**EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STEERING GROUP COMMITTEE**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**1. PURPOSE AND ROLE**

The purpose of the Equality and Diversity Steering Group Committee is to ensure DAERA fulfils its equality, diversity, good relations and human rights obligations. DAERA is committed to promoting equality and good relations across all aspects of its business; in its policies, information and service provision for customers, visitors and staff. DAERA works to ensure that all of its services are accessible and delivered in ways that meet the needs of its diverse customers.

**1.1 Responsibility**

The Committee is responsible for overseeing and monitoring the Department’s progress against its equality, good relations and human rights obligations; relevant strategies, policies and action plans; including equality screening decisions and equality impact assessments. It will:

* Provide strategic direction for promoting equality, diversity, good relations and human rights across all aspects of internal and external work areas;
* Oversee an Equality Scheme for the Department;
* Consider any identified non-compliance issues arising from Stewardship Reporting; and
* Ensure that DAERA contributes meaningfully to relevant NI strategies, action plans and periodic reports.

**2. MEMBERSHIP**

EDSG membership will consist of:

* Permanent Secretary (Chair);
* Grade 3 Heads of Group;
* Chief Executives of DAERA Agencies;
* Staff Engagement, Equality and Diversity Director; and
* DAERA’s various “Champions” (with others to be confirmed):
* Equality Champion – Permanent Secretary,
* Diversity Champion,
* Racial Equality Champion, and
* Children’s Champion.

**3. MEETINGS**

* Grade 5 Directors to attend on request to present on equality issues within their divisions;
* TUS to receive an invite to attend each meeting; and
* As a minimum, the EDSG will receive at each meeting;
* A report on the DAERA Equality Scheme,
* An update on the Annual Report to the Equality Commission NI (ECNI),
* An update on the DAERA Disability Action Plan,
* An update from each of DAERA’s “Champions”,
* A report from the Equality Diversity Working Group,
* A report from the Staff Engagement, Equality and Diversity Branch on Audit of Inequalities and screened policies,
* A report from the Staff Engagement, Equality and Diversity Branch on relevant developments at an NICS level (e.g. Gender Action Plan, Children’s Strategy, Racial Equality Strategy)
* A report from the Staff Engagement, Equality and Diversity Branch on meetings with Section 75 groups, and
* A report from the Staff Engagement, Equality and Diversity Branch on Outreach including learning and development, staff engagement on equality and diversity issues etc.

**3.1. Secretariat**

Secretariat will be provided by the Staff Engagement, Equality and Diversity Branch.

**3.2. Frequency of meetings**

Meetings to be held twice yearly. Where possible, meetings will be timed to coincide with the set Equality Commission timescales for receipt of Departmental reports.

**3.3. Record of meetings**

Formal minutes will be provided to Committee members within five working days of the meeting and agreed by EDSG Committee members within ten working days.

**4. REPORTING**

Formal minutes will be agreed by Head of Staff Engagement, Equality and Diversity Branch, cleared by members and subsequently published. The minutes will be provided to Departmental Board, via Corporate Support Section (CBM). The key papers are as follows:

* Minutes of each meeting
* Equality & Diversity Report
* Annual Progress Report (once a year)
* Other key papers such as DAP, DIAP, Equality Scheme (only when refreshed and updated)
* Other key papers (on an ad hoc basis)

**5. REVIEW**

Membership of the Committee should be reviewed on an annual basis.