

**Report on the results of the**

**Equality Impact Assessment**

***of the***

**Relocation of the DARD Headquarters**

**16 July 2014**

**Version 1.3**

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**MINISTERIAL FOREWORD**

I am pleased to be able to publish this report into the potential equality impacts of my decision to relocate the headquarters of Forest Service to Fermanagh, the headquarters of Rivers Agency to Loughry, the headquarters of Fisheries Division to South Down and the remainder of my departmental headquarters to Ballykelly.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who participated in the extensive consultation exercise. I do not underestimate the scale of the task ahead for my officials in delivering new headquarters at four different rural locations. This is the first time that a government department has relocated its headquarters outside of the Greater Belfast area. My hope is that by delivering this programme of relocation successfully, others will see that relocation, if planned and executed properly, can work and can be developed further in the future to redistribute even more high quality public sector jobs across all of the north.

The extensive work informing this report concludes that there are a number of section 75 groups that may be adversely impacted upon by my decision to relocate my departmental headquarters. However, the report also shows that mitigating actions can be taken by my department that will ensure that these impacts are addressed. I have previously given an undertaking to my staff that, where possible, they will not be forced to move to the new locations. I stand by that commitment and with my officials I will work hard to honour that commitment.

I also remain committed to the Section 75 statutory duties and to ensuring that equality and good relations considerations are central to the decision-making process. This report commits my department to monitor the equality impacts of the relocations and to review the policies and procedures around relocation should the need arise.

Once again I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who took the time and effort to participate in the consultation process.

****

**MICHELLE O’NEILL MLA**

**Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development**

**BROLLACH AN AIRE**

Tá áthas orm bheith ábalta an tuarascáil seo a fhoilsiú. Baineann sé leis na hiarmhairtí comhionannais a d’fhéadfadh a eascairt as an gcinnidh a rinne mé ceanncheathrú na Seirbhíse Foraoiseachta a athlonnú go dtí Fear Manach, an Ghníomhaireacht Aibhneacha go dtí Loughry, an Rannóg Iascaigh go dtí an Dún Theas agus an chuid eile de cheanncheathrú ma roinne go dtí Baile Uí Cheallaigh.

Ba mhaith liom an deis seo a thapú agus buíochas a ghabháil leo siúd go léir a bhí páirteach sa bheart comhairliúcháin fairsing seo. Ní thugaim meas faoina luach ar scála na hoibre atá roimh m’oifigigh, ceanncheathrú nua a sheachadadh i gceithre suíomh tuaithe nua. Is é seo an chéad uair a d’athlonnaigh roinn rialtais a ceanncheathrú lasmuigh de Mhórcheantar Bhéal Feirste. Tá súil agam, tríd an gclár athlonnaithe seo a sheachadadh go maith, go bhfeicfidh daoine gur féidir éirí go maith leis an athlonnú má dhéantar é a phleanáil agus a chur i bhfeidhm i gceart. Féadfaí tuilleadh forbartha a dhéanamh air amach anseo chun poist ard-chaighdeáin san earnáil phoiblí a athdháileadh ar fud an tuaiscirt.

Is é an tátal atá le baint as an obair fhairsing a cuireadh isteach sa tuarascáil seo ná go bhfuil roinnt grúpaí faoi Alt 75 a bhfhéadfadh athlonnú ceanncheathrú mo roinne dul chun dochair dóibh. Ach léiríonn an tuarascáil freisin, gur féidir le mo roinn bearta maolaitheacha a dhéanamh, a chinnteoidh go rachfar i ngleic leis na hiarmhairtí seo. Tá gealltanas tugtha agam cheana féin do m’fhoireann nach gcuirfí iallach orthu, más féidir sin, bogadh go dtí na suíomhanna nua. Seasaim leis an ngealltanas sin, agus i dteannta m’oifigigh, oibreoidh mé go tréan chun an gealltanas sin a urramú.

Tá mé tiomanta freisin i gcónaí do dhualgais reachtúla Alt 75 agus do cinnte a dhéanamh de go bhfuil an comhionannas agus an caidreamh maith i gcroílár an phróisis cinnteoireachta. Cuireann an tuarascáil seo mo roinn faoi thiomantas, maoirseacht a dhéanamh ar iarmhairtí comhionannais an athlonnaithe, agus athbhreithniú a dhéanamh ar an mbeartas agus ar na nósanna imeachta a bhaineann leis an athlonnú, más gá.

Ba mhaith liom arís an deis seo a thapú agus buíochas a ghabháil le gach duine a ghlac páirt sa phróiseas comhairliúcháin seo as an obair agus an t-am a chaith siad air.

****

**MICHELLE O’NEILL CTR**

**Aire Talmhaíochta agus Forbartha Tuaithe**

**FORETHOCHT O THA MÄNNYSTÈR**

A’m hert-gled tae be fït tae ootset this fynnin anent tha oncumin jonick fecks o ma desarn tae flït tha heid offys o tha Timmer-Mannerin Agentrie til Fermanagh, tha heid offys o tha Wattèrs Agentrie til Lochrie, tha heid offys o the Fïshin-grunns Ootlat til Sooth Doon an tha lave of my männystrie heid offys til Ballykelly.

A’m fur takkin this inlat tae lat aabodie ’at yokkt til tha leash o an apen discoorse patent ken A’m ableeged tae thaim. A ken richt weel it’s a muckle hannlin fur ma offysers tae fettle new heid offyses at fower sindèrie lannwart larachs. This is tha furst ’at a govermin männystrie haes flittit its heid offys ootby tha Eikit Bilfawst airt. I’m lippenin ’at wi cummin speed wi fettlin this ontak o flïttin, ither yins wull tak tent ’at flïttin, gin it’s richt mintit an throcht, can hae a guid ootcum an can be graithed mair eftèr this furtae dale oot mair wark o gye grist in tha patent shaidin athort tha hale o tha noarth.

Tha eident wark inpittin til this fynnin cums til tha takin ’at thar’s a wheen o shaidin 75 curns ’at ma desarn tae flït ma männystrie heid offys micht cud hae an ïll feck oan. Forbye, but, tha fynnin kythes ’at ma Männystrie’s fït til tak sowtherin remeids ’at wull mak siccar thae fecks is soartit. A hae gien ma wurd afore til ma darg-ban ’at, gin we’ll can dae’t ava, the’ wunnae be gart flït til tha new larachs. A’m no fur bak-draain oan thon thirlin an wi ma offysers A’m fur warkin awa tha wye A’ll can cairry oot thon thirlin.

Forbye, A’m thirlt yit til tha Shaidin 75 laa ontaks an tae makkin siccar ’at leukkin til jonick gates an guid mellin bes at tha hert o tha patent fur cummin til desarns. This fynnin thirls ma männystrie til owergang tha jonick fecks o tha flïttins an tae hae a scance o tha roadins an patents adae wi tha flïttin gin it cums aboot ’at thar’s a caa fur it.

Yince mair A’m fur takkin this inlat tae lat aabodie ’at haes wared a while an ettlin furtae yokk til tha apen discoorse patent.

****

**MICHELLE O’NEILL MLS**

**Männystèr o Fairms an Kintra Fordèrin**

**Executive Summary**

**Introduction**

Advancing the relocation of the DARD headquarters is a commitment in the Executive’s Programme for Government (2011- 2015). On 3rd September 2012, Minister O’Neill MLA announced her decision to consider the former military site, Shackleton Barracks, in Ballykelly, as the location for the new DARD headquarters. A previous announcement indicated the intention to relocate the headquarters of Forest Service to Fermanagh and a subsequent announcement will see the headquarters of Rivers Agency relocate to Loughry and the headquarters of the department’s Fisheries Division relocate to South Down.

There are three main aims of the relocation:

* securing modern, fit for purpose accommodation for headquarter staff, given that Dundonald House and Hydebank (Rivers HQ) have both reached the end of their useful lives;
* helping to rebalance the NI Economy through the redistribution of good quality public sector jobs out of Belfast; and
* helping to develop a rural area by bringing high quality public sector jobs and future employment opportunities to the Ballykelly area.

DARD is fully committed to its statutory equality duties. Section 75 of the NI Act (1998) requires DARD as a large public authority to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations across a range of categories. The legislation also requires the Department to undertake equality impact assessments when necessary, to assess the impact of its policy decisions on different groups of people. In taking forward the relocation programme, the Department has carefully scrutinised the potential impacts on its staff, customers and stakeholders.

The relocation to Ballykelly was subject to a full EQIA including a formal consultation process. The other relocations were subsequently included in this EQIA process too. However, these relocation exercises were ‘screened out with mitigations’ as the equality issues identified for these further relocations were considered to be similar to those already identified for the HQ relocation to Ballykelly.

**Findings**

This report has reached a number of conclusions in respect of the equality impact of relocation.

* That relocation will not have any adverse equality impacts on our external business partners and stakeholders
* That relocation will not have any adverse equality impacts on

Persons of different religious beliefs

Persons of different political opinion

Persons of a different racial group

Persons of different marital status

Persons of different sexual orientation

* Relocation could have potential adverse equality impacts for the following groups

Persons of different ages

Between men and women generally

Between persons with a disability and persons without

Between persons with dependants and persons without

It is recognised that the relocation of jobs to the northwest, and the other three rural locations, will impact positively on current, and future, NICS staff by ensuring that they will be provided with greater opportunities for taking up employment or gaining promotion without having to move to posts in Greater Belfast.

**Mitigating Actions**

The department will take the following mitigating actions to either remove, or lessen, the identified potential adverse equality impacts. The Department will:

* Relocate staff to new locations using the Staff Transition Model
* Provide for greater flexible working arrangements
* Adhere to the mobility clause included in the NICS Staff Terms and Conditions for staff in administrative assistant and administrative office grades and analogous and part-time staff (including partially retired)
* Adhere to any contractual arrangements in place for staff with disabilities
* Provide the opportunity for staff to transfer to another DARD or NICS post more suitable to their needs
* Adhere to procurement arrangements as set out in ‘Equality of Opportunity and Sustainable Development in Public Sector Procurement’.

**Next Steps**

Following the publication of this EQIA, the department will now develop and put in place equality monitoring arrangements as outlined. Monitoring the impact of each relocation exercise will show whether or not the conclusions reached above about specific equality groups are accurate and whether the actions put in place to mitigate against each of these impacts, are adequate and useful.

This monitoring will take place before and after each of the relocations and results will be published. Monitoring actions will include a sample survey of our external business partners. Monitoring information for staff will be captured through a HR database which will be developed as part of the HR Strategy. Staff will also be surveyed as applicable.

The Department will publish the outcome of any future analysis on its Departmental website.

**Chapter 1**

**Introduction and Strategic Context**

This report considers the potential equality impacts resulting from the decision to relocate the headquarters of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) to four different rural areas. The four relocations covered by this report are the relocation of:

* the headquarters of Forest Service to Fermanagh;
* the headquarters of Rivers Agency to Loughry Campus in Cookstown;
* DARD’s Fisheries Service headquarters to South Down; and
* the remainder of the Department’s headquarters to Ballykelly.

**1.2 Relocation Decisions**

In May 2012, Minister Michelle O’Neill MLA announced that she had asked the Chief Executive of the Forest Service to consider Fermanagh as the location for a new Forest Service headquarters. Then, on 3rd September 2012, the Minister announced her decision to consider the former military site, Shackleton Barracks, in Ballykelly as the location for the new DARD headquarters.

With the relocation of the DARD Headquarters to the Shackleton Site at Ballykelly it is expected that this will act as a catalyst to further development on the 730 acre site. The Department is pleased that local community groups have already expressed interest in the OFMDFM site. The future use of the site is an OFMDFM decision and they have indicated that they will adhere to the requirements of section 75 in deciding on the future use of the site.

The Minister directed the Permanent Secretary to develop a business case considering the viable options for accommodating the Department’s headquarters at Ballykelly.

As part of the development work on the business case for the relocation to Ballykelly, the Department considered whether or not the work of each business area could be enhanced by carrying out its functions from another geographical location. Two such areas where identified and subsequently on 16th May 2013 the Minister announced her intention to relocate the headquarters of the DARD Fisheries Division to South Down and the Rivers Agency headquarters to Loughry College.

**1.3 Strategic Context**

**1.3.1 The Bain Report**

The decision to relocate the DARD headquarters provides the opportunity to decentralise many of the functions of the Department out of Greater Belfast, in line with the principles of the [Independent Review of the Policy on Location of Public Sector Jobs in Northern Ireland](http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/final_report-location-of-jobs)[[1]](#footnote-1) (The Bain Review). The Bain Review recommendations are yet to be formally adopted by the Executive, however, the Northern Ireland Guide to Expenditure Appraisal and Evaluation states that Departments should ensure that any new accommodation proposals consider the implications of this report.

In that report, Sir George Bain wrote:

*‘We do not wish to be prescriptive about which government headquarters should be considered for relocation but, throughout our research, people consistently questioned why the headquarters of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (about 800 posts) is located on the Stormont Estate. The Department’s principal aim is to promote sustainable economic growth and the development of the countryside in Northern Ireland, and to assist the competitive development of the agri-food, fishing, and forestry sectors. Given the nature of its business and its agencies (e.g. the Forest Service and the Rivers Agency), a strong case can be made for relocating the headquarters and agencies. The department is also due to move from its current building on the Stormont Estate in 2013 as part of the Workplace 2010 programme. Hence we recommend that a departmental headquarters should be relocated and that the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development should be considered as a candidate.’*

**1.3.2 Programme for Government 2011-15**

The [NI Executive’s Programme for Government](http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/pfg) sets out the following key priorities:

* growing a sustainable economy and investing in the future;
* creating opportunities, tackling disadvantage and improving health and well being;
* protecting our people, the environment and creating safer communities;
* building a strong and shared community; and
* delivering high quality and efficient public services.

A specific target has been set to:

*‘ advance the relocation of the headquarters of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to a rural area by 2015’.*

**1.3.3 DARD Strategic Plan 2012-20**

The Department’s vision is for, “A thriving and sustainable rural economy, community and environment to promote social and economic equality”.

Our key aim is ‘*to be a Department that works with stakeholders, builds partnerships, tackles disadvantage and values its staff; strives to work efficiently, responds quickly to change and focuses on achieving sustainable outcomes’.*

Goal 5 in this Plan is ‘*to manage our business and deliver services to our customers in a cost-effective way.’* This means that we will work to defined customer service standards and within the resources allocated to us, remaining committed to the relocation of DARD Headquarters to a rural area.

The key Strategic Goals for 2013/14 are:

* To help the agri-food industry prepare for future market opportunities and economic challenges;
* To improve the lives of farmers and other rural dwellers targeting resources where they are most needed;
* To enhance animal, fish and plant health and animal welfare on an all Ireland basis;
* To help deliver improved sustainable environmental outcomes; and
* To manage our business and deliver services to our customers in a cost effective way.

**1.3.4** [DARD Estate Framework](http://www.dardni.gov.uk/dard-estate-framework.docx)

The Department has developed an Estate Framework in line with the Executive’s agreed Asset Management Strategy which will act as a high level strategic guide through the change process that lies ahead. The purpose of the Estate Framework is to consider how the DARD estate can more efficiently and effectively support delivery of the Department’s strategic objectives in future. It states that investment in the DARD Estate will align with the principles laid out in the [Regional Development Strategy 2035](http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/rds2035.htm).

The Estate Framework has been developed as one of a number of strategic documents to help guide us through the change process that lies ahead. The Asset Management Plan provides an overview of the Department’s estate and identifies opportunities for rationalisation, commercialisation and disposal. The Framework seeks to allow DARD to operate more effectively and efficiently in the future. We can improve our service delivery to the rural community and provide improved education, scientific and advisory services as well as greater opportunities for leisure. We can position DARD as a progressive, forward-thinking Department and embrace technological change to help to modernise the rural community.

**Chapter 2**

**Equality Duties**

**2.1 Section 75**

Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 (the Act) requires the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) to comply with two statutory duties:

**Section 75 (1)**

In carrying out our functions relating to NI we are required to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity -

* 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; and
* between persons with dependants and persons without.

**Section 75 (2)**

In addition, without prejudice to the obligations above, in carrying out our functions in relation to NI we are required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.  “Functions” include the “powers and duties” of a public authority. This includes our employment and procurement functions.

Further information on the Section 75 duties and the relationship between the equality duty (S75(1) and the good relations duty (S75(2) can be found in the ECNI publication [Section 75 Northern Ireland Act](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/47/section/75).

**How we propose to fulfil the Section 75 duties in relation to the relevant functions of DARD:**

Schedule 9 4. (1) of the Act requires DARD as a designated public authority to set out in an equality scheme how it proposes to fulfil the duties imposed by Section 75 in relation to its relevant functions. This equality scheme is intended to fulfil that statutory requirement.  It is both a statement of our arrangements for fulfilling the Section 75 statutory duties and our plan for their implementation.

DARD is committed to the discharge of its Section 75 obligations in all parts of its organisation. The Department will commit the necessary resources in terms of people, time and money to ensure that the Section 75 statutory duties are complied with and that its Equality Scheme can be implemented effectively.

We recognise the importance of consultation in all aspects of the implementation of our statutory equality duties. We have consulted on our Equality Scheme and its action measures; and continue to do so on equality impact assessments and other matters relevant to the Section 75 statutory duties. We are committed to carrying out consultation in accordance with the following principles (as contained in the Equality Commission’s guidance ‘Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010)’).

Consultations will seek the views of those directly affected by the matter / policy, including the Equality Commission, representative groups of Section 75 categories, other public authorities, voluntary and community groups, our staff and their trade unions and other such groups who have a legitimate interest in the matter whether or not they have a direct economic or personal interest. The Department will monitor its approach to consultation, to ensure that it is open and encourages participation; and that it continues to reach out to representative groups and to those individuals directly affected by the matter / policy.

**2.2 What is an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)?**

The Equality Commission has provided guidance on equality impact assessments to help public authorities undertake assessments on the equality implications of their policies. By undertaking this work, DARD can consider the extent of the likely impacts of the relocation programme on different groups of people, and as appropriate what measures or alternative policies it can then consider to mitigate any adverse impacts identified.

An EQIA is a thorough and systematic analysis of a policy, in order to identify:

* whether there are differences in the way a policy impacts upon the nine equality categories outlined above and if those impacts are considered to be adverse ones; and
* measures which might mitigate any adverse impacts and alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity.

There are seven separate elements in the completion of an EQIA.

1. Defining the aims of the policy;
2. Consideration of available data and research;
3. Assessment of impacts;
4. Consideration of measures which might mitigate any adverse impact and alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity;
5. Consultation;
6. Decision by Public Authority, and the publication of a report on the EQIA results; and
7. Monitoring for adverse impact in the future and publication of the results of such monitoring.

Chapter 1 of this report outlined Step 1 i.e. the policy aim and set the strategic context of the decision to relocate the DARD headquarters. The remainder of this report covers steps 2 to 7.

Steps 1 to 4 allows the Department to define and present the proposed change resulting from relocation, consider the potential adverse impacts of implementing the change and document the proposed mitigations that it will put in place to mitigate against these potential adverse impacts. Step 5 allows any interested party to highlight to the Department any further areas of concern that need to be considered. Step 6 presents the decision and outlines all the mitigations that the Department will put in place. Step 7 will document how the Department will monitor, during and after implementation, if the mitigations documented have resulted in minimising the adverse impact as expected and also any further adverse equality impacts resulting from the decision.

The Department recognises that there may well be impacts, adverse or otherwise, resulting from the relocation of its headquarters to Ballykelly, Fermanagh, South Down and Loughry for many groups that currently interact with DARD and/or who are affected by the work of the Department. These groups could include our customers and farmers, business partners, partner organisations, our staff and potentially the NI labour market.

**2.3 Equality Screening for Other Relocations**

The assessment of the equality impacts of four different relocations has been completed in two stages. The work on assessing the relocation of the DARD Headquarters to Ballykelly was underway before the Minister announced her intention to relocate Rivers Agency to Loughry and Fisheries Division to South Down.

It was therefore considered that the other relocations, Rivers Agency and Fisheries Division as well the previously announced relocation of Forest Service to Fermanagh, would be subject to separate equality assessments.

Screening was carried out on the relocation of Fisheries Division to South Down, Forest Services to Fermanagh and Rivers Agency to Loughry. The equality issues identified for these further relocations were similar to those identified through the full EQIA undertaken into the relocation to Ballykelly. On that basis the outcome was that they would be ‘screened out with mitigations’. The Equality Commission were consulted and agreed with the approach taken with a number of caveats, the main ones being that the screening documents should include a list of the mitigations and that the Department ensures that adequate equality monitoring processes are put in place. Copies of all three screening documents can be viewed by clicking on the following links:

[Equality Screening – Rivers Agency Relocation](http://dardni.staging.nigov.net/newdardinterstg9.8.4/final-equality-screening-rivers-agency-relocation-to-loughry-november-2013.pdf)

[Equality Screening – Forest Service Relocation](http://dardni.staging.nigov.net/newdardinterstg9.8.4/final-equality-screening-forest-service-relocation-to-fermanagh-november-2013.pdf)

[Equality Screening – Fisheries Division Relocation](http://dardni.staging.nigov.net/newdardinterstg9.8.4/final-equality-screening-fisheries-division-headquarters-to-south-down-november-2013.pdf)

**2.4 Consultation**

Chapter 3 of the DARD Equality Scheme sets out our commitment to consulting and the steps that we will take to ensure that it encourages full participation and reaches out to all those directly affected by the policy along with representative groups and individuals.

The consultation period for the HQ EQIA was split into two distinct phases:

* Formal pre-consultation exercise took place between January and March 2013, and
* Formal Public Consultation began on 12 April 2013 and continued for a 12-week period; ending on 05 July 2013.

**2.5 EQIA Pre-Consultation Programme**

Our HQ Relocation Team undertook some pre-consultation work to assist the EQIA process. The Team considered that this would provide early views that would help shape the consultation document. The exercise was undertaken with different groups: DARD staff and their representatives, DARD business partners and a wide range of organisations with particular interest in equality issues.

We are very grateful to all those organisations who kindly met with us and the many others who provided us with their views. Annex 1 details the organisations that we met with.

**2.5.1 DARD Staff Consultation**

As the recognised trade union representing staff affected by relocation, we consulted with Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA).

A survey was issued to all the DARD headquarter staff working in posts at Dundonald House in the Stormont Estate and to the Rivers Agency headquarters staff based at Hydebank. The survey was administered by the Northern Ireland Statistic Research Agency (NISRA), and a copy of the questionnaire is attached at Annex 2.

* The survey of all DARD HQ staff had a response rate of 89.3% and provided statistical data covering all of the Section 75 groups and is referred to throughout this document as appropriate. The questionnaire provided specific information on Section 75 categories and invited feedback and comments on the factors influencing individuals’ intentions. Further information and data about the survey responses is set out in Chapter 3. The full Survey Report can be viewed by clicking on the following link: [DARD HQ Relocation Staff Survey (February 2013)](http://dardni.staging.nigov.net/newdardinterstg9.8.4/final-dard-hq-relocation-staff-survey-report-03-july-2013.pdf)

We are grateful to all those who took time to complete the survey.

**2.5.2 DARD Business Partners**

The pre-consultation document was issued to 34 of DARD’s main partner organisations (see Annex 1). Although a few formally responded no equality issues for their organisation were identified from the proposed relocation of the DARD headquarters.

**2.5.3 Equality Focused Groups**

During the pre-consultation stage, meetings were organised with sectoral organisations to discuss the potential impacts of the relocation on different groups of people. We met a total of 16 of the leading equality focused groups (see Annex 1) and the feedback from these groups was invaluable in identifying potential equality issues and shaping the consultation document.

The Equality Practitioners in each of the NI Government Departments were also included in the pre-consultation exercise and again we would like to thank those who took time to respond.

**2.6 Formal Consultation Programme**

In accordance with Equality Commission guidelines and our own Equality Scheme, we conducted a 12 week public consultation which ended on 05 July 2013.

The delay in the production of this report was to allow time to consider the impact, and consequently to carry out the required screenings, of the Minister’s decision not to relocate Rivers Agency and Fisheries Division with the rest of the Departmental headquarters at Ballykelly but to relocate them to two other rural areas i.e. Cookstown and South Down. As stated above, this report also covers the relocation of the Forest Service headquarters to Fermanagh which was announced by Minister in May 2012.

The equality issues raised in the responses to the formal consultation and mitigating measures are considered in Chapter 4, Annex 3 contains the full responses to the consultation.

The Department would like to take this opportunity to thank all those groups and individuals who took the time and effort to provide comments, advice and/or responses to us. We appreciate the assistance during both the pre-consultation and formal consultation exercises that have helped to inform this report and to direct the Department in its approach to relocating its headquarters to four different rural locations.

**Chapter 3**

**Available Data and Research**

**3.1 Data Collection and Research**

The information contained within this Chapter is specific to the relocation to Ballykelly. The information considered for the other relocations can be viewed within the relevant screening documents.

The remainder of this section has been informed using both quantitative and qualitative information from a variety of internal and external sources. The information has come from face-to-face meetings, a staff survey, management information databases and a range of other documents. Information sources referenced include:

* [NICS HR Statistics](http://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/NICS%20Equality%20Report%202012.pdf) (source HRConnect via NISRA, DFP, see Annex 5)
* [DARD HQ Relocation Staff Survey (February 2013)](http://dardni.staging.nigov.net/newdardinterstg9.8.4/final-dard-hq-relocation-staff-survey-report-03-july-2013.pdf)
* DARD Business [Interaction](http://dardni.staging.nigov.net/newdardinterstg9.8.4/business-interactions-survey-analysis.xlsx) Survey (February 2012)

Unless otherwise stated, the information provided in this Chapter is provided by Human Resources Consultancy Service, NISRA DFP, and HRConnect which is the single source of human resource management information for the NI Civil Service.

**3.2 External Business Partners**

The consultation process undertaken as part of this assessment has not identified any equality issues for our business partners. The following tables provide some details of the face-to-face interactions / meetings that DARD HQ staff have with these business partners. The information has been set out to show where these meetings usually take place.

In February 2012 the HQ Relocation Programme Board commissioned a Business Interaction Survey (BIS). The objective of this survey was to assess the approximate number of meetings that take place annually between:

* each DARD headquarters division;
* DARD headquarters divisions and other parts of DARD; and
* DARD headquarters divisions and organisations (and individuals) external to DARD i.e. our external business partners.

The survey required each Division to provide details about the organisations (or individuals) it had met with during the previous calendar year. This included the organisation’s name and location; the number of meetings that took place and the reasons for meetings (see Table 3.1 below).

For this exercise the external business partner organisations / individuals have been grouped into geographic locations of Belfast (within the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area i.e. local government districts of Belfast, Carrickfergus, Castlereagh, Lisburn, Newtownabbey, North Down), North West (area made up of the local government districts of Derry, Strabane, Limavady, Coleraine), other parts of Northern Ireland and outside of Northern Ireland.

**Table 3.1 Meetings between External Business Partners and DARD HQ Divisions by Location**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **DARD HQ Business Area** | **Location** | | | | | |
| **HQ** | **Other Belfast** | **North West** | **Other NI** | **Outside NI** | **Total** |
| Permanent Secretary's Office | 96 | 41 | 3 | 33 | 6 | **179** |
| Finance Division | 65 | 313 | 32 | 135 | - | **545** |
| DHR and Business Improvement Division | 66 | 30 | 12 | - | - | **108** |
| Corporate and European Services Division | 85 | 53 | 40 | 158 | - | **336** |
| Information Management and Systems | 110 | 210 | - | 8 | 6 | **334** |
| Policy and Economics Division | 185 | 269 | 2 | 80 | 57 | **593** |
| Animal Health and Welfare Policy Division | 120 | 182 | - | 74 | 49 | **425** |
| Food Farm and Rural Policy Division | 289 | 1183 | 35 | 1063 | 178 | **2748** |
| Science Evidence and Innovation Policy | 102 | 227 | 13 | 47 | 36 | **425** |
| Rural Development Division | 146 | 90 | 348 | 1159 | 2 | **1745** |
| Agri-food Support Services Unit | 34 | 131 | 8 | 58 | - | **231** |
| EU Area-based Schemes Division | 77 | 25 | - | - | - | **102** |
| EU Area-based Schemes Development Unit | 274 | 332 | - | 20 | 24 | **650** |
| Countryside Management Unit | 15 | 15 | - | 20 | 5 | **55** |
| Enzootic Disease and Animal Welfare | 23 | 9 | - | 3 | 7 | **42** |
| Epizootic Disease and Veterinary Public Health | 575 | 55 | 11 | 102 | 263 | **1006** |
| **Total** | **2262** | **3165** | **504** | **2960** | **633** | **9524** |
| **% of total** | **24%** | **33%** | **5%** | **31%** | **7%** | **100%** |

The Department recognises the high volume of meetings that take place with external business partners either at our current bases in Dundonald House and Hydebank or in and around Greater Belfast, usually at the premises of the business partner. In order to ensure the same level of service continues to be provided to our customers / stakeholders the Department will need to review its existing working practices to minimise the potential disruption that will be caused by a move to Ballykelly.

**3.3 Staff**

The impacts of relocation on staff are considered in two parts.

1. There are significant adverse impacts on many of those currently working within the Department who will see their current posts move to Ballykelly.

2. There may also be significant positive impacts in terms of equality within the North West that will result from the relocation of a large number of good quality civil service jobs: for example, on current civil servants living in the North West and currently travelling to work in Belfast and for potential applicants for civil service jobs.

The following information presents the available equality profile data of the staff currently working in the DARD headquarters and of those civil servants currently working within the North West. A technical definition of how we have defined the ‘North West’ for the purpose of this analysis is contained at Annex 4 but in layman’s terms it is any location closer to Ballykelly than Belfast.

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, NISRA, was commissioned by the Department to carry out a series of surveys relating to the proposed relocation of the DARD headquarters. The first survey gathered the views of staff in posts directly affected by proposals to relocate the DARD Headquarters to Ballykelly (including Rivers Agency and Fisheries Division who, at that point, were earmarked for moving to Ballykelly), and Forest Service headquarters to Fermanagh. A second survey sought the views of the remaining DARD staff, and a third survey explored the interest of staff in the wider NICS in a move to either Ballykelly or Fermanagh.

The results of the first survey showed that 86% of current DARD HQ staff are not content to work in Ballykelly. Of that 86%, the vast majority state that they are willing to seek alternative posts (within DARD or across the NICS) that will allow them a shorter commute than would be required if they were to take up a post in Ballykelly.

The remaining DARD staff and the NICS staff were surveyed and responses indicate that some 1,100 staff at all grades across the service are willing to work in Ballykelly (with a further 800 indicating that they may be prepared to work in Ballykelly). The table below provides a breakdown of these staff by grade, and by the location of their current post. If all of the interest for Ballykelly based posts came from staff already located in the North West, this would create a problem for other DARD / NICS Divisions in backfilling their vacated posts. Of the 1,174 staff stating that they would be willing to work in Ballykelly, 307 are currently in posts located in the East of the Province. Of the 800 staff saying that they would maybe consider a move to a post in Ballykelly, 315 are currently in posts located in the East of the Province.

**Table 3.2 Number of Staff willing to Work in Ballykelly, by location of current post**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Number of staff willing to work in Ballykelly, by grade, and by location of current post.** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Total for all 3 Surveys (i.e. DARD HQ; Rest of DARD; Wider NICS)** | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | **Northwest** | | **Southwest** | | **East** | | **not/known** | | **Total** | |  |
| **GRADE** | **Yes** | **Maybe** | **Yes** | **Maybe** | **Yes** | **Maybe** | **Yes** | **Maybe** | **Yes** | **Maybe** | **Total** |
| **G7 & above** | 16 | 23 | 0 | 1 | 40 | 54 | 7 | 9 | 63 | 87 | **150** |
| **DP/SO** | 92 | 65 | 1 | 4 | 111 | 125 | 19 | 20 | 223 | 214 | **437** |
| **EO1/EO11** | 225 | 140 | 5 | 11 | 78 | 77 | 32 | 19 | 340 | 247 | **587** |
| **AO/AA** | 426 | 163 | 8 | 3 | 78 | 59 | 36 | 25 | 548 | 250 | **798** |
| **Total** | **759** | **391** | **14** | **19** | **307** | **315** | **94** | **73** | **1174** | **798** | **1972** |

A major aspect of the HR Strategy will be to allow staff who wish to join DARD to avail of the opportunity to work in Ballykelly to transfer into the Department. By doing so, these staff will vacate posts that may be suitable to some of the staff currently working within the DARD HQ that do not wish to continue in their post when it relocates to Ballykelly. At this stage DARD does not have detailed information that would allow us to consider whether or not the grades and skills of the staff indicating that they would join DARD would match the grades and skills of the DARD staff who do not wish to move to Ballykelly. This issue will be a major aspect of the work in developing the HR Strategy.

At a high level, the following table shows the breakdown of the 744 DARD HQ posts affected by the move to Ballykelly by grade, compared with the grade profile of staff currently located in the East of the Province[[2]](#footnote-2) who would be prepared to consider a move to Ballykelly (i.e. they stated ‘yes’ or ‘maybe’ when asked if they would consider a move to work in Ballykelly).

**Table 3.3 Number of Staff willing to work in Ballykelly by Grade**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade** | **AA/AO** | **EOI/ EOII** | **DP/SO** | **Grade 7 and above** | **Total** |
| **No. of DARD HQ Posts affected by move to Ballykelly** | 160 | 206 | 282 | 96 | **744** |
| ***% breakdown by grade*** | *21%* | *27%* | *38%* | *13%* | ***100%*** |
| **No. of non-DARD HQ staff, currently located in East of Province that would definitely consider a move to Ballykelly (i.e. Stated 'yes')** | 78 | 78 | 111 | 40 | **307** |
| ***% breakdown by grade*** | *25%* | *25%* | *36%* | *13%* | ***100%*** |
| **No. of non-DARD HQ staff, currently located in East of Province that would maybe consider a move to Ballykelly (i.e. Stated 'maybe')** | 59 | 77 | 125 | 54 | **315** |
| ***% breakdown by grade*** | *19%* | *24%* | *40%* | *17%* | ***100%*** |
| **Total that would potentially consider a move who are currently located in the East of the Province (i.e. total answering ‘yes’ or ‘maybe’)** | 137 | 155 | 236 | 94 | **622** |
| ***% breakdown by grade*** | *22%* | *25%* | *38%* | *15%* | ***100%*** |

The grade structure is not dissimilar, however, as there has been no analysis of the specific skills and experience required for posts moving to Ballykelly, it cannot be determined if it would be possible to easily churn the staff in all such posts. It is acknowledged that there may be particular issues with managing the turnover of staff in specialist and professional / technical posts. Furthermore, it is recognised that another major consideration will be the timing of moves in and out of DARD. It is likely that the DARD staff who do not want to move to Ballykelly will seek to leave the Department earlier, whereas the staff who will want to join DARD in Ballykelly, may wait until much closer to the time of the building being open before joining the Department.

The NICS has a large range of grades and specialism’s within each grade. The analysis on the following tables, groups staff into their analogous grades i.e. the equivalent General Service grade group. It is recognised however, that DARD Specialists (such as Agricultural or Meat Inspectors) will face specific challenges as a result of this relocation and are dealt with as a separate group in this analysis.

The impacts on other NICS staff will differ depending upon the group of staff being considered. The information on staff is set out in two groups as follows:

* Group 1 is made up of DARD staff currently based at Dundonald House and our Rivers Agency staff currently based at Hydebank, (this excludes the Forest Service staff based at Dundonald House who are subject to a separate relocation programme); and
* Group 2 is made up of NICS staff currently working in the North West, (see Annex 4 for a definition of ‘North-West’ for the purposes of this EQIA).

The remainder of this Chapter details the data for each of the staff groups across the Section 75 categories. However, consideration of potential equality impacts is often about considering multiple identity issues, e.g. the potential impacts on groups such as young female staff with dependants. Where appropriate, multiple identity statistics for both groups is shown. Further cross-tabulated information is outlined in Annex 5.

What we have outlined below is what we consider to be the more important multiple identity issues for this relocation exercise. The tables provide some headline information about the current workforce that make up these 2 groups.

**Table 3.4 Grade Breakdown by Group**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Analogous Grade** | **Group** | | | |
| **1 (DARD HQ)** | | **2 (NICS in NW)** | |
| **No of staff** | **% of staff** | **No of staff** | **% of staff** |
| **G5 and above** | 16 | 2.0 | 1 | 0.0 |
| **G6** | 12 | 1.5 | 5 | 0.1 |
| **G7** | 73 | 9.3 | 81 | 2.1 |
| **DP** | 136 | 17.3 | 133 | 3.5 |
| **SO** | 160 | 20.4 | 314 | 8.3 |
| **EOI** | 106 | 13.5 | 506 | 13.4 |
| **EOII** | 108 | 13.8 | 732 | 19.3 |
| **AO** | 117 | 14.9 | 1267 | 33.5 |
| **AA** | 57 | 7.3 | 350 | 9.2 |
| **Industrial** | 1 | 0.1 | 397 | 10.5 |
| **Total** | **785** | **100** | **3786** | **100** |

**Table 3.5 Working Pattern by Group**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Working Pattern** | **Group** | | | |
| **1 (DARD HQ)** | | **2 (NICS in NW)** | |
| **No of staff** | **% of staff** | **No of staff** | **% of staff** |
| **Full-time** | 634 | 81.0 | 2900 | 76.6 |
| **Part-time\*** | 151 | 19.0 | 885 | 23.4 |
| **Total** | **785** | **100** | **3785** | **100.0** |

*\*This covers all non full-time arrangements such as part-time, job share, term-time etc*

**3.4 Section 75 Groupings**

**3.4.1 Religious Belief**

The table below shows that the current workforce in the DARD headquarters is 63.2% Protestant and 34.4% Catholic. The breakdown of the staff currently employed in the NICS in the North West is 33.3% Protestant and 64.4% Catholic.

**Table 3.6 Religious Beliefs by Group**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Religious Belief** | **Group** | | | |
| **1 (DARD HQ)** | | **2 (North West)** | |
| **No of staff** | **% of staff** | **No of staff** | **% of staff** |
| **Protestant** | 496 | 63.2 | 1260 | 33.3 |
| **Catholic** | 270 | 34.4 | 2436 | 64.4 |
| **undetermined** | 19 | 2.4 | 89 | 2.4 |
| **Total** | **785** | **100** | **3785** | **100.0** |

**Chart 3.1 Religious Belief by Group**

**3.4.2 Political Opinion**

Information on Political Opinion is not available from HRConnect for NICS staff. However, the NICS follows, [ECNI Guidance ‘Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 – Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities](http://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/S75GuideforPublicAuthoritiesApril2010.pdf), which states that *‘when defined in terms of the unionist / nationalist divide, community background and/or location are useful proxy indicators.’*

The DARD HQ Relocation Staff Survey asked staff about their political opinion. The survey results show that in total 28.9% of the 745 respondents stated that they did not wish to respond to the question and a further 27.9% stated they had no political opinion. Of the 42% of staff who did respond, 13.4% indicated they were ‘Nationalist’, 26% ‘Unionist’ and 2.7% ‘Other’.

Given the low response rate to this question it is difficult to consider potential equality impacts based on this information alone. However, as outlined in the ECNI guidance, in NI, political opinion is perceived to be very closely aligned to religion and any differential impacts identified or conclusions reached in respect of political opinion are likely to be similar to those made for religious belief.

**3.4.3 Racial Groups**

The information on Race held on HRConnect shows that 0.2% of the NICS workforce have stated that they are from Ethnic Minority Groups. The 2011 [DARD Equality Profile](http://www.dardni.gov.uk/dard-equality-scheme-2011-2016.pdf)[[3]](#footnote-3) reports that 0.3% of our staff (7\* in total) were from a minority ethnic background. Responses to the Ethnicity questions in the DARD HQ Relocation Staff Survey showed that 93.8% of DARD HQ staff identify themselves as White, while the remaining 6.2% either indicated that they did not wish to respond to the question or left the question blank. We are aware that this figure may be higher as staff are not required to declare their race and also as DARD has previously recruited beyond NI.

Information from the [Census](http://www.nisra.gov.uk/Census/2011_results_key_statistics.html) shows that on Census Day 2011, 1.8 per cent (32,400) of the usually resident NI population belonged to minority ethnic groups, with the main minority ethnic groups being Chinese (6,300 people), Indian (6,200), Mixed (6,000) and Other Asian (5,000). A further 0.1 per cent (1,300) of people were Irish Travellers.

**3.4.4 Age**

The table below shows that the current DARD HQ staff (Group 1) have a higher age profile than that of the NICS staff currently working in the North West (Group 2). 42% of the current DARD headquarters staff are aged 45-54, whereas only 35.9% of staff working in the North West fall into this age band.

**Table 3.7 Age Band by Group**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Age** | **Group** | | | |
| **1 (DARD HQ)** | | **2 (North West)** | |
| **No of staff** | **% of staff** | **no of staff** | **% of staff** |
| **Under 25** | 21 | 2.7 | 40 | 1.1 |
| **25-29** | 65 | 8.3 | 267 | 7.1 |
| **30-34** | 87 | 11.1 | 523 | 13.8 |
| **35 – 39** | 84 | 10.7 | 433 | 11.4 |
| **40 – 44** | 102 | 13.0 | 574 | 15.2 |
| **45 – 49** | 162 | 20.6 | 657 | 17.4 |
| **50 – 54** | 168 | 21.4 | 700 | 18.5 |
| **55 – 59** | 71 | 9.0 | 396 | 10.5 |
| **60+** | 25 | 3.2 | 195 | 5.2 |
| **Total** | **785** | **100** | **3785** | **100.0** |

**Chart 3.2 Age Band by Group**

When considering potential equality impacts it is important to consider multiple identity groups. The following presents the information held by gender and is cross-tabulated with other groupings to show the numbers to be considered.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 3.8 DARD HQ Staff: Age by Gender** | | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Under 25 | 25-29 | 30-34 | 35-39 | 40-44 | 45-49 | 50-54 | 55-59 | 60-64 | 65+ | Total |
| Female | 11 | 38 | 53 | 38 | 56 | 87 | 76 | 22 | 3 | 3 | 387 |
| Male | 10 | 26 | 33 | 48 | 46 | 75 | 92 | 49 | 16 | 3 | 398 |
| Total | 21 | 64 | 86 | 86 | 102 | 162 | 168 | 71 | 19 | 6 | 785 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 3.9 DARD HQ Staff: Age by Gender by Working Pattern** | | | | | | | | | | |  | |
|  | Under 25 | 25-29 | 30-34 | 35-39 | 40-44 | 45-49 | 50-54 | 55-59 | 60-64 | 65+ | Total |
| **Female** | 11 | 38 | 53 | 38 | 56 | 87 | 76 | 22 | 3 | 3 | 387 |
| Full-time | 11 | 29 | 37 | 22 | 31 | 54 | 54 | 18 | 2 | 3 | 261 |
| Part-time |  | 9 | 16 | 16 | 25 | 33 | 22 | 4 | 1 |  | 126 |
| **Male** | 10 | 26 | 33 | 48 | 46 | 75 | 92 | 49 | 16 | 3 | 398 |
| Full-time | 10 | 26 | 31 | 46 | 44 | 72 | 86 | 45 | 6 |  | 366 |
| Part-time |  |  | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 10 | 3 | 32 |
| Grand Total | 21 | 64 | 86 | 86 | 102 | 162 | 168 | 71 | 19 | 6 | 785 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 3.10 NW NICS Staff Age by Gender by Working Pattern** | | | | | | | | | |  |  |
|  | Under 25 | 25-29 | 30-34 | 35-39 | 40-44 | 45-49 | 50-54 | 55-59 | 60-64 | 65+ | Total |
| **Male** | 21 | 114 | 201 | 185 | 275 | 329 | 323 | 222 | 122 | 23 | 1815 |
| Full-time | 21 | 113 | 199 | 176 | 260 | 318 | 297 | 205 | 93 | 13 | 1695 |
| Part-time | 0 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 15 | 11 | 26 | 17 | 29 | 10 | 120 |
| **Female** | 19 | 153 | 322 | 248 | 299 | 328 | 377 | 174 | 46 | 4 | 1970 |
| Full-time | 18 | 135 | 220 | 138 | 167 | 183 | 218 | 100 | 23 | 3 | 1205 |
| Part-time | 1 | 18 | 102 | 110 | 132 | 145 | 159 | 74 | 23 | 1 | 765 |
| Grand Total | 40 | 267 | 523 | 433 | 574 | 657 | 700 | 396 | 168 | 27 | 3785 |

**3.4.5 Marital Status**

The table below shows that the current DARD HQ staff (Group 1) has a similar proportion (61.1%) of staff who are married when compared with the NICS staff currently working in the North West (61.6%, Group 2).

**Table 3.11 Marital Status by Group**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Marital Status** | **Group** | | | |
| **1 (DARD HQ)** | | **2 (North West)** | |
| **No of staff** | **% of staff** | **No of staff** | **% of staff** |
| **Single** | 207 | 26.4 | 1086 | 28.7 |
| **Married** | 480 | 61.1 | 2330 | 61.6 |
| **Separated** | 13 | 1.7 | 60 | 1.6 |
| **Divorced** | 36 | 4.6 | 96 | 2.5 |
| **Civil Partnership** | 4 | 0.5 | 1 | .0 |
| **Widowed** | 6 | 0.8 | 33 | .9 |
| **Unknown** | 39 | 4.9 | 179 | 4.7 |
| **Total** | **785** | **100** | **3785** | **100** |

**Chart 3.3: Marital Status by Group**

**3.4.6 Sexual Orientation**

Information provided by the Rainbow Coalition on an EQIA of DARD Direct programme (2008) stated that approximately 10 per cent of the local population identified as being lesbian, gay or bisexual (LSB). This is generally accepted as a reasonable estimate.

**3.4.7 Men and Women Generally**

The table below shows that a higher proportion of staff working in the NICS in the North West (52%, Group 2) are female compared to the 49.3% of staff currently working in the DARD headquarters (Group 1).

**Table 3.12 Gender by Group**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Gender** | **Group** | | | |
| **1 (DARD HQ)** | | **2 (North West)** | |
| **No of staff** | **% of staff** | **No of staff** | **% of staff** |
| **Male** | 398 | 50.7 | 1815 | 48.0 |
| **Female** | 387 | 49.3 | 1970 | 52.0 |
| **Total** | **785** | **100** | **3785** | **100.0** |

**Chart 3.4 Gender by Group**

The following tables show the breakdown by grade for staff in the two groups – DARD HQ staff and NICS Staff working in the North West.

**Table 3.13 DARD HQ Staff Gender by Grade**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Gender | AA | AO | EOII | EOI | SO | DP | G7 | G6+ | Total |
| Female | 31 | 83 | 63 | 52 | 76 | 55 | 21 | 6 | 387 |
| Male | 22 | 34 | 49 | 50 | 84 | 83 | 52 | 24 | 398 |
| Total | 53 | 117 | 112 | 102 | 160 | 138 | 73 | 30 | 785 |

**Table 3.14 NW NICS Staff Gender by Grade**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Gender | Industrial | AA | AO | EOII | EOI | SO | DP | G7 | G6+ | Total |
| Male | 378 | 164 | 386 | 63 | 252 | 199 | 79 | 51 | 3 | 1815 |
| Female | 19 | 186 | 881 | 49 | 480 | 115 | 54 | 30 | 2 | 1970 |
| Total | 397 | 350 | 1267 | 112 | 732 | 314 | 133 | 81 | 5 | 3785 |

**3.4.8 Disability**

HRConnect statistics have shown that just over 16% of staff currently working in the DARD headquarters have declared themselves as having a disability; however, this figure is unlikely to reflect all those who have a disability. The DARD Disability Forum, established in 2002, works to encourage staff who have a disability to declare it and to seek any workplace adjustments or support that they may need. The Forum is very aware that this can often be difficult to do; as there may be individuals who do not wish to disclose personal details of an otherwise hidden disability; and others who may be worried about the perceived impact of doing so. The Forum also realises that many individuals do not consider that their health condition / impairment is disabling to them; and there are others who are unaware of the definition of a disability as set out in the [Disability Discrimination Act 1995](http://www.google.co.uk/url?url=http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/50/contents&rct=j&frm=1&q=&esrc=s&sa=U&ei=FmTbU7qtIIHW0QXg7YGwBQ&ved=0CBQQFjAA&usg=AFQjCNGOW69qc0klSAENWoFwwOEbNQ4jFA) (DDA) and therefore do not self declare.

The Equality profile of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development as at 1 January 2013 produced by NISRA, showed that 8.1% of all DARD staff had declared that they had a disability. This is almost twice the NICS average, but the true figure is still likely to be higher. However, a much higher percentage, 13%, of respondents to the DARD HQ Relocation Staff Survey, indicated that they classed themselves as disabled (a further 6.4% indicated that they did not wish to respond to that question). The extent of staff under reporting disability is difficult to judge given that in NI, the rate of disability is currently running at over 20% (Census 2011) which basically means that one person in five has a disability that meets the definition of the DDA. From this rate, we can with confidence assume that the DARD rate of 8.1% is still considerably lower that the likely true number of staff who have a disability.

**Table 3.15 Disability by Group**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Disability** | **Group** | | | |
| **1 (DARD HQ)** | | **2 (North West)** | |
| **No of staff** | **% of staff** | **No of staff** | **% of staff** |
| **Yes** | 128 | 16.3 | 476 | 12.6 |
| **No** | 98 | 12.5 | 237 | 6.3 |
| **Missing** | 559 | 71.2 | 3072 | 81.2 |
| **Total** | **785** | **100** | **3785** | **100.0** |

**Chart 3.5 Disability by Group**

When considering potential equality impacts it is important to consider multiple identity groups. Many of the groups consulted raised concerns about potential impacts on staff with disabilities in terms of Age / Gender / Grade. The following tables present the information held for staff with disabilities and is cross-tabulated with other groupings that will show the numbers to be considered.

**Table 3.16 DARD HQ Staff: Disability by Gender by Grade**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **AA/AO** | **EO** | **SO+** | **Total** |
| **Female** | 114 | 115 | 158 | 387 |
| **Disabled? Y** | 21 | 14 | 16 | 51 |
| **N** | 92 | 101 | 142 | 335 |
| **Male** | 56 | 99 | 243 | 398 |
| **Disabled? Y** | 7 | 12 | 28 | 47 |
| **N** | 49 | 87 | 215 | 351 |
| **Total** | 169 | 214 | 298 | 785 |

**Table 3.17 NW NICS Staff: Disability by Gender by Grade**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Industrial** | **AA/AO** | **EO** | **SO** | **DP+** | **Total** |
| **Female** | 19 | 1067 | 683 | 115 | 86 | 1970 |
| **Disabled? Y** | 0 | 79 | 45 | 10 | 6 | 140 |
| **N** | 19 | 988 | 638 | 105 | 80 | 1830 |
| **Male** | 378 | 550 | 555 | 199 | 133 | 1815 |
| **Disabled? Y** | 14 | 42 | 29 | 7 | 5 | 97 |
| **N** | 364 | 508 | 526 | 192 | 128 | 1718 |
| **Total** | 397 | 1617 | 1238 | 314 | 219 | 3785 |

**3.4.9 People with Dependants**

The information on the numbers of NICS staff with dependants is not available from HRConnect. However, the DARD HQ Relocation Staff Survey asked staff (Group 1) to indicate if they had dependants: 63.4% of staff have dependants, 27.7% indicated that they do not have dependants and the remaining 7.9% indicated that they did not wish to respond to that question.

**Chapter 4**

**Potential Equality Impacts of Relocation**

**4.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the potential equality impacts that have been identified through both the extensive pre-consultation exercise undertaken by the Department and also the responses to the formal consultation exercise (see Annex 3 for detail).

**4.2 Assessment of the Potential Equality Impacts**

The following paragraphs set out our assessment of the potential adverse equality impacts resulting from the decision to relocate the headquarters of DARD to four different rural locations. We have looked at each of the nine equality groups and outlined as appropriate:

* Our Assessment of the potential adverse equality impact;
* Background information and relevant statistics;
* Comments received during consultation;
* The Departments response; and
* Mitigations that DARD will put in place.

Where we have identified a potential adverse impact, we have explained how we have reached this assessment and the actions we will now take to address it. Other impacts, although not considered to be adverse, have also been included in this report as we are aware that these may also cause difficulties for some of our staff. Wherever possible, the Department will take action to help lessen the impact on staff. The full responses from the consultation are contained in Annex 3 and the possible Mitigations are covered in more detail in Chapter 5.

Where no potential adverse equality impact is identified, we have provided a statement outlining any factors raised throughout the consultation.

It is recognised that the relocation of jobs to the northwest, and the other three rural locations, will impact positively on current, and future, NICS staff by ensuring that they will be provided with greater opportunities for taking up employment or gaining promotion without having to move to posts in Greater Belfast.

**PERSONS OF DIFFERENT RELIGIOUS BELIEFS**

**Assessment of the potential adverse equality impact**

The Department has concluded that there is no potential adverse impact. However, one of the respondents (Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, ECNI) reported that the Department must ensure that it monitors changes over time to ensure that relocation does not adversely impact on one community or the other.

**Background Information**

The religious make up of the current DARD headquarters staff is approximately 2:1 Protestant: Catholic (see Table 3.6, Chapter 3). The composition of NICS staff currently working in the North West is almost a mirror image with Catholics making up approximately two-thirds of the NICS workforce.

Although the exact numbers of current DARD HQ staff, and current NICS staff, who will ultimately work in posts based at Ballykelly is still unknown, the Department recognises that relocation to Ballykelly could lead to a potential shift in the composition of its workforce in terms of religious belief from the current position of 2:1 Protestant to Catholic to a position more closely reflecting the composition of the NICS workforce in the North West i.e. 2:1 Catholic:Protestant. We anticipate that this transition could take some time to occur (up to 10 years).

**Comments Received**

***ECNI***…… ‘*However, we are aware that making an assessment of equality implications is not an easy task and many people may not easily make the connection, if there is one, between a particular disadvantage they may experience and their equality profile. What on the face of it may appear to be only a logistical issue may upon closer inspection or through implementation have an equality dimension to it. Therefore we would advise the Department to set in place monitoring, as is required, so that any difficulties that may arise for customers and service users in the future and to seek to identify if these may be linked to and/or exacerbated due to equality characteristics’.*

***Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ)***…… *‘According to the most recent published figures Senior Civil Service posts at Grade 5 level and above in the Northern Ireland Civil Service are only 34.5% Catholic and only 25.4% female. DARD may wish to include figures for DARD specific senior posts across all section 75 categories in the final EQIA. This would provide an evidence base for how the move, if it facilitates an improvement in the under-representation of Catholics, women or others into senior posts is positive action and therefore not an adverse impact’.*

**Departmental Response**

How the Department will monitor the impact of relocation across the Section 75 groups is outlined in Chapter 6: Monitoring. However, in terms of both the annual fair employment monitoring return and the tri-annual [Article 55 Reviews](http://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Monitoring%20and%20review/Article55ReportstructureSmallOrg2011.pdf)[[4]](#footnote-4), the NICS is seen as a single employer. Therefore, a shift from the current composition to one mirroring the composition of the NICS workforce in the North West is likely to have a minimal impact on the profile of the NICS in terms of religious beliefs.

There are currently only 18 Senior Civil Service posts in DARD. This information therefore does not lend itself to an analysis by Section 75 category. However, the NICS does provide an annual analysis of the Section 75 categories across the NICS for staff in Senior Civil Service posts and the NICS will continue to monitor the equality impact of any changes to the makeup of the Senior Civil Service posts resulting from relocation.

**Mitigations**

The Department considers that it does not need to put mitigations in place for this issue. The comment from ECNI is alerting the Department to the potential risk and encouraging the Department to ensure that appropriate monitoring arrangements are put in place to ensure that this does not become an issue. The monitoring arrangements are outlined in Chapter 6 of this document.

**PERSONS OF DIFFERENT POLITICAL OPINION**

**Assessment of the potential adverse equality impact**

The Department has concluded that there is no potential adverse impact.

**Departmental Comment**

As outlined above in this assessment, community background is being used as a reasonable proxy indicator for the unionist / nationalist divide in Northern Ireland. Therefore, we consider that the issue outlined above for Persons of different religious beliefs is similar for Persons of different political opinion.

**PERSONS OF DIFFERENT RACIAL GROUP**

**Assessment of the potential adverse equality impact**

No potential adverse equality impacts have been identified.

**Departmental Comment**

The number of staff within DARD declaring themselves as being from a minority racial group is only 0.2% and no potential adverse equality impacts have been identified to date. We do however acknowledge the advice of the ECNI that small numbers in itself is not an indication that there are no potential adverse impacts. However, throughout the consultation processes, no potential adverse equality impacts were raised by any group.

**PERSONS OF DIFFERENT AGE**

**Assessment of the potential adverse equality impact**

**Older staff** may be adversely impacted because of relocation as some older staff may retire sooner than they would have done if the Department did not relocate its headquarters. A higher proportion of our older staff are male.

**Background Information**

The current age profile of the DARD HQ staff shows a statistically significant number in the higher working-age bands compared to the rest of the NICS: the Equality Profile for DARD at 01 January 2013 shows that 36.1% of staff are in the 50+ age group compared to only 31.7% across the whole of the NICS. When asked about alternatives to taking up a post in Ballykelly, 60% of respondents aged 55 and over stated that they would either Age Retire or seek Early Retirement. In 2011/12, 0.86% of the NICS workforce retired through Age Retirement and a further 0.25% retired early. The number of DARD HQ staff who would consider this as an alternative to relocating (9.7% and 25.1% respectively) is significantly higher. The table below shows the numbers broken down by grade.

**Table 4.1 Alternatives to not taking up a post at Ballykelly**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Age Retire** | **Seek Early Retirement** |
| **Grade 7 or above** | 10 | 31 |
| **DP/SO** | 32 | 72 |
| **EO1/EO2** | 13 | 39 |
| **AO/AA/Other** | 8 | 21 |
| **Total** | 63 | 163 |

Therefore, the decision to relocate to Ballykelly could potentially have an adverse impact on our older staff as many may choose to end their careers earlier than would otherwise have been the case. As many of these older staff are likely to be experienced, they are also important to setting up and developing new teams in the new locations. Although early retirement would essentially be an individual’s choice, the Department will wish to ensure that this issue is considered (see Chapter 5). Action will be needed to mitigate this impact and to find ways to encourage as many staff as possible to remain in post, or to transfer to another part of DARD or to an NICS post instead.

**Comments Received**

***CAJ****……. ‘DARD may wish to consider including information in their final EQIA as regards the impact the move may have on those coming to retirement age (for example those wanting early retirement or those who may feel the need to take early retirement due to the move)’*.

**Departmental Response**

The Department agrees that relocation may force some staff to choose to retire early rather than try to relocate or take up another post in another Department. The age-profile of the Department is such that there are significant numbers of staff, mostly male, in this group. The figures show that over 200 DARD headquarters staff will reach the normal age of retirement[[5]](#footnote-5) before the transition of all posts is completed to Ballykelly. The Department also acknowledges that the loss of such experience over such a short time period, could potentially have an impact on the Department’s ability to meet its customers’ needs in the short and medium term.

**Mitigations**

The Department will:

* Relocate staff to new locations using the Staff Transition Model;
* Provide for greater flexible working arrangements than currently offered at present; and
* Adhere to the mobility clause included in the NICS Staff Terms and Conditions for part-time staff (including partially retired).

**Assessment of the potential adverse equality impact**

**Younger staff**, particularly those with dependants, may be adversely impacted upon by relocation as the additional travel time and associated costs would have a greater impact on them as a group compared to older staff without dependants. A higher proportion of younger staff are female.

**Background Information**

As outlined in the table below, the age profile of the staff in the DARD headquarters shows that younger staff are generally in the lower grades.

**Table 4.2 DARD HQ Staff: Age by Gender**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Under 25 | 25-29 | 30-34 | 35-39 | 40-44 | 45-49 | 50-54 | 55-59 | 60-64 | 65+ | Total |
| Female | 11 | 38 | 53 | 38 | 56 | 87 | 76 | 22 | 3 | 3 | 387 |
| Male | 10 | 26 | 33 | 48 | 46 | 75 | 92 | 49 | 16 | 3 | 398 |
| Total | 21 | 64 | 86 | 86 | 102 | 162 | 168 | 71 | 19 | 6 | 785 |

The results of the DARD HQ Relocation Staff Survey showed that those aged 45 and over (16%) were more likely to consider a move than those aged under 45 (11%). More than a fifth (21%) of those aged 55 and over were prepared to consider a move. Those under the age of 45 were more likely to consider employment outside of NICS (40%) as an option than those aged 45 and over (21%).

**Comments Received**

***Social and Democratic Labour Party (SDLP*)**…… *‘From the Survey results, it is evident that the group of staff who are least content with the suggested move to Ballykelly is predominantly made up of young females. Their stated reasons for concern centred mainly on issues that affected family life e.g. work-life balance, schooling, caring responsibilities etc’.*

***CAJ***.........*’The EQIA states 288 people identified as not being able to move out of the Stormont Estate (e.g. due to health reasons, caring responsibilities etc). CAJ would seek further information in the final EQIA as to what measures will be taken to accommodate persons in this category’.*

**Departmental Response**

The Department recognises the potential adverse impact of relocation on young female staff, particularly those with dependents, and how they may be adversely impacted upon by relocation as the additional travel time and associated costs would have a greater impact on them as a group than older staff without dependents. A higher proportion of younger staff are female.

**Mitigations**

The Department will:

* Adhere to the mobility clause included in the NICS Staff Terms and Conditions for part-time staff;
* Relocate staff to new locations using Staff Transition Model;
* Provide for greater flexible working arrangements; and
* Provide the opportunity for staff to transfer to another DARD or NICS post more suitable to their needs.

**PERSONS OF DIFFERENT MARITAL STATUS**

**Assessment of the potential adverse equality impact**

No adverse equality impacts have been specifically identified for this group. However, it is recognised that the impact of multiple identifies affect this group with for example impacts being exacerbated for Younger female staff should they be married/single and/or have dependants.

**Departmental Comment**

The consultation process did not raise any specific concerns about any potential adverse impact on people because of their marital status. While the Department recognises that there are very obvious issues, for example, single staff with dependants etc, these issues will be mitigated against when considering the gender and age issues. We are aware from the statistics that over 61% of staff are married, and many have responsibilities for children and other dependants.

**PERSONS OF DIFFERENT SEXUAL ORIENTATION**

**Assessment of the potential adverse equality impact**

No adverse equality impacts have been identified for this group.

**Departmental Comment**

The number of respondents to the DARD HQ Relocation Staff Survey declaring themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual was small – only 1.2%. Consultation with groups with particular interest in sexual orientation issues did not highlight any potential adverse equality issues resulting from relocation. We do however acknowledge the advice of the ECNI that small numbers in itself are not an indication that there are no potential adverse impacts.

**BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN GENERALLY**

**Assessment of the potential adverse equality impact**

Females may be adversely impacted upon by the decision to relocate. The age profile of the staff in the DARD headquarters show that there is a statistically significant difference between the number of females and males in the lower grades.

**Background Information**

Although this section deals specifically with potential adverse impacts between men and women generally, it should be noted that other equality issues are likely to be closely linked with gender; such as marital status, age, dependants.

The current overall gender breakdown of the DARD HQ staff is 50.7% male and 49.3% female. However, the DARD staffing statistics (Annex 5) indicating that the balance of male/female staff changes significantly by grade: at the lower grades (AO and below) females account for 67% of staff and representation declines through the grades with female representation at the highest grades being only 20%.

The impact of relocation is likely to impact adversely on females given that they have a higher representation in the lower grades (EO11 and below). The nature of the work in these grades may mean that they may be required to be office based at all times and therefore not as likely to be able to avail of the flexible working arrangements in terms of location.

Historically, female staff are much more likely to work part-time than their male counterparts. Within the DARD HQ staff, the number of females working part-time (126) outweighs males working part-time (32) by a factor of 1:4. This higher proportion is usually linked with caring responsibilities.

**Comment Received**

**SDLP**………*’Also evident from the Survey results is the complications for part-time staff, the vast majority of which are female. Many of these part-time staff also have dependants. Furthermore, part-time staff will not have the same access to alternative Northern Ireland Civil Service posts as full-time staff. The SDLP would ask that DARD pay attention to the needs of this group when considering appropriate mitigating actions and ensuring information is communicated fully and in a timely fashion and making provision for additional support if required’.*

**Departmental Response**

The department will consider specifically the needs of part-time staff. This issue was highlighted during the pre-consultation exercise and was acknowledged by the Department in its formal consultation document. Many groups raised the potential adverse impact on young staff, particularly female staff with dependants as a main concern. Many of these female staff are also working less than full-time hours and in the lower grades.

**Mitigation**

The Department will:

* Adhere to the mobility clause included in the NICS Staff Terms and Conditions for staff in administrative assistant and administrative officer grades and analogous;
* Adhere to the mobility clause included in the NICS Staff Terms and Conditions for part-time staff;
* Relocate staff to new locations using the Staff Transition Model;
* Provide for greater flexible working arrangements; and
* Provide the opportunity for staff to transfer to another DARD or NICS post more suitable to their needs.

**BETWEEN PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY AND PERSONS WITHOUT**

**Assessment of the potential adverse equality impact**

Staff with disabilities will potentially suffer adverse impacts resulting from this relocation. Although it is recognised that relocation will create difficulties for many staff, issues such as access to transport, additional travel time and cost, care issues, reasonable adjustments required etc will be exacerbated for staff with disabilities.

**Background Information**

As outlined in Chapter 3, information from HRConnect shows that 16.3% of staff in the DARD headquarters have declared that they have a disability. In addition, staff with disabilities have a statistically significant higher representation at the lower grades: only 20% of DARD HQ staff are in AA/AO grades but 28% of staff with disabilities are in AA/AO grades.

Another factor that the Department will need to consider is the potential under-reporting of disabilities. There is a likelihood that some HQ staff who have a disability will not have formally declared this yet because they see no need to do so as they have not yet needed any workplace adjustments to be made. However, when faced with a relocation to Ballykelly, which may present some significant difficulties, those staff may now wish to formally declare their disability to enable an assessment of a suitable workplace to be identified for them.

The DARD DisAbility Forum was established in 2002 and works to encourage staff who have a disability to declare it and to seek any workplace adjustments or support that they may need. The Forum has reported that it is aware that it can often be difficult for individuals to declare to their employer that they have a disability; they may not wish to disclose personal details of an otherwise hidden disability or they may be worried about the perceived impact of doing so. The Forum also realises that some individuals do not consider that their health condition / impairment is disabling to them; and there are others who are unaware of the definition of a disability as set out in the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and therefore do not self declare.

**Comments Received**

**SDLP, Disability Action, DARD DisAbility Forum, Joe Byrne MLA and Councillor Patsy Kelly**…. How relocation will impact adversely on staff with disabilities was a major concern for a larger number of respondents: more so than any other section 75 group. The issues for disabled staff are many and varied and include such things as a potential detrimental impact on health, retaining the reasonable adjustments already agreed with their employer and many issues related to travel in terms of the Motability Scheme, Carers providing transport, taxis costs etc. More detail on the issues outlined by the respondents can be found in the full responses in Annex 3.

**Autism NI**……..***’****Currently, inequalities regarding access to services, external and internal training for the workforce and families, as well as public awareness of Autism, are supported by the failure of past disability legislation to recognise Autism. This situation must be addressed as part of required compliance with the Autism Act (NI) 2011’.*

*‘The natural consequence of the new landmark legislation is a legal requirement to take account of the social and communication barriers faced by individuals with Autism in accessing public services and public facilities as well as proposed reorganisation and physical relocation plans’.*

**Departmental Response**

The Department is fully committed to complying with the Autism Act (NI) 2011 and to fulfilling the requirements of the DDA. The Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006 requires employers to give regard to a disabled persons work location as a reasonable adjustment. The NICS has a duty to do what it can to facilitate staff in this group. The department is fully committed to working with individual staff with disabilities to ensure that their needs are met during and following the relocation process and to ensure, that any arrangements currently in place for disabled staff continue to be met. The department will ensure that the issues of concern for our staff with disabilities and our DisAbility Forum are listened to. We will take all possible steps to ensure all issues are addressed to lessen the impact that moving to work in a new relocation will have.

**Mitigations**

The Department will:

* Adhere to the mobility clause included in the NICS Staff Terms and Conditions for staff in Administrative Assistant and Administrative Office grades and analogous, both full and part-time;
* Adhere to any contractual arrangements in place for staff with disabilities
* Implement reasonable adjustments arrangements for current staff with disabilities impacted by relocation and for other NICS staff with disabilities seeking to transfer to any of the new locations;
* Relocate staff to new locations using Staff Transition Model;
* Provide for greater flexible working arrangements; and
* Provide the opportunity for staff to transfer to another DARD or NICS post more suitable to their needs.

**BETWEEN PERSONS WITH DEPENDANTS AND PERSONS WITHOUT**

**Assessment of the potential adverse equality impact**

Staff with dependants will potentially suffer adverse impacts resulting from this relocation.

**Departmental Comment**

The issue of people with dependents being adversely impacted upon because of relocation has already been addressed above in relation to age for both Younger and Older staff and also links to other issues such as gender and marital status.

**4.3 Business Partners**

Chapter 3 outlined the many different interactions that DARD routinely has with other partner organisations. It is accepted that, as many of these groups are based in and around Belfast there will be very obvious issues in terms of logistics for DARD and the organisations it interacts with when it relocates from Belfast to the four rural locations.

In the EQIA which issued for consultation, the Department outlined that it considered that the impacts would primarily be ones that impacted on our own staff, rather than on our business partners. We do not consider that there are any adverse impacts on those organisations that DARD does business with.

Although both Strabane and Omagh District Councils stated that they wished to refute that there are no adverse equality impacts identified within any other groups other than staff, none of the recipients of the formal consultation document (500+) raised any potential adverse equality impacts for DARDs business partners.

Although that remains the position, we do acknowledge the advice of the ECNI and we will monitor for any potential equality impacts of relocation on our business partners.

**4.4 Responses to the Formal Consultation**

Section 4.2 above considered the potential adverse impacts of relocation as reported by various organisations in response to the formal consultation period on the relocation of the DARD headquarters. These groups included ECNI, CAJ, SDLP, Disability Action, DARD DisAbility Forum and Autism NI.

As well as the organisations already mentioned above, we received responses from the following organisations/individuals. This table has been grouped depending on the response received.

**Table 4.3 Respondents to Formal Consultation**

| **Respondent** | **Comment** |
| --- | --- |
| Alderman George Robinson, MLA | fully supported the relocation to Ballykelly |
| Councillor Alan Robinson | fully supported the relocation to Ballykelly |
| Councillor David Gilmour | fully supported the relocation to Ballykelly |
| Councillor James McCorkell | fully supported the relocation to Ballykelly |
| Councillor Mark Fielding | fully supported the relocation to Ballykelly |
| Gregory Campbell, MP, MLA | fully supported the relocation to Ballykelly |
|  |  |
| Aquaculture Initiative | supported decentralisation but questioned the move to such a remote relocation |
| British Veterinary Association | supported decentralisation but questioned the move to such a remote relocation |
| Livestock and Meat Commission | supported decentralisation but questioned the move to such a remote relocation |
| NI Grain Trade Association | supported decentralisation but questioned the move to such a remote relocation |
| Ulster Farmers Union | supported decentralisation but asked the Department to postpone the move until after the learning from DARD Direct was known |
|  |  |
| Joe Byrne, MLA & Patsy Kelly, MLA | disagreed with the decision to relocate to Ballykelly in favour of Strabane |
| Lagan Rural Partnership | disagreed with the decision to relocate to Ballykelly in favour of Lisburn |
| Omagh District Council | disagree with the decision to relocate to Ballykelly in favour of Omagh |
| Strabane District Council | disagree with the decision to relocate to Ballykelly in favour of Strabane |
|  |  |
| NI Judicial Appointments Commission | thanked the Department but had no comment to make |
| Marine Management Organisation | thanked the Department but had no comment to make |
| The Law Society | thanked the Department but had no comment to make |

**4.5 Issues Raised by Respondents**

The following section outlines some of the equality issues raised by respondents to the formal consultation that are not specific to any particular Section 75 group. The full response from each respondent is outlined in Annex 3. The issues considered below are:

1. **Decisions on locations did not consider all Section 75 Groups**
2. **Loss of corporate knowledge**
3. **Public Transport issues**
4. **Delivering Social Benefits**
5. **Decisions on locations did not consider all Section 75 Groups**

**Respondents Comment: *Strabane District Council*** - *DARD’s Equality Scheme states that DARD will ensure that S75 is at the core of its decision and policy making processes. Strabane District Council would therefore argue that the decision to relocate to Ballykelly was not based on the principles of S75 and is a breach of the Department’s equality scheme. Strabane District Council calls on DARD to carry out a full equality impact assessment on the shortlisted locations and to comply with its statutory duties.*

**Omagh District Council**.........’*EQIA should consider the impacts on all groups that interact with DARD and the wider rural community it serves’.*

**Departmental Response:** The Department has undertaken an assessment of the potential equality impacts of relocation as required in line with equality guidance and best practice.

Between 12 April 2013 and 5 July 2013 DARD officials met a number of organisations to hear their initial views / concerns etc. The pre-consultation undertaken by the Department to inform this assessment was extensive and included:

* pre-consultation meetings with 17 equality focused groups;
* writing to 50 of DARDs main customers and stakeholders requesting comment;
* seeking comment from equality professionals within the other NICS Departments;
* issuing a survey to some 900 staff directly impacted by relocation; and
* in-depth discussion with staff trade union representatives.

All of the above information can be found in the [Formal Consultation Document on the proposal to relocate the Headquarters of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development 12 April 2013.](http://dardni.staging.nigov.net/newdardinterstg9.8.4/dard-hq-relocation-consultation-document-eia.pdf)

The formal consultation document was issued to over 500 interested organisations and individuals as well as being advertised in local media and being placed on the DARD Website.

We would again like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who took part.

Many of the respondents to the consultants reported that the Department had carried out its duties in line with Section 75 and the Equality Commission guidelines. The **ECNI** reported…..’*The Commission recognises the efforts undertaken by the Department in compiling this consultation document, which is comprehensive and easy to read, and we welcome the fact that in its structure it follows the 7-step process for Equality Impact Assessments as detailed in the Commission’s Practical Guidance’.*

In December 2012 legal representatives of the main trade union representing the staff working in the DARD headquarters, NI Public Service Alliance, wrote to the Department seeking information on the process followed with a view to potentially seeking a judicial review on the grounds that the Department did not adhere to equality legislative requirements when deciding to relocate to Ballykelly and asking the Department to defer further action on relocation until the matter of equality assessment was addressed. In response the Department replied that *‘it is committed to the principle of equality as enshrined in section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The proposal to relocate DARD Headquarters to a rural location has been the subject of high level EQIA. The decision to construct a business case for relocation to Ballykelly will be the subject of a full EQIA’. In the circumstances, there is no proper basis to defer further action on this important programme*’.

1. **Loss of corporate knowledge**

**Respondents Comments:**

***NI Grain Trade Association*** .........***‘****We are also concerned about the loss of experienced personnel which will result from the relocation. People with years of experience and detailed knowledge of the particular sectors in which they are involved will be lost and their expertise and understanding of the industry will take many years to replace. This can only be detrimental to the effective operation of DARD and will impact on those who have to interact with them.**At a time of great opportunity for our industry, as evidenced by the recent Food Strategy Report, it is vital that DARD are fully resourced with competent staff to play their part in meeting the challenges ahead’.*

***Lagan Rural Partnership*** *.........’The Partnership is concerned that this disintegration in staffing compliment and associated expertise will lead to the development of a significant knowledge transfer gap within the Department that will also negatively impact on the support and partnership role that the Department provides to all of its stakeholder and Business Partners’.*

**Departmental Response**

The Department recognises that managing the movement of staff is the biggest challenge of the relocation programme and the potential loss of corporate knowledge is the greatest risk to having functioning headquarters in each of the four locations. Chapter 5 outlines the mitigations that the Department will put in place to mitigate the potential adverse impacts. However, these mitigations also serve to ensure that the Department has the time, resources and arrangements in place to ensure a smooth transfer of the corporate knowledge from the current headquarters to the four new locations.

1. **Public Transport issues**

**Respondents Comment:**

***CAJ***

* Accessible road and public transport networks
* Rail link on site

*‘DARD should work with other departments such as Department for Regional Development (DRD) when planning for any move so that road and public transport networks are accessible for staff. This includes the obvious potential for a rail link to the site’.*

**Departmental Response**

The Department is considering the travel requirements for staff who will work in Ballykelly, and the other 3 locations. DRD have plans to improve the road infrastructure with a by-pass around Ballykelly, the timeframe for this is 2017/2018, and the current business plan for developing a new headquarters on the Shackleton site provides for a new access road to ensure traffic impact is minimised. Further to improvements on the road network, enhancements to other forms of public transport are being considered. Consultations between the DARD Minister and the DRD Minister to consider specifically the provision of a new rail halt are on-going.

1. **Delivering Social Benefits**

**Respondents Comment: Disability Action – ‘***Regarding delivering social benefits through procurement Disability Action would advise the Department for Agriculture and Rural Development to ensure that contact criterion encourages prospective contactors to demonstrate, beyond the drafting of an equal opportunity policy, how they will utilize government programmes such as Employment Support and Workable’.*

**Departmental Response**

The Department has a long-term vision of ‘A thriving and sustainable rural community and environment’. Relocation will bring economic benefit to four rural locations and will allow the Department to enhance its work in social and community engagement. For example, the Department will work with OFMDFM to ensure that the local community in Ballykelly can benefit from facilities provided on the site and that the Consultant shall comply and take all reasonable steps to ensure the observance of the provision of Equality of Opportunity by all servants, employees, consultants and sub consultants employed. Furthermore, the Department is also required to ensure that it adheres to the ‘Equality of Opportunity and Sustainable Development in Public Sector Procurement’ guidance (see section 5.7 for more detail).

**Chapter 5**

**Mitigations**

**5.1 Introduction**

Chapter 4 highlighted the potential adverse equality impacts that are envisaged as a result of the Minister’s decision to relocate the Departmental headquarters out of Greater Belfast to four different rural areas. As listed below, this chapter outlines the mitigations that will be put in place to either remove, or lessen, the potential adverse equality impact.

1. Relocate staff to new locations using the **Staff Transition Model;**
2. Provide for greater **flexible working arrangements**;
3. Adhere to the **mobility** clause included in the NICS Staff Terms and Conditions for staff in administrative assistant and administrative office grades and analogous and part-time staff (including partially retired);
4. Adhere to any contractual arrangements in place for staff with **disabilities;**
5. Provide the opportunity for staff to **transfer** to another DARD or NICS post more suitable to their needs; and
6. Equality of Opportunity and Sustainable Development in Public Sector Procurement.

Each of the topics in **bold** above are examined in detail below.

It should be noted at this stage that the aim of the Department is to have the four headquarters (Rivers Agency at Loughry, Forest Service in Fermanagh, Fisheries Division in South Down and the remainder of the headquarters at Ballykelly) fully operational immediately after each relocation has been completed. The Department wishes to avoid disruption to its services or to its customers and it therefore recognises that it is in its best interests to retain as many of its current staff as possible to work in the new locations. The Department will work with individual members of staff to do all it can within the current NICS Terms and Conditions of Service and the policies and procedures governing working arrangements and practices to ensure that as many current staff as possible are encouraged to remain in post after relocation. However, this will simply not be suitable or practical for many staff and we will work with individuals to ensure that they are in the most suitable posts for them after relocation.

Furthermore, when the Minister announced her decision, she acknowledged that some staff would not welcome her decision and she gave a commitment that as far as possible she would ensure that no member of staff would be forced to move with their posts to work in Ballykelly. The Department has since extended this commitment to staff impacted by the other 3 relocations: Fisheries Division to South Down, Forest Service to Fermanagh and Rivers Agency to Loughry.

In conjunction with our HR business partners, the Department is developing a HQ Relocation Human Resource (HR) Strategy to specifically address the needs of the Department and individual members of staff in respect of relocation. This Strategy is being drawn up in conjunction with all other NICS Departments.

**5.2 Staff Transition Model**

A review of other relocations projects/programmes, in both this and other jurisdictions, shows that a major success factor in any relocation is the ability of the organisation to continue to meet its business objectives both during and post the move. The lessons learned from other relocation projects such as the relocation of NICS to Carlisle House and Orchard/Waterside House all in the North-West and the decentralisation of central government departments and agencies in both Scotland and the Republic of Ireland are outlined in Annex 6. The key point is that it is critical that we carefully consider how staff are migrated to the new headquarters in a way which mitigates as far as possible the loss of valuable corporate knowledge and experience. Managing the transfer of knowledge between current and new staff is important. This will be a particular issue for DARD considering that the Staff Survey showed that only 5% of staff currently working in DARD HQ were willing to move to Ballykelly on a permanent basis (a further 9% of staff would possibly consider moving).

**5.2.1 Staff Transition to Ballykelly**

The Department has developed a Staff Transition Models for the movement of staff/posts to the new headquarters at Ballykelly (see below).

DARD envisages that the composition of the workforce in the DARD HQ will, over a period of time, move from a position where around 75% of the current staff live in and around North Down to a position where 75% of the DARD HQ staff post relocation will live in and around the North West. It is expected that this transition could take up to 10 years and once it is developed, the DARD HQ Relocation Human Resource (HR) Strategy will detail how this transition will be managed efficiently and effectively.

The HQ Relocation HR Strategy currently being developed outlines a phased transition of staff from the current site at Dundonald House to Ballykelly. It is intended that a phased transition will:

* Reduce any additional travel and commuting requirements of staff in the short/medium term.
* Ensure business continuity by managing the exchange of corporate knowledge between current and replacement staff;
* Ensure that the Department delivers on the Minister’s; commitment that where possible no-one will be forced to move to Ballykelly to work;
* Ensure that the Department delivers on the Programme for Government target of advancing the relocation of the DARD HQ to a rural area;
* Reduce risk of business failure resulting from low staff morale;
* Facilitate the testing of a more flexible approach[[6]](#footnote-6) to working arrangements, with DARD prepared to act as a pathfinder; and

The Department proposes to achieve this transition by two methods:

* Encouraging more staff to remain with the Department by utilising more flexible working arrangements, with the required supporting modern technologies, to allow staff to work from a variety of locations for some of the time; and
* Ensuring that DARD HQ staff who don’t wish to move to Ballykelly are transferred to suitable alternative posts in the NICS.

It is acknowledged that a significant number of staff who have indicated that they will not remain with their post when it relocates to Ballykelly would prefer to transfer to posts within DARD rather than to another NICS department. Our intention is to facilitate as many staff within the Department as possible but staff should be aware that the likely numbers of opportunities to remain with the Department in a post that is not based in Ballykelly will be very limited.

A Staff Transition Model has been developed and is predicated on the Department advancing relocation on the basis of a staggered staff move. The construction of the accommodation at Ballykelly will be done on a phased basis with 400 workstations in phase one (2017) with the remaining approximately 200 in a second phase (2020).

The Staff Transition Model developed for relocating posts to Ballykelly starts in the year prior to the construction of phase one being completed. At this point, the model shows a small number of DARD HQ staff (around 30 in total) working in Ballykelly (it is not yet known the exact location of these posts but it is envisaged that they will be either in the Shackleton site in accommodation recently refurbished for use by OFMDFM or in other NICS accommodation in the North West). Having a dedicated number of workstations somewhere in the North West should help attract replacement staff earlier in the process, thereby assisting in the transfer of the corporate knowledge.

The first major move of staff to Ballykelly will happen in 2017 when 290 staff will move permanently into the newly constructed phase one. The 30 staff already in the North West will also move to occupy the new building, making it 320 staff permanently in a building of 400 workstations. It is expected that at least 30 of the other workstations will be utilised by staff working flexibly between Belfast and Ballykelly. The remainder of the 744 DARD HQ staff i.e. 374 staff to be found office space in Belfast for the duration of phase one – this will either be that they remain in Dundonald House or move to other NICS accommodation in Greater Belfast but that will be dependent upon DFP Properties Division plans for Dundonald House.

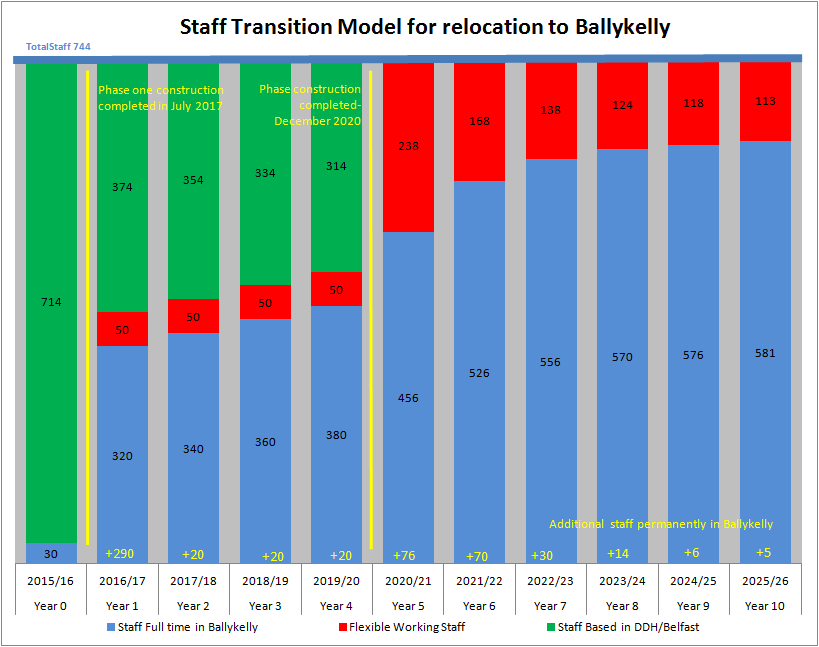
During each of the next 3 years (2018-2020), up until phase two is completed, approximately 20 more posts will move to be based permanently in Ballykelly – although there is considerable flexibility in the timing of the move, 20 is a working assumption based on the numbers available from the work being undertaken with the business areas.

Following completion of phase two the number of permanent staff working in Ballykelly will increase to 450 and increase in subsequent years until we have some 580 permanent staff working in Ballykelly. Of the 744 staff in total, we will have some 50 staff who will remain permanently in Belfast and the remaining staff will work between Ballykelly and bases either in Belfast, provided for by DFP Properties Division or through the utilisation of spare capacity across the DARD Estate.

DFP Properties Division are completing an economic appraisal for the future development of Dundonald House which is dependent on DARD staff moving to its new headquarters in Ballykelly. Properties Division will provide the accommodation in Belfast that will meet the needs of this transition model. They have also agreed to provide, on a permanent basis, approx. 100 workstations in Belfast. These workstations will be utilised by the Department for staff who either require a permanent base in Belfast or who will work between Belfast and Ballykelly.

This Model will be refined as the programme progresses. The chart below seeks to illustrate this proposed transition.

**Chart 5.1 Staff Transition Model for relocation to Ballykelly**

****

**5.2.2 Other HQ Relocations**

The plan to relocate Forest Service to Fermanagh is to utilise Inishkeen House which is a DARD occupied DFP building in Enniskillen that is currently underutilised. Given the distance involved in this move, and the specialist nature of many of the posts impacts, Forest Service are planning to move staff on a staged basis to the new headquarters. It is expected that this move will begin summer/autumn 2014 and be completed by June 2015.

The plan is to relocate Fisheries Division to Downpatrick into accommodation leased from Down District Council at the old Downshire Hospital site. This site is currently being developed as a public sector hub and accommodates a range of organisations from across the public sector such as health, council, housing and emergency services etc. Given the relatively short distance and number of posts earmarked for relocation (51) it is envisaged that the physical move of staff can happen relatively quickly and not require a transition model.

Rivers Agency will relocate to a new building on the CAFRE campus at Loughry. Again, as with the Fisheries Division relocation given the relatively short distance and number of posts earmarked for relocation (85) it is envisaged that the physical move of staff can happen relatively quickly and not require a transition model.

**5.3 Flexible Working**

The Department intends to consider a wide range of alternative working methods that will allow many DARD staff to retain a post within the Department, which will in the future be based in Ballykelly, but will allow them the flexibility of carrying out their duties from any location. Although the Department recognises that it is usually the higher grade posts that traditionally lend themselves more easily to flexible working, it is committed to ensuring that grade is not a deciding factor on who can work from other locations. Increasing access to greater flexible working arrangements especially for the lower grades will be considered as part of the development work in this area. Furthermore, in practice it will be a matter between individual staff and their line managers as to the extent of flexible working that individual staff can avail of and the Department will put in place change management training for all staff to ensure that the new ways of working are embraced.

The DARD External Business Interaction Survey showed that a large number of the interactions between DARD staff and external customers take place in Greater Belfast. These interactions include attendance at ARD Committee meetings, inter-departmental working groups as well as meetings with customers and business partners outside of the NICS. It is imperative therefore that arrangements are put in place to allow staff to work on an ad hoc basis close to the Stormont Estate.

In order to ensure that greater flexible working can be fully integrated into the normal working of DARD, the Department must address a number of prerequisites:

* A more to the greater flexibility of working arrangement envisaged will require a cultural change in how work is allocated and managed;
* Work will need to be managed more in terms of outputs, or possibly in outcomes, and not in time spent at a desk. This will not be an easy shift and will require buy-in and leadership at every level of the Department;
* It is often the case that the staff required to be in a particular locale are staff at a lower grade whose job roles do not lend themselves as easily to flexible working. This change will need to be carefully managed and supported by a sound change management strategy;
* Modern, easy to use, reliable and flexible technology will be required which can make use of WIFI and 4G networks to ensure working from other locations can be as seamless as possible. The technology needs to be complemented by easy to use applications and extensive access to information in a secure manner;
* Other more practical issues need to be considered e.g. the provision of workstations at other DARD/NICS locations and the possible need for a booking system for workstations.

**5.4 Mobility**

The NICS Staff Terms and Conditions of Service, as outlined in the NICS Staff Handbook, dictate that ‘mobility’ is dependent upon grade and working pattern. If you are in the AO (and analogous) grade or below, or part-time at any grade (including partially retired), you are ‘non-mobile’ and liable only for permanent transfer only to posts within reasonable daily travelling distance of your home. Staff with non-mobile terms cannot therefore be moved and compelled to work in Ballykelly and will be found posts closer to home. It is of course acknowledged that staff in the non-mobile grades can relocate with their posts should they choose to do so. Where that is the case, these staff will be entitled to the same conditions of service in terms of reimbursement of travel/relocation costs etc as other staff.

Currently there are 248 staff in DARD headquarters who fall into this category (160 AA/AOs, 88 part-time staff above AO grade) and will require a post within a reasonable daily travelling distance from home. In our consultations with DFPs Corporate HR we have been assured that the staff at the lower grade can be easily subsumed into other NICS posts across Greater Belfast. However, the Department will need to give special consideration as to how it deals with staff above AO particularly those in either DARD or NICS specialist posts. These issues have been raised and are being addressed in the HQ Relocation HR Strategy and Plan.

From the NICS wide DARD HQ Relocations Survey, 500 staff at AA/AO grade indicated that they would be willing to work in Ballykelly. Although highly unlikely, a number of the equality focused groups requested that should a targeted recruitment campaign for these grades be required in the North West that they be given earlier notice to allow them to prepare bespoke training packages to allow their clients, particularly NEETS (young people not in education, employment or training) to prepare to apply for such posts.

**5.5 Contractual arrangements in place for staff with disabilities**

There is a large volume of legislation that requires the NICS to give special consideration to staff when looking at their individual circumstances in relation to their place of work. For example, the Employment Rights (NI) Order 2006 contains a right for staff with caring responsibilities to apply to have their working time/conditions altered to suit their needs.

The Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006 provides similar rights for employees with disabilities. These are referred to as reasonable adjustments and can be changes such as: to working times, working patterns and hours as well as other adjustments such as physical adjustments to working equipment and access points etc. The Department will work with individuals to ensure that where appropriate their current workplace (or working arrangements) adjustments will carry on through to their next location whether be that at one of the new DARD locations or at an alternative NICS location. This issue has been highlighted and will be taken forward in the HQ Relocation HR Strategy and Plan.

**5.6 Transferring Staff**

In developing the HQ Relocations HR Strategy and Plan, Departmental HR has worked with Corporate HR (DFP) to consider the NICS policies and procedures that impact on how, and in particular the priority, that staff will be treated when it comes to transferring either into another DARD post or to another NICS Department. Within the remainder of this section we refer to transfer to another NICS post which covers both within DARD and within another NICS Department.

Different groups of staff will have different rights when it comes to transferring. All staff can be grouped into one of four categories. The rights of both Non-mobile staff (see section 5.4. above) and staff covered by Legislation (see section 5.5 above) have been outlined above. The two other groups of staff are ‘Other General Service and NICS Specialist’ staff and DARD specialists.

Staff classified as Other General Service and NICS Specialist do not have any specific contractual right or legislative basis for working closer to home. However, the NICS procedures and policies allow for staff in this group to apply for any vacant post providing they meet the necessary selection criteria. Staff in this group have skills and competencies that are easily transferable between NICS posts.

Staff classified as DARD specialists, although they have similar contractual and legislative rights as general service staff, they are employed in disciplines specific to DARD and therefore their skills are not as easily transferable. Staff in these grades include for example Meat inspectors, Agricultural Economists etc. The staff in this group do have the option of applying to transfer laterally i.e. out of their specialist field and into the general service but this is an additional hurdle for these staff when compared with general service staff.

The HQ Relocations HR Strategy and Plan gives particular consideration to the staff depending upon which group they fall into. Work is already underway to identify the numbers in each group who do not want to remain in post should their post be relocated. This information gathering is underway and Rivers Agency Staff have completed a pilot questionnaire outlining their own individual preference when their post relocates to Loughry. This questionnaire will roll out to the other relocations and when complete will provide the Department and Corporate HR with the information needed to consider the appropriateness of the current NICS transfer policies and procedures to cater for the staff movement between posts expected as a result of the relocations.

**5.7 Equality of Opportunity and Sustainable Development in Public Sector Procurement**

Given the extent of the procurement and construction linked with the relocation programme, it is useful to show how the Department, through their work with DFP’s Central Procurement Directorate, (CPD), will adhere to the principles outlined in the [Equality of Opportunity & Sustainable Development & Public Sector Procurement](https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=Equality+of+Opportunity+%26+Sustainable+Development+%26+Public+Sector+Procurement&hl=en-GB&gbv=2&oq=&gs_l=).

This guide has been prepared by the Equality Commission and the CPD to support public authorities as they embed equality of opportunity, including good relations, and sustainable development in their procurement practice.

One example of how the Department will seek to adhere to this guidance is the inclusion of specific conditions for contractors as part of any design and/or construction of new buildings required at Ballykelly and Loughry.

The current draft agreements for the design of the building at Ballykelly include the following clauses.

*Opportunities for the Unemployed*

*‘The Consultant shall either directly, or through its Sub-consultants provide twenty six (26) person weeks of work experience, or employment opportunities for the unemployed, through a Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) approved scheme, or equivalent. The Consultant shall liaise with DEL’s Employer Contact Manager to arrange approved scheme placements.*

*In seeking applicants from the DEL approved scheme the Consultant shall highlight to potential applicants that a work placement may lead to an employment opportunity with the Consultant. In the event that an unemployed participant completes their module and the Consultant then recruits the participant as an employee, then the period of employment would contribute to the Consultant’s obligation to provide opportunities for the unemployed up to a maximum of 26 weeks.*

*In the event that an unemployed participant commences the work placement, but withdraws or is removed from the DEL approved scheme placement before completing the work experience or employment opportunity, the Consultant shall arrange for a replacement participant from the DEL approved scheme.*

*The Consultant provides the unemployed participant with meaningful work experience, training and development which will enhance their opportunities for future employment’.*

*Other social objectives*

*‘The Authority may require the Consultant to provide more or different social objectives as part of each Secondary Competition’.*

*Promote best practice in Health and Safety and Respect for People*

*The Consultant shall comply with the equality in the workplace requirements.*

**Chapter 6**

**Monitoring**

**6.1 Why monitor?**

The requirement to monitor the impact of a policy change is imbedded in the legislation under Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, and through published commitments in our Equality Scheme. The legislation requires a public authority to monitor the impact of a policy decision on all Section 75 groups and to publish the results of such monitoring. Furthermore, DARD’s Equality Scheme requires that should the monitoring and analysis of results over a two year period show that the policy results in greater adverse impacts than predicted, or if opportunities arise which would allow for greater equality of opportunity to be promoted, the Department must ensure that the policy is revised to achieve better outcomes for the relevant equality groups.

**6.2 What will be monitored?**

This report has reached a number of conclusions in respect of the equality impact of relocation. It will be important to monitor the impacts of the relocation to test these conclusions.

The monitoring will need to test that:

1. Relocation will not have any adverse equality impact on any of the Departments external business partners
2. That relocation will not have any adverse impacts on

* Persons of different religious beliefs
* Persons of different political opinion
* Persons of a different racial group
* Persons of different marital status
* Persons of different sexual orientation

1. That the mitigations in place will minimise the adverse impact of relocation on staff with the following equality characteristics

* Persons of different ages
* Between men and women generally
* Between persons with a disability and persons without
* Between persons with dependants and persons without

**6.3 Monitoring Systems**

The Department, where applicable, will use HRConnect (the NICS human resources information management system) to monitor the impact of relocation. In addition the Department will put in place specific arrangements that will ensure all equality aspects of relocation are monitored as required, and to assess the impact of the mitigations on the equality groupings above.

**6.3.1 Monitoring equality impacts for other Stakeholders**

The Department will test the assumption that the only adverse equality impacts of relocation are on staff by developing and issuing a questionnaire to a sample of its business partners. This will be undertaken by the HQ Relocation Team 12 months after each of the relocations for Forestry, Fisheries and Rivers Agency actually takes place (and also 12 months after Phase Two of the new headquarters in Ballykelly is completed).

**6.3.2** **Monitoring equality impacts for staff**

As outlined in this report staff will either relocate to the new locations (in some cases facilitated by flexible working) or leave the Department (either to take up a post in another NICS Department or leave the NICS through retirement/new employment etc). In order to ensure that the mitigations in place for staff are adequate the Department, through the HQ Relocation HR Team, will arrange for relevant equality data for each individual member of staff affected by any of the relocation projects to be captured and recorded in a database. The database will capture the preferences of all staff for a posting after relocation, whether they choose to remain with the Department or decide to transfer out of the Department. For those who choose to retire or leave the Department to take up external employment an Exit Interview will be conducted to gather information on the reason for leaving.

This database will be developed as part of the HR Strategy and will be in place before any of the relocations happen. The information from the database will be analysed as appropriate 12 months after each relocation takes place.

The information obtained will be supplemented with information from a staff survey aimed at a representative sample of staff impacted by each relocation. Again this will take place 12 months after each relocation.

**6.4 Publishing the findings of Monitoring**

As outlined above, monitoring information will be gathered 12 months after each relocation (and 12 months after the completion of Phase Two at Ballykelly). As soon as possible after each monitoring stage, the Department will publish the outcome of the analysis, and any further mitigation actions required, on its Departmental website and make it available to staff and consultees. In line with the commitment in our Equality Scheme the outcome of the monitoring will also be published in the Department’s annual progress report to the Equality Commission.

**Annex 1**

**DARD HQ RELOCATION EQIA PRE-CONSULTATION PARTICIPANTS**

Pre-consultation took place between January and April 2013. The Department is grateful to all those who took part in the consultation.

**DARD Business Partners**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute | NI Meat Exporters Association |
| AgriSearch | North of Ireland Veterinary Association (NIVA) |
| Anglo North Irish Fish Producers Organisation (ANIFPO) | NI Agricultural Consultants Association |
| Association of Veterinary Surgeons Practising in NI (AVSPNI) | NI Environment Agency |
| Commissioner for Public Appointments (CPANI) | NI Fish Producers Organisation (NIFPO) |
| Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside | Outdoor Recreation NI (formerly CAAN) |
| Countryside Services Limited | Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors |
| Dairy UK | Royal Society for Protections of Birds (RSPB) |
| Farmers for Action | Rural Development Council |
| Livestock and Meat Commission | Society of Irish Foresters |
| National Beef Association | Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE) |
| National Sheep Association | Ulster Farmers' Union |
| National Trust | Ulster Wildlife Trust |
| NI Agriculture Producers Association | Ulster Society Prevention Cruelty to Animals |
| NI Environmental Link (NIEL) | Veterinary Northern Ireland |
| NI Local Government Association | Worldwide Fund for Nature |
| NI Poultry Federation | Young Farmers Clubs of Ulster |

**Equality Focused Groups**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| NI Commissioner for Children and Young People | DARD Equality Steering Group |
| Commissioner for Older People NI | NI Human Rights Commissioner |
| Committee for Administrative Justice | The Rainbow Project |
| NI Commissioner for Children and Young People | DARD Equality Steering Group |
| Community Relations Council | NI Rural Women's Network |
| DARD Disability Forum | Rural Community Network |
| Disability Action | Women's Resource and Development Agency |
| Equality Coalition | Youth Action NI |

**Government Departments**

The Equality Practitioners in each of the other 11 NI Government Departments (and the NI Assembly) were issued with the pre-consultation and invited to provide comment.

**Annex 2**

DARD HQ Relocation Staff Survey

Introduction

As you are aware, there are proposals in place to relocate the DARD Headquarters, including Rivers Agency, to Ballykelly and under a separate initiative to relocate the Forest Service Headquarters to Fermanagh.

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, NISRA, has been commissioned to carry out a survey of staff in posts that may be impacted by these potential moves. This survey is aimed at all the staff currently working in headquarters at Dundonald House and Hydebank. It is proposed that the views of other DARD and NICS staff not working in those locations will also be gathered through survey.

This survey has two main purposes.

1.The information from this survey will be used by the Department to consider what it needs to do to ensure that the Department, including Rivers Agency and Forest Service, will be able to continue to deliver its services following relocation, and

2.The information will inform the Equality Impact Assessments for the relocation as required under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act.

This survey is also an opportunity for you as a member of DARD to provide your views and comments to the Department. It is important therefore that you complete the survey.

The information you provide on this survey will be anonymised to be used for statistical purposes only under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998. The information you provide will not be released by NISRA or be shared with anyone else in any way that could identify you.

NISRA will collect and analyse the data independently and will only provide statistical summary data back to DARD.

It is important that as many staff as possible complete the survey. The survey should take no more than 10-15 minutes to complete. Although final decisions have yet to be taken about which posts will relocate, please complete the survey on the assumption that your current post will relocate to Ballykelly (or if you are in Forest Service that your post will relocate to Fermanagh). You should also note that TUS has been consulted in relation to this survey although some options listed in the questionnaire have not yet been explored in detail or been the subject of consultation with TUS.

It is recognised that mobility is determined by individual's terms and conditions. However, regardless of whether or not your terms and conditions determine you to be mobile or non-mobile it is important that we capture your views and encourage you to complete the survey.

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete the survey.

Intro1. Please indicate where the headquarters is for your current post.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

The headquarters for my post is Dundonald House (even if I do not work at this location all of the time)……. Go to Intro2

|  |
| --- |
|  |

The headquarters for my post is Hydebank (even if I do not work at this location all of the time)………………. Go to Intro2

|  |
| --- |
|  |

The headquarters for my post is not Dundonald House or Hydebank ……………………………………. Go to end

Intro2. To which division / business unit of DARD do you belong?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Veterinary Service…………………………... Go to Q1

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Service Delivery Group……………………… Go to Q1

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Central Services Group……………………... Go to Q1

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Central Policy Group………………………… Go to Q1

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Rivers Agency………………………………... Go to Q1

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Forest Service………………………………... Go to Q3

Q1. Will you be content to remain in your current post if it will move to the new headquarters in Ballykelly?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Yes………………………. Go to Q10

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Maybe………………….. Go to Q2

|  |
| --- |
|  |

No……………………….. Go to Q2

Q2. Would you be interested in moving to the new Forest Service HQ in County Fermanagh?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Yes………………………. Go to Q5

|  |
| --- |
|  |

No……………………….. Go to Q5

Q3. Will you be content to remain in your current post if it will move to the new headquarters in County Fermanagh?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Yes……………………… Go to Q10

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Maybe…………………. Go to Q4

|  |
| --- |
|  |

No………………………. Go to Q4

Q4. Would you be interested in moving to the new DARD HQ in Ballykelly?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Yes……………………… Go to Q5

|  |
| --- |
|  |

No………………………. Go to Q5

Q5. For each of the personal reasons on the following list please select how important it is to you in your desire NOT to move to either the new DARD HQ in Ballykelly or the new Forest Service HQ in County Fermanagh?

*Please tick only one box for each reason listed below.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | *Not applicable* | *Not at all important* | *Unimportant* | *Neither important nor unimportant* | *Important* | *Very important* |
| *Travel time/distance* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Work life balance* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Access to a car* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Road conditions in bad weather* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Lack of a train halt at Ballykelly* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Family ties* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Caring responsibilities* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Disability* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Relocation of family/home on a long term basis* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Childcare arrangements* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Locating suitable accommodation* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Issues around child/children’s education* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Moving house* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *General lack of public transport* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Partner’s employment* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Cost of travel* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Other (specify)* |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Q6. For each of the work related reasons on the following list please select how important it is to you in your desire NOT to move to either the new DARD HQ in Ballykelly or the new Forest Service HQ in County Fermanagh?

*Please tick only one box for each reason listed below*.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | *Not applicable* | *Not at all important* | *Unimportant* | *Neither important nor unimportant* | *Important* | *Very important* |
| *Additional time required to go to meetings* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Difficulty carrying out management checks on remote staff* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Distance from stakeholders* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Limited promotion opportunities* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Distance from staff / team* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Distance from other work requirements* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Other (specify)* |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Q7. Which, if any, of the following arrangements would encourage you to consider relocating with your post to Ballykelly/County Fermanagh?

*Tick all that apply*

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Assistance with permanent relocation of home……….

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Flexible working arrangements………………………….

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Financial assistance………………………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Assistance with car sharing……………………………..

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Assistance with childcare………………………………..

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Dedicated public transport……………………………….

Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

None of the above…………………………………………

Q8. Which of the following flexible working options would encourage you to consider relocating with your post to Ballykelly/County Fermanagh?

*Tick all that apply*

|  |
| --- |
|  |

A change from full-time to part-time working……..

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Job sharing……………………………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |
|  |

Compressed hours………………………………….

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Working remotely, closer to my home 1-2 days per week

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Working remotely, closer to my home 3-4 days per week

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Working from home 1-2 days per week…………..

Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Q9. You have indicated that you are not content to relocate with your post to Ballykelly/County Fermanagh. Prior to your post relocating which of the following options will you consider?

*Tick all that apply*

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Consider another post closer to home within DARD…………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Consider another post closer to home outside of DARD…….

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Consider redeployment from a Professional & Technical post to an administrative post………………………………………………..

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Consider employment outside the NICS…………………………..

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Age retire on or before the relocation date………………………...

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Consider early retirement ……………………………………………

Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Q10. What is your current grade (or equivalent)?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Senior Civil Servant (Grade 5 and above)…………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Sen. Principal / Principal (Grade 6/7)……………..

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Deputy Principal / Staff Officer…………………….

|  |
| --- |
|  |

EOI/EOII………………………………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

AO/AA………………………………………………..

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Industrial Craft……………………………………….

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Industrial non-craft…………………………………..

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Industrial supervisory………………………………

Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Q11. Are you a Professional & Technical or specialist grade?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Yes……………… Go to Q12

|  |
| --- |
|  |

No……………… Go to Q13

Q12. Looking at the list below, are you an NICS specialist/P&T grade or a DARD specific specialist grade?

NICS Specialist

Accountant grades

Professional & Technical grades (Civil Engineers)

ICT Level grades

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Auditor grades

Personal Secretary grades

DARD specific Specialist

Agricultural Inspector Grade staff

Agriculture Economist grades

Veterinary Officer grades

Inspector Group grades

Meat Inspector grades

Fisheries Officer grades

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Meat inspector grades

Mapping Grades

Q13. How would you describe your current working pattern?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Full-time……………………………..

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Part-time…………………………….

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Compressed Hours…………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Term time……………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Job share……………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Part retired…………………………..

Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Q14. How do you usually travel to work?

Using my own car………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Motorbike/scooter…………………….

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Car sharing arrangement……………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Public transport – bus………………..

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Public Transport – rail……………….

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Park and Ride…………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Walk……………………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Cycle…………………………………..

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Get a lift……………………………….

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Other………………………………….

Q15. What is your current daily return mileage?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Less than 10 miles……………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

11-30 miles…………………………….

|  |
| --- |
|  |

31-60 miles…………………………….

|  |
| --- |
|  |

61-90 miles…………………………….

|  |
| --- |
|  |

91 – 120 miles…………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

More than 120 miles………………….

Q16. Approximately how far would you need to travel if your post was in Ballykelly or County Fermanagh (return trip)?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Less than 10 miles………………….

|  |
| --- |
|  |

11-30 miles…………………………..

|  |
| --- |
|  |

31-60 miles…………………………..

|  |
| --- |
|  |

61-90 miles…………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

91 – 120 miles………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

More than 120 miles………………..

Q17. Please enter your full home post code. This information will be helpful to assess travel and transport needs. Please use the format XXXX XXX

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act the Department is obliged to carry out Equality Impact Assessments. It is important that the Department can assess any adverse impact on the 9 groups listed under Section 75. The remaining questions contained in this survey are for EQIA purposes only and your responses to these questions will not be used for any other purpose.

Q18. Which of the following age bands do you fall into?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

16-24……………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

25-34……………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

35-44……………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

45-54……………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

55-64……………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

65 and over…………………….

|  |
| --- |
|  |

I do not wish to respond to this question

Q19. What is your gender?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Male……………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Female…………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

I do not wish to respond to this question……

Q20. What is your marital status?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Single, that is, never married nor in a same-sex Civil partnership

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Married …………………………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Separated, but still legally married ………….

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Divorced ……………………………………….

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Widowed……………………………………….

|  |
| --- |
|  |

In a registered same-sex civil partnership……………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Separated, but still legally in a same-sex civil partnership…….

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Formerly in a same-sex civil partnership which is now legally dissolved……………………………………………………………..

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Surviving partner from a same-sex civil partnership…………….

|  |
| --- |
|  |

I do not wish to respond to this question………………………….

Q21. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 defines a disabled person

as someone who has:

a long standing physical or mental condition that has lasted or is likely to last at least 12 months

a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a persons ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Do you consider that you meet this definition of disability?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Yes………………………….

|  |
| --- |
|  |

No……………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

I do not wish to respond to this question…..

Q22. Do you have personal responsibility for the care of any of the following?

*Tick all that apply*

|  |
| --- |
|  |

A child or children……………………..

|  |
| --- |
|  |

A person with a disability……………..

|  |
| --- |
|  |

A dependant older person…………….

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Other……………………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

None of the above……………………...

|  |
| --- |
|  |

I do not wish to respond to this question….

Q23. To which of these groups do you consider you belong?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

White…………………………...

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Irish Traveller………………….

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Mixed / Multiple Ethnic groups

White and black Caribbean……………..

|  |
| --- |
|  |

White and Black African…………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

White and Asian………………………….

Any other Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Group (describe)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Asian / Asian British

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Indian……………………………………..

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Pakistani…………………………………..

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Bangladeshi………………………………

|  |
| --- |
| … |

Chinese……………………………………

Any other Asian background (describe)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Black / African / Caribbean / Black British

|  |
| --- |
|  |

African……………………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Caribbean……………………………….

Any other Black/African Caribbean background

(describe)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Other ethnic Group

Arab………………………………………

Any other Ethnic group (describe)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |
| --- |
|  |

I do not wish to respond to this question…….

Q24. Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Heterosexual or Straight………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Gay or Lesbian…………………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Bisexual…………………………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Other ……………………………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Prefer not to say………………………………..

Q25. What is your religion?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Catholic………………………………..

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Presbyterian…………………………...

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Church of Ireland……………………..

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Methodist………………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Baptist…………………………………..

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Free Presbyterian………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Brethren…………………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Protestant – Other, including not specified………….

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Christian – Other, including not specified……………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Buddhist…………………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Hindu……………………………………

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Jewish………………………………….

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Muslim………………………………….

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Sikh……………………………………..

Any other religion (please describe)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |
| --- |
|  |

No religion…………………………….

|  |
| --- |
|  |

I do not wish to respond to this question………..

Q26. Please indicate your political opinion?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Nationalist…………………………..

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Unionist………………………………

Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |
| --- |
|  |

No political opinion………………….

|  |
| --- |
|  |

I do not wish to respond to this question…………

Q27. Please use this space for any other comments you would like to make.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

**Annex 3**

**FULL RESPONSES FROM FORMAL CONSULTATION EXERCISE**

|  |
| --- |
| **Response from Meadhbh McCann, Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP)**  **Received on 11 July 2013** |
| The SDLP welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation, ‘Equality Impact Assessment on the proposal to relocate the Headquarters of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.’  We also welcome the announcement from Minister O’Neill MLA on 3rd September 2012 of her decision to consider the former military site, Shackleton Barracks, Ballykelly, as the location for the new Department for Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) headquarters.  This response will provide comment and suggestion on the following areas:   * The Independent Review of the Policy on location of public sector jobs in Northern Ireland * Results of the staff survey and transferring staff * The benefits of relocation to the North-West   Independent Review of the Policy on Location of Public Sector Jobs in Northern Ireland  The SDLP cites the findings of the ‘Independent Review of the Policy on Location of Public Sector Jobs in Northern Ireland’ as the foundation of our support for the relocation of the DARD Headquarters. We believe that the decision to relocate the DARD headquarters provides the opportunity to decentralise the functions of the Department out of Greater Belfast, in line with the principles of the review.  The SDLP is committed to the decentralisation of public sector jobs to rural areas as we believe such a redeployment of public sector jobs will aid economic development and promote wellbeing across the North. In order to best achieve these aims we have previously stated that the reallocated jobs should be focused on areas of high deprivation and address the historical imbalances which exist in the Northern Ireland economy. Strategic government planning of this kind, would start to tackle problems of high unemployment and low-wage employment, and the resultant additional consumer spending in these areas would help encourage private sector investment.  Results of the staff survey and transferring staff  SDLP welcomes DARD’s commitment, in relation to the relocation programme, to the implementation of the Section 75 duties and Equality Scheme across all aspects of DARD business and that Section 75 will be at the core the decision and policy-making processes.  The DARD Headquarters relocation staff survey highlighted the thoughts and views of the current DARD staff in relation to the proposed relocation of DARD Headquarters to Ballykelly.  The SDLP recognises that there may well be impacts, adverse or otherwise, resulting from the relocation of its headquarters to Ballykelly for many groups.  From the Survey results, it is evident that the group of staff who are least content with the suggested move to Ballykelly is predominantly made up of young females. Their stated reasons for concern centred mainly on issues that affected family life e.g. work-life balance, schooling, caring responsibilities etc.  Also evident from the Survey results is the complications for part-time staff, the vast majority of which are female. Many of these part-time staff also have dependants. Furthermore, part-time staff will not have the same access to alternative Northern Ireland Civil Service posts as full-time staff. The SDLP would ask that DARD pay attention to the needs of this group when considering appropriate mitigating actions and ensuring information is communicated fully and in a timely fashion and making provision for additional support if required.  8.5% DARD staff had declared that they had a disability. DARD need to put processes and procedures in place to help these staff throughout the relocation programme; mindful of the impact that relocation could have on staff with a disability such as transport arrangements, access to public transport and care issues.  In order to ensure an effective transfer of staff, the SDLP calls on DARD to ensure staff are communicated with through all stages of the relocation programme and that individuals can make decisions on all available information, particularly around viable alternatives, including transfers to other Government departments which will continue to be based in Belfast.  The benefits of relocation to the North-West  The Consultation sites the following three main aims of relocation to include:  (1) Securing modern, fit for purpose accommodation for headquarter staff, given that Dundonald House and Hydebank are reaching the end of their useful lives;  (2) Helping to rebalance the NI Economy through the redistribution of good quality public sector jobs out of Belfast; and  (3) Helping to develop a specific rural area by bringing good quality public sector jobs and future employment opportunities to the Ballykelly area  The SDLP is supportive of the above mentioned aims of this relocation programme. The North-West is an area that suffers from a historical legacy of neglect and will benefit from such economic regeneration.  The development of this region will be instrumental in the rebalancing of the economic development in the North; helping to address the historical imbalances which exist in the Northern Ireland economy.  Positive consequences of the relocation programme will be additional consumer spending and stimulation of the private sector investment.  It could also benefit some of the more than 1400 Northern Ireland Civil Service staff currently working in Belfast with home addresses in the North West who may now have an option to move to a job closer to home.  Finally, if the relocation is to proceed Significant investment is required to upgrade the public transport network to accompany relocation, and both reform programmes must be undertake in tandem. |
| **Response from Joe Byrne MLA & Patsy Kelly Cllr – Omagh SDLP**  **Received on 11 July 2013** |
| Firstly, it should be noted that this response welcomes the EQIA Formal Consultation in relation to the relocation of DARD Headquarters to a rural area by 2015.  From a broader perspective, it is most positive that the HQ Relocation Team has adhered to the sentiment expressed by Sir George Bain in ‘The independent review of the policy on location of Public Sector Jobs in Northern Ireland’. The decentralisation of Public Sector Jobs may prove to be a useful tool in prompting economic growth in rural areas; this process is necessary in order to effectively rebalance the economy in the North.  The introduction of up to 900 rural Public Sector Jobs is an alluring prospect, a significant reward to any specific rural area. It is for this reason that the decided location for redeployment must be the area that needs it most. It must not be an area that is most convenient nor an area that is most cost effective; it must be the area that needs a significant pecuniary boost above any other in order to kick-start economic development and promote healthy societal relations.  If the decision for redeployment was predicated upon Cost-effectiveness or convenience then surely it would be a distorted one considering the role of Section 75 of the NI Act in the reallocation of Public Sector Jobs. In fact, if the decision was based on cost effectiveness primarily, then an office development project suitable for DARD could be provided at a less capital cost in West Tyrone, or indeed a 25 year lease back initiative. What is clear is that if successful decentralisation is to be achieved then the emphasis must be placed on socio-economic factors in order to ensure that the appropriate location is chosen.  DARD’s Equality Scheme states that The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development will ensure that S75 is at the core of their decision-making and policy. It is particularly perplexing and distressing then, that the definitive reasons given for reallocating Public Sector Jobs to Ballykelly were as follows:  **‘The Minister took the final step in the decision i.e. to consider only the viable options at Ballykelly based on two further factors; the availability of the Executive-owned site at Shackleton Barracks and the potential to use some of the buildings available on the site.’**  As this final decision was not based on any Section 75 criterion it is evidently clear that DARD has breached its own Equality scheme. The Flagrant omission of Section 75 consideration in the Minister’s final decision is unjust considering the aforementioned prospective economic benefit to any chosen rural area.  Socio-economic objective test and S75  In the EQIA Formal Consultation it is stated that the section in most need of an economic boost is the North-West. Subsequently, based on the objective socio-economic study, two viable candidates emerged; Strabane and Ballykelly.  It is the contention of this response that Strabane is the more suitable choice based on the following factors:  1. Bluntly speaking, Strabane scored highest of all potential locations for relocation in the objective decision-making process.  2. West Tyrone is comprised of a very strong Agricultural community. Within both the Strabane and Omagh District Council areas there are 3,227 farms in total. When we juxtapose this figure with Limavady (600 farms) it is apparent that West Tyrone and particularly Strabane (1,209 farms) is a suitable nest-bed for DARD HQ.  3. Section 75 is the definitive legislation governing any relocation of Public Sector Jobs. It is evident that DARD has not sufficiently grappled with S75 as the decision to relocate to Ballykelly has unearthed significant inconsistencies. For example, one of the 9 criteria used in the socio-economic indicator was demography.  The consultation stated:  **‘It is therefore felt important that consideration be given to areas that have high levels of young people (aged 15 and below).’**  Strabane has a higher percentile of younger people than Ballykelly (22.14% compared to 21.6%). This statistic is ever more poignant considering the fact that youth unemployment is also augmented in the former.  Whilst this response has warned of the danger regarding site based decision-making, it is important to address the availability of viable HQ locations within Strabane. There are 2 primary locations in Strabane that may be suitable for redeployment. The first of which is the 40 acre Invest NI Business Park on the Melmount Road and secondly, the 25 Acres of land set aside for Business development at the ‘Camels Hump’ Strabane. In terms of financial viability as a consideration, perhaps it would be more instructive to wait on the pending Departmental Business Case.  Other Considerations  It is certainly positive that DARD has extensively examined the potential effects to staff that relocation may conjure however; it is a reasonable contention that this has limited the scope of the consultation. This response would like to refute the results of the pre-consultation, namely that there are no adverse equality impacts identified within any other groups. It remains that DARD are a Public Sector service provider and the concerns of the staff should not outweigh the distresses of customers or the wider community as a whole.  It may be useful if DARD would publish the full results of the pre-consultation in the interest of broadening the scope of EQIA and establishing a fully informed decision-making process.  In the EQIA Formal Consultation it was communicated that 8.5% of DARD staff declared that they had a disability. It is important that DARD put procedures and protocols in place in order to assist these staff through the process of relocation.  In summary, this response has noted the significant inconsistencies with S75 that the EQIA Formal Consultation document has produced. Furthermore it has expressed dismay at the decision to relocate DARD HQ to Ballykelly due to the availability of a convenient site.  “We would like to put forward the West Tyrone section, particularly Strabane, as a more viable candidate than Ballykelly based on the socio-economic indicator and also S75 considerations. We request that DARD carry out a Departmental Business case for the Strabane area and re-examine fully the sentiments of this response”  “It is incomprehensible that such an important relocation initiative decision-making process has been so narrowly constricted on a very narrow criteria basis; this seems contrary to any proper objective based assessment, including S75 considerations”. |
| **Response from Committee on the Administration of Justice**  **Received on 8 July 2013** |
| Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) is an independent human rights organisation with cross community membership in Northern Ireland and beyond. It was established in 1981 and lobbies and campaigns on a broad range of human rights issues. CAJ seeks to secure the highest standards in the administration of justice in Northern Ireland by ensuring that the Government complies with its obligations in international human rights law.  The Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) would like to respond with the following comments to the equality impact assessment (EQIA) for the relocation of the DARD headquarters to Ballykelly, Co L’Derry following on from the meeting held with the DARD Equality Unit on 12 February 2013.  CAJ in principle supports the decentralization of public sector jobs when it assists with the promotion of equality of opportunity. CAJ therefore welcomes the DARD proposal to relocate its headquarters to Ballykelly. CAJ would like to make the following comments:  The EQIA states 288 people identified as not being able to move out of the Stormont Estate (e.g. due to health reasons, caring responsibilities etc). CAJ would seek further information in the final EQIA as to what measures will be taken to accommodate persons in this category.  DARD has stated that a civil service-wide questionnaire has indentified people who are willing to either move to the north west for work, along with those who already travel from the north west to work in the Stormont Estate and the wider Belfast area. This appears to be a sensible way in which to implement the positive action policy whilst minimising impacts on existing staff.  DARD may wish to consider including information in their final EQIA as regards the impact the move may have on those coming to retirement age (for example those wanting early retirement or those who may feel the need to take early retirement due to the move).  According to the most recent published figures Senior Civil Service posts at Grade 5 level and above in the Northern Ireland Civil Service are only 34.5% Catholic and only 25.4% female.[[7]](#footnote-7) DARD may wish to include figures for DARD specific senior posts across all section 75 categories in the final EQIA. This would provide an evidence base for how the move, if it facilitates an improvement in the under-representation of Catholics, women or others into senior posts is positive action and therefore not an adverse impact. DARD should work with other departments such as Department for Regional Development (DRD) when planning for any move so that road and public transport networks are accessible for staff. This includes the obvious potential for a rail link to the site.  CAJ welcome the innovative working methods mentioned as these are particularly helpful for those with caring responsibilities such as remote working and utilising technology to increase efficiency.  CAJ would like to thank DARD for this opportunity to respond to their EQIA for the relocation of the DARD headquarters, and urges DARD to continue to work engaged with staff and key stakeholders including NIPSA about the move to the new Ballykelly site. |
| **Response from Ulster Farmers Union**  **Received on 5 July 2013** |
| I am writing in response to the DARD consultation to provide the UFU’s views on the above subject.  The UFU has previously commented on the relocation of DARD Headquarters and our position remains that while we are fully supportive of the objective of moving jobs into rural areas, we do not accept that very significant amounts of tax payers money should be spent on two separate DARD staff accommodation projects for both DARD Direct and the relocation of DARD Headquarters.  The UFU therefore continues to propose that DARD should hold off both considering and also allocating funding on the relocation of DARD Headquarters until a full evaluation is carried out on the effectiveness of DARD Direct delivery. The logic behind this is that if DARD Direct is a success, that would be the means of moving front line staff into the rural community and there should, therefore, be a reduced number of staff necessary at DARD Headquarters and consequently a reduced accommodation and budget requirement.  The UFU is also not convinced that, as claimed in the consultation document, such a relocation as proposed would not adversely impact on its business partners such as the Ulster Farmers’ Union despite the intention for DARD to make greater use of technology to interact with its business partner.  I trust that these comments will be fully considered as part of this consultation process. |
| **Response from Public Sector, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland**  **Received on 5 July 2013** |
| Thankyou very much for forwarding a copy of the formal consultation document. We welcome the opportunity to provide some further feedback, in addition to the initial advice we gave in February, on the equality impact assessment of the proposed relocation of DARD headquarters to Ballykelly.  The Commission has not taken a specific policy position on the policy proposals in this document. The advice we have provided and in this letter relates to what you present in your EQIA document and our advice on this process.  The Commission recognises the efforts undertaken by the Department in compiling this consultation document, which is comprehensive and easy to read, and we welcome the fact that in its structure it follows the 7-step process for Equality Impact Assessments as detailed in the Commission’s Practical Guidance*.*  In February 2013, as part of the pre-consultation, we provided the Department with advice and we are pleased to see that most of our advice has been taken on board.  In particular we raised the following issues:  We noted that the equality impacts of the relocation of DARD headquarters to Ballykelly should have been assessed earlier, at the time when the 23 different options, subsequently shortlisted to 3 on a list of criteria, for a new location were being considered.  We advised that the background to the policy should at least be set out in the EQIA document i.e. how the decision was arrived at and the criteria used and we welcome that this has now been incorporated.  We advised the Department to clearly state what the “relocation of DARD headquarters” involves and that more clarity was needed to determine which members of staff will be affected by the relocation. As relocation is an issue that first and foremost affects DARD staff we advised that the most up-to-date S75 and other relevant information such as FETO and other staff equality monitoring information should be obtained from the Human Resources Department and other sources we signposted you to.  We advised that this data be used to identify the impacts, both positive and negative, of the policy proposal on the various Section 75 groups, and asked for the document to provide further detail on the nature of the identified impacts and the link between the equality ground and the (adverse) impact.  We are pleased to see that the Department has endeavoured to do this. We also commend the Department for having undertaken the staff survey and are pleased to see that the issue of multiple identities is recognized and considered.  We note however that that information from the Department’s audit of inequalities does not appear to have been utilized. As the document itself acknowledges on page 14, the proposed relocation does not only impact on staff in terms of employment and DARD customers in terms of service provision. The development of the former military site offers opportunities that go beyond these issues and potentially impact on the wider local community. Going forward we would advise the Department to consider these opportunities in light of the findings from its audit and other available information, like NISRA statistics or the Commission’s Statement of Key Inequalities.  The relocation will impact on DARD business partners, staff and potential new staff, i.e. current civil servants and potential applicants. As these represent three distinct groups and we advised that the impacts of the policy on each of them should be examined separately. Again, we are pleased that the Department has taken our advice on board but would like to point out the following:  In relation to the potential impact of the relocation on DARD’S customers and service users, the document states that no equality implications were identified by those customers who were involved in the pre-consultation exercise. However, we are aware that making an assessment of equality implications is not an easy task and many people may not easily make the connection, if there is one, between a particular disadvantage they may experience and their equality profile. What on the face of it may appear to be only a logistical issue may upon closer inspection or through implementation have an equality dimension to it. Therefore we would therefore advise the Department to set in place monitoring, as is required, so that any difficulties that may arise for customers and service users in the future and to seek to identify if these may be linked to and/or exacerbated due to equality characteristics.  We have also advised, given the issues you outlined early in the process, that in the interests of openness and transparency, any potential Good Relations issues should be clearly identified and addressed through the assessment process of this EQIA. We note you now do not consider that there are any aspects of the policy aims which are relevant to paying regard to the desirability of promotion of good relations.  Lastly, we would like to make an important general point. On page 11, in relation to persons of different sexual orientation, it is stated that given the very low numbers DARD consider it unlikely that there will be any potential adverse impacts. For the purposes of identifying impacts and data, our guidance clearly notes that equality of opportunity and policy impacts are not about numbers. Even small numbers of people can be significantly impacted upon by a policy decision and the situation may warrant intervention/mitigation. In fact, sometimes the fact that a group is a minority can exacerbate the disadvantage they already experience due to their equality characteristics. The (potential) impact on a particular group must primarily be judged based on equality-related data, not the size of the group.  We note that the decision to choose Ballykelly as the location for the new DARD headquarters has been made at ministerial level, therefore it appears that the primary purpose of this EQIA as presented is to identify any equality issues that will have to be addressed when implementing this policy, i.e. mitigation, rather than setting out alternative policy options. The range of issues flagged up in this EQIA should be reflected in the DARD HQ Relocation Human Resources Strategy which appears to be the key vehicle for moving forward. The Commission will be happy to provide further advice in this regard, in particular on ensuring that the Strategy is consistent with the Department’s obligations under Anti-Discrimination legislation.  Please note that this response is written without prejudice to any consideration or determination which the Commission might make in performance of its statutory function to investigate individual complaints under Schedule 9 of the 1998 Northern Ireland Act or conduct any other investigation under that Schedule.  If you would like clarification on any of the issues raised above or any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me. |
| **Response from Strabane District Council**  **Received on 4 July 2013** |
| Strabane District Council welcomes the publication of the EQIA Formal Consultation Document in relation to relocation of DARD headquarters to a rural area by 2015.  This consultation is particularly significant for Strabane District Council given that Strabane ranked the highest of all potential locations for relocation in the objective decision making process. Strabane District Council subsequently noted - with extreme disappointment, that the Minister has decided to relocate to Ballykelly, based on the availability of the Executive owned site at the former Shackleton Barracks and the potential availability of buildings on that site.  Strabane District Council would strongly argue that the 40 acre Invest NI’s Business Park on the Melmount Road, Strabane would be a more suitable location for a DARD HQ office. It is a greenfield site and in a state of readiness for the development of fit for purpose facility for DARD. Council questions the cost effectiveness of the proposal to re-locate to a former military site which is in need of costly capital redevelopment and repair work. Council is therefore poised to fully examine the pending Departmental business case for relocation in this regard.  Notwithstanding the above comments, the Councils comments on the EQIA are detailed below.  1. Broadly, Strabane District Council welcomes the decision of the Minister to relocate the DARD public sector jobs away from Belfast and into the rural North West.  2. At the outset, Strabane District Council wishes to outline its grave concerns about the inadequacy of this equality impact assessment. Strabane District Council is appalled that the Department has not factored S75 categories into the HQ relocation decision making process and have simply produced a report on the impacts of a Ministerial decision on the civil servants affected.  3. The strategic level EQIA carried out on the targets within the Programme for Government stated that: ”*The DARD HQ Relocation programme will have equality implications which will be addressed throughout the project. However, detailed work on Equality Impacts cannot commence until a shortlist of locations is known*.” Strabane District Council notes, with concern, that S75 was not considered in any of the short listing criteria and equality of opportunity was not considered as an outcome in the Benefits Relation Report.  4. DARD’s Equality Scheme states that DARD will ensure that S75 is at the core of its decision and policy making processes. Strabane District Council would therefore argue that the decision to relocate to Ballykelly was not based on the principles of S75 and is a breach of the Department’s equality scheme. Strabane District Council calls on DARD to carry out a full equality impact assessment on the shortlisted locations and to comply with its statutory duties.  5. Whilst Strabane District Council recognises that the issues associated with the relocation of staff are important, it asserts that DARD as a public sector service provider should place more emphasis on the customers of the service and the community in which the civil service is enlisted to serve. This significant decision making process should be based on a proper assessment against the nine equality categories.  6. Strabane District Council argues that there are compelling quantative datasets which cannot be ignored by the Department when considering the relocation of the DARD HQ. Focusing primarily on S75 categories - Strabane District Council area, has broadly speaking, more people who are long term sick or disabled than Limavady (24.47% compared to 20.74%); more young people than Limavady (22.14% compared to 21.6%), more older people than Limavady (14.02% compared to 12.63%) and more lone parents than Limavady (10.42% compared to 9.43%).  7. Moreover, focusing on the user base and agricultural and rural development objectives of the Department - Strabane District Council area has more farms (1,209 farms compared to 600); a larger area farmed in hectares (67,251 compared to 38,421) and more people employed in agricultural labour (2,373 compared to 1,214).  8. In short, Strabane District Council argues that the decision to relocate to Ballykelly is wholly unjustified and the EQIA does not provide the Council with any assurance that the Department is approaching its S75 commitments in a robust and systematic manner.  9. Strabane District Council also wishes to refute the results of the cited pre-consultation exercise; - namely that there are no adverse equality impacts identified within any other groups. Council also wishes to record its objection that Local Government was not considered as a consultee within this process. The approach taken most certainly narrows the scope of the EQIA unnecessarily. Council would call on the department to formally publish the outcomes of this pre-consultation exercise as it is not clearly alluded to therein. Publication of the results of this consultation will also broaden the focus of the EQIA beyond the impacts on staff.  In summary, Strabane District Council has concerns in relation to the cost effectiveness of the proposal to relocate to a former military site in Ballykelly. The Council calls on the Department to carry out a full equality impact assessment on the short listed locations and to comply with its statutory duties. Strabane District Council has presented compelling quantative datasets on S75 which cannot be ignored by the Department when considering the relocation of the DARD HQ. Council argues that DARD, as a public sector service provider, should place more emphasis on the customers of the service and the community in which the civil service is enlisted to serve. Council also refutes the results of the cited pre-consultation exercise; records its objection that Local Government was not considered as a consultee in this pre-consultation and calls on the department to formally publish the outcomes of this exercise.  The Council wishes to thank the Department for the opportunity to respond to this consultation. The Council trusts that the comments herein will be considered very carefully by the Department and it eagerly awaits the outcome of the consultation process. |
| **Response from Disability Action**  **Received on 4 July 2013** |
| **INTRODUCTION**  **1** Disability Action is a pioneering Northern Ireland charity working with and for people with disabilities. We work with our members to provide information, training, transport awareness programmes and representation for people regardless of their disability; whether that is physical, mental, sensory, hidden or learning disability.  **2** 21% of adults and 6% of children in Northern Ireland have a disability and the incidence is higher here than in the rest of the United Kingdom.  Over one quarter of all families here are affected  **3** As a campaigning body, we work to bring about positive change to the social, economic and cultural life of people with disabilities and consequently our entire community. In pursuit of our aims we serve 45,000 people each year.  **4** Our network of services is provided via our Headquarters in Belfast and in three regional offices in Carrickfergus, Derry and Dungannon.  **5** Disability Action welcomes the opportunity to respond to this draft and to aid our response has put the relevant page/paragraph of the draft in brackets at the end of our comments.  **SPECIFIC COMMENTARY**  **6** Regarding delivering social benefits through procurement Disability Action would advise the Department for Agriculture and Rural Development to ensure that contact criterion encourages prospective contactors to demonstrate, beyond the drafting of an equal opportunity policy, how they will utilize government programmes such as Employment Support and Workable. (Item 1.1, Page 14)  **7** Regarding current civil servants living in the North West and travelling to work in Belfast Disability Action recommends that priority be given to staff with disabilities as a reasonable adjustment. (Item 3.3, Page 27)  **8** Disability Action agrees with DARD’s statement regarding consideration of potential equality impacts can be about considering multiple identities eg young female staff with disabilities with dependents. (Item 3.3, Page 28)  **9** Regarding people with disabilities the information contained within this EQIA is too vague to comment on in regard to individual staff members with disabilities at this stage. However Disability Action recommends that any relocation package for a small to medium timeframe, must consider the following:-  Staff with reasonable adjustments already in place should have a review as part of move.  Staff who don’t have a reasonable adjustment may now require one eg is there direct public travel from Belfast to Ballykelly?  Staff who currently don’t have a reasonable adjustment in place should be encouraged to declare their disability through a safe and confidential mechanism.  Staff with disabilities who do not wish to relocate be given priority transfer.  Staff with disabilities living in the North West and travelling to Belfast given priority as a reasonable adjustment.  Disability Action seeks information on people with disabilities employed by DARD under the Employment Support Programme  Target recruitment campaign should consider government programmes eg Workable, Employment Support etc and other initiatives such as job testing, ring fencing etc.  **CONCLUSION**  **10** Disability Action recognises the time and effort that have gone into producing this document for consultation and thanks DARD for the opportunity to respond and looks forward to continued dialogue. |
| **Response from DARD Disability Forum**  **Received on 2 July 2013** |
| This is a composite response to the Equality Impact Assessment for the relocation of the DARD Headquarters.  This response does not comment on the general principle of decentralisation of Civil Service jobs but solely on how staff with disabilities will be affected by the relocation of staff from DARD HQ.  disAbility Forum members were consulted on their views and a deputation of Forum members met with representative of the HQ Relocation Team as part of the pre-consultative process on 12th February 2013 to discuss how the DARD HQ relocation would affect staff with disabilities.  Paragraph 4.2.8 of the EQIA set out below, provides a summary of the issues raised and how the Department intends to deal with these issues in broad terms.  ***“4.2.8 Persons with a Disability and Persons Without***  *As outlined in Chapter 3, information from HRConnect shows that 16.3% of staff in the DARD headquarters have declared that they have a disability. In addition, staff with disabilities are likely to be at the lower grades (28% of DARD HQ staff with disabilities are in the lowest analogous grade group which makes up only 20% of the total staff in the DARD HQ – see Chapter 3). Throughout the pre-consultation exercise a number of groups raised concerns of a likely adverse impact for staff with disabilities resulting from this relocation. The consultees reported that there are many additional issues associated with disabled staff e.g. transport arrangements, access to public transport, care issues etc that will impinge on individuals ability to move to a new workplace. Furthermore, the extra distance and time required to get to Ballykelly will present further issues for disabled staff that will not be issues for able-bodied staff. Many staff will already have reasonable adjustments in place within their current workplace and support from their managers and colleagues and this may dissuade them from wanting to move to a new location.*  *The Department is fully committed to fulfilling the requirements of the DDA and will ensure that the issues of concern for our staff with disabilities and our Disability Forum are listened to. We will take all possible steps to ensure all issues are addressed to lessen the impact that moving to work in a new relocation will have.”*  The disAbility Forum is taking the opportunity to re-inforce these comments by providing a list of important reasons why staff with disabilities would have serious difficulties relocating to Ballykelly.  These include;   * Distance to travel and the detrimental effects this may have on the health of a member of staff with a disability, particularly those who suffer pain and fatigue in relation to their condition. * Accessibility to work;  1. Lack of suitable and accessible public transport; 2. Taxis (Cost), 3. Lifts to work by Carers (how this would affect other family members); 4. Motability Vehicles (extra costs could be incurred by staff if the set mileage for their Motability car is exceeded. This would undoubtedly arise if a member of staff living, for instance in the greater Belfast/Ards peninsula area was to be relocated to Ballykelly); 5. Access to Disabled Car Parking (Adequate parking for staff with mobility difficulties is essential irrespective of where they are posted).  * Welfare Reform (Changes to Universal Credit and Disability Living Allowance may have a detrimental effect on staff with Disabilities); * Part-time staff with a disability may have made lifestyle choices due to their disability and this could be a barrier to relocating ; * Staff who have a disability and are in a mobile grade have concerns on how the rules will affect them; * Assurances on how equality issues will be applied should be given; * Needs of staff with disabilities should be considered on an individual basis i.e. a blanket approach should not be applied; * Previous transfers arranged because of welfare issues should be honoured; * Those staff with disabilities often have regular medical and hospital appointments which incur additional time out of the office. Relocation to Ballykelly would inevitably require extra time out of work thus leading to a backlog of work and a further increase of stress levels.   I would ask that serious and sympathetic consideration be given to the above comments. They are genuine concerns felt by DARD staff that have varying degrees of difficulty as a result of their personal disability.  I would also request that DARD inform those staff with a disability of any decisions on the relocation of DARD HQ at the earliest opportunity to avoid additional anxiety to that already incurred by them in relation to their future careers. |
| **Response from Aquaculture Initiative (EEIG)**  **Received on 1 July 2013** |
| Since its inception in 1998, the Aquaculture Initiative EEIG has worked with DARD Fisheries, and would not be in a position to comment on other sections/divisions of the department.  As a result of this we are not in a position to make any detailed response to the consultation on the relocation of DARD HQ to Ballykelly.  This is also bearing in mind that a recent press release in May has outlined how the DARD Fisheries section is now planned to relocate to South Down. This would be close to where we have been based for the past three years.  An overall point could be made that it should be recognised that the decentralisation of Civil Service jobs can have many benefits both in terms of the rebalancing of economic activity to the rural economy, establishing the Department within the rural context of its remit, and in reducing journey times for many employees from the country to the city.  However, it should also be noted as well, that a downside of decentralisation is when staff with many years of experience are not able to make the relocation move and then leave the Department creating a gap in the skills available.  It is hoped that by moving DARD Fisheries to South Down rather than Ballykelly that this loss of experienced DARD staff can be avoided. |
| **Response from Northern Ireland Grain Trade Association (NIGTA)**  **Received on 27 June 2013** |
| Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the consultation re the proposed relocation of DARD headquarters from Belfast to Ballykelly.  Our Association feel strongly that we will be disadvantaged by the proposed move in that our trade and therefore our member businesses are largely located in the Greater Belfast area with much of the activity focussed around the port of Belfast.  The regular communications and meetings which we have with DARD staff re regulation and policy relating to imports, the manufacture of feed and the agricultural supply trade are always Belfast based. We would not oppose a move to a more central location but taking the DARD headquarters so far  from the main centre of economic activity in Northern Ireland is not helpful.  We are also concerned about the loss of experienced personnel which will result from the relocation. People with years of experience and detailed knowledge of the particular sectors in which they are involved will be lost and their expertise and understanding of the industry will take many years to replace. This can only be detrimental to the effective operation of DARD and will impact on those who have to interact with them.  At a time of great opportunity for our industry, as evidenced by the recent Food Strategy Report, it is vital that DARD are fully resourced with competent staff to play their part in meeting the challenges ahead.  I note that the Northern Ireland Grain Trade Association were not included in the Pre – Consultation exercise and would request that we be added to the list for further consultations where relevant. |
| **Response from Chief Executive, Autism NI (PAPA)**  **Received on 21 June 2013** |
| Please find attached some information which forms part of the Autism NI response to the opportunity to comment on the consultation on the Equality Impact Assessment for the relocation of the DARD headquarters.  The following comments from Autism NI are confined to Autism specific issues that require prioritisation in this context. Beyond this, we wish to support the general disability sector comments provided by MENCAP and Disability Action.  Currently, inequalities regarding access to services, external and internal training for the workforce and families, as well as public awareness of Autism, are supported by the failure of past disability legislation to recognise Autism. This situation must be addressed as part of required compliance with the Autism Act (NI) 2011.  The natural consequence of the new landmark legislation is a legal requirement to take account of the social and communication barriers faced by individuals with Autism in accessing public services and public facilities as well as proposed reorganisation and physical relocation plans, e.g.  improved visual signage and attention to potential sensory barriers;  clearly structured public areas delineated by function;  assessments based upon social functioning, not merely mental and physical ability;  adjustments to “customer service” procedures that provide for people with Autism;  specific workforce Autism training to assist compliance and competency.  I therefore attach a copy of the Autism Act (NI) 2011 for your consideration. |
| **Response from Livestock & Meat Commission**  **Received on 6 June** |
| Further to your letter of 12 April 2013 on this matter, the Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland would offer the following comments:  The specific location of the DARD Headquarters is not an issue on which LMC has a defined position. However, LMC would highlight the importance of stakeholders being able to continue to engage directly with DARD officials on a regular face-to-face basis in the future.  Therefore, LMC would ask that serious consideration is given to where such meetings might be conveniently located in the future, for the benefit of both stakeholders and DARD Officials. |
| **Response from British Veterinary Association**  **Received on 14 May 2013** |
| Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the relocation of DARD HQ. Our members discussed the proposals in detail and although no views were expressed in terms of the impact on equality a few concerns were raised which we have been asked to draw to your attention. While we respect the desire to decentralise our members were particularly concerned about the choice of Ballykelly given the travel difficulties it poses. In summary our members’ concerns were:   Ballykelly is away from centre of power, which sends a very negative message about the level of importance placed on agriculture, animal health and trade in Northern Ireland’s agri-food products;   DARD and in particular the Veterinary Service will be isolated from other government departments and non-governmental bodies such as the FSA and AFBI. This will have a significant negative impact on working and operational relationships between them. It will also lead to a considerable and costly overhead to the effective delivery of animal health, public health and animal welfare at the best of times; and in times of food scares and epizootic disease a significant impediment to their prompt eradication and the restoration of confidence in local food.   We understand that it will take at least 10 years for the change to be properly bedded in. The history of animal and public health crises in recent decades clearly indicates that in such a period there will ordinarily be as many as 4 significant episodes of risk to the animal and public health status of the Northern Ireland. The risks that such a lengthy period of ineffectiveness as this presents to agri-food industry do not appear to have been adequately factored into the proposals, and are clearly at variance with the thrust of Northern Ireland government to promote the growth and development of agri-food sector, dependant as it is on international and public confidence in the high health status of Northern Ireland.   Ballykelly is not renowned for any particular connection with agricultural industry or infrastructure unlike other locations, which we understand were mooted as an alternative new home for DARD (eg Loughry or the Maze, which are or are becoming centres of rural excellence);   We are concerned that such a move will not attract key staff to relocate. This will result in a “brain drain” in particular within animal health and welfare policy makers;   Ballykelly is not blessed with good surrounding infrastructure and hard to get to for the majority of the population, particularly in bad/snowy weather;   Being below sea-level and dependant on constant pumping, the Ballykelly site is not only vulnerable to flooding, but is not very sustainable environmentally.  We would welcome your views on the impact of the move and your comments on the issues raised by our members. |
| **Response from The Law Society of Northern Ireland**  **Received on 7 May 2013** |
| The Society thanks the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for the opportunity to respond to the consultation in respect of the above matter.  Having considered the proposals, the Society has no comment to make at this time concerning any issues raised therein. |
| **Response from Councillor James McCorkell, Democratic Unionist Party**  **Received on 23 May 2013** |
| I am write as a strong advocate of the relocation of DARD to Ballykelly. As a Councillor for the area I am mindful of the devastation recent years have brought to the unemployment statistics in Limavady Borough and the content of the Bain report to locate public sector jobs across the province. The proposed move to Ballykelly will tackle both these issues over a number of years and also make good use of part of the former Shackleton Barracks site for the good of the Northern Ireland public. Such a development may also be the catalyst for the re-generation - in economic terms - of the entire Limavady/North West region. *"It must be remembered that Dundonald House and Hydebank are reaching the end of their useful lives" (2.8).* A move to Ballykelly gives DARD the opportunity to have a state of the art purpose built facility.  I am always dismayed when I read about the impact on staff travelling will have. There are many in the North West who have over many years, travelled to Belfast to work but this is considered acceptable. It must also then be acceptable when the situation is reversed. These individuals also have caring responsibilities, work life balance, travel time and associated costs but are apparently deemed not worthy of consideration for the North West people. If people wish to leave the service I deem this a short sighted and knee jerk re-action and hope they will re-consider. I believe these issues are not about Ballykelly specifically, but rather any change in location that does not fully satisfy what a particular individual desires. The use of modern technologies, remote working ·- admittedly - for more senior staff, will help address this concern of the staff.  While admitting that there will be challenges I believe the Ballykelly relocation is of huge importance to Northern Ireland and gives us the opportunity to be leaders in the area of remote working. Many of my constituents travel daily to Belfast and have to take their share in caring for relatives and work life balance issues which do not seem to be given the same credibility as Belfast staff. This is unfair and unreasonable and begs the question where is the equality for staff from the North West?    There is also mention of how a move to Ballykelly may have an adverse impact on promotion for some female staff. This again applies two ways where North West staff have the same concerns but it seems apparently unimportant. While current staff are unhappy at the prospect of a move to the Ballykelly site, there are processes proposed which give them every opportunity to stay in jobs closer to Belfast via the transfer system.  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Chapter 5 (5.2) states: *The Department proposes to achieve this where possible by two methods:*  *Ensuring that staff members who don't wish to move to Ballykelly are transferred from posts that may relocate, and into alternative posts in suitable locations (i.e. within Greater Belfast), and*  *Introducing more modern working methods and technologies that will allow a greater*  *flexibility of location from which the Department's work can be carried out.*  Further, Paragraph 5.2.1 states: *"It is usual for NICS staff to seek transfers to locations closer to home and a major aspect of the HR Strategy will be to move staff across Departments to allow those people to transfer into DARD in preparation for the relocation. This will enable those staff to relocate to Ballykelly while at the same time vacating posts that are more suitable to some of the current DARD HQ staff.*  These seem a very acceptable compromise by DARD in ensuring fair treatment of staff members not wanting to re-locate and benefits all categories of Section 75. I would urge DARD to examine all the options new technologies offer i.e. remote working, home working and utilising space in other NICS buildings on an occasional basis to aid staff.  I must add that I am fully aware that the vast majority of NICS new starts must begin their career in Belfast. Therefore currently, new starts from the North West, unlike new starts from the greater Belfast area, have no luxury in choosing their place of work from the outset of their careers and face years of travelling to Belfast before they can obtain a transfer nearer home.  It is worthwhile pointing out that the relocation of DARD HQ to Ballykelly will directly impact on the top two potential sites of the 23 considered. As Omagh and Limavady have long term difficulties with unemployment the re-location to Ballykelly can aid these two areas in a most positive manner.  I do accept that part time female staff may face an impact as a result of the· decision to relocate to Ballykelly, however, the moves taken by the Department to assist staff members wishing to remain at a Belfast location or transfer to another Department will, I hope, also be extended to part time staff. This should help negate any impact on them. The same assistance must also apply to any staff member with a disability.  I notice that in Chapter 4 Paragraph 4.3 reference is made to the lower opportunity for promotion in the North West area. The move to Ballykelly will surely be a positive move in addressing this situation.  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| **Response from Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission**  **Received on 15 April 2013** |
| Details of the above consultation have been forwarded to me for comment. We have no comments to make on the proposals. |
| **Response from Coleraine Borough Council**  **Received on 04 July 2013** |
| I write to support the proposal to relocate the Headquarters to Ballykelly.  The former MOD site now owned by the Northern Ireland Executive would make good use of an already existing Public sector site which is costing considerable money to maintain and secure.  I also support the decentralisation of public sector jobs from the Greater Belfast area to regional towns which is in line with the Bain Report. Limavady and Coleraine Council areas has seen considerable job losses in the last few years both in the public and private sectors.  With Coleraine Town 16 miles and 25 minutes travelling time from Ballykelly; I believe the location of the new Department's Headquarters here, as well as Limavady and the wider North West region it would also benefit Coleraine attracting recruitment from this area. |
| **Response from Councillor David Gilmore**  **Received from 10 May 2013** |
| I am writing as an unashamed supporter of the relocation to Ballykelly, as a Councillor for the area, cognisant of the devastation recent years have brought to the unemployment statistics in Limavady Borough and the content of the Bain report to locate public sector jobs across the province. The proposed move to Ballykelly will tackle both these issues over a number of years and also make good use of part of the former Shackleton Barracks site for the good of the Northern Ireland public. Such a development may also be the catalyst for the re-generation -in economic terms -of the entire Limavady/North West region. *"It must be remembered that Dundonald House and Hydebank are reaching the end of their useful lives" (2.8).* A move to Ballykelly gives DARD the opportunity to have a state of the art purpose built facility.  I am always dismayed when I read about the impact on staff travelling will have. There are many in the North West who have, over many years, travelled to Belfast to work but this is considered acceptable. It must also then be acceptable when the situation is reversed. These individuals also have caring responsibilities, work life balance, travel time and associated costs but are apparently deemed not worthy of consideration for the North West people. If people wish to leave the service I deem this a short sighted and knee jerk re-action and hope they will re-consider. I believe these issues are not about Ballykelly specifically, but rather any change in location that does not fully satisfy what a particular individual desires. The use of modern technologies, remote working - admittedly - for more senior staff, will help address this concern of the staff.  While admitting that there will be challenges I believe the Ballykelly relocation is of huge importance to Northern Ireland and gives us the opportunity to be leaders in the are of remote working. 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It is worthwhile pointing out that the relocation of DARD HQ to Ballykelly will directly impact on the top two potential sites of the 23 considered. As Omagh and Limavady have long term difficulties with unemployment the re-location to Ballykelly can aid these two areas in a most positive manner.  I do accept that part time female staff may face an impact as a result of the decision to relocate to Ballykelly, however, the moves taken by the Department to assist staff members wishing to remain at a Belfast location or transfer to another Department will, I hope, also be extended to part time staff. This should help negate any impact on them. The same assistance must also apply to any staff member with a disability.  I notice that in Chapter 4 Paragraph 4.3 reference is made to the lower opportunity for  promotion in the North West area. The move to Ballykelly will surely be a positive move in addressing this situation. 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Employment levels will rise, young people will have something to aim for  educationally, additional businesses will see the move as a vote of confidence in the North West and will attract additional investment from various sources. |
| **Response from Councillor Alan Robinson, Deputy Mayor, Member of Limavady Borough Council**  **Received on 10 May 2013** |
| I am writing as an unashamed supporter of the relocation to Ballykelly, as Deputy Mayor for the Limavady Borough, cognisant of the devastation recent years have brought to the unemployment statistics in Limavady Borough and the content of the Bain report to locate public sector jobs across the province. The proposed move to Ballykelly will tackle both these issues over a number of years and *also* make good use of part of the former Shackleton Barracks site for the good of the Northern Ireland public. Such a development may also be the catalyst for the re-generation - in economic terms - of the entire Limavady/North West region. *"It must be remembered that Dundonald House and Hydebank are reaching the end of their useful lives" (2.8).* A move to Ballykelly gives DARD the opportunity to have a state of the art purpose built facility.  I am always dismayed when I read about the impact on staff travelling will have. 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| **Response from Alderman George Robinson, MLA, Member of the Northern Ireland Assembly for the East Londonderry Constituency**  **Received on 22 April 2013** |
| I am writing as an unashamed supporter of the relocation to Ballykelly, as a Councillor for the area, cognisant of the devastation recent years have brought to the unemployment statistics in Limavady Borough and the content of the Bain report to locate public sector jobs across the province. The proposed move to Ballykelly will tackle both these issues over a number of years and also make good use of part of the former Shackleton Barracks site for the good of the Northern Ireland public. Such a development may also be the catalyst for the re-generation - in economic terms - of the entire Limavady/North West region. *"It must be remembered that Dundonald House and Hydebank are reaching the end of their useful lives" (2.8).* A move to Ballykelly gives DARD the opportunity to have a state of the art purpose built facility.  I am always dismayed when I read about the impact on staff travelling will have. 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Employment levels will rise, young people will have something to aim for educationally, additional businesses will see the move as a vote of confidence in the North West and will attract additional investment from various sources, |
| **Response from Omagh District Council**  **Received on 05 July 2013** |
| I am writing on behalf of Omagh District Council in response to the consultation on the EQIA for the relocation of the DARD headquarters.  Omagh District Council notes that the relocation of the DARD headquarters is in keeping with the Programme for Government, Workplace 2010 programme and the Bain Report. The Council however, is disappointed that Ballykelly has been identified as the preferred site, particularly as the relocation decision has chosen to ignore the Bain recommendations.  Omagh District Council fully supported the Bain Recommendations and had hoped that they would be implemented in full. Omagh District Council has long advocated the need for decentralisation of both civil service and public sector jobs across the province and it was pleased that the Bain recommendations had identified Omagh as one of six areas suitable for (re)location of public sector jobs. Omagh scored high against all of the priority factors outlined by the Bain Report in terms of critical mass, equality, rural proofing, availability of human capital and a public sector skills base, adequate accommodation, levels of deprivation, demographics, sustainability both economic and social, as well as taking account of the province wide impact of the modernisation agenda and RPA.  The Council is also concerned that the EQIA on the relocation of the DARD Headquarters has considered only the impact on staff. The Council believes the EQIA should consider the impacts on all groups that interact with DARD and the wider rural community that it serves.  The Council also wishes to highlight the following points in its response:-   * In the past, a key feature of Omagh's economy has been the strength of its service sector, with over 50% of its workforce employed within the public sector. Once a strength, this now reflects the vulnerability of the area given its high dependency on public sector and civil service jobs within this district, particularly when the modernisation agenda and local government reform heightens the potential for jobs being relocated elsewhere or no longer existing. * Omagh, has in recent times, been severely disadvantaged by and has experienced the down side of a number of 'centralisation' and 'relocation' decisions such as the consequence of the health reform under Developing Better Services and the current Transformi ng Your Care agenda. Additionally, Omagh has been denuded of several other public sector delivery agents, such as the Northern Ireland Housing Executive relocating its western headquarters to Derry, the motor taxing service centralising to Coleraine, the closure and downgrading of the Tyrone County Hospital and the South Tyrone Hospital in Dungannon. Also in 2007, the military vacated the St Lucia and Lisanelly Barracks resulting in the loss of a significant number of civilian posts. This eradication of public sector jobs has had a detrimental impact on the local economy as well as the social impact on the people of the area. * The economic downturn has also resulted in the closure of several major employers in the town, which has added to the difficulties with employment opportunities in the West. * Omagh has traditionally been a significant public services centre and already has a sizeable DARD estate at various locations throughout the Omagh district. Being situated in a very central geographic location at the heart of the rural west and on the Western Economic Corridor via the A5/N2, Omagh continues to provide the ideal location for many of the Department's business areas. Indeed the Council believes Omagh is the ideal location for the proposed new DARD headquarters, particularly as it also has available an Executive owned former military site with suitable buildings at St Lucia. The St Lucia estate has significant and readily available office accommodation for a number of public sector organisations to (re)locate. Project Kelvin which has a hub in Omagh has also brought significant technological advances to the area, through the provision of high speed links and secure superfast fibre optic connections across Ireland, the UK, Europe and the USA. * Additionally, the Omagh district is the largest centre of population in the rural west with over 52,500 citizens and a wider catchment across the North West and cross border. Omagh's centrality has the potential to attract employees from a greater radius and acceptable travel to work distances. * Whilst the Council accepts that the Ballykelly site is within the 'rural' North West, it is nonetheless on the periphery of the rural region and therefore accessibility for customers, farmers and other partners will continue to be an issue. Omagh and in particular the St Lucia site, as a site for the headquarters would be in keeping with the principle of subsidiarity. * Omagh has been highlighted in the Regional Development Strategy as a 'Main Hub' which is in keeping with Omagh's tradition as a sub-regional administrative centre and its recognition as a major service centre. Omagh is the County town of Tyrone and the key town in the West. The Family of Settlements Report 1998, Shaping our Future, also recognised Omagh's strengths in terms of potential for growth, location in proximity to Derry and Belfast alongside its central location in the rural west, "equipping it to develop as a major service centre for the west of the region." * The transitional period of up to 10 years required to re-profile the DARD HQ staff is concerning given the relocation costs associated with this as well as the loss of expertise to the department through staff not relocating with their job and the requirement for capacity building to bring new staff up to the required standard of knowledge and expertise. This is contrary to DARD's strategic goal 'to manage our business and deliver services to our customers in a cost-effective way'. * The long transition period also needs to be considered in terms of impact for the customers, with regard to continuity of service and customer satisfaction. * The Council concurs with the consideration of agile working arrangements to lessen the requirement for HQ staff to be based at headquarters on each working day.   As previously mentioned, this Council has always been an advocate of decentralisation, as it brings real social, economic, equality and environmental benefits not only to the area of relocation but to the sub-region as a whole. It provides choice, where people can work and live in a place of their choice offering them an improved quality of work life balance. Relocation of a headquarters on the· periphery of a sub-region, such as the case with Ballykelly, does not provide this opportunity. Its proximity to Derry/Londonderry only serves to enhance the centralisation agenda of employment opportunities in close proximity to or within the two main cities.  Many of the surrounding areas look to Omagh as their employment centre and would affiliate with Omagh for education, leisure, social and health care needs.  Omagh is an employment base for people from the surrounding towns and villages including Strabane, Cookstown, Derry, Dungannon, and Fermanagh, all of which are within a 20-40 mile radius, hence offering the people the opportunity to still live in their own locality and contribute to their own economy.  The Council is opposed to any dilution of the Bain recommendations, whereby further hubs are added to the list, such as the case with Ballykelly, as this only serves to dilute and spread the public sector in such a way as to make for an unsustainable public sector in the future.  On behalf of Omagh District Council, I wish to thank you for the opportunity to respond to this consultation and we eagerly await the outcome of the consultation process. |
| **Response from Lagan Rural Partnership, Lisburn City Council**  **Received on 04 July 2013** |
| Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the aforementioned Equality Impact Assessment.  Lagan Rural Partnership is the delivery agent of Axis 3 of the NI Rural Development Programme in the rural areas of Lisburn City, Castlereagh Borough and Belfast City. The Partnership comprises of a Local Action Group representative of 11 social partners and 11 elected representatives and a Joint Council Committee representative of a further 11 elected representatives. Lagan Rural Partnership is administered by Lisburn City Council under Service Level Agreement.  The Partnership would like to acknowledge DARD's conviction to help rebalance the NI Economy through the redistribution of potentially 900 good quality public sector jobs out of Belfast but would like to convey considerable disappointment that Lisburn was ranked 19th out of 23 potential options for relocation and disagreement with the proposal to locate the DARD Headquarters in Ballykelly.  The Partnership would like to convey particular disappointment of the exclusion of the Maze/Long Kesh site for consideration as it is based in a rural location and would still be within a reasonable distance for the 75% of staff that live within a normal commute of the current DARD Headquarters in Dundonald House.  The Partnership believes that significant social and economic opportunities have been lost as a consequence of the exclusion of the Maze/Long Kesh site for consideration as significant benefits and synergies could have been realised due to confirmation that the site is to accommodate the Headquarters of the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society, the Balmoral Show and the Northern Ireland Centre of Excellence for Agri Business.  The Partnership notes in particular that the results of the DARD HQ Relocation Staff Survey shows that 86% of current staff would not be content to work in the recommended location of Ballykelly. ·..  The Partnership also notes that this reticence to relocate is due to issues regarding travel time and distance (Ballykelly is 68 miles from Dundonald House with a travel time of 1hr, 46 minutes), cost of travel, work/life balance and consideration of partner's employment.  The Partnership is also concerned that a significant staff compliment is expected to be lost to the Department as a vast majority of the 86% who stated they would not be content to work in Ballykelly indicated that they would be seeking alternative posts within other Civil Service Departments.  The Partnership is concerned that this disintegration in staffing compliment and associated expertise will lead to the development of a significant knowledge transfer gap within the Department that will also negatively impact on the support and partnership role that the Department provides to all of its stakeholder and Business Partners. The Partnership is confident that such issues would be markedly negated if a rural location closer to the Greater Belfast area (i.e. Maze/Long Kesh site) had been considered.  The Partnership notes that a transitional period of up to 10 years may be required to re profile the DARD HQ staff from the current position where 75% of staff within a normal commute of Dundonald House to a situation where 75% of the DARD HQ staff will live in broadly the North West.  The Partnership is therefore also concerned that during this period substantial public money will be expended in the administration of internal civil service recruitment exercises to meet the desire for 75% of the workforce to live in the North West and that the selection of a rural location closer to the Greater Belfast area (i.e. Maze/Long Kesh site) would also markedly help to negate the expenditure of such public money.  To conclude, whilst it is accepted that DARD are taking a concerted step to improve public sector employment opportunities in rural Northern Ireland, the Partnership would like to reiterate our apprehension regarding the substantial amount of public monies that potentially could be expended in this proposed restructure and relocation to Ballykelly and the significant opportunities lost by the exclusion of the Maze/Long Kesh site for consideration. |
| **Response from Gregory Campbell, MP MLA, House of Commons**  **Received on 30 April 2013** |
| I am writing in support of the proposal to relocate the Headquarters of the Department of Agriculture and rural Development to Ballykelly.  In view of the Programme for Government target to advance the relocation of DARD Headquarters to a rural area by 2015, the available Northern Ireland Executive owned estate at Ballykelly in the North West region of the province would make excellent use of the former MOD site in this rural area, which, according to a reply from OFMDFM is currently costing £10,000 a week to maintain and secure as a vacant site.  To locate in Ballykelly would assist in the re-distribution of Northern Ireland Civil Service jobs throughout Northern Ireland and decentralize the functions of the Department out of Greater Belfast which is in line with the Bain Report on the location of Public Sector jobs in Northern Ireland. Ballykelly is a village in Limavady Borough Council area and within radius of 25 miles travel to work distance of six Council areas. The populations of Limavady, Ballymoney, Coleraine and Waterside alone comprise 160,000 people all of whom are less than 30 minutes commute time to the site. This population base has a higher 16-24 age profile than the rest of Northern Ireland, thereby providing a more secure ongoing recruitment base in the immediate vicinity. Limavady was identified as a main hub town centre with strategic role for employment and services in Shaping our Future Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025 (RDS) published in 2001 when I was Minister for Regional Development.  With the Department responsible for Rural affairs and the sustainability of rural areas Ballykelly is situated in the centre of the farming region of the Roe Valley where there is wide cross section of agriculture both in both arable and livestock sectors. The move to Ballykelly could present an opportunity to create an agri-business sector in the region which has suffered massive job losses in recent years with Limavady Borough have the highest youth unemployment in Northern Ireland.  Employment opportunities could be created as the Site at Ballykelly is very large with the construction industry also benefiting.  By relocating the DARD Headquarters to a rural site in the North West region it will help rebalance the Northern Ireland Economy in an area of high unemployment by providing good quality public sector jobs and other employment opportunities in an area where it is most needed. |
| **Response from Marine Management Organisation**  **Received on 25 April 2013** |
| Thank you for inviting the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) to comment on the above consultation. I can confirm that the MMO has no comments to submit on this consultation.  If you have any questions or need any further information please just let me know. More information on the role of the MMO can be found on our website |

**Annex 4**

**Defining the *‘North West’***

As stated in Chapter 3, to truly consider the full equality impacts of this proposed relocation it was important to consider the impact that the move of approximately 800 posts, from all NICS grades (or analogous grades) on the NICS staff who currently work in the North West and also the group of staff who travel from that region to work in the NICS in and around Greater Belfast.

In order to identify this group, DARD took advice from NISRA, (Human Resources Consultancy Service, DFP). NISRA had previously provided input to the analysis used to inform the ‘Report on the Distribution of Public Sector Jobs’ i.e. the Bain Report.

For that analysis, NISRA made use of the Travel Distance Matrix developed for their analytical work on the Bain Report. The Simplified Modelling for Spatial Systems (SMOSS) in that Matrix calculates the road distance between the centroid of the Census Output Area of the home address and the centroid of government buildings in the ward of the workplace, for each civil servant for whom home postcodes are available.

In layman’s terms this basically means each individual is grouped depending on whether the they live to Ballykelly or Dundonald House/Hydebank.

We would have ideally examined the time taken for the journey to work, since this is arguably more important than the distance, but owing to the myriad of factors involved it has not been possible to measure this.

**Annex 5**

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| **DARD HQ Staff** | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| **Information from HRConnect July 2012** | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| **Age by Grade** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Grade | Under 25 | 25-29 | 30-34 | 35-39 | 40-44 | 45-49 | 50-54 | 55-59 | 60-64 | 65+ | Total |
| AA/AO | 18 | 38 | 24 | 15 | 15 | 24 | 22 | 11 | \* | \* | 169 |
| EOI/EOII | \* | 20 | 31 | 37 | 36 | 34 | 39 | 13 | \* | \* | 214 |
| DP/SO | \* | 6 | 28 | 31 | 43 | 81 | 65 | 29 | 11 | \* | 298 |
| G7 and above |  |  | \* | \* | 8 | 23 | 42 | 18 | 6 |  | 103 |
| Total | 21 | 64 | \* | \* | 102 | 162 | 168 | 71 | \* | 6 | 785 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Age by Specialism** | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Specialism | Under 25 | 25-29 | 30-34 | 35-39 | 40-44 | 45-49 | 50-54 | 55-59 | 60-64 | 65+ | Total |
| DARD Specialist | \* | \* | 6 | 6 | 9 | 20 | 19 | 10 | \* |  | 75 |
| General Service | 19 | 50 | 65 | 62 | 80 | 124 | 124 | 44 | 11 | \* | 583 |
| NICS Specialist | \* | 12 | 15 | 18 | 11 | 16 | 20 | 13 | \* | \* | 112 |
| SCS |  |  |  |  | \* | \* | 5 | \* | \* |  | 15 |
| Total | \* | \* | 86 | 86 | \* | \* | 168 | \* | 19 | 6 | 785 |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Age by Gender** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Under 25 | 25-29 | 30-34 | 35-39 | 40-44 | 45-49 | 50-54 | 55-59 | 60-64 | 65+ | Total |
| Female | 11 | 38 | 53 | 38 | 56 | 87 | 76 | 22 | 3 | 3 | 387 |
| Male | 10 | 26 | 33 | 48 | 46 | 75 | 92 | 49 | 16 | 3 | 398 |
| Total | 21 | 64 | 86 | 86 | 102 | 162 | 168 | 71 | 19 | 6 | 785 |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Age by Marital Status** | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Under 25 | 25-29 | 30-34 | 35-39 | 40-44 | 45-49 | 50-54 | 55-59 | 60-64 | 65+ | Total |
| Married/Civil Partnership | \* | 22 | 35 | 45 | 72 | 110 | 118 | 59 | 17 | \* | 484 |
| Single | 14 | 35 | 40 | 31 | 20 | 31 | 31 | 5 |  |  | 207 |
| Widowed |  |  |  |  | \* |  | \* | \* |  |  | 6 |
| Divorced/Separated |  |  | \* | \* | 7 | 15 | 13 | 5 | \* | \* | 49 |
| n/k | 6 | 7 | 8 | 6 | \* | 6 | \* |  | \* |  | 34 |
| Total | \* | 64 | 86 | 86 | 102 | 162 | 168 | 71 | 19 | 6 | 785 |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Gender by Grade** | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Gender | AA | AO | EOII | EOI | SO | DP | G7 | G6+ | Total |
| Female | 31 | 83 | 63 | 52 | 76 | 55 | 21 | 6 | 387 |
| Male | 22 | 34 | 49 | 50 | 84 | 83 | 52 | 24 | 398 |
| Total | 52 | 117 | 112 | 102 | 160 | 138 | 73 | 12 | 785 |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Age by Gender by Working Pattern** | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Under 25 | 25-29 | 30-34 | 35-39 | 40-44 | 45-49 | 50-54 | 55-59 | 60-64 | 65+ | Total |
| Female | 11 | 38 | 53 | 38 | 56 | 87 | 76 | 22 | 3 | 3 | 387 |
| Full-time | 11 | 29 | 37 | 22 | 31 | 54 | 54 | 18 | 2 | 3 | 261 |
| Part-time |  | 9 | 16 | 16 | 25 | 33 | 22 | 4 | 1 |  | 126 |
| Male | 10 | 26 | 33 | 48 | 46 | 75 | 92 | 49 | 16 | 3 | 398 |
| Full-time | 10 | 26 | 31 | 46 | 44 | 72 | 86 | 45 | 6 |  | 366 |
| Part-time |  |  | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 10 | 3 | 32 |
| Grand Total | 21 | 64 | 86 | 86 | 102 | 162 | 168 | 71 | 19 | 6 | 785 |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Age by Ethnicity** | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Under 25 | 25-29 | 30-34 | 35-39 | 40-44 | 45-49 | 50-54 | 55-59 | 60-64 | 65+ | Total |
| Other |  |  | \* |  | \* |  |  | \* |  |  | \* |
| White | 21 | 64 | 85 | 86 | 101 | 162 | 168 | 70 | 19 | 6 | 782 |
| Total | 21 | 64 | \* | 86 | \* | 162 | 168 | \* | 19 | 6 | 785 |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Age by Gender by Disability** | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Under 25 | 25-29 | 30-34 | 35-39 | 40-44 | 45-49 | 50-54 | 55-59 | 60-64 | 65+ | Total |
| Female | \* | \* | \* | \* | 56 | 87 | 76 | 22 | \* | \* | 387 |
| Yes | \* | \* | \* | \* | 9 | 11 | 12 | 6 |  | \* | 51 |
| No | 10 | 34 | 52 | 33 | 47 | 76 | 64 | 16 | \* | \* | 336 |
| Male | \* | \* | \* | \* | \* | 75 | 92 | 49 | \* | \* | 398 |
| Yes | \* |  | \* | \* | \* | 12 | 14 | 5 | \* | \* | 47 |
| No | 9 | 26 | 29 | 44 | 43 | 63 | 78 | 44 | 13 | \* | 351 |
| Total | 21 | 64 | 86 | 86 | 102 | 162 | 168 | 71 | 19 | 6 | 785 |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Disability by Gender by Grade** | | |  |  |
|  | AA/AO | EO | SO+ | Total |
| Female | 114 | 115 | 158 | 387 |
| Y | 21 | 14 | 16 | 51 |
| N | 92 | 101 | 142 | 335 |
| Male | 56 | 99 | 243 | 398 |
| Y | 7 | 12 | 28 | 47 |
| N | 49 | 87 | 215 | 351 |
| Grand Total | 169 | 214 | 298 | 784 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade by Marital Status** | |  |  |  |  |
|  | AA/AO | EO | DP/SO | G7+ | Total |
| Married/Civil Partnership | 59 | 116 | 221 | 88 | 484 |
| Single | 73 | 75 | 54 | 4 | 207 |
| Separated/Divorced | 20 | 12 | 9 | 8 | 49 |
| Other or n/k | 17 | 11 | 14 | 3 | 39 |
| Total | 169 | 214 | 298 | 103 | 785 |

**Age by Community Background by Gender**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Male | | | Female | | | Total |
|  | Protestant | Catholic and Not Determined | Total | Protestant | Catholic and Not Determined | Total |
| Under 30 | 22 | 14 | 36 | 33 | 16 | 49 | 85 |
| 30-34 | 21 | 12 | 33 | 33 | 20 | 53 | 86 |
| 35 - 39 | 29 | 19 | 48 | 23 | 15 | 38 | 86 |
| 40 - 44 | 32 | 14 | 46 | 38 | 18 | 56 | 102 |
| 45 - 49 | 51 | 24 | 75 | 54 | 33 | 87 | 162 |
| 50 - 54 | 44 | 48 | 92 | 49 | 27 | 76 | 168 |
| 55+ | 45 | 23 | 68 | 22 | 6 | 28 | 96 |
| Total | 244 | 154 | 398 | 252 | 135 | 387 | 785 |

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| **Analogous Grade by Community Background by Gender** | | | | | |  |  | |  | |  |
|  | Male | | | Female | | | Overall Total | | | | |
|  | Protestant | Catholic and Not Determined | Total | Protestant | Catholic and Not Determined | Total | Protestant | Catholic and Not Determined | | Total | |
| G7+ | 41 | 35 | 76 | 13 | 12 | 25 | 54 | 47 | | 101 | |
| DP | 52 | 29 | 81 | 34 | 21 | 55 | 86 | 50 | | 136 | |
| SO | 51 | 34 | 85 | 43 | 33 | 76 | 94 | 66 | | 160 | |
| EOI | 33 | 17 | 50 | 35 | 20 | 55 | 68 | 38 | | 106 | |
| EOII | 30 | 17 | 47 | 45 | 16 | 61 | 75 | 33 | | 108 | |
| AO | 22 | 14 | 36 | 54 | 27 | 81 | 76 | 41 | | 117 | |
| AA | 15 | 7 | 22 | 28 | 7 | 35 | 43 | 14 | | 57 | |
| Total | 244 | 153 | 397 | 252 | 136 | 388 | 496 | 289 | | 785 | |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Work Pattern by Community Background by Gender** | | | | |  |
|  | | | Protestant | Catholic and Not Determined | Total |
| Male | Working Pattern | FT | 223 | 148 | 371 |
| PT/JS | 21 | 6 | 27 |
| Total | | 244 | 154 | 398 |
| Female | Working Pattern | FT | 165 | 98 | 263 |
| PT/JS | 87 | 37 | 124 |
| Total | | 252 | 135 | 387 |
| Total | Working Pattern | FT | 388 | 246 | 634 |
| PT/JS | 108 | 43 | 151 |
| Total | | 496 | 289 | 785 |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Disabled by Community Background and Gender** | | | | | |
| Gender | | | Community Background | | |
| Protestant | Catholic and Not Determined | Total |
| Male | Disabled? | N | 212 | 139 | 351 |
| Y | 32 | 15 | 47 |
| Total | | 244 | 154 | 398 |
| Female | Disabled? | N | 214 | 122 | 336 |
| Y | 38 | 13 | 51 |
| Total | | 252 | 135 | 387 |
| Total | Disabled? | N | 426 | 261 | 687 |
| Y | 70 | 28 | 98 |
| Total | | 496 | 270 | 785 |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **NICS staff living and working in the North West** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ***(Please see Annex 4 for a definition of the North West)*** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |  |  | |  | |  |
| **Information from HRConnect July 2012** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |  |  | |  |  | |  | |  | |
| **Age by Grade** | | | | | | | | | | | |  | |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Grade | Under 25 | 25-29 | | 30-34 | | 35-39 | | 40-44 | | 45-49 | | 50-54 | | 55-59 | 60-64 | | 65+ | | Total | |
| AA/AO | 38 | 217 | | 338 | | 227 | | 298 | | 288 | | 325 | | 185 | 87 | | 11 | | 2014 | |
| EOI/EOII | 1 | 40 | | 124 | | 144 | | 211 | | 270 | | 248 | | 141 | 48 | | 11 | | 1238 | |
| DP/SO | 1 | 9 | | 59 | | 53 | | 50 | | 81 | | 108 | | 60 | 23 | | 3 | | 447 | |
| G7 and above | 0 | 1 | | 2 | | 9 | | 15 | | 18 | | 19 | | 10 | 10 | | 2 | | 86 | |
| Total | 40 | 267 | | 523 | | 433 | | 574 | | 657 | | 700 | | 396 | 168 | | 27 | | 3785 | |

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| **Age by Gender** | | | | | | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Under 25 | 25-29 | | 30-34 | | 35-39 | | 40-44 | | 45-49 | 50-54 | 55-59 | 60-64 | 65+ | Total |
| Male | 21 | 114 | | 201 | | 185 | | 275 | | 329 | 323 | 222 | 122 | 23 | 1815 |
| Female | 19 | 153 | | 322 | | 248 | | 299 | | 328 | 377 | 174 | 46 | 4 | 1970 |
| Total | 40 | 267 | | 523 | | 433 | | 574 | | 657 | 700 | 396 | 168 | 27 | 3785 |

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| **Gender by Grade** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |  |  |  |  |
| Gender | Industrial | | AA | | AO | | EOII | | EOI | | SO | | DP | | G7 | G6+ | Total |  |
| Male | 378 | | 164 | | 386 | | 63 | | 252 | | 199 | | 79 | | 51 | 3 | 1815 |  |
| Female | 19 | | 186 | | 881 | | 49 | | 480 | | 115 | | 54 | | 30 | 2 | 1970 |  |
| Total | 397 | | 350 | | 1267 | | 112 | | 732 | | 314 | | 133 | | 81 | 5 | 3785 |  |

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| **Age by Gender by Working Pattern** | | | | | | | | | | | |  |  |  |  |
|  | | Under 25 | 25-29 | | 30-34 | 35-39 | 40-44 | 45-49 | | 50-54 | | 55-59 | 60-64 | 65+ | Total |
| Male | | 21 | 114 | | 201 | 185 | 275 | 329 | | 323 | | 222 | 122 | 23 | 1815 |
| Full-time | | 21 | 113 | | 199 | 176 | 260 | 318 | | 297 | | 205 | 93 | 13 | 1695 |
| Part-time | | 0 | 1 | | 2 | 9 | 15 | 11 | | 26 | | 17 | 29 | 10 | 120 |
| Female | | 19 | 153 | | 322 | 248 | 299 | 328 | | 377 | | 174 | 46 | 4 | 1970 |
| Full-time | | 18 | 135 | | 220 | 138 | 167 | 183 | | 218 | | 100 | 23 | 3 | 1205 |
| Part-time | | 1 | 18 | | 102 | 110 | 132 | 145 | | 159 | | 74 | 23 | 1 | 765 |
| Grand Total | | 40 | 267 | | 523 | 433 | 574 | 657 | | 700 | | 396 | 168 | 27 | 3785 |

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| **Disability by Gender by Grade** | | | | | | | | | | | |  | |  |  | |  | |  | |  | |
|  | | Industrial | | AA/AO | | EO | | SO | | DP+ | | Total | |  |  | |  | |  | |  | |
| Male | | 378 | | 550 | | 555 | | 199 | | 133 | | 1815 | |  |  | |  | |  | |  | |
| Y | | 14 | | 42 | | 29 | | 7 | | 5 | | 97 | |  |  | |  | |  | |  | |
| N | | 364 | | 508 | | 526 | | 192 | | 128 | | 1718 | |  |  | |  | |  | |  | |
| Female | | 19 | | 1067 | | 683 | | 115 | | 86 | | 1970 | |  |  | |  | |  | |  | |
| Y | | 0 | | 79 | | 45 | | 10 | | 6 | | 140 | |  |  | |  | |  | |  | |
| N | | 19 | | 988 | | 638 | | 105 | | 80 | | 1830 | |  |  | |  | |  | |  | |
| Total | | 397 | | 1617 | | 1238 | | 314 | | 219 | | 3785 | |  |  | |  | |  | |  | |
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**Annex 6**

**LESSONS LEARNED FROM OTHER HEADQUARTERS RELOCATION PROJECTS**

In a project of this magnitude, it was important that the planning stage was informed by as much learning from previous comparative projects as possible. As part of the programme development, the HQ Relocation Team considered a number of other relocations previously undertaken in Northern Ireland, Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland.

The evaluation of each of the relocations can provide insights to issues that could impact on DARD while managing the move of HQ function posts to Ballykelly. Where applicable, these issues have been drawn out and considered in detail below.

**Relocation of DFP Central Procurement Directorate to Clare House**

**Background**

Clare House was a Workplace 2010 Pathfinder Accommodation Project which was refurbished in line with the new Government Office Specification to originally accommodate approximately 500 staff from DFP's Central Procurement Directorate (CPD). A Lessons Learned type review was carried out on the conduct and management of the overall Clare House Project. The review involved interviewing key stakeholders to gain a personal viewpoint of how the project was delivered and if there were any lessons to be learned.

**Issues for consideration**

1. **IT Issue**

In terms of the overall success of the project, there was a sense of achievement that the delivery of the building has been a success. There were however some elements that were considered less successful. In particular there were significant first day IT issues.

***How will this issue be addressed***

The HQ Relocation Programme Team recognise fully that the interface between ICT and the programme could mean the difference between success and failure and have included a separate Digital DARD strand to the project to address all the IT issues throughout the project.

1. **Noise in Open Plan Environment**

Staff have reported that there were issues around noise and concentration difficulties. As well as distractions from conversations and mobile phones, those staff located close to the atrium were disturbed by noise arising from the ground floor business lounge and restaurant. There were also concerns about the lack of confidentiality.

***How will this issue be addressed***

The Programme Team fully intend to ensure that considerable thought is given in the design phase of the building projects on how general office noise might be better managed. Also, space planning should pay particular attention to the adjacencies of functional areas with regard to the management of people movement and the transmission of noise to workstation areas.

**Relocation of NICS Posts to Orchard House & Waterside House:**

**Background**

This project relocated seven civil service branches from the Belfast-North Down area to Londonderry in 1993-94. The rationale for the initiative was to help revitalise Derry by introducing extra spending power by staff transferring to the area, creating additional employment opportunities, and boosting the construction industry; and to have a positive impact on equality of opportunity by having a more substantial civil service presence in the West.

The relocation was completed by mid-1994 when all 279 posts were transferred to two new buildings – Orchard House and Waterside House – located on either side of the River Foyle. It resulted in virtually a complete turnover of staff as people chose not to relocate and posts were filled from other parts of the civil service in Belfast, Derry and elsewhere. The transferred functions have been retained in Derry and are generally still operational some fourteen years later. There were a number of lessons learned which were evaluated through a government-commissioned report carried out by Coopers & Lybrand in 1997.

**Issues for consideration**

1. **Creation of Employment**

Coopers and Lybrand concluded that the full economic benefits and the creation of additional employment opportunities were restricted because the majority of transferring staff were already living in the area and contributing to the local economy – known as the “hometown effect” because the wealth that would have been generated by new residents was less pronounced.

***How will this issue be addressed***

DARD recognise that this issue will not be insignificant for this project. However, it should also be recognised that for many years large numbers of NICS staff have relocated to Belfast to further their careers as there was not the same opportunities in the North West and indeed anywhere beyond Greater Belfast. At present there is only one SCS post based outside of Greater Belfast. This relocation will see that number rise to around 18 (including one at Permanent Secretary level). Although this will provide greater opportunities for the NICS staff in the North West, it is likely to also result in staff relocating to the area to further their careers.

1. **Success can be difficult to justify in terms of cost**

Coopers and Lybrand concluded that success of the relocation project was difficult to justify in terms of costs alone.

***How will this issue be addressed***

The HQ Relocation Programme Team will address this issue through the development of a Benefits Realisation Report. The development work on this report is ongoing. In response to an update report produced by the HQ Relocation Consultative Forum (June 2012) the HQ Relocation Programme Board have agreed that the benefits of this relocation should be classified in three themes covering benefits in respect of both Service Delivery and Sustainability as well as economic benefits.

**Pensions Service relocation from Windsor House, Belfast to Carlisle House**

**Background**

In March 2011 the Social Security Agency relocated State Pension services based in Windsor House, Belfast to be located alongside Pension Credit based in Carlisle House in Derry. State Pensions Branch in Windsor House employed 129 staff. There were similarities between this relocation and the relocation of the staff to Orchard House and Waterside House: the move involved a process function that required staff to be trained to a level that could ensure business continuity.

**Issues for consideration**

1. **Training needs of staff**

The evaluation of this project showed that when planning training, consideration should be given to ensuring that business areas with large numbers of staff are allocated sufficient time to schedule training. Training should not be delivered too early as this may result in the need for refresher training due to training decay. Also, in order to avoid making incorrect assumptions about staff level of knowledge and learning requirements Learning Needs Analysis (LNA) should be conducted to inform learning requirements for individual training needs. This includes establishing computer literacy levels especially if the project involves converting manual processes to system.

***How will this issue be addressed***

Although it is recognised that the difference in terms of business to be delivered between the State Pension relocation and the relocation of the DARD HQ is significant, it is also recognised that the changes proposed to working practices i.e. the introduction of more formalised flexible working arrangements will require a significant upskilling of some of the staff involved. It is therefore important that as a first step that the Department considered the skills level of staff and matches that with the relevant training. Furthermore, the Department recognises that this change will result in a very different culture in the Department. The cost of additional training on both aspects has been included in the business case.

1. **Approvals Process**

The Carlisle House relocation project also highlighted issues regarding the necessary approval of documents to enable signing of contracts and the timing of the approvals being in place. In essence timescales were not fully developed to facilitate signing contracts which lead to several versions of procurement documentation.

***How will this issue be addressed***

Central Procurement Directorate have been fully involved to date with this relocation. They have appointed a dedicated team to take forward the necessary work. Furthermore, the governance arrangements in place for this project include the HQ Relocation Programme Board which is made up of both internal and external stakeholders at senior level. The Board has already agreed an Information Management Strategy that will ensure that all programme and project documentation is managed effectively.

**Relocation of Scottish Executive departments, agencies and NDPBs**

**Background**

In September 1999, the Scottish Executive’s policy for the location and relocation of public sector organisations in Scotland was announced, to promote efficiency and effectiveness and to deliver services close to the communities they serve. The policy covered the Executive’s departments and agencies, departments of non-ministerial office holders, the Crown Office, National Health Service common services functions and all NDPBs funded by the Scottish Executive.

1. **Staff Communication**

The post project evaluation of this relocation highlighted the need to ensure organisations engage staff from the outset and that they provide all staff with information and support throughout the relocation process.

***How will this issue be addressed***

The HQ Relocation Team has kept staff informed of developments through regular updates in DARD Bizz, regular updates from the Permanent Secretary and information sessions lead by senior managers. The team has established a dedicated intranet site to communicate the aims and objectives of the project and to provide the very latest updates on the project. Within that site there is a Frequently Asked Questions section which is updated regularly. Furthermore, a sub-committee of the Whitley industrial relations mechanism has been established. This committee meets on a monthly basis and provides a forum for management to consult with TUS on any issues related to relocation. The minutes of these meetings are placed on the HQ Relocations intranet site.

The HQ Relocation Programme Board has agreed a Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy which outlines all the communication methods to be utilised throughout the lifetime of the project. This Strategy is reviewed regularly by the Board.

**Impacts of decentralisation on RoI civil service**

**Background**

The RoI Minister for Finance, in December 2003, announced the Irish government's commitment to the voluntary decentralisation of over 10,300 posts in civil service departments/offices and agencies to over fifty locations across twenty-five counties throughout the country. A number of evaluation reports have been produced and the following outlines some of the major issues.

**Issues for consideration**

1. **Staff Churn and loss of Corporate knowledge**

Some Departments and Offices struggled with huge logistical, business continuity and HR challenges arising from decentralisation. Generally the more policy-oriented the organisation the greater was the struggle, both over the changeover period and subsequently. Staff churn caused a major haemorrhaging of corporate knowledge. In some cases, the exit of skills was such that the corpus of knowledge on some important national policies came to rest on only a few individuals, sometimes just a Principal Officer. It was reported that organisations benefitted from the innovation, enthusiasm and flexibility of many new staff entrants. However, loss of knowledge and expertise, both short and long term, and the attendant upheaval to business activity considerably outweighed those benefits.

***How will this issue be addressed***

Although significantly different in terms of scale, given that the DARD HQ is primarily a policy-orientated organisation this issue needs to be given careful consideration. As outlined in the business case, the proposal for the DARD HQ relocation is to move on a transition basis which will take in total 12 years. Senior DARD management consider this period to be sufficient to ensure that the transfer of corporate knowledge to the new staff will be effective. Although not to understate the scale of change and the associated potential impacts on the business, it is noted that over the same period the Department faces a significant challenge with staff churn simply due to the age profile of its current staff: during the transition period approximately one third of the current staff in headquarters will reach the normal age for retirement[[8]](#footnote-8). Amongst many other issues, the HR Strategy for the programme will consider hand-over training and retention of key staff through the transition and Flexible Working arrangements as a means of managing the corporate knowledge.

1. **Management Presence**

In the ROI, many decentralised offices are managed from Dublin and do not have a local Head of Office *in situ* to deal with day to day corporate issues including reallocation of staff in consultation with relevant Assistant Secretaries. The absence of a Head places a considerable time burden on HQ MAC members, diminishing their space to prioritise and plan.

***How will this issue be addressed***

It is clear from the outset that all senior staff will be based in the new HQ at Ballykelly. The accommodation at Ballykelly will be to WorkplaceNI standard which includes open planned working environments. This should result in senior management being even more visible to staff than they are at present in the cellular accommodation within Dundonald House.

1. **Communication**

In the ROI programme it was found that communications on the timing and phasing of relocations could have been better, and there were consequences for individuals who had acted on incomplete information. For example, there was a negative impact on the morale of those staff that had relocated to another Department or Office in the expectation of a later move to a location outside Dublin that did not in the event go ahead. The sense of grievance was compounded if the individual had foregone promotion to avail of decentralisation or had made a major lifestyle choice such as selling a house in Dublin and purchasing a replacement home elsewhere.

***How will this issue be addressed***

Given the additional relocations announced by the Minister, this issue needs to be considered for the DARD HQ relocation. It is vitally important that staff are fully aware of likely timescales and potential options open to them. Communications to date have been geared towards keeping staff as fully aware as possible but at the same time letting them know that all the information is not available and that advice at this stage would be not to act until more information is available. Staff have also been provided with a commitment by the Minister that they will not be forced to work in Ballykelly where possible.

1. **Time and money**

The evaluation of the ROI programme revealed that there were considerable hidden costs associated with the decentralisation programme – for example, in some organisations, a number of Principal Officers and Assistant Secretaries have to work out of two locations, typically the HQ in Dublin and the decentralised office, spending between 20% and 50% of their time in one or other of them. The associated travel and subsistence costs, along with the time burden, are substantial in many cases.

***How will this issue be addressed***

It is widely recognised that there are staff who will be required to work out of two locations at least part of the time and the Department has put in place arrangements for workstations to be available in Belfast to accommodate this. The costs associated with this arrangement have been included in the business case for the DARD HQ Relocation.

1. **Shared understanding**

*Internal cooperation:* In the RoI decentralisation was found to impact on internal shared understanding within organisations in a number of ways especially where face-to-face interactions with Ministers who are Dublin-based are required and where a function is geographically dispersed across a number of locations.

***How will this issue be addressed***

It is recognised that this may be an issue for the Department. However, as part of the relocation the Department will hope to mitigate against this through the use of modern ICT and video conferencing facilities.

*External cooperation:* According to stakeholders, it took some time for new staff to get up to speed following a decentralisation and this had an impact on their capacity to forge shared understanding in the early stages.

***How will this issue be addressed***

As outlined above in respect to the issue of transferring corporate knowledge, the staff transition plan will see a phased approach to relocation over a period of 5 to 10 years, together with the “flexible working” approach supported by modern ICT and video conferencing, will ensure that there is a manageable mix of new staff and others with appropriate experience.

1. <http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/final_report-location-of-jobs>). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. East of Province covers the Local Government Districts of Larne, Carrickfergus, Newtownabbey, Antrim, Belfast, North Down, Castlereagh, Lisburn and Down.

   [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 2011 DARD Equality Profile [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. http://www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/newarticle55revised.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. For most staff for which retirement is a viable option, their normal age of retirement will be 60: this is in line with the scheme has a pension age of 60 and is the earliest that they can usually take your pension without it being reduced for early payment.

   [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. In the context of relocation ‘A more flexible approach’ is about creating a culture and providing the technology whereby staff can carry out the work of the Department from various locations thereby reducing the need for commuting to a headquarters base. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. For most staff for which retirement is a viable option, their normal age of retirement will be 60: this is in line with the scheme has a pension age of 60 and is the earliest that they can usually take your pension without it being reduced for early payment. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)