Section 75, The Northern Ireland Act 1998,
(The Equality Duty)

Electronic Libraries For Northern Ireland

Results of an Equality Impact Assessment

November 2001
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1 This report presents the results of an Equality Impact Assessment of the Electronic Libraries for Northern Ireland (ELFNI) Project, carried out by the Education and Library Boards in compliance with the Equality Schemes of the five Boards.

2 ELFNI was established to procure on behalf of the five ELBs, and with support, initially from the Department of Education (DE), and subsequently from the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL), robust systems to:
   - deliver public access to electronic information through the public library network in Northern Ireland as part of the national implementation of the government initiative, the People’s Network
   - provide new library management systems to support modern high quality library services.

3 In 1999 the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) and the Department of Education gave approval for the procurement exercise to proceed under the Public Private Partnerships/Private Finance Initiative (PPP/PFI) arrangements.

4 The project will provide:
   - personal computers – PCs – for public use in all branch libraries
   - a computerised library management system to operate in all libraries, including mobile libraries
   - an electronic libraries portal or gateway to a wide range of quality-assured information sources
   - modern IT systems for use by the staff in libraries
   - a range of associated services e.g. fax services.

5 Library users will be able to:
   - request a book held by any public library in Northern Ireland and have it delivered to their local library
   - have access to the World Wide Web in their local library
   - have access to information on CD ROMs in their local library
   - use office software such as word processing in their local library
   - have access to the same range of library services in every public library in Northern Ireland, regardless of size or location
   - access library services and information at all times via the World Wide Web.
The Boards in their Equality schemes made an explicit commitment to carrying out an Impact Assessment of the project. The preliminary impact assessment was published on 1 June 2001, and included the findings from a data audit, which considered both quantitative and qualitative data and research findings from a wide range of sources. A consultation exercise began immediately and during June, July and August 19 public meetings and seven regional meetings with sectoral groups were facilitated across the province. A market research study was also commissioned and was conducted between 20-27 June 2001.

It is clear from the consultation that the majority of consultees understand the potential of the policy and see it as being of positive benefit to them. Their concern has principally been to ensure that implementation of the policy will take account of their specific needs and requirements so that the benefits will actually be delivered. As a result of the consultation process changes have been made to the project which, as far as equality issues are concerned, should strengthen and improve the services which the policy seeks to deliver.

Concern was expressed about employment issues arising from the PPP/PFI approach. The scope of the policy has been altered to take account of this.

The Education and Library Boards have sought views on this project from as wide a range of groups as possible. As a result of the research and consultation, the ELFNI Project Board has adopted the measures outlined in the table below and believes that they will strengthen and improve the services provided. The social benefits to the whole community, and for the equality categories, are documented in the full report, and establish the potential of the project to make a significant contribution to promoting social inclusion and empowerment across the nine categories.

It is essential for the delivery of these benefits and thereby the success of the project that groups from all categories are fully engaged. The Boards will continue and develop consultation to ensure that groups are kept fully informed and have opportunities to contribute to developments, improvements and reviews.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Key Findings</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tr>
<td>ELFNI services must be affordable to users</td>
<td>ELFNI will provide library members with free access to the Internet and to ICT facilities. (Library membership is free). Libraries will continue to charge for ancillary services including printing, floppy disks, photocopying and fax facilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consultees want advice and support in accessing websites relevant to their interests</td>
<td>Websites will be identified and signposted which provide reliable, accurate information relevant to the needs of consultees and other library users.</td>
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<td>There is a demand for ICT taster sessions and, in some cases, more formal courses in ICT</td>
<td>Libraries will provide taster sessions. ELFNI will provide the ICT equipment necessary for more formal courses to be delivered by training providers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Library staff should be trained in:</td>
<td>Some training in disability awareness is already in place and this will be extended. Boards are currently piloting equality awareness training, which will be delivered to all staff. By 2003 all library staff will be trained to European Computer Driving Licence level. More advanced training will begin in 2002. The training will take account of equality issues. Boards will deliver training to staff in the use of the adaptive technology which is currently being installed. Boards deliver training to all staff to equip them with the skills to support both adults and children in their library use. This training will continue and will be developed to take account of equality issues. More advanced training in learning support will be provided for some staff from 2002.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• disability and equality issues</td>
<td>No evidence of adverse impact.</td>
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<td>• supporting ICT users with differing skill levels</td>
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<td>• adaptive technology</td>
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<td>• mentoring and learning support</td>
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<td>Library catchment areas broadly reflect the religious composition of the population.</td>
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<td>Key Findings</td>
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<td>The religious composition of the staff who could be transferred to the private sector provider reflects that of the library service as a whole. 62% of the staff who could be transferred are female compared with 80% in the entire service. There may also be an imbalance in relation to marital status</td>
<td>The project has been changed so that acquisitions, cataloguing and delivery staff will no longer transfer to the Service Provider on contract signing. The option of the Service Provider providing acquisitions and cataloguing services will be considered in due course but would only be implemented once staffing issues have been resolved. Opportunities for the IT staff (up to six) to remain within Boards if they do not wish to transfer are being actively explored.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data is not available on the political opinions, marital status, sexual orientation or dependency status of library users but the consultation did not suggest that ELFNI would have an adverse impact</td>
<td>No adverse impact.</td>
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<tr>
<td>There is significant opposition to PPP/PFI as a means of procurement</td>
<td>Boards will refer this information to the Department of Finance and Personnel which is consulting on procurement (Nov 2001).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minority ethnic groups want guidance and support in identifying and accessing websites in their languages</td>
<td>Websites will be designated which provide reliable, accurate information relevant to the needs of consultees and other library users.</td>
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<td>For those whose first language is not English their use of ELFNI may depend on the use of translation software</td>
<td>Research and consultation to assess the specific needs of local groups in each Board area will take place.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some consultees from minority ethnic groups would like involvement in the process of identifying and validating websites</td>
<td>Groups and individuals will be asked to contribute to this exercise. ELFNI users will be able to make suggestions via the online feedback form.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Key Findings</td>
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<td>There are a number of possible barriers to older people using ICT facilities</td>
<td>Providing ELFNI facilities in libraries will overcome many of these barriers. Taster sessions and specific marketing will encourage older people to use ELFNI.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELFNI services should be available on mobile libraries</td>
<td>There will be access to the Internet and to the library catalogue on mobile libraries subject to the constraints of mobile telephony and space.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hardware, software and furniture designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities is essential</td>
<td>Adaptive technology will be rolled out in all Boards and the service provider will carry out annual technology reviews which will include adaptive technology.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some consultees wish to be able to adjust the software settings on PCs</td>
<td>Discussion will take place with the Service Provider as to whether this is possible across a large network.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Access to ELFNI services should be available to those who are housebound, in hospital or in residential care</td>
<td>Mobile libraries delivering these services will have access to the Internet and the library management system, subject to the constraints of mobile telephony. Further research will be carried out into the needs of hospital patients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some consultees want access at home via ELFNI to fee-charging electronic information services to which libraries subscribe</td>
<td>This will be investigated but is likely to prove difficult, and in some cases impossible, due to the publishers’ licensing arrangements and copyright legislation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The consultation process did not indicate any adverse consequences of the ELFNI Project for library users in respect of gender</td>
<td>No adverse impact.</td>
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires the five Education and Library Boards, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between nine categories of persons, namely:

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

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

1.2 The Boards in their Equality Schemes, approved by the Equality Commission, set out how they proposed to fulfil their statutory duties. Existing policies were screened to assess whether they impacted on the promotion of equality of opportunity or the duty to promote good relations using the following criteria:

- Is there any evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by different groups?
- Is there any evidence that different groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular policy issue?
- Is there an opportunity to promote equality of opportunity between the relevant different groups, either by altering the policy, or by working with others in government or in the larger community, in the context of the policy?
- Have consultations with relevant groups, organisations or individuals indicated that policies of that type create problems specific to any relevant group?

1.3 In addition to the screening of existing policies the Boards gave a commitment to carry out a full Equality Impact Assessment on a policy known as “Electronic Libraries for Northern Ireland” or the ELFNI Project.

1.4 The purpose of this document is to publish the results of the Equality Impact Assessment, including the decisions made in relation to the ELFNI Project as a result of the Impact Assessment, in line with Stage 6 of the Equality Commission’s “Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment”. 
The structure of this document is based on that recommended in the guidance. The introduction is followed by a section which describes the background, aims and scope of the Electronic Libraries Project. The next section describes the sources of information used to inform the assessment process. The key findings follow and the final section contains the conclusions drawn from these findings and the decisions made as a result of this. This final section also describes the monitoring and evaluation arrangements for the policy, with particular regard to equality impact.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Context

2.1.1 The Education and Library Boards have a mission to bring enjoyment and lifelong learning to as many people as possible through access to books and other information services, by providing high quality public library services which are readily accessible and responsive to the changing needs of users. The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) has responsibility for the development of library policy across Northern Ireland and for funding the Service.

The Boards also provide a library service to schools, which orders library books on behalf of schools, lends books and other materials to schools and provides advice and guidance as required. The service is available to every school in Northern Ireland. The Department of Education (DE) funds this element of the Library Service.

See Appendix 1 for details of the inter-relationships between the Library Service and the wider community.

2.1.2 Information and communications technology (ICT) has been a major influence on developments in library services across the world in two key areas:

- public access to electronic information and office software, e.g. the provision of CD ROMS and access to the World Wide Web have greatly increased the potential amount of information available to customers in even the smallest library, and
- the automation of many library administrative routines to increase efficiency including ordering, cataloguing and receipting new books, and counter routines concerned with the lending and return of books.

2.1.3 The People’s Network is a recent government initiative which aims to ensure that every public library in the United Kingdom has sufficient computers and also staff trained to assist customers in using computers and accessing electronic information. The People’s Network will also facilitate and encourage programmes to digitise printed material e.g. local history photographs and documents of national and local interest, to ensure the availability of high quality content on the Network.
2.1.4 In this context the Electronic Libraries for Northern Ireland Project (ELFNI) was established to procure on behalf of the five Education and Library Boards, and with support from the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, robust systems that will support and enable the delivery of electronic information services to the Northern Ireland Community. This will enable the Boards to deliver socially inclusive, cost effective, efficient and modern public library and information services.

2.1.5 In 1999 the Department of Education, which was responsible for public library service policy and funding at the time, gave approval for the procurement exercise to proceed under arrangements for Public Private Partnerships/ Private Finance Initiative (PPP/PFI) which involves the private sector in the provision of public services. Under this type of arrangement the Boards specify the outputs required from the system and the levels of service that must be provided, with the private sector taking responsibility for supplying computer equipment, communication networks and services. A private provider would also be responsible for maintaining and repairing computer equipment and for refreshing equipment to keep pace with advances in technology. The Boards would pay an annual charge for this service as part of a contractual agreement expected to cover a ten-year period.

2.2 What ELFNI will mean for library users?

2.2.1 Library users will continue to enjoy access to the wide range of reading materials, including books, periodicals, newspapers and reference works, together with access to videos and other information sources, traditionally available through public libraries.

2.2.2 The Electronic Libraries Project will complement and enhance these traditional services by linking all public libraries in Northern Ireland, thus enabling library users to:

- request a book held by any public library in Northern Ireland and have it delivered to their local library
- have access to the World Wide Web in their local library
- have access to information on CD ROMs in their local library
- use office software such as word processing in their local library
- have access to the same range of library services in every public library in Northern Ireland, regardless of size or location
- allow access to Northern Ireland library services and information at all times via the World Wide Web.

A statistical overview of library services in Northern Ireland is contained in Appendix 2.

2.2.3 The aim of The Electronic Libraries Project is to provide a modern library service for Northern Ireland which will enable libraries to deliver their services in a way that:
ensures the potential for access by the whole community to the resources of all public libraries
is modern, efficient and cost effective
provides access to electronic information and ICT facilities for everyone in their local library
allows people to connect to the library services’ information resources from their home, school, office or other location using a personal computer that has access to the World Wide Web, and
facilitates the harmonisation and extension of the different library management systems currently in use across the Boards.

A list of current ICT initiatives in libraries in Northern Ireland is contained in Appendix 3.

2.2.4 To deliver these services the Boards will provide, by way of a partnership arrangement with the private sector:

- personal computers – PCs – for public use in all branch libraries;
- a computerised library management information system to operate in all libraries, including mobile libraries
- an electronic libraries portal or gateway to a wide range of quality-assured information sources
- modern IT systems for use by the staff in libraries
- a range of associated services e.g. fax services.

A full list of the services to be provided as part of the ELFNI project is contained in Appendix 4.

2.2.5 The Boards will be required to demonstrate that a public/private partnership offers best value for money and a decision to award a PPP/PFI contract will be subject to approval by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and by the Department of Finance and Personnel.

In the event of a PPP/PFI contract going forward, any staff transferring to a private sector provider would do so with their existing conditions of employment protected by virtue of the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981,(as amended) – TUPE.

2.3 The New Facilities

2.3.1 Personal Computers will be made available for public use in each library and will provide access to electronic information including the World Wide Web and CD ROMs and also office facilities such as word processing. These PCs will provide free access for library members to the World Wide Web.

There will also be a collection of quality-assured websites selected to meet the information needs of library customers and this collection of websites will be regularly updated in line with identified customer needs.
2.3.2 The new Library Management System will contain a database or catalogue of stock in all public libraries in Northern Ireland. Public access to this information will enable library users to know what is available throughout the Library Service and to request books or other material that may be of interest. This catalogue of information will also be accessible via the World Wide Web and so library members with web access from home/school/office or elsewhere will be able to request books electronically and also renew their book loans using the Web.

2.3.3 The Library Management System will include software to facilitate the ordering and cataloguing of new library stock, recording loans to library users, reserving books on request and recording the movement of library stock between branch libraries. The System will also be used to purchase books for school libraries and provide an automated update to individual school library management systems.

2.3.4 For the first time all five Boards will have a single library management system and this will provide opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness. For example all Boards currently order and then catalogue new books separately. The new system should help to reduce the duplication of specialised titles across the Library Service as a whole, whilst the rationalisation of the present arrangements for ordering and cataloguing could also produce efficiency gains. It will also be possible now to install electronic security devices, initially in larger branch libraries, to help combat the theft of books and other materials.

2.3.5 The benefits of the new systems for Library Services include the opportunity to move on from the present various and in some cases outdated information systems, including manual systems, to use up-to-date library software geared to meeting the needs of library users. These systems will also include modern office software such as word processing and e-mail facilities and will provide links to the Boards’ other corporate IT systems.

2.4 The Screening Exercise

2.4.1 In February 2001 the policy known as Electronic Libraries for Northern Ireland (ELFNI) was screened using the following criteria:

- Is there any evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by different groups?
- Is there any evidence that different groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular policy issue?
- Is there an opportunity to promote equality of opportunity between the relevant different groups, either by altering the policy, or by working with others in government or in the larger community, in the context of the policy?
- Have consultations with relevant groups, organisations or individuals indicated that policies of that type create problems specific to any relevant group?
2.4.2 The screening exercise was conducted on an inter-Board basis and concluded that:

“This policy presents a significant opportunity to develop a socially inclusive service that will facilitate many groups to make better use of the library services. Current experience of electronic services indicates factors such as age and disability affect participation levels. There is evidence to suggest that people with disabilities may have different needs e.g. in respect of adaptive technology; older users and those whose first language is not English may require additional staff support. In respect of children’s usage, use of the Internet may give rise to Child Protection issues.

Consultations with trade unions have identified concerns in relation to a possible negative equality impact on staff. Within the context of the Private Finance Initiative, there may be a differential impact on staff affected by the transfer of service provision to another employer, in respect of religious belief and/or gender”.

2.4.3 The results of the screening exercise confirmed the need for an Impact Assessment. The results were published in May 2001 by all Boards in their individual reports on the screening of policies (Consultation report, para 12.1).

3.0 DATA COLLECTION AND CONSULTATION

3.1 Data Collection

3.1.1 In conducting the Equality Impact Assessment the Education and Library Boards took fully into account data and research findings from the following sources:

(a) Employment data – data relating to the gender and perceived religious belief for all staff employed in the Library Service and data relating to gender, religious belief, marital status and disability for those staff likely to be affected by proposals to rationalize certain services, including ordering, cataloguing, delivery services and IT support. Reliable data for staff is not available for the remaining categories specified in Section 75 as current employee records are based on the provision of information to meet the requirements of earlier legislation. This is an issue which the Boards, in their Equality Schemes, have undertaken to address. Employment data appears at Appendix 5.

(b) The physical location of existing branch libraries – the locations of libraries were plotted on a map of Northern Ireland and this information was then mapped against the Results of the Census of Population & Housing (1991) to allow inferences to be drawn on the equality of access to library services for different religious/political communities. Details of existing branch libraries appear at Appendix 6.

(c) General Omnibus Survey – Market Research
A series of questions relating to the Equality Impact Assessment was included in a General Omnibus Survey, operated by Ulster Marketing Surveys and conducted between 20 and 27 June 2001. The survey was based on a sample of 1100 adults (16+), drawn from a random selection of sampling points to be representative of the structure of the Northern Ireland population as a whole.

The demographic breakdown of the sample included age, gender, socio-economic status, religion, marital status and number of dependants. Also included were ethnic status, postcode, working status, car ownership, the number in household and age of children under 15.

See Appendix 7 for a graphical representation of the results of the Omnibus Survey.

(d) A profile of current library users – data relating to the age and gender of registered library users in two Board areas was available from the Public Library User Survey, a national, standardised survey approved by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and from the existing library management systems in three Board areas.

(e) Other ICT library projects – research was conducted to identify other information and communications technology projects, involving access by the public, with a view to gathering relevant information in relation to any of the categories of persons specified in Section 75. The research covered existing library ICT projects in Northern Ireland as well as initiatives in Britain, the USA and Europe. Information was gathered from published literature and the World Wide Web. There were also discussions with library staff in Great Britain.

3.2 Consultation

3.2.1 An Equality Impact Assessment report was prepared and made available for distribution to the public on 1 June 2001. The report made clear that Boards wished to consult as widely as possible on the findings of the equality impact assessment and with this objective in mind the following actions were taken:

- **Advertisement**
  Advertisements were placed in the three main regional newspapers inviting the public to comment on the Equality Impact Assessment. These advertisements indicated that the consultation report was available in all public libraries, on the Web or from WELB Library Headquarters, Omagh. The advertisements also indicated the report could be made available in alternative formats on request.

- **Press Releases**
  Press releases were prepared and distributed to local newspapers across Northern Ireland to make the public aware of the ELFNI project.
• **Distributing the Report**

1800 copies of the consultation report were printed and either distributed
directly to consultees or made readily available to the general public, e.g.
via branch and mobile libraries. The report was issued to the consultees
listed in each Board’s Equality Scheme and those listed in DCAL’s
Equality Scheme, to those who attended the public and regional
meetings arranged to explain and consider the ELFNI policy and in
response to individual requests. The report was distributed together with
a pro-forma, which was intended to help and encourage the submission
of responses by the public. Posters were displayed in all libraries
drawing attention to the consultation exercise.

• **Websites**

The consultation report was posted on the World Wide Web.

• **Consultation Meetings**

A series of consultation meetings were held. See Appendix 8 for
full details.

3.2.2 The arrangements for consultation were co-ordinated, on behalf of the Boards
and DCAL, by Ms Helen Osborn, Head of Libraries and Information, Western
Education and Library Board.

3.2.3 **Public Meetings**

A total of 19 public meetings were held at convenient locations across
Northern Ireland and the starting times for these meetings were varied in an
attempt to cater for the needs of the public. Accordingly two meetings were
held in the morning, six in the early or mid afternoon, nine in the late
afternoon and two in the evening. Feedback about the timing of meetings
from the Boards’ earlier equality consultation informed these arrang ements.

Although the turnout was low the meetings produced much useful feedback
and those members of the public who did attend had much to contribute. All
of the views that were expressed have been summarised in the next chapter.

3.2.4 **Regional Meetings**

During June, July and August the Boards organised seven regional meetings
with groups representing six of the categories of persons specified in Section
75, namely persons with a disability, persons with dependants, ethnic
minorities, age (older people and youth), sexual orientation and gender. The
meetings were facilitated by umbrella groups, which invited their constituent
members. These meetings have been an invaluable source of information
and guidance with over 50 people representing some 44 different
organisations in attendance. An agreed record of each meeting was prepared
and in addition some groups have submitted detailed papers for
consideration. Follow-up meetings have taken place in some cases and other
such meetings are envisaged as part of the ongoing consultation.
Support was available to consultees who attended regional or public meetings. All requests for assistance were met, these included:

- provision of transport
- translation of information
- information being made available in different formats
- dietary requirements
- provision of a crèche
- payment of travel expenses.

3.2.5 Other Meetings

As part of the campaign to publicise the ELFNI policy as widely as possible the project was the subject of a short presentation at the AGMs of the Belfast Traveller Support Group and of the Library and Information Services Council (LISC).

In the Western Board area a consultation meeting was held with Disability Action in Londonderry and the policy was also discussed with Traveller families at a meeting on a Traveller site near Omagh. In the South Eastern Board a meeting was held with Greater Voice, an advocacy group for people with disabilities.

3.2.6 Written Submissions

Written responses to the consultation document were received from organisations in the voluntary, community and trade union sectors and from individuals.

4.0 KEY FINDINGS

4.1 The findings from the data collection, research and consultation exercises are set out below, together with the source of the finding.

4.2 Issues affecting more than one category

Provision of access to electronic information through the whole network will give all users of static libraries access to the full range of electronic resources, irrespective of whether their local library is a main reference library or a part-time community library. This was welcomed and commended. The majority of responses indicated that ELFNI would affect equality of opportunity positively in respect of library use. Consultees recognised that local access to information, resources, and to opportunities to participate in electronic communities would facilitate empowerment for individuals and for groups (Consultation with Carers, Disability sector). The following points were made:
• access to virtual information services can reduce the barrier of disability and/or exclusion
• access to the widest range of information and assistance in its exploitation by trained staff can assist in researching and presenting the best case to secure needed support for daily living, personal development and lifelong learning
• access to opportunities to develop ICT skills in an informal environment with one to one support can increase self confidence and develop new skills.

Affordability was seen as an important issue and there was strong support for the principle of a free public library service (Public meetings, Disability sector, desk research).

Most consultees wanted access to websites relevant to their interests and needs and welcomed advice and support in identifying and accessing appropriate websites (Public meetings).

Consultees recognised that many members of socially excluded groups lack ICT skills and the opportunity and/or confidence to undertake formal courses. Access to taster sessions, at times and locations to suit them, was seen as a way of developing awareness and building confidence (Age, Carers, Disability sectors). Some consultees were also interested in the provision of more formal courses in ICT in libraries (Disability sector).

Almost all consultees stressed the need for staff support in ensuring that library users were able to take full advantage of all library services. (All sectors). Particular importance was attached to:

• training in disability and other equality issues for front-line staff, and for members of relevant groups to be involved in the development and delivery of training
• ICT training to enable staff to support users with differing skill levels and needs
• specific training in the use of adaptive technology
• training in mentoring and learning support.

4.3 Religious Belief

Data is not collected on the religious belief of registered library users but there has been no suggestion to date that library users or potential library users are discriminated against on grounds of religious belief. The mapping of public libraries exercise suggests that the religious breakdown of library catchment areas broadly reflect the religious composition of the population of Northern Ireland (Mapping exercise).

The proposed electronic library service will be available to all from branch libraries throughout Northern Ireland and from mobile libraries serving rural communities and also to anyone with a PC via the World Wide Web.
Of the 60 staff, including part-time staff, who could potentially be affected by the centralisation of services, 53.3% are Protestant, 35.0% are Catholic and the perceived religious beliefs of 11.7% is not known. These figures compare with 54.4% Protestant, 36.4% Catholic and 9.2% not known, for staff in the Library Service as a whole (Employment data, Appendix 5).

4.4 Political Opinion

Data is not collected on the political opinions held by existing registered library users but there has been no suggestion to date that political opinion is an issue in relation to the public gaining access to library services. Access to electronic library services will be available to all from branch libraries and mobile libraries throughout Northern Ireland and from any web-enabled PC.

In the wider political context the current government policy on PPP/PFI is being widely debated and organisations and individuals, including those employed in libraries, have concerns both on grounds of principle and in respect of the practical consequences for workers.

Concern was expressed about staff affected by the proposal to rationalise the current arrangements for ordering and cataloguing new stock, delivery services and IT staff. The Library Service employs some 1,182 staff of whom 60 staff would have been affected by the centralisation of services and thus be required to transfer to the private sector.

Various suggestions were made for mitigation:

- the removal from the project of those elements with staffing implications
- redeployment of staff within the Boards
- fixed term secondments to the project
- access to the Boards’ internal promotion mechanisms for transferred staff.

The view of the trade unions is that PPP/PFI should not be used to deliver the ELFNI Project.

4.5 Racial Group

Provision of guidance and support in identifying and accessing websites in appropriate languages and of translation software, was identified as an important issue. Some consultees would like direct involvement in the identification and validation of such resources (Racial groups sector).

4.6 Age

The research undertaken identified a number of barriers to older people using ICT facilities, including cost, fewer opportunities for older people to use IT facilities, inexperience and lack of interest resulting from a lack of understanding of the potential benefits to be gained from using modern technology. These obstacles are already being addressed by a number of existing projects in Northern Ireland and elsewhere, involving placing ICT
facilities in libraries. These projects have demonstrated the benefits to older people once they have gained a certain degree of confidence, often connected to e-mailing family, supporting grandchildren with their homework or accessing information relevant to their own interests. It is also apparent from the research that older people are more comfortable learning to use ICT in a familiar venue, with support from staff whom they know and trust, in a relaxed and informal manner (Desk research, ISTAR Project).

Some consultees wanted confirmation that as many of the benefits of the project as possible would be available to users of mobile libraries (Age sector).

Research and consultation has indicated that ICT in libraries can play an important and effective role in providing children with homework support, the promotion of reading and helping to develop information gathering skills.

4.7 Disability

The provision of adaptive technology, i.e. appropriate furniture, computer hardware, peripherals and software, was deemed essential. This needs to be available throughout the network and updated as necessary. Independent use by individuals with special needs should be facilitated, and support from staff should not be intrusive. Some consultees suggested that people with disabilities should be able to change the settings on PCs to suit their specific needs. The importance of involving people with disabilities in the selection and testing of all aspects of appropriate technology was emphasised. They could also provide advice and guidance on their use (Disability sector).

The needs of people who are housebound, in hospital, residential or nursing homes must be identified and addressed (Disability sector).

The provision of library services via the Web can remove barriers to use and thus help to promote the social inclusion of people with disabilities (Desk research).

Some consultees requested access via their home PCs to electronic information resources to which libraries subscribe (consultation with disabled sector). If ELFNI is to be provided via kiosks, in public locations other than libraries, these must be accessible to people with disabilities (Disability sector).

4.8 Marital Status

The Boards do not collect data on the marital status of library users and so it is difficult to assess the likely impact of an electronic libraries policy on this Section 75 category. However, there is no reason to believe that marital status will have any adverse effect in regard to persons making full use of the range of services available through the public library service.
Of the 60 staff who could be affected by the centralisation of services, 38 are married, representing 63% of the relevant group. There is no reliable comparator available for the Library Service as whole. See also related comments about mitigation at 4.4 above.

4.9 Sexual Orientation

The research and consultation to date has not indicated any likelihood of adverse consequences for individuals covered by this Section 75 category in relation to making full use of the services available through the public library service (Desk research, Sexual orientation sector).

4.10 Gender

The consultation process did not indicate any adverse consequences of the ELFNI Project for library users in relation to gender. Some 60% of adult library users are female (Data audit).

Of the 60 staff who could potentially be affected by the centralisation of services, 38.3% are male and 61.7% female. These figures compare with 20.2% males and 79.8% females for staff in the Library Service as a whole. See also related comments about mitigation at 4.4 above.

4.11 Dependents

The consultation process did not indicate any adverse consequences of the ELFNI Project for those with dependants. ELFNI will extend the accessibility of library services for those who are not able to visit libraries and some carers fall into this category. The general survey (Appendix 7) indicated that respondents living in households with children are slightly more likely to use ELFNI services than those who do not.

4.12 Some findings from the consultation exercise related to issues broader than the ELFNI project and have been included for the sake of completeness. These issues are being considered by the Boards and have been submitted to DCAL for consideration as part of ‘Tomorrow’s Libraries’, a review of the public library service.

- Physical access to library buildings for those with mobility problems is a key issue (Disability sector)
- Mobile and housebound library services should be marketed more effectively (Age sector)
- Transport to libraries for those with limited mobility is an issue. The deployment of school transport to improve access to Board services for older and disabled users was suggested (Age sector).
- The need for a range of books and other library resources in appropriate languages in libraries (Race sector)
- Some consultees wanted more direct involvement in library collection development (Race sector)
• Inequality of provision to those who don’t have a permanent address e.g. Irish Travellers (Race sector)
• Library accessibility and ambience were identified as a deterrent to some users eg no crèche facilities, perception that libraries are only for the literate. (Dependants, Race and Women’s sectors).

4.13 A number of consultees commented favourably on the consultation process and the thoroughness with which the equality impact assessment was carried out. However, NIPSA does not accept that the Boards have met their obligations to undertake a complete and comprehensive equality impact assessment of the ELFNI project.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 The ELFNI Project Board has considered carefully the findings of the consultation exercise and the research, and the outcomes itemised below have been agreed.

5.2 The timescale for the outcomes will be as ELFNI services are rolled out to each library, unless otherwise indicated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELFNI services must be affordable to users</th>
<th>ELFNI will provide library members with free access to the Internet and to ICT facilities. (Library membership is free). Libraries will continue to charge for ancillary services including printing, floppy disks, photocopying and fax facilities.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultees want advice and support in accessing websites relevant to their interests</td>
<td>Websites will be identified and signposted which provide reliable, accurate information relevant to the needs of consultees and other library users.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a demand for ICT taster sessions and, in some cases, more formal courses in ICT</td>
<td>Libraries will provide taster sessions. ELFNI will provide the ICT equipment necessary for more formal courses to be delivered by training providers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library staff should be trained in:</td>
<td>Some training in disability awareness is already in place and this will be extended. Boards are currently piloting equality awareness training, which will be delivered to all staff. By 2003 all library staff will be trained to European Computer Driving Licence level. More advanced training will start in 2002.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• disability and equality issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• supporting ICT users with differing skill levels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• adaptive technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• mentoring and learning support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Library catchment areas broadly reflect the religious composition of the population.

The religious composition of the staff who could be transferred to the private sector provider reflects that of the library service as a whole. 62% of the staff who could be transferred are female compared with 80% in the entire service. There may also be an imbalance in relation to marital status.

Data is not available on the political opinions, marital status, sexual orientation or dependency status of library users but the consultation did not suggest that ELFNI would have an adverse impact.

There is significant opposition to PPP/PFI as a means of procurement.

Minority ethnic groups want guidance and support in identifying and accessing websites in their languages.

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begin in 2002. The training will take account of equality issues. Boards will deliver training to staff in the use of the adaptive technology which is currently being installed. Boards deliver training to all staff to equip them with the skills to support both adults and children in their library use. This training will continue and will be developed to take account of equality issues. More advanced training in learning support will be provided for some staff from 2002.

No evidence of adverse impact.

The project has been changed so that acquisitions, cataloguing and delivery staff will no longer transfer to the Service Provider on contract signing. The option of the Service Provider providing acquisitions and cataloguing services will be considered in due course but would only be implemented once staffing issues have been resolved. Opportunities for the IT staff (up to six) to remain within Boards if they do not wish to transfer are being actively explored.

No adverse impact.

Boards will refer this information to the Department of Finance and Personnel which is consulting on procurement (Nov 2001).

Websites will be designated which provide reliable, accurate and timely information relevant to the needs of consultees and other library users.
For those whose first language is not English their use of ELFNI may depend on the use of translation software

Some consultees from minority ethnic groups would like involvement in the process of identifying and validating websites

There are a number of possible barriers to older people using ICT facilities

ELFNI services should be available on mobile libraries

Hardware, software and furniture designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities is essential

Some consultees wish to be able to adjust the software settings on PCs

Access to ELFNI services should be available to those who are housebound, in hospital or in residential care

Some consultees want access at home via ELFNI to fee-charging electronic information services to which libraries subscribe

The consultation process did not indicate any adverse consequences

Research and consultation to assess the specific needs of local groups in each Board area will take place.

Groups and individuals will be asked to contribute to this exercise. ELFNI users will be able to make suggestions via the online feedback form.

Providing ELFNI facilities in libraries will overcome many of these barriers. Taster sessions and specific marketing will encourage older people to use ELFNI.

There will be access to the Internet and to the library catalogue on mobile libraries subject to the constraints of space and mobile telephony.

Adaptive technology will be rolled out in all Boards and the service provider will carry out annual technology reviews which will include adaptive technology.

Discussion will take place with the Service Provider as to whether this is possible across a large network.

Mobile libraries delivering these services will have access to the Internet and the library management system, subject to the constraints of mobile telephony. Further research will be carried out into the needs of hospital patients.

This will be investigated but is likely to prove difficult, and in some cases impossible, due to the publishers’ licensing arrangements and copyright legislation.

No adverse impact.
5.3 In order to establish that the project is delivering the expected benefits and improving services for groups across the nine categories, the development of systems to monitor the delivery of services in relation to equality issues is of crucial importance.

- The Project Board is proceeding to set up an Intelligent Customer Unit which will act as the agent of the Contract Executive (the body which will take over from the Project Board) in managing the contract. The Unit will be responsible for developing and operating appropriate systems and procedures to monitor impact and to recommend service improvements.
- The ELFNI Benefits Realisation Plan, which includes a section on equality, sets out the benefits of the project and how and when these will be measured. The Contract Executive will receive regular updates on the achievement of benefits from the Intelligent Customer Unit.
- The project itself will provide much improved access to information on library usage and library users through the management information systems, which will provide for the first time the means of obtaining consistent information across all five Boards and the opportunity to hold data which is currently not provided. The need to monitor equality issues will inform the consideration of what data will be held.
- The Boards already carry out or participate in a range of customer surveys, and these will be further developed in the light of equality issues. Boards will request questions on equality issues to be included in the national Public Library User Surveys.
- Service providers will also carry out annual technology reviews, which will include adaptive technology as an integral part of the project.
- Library Services will be participating fully in regular Board consultation exercises on equality issues in respect of this and other policies.
- Monitoring information will be published in print and electronically by the ELFNI Contract Executive.
ACHUKA (CHILDREN’S LITERATURE WEB SITE)  
www.achuka.com

AGE CONCERN  
www.ace.org.uk

BLANCHARD, C (2000)  
First Byte: The People’s Network and the Children’s Library  
Youth Library Review, Issue 28, pages 7-12

BRIGHTON, HOVE LIBRARIES  
www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/bhc/libraries

CABINET OFFICE  
Closing The Digital Divide: information and communication technologies in deprived areas. a report by policy action team 15  
www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/seu/2000/pat15.doc

CHILIAS PROJECT (GATESHEAD et al)  
www.gateshead.gov.uk/libraries/europroj.htm

CONWY BOROUGH COUNCIL  
www.conwy.gov.uk

CROYDON ONLINE RESEARCH PROJECT  
www.croydononline.org/croy-ind.asp

DELTA PROJECT (Derbyshire)  
www.derbyshire.gov.ak/azserv/libh009.htm

DENHAM, D et al  
Children and IT in Public Libraries (BLRI Report No 51)  

DOUGLAS, Jonathan  
Professional Adviser (Youth and Education) Library Association – source of advice and information

EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND  
Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment  
Equality Scheme (Draft)
Belfast Education & Library Board - March 2001
North-Eastern Education & Library Board - March 2001
South-Eastern Education & Library Board - April 2000
Southern Education & Library Board - March 2001
Western Education & Library Board - April 2001

Equality Scheme: consultation on the screening of policies
Belfast Education & Library Board - June 2001
North-Eastern Education & Library Board - May 2001
South-Eastern Education & Library Board - January 2001
Southern Education & Library Board - June 2001
Western Education & Library Board - June 2001

Equality Scheme (Approved)
South-Eastern Education & Library Board – July 2001

ISLINGTON LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICE
www.islington.gov.uk/libraries

LIBRARY AND INFORMATION COMMISSION (now RE: SOURCE)
www.lic.gov.uk
Also www.resource.gov.uk

LISA DATABASE
LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE ABSTRACTS
http://bubl.ac.uk/journals/lis

MUDDIMAN, D et al
Open For All: The Public Library and Social Exclusion Vols 1, 2 and 3

MUNCIE PUBLIC LIBRARY, INDIANA
http://www.pe.net/~rksnow/incountymuncielib.htm

NATIONAL LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND
www.nlbuk.org

ONLINE @LEEDS PROJECT
http://website.lineone.net/~onlineleeds

ONS. INTERNET ACCESS
http://news.bbc.co.uk/low/english/uk/newsid

PROJECT HERCULE
www.iol.ie/~dubcilib/hercule.htm
www.millennium.walsallgfl.org.uk/contents.htm

READERS WITHOUT WALLS
ROACH, P & MORRISON, M
Public Libraries, Ethnic Diversity and Citizenship (BLRI Report No 76)

ROLLING ZONE (HERTFORDSHIRE)
http://vtc.ngfl.gov.uk/literacy/features/libraries.html

SHARE THE VISION NEWS
http://bubl.ac.uk/news/events/ev041103.htm

(SILVER SURFERS IN MONMOUTHSHIRE LIBRARIES)
INTERNET ACCESS FOR OLDER ADULTS IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES
www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/leisure/libraries/report.html

SPECIAL CHILDREN
Issue No 123 October 1999 p 19-22
‘Supporting Dyslexic Learners – How ICT can help’

STORIES FROM THE WEB PROJECT (Birmingham et al)
http://hosted.ukoln.ac.uk/storeis/libclubs

TALKING NEWSPAPERS ASSOCIATION
www.tnauk.org.uk

TALNET
http://talisweb.talnet.gov.uk

WOMEN CONNECT. A REPORT ON WOMEN AND ICT FOR PAT 15, 1999
www.womenconnect.org.uk

YOUTH LIBRARIES GROUP
Bridging The Digital Divide: ICT in Children’s Literature
YLG 2001 0946581201
## Appendix 2

### Statistics relating to Public Library Services in Northern Ireland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Branch Libraries</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours open each week</td>
<td>4,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Libraries</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book loans in 1999/2000</td>
<td>9,132,298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio-visual loans in 1999/2000</td>
<td>609,626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits in 1999/2000</td>
<td>6,755,299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enquiries in 1999/2000</td>
<td>1,668,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookstock (31 March 2000)</td>
<td>3,945,055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additions to bookstock 1999/2000</td>
<td>228,357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total revenue expenditure 1999/2000</td>
<td>£18,876,391</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Statistics relating to Schools’ Library Services in Northern Ireland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book stock</td>
<td>3,271,689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total revenue expenditure 1999/2000</td>
<td>£4,114,495</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3

ICT in libraries – the situation prior to ELFNI

A number of initiatives have led to the provision of PCs with access to the world wide web in various libraries in Northern Ireland. These include:

- Wolfson Centres of Excellence. One library in each Board to be equipped with high specification networked PCs, providing access to CD ROMs and the Internet funded by the Wolfson Foundation. Bangor, Derry, Ormeau Road, Ballymena, Newry
- ISTAR. EU-funded project to provide high spec PCs for public access in 4 libraries in WELB with 4 ISTAR officers to provide training and mentoring in ICT for library customers
- Killyleagh Schools Internet Project. Joint project with 2 schools in Killyleagh (SEELB), sponsored by a local development agency which provides staff, pupil and public access to the Internet in Killyleagh Library
- BT Homelink. A scheme operating in 1 library and 2 schools in WELB and NEELB. Parents and pupils in a P6 class have access to similar ICT facilities at school and in the local library
- Within BELB, Learning Gateways in Central, Holywood Arches and Whiterock Libraries offering multiple public access terminals and medium to high speed electronic connections
- Learndirect - Belfast Central and Londonderry Central Libraries are learning centres within Learndirect (formerly known as the University for Industry) which involves the provision of ICT-based Learndirect learning packages with tutorial support
- Access to Microsoft Office software is available to customers in a number of libraries in each Board
- A selection of multimedia CD ROMs is available to customers on computers in a number of libraries in each Board
- Oasis Centre in Ballee Library. An open learning service is provided in partnership with the North Eastern Institute of Further and Higher Education and Ballee Community Association, which includes IT facilities and courses
- Distance Education in Rural Areas through Libraries (DERAL) Project in Ballee and Ballymoney libraries, which includes Internet access
- Delivery of accredited IT courses e.g. CLAIT and ECDL in Belfast Central Library in partnership with bodies such as BIFHE and the WEA
- Youthnet/Internet Project, Antrim Library. Access to the Internet and Youthnet (a national online database of youth information) in partnership with Antrim Youth Council.

3 different library management systems are in use in public libraries in Northern Ireland. 40 branch libraries and the majority of mobile libraries are without a library management system.
SERVICES REQUIRED OF THE SERVICE PROVIDERS

A Mandatory Requirements

Service providers have been asked to provide costed proposals for the following services in their pre-contract submissions:

- Acquisitions (IT Element) i.e. the ordering and processing of new stock
- Circulation (IT element) i.e. procedures for loan and return of stock
- Inter-Library Loans (IT Element) i.e. procedures to obtain books and other items from other Library Services, both within the UK and world wide
- Catalogue Creation and Maintenance (IT Element) i.e. producing and maintaining records of all items of library stock and where they are
- On Line Request Services (IT Element) i.e. a service which enables users to place their own requests for books or other items on loan or in another library
- Fax Services in all libraries for staff and users
- On Line Search Services i.e. facilities for searching specialist external databases
- Multimedia Storage and Retrieval Services e.g. networking CD ROMs within and between libraries
- Community Information Facilities to enable local staff to input, update, and make publicly available information relevant to the local community such as local clubs and societies, schools, transport, medical facilities etc
- On-line Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) i.e. provision of information to users about library stock and services in a user-friendly and secure format
- Internet Services i.e. facilities to enable staff and users to access information from the Internet in all libraries, and to use email, with high bandwidth to enable rapid access
- Data Transfer for Schools i.e. facilities for downloading stock records from the Schools’ Library Service directly to individual school libraries and their systems
- Request Services which enable users to register requests for books and other items online or via fax, email, voice mail
- Government Information Services i.e. the facility to allow public access to government information and interactive services by electronic means
- Public videoconferencing facilities in all libraries.

B Separately Costed Mandatory Services

Service providers have been asked to provide costed proposals for the following separately costed mandatory services in their pre-contract submissions:

- Digital Conversion Services i.e. facilities retrospectively to convert card catalogues to electronic form
- Stock Security systems in large libraries
- Self-Service Issue Facilities in some libraries
- Disposal of stock
- Photocopying.
C Separately Costed Optional Requirements

The Service Providers have been asked to provide costed proposals for the following separately costed optionals in their pre-contract submissions to enable these to form part of the overall evaluation. The decision on the provision of these services will depend upon the approval of a Business Case and the resolution of related staffing issues.

- Management of Reserve Stock Service i.e. storage of those items of library stock which are no longer suitable for display on open shelves but which are required by library services from time to time to meet specific requests or to answer information enquiries
- Delivery Services between libraries
- Acquisitions and cataloguing.

D Optional Services – To Be Considered Post Contract

Each of the optional services will be assessed to establish whether they provide value for money. The Service Providers’ proposals must be submitted within 2 years of contract signature.

- Digitisation of photographs service: Libraries hold collections of photographs of local and historical interest, which deserve to be exploited and made available more widely. Digitisation of this material cannot presently be undertaken to any great extent by library staff, but could provide an opportunity for the Contractor to generate income from the sale of individual images (e.g. as postcards or pictures) or by publishing collections of photographs of local interest
- Exhibition services i.e. marketing of exhibition space in libraries, under agreed conditions
- Open Access/Self Learning Centres i.e. the operation, management and promotion of open learning centres in libraries
- Operation of a booking and hiring system for library meeting rooms and other multipurpose spaces within libraries to maximise income from this source
- Publicity and Promotional Services
- Genealogy Services i.e. a fee-based family history research service
- Digital Publication Services i.e. publishing local history materials digitally without prejudicing their security or the integrity of library collections
- Stock Recovery Service i.e. recovery of overdue books and other items
- Catering Services i.e. refreshment facilities for library users or staff or both
- Kiosks.
## Appendix 5

### NORTHERN IRELAND LIBRARY SERVICE – COLLECTIVE EMPLOYMENT DATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 75 Categories</th>
<th>Total Library Staff in all 5 Boards</th>
<th>Potential Staff affected by ELFNI centralisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,182 100.0%</td>
<td>60 5.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Gender:
- Male: 239 (20.2%) 23 (38.3%)
- Female: 943 (79.8%) 37 (61.7%)

#### Religion:
- Protestant: 643 (54.4%) 32 (53.3%)
- Roman Catholic: 430 (36.4%) 21 (35.0%)
- Not Known: 109 (9.2%) 7 (11.7%)

#### Marital Status:
- Single: Not Known 22 (36.7%)
- Married: Not Known 38 (63.3%)

#### Disability
- Not Known: 2

#### Political Opinion
- Not Known: Not Known

#### Racial Grouping
- Not Known: Not Known

#### Sexual Orientation
- Not Known: Not Known

#### Age
- Not Known: Not Known

#### With Dependents
- Not Known: Not Known

### NB
The data on marital status and disability is subject to change. The figures quoted are the most recent information available from the Boards' records.
Survey Finding

The aim of the survey was to gauge the public’s reaction to that element of the ELFNI project that is tangible to them. In order to achieve this it was decided to provide respondents with a description of the service and measure the likelihood of using it. Respondents were told that…

“There is a plan to equip every public library with computers. All the machines will have Internet access and library staff would be available to help members of the public use the computers free of charge.”

Having heard the description of the service respondents were asked how likely they would be to use this service at a public library.

Overall, one third of respondents (33%) said that they would be very or quite likely to use the service described to them.

The main variation in response related to age, falling from 53% of 16-24 year olds saying they would be likely to use the service to just 9% of respondents aged 65 and over. This is also reflected in analysis by working status – 62% of those in full time education, who tend to be in the younger age group, said they were likely to use the service.
The findings would also suggest that respondents living in households with children were more likely to use the service.

There was a slight variation in response between Roman Catholic and Protestant respondents, which perhaps reflects the variation by area. Those living in the West of Northern Ireland, which is predominantly Roman Catholic, were more likely to say that they would use the service. It should be noted, however, that the variation is due in part to the relatively high proportion of respondents who answered ‘don’t know’ in Belfast City and the North of the Province – 18% and 16% respectively, compared with 7% in the South and 5% in the West who gave this response.
The survey included questions about current use of public libraries and reasons for use. Analysis of the responses suggests that those already using the service were more likely to say that they would use the services described to them. The proportion of respondents currently using the public library tended to be higher among younger respondents, Roman Catholics, those in full time education and those living in household with children.
All respondents who said that they would be unlikely to use the service were asked why they would be unlikely to use it. The main reason, mentioned by 28% of people unlikely to use the service, was that they had access to the Internet at home.

Questions relating to access to computers and the Internet were also included in the survey. Over half of respondents (52%) had access to at least one computer – either at home (40%), in work (17%) or somewhere else (11%). Other points of access included in this category were college/university, family/friends, home, library and community centre. The survey also showed that 83% of respondents who had access to a computer could use it to access the Internet. Those without access to computers tended to be older respondents, those in the lower social class group and households without children.
Taking this in conjunction with the findings of the question relating to the likely use of the ELFNI service described to respondents would suggest that the offer of this service in the library is not necessarily appealing to people without access to computers and the Internet. Older respondents do not have access, but are unlikely to use the service in the library. The main reasons they give for not using the service are being ‘too old’ and ‘having no interest in computers’, rather than not having access to the technology.

Overall, age appears to have been extremely influential in the decision as to likely use of the service. Trends relating to other factors, such as social class and household size, would also reflect the influence of age. The survey findings suggest that lower social class groups (C2, D&E) do not have access to computers, but this did not make them more likely than those others to use the service at the library. In fact, the social class trend is probably a function of the fact that respondents aged 65 and over accounted for 51% of the lowest social group (DE). Similarly, the household structure trend is a function of age, reflecting
the fact that 99% of respondents aged 65+ were living in households without children.

The findings of the survey would suggest that people who currently use the library are likely to use the service described to them.

The factor that has been most influential in respondents’ decision appears to be age and trends in relation to other factors seem to reflect this.
## CONSULTATION EVENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Meetings</th>
<th>Locations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Belfast Board</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 June 4.30 pm</td>
<td>Argyle Business Centre. 39 North Howard Street, Belfast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 June 4.30 pm</td>
<td>St. Louise’s Comprehensive College. 468 Falls Road, Belfast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 June 4.30 pm</td>
<td>Forge Integrated School. 20 Carolan Road, Belfast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 June 4.30 pm</td>
<td>Jaffe Centre. 881-883 Shore Road, Belfast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>North-Eastern Board</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 June 2.00 pm</td>
<td>Antrim Board Centre. 17 Lough Road, Antrim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 June 2.00 pm</td>
<td>Ballymoney Music Centre. 23 Charles Street, Ballymoney.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 June 2.00 pm</td>
<td>East Antrim Institute, Newtownabbey Campus. 400 Shore Road, Newtownabbey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>South-Eastern Board</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 June 3.00 pm</td>
<td>Board Headquarters. Grahamsbridge Road, Dundonald.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 June 3.00 pm</td>
<td>Downpatrick Resource Centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 June 10.00 am</td>
<td>Rathvarna Resource Centre. Lisburn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Southern Board</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 June 2.00 pm</td>
<td>Market Place Theatre &amp; Arts Centre Armagh.</td>
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<tr>
<td>26 June 10.00 am</td>
<td>The Civic Centre. Lakeview Road, Craigavon.</td>
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27 June  4.00 pm  The Arts Centre.
            Bank Parade, Newry.

Western Board

25 June  4.30 pm  Enniskillen Divisional Library.
            Halls Lane, Enniskillen.

27 June  7.30 pm  Omagh Library Headquarters.
            1 Spillars Place, Omagh.

4 July    4.30 pm  Strabane District Council Offices.
            47 Derry Road, Strabane.

4 July    7.30 pm  Londonderry Central Library.
            Foyle Street, Derry.

5 July    4.30 pm  Limavady College.
            Main Street, Limavady.

2 Other Meetings

26 June  11.00 am  Ballinamullan Traveller’s Site.
            Cookstown Road, Omagh.

23 July   2.30 pm  Greater Voice

26 July   2.30 pm  Disability Action.
            58 Strand Road, Derry.

3 Regional Meetings  Groups Represented

7 June
Coalition on Sexual
Orientation (CoSo).

18 June
Disability Action

7 June
CoSo
Cara Friend/Gay Lesbian Youth
Queer Space

18 June
Sense Northern Ireland
Greater Voice
Muscular Dystrophy Campaign
British Epilepsy Association
Down’s Syndrome Association
Disability Action
18 June
NI Council for Ethnic Minorities
Multi-Cultural Resource Centre
NI Co. for Ethnic Minorities
Equality Commission (Racial Equality Directorate)
Traveller Movement Northern Ireland
Indian Community Centre
Chinese Welfare Association
Oi Yin Bangor Chinese Women’s Group
Belfast Islamic Women’s Group
Asylum Seekers Project
University of Ulster
MCRC “Skills, Games & Toys”
Wah-Hip Chinese Community Association

20 June
Age Related Reference Group
Age Concern
Help the Aged
Newtownabbey Senior Citizens’ Forum

20 June
Youthnet
Youthnet
Guide Association
NI Pre-School Playgroup Association
Children’s Law Centre
Red Cross

26 July
Carers National Association N. I.
Carers National Association
M.S. Society.
Parent of an autistic young adult

27 July
N I Public Service Alliance
NIPSA

15 August
Women’s Support Network
Women’s Support Network
Ardoyne Women’s Group
Ballybeen Women’s Group
Footprints Women’s Group
Shankill Women’s Group
Windsor Women’s Group
Walkway
Women’s Information Group
Falls Women’s Group
Lisburn Women’s Centre
Citywide Women’s Consortium
Women’s News
4 Other Events

July

Northern Ireland General Omnibus Survey.
Presentation at the Belfast Traveller Support Group AGM.

Presentation at the Library and Information Services Council AGM