

**IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S  
PROPOSALS FOR THE REFORM OF WATER AND  
SEWERAGE SERVICES**

**PART II:**

**EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**November 2004**



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## Part II: The Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

### Chapter One: Executive Summary

- 1.1 Four key elements of the Water Reform Programme proposals have been assessed in terms of their potential impact on equality of opportunity and good relations:
  1. Economic and Consumer Regulation - Extension of the role of the Northern Ireland Authority for Energy Regulation (NIAER) to include regulation of the Northern Ireland Water Industry;
  2. Customer Representation - Expansion of the remit of the General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland (GCCNI) to incorporate Customer Representation on water matters;
  3. Business Model - Creation of a Water Service Government Company (GoCo); and
  4. New charging arrangements – (i) Reform of Non-domestic charging (ii) Introduction of Domestic charging.
- 1.2 It has been concluded that the creation of a Government Owned Company (GoCo) and the domestic element of the new charging arrangements give rise to equality impacts. The proposals for economic and consumer regulation and customer representation have been screened out. The impacts of internal rationalization and reform of Water Service arising as a result of the establishment of the GoCo will be assessed by Water Service when firm proposals have been developed. This Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) therefore focuses on the impacts arising from the proposed introduction of a domestic charging regime based on property capital values. The draft EQIA concludes that this will have a negative differential impact on households from the Protestant and Unionist communities, married people, the elderly and those that care for them.
- 1.3 It has been concluded that none of the proposals will impact on good relations between persons of different religious beliefs, political opinion or racial group.
- 1.4 The negative equality impacts will be mitigated by elements of the charging scheme. These include a uniform standing charge and the

imposition of a cap on the maximum level of charge that can be levied on households. Provision for household metering is to be introduced once charges are fully phased in. This may provide further mitigation of these impacts.

- 1.5 The Department also intends to review the operation and impact of the low income discounts scheme and will consider the potential for tailoring these arrangements to provide further mitigating impacts.

## Chapter Two: Introduction

- 2.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 places a statutory requirement on the Department for Regional Development in carrying out its functions, 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.
- 2.2 In addition, without prejudice to its obligations above, the Department must also have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.
- 2.3 In practical terms, Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, requires the Department, when developing new policy initiatives such as Water Reform, to perform an EQIA. This is a thorough and systematic analysis to determine the extent of any differential impact of policy proposals upon the nine equality categories defined in Section 75. Where impact is identified, consideration must be given to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity or measures which might be employed to mitigate adverse impact.
- 2.4 This document sets out the draft Equality Impact Assessment of the proposals for reform of Northern Ireland's water and sewerage services. It is issued in draft form to enable the conclusions reached and evidence considered to be verified through public consultation. The comments received will be carefully reviewed before a final EQIA is produced. The findings of this EQIA will inform the preparation of the legislation that will be required to implement the proposals for Water Reform.
- 2.5 This document is issued as Part II of the overall Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) which addresses the full range of impacts of the wide-ranging agenda for Water Reform.

## Screening

2.6 This section details the outcome of the screening analysis carried out on the individual strands of the Water Reform proposals.

# Chapter Three: Screening

## Economic and Consumer Regulation

- 3.1 The 2003 Consultation Document (para 7.17) concluded that the proposal to establish arrangements for Economic and Consumer Regulation would not require detailed equality impact assessment. The consultation process endorsed this view (para 8.7 of the Consultation Report).
- 3.2 The Northern Ireland Authority for Energy Regulation (NIAER) has been selected to take on the role of Economic and Consumer Regulation of the Northern Ireland Water Industry. NIAER is an existing Northern Ireland Public Authority, already designated in respect of Section 75 obligations, and has its own equality scheme. The primary legislation being developed to implement Water Reform will prescribe the expanded functions and responsibilities of the Regulator and will incorporate a statutory requirement on the Regulator to deliver its functions equally and impartially on behalf of all water customers.

## Consumer Representation

- 3.3 The 2003 Consultation Document (para 7.17) concluded that the proposal to establish arrangements for Customer representation would not require detailed equality impact assessment. The consultation process endorsed this view (para 8.7 of the Consultation Report).
- 3.4 The General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland (GCCNI) has emerged as the preferred option for the Northern Ireland Water “Champion”. The GCCNI is a well-established Northern Ireland Public Body already designated in respect of section 75 obligations and has its own equality scheme. The primary legislation being developed to implement Water Reform will prescribe the expanded functions and responsibilities of the GCCNI on water issues and will incorporate a statutory requirement on it to deliver its functions equally and impartially on behalf of all water users

## Business Model

- 3.5 The 2003 Consultation Document acknowledged that all five options explored would affect the same Section 75 groups – largely as a result of the operating efficiencies common to all models – and that a detailed EQIA would be required to address the impacts on both the workforce and wider society.

- 3.6 Since then, Ministers have decided that Water Service should become a Company wholly owned by Government (a GoCo) and have set Water Service an extremely challenging efficiency target, requiring a reduction in annual operating costs of at least £43 million by 2009/10. Responses to the 2003 Consultation suggested that these decisions could give rise to a number of impacts.

### **Impact on the Water Service workforce and Local Communities**

- 3.7 Angela Smith MP announced in April 2003 that it was anticipated the reform process would lead to a reduction of 500-600 posts in the Water Service over a period of 5 to 6 years. She made it clear that this figure was subject to further work being done.
- 3.8 In October 2003, John Spellar MP indicated that the efficiency programme would result in reductions of no more than 350 posts in Water Service before 31 March 2006. The process of reductions has commenced, but to date has been managed through natural wastage.
- 3.9 It is not possible at this stage to be definitive about developments after 2006 but there will be ongoing pressure to deliver efficiencies which is likely to result in further post reductions. The detailed work will have to take into account the charging levels as set by Government initially and then the new Economic Regulator.
- 3.10 Ministers have made it clear that all efforts will be made to avoid redundancies. Water Service management is committed to making reductions through natural wastage (e.g. retirements; not filling vacancies) wherever possible. All available established Civil Service procedures (into which equality of opportunity is fully integrated) will be used, including redeployment. Reductions will also be the subject of detailed consultation with Water Service staff and their representatives. These pre-redundancy measures will continue to apply once the Government Owned Company (GoCo) is formed and will be part of the terms and conditions of service for employees transferring under the TUPE<sup>1</sup> arrangements.
- 3.11 An equality screening on implementation of the Efficiency Programme will provide opportunity for potential in parts to be considered further. This screening process will be undertaken by Water Service, ahead of responsibility transferring to GoCo and will include consideration of any proposals to reduce or rationalize the number and location of offices and depots.

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<sup>1</sup>Transfer of undertakings (protection of employment)

## **Public Private Partnerships (PPP)**

3.12 The Minister's statement of 10 August 2004 also outlined the intention to investigate the role that the private sector might play in the GoCo. The Department is highly conscious, from feedback obtained during the consultation process, of the concerns of many regarding the equality implications of private sector involvement in financing and delivering water and sewerage services. In accordance with the PPP Framework Document "Working Together in Financing our Future". Water Service (responsibility transferring to GoCo) will screen all PPP Projects to determine whether full equality impact assessment is required.

## **Non-Domestic Charging**

3.13 Since the 2003 consultation process, policy development on new charging arrangements has been widened to incorporate changes to the already existing non-domestic charging arrangements. The non-domestic customers consist broadly of the agricultural, commercial, industrial, voluntary/community and public sectors. These proposals will essentially impact on businesses, or those conducting business, rather than on individuals, and their impacts will therefore be more appropriately addressed in the partial Regulatory Impact Assessment (see Integrated Impact Assessment Part III). It has accordingly been decided to screen out the changes to non-domestic charging on the grounds that there is no reason to expect these proposals to impact differentially on any of the Section 75 categories. As this issue has not been screened in the 2003 Consultation Document, comments on the decision would be particularly welcome.

## **Domestic charging**

3.14 The 2003 Consultation Document provided a preliminary equality assessment which concluded that each of the possible options for domestic charging could present considerable equality impacts. The feedback to the Consultation Document confirmed this view. The options for domestic charging have therefore been subject to equality analysis leading to a full EQIA of the preferred charging option.

## **Good Relations**

3.15 Under Section 75 (2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Department must also have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between specified groups. It has been concluded that none of the proposals will impact on good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

## Conclusion on Equality Screening

- 3.16 The proposals for new domestic charges should be subject to full Equality Impact Assessment at this point in time.
- 3.17 The proposals for economic and consumer regulation and consumer representation have been screened out of further equality impact assessment. Further consideration will be given separately, to the equality implications for the wider community and the Water Service workforce of the implementation of the Efficiency Programme and PPP Schemes. The first stage in this process will be screening for equality impacts to determine whether EQIAs should be performed. The implications of the preferred business model on the workforce, the wider community and PPPs will be subject to a separate EQIA at a later date. The revised arrangements for non-domestic charging have been screened out of further equality assessment.
- 3.18 None of the proposals has implications for good relations.

## Chapter Four: The Approach to Assessment

- 4.1 The Department has followed closely the guidance for undertaking an EQIA as set out in the Equality Commission's publication "Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessments"<sup>1</sup>.
- 4.2 This envisages seven separate elements:
1. Consideration of available data and research;
  2. Assessment of impacts;
  3. Consideration of:
    - measures which might mitigate any adverse impact; and
    - alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity;
  4. Formal consultation;
  5. Decision;
  6. Publication of results of EQIA; and
  7. Monitor for adverse impact in the future and publication of the results of such monitoring.

### Consideration of Available Data and Research

- 4.3 The Department has ensured that the consideration of equality issues has been factored into the process used to develop domestic charging policy.
- 4.4 Equality analysis of the domestic charging options has therefore taken place in three phases, in line with the various stages of policy development. In Phase I and Phase II, equality effects were assessed at district council level. In Phase III, the analysis was carried out at the more detailed electoral ward level, where the data allowed.
- 4.5 The quantitative data used to characterise these areas in terms of equality groups was:
- **Age and Gender**  
Phase I: Mid-Year Estimates of Population, June 2001.  
Phase II: Mid-Year Estimates of Population, June 2002.  
Phase III: 2001 Census
  - **Marital Status** - 2001 Census, which also gives information on 'living arrangements' (ie. alone or as part of a couple).

<sup>1</sup> [www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org)

- **Religion** - 2001 Census, 'Community Background' variable. This variable has a better coverage of the two main traditions than the 'Religion' variable per se.
- **Racial Group** - 2001 Census. For the first time these data are available on the numbers of people of ethnic minority background in the NI population.
- **Disability** - Those in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance, February 2003 (Phase I and Phase III), May 2003 (Phase II). 2001 Census, those with a long-term limiting illness (Phase III).
- **People with Dependents** - 2001 Census, number of households with dependant children. Also for the first time, the 2001 Census recorded the number of people caring for others, who may in turn be elderly or disabled.
- **Political Opinion** - First preference votes cast in the June 2001 District Council elections from the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland.
- **Sexual Orientation** - No population data are available on sexual orientation – it is not possible to include this group in quantitative analysis.

4.6 The above data on equality groups are linked to other datasets which are used to illustrate the potential effects of the various charging options. These are:

- House sales data from Valuation & Lands Agency (VLA) for 1998 and 1999 (Phase I) giving capital values at point of sale. Data for 2002 and 2003 (Phase II) and 2002, 2003 and 2004 (Phase III) also included house size as a variable;
- DETI 'New Earnings Survey' 2002 (Phase I);
- NI Household Panel Survey, February 2003 (Phase I); and
- 2001 Census – household composition variable (Phase I).

4.7 Ideally, analysis would be carried out by linking householders and their Section 75 characteristics with individual data on household size, water consumption, income and house value. However, as data is not

available to do this, analysis has to be carried out in a spatial way to link the overall population characteristics of an area to the average household sizes etc. Care must be taken in interpreting the findings in that the characteristics of areas cannot be assumed to be homogenous, so for example, if we find that an area with high average house values has a large proportion of non-white ethnic groups, it is not necessarily true that these particular people will be living only in the expensive houses. This is more of an issue in Phases I and II of the analysis which were carried out at a higher geographical level. Phase III analysis was carried out at electoral ward level, and is therefore more robust.

## Chapter Five: Assessment of Impacts & Policy Development

5.1 This section outlines the relative equality impacts of the wide range of options considered for domestic charging which, combined with a range of technical, economic and other policy factors led to the development of the preferred charging arrangements. The results of the impact assessment process are set out in this section in summary form. Further detail, including methodological considerations, are given in the Equality Technical Appraisal available on the Water Reform Website: [www.waterreformni.gov.uk](http://www.waterreformni.gov.uk)

### Phase I – June 2003

- 5.2 The 2003 consultation document set out broad representative options upon which domestic charges could be based. These were a uniform (or flat) charge; a property-based charge (based on capital value); and a combination of both. It also raised the possibility of domestic metering.
- 5.3 Whilst these represented only indicative options, the Department performed an internal preliminary assessment of equality impacts to help inform the process of policy development.
- 5.4 The equality effects of the three Phase 1 options are fundamentally driven by different factors as follows :
- i. Property-based charge – differential house prices related to the Section 75 profile of the people who live in them;
  - ii. Flat charge – differential household sizes and the Section 75 profiles of the people in those households; and
  - iii. Metering – differential consumption, and the profiles of the Section 75 people who need to consume more.

5.5 The equality effects of the 3 options are summarised in the table below.

Section 75 group	Property-based charge (capital value)	Flat Charge	Metering
Religion	Negative on Protestants	Negative on Protestants	No Impact
Political Opinion	Negative on Unionists	Negative on Unionists	No Impact
Gender	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Age	Negative on Elderly	Negative on Elderly	Negative on children
Marital Status	Negative on Married people	Negative on Single people	No Impact
Disability	No Impact	No Impact	Negative on Disabled people
Dependants	Negative on carers of elderly people	Positive on households with children	Negative on those with dependants
Race	No Impact	Positive on ethnic minorities	No Impact

5.6 In summary, Phase 1 analysis indicated that metering would result in the smallest equality impact and that the other options would have greater equality implications. This equality assessment also supported the early policy decision<sup>2</sup> to rule out a flat charge approach from further consideration.

## Phase II – March 2004

5.7 In Phase II attention focused on approaches based on property size, value or some combination. All of these property-based charging approaches also contained a metering option.

5.8 Equality analysis was repeated for the capital value option on an updated house price dataset. A new option of charging based on property size was also assessed, as this was considered to provide an indicator of the costs on the water and sewerage system placed by households.

<sup>2</sup> John Spellar, 7 October, 2003

5.9 The equality effects of these two options are summarised in the table below.

Section 75 group	Capital Value of Property	Property Size
Religion	Negative on Protestants	Negative on Roman Catholics
Political Opinion	Negative on Unionists	Negative on Nationalists
Gender <sup>3</sup>	No Impact	No Impact
Age	Negative on Elderly	Negative on Children
Marital Status	Negative on separated/ widowed/divorced people	Negative on Married People
Disability	No Impact	No Impact
Dependants	Negative on carers of elderly people	Negative on households with children
Race	No Impact – small numbers	No Impact – small numbers

### Phase III – August 2004

5.10 This analysis was performed at a much more detailed level than the preceding phases. This section outlines the assessed impact on each of the Section 75 groups of a charging system based on capital values. Full details of the analysis are given in the Equality Technical Appraisal available on the Water Reform website, [www.waterreformni.gov.uk](http://www.waterreformni.gov.uk).

### Religious Belief

5.11 There is a significant negative equality impact on Protestants. There is a markedly higher representation of Protestants in those areas of Northern Ireland with higher house prices. Where house prices are highest, the population is 62% Protestant and 33% Roman Catholic, compared to 46% and 52% respectively where house prices are lowest. These figures show that Protestants are likely to bear a disproportionately greater burden of the domestic water and sewerage bill than their representation in the wider Northern Ireland community (53%) would otherwise indicate.

<sup>3</sup> Where there is an impact on the elderly there are more females and vice versa – it is thought this is an age rather than a gender effect.

## **Political Opinion**

5.12 There is a significant negative equality impact on Unionists. There is a markedly higher representation of Unionists in those areas of Northern Ireland with higher house prices. Where house prices are highest, the population is 56% Unionist and 32% Nationalist, compared to 43% and 50% respectively where house prices are lowest. These figures show that Unionists are likely to bear a disproportionately greater burden of the domestic water and sewerage bill than their representation in the wider Northern Ireland community (48%) would otherwise indicate.

## **Marital Status**

5.13 There is a negative impact on married people due to the greater representation of married people compared to all other marital categories in those areas with highest house prices. Where the house prices are highest, 54% of the population is married, compared to 44% where house prices are lowest. This confirms the view that married couples live in larger and possibly more expensive properties than single householders, and will therefore incur higher charges.

## **Age**

5.14 There is a negative impact on the elderly but not on households with children. Where the house prices are highest, there is a disproportionate representation of over 65 year olds who make up 14% of the population compared to 13% in Northern Ireland as a whole. On the other hand there are fewer children aged under 16 (22% of the population where houses are most expensive and 25% where they are cheapest).

## **People with Dependants**

5.15 There is a negative impact on those with elderly dependants. In areas with higher property prices there is a greater than average number of carers (12% of the population compared to the Northern Ireland figure 11%). They would appear to be caring for the elderly rather than the disabled, of whom there are fewer than the NI average in these areas.

## **Gender**

5.16 There would be no impact on gender under this charging regime.

## **People with Disabilities**

5.17 There would be no impact on people with disabilities under this charging regime.

## **Race**

5.18 Although there are more ethnic minorities living in areas where houses are most expensive, this does not necessarily mean that those individuals are living in these houses. The small numbers involved do not allow firm conclusions on impacts. Consultation feedback on this conclusion would be particularly welcome.

## **Sexual Orientation**

5.19 There are no data available to assess the potential impact on the sexual orientation category. Consultation feedback on this conclusion would be particularly welcome.

## **Good Relations**

5.20 The proposals are unlikely to impact on good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group. While negative equality impacts have been identified on Protestants and Unionists, this is due to the markedly higher representation of Protestants and Unionists in those areas with higher house prices and they are unlikely to impact significantly on good relations.

## **Chapter Six: Alternative/Mitigation Measures**

- 6.1 The Policy Proposals Paper, published along with this IIA, sets out the rationale for the preferred charging approach. It explains why other possible approaches or alternatives have been discounted. This section addresses mitigation measures for the chosen preferred option.
- 6.2 The Department has sought to tailor the charging scheme to include the following measures which would mitigate the negative equality impacts which have been identified:

### **Standing Charge**

- 6.3 Every household connected to the water and sewerage infrastructure will pay a standing charge for water and for sewerage. This will be a uniform amount payable by all, broadly reflecting the costs associated with maintaining connections to the public water and sewerage networks. The standing charge will represent approximately 35% of the total costs of domestic supply. It therefore has the effect of reducing the overall property-related element of the domestic charges.

### **Capping of Charges**

- 6.4 The cap (£750) ensures that the most expensive properties do not incur charges which are substantially higher than could be justified by the overall highest levels of household consumption of water and sewerage services. By limiting the level to which charges can rise, a limit is similarly imposed on the property-related equality impacts on the affected groups.

### **Protection for Low Income Households**

- 6.5 Customers who are in receipt of Housing Benefit, Rate Rebate, or the proposed new Rate Relief will be eligible for a 25% discount on the annual water and sewerage charge. Whilst this is essentially a 'targeting social need' provision, it is available to all households meeting qualifying conditions across the full range of charges, this means that it will provide a reduction for all, irrespective of the value of the property. The actual amount of the discount increases with rising property value up to the imposition of the cap. It means more in cash terms for those qualifying households in higher value properties.

- 6.6 It is proposed in future to assess and monitor the impact of the low-income discount scheme to establish if it can be used to provide further mitigation of equality impacts.

### **Domestic Metering**

- 6.7 Metering of domestic properties is to be provided for in the proposed charging regime, though not until the new charges are fully phased in. This is to allow sufficient time to introduce metering without unfairly burdening any group of customers. The preliminary impact assessment (Phase I) indicated that metering would not have a negative impact on the religion/political opinion categories.
- 6.8 Much policy development work will be required to ensure that any future charging regime does not have any negative impacts on equality groups, for example, people with disabilities or households with children which may require large amounts of water. The Department will therefore screen the emerging metering proposals for equality impacts.
- 6.9 In addition, the Department considers that there are features of the new domestic charging arrangements which, although not providing direct mitigation for the relevant Section 75 groups, will reduce their overall impact. These are set out in the following paragraphs.

### **Phasing the introduction of Domestic Charges**

- 6.10 The introduction of the new charges will be phased in. Domestic customers will pay one-third in the first year, two thirds of the annual charge in the second year following their introduction, and thereafter the full charge. While this facility will benefit all domestic customers, it will provide a greater benefit in cash terms to the Section 75 groups on whom the charging system has a greater impact.

### **Water Service Efficiency Programme**

- 6.11 Water Service has been set an extremely challenging target to reduce annual operating costs by £43 million by the end of the decade. The efficiency improvements will ensure that the water and sewerage charges are kept as low as possible. The implementation and further development of the efficiency programme will be overseen by the new Economic Regulator, who will be required to ensure that the level of charges is reasonable and that there is a fair distribution of costs among customer categories.

## Chapter Seven: Conclusion of Analysis

- 7.1 The Department considers that the domestic charging option that has emerged – a variable charge based on an assessment of each property’s capital value – will have differential impacts on Protestants and Unionists. This is due to the markedly higher representation of Protestants and Unionists in those areas with higher house prices.
- 7.2 The Department also considers that there will be marginal differential impact on married couples, and elderly people and their carers.
- 7.3 These impacts are mitigated by various components of the domestic charging arrangements. No impacts are anticipated on good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

## Chapter Eight: Formal consultation

- 8.1 This equality impact assessment is issued in draft form for public consultation for a 14 week period until 4 March 2004.
- 8.2 This draft Equality Impact Assessment is issued as part of the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) document, to all the organizations who responded formally to the 2003 consultation process. An Executive Summary of the IIA and the draft EQIA will be issued to all other consultees listed in the Department's Equality Scheme. A full list of consultees is detailed on the Department's website, [www.drdni.gov.uk](http://www.drdni.gov.uk) <<http://www.drdni.gov.uk>>. In addition, the full document will be issued to any organizations and individuals who have expressed an interest in it. A flyer outlining the new charges issued to every household in Northern Ireland has invited participation in the consultation process.
- 8.3 The full IIA has been placed on the Water Reform Website, [www.waterreformni.gov.uk](http://www.waterreformni.gov.uk), from which it can be downloaded in full or in part. Executive summaries of the IIA, and the draft EQIA can also be accessed on the website.
- 8.4 Should you require this document in an accessible format such as Braille, audio tape, minority ethnic language etc, please contact the Water Reform Unit. See contact details on page 27)

### Consultation Questions

- 8.5 Comments are welcome on any aspect of this draft equality impact assessment. The Department would particularly welcome feedback on the following:
1. on the assessment performed;
  2. on the draft conclusions; and
  3. any other relevant qualitative or quantitative information which you consider should have been taken into account in performing this analysis.

## Chapter Nine: Legislation and Implementation

- 9.1 The EQIA will be finalised following consideration of the comments made during the consultation process and final decisions by the Minister.
- 9.2 Draft primary legislation to give effect to the final policy decisions in respect of the entire Water Reform agenda will be published following consideration of the comments received during this consultation exercise. While the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive remain in suspension, legislative proposals will be brought forward in the form of a draft Order-In-Council to be considered by the UK Parliament at Westminster. The legislative route will revert to the Assembly following a resumption of devolution.

## **Chapter Ten: Publication of the results of EQIA**

- 10.1 Copies of the final EQIA will be issued to all those who responded to the consultation exercise. This will outline the way in which the consultation responses have influenced the final document. Copies of the Executive Summary of the EQIA will be issued to those organisations listed within the Department's Equality Scheme. Copies in accessible formats may be requested from the Water Reform Unit (see contact details on page 32). The general public will be informed of the availability of the final EQIA through a press release.

## **Chapter Eleven: Monitoring for Future Adverse Impact and Publication of Results**

- 11.1 The impacts of the new domestic charging arrangements will be monitored by the Department over the implementation period, to identify any unforeseen results. Results will be analysed to determine whether or not the impacts on any of the nine groups has changed. Any new policy developments will be subject to detailed screening and assessment to ensure that they promote equality of opportunity.
- 11.2 The outcome of the monitoring will be reviewed on an annual basis and the results will be published in the Department's annual progress report to the Equality Commission.
- 11.3 Further details of monitoring arrangements, including the data to be collected and analysed will be specified in the final EQIA.

## How to give your views

You are invited to send your views on this draft Equality Impact Assessment on Water Reform by **Friday 4 March 2005**. **A response form is attached within the Summary Document**. Please note that your response may be made publicly available unless you specifically indicate that it is to be treated in confidence.

Please send your response to:

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Further information is provided on the Water Reform website at:  
[www.waterreformni.gov.uk](http://www.waterreformni.gov.uk)

Following consideration of all responses a final IIA will be published on the Water Reform website, [www.waterreformni.gov.uk](http://www.waterreformni.gov.uk). This document will also be available from the Water Reform Unit.

