SUMMARY

4. The Act’s main provisions:
   - establish the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) and define its purpose and functions;
   - make unlawful discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in the provision of goods, facilities and services, education, the use and disposal of premises, and the exercise of public functions;
   - enable provision to be made for discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities and services, education, the use and disposal of premises and the exercise of public functions; and
   - create a duty on public authorities to promote equality of opportunity between women and men (‘the gender duty’), and prohibit sex discrimination and harassment in the exercise of public functions.

5. The CEHR will take on the work of the existing equality Commissions (the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), and the Disability Rights Commission (DRC)) and will additionally assume responsibility for promoting equality and combating unlawful discrimination in three new strands, namely sexual orientation, religion or belief, and age. The CEHR will also have responsibility for the promotion of human rights.