

CAJ's submission no. S413

**CAJ's response to the
Department for Agriculture and Rural
Development (DARD)
Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) for the
relocation of the
DARD Headquarters to Ballykelly**

July 2013

About CAJ

The Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) was established in 1981 and is an independent non-governmental organisation affiliated to the International Federation of Human Rights. CAJ takes no position on the constitutional status of Northern Ireland and is firmly opposed to the use of violence for political ends. Its membership is drawn from across the community.

The Committee seeks to ensure the highest standards in the administration of justice in Northern Ireland by ensuring that the government complies with its responsibilities in international human rights law. The CAJ works closely with other domestic and international human rights groups such as Amnesty International, Human Rights First (formerly the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights) and Human Rights Watch and makes regular submissions to a number of United Nations and European bodies established to protect human rights.

CAJ's activities include - publishing reports, conducting research, holding conferences, campaigning locally and internationally, individual casework and providing legal advice. Its areas of work are extensive and include policing, emergency laws and the criminal justice system, equality and advocacy for a Bill of Rights.

CAJ however would not be in a position to do any of this work, without the financial help of its funders, individual donors and charitable trusts (since CAJ does not take government funding). We would like to take this opportunity to thank Atlantic Philanthropies, Barrow Cadbury Trust, Hilda Mullen Foundation, Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, Oak Foundation and UNISON.

The organisation has been awarded several international human rights prizes, including the Reebok Human Rights Award and the Council of Europe Human Rights Prize.

CAJ response to the Department for Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) for the relocation of the DARD Headquarters to Ballykelly

The Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) would like to respond with the following comments to the equality impact assessment (EQIA) for the relocation of the DARD headquarters to Ballykelly, Co L'Derry following on from the meeting held with the DARD Equality Unit on 12 February 2013.

CAJ in principle supports the decentralization of public sector jobs when it assists with the promotion of equality of opportunity. CAJ therefore welcomes the DARD proposal to relocate its headquarters to Ballykelly. CAJ would like to make the following comments:

- The EQIA states 288 people identified as not being able to move out of the Stormont Estate (e.g. due to health reasons, caring responsibilities etc). CAJ would seek further information in the final EQIA as to what measures will be taken to accommodate persons in this category.
- DARD has stated that a civil service-wide questionnaire has identified people who are willing to either move to the north west for work, along with those who already travel from the north west to work in the Stormont Estate and the wider Belfast area. This appears to be a sensible way in which to implement the positive action policy whilst minimising impacts on existing staff.
- DARD may wish to consider including information in their final EQIA as regards the impact the move may have on those coming to retirement age (for example those wanting early retirement or those who may feel the need to take early retirement due to the move).
- According to the most recent published figures Senior Civil Service posts at Grade 5 level and above in the Northern Ireland Civil Service

are only 34.5% Catholic and only 25.4% female.¹ DARD may wish to include figures for DARD specific senior posts across all section 75 categories in the final EQIA. This would provide an evidence base for how the move, if it facilitates an improvement in the under-representation of Catholics, women or others into senior posts is positive action and therefore not an adverse impact.

- DARD should work with other departments such as Department for Regional Development (DRD) when planning for any move so that road and public transport networks are accessible for staff. This includes the obvious potential for a rail link to the site.
- CAJ welcome the innovative working methods mentioned as these are particularly helpful for those with caring responsibilities such as remote working and utilising technology to increase efficiency.

CAJ would like to thank DARD for this opportunity to respond to their EQIA for the relocation of the DARD headquarters, and urges DARD to continue to work engaged with staff and key stakeholders including NIPSA about the move to the new Ballykelly site.

July 2013

¹ Equal Opportunities in the Northern Ireland Civil Service 2008, DFP accessed July 2013
http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/equal_opportunities_unit_supplement_to_eighth_report.pdf