

WEEKLY ANSWERS BOOKLET
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Written Answers to Questions

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Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister

Road Side Memorials

Mr Irwin asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to his answer to AQW 5601/08, to outline the equality obligation placed upon the Roads Service by equality legislation in dealing with (i) complaints about; and (ii) community approval for, troubles-related, illegally erected memorials.

(AQW 6543/08)

Mr C Murphy: My Department's Roads Service has a statutory duty under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and to have regard to good relations in carrying out its functions. This duty is fulfilled in accordance with the Department's Equality Scheme which has been approved by the Equality Commission.

Section 10 of the Equality Scheme sets out how complaints can be made and how they will be handled by the Department. With regard to community approval for troubles-related, illegally erected memorials, my Department's Roads Service pays high regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial groups. In doing so Roads Service is acutely aware that taking action to remove illegally erected monuments without the support of the wider local community could have a negative impact on relations between such groups. Roads Service's experience in dealing with similarly contentious issues such as flag flying, kerb painting, etc, has shown that community agreement is key to successfully resolving such sensitive issues.