

# **Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland**

## **First annual report to the Equality Commission**

The Implementation of the Equality and Good Relations Duties under  
Section 75 Northern Ireland Act 1998 & the Disability Action Plan  
under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order (DDO) 2006.

30<sup>th</sup> September 2010

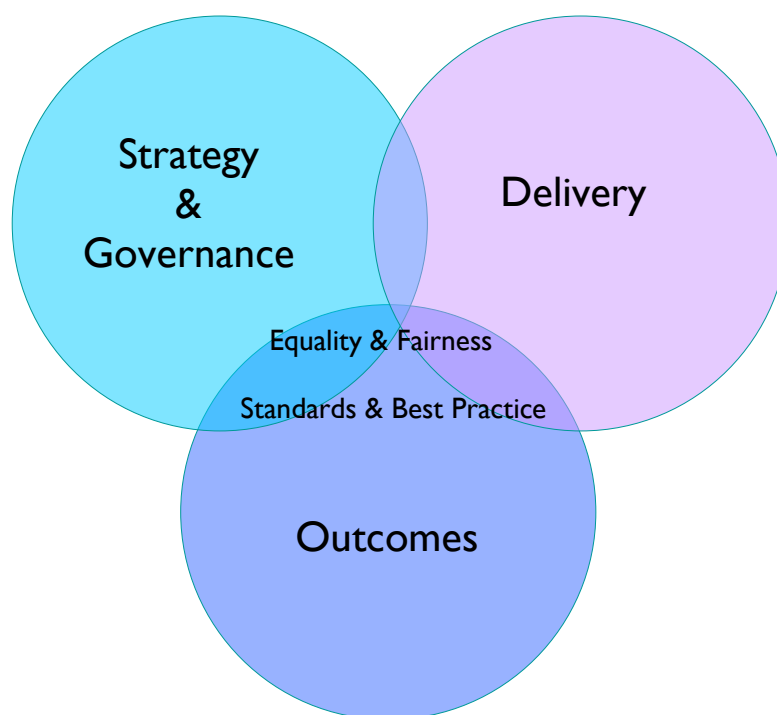
### Executive Summary:

Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJI) received communication on 6 September 2010 from the Equality Commission which confirmed that we are a designated authority under the relevant legislation with regard to Section 75 duties and obligations. During the forthcoming year CJINI plans to revise its existing draft Equality Scheme in line with the updated Guide for Public Authorities.

During the reporting period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 CJINI made the following service developments to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

External – The CJI website was developed to provide better accessibility by provision of a larger text option and the Browsealoud software which enables text to be electronically spoken to the user.

The new CJI inspection framework (below) has been developed to put issues of equality and fairness at the heart of each inspection.



CJI applies the framework to every inspection that it conducts and the framework is incorporated into CJI's inspection management processes which will include a review of its effectiveness. There are three main elements to the inspection framework;

- Strategy and Governance;
- Delivery; and
- Outcomes.

Constants in each of these areas and throughout each inspection are equality and fairness, together with standards and best practice. As part of the inspection

process CJI will identify standards and best practice (where they are known to exist) that are applicable to the inspected organisation or inspection theme and will embed these in each element of the framework. Similarly, equality and fairness will form an integral part of any inspection undertaken by CJI.

Inspection topics over the period that have specifically addressed issues of equality and fairness have included:

- Vulnerable Prisoners;
- Section 75;
- Policing with the Community;
- Probation Board Community Service;
- Mental health and the Criminal Justice System;
- Management of Jurors;
- Police Custody; and
- Prison Inspections.

Recommendations made in our reports have been designed to promote equality of opportunity. For example, access for disabled people sitting as jurors in courts; whilst recommendations made in the report on Mental Health are being taken forward across the criminal justice system. We have also pointed to inequalities such as the concerns regarding the employment profile of prison staff and the treatment of prisoners based on religious background.

Outcomes from inspection recommendations include an ongoing review by the Court and Tribunal Service of accessibility to courts for disabled jurors. Whilst Inspection recommendations are not enforceable organisations sign up to delivering against them over a period of between a year and 18 months.

Internal – The introduction of a monthly general meeting which all staff are invited to attend and where they can add any matters to the agenda for discussion. This is linked with an ISO 9001 approach to continuous improvement of processes where suggestions for development are tracked and implemented to ensure outcomes. There is also a separate Inspectors' meeting which in this period addressed an inequality issue around Inspectors' salaries. This has now been addressed.

#### Initiatives Planned:

Inspections planned for the year 2010 – 2011 that will include major elements of equality and fairness include the following:

- PSNI Customer Service;
- Victims and Witnesses (including a survey available in various formats);
- PSNI Call Management;
- Youth Offending Interventions;
- Youth Diversion;
- PSNI workforce modernisation;
- OPCAT responsibilities;
- Juvenile Justice Centre; and
- Unannounced prison inspections.

In addition there will be follow-up reviews of:

- Section 75;
- Policing with the Community: AND
- Management of Jurors.

CJI will also be hosting our 7<sup>th</sup> Stakeholder conference and will be inviting representatives across the spectrum of S75 categories to take part in an event that will help shape our inspection programme. In the run up to the conference we will also be consulting with people and groups representing S75 categories as part of our development of the inspection programme.

CJI is revising its draft Equality Scheme to comply with the latest guidance issued by the Equality Commission. This will be in place before the end of the financial year so that we can produce a scheme within 6 months of being requested to do so by the Equality Commission on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2011.

## **SECTION I**

### **Strategic Implementation of Section 75 Duties**

CJI has consulted extensively with the agencies of the criminal justice system and other stakeholders in formulating our corporate and business plans. The Inspectorate's Stakeholder Conference in January 2009 gave clear feedback on our proposals for the work programme, and contributed a number of new suggestions for thematic work.

In developing our Corporate Plan we adopted a thematic approach to inspection that, over the life of the document, attempts to draw conclusions that can support Ministers and the wider community, in understanding the workings of the criminal justice system and its impact on victims and witnesses, young people and children, prisoners and detainees. We aim to look at the linkages between the criminal justice system and devolved departments in the delivery of justice services.

A robust, independent, inspection process is fundamental to furthering public confidence in the criminal justice system. To do that we ensure that our reports are not just technical documents written for the chosen few, but offer a wider and more easily accessible commentary on the effectiveness and efficiency of the system for everyone.

CJI contributes to the Government's aims by improving public confidence in the criminal justice system. It does so by assisting the criminal justice agencies in Northern Ireland to become more efficient and effective, and by ensuring that they are being fair and equitable in all their policies and operations. CJI has specific objectives that are aimed at delivering equality and good relations. They are:

- To provide independent scrutiny of the conditions for and treatment of, users of the criminal justice system, in particular victims and witnesses, children and young people, prisoners and detainees; and
- To work in partnership to deliver a high quality, independent and impartial inspection programme.

CJI's vision is rooted in promoting equality and good relations and is summed up as *'a better justice system for all'*.

By that we mean a criminal justice system that works smoothly and efficiently, protecting everyone, working to reduce crime and helping to put offenders back on the right track so that they will not offend again. It also means a system that does all these things with absolute fairness, promotes equality and human rights and is responsive to the real concerns of the community. A justice system that can do these things is the foundation for a peaceful and cohesive community and is a prerequisite for the promotion of good relations and equality.

That vision requires the collaboration of all the agencies of the criminal justice system, the voluntary sector and political and community-based organisations to bring it about. CJI contributes to it by conducting inspections of individual agencies and cross-cutting thematic reviews of aspects of the criminal justice system.

The Inspectorate publishes all its reports and makes all its papers freely available, subject to the normal exceptions for security and personal information. Inspections are made widely available and are published in hard copy and on our website. Reports are available in various formats on request.

A wide range of voluntary and community organisations are either involved with the criminal justice system in some way, or at any rate have a close and continuing interest in it. CJI maintains contact with all these groups during inspection fieldwork and during development of the inspection programme.

CJI has a close relationship with HM Inspectorates of Constabulary, Prisons, Probation and the Crown Prosecution Service. It also works with HM Inspectorate of Court Administration, the Education and Training Inspectorate (Northern Ireland), the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (Northern Ireland), the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Commissioner for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland. All of these are significant partners and stakeholders in CJI that enables us to fulfill our S75 responsibilities.

All of the staff of CJI, including the Chief Inspector and Deputy Chief Inspector, were recruited externally through open competition. Staff are employed on terms and conditions similar to those of the Northern Ireland Civil Service with some small modifications.

The men and women who work for the Inspectorate are CJI's most valuable asset and personal self-development is encouraged. All staff members have a part to play in helping set the standards and future direction of the Inspectorate and to this end, general staff meetings are held on a monthly basis.

CJI is committed to developing each member of staff so that all reach their potential. The staff appraisal process is the principal means of identifying appropriate developmental opportunities through training courses, attendance at conferences and seminars, secondment opportunities or participation in joint inspection work.

CJI communicates widely and effectively with the community in Northern Ireland to ensure it understands the concerns of the people of Northern Ireland, and can reflect these concerns in its inspection programme. The Inspectorate listens and engages with the community through community outreach and inspection activity, and accepts all suitable invitations to seminars, conferences and to community and other representative groups. CJI uses its annual Stakeholder Conference to bring together and engage directly with representatives of the community, voluntary and statutory sectors involved in the criminal justice system. The conference is used to open up communication channels and promote dialogue and discussion both around the issues facing the criminal justice system and CJI's proposed inspection programme. As part of its engagement activity, CJI regularly meets with political representatives from all parties and other opinion formers in Northern Ireland.

CJI communicates the findings of its inspections to the community and stakeholders from across the criminal justice system through its published inspection reports, its website and through its newsletter *The Spec*. All material published by CJI is available

in a printed format. Electronic copies are made available on the CJI website – [www.cjini.org](http://www.cjini.org).

## **SECTION 2**

### **Screening:**

Policies have been derived from our previous sponsor organisation where they had been subject to screening and EQIA. These policies were adapted for use in CJI. Upon adoption of our revised Equality Scheme CJI will revise the policies and subject them to screening as part of our overall aim to develop bespoke policies for CJI.

## **SECTION 3**

### **EQIA:**

This will follow on from the screening that takes place under our revised Equality Scheme.

## **SECTION 4**

### **Training**

Due to the size of our staff pool (16) training in CJI is undertaken by a selected member of staff and cascaded to other staff by presentations as part of our regular meeting programme. In the reporting period members of staff attended S75 relevant training events on:

Rainbow Project Hate Crime event;  
Tackling Sexual Violence Conference;  
International Penal Abolition Conference;  
Prisoner Resettlement;  
Youth Justice Agency Seminar ;  
Supporting People with Mental Health Difficulties in the criminal justice system;  
NICEM lecture;  
Consultation event on draft NOS for domestic and sexual violence;  
Policing with the Community; and  
Bill of Rights for NI.

## **SECTION 5**

### **Communication:**

Follow-up reviews in this period having direct impact on S75 obligations for agencies indicated that there had been considerable progress with recommendations made to the Northern Ireland Coroners service in relation to support for bereaved families and for staff. We also publish a summary of inspection findings. In this period we specifically pointed to our Section 75 report which highlighted concerns over

monitoring of delivery of the equality agenda – where very limited data exists. We also pointed to concerns regarding the employment profile of prison staff and the treatment of prisoners based on religious background.

CJI communicates its inspection outcomes through a stakeholder conference, publication of inspection reports and follow-up reviews, and through its newsletter 'The Spec'. Follow-up reviews assess organisations' progress with recommendations.

## **SECTION 6**

### **Data collection and analysis:**

CJI collects mainly qualitative data during inspection fieldwork in support of quantitative data supplied by the criminal justice and other organisations it inspects. With regard to S75 duties information to support inspection findings was gathered in relation to the Northern Ireland Prison Service employment figures. During the inspection of the management of Jurors a survey was conducted with jurors which highlighted issues of accessibility for disabled people. The system of producing juror questionnaires and making them available in various formats, hard copy, large text, on-line or electronically has been adopted and further developed by CJI. It is now being used to gather information from victims of crime and witnesses to crime as part of a thematic inspection into victims and witnesses. Qualitative data collected during the inspections of:

- PSNI Customer Service;
- Policing with the Community;
- Mental Health;
- Sexual Violence;
- Life sentence Prisoners;
- Vulnerable Prisoners;
- Youth Conference Service;
- Hate Crime;
- NI Coroners Service; and,
- Probation Community Service;

was used to ensure that the element of equality and fairness was addressed as part of our inspection framework.

## **SECTION 7**

### **Information provision, Access to Information and Services:**

The CJI website was redesigned to enable better access using recognised standards on accessibility 'Guide to Good Practice in Commissioning Accessible Websites'. As a result we now provide access to the website in larger text format and also users have the option of downloading 'Browsealoud'. This software converts text to speech and is a free download from our website. Publications are made available in other formats on request.



## **SECTION 8**

### **Complaints:**

No complaints related to S75 have been received by CJI in this period.

## **SECTION 9**

### **Consultation and engagement**

During inspections CJI consults with groups representing people in the S75 categories. During the reporting period whilst carrying out inspections of:

- Youth Conference Service;
- Hate Crime;
- Sexual Violence;
- PSNI Customer Service; and,
- Policing with the Community;

extensive consultation was undertaken with people in the S75 categories by making contact with representative groups to arrange meetings at the most appropriate time s and location. When consulting with younger people during the Youth Conference Service and Policing with the Community Inspections CJI followed the guidance to consulting produced by the Equality Commission – ‘*Let’s Talk – Let’s Listen*’. Consultation with relevant stakeholders and representatives of S75 categories is built in to the CJI inspection processes and methodology.

## **SECTION 10**

### **The Good Relations Duty**

Nothing additional during the reporting period.

## **SECTION 11**

### **Additional Comments**

No additional comments during this reporting period.