOC 9	65.9%	31.8%	2.3%	100%

**Overall Totals**

**Protestant: 53.7%:Roman Catholic: 43.0%:Non Determined: 3.3%**

**Source: BCC Annual Monitoring Return 2002**

**\*See Appendix 2**

**Table 3 Religion of Appointees 2001 by SOC**

	Protestant	Roman Catholic	Non Determined	Total
SOC 1	53.3%	46.7%	0%	100%
SOC 2	63.6%	36.4%	0%	100%
SOC 3	54.2%	43.7%	2.1%	100%
SOC 4	36.4%	63.6%	0%	100%
SOC 5	45.5%	54.5%	0%	100%
SOC 6	46.5%	53.5%	0%	100%
SOC 7	33.3%	44.4%	22.3%	100%
SOC 8	70%	30%	0%	100%
SOC 9	57.7%	38.5%	3.8%	100%

**Overall Totals**

**Protestant: 51.6%: Roman Catholic:46.2%:Non Determined 2.2%**

**Source: Annual Monitoring Return 2002**

**Table 4 Summary of Religion of Applicants, Shortlisted and Appointees 2001**

	Protestant	Roman Catholic	Non Determined	Total
Applicants 2001	1666 (53.7%)	1333 (43.0%)	104 (3.3%)	3103
Shortlisted 2001	901 (55.1%)	695 (42.5%)	38 (2.4%)	1634
Appointed 2001	235 (53.4%)	195 (44.3%)	10 (2.3%)	440

**Source: The BCC Internal Database**

3.3.3 The figures in Tables 2, 3 and 4 demonstrate that while there are variations in the representation of the Protestant and Roman Catholic community when broken down by SOC this is due to the nature of the post advertised and the catchment area from which the potential applicants will be drawn for example for lower posts the catchment area will be Belfast City Council and senior posts could attract an applicant pool from across Northern Ireland.

**Table 5 Workforce Composition 1.1. 2002 by SOC**

	Protestant	Roman Catholic	Non Determined	Total
SOC 1	149 58.7%	87 34.2%	18 7.1%	254 100%
SOC 2	73 55.3%	54 40.9%	5 3.8%	132 100%
SOC 3	202 56.1%	139 38.6%	19 5.3%	360 100%
SOC 4	194 60.1%	122 37.8%	7 2.1%	323 100%
SOC 5	109 69.0%	43 27.2%	6 3.8%	158 100%
SOC 6	201 56.8%	138 39.0%	15 4.2%	354 100%
SOC 7	16 55.2%	9 31.0%	4 13.8%	29 100%
SOC 8	168 62.5%	94 34.9%	7 2.6%	269 100%
SOC 9	275 61.4%	147 32.8%	26 5.8%	448 100%
Totals	1387 59.6%	833 35.8%	107 4.6%	2327 100%

**Source: BCC Annual Monitoring Return 2002**

3.3.4 When a comparison is made between the breakdown given in tables 2 –5 by Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) with the composition of the economically active in the Belfast TTWA it demonstrates that while the overall percentage of applicants shortlisted and appointed for each of the main religious groups is close to the target population there is an under representation in certain areas. In the Section 31 Review submitted in 1999 the Equality Commission noted the under-representation at Director and Craft positions. It was also however recognised that there is limited recruitment in these areas (See Appendix 4)

3.3.5 Over the next few years a number of senior positions within the Council will become vacant and the Council through its initiatives on training and development and succession planning will seek to ensure opportunities for development are made available to encourage under represented groups to avail of these opportunities.

- 3.3.6 At the time of screening Belfast City Council conducted an extensive consultation exercise on the policies that were to be subjected to EQIA. The analysis of the qualitative data gathered through screening and the consultation process on the Model Equal Opportunities Policy and Community Outreach Programme subjected to EQIA in year one demonstrate that no issues have been raised to indicate that the Recruitment and Selection Procedures have a differential adverse impact in terms of religion.
- 3.3.7 Therefore there is no quantitative or qualitative evidence to demonstrate that the Recruitment and Selection Procedures have an adverse differential impact in terms of religion.

### **Political Opinion**

- 3.3.8 Within the Belfast City Council Code of Conduct for employees it states that “employees must not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work.” Moreover it is not the policy of Belfast City Council to monitor the political opinion of applicants or employees. Through the extensive consultation process undertaken by Belfast City Council on screening and on the application of a range of their Human Resources policies (through Year 1 EQIA's) no issues have been raised to indicate that the application of the Recruitment and Selection Procedures impact in a differential way in respect of political opinion.

### **Racial Group**

- 3.3.9 An analysis of secondary data demonstrates that there has been an increase of 3,500 people from ethnic minorities living in N.I.<sup>1</sup> making a total of around 20,000 people (Multi Cultural Resource Centre) Despite this, it is estimated that minority ethnic groups constitute less than 1% of the total population of the Belfast area.
- 3.3.10 The Council introduced monitoring for ethnic minority applicants and appointees on a voluntary basis in 1997. It is difficult to make a determination in relation to adverse impact from the existing statistical information due to sampling error given the small numbers concerned. For example in 2000 there were 17 applicants and 6 appointees (from ethnic minority groups out of a total of 3,449 applicants and in 2001 24 applicants and 1 appointee (See Table 6 Applicant Flow and Ethnic Minority Communities 2001.)

### 3.3.11 **Table 6 Applicant Flow by Race 2001**

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<sup>1</sup> Jarman N, Community Development Centre, Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, Research Branch, Overview Analysis of Racial Incidents recorded in Northern Ireland by the RUC 1996 – 1998

		<b>White</b>	<b>Ethnic Minority</b>
Applicants	3103	3079 (99.2%)	24 (0.8%)
Shortlisted	1634	1627 (99.6%)	7 (0.49%)
Appointees	440	439 (99.8%)	1 (0.2%)

**Source: BCC Internal Database**

- 3.3.12 In extensive consultations during screening and while undertaking the Human Resource EQIA's in Year 1 the issues raised by the representative groups were relevant to the Community Outreach Programme as opposed to the application of the Recruitment and Selection Procedures. The exception was the comment received from the Belfast Travellers Support Group that BCC should target employment for people without literacy skills as this would benefit a wider section of the community in terms of disadvantage and disabilities. A number of measures are being taken by the Council to ensure that there is access to employment for people with low level literacy skills. For example as a result of the EQIA on the Community Outreach Programme the Council is refocusing work experience opportunities. In addition the Council is also introducing a competency framework for Recruitment and Selection, which will reduce the reliance on academic qualifications as eligibility criteria.
- 3.3.13 The Council is mindful of the language barriers in accessing the recruitment procedures for people from ethnic minority communities and for those with literacy problems. Where appropriate the Council facilitates those wishing to apply for posts within the Council to complete application forms and with any special requirements they may have at assessment stage. It is also proposed to target information on access to employment with Belfast City Council as one of the mitigating actions under the EQIA on the placing of Job Advertisements
- 3.3.14 The analysis of the qualitative information on recruitment and selection procedures demonstrates that there is no evidence of adverse differential impact in terms of ethnic minority background. Additionally there is no appropriate reliable quantitative data to suggest there is a differential impact in respect of a person's ethnic background.

### **Age**

- 3.3.15 The comparison between the NI Labour Force Survey Annual Data Set and the breakdown of the age profile of the applicants shortlisted, and, appointees demonstrates that the Procedure on Recruitment and Selection impacts in a differential way in respect of a person's age.

**Table 7 NI Labour Force Survey Annual Data Set 2000**

Age	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
	%	%	%	%	%	%
In employment	16	27	26	19	9	2
ILO* unemployed	26	30	21	18	**	**
Economically inactive	17	9	10	10	17	38
All	17	20	19	15	12	16

\*ILO- International Labour Organisation standard definition of unemployed.

\*\* Sample size too small for reliable estimate

Source: NI Labour Force Survey 2000

**Table 8 Applicants by Age Bands 2001**

Blank	34	(1.1%)	
16-24	938	(30.2%)	
25-34	1114	(35.9%)	
35-44	632	(20.4%)	
45-54	292	(9.4%)	
55-64	92	(3.0%)	
65+	1	(0%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>3103</b>		<b>100%</b>

Source: The BCC Internal Database

**Table 9 Shortlisted by Age Bands 2001**

Blank	21	(1.3%)	
16-24	453	(27.7%)	
25-34	582	(35.6%)	
35-44	376	(23.0%)	
45-54	153	(9.4%)	
55-64	49	(3.0%)	
65+	0	(0)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1634</b>		<b>100%</b>

Source: The BCC Internal Database

**Table 10 Appointed by Age Bands 2001**

Blank	7	(1.6%)	
16-24	118	(26.8%)	
25-34	149	(33.9%)	
35-44	111	(25.2%)	
45-54	45	(10.2%)	
55-64	10	(2.3%)	
65+	0	(0%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>440*</b>		<b>100%</b>

\*Total figure of Appointees in Table 10 includes casuals, FTC, industrial placements and all seasonal workers

Source: The BCC Internal Database

3.3.16 The age profile of the applicants will depend to a large degree on the nature of the posts advertised and the experience and qualifications requirements. A profile of the jobs advertised in 2001 is provided in (Appendix 2)

3.3.17 The Council is currently introducing a competency based recruitment process where each vacant post is reviewed and consideration given to the necessity of reliance on formal qualifications. The implementation of this major initiative will facilitate certain age groups such as young people and older people who may not have been able to comply with the qualification requirements previously imposed. It is also proposed to target information on access to employment with Belfast City Council as one of the mitigating actions under the EQIA on the placing of Job Advertisements

**Marital Status**

3.3.18 There are no reliable statistics available in relation to the marital status of BCC employees. However, the statistics in Tables 12 to 14 demonstrate that the percentages of married and non-married applicants, short listed and appointees compares favourably with the percentages in the general population.

**Table 11 NI Labour Force Survey – Annual Data Set – Marital Status 2000**

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Single never married %</b>	<b>Married living with husband / wife %</b>	<b>Married Separated from Husband/ Wife %</b>	<b>Divorced %</b>	<b>Widowed %</b>
In employment	35	58	3	2	2
*ILO unemployed	49	39	*	*	*
Economically inactive	28	50	3	3	17
All	33	54	3	3	8

\*ILO- International Labour Organisation standard definition of unemployed.

**Source: NI Labour Force Survey**

**Table12 Marital Status of all Applicants 2001**

<b>Applicants</b>	<b>Married</b>	<b>904</b>	<b>(29.1%)</b>
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	<b>Non-married</b>	<b>2082</b>	<b>(67.1%)</b>
	<b>No response</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>(3.8%)</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3103</b>	<b>(100%)</b>

**Source: The BCC Internal Database**

**Table 13 Marital Status of all Shortlisted 2001**

Shortlisted	Married	504	(30.8%)
	Non-married	1056	(64.6%)
	No response	74	(4.6%)
	Total	1634	100%)

**Source: The BCC Internal Database**

**Table 14 Marital Status of Appointees 2001**

Appointed	Married	139	(31.6%)
	Non-married	281	(63.9%)
	No response	20	(4.5%)
	Total	440	(100%)

**Source: Internal BCC Database**

3.3.19 There is no evidence to suggest that there is a differential impact in respect of marital status, nor have specific issues been raised to suggest a differential impact exists.

### **Sexual Orientation**

3.3.20 There was considerable consultation with the gay and lesbian community as part of the consultation process on screening. The research to date has not indicated any likelihood of adverse consequences for individuals covered by this Section 75 category through the implementation of the Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection.

### **Gender**

- 3.3.21 The Council monitors the percentages of male and female applicants, shortlisted, appointees and employees.
- 3.3.22 Tables 17 and 18 show a breakdown of applicants and appointees by gender and SOC. Tables 19 to 21 summarise this information and includes those shortlisted. In general the workforce flow figures from application to appointment demonstrate there is fair participation.
- 3.3.23 The overall percentages of males and females in the workforce in BCC compares favourably with the percentages of males and females in employment across NI as reported in the NI Labour Force Survey – Annual Data Set 2000 (See tables 15 and 16 below)

**Table 15 – Northern Ireland Labour Force Annual Data Set 2000**

<b>SEX</b>	Male %	Female %
In employment	57	43
ILO unemployed	63	37
Economically inactive	36	64
<b>All</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>52</b>

**Table 16 – Workforce Composition as at 1 January 2002 by Gender by SOC**

<b>SOC</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
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SOC1	163 64.2%	91 35.8%	254 100%
SOC 2	84 63.6%	48 36.4%	132 100%
SOC 3	195 54.2%	165 45.8%	360 100%
SOC 4	60 18.6%	263 81.4%	323 100%
SOC 5	157 99.4%	1 0.6%	158 100%
SOC 6	199 56.2%	155 43.8%	354 100%
SOC 7	4 13.8%	25 86.2%	29 100%
SOC 8	267 99.3%	2 0.7%	269 100%
SOC 9	311 69.4%	137 30.6%	448 100%
Total	1440 61.9%	887 38.1%	2327 100%

Source: Annual Monitoring Return 2002

3.3.24 BCC takes proactive action to encourage women to apply for previously non traditional jobs in Local Government and to promote work-life balance for example through job-sharing, flexible working, career breaks, phased return to work, special unpaid leave.

3.3.25 Between 1995 and 1998 the representation of females in the workforce increased from 34.4% to 37.7% and in 2001 to 38.1%

Table 17 Applicants by Gender and SOC 2001

	Male		Female		Total	
SOC1	312	(58.8%)	219	(41.2%)	531	(100%)
SOC 2	24	(34.8%)	45	(65.2%)	69	(100%)
SOC 3	406	(54.1%)	344	(45.9%)	750	(100%)
SOC 4	159	(27.4%)	421	(72.6%)	580	(100%)
SOC 5	113	(97.4%)	3	(2.6%)	116	(100%)
SOC 6	201	(62.6%)	120	(37.4%)	321	(100%)
SOC 7	46	(28.0%)	118	(72.0%)	164	(100%)
SOC 8	399	(100%)	0	(0%)	399	(100%)
SOC 9	119	(68.8%)	54	(31.2%)	173	(100%)

<b>Total</b>	<b>1779</b>	<b>(57.3%)</b>	<b>1324</b>	<b>(42.7%)</b>	<b>3103</b>	<b>(100%)</b>
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Source: BCC Annual Monitoring Return 2002

**Table 18 Appointees by Gender and SOC 2001**

	Male		Female		Total	
SOC 1	9	(60.0%)	6	(40%)	15	(100%)
SOC 2	3	(27.3%)	8	(72.7%)	11	(100%)
SOC 3	34	(70.8%)	14	(29.2%)	48	(100%)
SOC 4	1	(9.1%)	10	(90.9%)	11	(100%)
SOC 5	11	(100%)	0	(0%)	11	(100%)
SOC 6	14	(32.6%)	29	(67.4%)	43	(100%)
SOC 7	2	(22.2%)	7	(77.8%)	9	(100%)
SOC 8	10	(100%)	0	(0%)	10	(100%)
SOC 9	15	(57.7%)	11	(42.3%)	26	(100%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>(53.8%)</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>(46.2%)</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>(100%)</b>

Source: BCC Annual Monitoring Return 2002

**Table 19 Applicants by Gender - 2001**

Male	1779	(57.3%)
Female	1324	(42.7%)
Total	3103	(100%)

Source: BCC Annual Monitoring Return 2002

**Table 20 Summary of Shortlisted by Gender 2001**

Male	991	(60.6%)
Female	643	(39.4%)
Total	1634	(100%)

Source: BCC Database

**Table 21 Summary of those Appointed by Gender 2001**

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Male	257	(58.4%)
Female	183	(41.6%)
Total	440	(100%)

**Source: BCC Database**

3.3.26 The breakdown of the workforce by SOC's and gender in Table 16 and comments received through the consultation exercise on screening suggest there may be adverse differential impact in terms of the representation of females in senior management grades. The Council is however targeting a number of measures under their Model Equal Opportunities Policy, Community Outreach Programme, Training and Development initiatives to encourage more women to apply for management positions and in areas that have been regarded as traditionally male dominated professions. It is also proposed to target information on access to employment with Belfast City Council as one of the mitigating actions under the EQIA on the Placing of Job Advertisements.

### **Persons with and without a disability**

3.3.27 Belfast City Council currently takes a wide range of measures to facilitate persons with a disability to access employment opportunities. The following list is indicative but not exhaustive of some of the measures taken:

- Notifying the Disability Advisory Service of all job vacancies;
- in the letter to potential applicants advising them of the reasonable adjustments that can be made and of the help-line number,
- stating in the job advertisement that information relating to the recruitment exercise can be produced in alternative formats;
- making signers available during interview process;
- applying the essential criteria and dropping the desirable criteria for persons with a disability when shortlisting;
- when using psychometric tests as part of the selection process ensuring that the person administering the tests will make suitable adjustments for applicants with disabilities;
- through the Community Outreach Programme encouraging people with disabilities to avail of work experience placements with the Council.

3.3.28 The ratios of disabled persons who apply for and are shortlisted and appointed to the Council as represented in Table 22 demonstrate that the measures the Council is taking to open up access to persons with a disability are having a favourable impact. It is accepted however that there are issues around the reliability of information on disabled persons and the difficulties in making comparisons due to the lack of information on the persons with a disability in the workforce and the reluctance of many people to acknowledge that they may have a disability that falls within the definition of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)

**Table 22 Applications, Shortlisted and Appointed for Persons with a declared Disability 2001**

<b>Applicants with Disability</b>	<b>49</b>	
<b>Shortlisted</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>(63.3%)</b>
<b>Not Shortlisted*</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>(36.7%)</b>
<b>Appointed</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>(19.4%)</b>
<b>Not Appointed</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>(80.6%)</b>

\* Did not meet minimum job criteria

Source: Internal BCC Database

The 63.3% shortlisted compares favourably with those who did not declare a disability (52.5%)

3.3.29 An analysis of the qualitative information available through the consultation process on the Model Equal Opportunities Policy resulted in access to employment policies for people with learning disabilities being identified as an issue the Council should address. The Council is researching how the scope of the internal staff counselling service could be expanded to facilitate those with a learning disability to access the full range of employment policies and procedures including the recruitment process. It is also proposed to target information on access to employment with Belfast City Council as one of the mitigating actions under the EQIA on the placing of Job Advertisements

### **Persons with and without Dependents**

3.3.30 The only information currently captured on dependents is through the Equal Opportunities monitoring form completed by job applicants. These records do not provide a reliable record of those with and without dependents in the workforce, i.e. they record the applicants' circumstances on entry, however the ratios of applicants, shortlisted and appointed for those with and without dependents shows that there is evidence of fair participation.

**Table 23 Applicants with and without Dependents 2001**

<b>Applicants 2001</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>

Without Dependents	1125 (85%)	1391 (78%)
With Dependents	199 (15%)	388 (22%)
Total	1324 (100%)	1779 (100%)

**Source: Internal BCC Database**

**Table 24 Shortlisted with and without Dependents 2001**

Shortlisted 2001	Female	Male
Without Dependents	523 (81%)	761 (77%)
With Dependents	120 (19%)	230 (23%)
Total	643 (100%)	991 (100%)

**Source: Internal BCC Database**

**Table 25 Appointed with and without Dependents 2001**

Appointed 2001	Female	Male
Without Dependents	151 (83%)	185 (72%)
With Dependents	32 (17%)	72 (28%)
Total	183 (100%)	257 (100%)

**Source: Internal BCC Database**

## **4.0 Placing Job Advertisement Policy**

### **4.1 Background to the Policy on Placing Job Advertisements**

4.1.1 At Policy and Resources (Personnel) Sub Committee meeting on 21 December 1998 the committee debated the Council Policy on Placing Job Advertisements and took the following decisions

“To publicly advertise all vacancies, with the exception of those circumstances where circulating the post internally would directly mitigate a possible redundancy situation in the Council or where technical journals would be the best method to use to attract specialists. All basic grade posts to be advertised through the Training and Employment Agency’s offices and more senior posts through placing advertisements in the Belfast Telegraph, the Irish News and the Newsletter in order to attract applications from all sections of the community across Northern Ireland and to ensure equality of access.”

4.1.2 The policy on placing Job Advertisements takes into account readership levels, the most cost effective method of ensuring equality of access to the recruitment process and the business needs of the departments to expedite the time taken to fill vacancies.

4.1.3 The Council policy on Placing Job Advertisements was once again reviewed by the Policy and Resources Sub-Committee at their meeting on 25 January 1999 when Councillors considered recruitment costs and circulation information on newspapers in Northern Ireland. The Sub Committee noted the information provided and took the decision that the existing policy should continue to apply.

4.1.4 In addition to advertising all job vacancies in the Belfast Telegraph, Irish News and Newsletter the Council forwards copies of all advertisements to the Disability Advisory Service and information on current vacancies is available on the Council’s Jobline.

4.1.5 The Council has implemented a system to place all vacancies on its web-site and this will go live within the next couple of months.

### **4.2 Placing of Job Advertisements**

#### **4.2.1 Aim**

- To draw Council vacancies to the attention of potential applicants.
- To attract applicants from all sections of the community; to ensure equality of access and to do so in the most cost effective manner taking into account the costs of advertising and the circulation figures of local newspapers.

- To ensure that the advertisement of all posts is accessible to all sections of the community.

#### 4.2.2 **Associated objectives**

- To implement the policy in a cost-effective manner
- To be conscious of service delivery requirements in terms of the time taken to fill vacancies.

#### 4.2.3 **Who implements the Policy**

- The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the effective implementation of the policy. The Head of Human Resources and the Senior HR Advisor - Employee Resourcing implement the policy in conjunction with the clients in each Department.

#### 4.2.4 **Outcomes for BCC**

- Bringing to the attention of all potential applicants the career opportunities that exist within the City Council.
- To ensure BCC optimises the pool of potential applicants for each post.

#### 4.2.5 **Main stakeholders**

- Elected Members
- Job Applicants – Internal or External
- Client Departments
- Trade Unions

#### 4.2.6 **Outcomes for main stakeholders**

- That the Human Resources Section presents for selection the optimum pool of qualified candidates

#### 4.2.7 **Support for other policies/strategies**

- This policy is integral to all Human Resources policies and the Corporate Strategic Objectives.

#### 4.2.8 **Interface with other organisations in relation to the implementation of the Placing of Job Advertisements Policy.**

- Local Government Staff Commission
- Trade Unions
- Disablement Advisory Service

### 4.3 **Assessment of Impacts**

Readership profiles for the three main Belfast papers indicate an even distribution across the economically active population (see Appendix 5 for further details)

#### **Religion**

- 4.3.1 Belfast City Council has monitored the perceived religious affiliation of the applicant flows since 1990. The categories monitored include Protestant, Roman Catholic and non-determined. The internal applicant database does not however identify where the potential applicant saw the advertisement.
- 4.3.2 The Tables (1 to 4) on religion and religious composition for the Economically Active by TTWA and the applicant flows for 2001 demonstrate that there is no evidence of the differential impact in terms of religion through the application of the existing policy on Placing Job Advertisements. Moreover through the consultation exercise on screening and on the Model Equal Opportunities Policy undertaken more recently no issues were identified in terms of religion.
- 4.3.3 There is therefore no quantitative or qualitative evidence to demonstrate that the Policy on Placing Job Advertisements has an adverse differential impact in terms of religion.

#### **Political Opinion.**

- 4.3.4 It is not the policy of Belfast City Council to monitor the political opinion of applicants or appointees. Through the extensive consultation process undertaken by the Council to date no issues have been raised to indicate that the Policy has a differential adverse impact in terms of political opinion.

#### **Racial Group**

- 4.3.5 The Council introduced monitoring for applicants from ethnic minority communities on a voluntary basis in 1997. It is difficult to make a determination on adverse impact based on the qualitative data due to sampling error given the

small numbers concerned. For example in 2001 24 applicants from ethnic minority backgrounds applied out of a total of 3103 (See Table 6)

The following comments were received during the screening process:

- that job advertisements for vacancies within the Council should be placed where all people will see them i.e. not just the big papers
- that the Council should work with community groups to ensure access to all potential candidates particularly among excluded minority groups

4.3.6 Belfast City Council is keen to build partnerships with local ethnic community groups and has already taken a number of measures to do so. The Council will continue to take measures to build partnerships with those representing the local ethnic communities and will explore circulating information on how to access employment in Belfast City Council

### **Age**

4.3.7 Information on the age profile of all applicants is provided in Table 8. A comparison between the age profile for applicants with the Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey Annual Data Set (Table 7) on Age demonstrates that the percentages of people applying in the 16-24 age group is double that of the economically active in employment and that the percentages of applicants in the 45-54 and 55-64 age groups are significantly lower. The age profile of the applicants also must be assessed in light of the nature of the posts advertised in any year. The posts advertised in 2001 are listed in (Appendix 4) The nature of a number of the posts advertised may well have attracted higher percentages of young people i.e. clerical positions, recreation assistants, environmental health posts, front of house posts, fitness coaches.

### **Marital Status**

4.3.8 When the marital status of the applicants in Table 12 is compared with the NI Labour Force Survey Data in Table 11 it demonstrates that there is a lower than expected percentage of married people applying for posts with BCC. However this may once again be reflective of the nature of the posts advertised and the fact that high percentages of single young people applied because of the type of post advertised.

### **Sexual Orientation**

4.3.9 The Council does not monitor the sexual orientation of applicants. Through the consultation process in relation to the Year 1 EQIA's it was recommended by Coalition on Sexual Orientation (CoSo) that BCC should monitor the sexual orientation of applicants. The Council will research monitoring models used by other organisations.

4.3.10 There was considerable consultation with the gay and lesbian community as part of the consultation process on screening and comments were raised about the Council advertising in some of the magazines read primarily by the gay and lesbian community. The Council intends to further explore how information on access to posts could be made more accessible to the gay and lesbian community.

## **Gender**

4.3.11 Information is available on the gender of applicants for all externally advertised posts through the annual monitoring return. Table 17 demonstrates that the overall breakdown of applicants by gender is 57% male 43% female. Further analysis of the breakdown of applicants by gender by SOC demonstrates that there is an under representation of female applicants for craft and operative positions (SOC 8) and under representation of males applying for clerical posts (SOC 4 + 5) (Table 17).

4.3.12 The Council is targeting a number of measures under their Model Equal Opportunities Policy, Community Outreach Programme and Training and Development Initiatives to encourage females and males to apply for posts traditionally regarded as male or female professions. A more detailed analysis is also to be undertaken in to the readership profiles of the three main papers in which the Council currently advertises. Moreover, through the internal and external consultation process the Council intends to identify ways of forwarding targeted information on accessing employment with the City Council for local voluntary sector groups.

## **Persons with and without a disability**

4.3.13 In addition to advertising all job vacancies in the Belfast Telegraph, the Irish News and the Newsletter the Council forwards copies of advertisements to the Disability Advisory Service. Information is collected through the monitoring form on whether applicants consider themselves to be disabled under the disability definition as contained in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. From the data available there is no evidence of differential impact in respect of a person's disability. A number of issues were raised under the EQIA on the Model Equal Opportunities Policy in relation to access to employment policies for people with learning disabilities.

4.3.14 These issues have been taken into account by the Council and support measures are to be made available to internal and external applicants with a disability, through providing assistance to make their application. The Council is also keen to hear from interested groups about measures that it may be possible for the Council to implement for example: the launch of an annual information sheet on applying for jobs with the Council, poster campaigns, adaptations that could be

made to the posting of the job advertisements on the web- site to facilitate disabled persons applying for jobs.

**Persons with dependants.**

- 4.3.15 Information is collected through the monitoring form on applicants with and without dependants in relation to their responsibilities for the care and welfare of others (i.e. children, other relatives) There is no evidence from this information or from any other source, to indicate that there is a differential impact in terms of the policy on placing jobs advertisements in respect of persons with dependants.

## **5.0 REMOVAL EXPENSES POLICY**

### **5.1 Background to the Removal Expenses Policy**

5.1.1 The policy on removal expenses was adopted by Belfast City Council in 1993. The rationale for introducing the policy was to encourage potential applicants from G.B to apply for posts requiring experience and skills in the application of Compulsory Competitive Tendering (C.C.T). The policy applied to those applying for posts that are of Head of Service or Chief Officer level. Through the application of the policy newly appointed officers can receive assistance in meeting the costs of removal expenses and lodging/travelling expenses incurred through taking up their appointment.

5.1.2 The scope of this policy is narrow in that it only applies in the following circumstances:

- Where the post has been advertised in the national newspapers and/or journals
- The officer appointed is taking up a post at Head of Service or Chief Officer level and at their time of appointment was residing in G.B.
- The policy will not apply if the appointee's spouse/partner is eligible under a separate scheme from another employer

The policy has not been taken up since the introduction of compulsory competitive tendering (C.C.T).

### **5.2 Removal Expenses Policy**

#### **5.2.1 Aim**

- To aid recruitment by assisting newly appointed officers at certain designated grades to meet the costs of removal expenses, lodging and travelling expenses incurred through taking up their appointment

#### **5.2.2 Associated Objectives**

- To meet a skills gap identified by the Council through encouraging people from G.B. to relocate to Northern Ireland.

#### **5.2.3 Who implements the Policy**

- The Human Resources Section implements the policy for Chief Officer posts.

#### **5.2.4 Outcomes for Belfast City Council**

- Increased applicant pool for Chief Officer posts

#### 5.2.5 **Main stakeholders**

- Elected Members
- Job Applicants - External
- Client Departments
- Trade Unions

#### 5.2.6 **Outcomes for Main Stakeholders**

- To assist newly appointed officers at a certain designated level in meeting their costs in relation to Removal Expenses, lodging and travelling incurred through taking up appointment.

#### 5.2.7 **Support for other policies/strategies**

- This policy supports the implementation of the Recruitment Policy

### 5.3 **Assessment of Impacts**

This policy is very limited in application and has only been used on a few occasions since it was first introduced by the Council in 1993. It is therefore difficult to assess how the Removal Expenses Policy may have adversely impacted on any of the nine equality categories. However the Council, in accordance with the Guidance on Conducting EQIA's, wishes to consult with those who may have an interest in this policy.

## **6.0 PREMATURE RETIREMENT POLICY**

### **6.1 Background to the Premature Retirement Policy**

- 6.1.1 The policy on premature retirement was adopted by Belfast City Council in 1993. The policy was introduced as part of a change management programme in preparation for the implementation of Compulsory Competitive Tendering (C.C.T). It was acknowledged by the Council that not all employees would feel capable of adapting to the changing working environment necessitated by C.C.T. Therefore a policy was adopted that would enable the Council to facilitate employees who wished to leave on the grounds of premature retirement to receive discretionary 'added years' so that their benefits payable under the Local Government Superannuation Scheme could be paid before they reached normal retirement age.
- 6.1.2 The policy applies to those employees who have reached the age of 50 who wish to retire early, where permitting them to cease employment would ensure the efficient exercise of the Council's services. Through the application of this policy employees who are over 50 years of age can make an application through their Head of Department to the Director of Corporate Services to be considered for premature retirement.
- 6.1.3 The Director of Corporate Services has delegated authority to approve the applications. Each case is assessed on its own merits in terms of the efficiency improvements that can be made and the impact on the person's well-being of remaining in the job.

The policy may cease to be necessary following the implementation of changes to the Northern Ireland Superannuation Committee Regulations that are due to take effect later this year.

- 6.1.4 The scope of this policy is narrow in that it only applies in the following circumstances:

- Where the member of
- Employee has reached 50 years of age and can demonstrate that having to adapt to the changing demands of their jobs would have a detrimental effect on their well-being and that their early release will result in performance improvements.

There have been 12 applications for premature retirement since the policy was first introduced in 1993.

## **6.2 Premature Retirement Policy**

### **6.2.1 Aim**

- To facilitate the Council to exercise discretion in releasing an employee on the terms of premature retirement where it will result in the efficient exercise of the Council's service by permitting the employee member to retire early.

### **6.2.2 Associated Objectives**

- Ensuring that the Council has a highly efficient workforce that is capable of coping with new and changing demands.
- As a caring employer facilitating those employee to receive early payment of their pension where remaining in their jobs would have a detrimental impact on their well-being.

### **6.2.3 Who Implements the Policy**

- The Director of Corporate Services
- The Department Heads
- The Human Resources Section

### **6.2.4 Outcomes for Belfast City Council**

- An adaptable workforce and more efficient services.

### **6.2.5 Main Stakeholders**

- Elected Members
- Employees
- Ratepayers of Belfast City Council

### **6.2.6 Outcomes for Main Stakeholders**

- To ensure that BCC has an effective and efficient workforce.

### **6.2.7 Support for other policies/strategies**

- This is a stand alone policy.

### **6.3 Assessment of Impacts**

This policy is very limited in application and has only been used on 12 occasions since it was first introduced by the Council in 1993. An analysis has been carried out of the approvals granted since 1993 and a review of all the comments received to date on the policies. Given the information available it does not appear that the policy has an adverse impact on any of the nine equality categories. However, the Council, in accordance with the Guidance on conducting EQIA's wishes to consult with those who may have an interest in this policy.

The Council will, in any event, be considering the provisions of this policy and/or the need for such a policy in the light of the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) Regulations (NI) 2003.

## 7.0 Consideration of Measures to Mitigate Adverse Impact

Belfast City Council has given careful consideration to the measures that might be taken to eliminate, or at least mitigate the adverse impacts which have been identified in the previous sections of the report.

The Council proposes the measures detailed below to mitigate any adverse impact in the application of the following policies:

- The Procedures on Recruitment and Selection
- The Placing of Job Advertisements Policy
- Removal Expenses Policy
- The Premature Retirement Policy

### 7.1 The Procedures on Recruitment and Selection

7.1.1 The Council through workforce profiling and planning and the implementation of their initiatives on training development and succession planning will seek to promote a more representative workforce in certain job groups. This is in addition to closely monitoring the trends in certain job groups and reviewing the outcomes through discussions with the Equality Commission.

7.1.2 The Council intends to review the welcome statement in accordance with comments received from those representing the 9 Section 75 categories during the consultation exercise on screening.

7.1.3 The Council has noted that there may be an adverse differential impact in terms of the numbers of females represented in management grades and non traditional posts. Measures are currently being targeted to promote a representative workforce through the following:

- the Community Outreach Programme. As part of the equality agenda at Belfast City Council and as itemised in Priority 7 of the Corporate Plan, the Council has stated that it will "formulate an action plan to address under-representation and/or imbalances in our workforce and tackle those issues which reduce the number of job applications from certain groups."

Following an extensive review of Council monitoring statistics, in respect of community background, gender, disability and ethnicity, the Council's Community Outreach Programme is currently being reviewed to target the identified areas of imbalance in respect of ethnicity (including Irish Travellers), disability and gender.

The review of the Community Outreach Programme has led to the formulation of an action plan for 2004/2005 which includes, in short:

- An additional 30 work experience placements being created specifically for

- females in non-traditional roles;
  - Additional careers fairs events and interview skills training sessions for all girls schools and groups of people with disabilities and of ethnic origin other than white;
  - An increase in the number of disabled employee posts under the Employment Support Scheme from 4 to 8;
  - Follow-up meetings with the targeted groups to investigate the obstacles that reduce applications and to identify initiatives to address them e.g. guaranteed interviews for disabled candidates;
  - Participation in the Employer Supported Volunteering Scheme in respect of targeted challenges; and
  - Engagement in government funded training initiatives such as the Transitional Employment Programme to offer work experience placements for females, with pay, in non-traditional roles in Cleansing and the Jobskills Scheme for students with disabilities.
- the implementation of competency based recruitment and the
- Council's training and development initiatives which include the Management Development Programme and Breakthrough 2000 (a development programme for women)
- actions to be taken under the draft Good Relations Strategy for example to increase significantly the proportion of women in the Contract Cleansing Section and to attempt to equip women employees to be better able to apply for senior posts in the Council

This is in addition to taking measures under the EQIA on the Placing of Job Advertisements Policy to target information on accessing employment to a range of local representative groups.

- 7.1.4 Concerns previously raised about the ability of people with a learning disability accessing the Council employment procedures are to be addressed by asking the Employee Counselling Service to research possible support for employees with a learning disability to help them access the appointments and promotions procedures. BCC already has in place a range of measures to facilitate those people with a disability to apply for positions in the Council. The Council is however keen to discuss with the representative groups other measures that could be implemented.

## **7.2 Placing of Job Advertisements Policy**

- 7.2.1 The Council has taken steps through their outreach work to build partnerships with local ethnic minority communities and to encourage them to apply for positions with the Council. Comments are welcomed on how the Council could better circulate information on access to employment e.g. through promotional campaigns.

- 7.2.2 A further analysis is to be undertaken of the age profile and gender of the

readership statistics on each of the main papers used for placing job advertisements. Further comments are also welcomed on whether there are better ways of promoting information on job vacancies to young people and older people.

- 7.2.3 In order to address the differentials that have been identified in terms of the numbers of men and women, and, disabled persons applying for certain jobs, comments are welcomed on the most effective way of addressing this.

### **7.3 Removal Expenses Policy**

- 7.3.1 While no differential impacts have been identified due to the very limited scope of this policy the Council is open to comment from those with an interest in this policy.

### **7.4 Premature Retirement Policy**

- 7.4.1 While no differential impacts have been identified due to the very limited scope of this policy the Council is open to comment from those with an interest in this policy.

## 8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 The EQIA's of the following four HR Policies, the Procedures on Recruitment and Selection, the Placing of Job Advertisements Policy, the Removal Expenses Policy and Premature Retirement Policy have been undertaken to assess whether they will have differential impact on equality of opportunity for any of the nine categories identified under Section 75 and if so, whether this differential is adverse. The positive measures proposed by BCC will eliminate the instances of adverse impact identified in this report.
- 8.2 BCC is committed to the principle of equality of opportunity and is confident that the measures identified in this report will contribute to fair participation and fair treatment in employment.

## 9.0 Consultation

- 9.1 During the informal consultation phase a range of organisations that had commented on Human Resource Policies during the screening process were written to and invited to comment on each of the Policies subject to and Equality Impact Assessment.

### 9.2 Pre Consultation Meetings

During the course of the data gathering for the EQIA's, pre consultation meetings were organised to which representatives of groups associated with each of the 9 equality dimensions were invited.

### 9.3. Formal Consultation

During the formal consultation phase the Council consulted as widely as possible on the preliminary findings of these EQIA's and associated mitigating actions. With this objective in mind the Council took the following actions:

- to submit a press release to various media outlets;
- prominent advertisements inviting the public to comment on this matter will be placed in the main newspapers in Northern Ireland in accordance with normal Council practice;
- the draft EQIA report was issued to all the consultees listed in the Council's Equality Scheme and to any member of the public on request;
- a copy of the draft report was posted on the Council's website;
- consultation meetings were arranged at suitable accessible venues in the city;
- the report was made available, on request, in alternative formats including Braille, disk and audio cassette and in minority languages for those who are not fluent in English.

9.4 The results of the consultation process are provided in the Matrix in Appendix 7

## **10.0 Publication**

10.1 This report will be available on the Council's website at [www.belfastcity.gov.uk](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk) it will be available on request in other formats (including Braille, Disk and Audio Cassette and in minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English).

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Letter from Local Government Staff Commission**

**STANDARD OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION 2000**

The Standard Occupational Classification consists of the following major groups:

1. Managers and Senior Officials
2. Professional Occupations
3. Associate Professional and Technical Occupations
4. Administrative and Secretarial Occupations
5. Skilled Trades Occupations
6. Personal Service Occupations
7. Sales and Customer Service Occupations
8. Process, Plant and Machine Operatives
9. Elementary Occupations

APPENDIX 3

Letter from the Fair Employment Commission

## Appendix 4

### Jobs Advertised 2001

	Job Group
Economic Development Officer	Senior
Swimming Teacher Part time	Basic
Assistant Customer Support Officer	Junior
Car Park Attendant Part time	Manual
Assistant Area Manager – 1 year F.T.C	Middle
Research Officer	Senior
Gardener III	Manual
Driver/Gardener	Manual
Stage Technician	Craft
Special Projects Officer (outreach)	Middle
Special Projects Officer (Initiatives)	Middle
Community Centre Assistant Supervisor Part time	Basic
Community Centre Supervisor Part time	Basic
Senior Legal Assistant – Job Share – Conveyancing and Contracts	Senior
Mechanical Engineering Technician	Middle
Head of Corporate Communication	Director
Head of Policy Services	Director
Community Development Assistant Part time	Junior
Business Support Assistant (Scale6)	Junior
Research Officer	Senior
Best Value Officer	Senior
Business Improvement Consultant	Senior
Health & Safety Manager	Senior
Consultancy Assistant	Middle
Security Officer	Manual
Audio Visual Co-ordinator	Junior
Receptionist/Telephonist/Clerk Part time	Basic
Clerk/Word Processor Operator	Basic
Marketing and Sales Officer	Junior
Vehicle/Plant Fitter F.T.C	Craft
Tennis Coach/Development Manager	Junior
Senior Markets Supervisor F.T.C.	Middle
Sustainable Development Manager	Senior
Retail and Merchandising Assistant Part time	Basic
Sweeper/Labourer	Manual
Procurement Manager	Senior
Cleaner Part time	Manual
Box Office Ticket Sales Assistant	Basic
Commercial Support Officer	Middle
Mechanical Engineering Technician	Middle
Maintenance Fitter/Plant Operator	Craft
Procurement Assistant	Junior

Health and Safety Advisor (Fire)	Middle
E.H.O. Job Share – Consumer Protection	Senior
E.H.O. Job Share – Health Protection	Senior
E.H.O. Permanent	Senior
Emergency Co-ordination Officer	Senior
E.H.O. FTC – Consumer Protection	Senior
Trainee Consultant	Junior
Business Support Assistant	Junior
Duty Officer – W.F.H.	Junior
Retail and Merchandising Assistant	Basic
Health & Fitness Coach	Basic
Assistant Landscape Architect – FTC	Junior
Assistant Manager – Belfast Castle/Malone House	Junior
Events Officer	Junior
J.I.S.T.O.	Junior
Sales Executive (Ireland) W.F.H.	Middle
Sales Executive (UK and International)	Middle
Mechanical Engineering Technician	Junior
Business Support Assistant (Members Services)	Junior
Playground Litter Attendant	Manual
Casual Front of House	Manual
Maintenance Fitter/Plant Operator	Craft
Cleaner Part time	Manual
Secretarial Assistant	Junior
Economic Development Officer	Senior
Cashier – WFM	Basic
Cleaner	Manual
Assistant Divisional Manager – Food Safety	Senior
Business Support Assistant	
Policy and Procedure Manager	Senior
Community Services Manager	Senior
Funding Advice and Information Officer	Middle
E.H.O	Senior
Assistant Analyst	Middle
Quality Systems Manager	Senior
Waste Control Officer	Middle
Culture and Arts Manager	Senior
Business Manager – Cleansing Contracts	Senior
Commercial Development Executive – W.F.M	Middle
Leisure Centre Attendant	Manual
Clerk/Word Processor Operator – Job Share	Basic
Mobile P.C. Cleaner	Manual
Team Leader – Cleansing	Manual
Commercial Development Executive	Middle
Clerk/Word Processor Operator – Job	Basic

Share	
Safety and Environment Advisor for Small Businesses – F.T.C.	Senior
Emergency Co-ordination Officer	Senior
Culture and Arts Manager	Senior
Cleaner Part time	Manual
Community Centre Supervisor (Part time)	Basic
Community Centre Assistant Supervisor	Basic
Refuse Collector	Manual
Chief Executive	Director
Policy and Procedure Officer	Senior
Assistant Landscape Architect	Junior
Assistant Divisional Manager – Dog Control	Senior
Technical Officer – I.P.C.	Middle
Technical Officer – A1 Quality	Middle
Technical Officer – Health and Safety	Middle
Cemeteries Clerk	Basic
Senior Cemeteries Clerk	Junior
Commercial Support Assistant	Junior
Box Officer Ticket Sales Assistant	Basic
Policy and Procurement Officer	Senior
Entertainment Co-ordinator	Junior
L.G.V. Driver	Manual
Clerk/Word Processor Operator	Basic
Refuse Collector	Manual
Head of Corporate Communications	Director
Head of Building Control	Director
Joiner – F.T.C.	Craft
Community Centre Assistant Supervisor Part time	Basic
Property Officer (O.S)	Senior
Community Centre Supervisor	Basic
Assistant Zoo Keeper – Job Share	Manual
Legal Assistant – Conveyancing and Contracts (Locum)	Senior
Area Contract Manager – Ground Maintenance	Senior
Site Inspector – Technical	Junior
Graduate Placement	Basic
Catering Assistant	Manual
Maintenance Fitter/Plant Operator	Craft

## APPENDIX 5

### READERSHIP FIGURES FOR THE THREE MAIN PAPERS

#### Readership Profile by Religion

<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Readership</b>	<b>Religious</b>
Belfast Telegraph	63% 31% 6%	Protestant Roman Catholic Other
Irish News	10% 90%	Protestant Roman Catholic
News Letter	69% 26% 5%	Protestant Roman Catholic Other

#### Readership Profile by Gender

<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Readership</b>	<b>Gender</b>
Belfast Telegraph	51% 49%	Male Female
Irish News	58% 42%	Male Female

#### Readership Profile by Age

<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Readership</b>	<b>Age Profile</b>
Belfast Telegraph	338,000	45% 15-40 55% 45-65+
Irish News	193,000	50% 15-45 50% 45-65+
News Letter (including Belfast News)	192,000	52% under 35 48% over 35

### Readership Profile by Geographical Area

Newspaper	Readership	Area
Belfast Telegraph	54% 46%	Greater Belfast Rest of N.I.
Irish News	32% 68%	Greater Belfast Rest of N.I.
News Letter	53% 47%	Greater Belfast Rest of N.I.

### Readership Profile

Newspaper	Circulation	Readership
Belfast Telegraph	ABC 111,407	338,000
Irish News	ABC 50,031	193,000
News Letter	ABC 31,826 ABC 104,965 Combined with Belfast News	192,000 Combined with Belfast News

	<b>ABC 1 (%)</b>	<b>C2DE(%)</b>
<b>Pop Profile</b>	37	63
Belfast Telegraph	47	53
Irish News	35	65
Newsletter	40	60

#### **A**

These are professional people, very senior managers in their business or commerce or top-level civil servants. Retired people, previously grade A, and their widows.

#### **B**

Middle management executives in large organisations with appropriate qualifications. Principal officers in local government and civil service. Top management or owners of small business concerns, educational and service establishments. Retired people, previously grade , and their widows.

#### **C1**

Junior management, owners of small establishments, and all others in non-manual positions. Jobs in this group have very varied responsibilities and educational requirements. Retired people, previously grade C, and their widows.

#### **C2**

All skilled manual workers with responsibility for other people. Retired people, previously grade C2, with pensions from their job. Widows, if receiving a pension from their late husband's job.

#### **D**

All semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers, and apprentices and trainees to skilled workers. Retired people, previously grade D, with pensions from their job. Widows, if receiving a pension from their late husband's job.

#### **E**

All those entirely dependent on the state long-term, through sickness, unemployment, old age or other reasons. Those unemployed for a period exceeding six months (otherwise classify on previous occupation). Casual workers and those without a regular income. Only households without a chief wage earner will be coded in this group.

**Appendix 6**  
**2001 Census Data**