



**Submission from the Equality Coalition to the
Transforming Your Care consultation
January 2013**

The Equality Coalition is a broad alliance of non-governmental organisations whose members cover all the categories listed in section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 ('s75'), as well as other equality strands. It was founded in 1996 and was instrumental in putting equality at the forefront of the agenda at that time, specifically in relation to the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement and ultimately the public sector duty in s75.

The Equality Coalition now has over 80 members, many of which are umbrella organisations. It is co-convened by the Committee on the Administration of Justice and UNISON. The Equality Coalition continues to provide a forum for unity between all sectors when working for equality, through recognising multiple identities, mutual support between members and respect for the diversity of its members' work and views. We welcome this opportunity to submit a response to the health and social care board (HSCB) in relation to the current consultation on *Transforming Your Care*.

At a recent Equality Coalition meeting serious concerns were expressed by a number of member groups in relation to the impacts of the present *Transforming Your Care* model would have on a number of equality grounds. Several members of the Equality Coalition will submit their own evidence to the consultation with further information to this end.

The Equality Coalition would like to collectively raise issues relating to the legislative requirements to properly assess the equality impacts of policies. Many of these requirements were set out in detail in recent written evidence from the Coalition to the *Ad Hoc Committee on Conformity with Equality Requirements* of the Northern Ireland Assembly on the related matter of welfare reform. This is attached for your reference.



The screening template for the *Transforming Your Care* proposals recognises that there will be 'major' adverse impacts on equality grounds. Whilst the data is incomplete, evidence of impacts is provided on women, persons with disabilities and age. Despite this the HSCB goes on to conclude that an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) will not be conducted on the strategic policy. The HSCB indicates instead there may be EQIAs on micro elements of the policy when it may be too late to mitigate against impacts caused by the overall shift in approach. The HSCB states that among the 'stated objectives' of the new strategic policy 'is the reduction in health inequalities and the promotion of equality of opportunity'. It would clearly conflict with this stated objective if the policy was in fact to have the opposite effect, which can be ascertained by properly equality impact assessing the proposed model. The Equality Coalition calls on the HSCB to conduct an EQIA on this strategic policy before decisions are taken.

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