

Dear Jenny,

Further to your request for proposals for standing orders for an Equality of Opportunity committee post May 2007, please note the following.

The present Equality of Opportunity Committee has successfully operated within an ethos of cross party consensus on equal opportunity policy. We would therefore like to propose that the terms of any proposed standing orders have regard to the positive gains achieved as a result of this consensus on equal opportunity policy. It is with this in mind that we offer the following comments on what we consider to be some of the essential functions of an Equality of Opportunity Committee post May 2007.

We would like to see the future committee perform the following functions:

- Scrutinise the Minister on progress in mainstreaming equal opportunity policy making and delivery.
- Scrutinise specific pieces of legislation that has a direct impact of the promotion of equality.
- Undertake in depth scrutiny on specific policies and departments in relation to equality criteria.
- Policy reviews of new policy.
- Conduct rigorous investigations, gather evidence and make strong recommendations of policy impacts.
- Scrutinise the race, gender and disability equality schemes at least once every five years. (Assembly term)

We would like to see standing orders:

- Permit joint working with other committees whenever necessary.
- Permit the use of reference groups.
- Permit the use of rapporteurs.
- Compel attendance of Ministers.
- Permit the continued role of standing invitees.

We hope this provides the information required. Please do not hesitate to contact us for further clarification.

Helen Mary Jones

Leanne Wood.

16 October 2006