

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council



**Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties
Annual Progress Report 2018-19**

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Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:

<https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk>

Signature:

This report has been prepared using a template circulated by the Equality Commission.

It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties, and implementing Equality Scheme commitments and Disability Action Plans.

This report reflects progress made between April 2018 and March 2019

PART A – Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Scheme

Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice

- 1** In 2018-19, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.

Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.

The promotion and implementation of the statutory duties are undertaken through a broad range of activities within Council. This would include the following by way of example in respect of Section 75 (1):

Meetings between Equality Officer (EO) & Council Officers

The EO meets with officers across all Council departments as required. Such meetings would cover all aspects of the statutory duties and in the present reporting period has focussed largely on policy development and completion of the screening template/the screening outcome decision with supporting evidence.

The above has resulted in a substantial increase in the number of policies screened in this period (see Q15) with a consequent increase in the number of officers involved in the screening process. This has included both new and revised policies being screened and the importance of doing so emphasised and embedded further across all Council departments.

Within such meetings a range of practical matters are often discussed including language and communication formats, physical access and disability (which would impact or potentially impact on specific groups) as well as more generic matters such as household waste collection which would apply universally.

Training

The Equality Officer (EO) identified that it would be proactive to undertake some initial training in respect of the new functions of Council. It was further deemed appropriate to approach the Equality Commission to potentially develop a training input from the Commission regarding the new functions.

Consequently, during this reporting period a series of meetings were held with relevant Equality Commission staff in order to progress a training input in respect of the new functions of Council.

It was agreed with the Equality Commission that two initial (pilot) sessions would be held - one session to be delivered to a number of relevant Council officers from both the planning and economic development units. A further second session, aimed at Elected

Members, likewise to be delivered as and when this could be arranged. The sessions with officers were held in March (2019) and the session for Elected Members is scheduled for September (2019) and will be reported on in the next reporting period.

It would be viewed as crucial that the Commission provides guidance and direction in respect of the above in order that Council may fulfil its statutory duty obligations in respect of the new functions.

Equality & Diversity Group Initiative

Originally established by the Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC) in 2011 and reconstituted in 2015 (following the reform of local government), with a new Chair appointed by Solace in 2019 it was thought opportune to revise and develop a new strategy for the coming period (2019-2021).

Consequently following an event in February 2019 the strategy for the group was redrafted and comments are presently being sought from stakeholders. The launch of the new strategy (due September 2019) and action plan will be reported on in the next reporting period.

Statutory Duty Network (SDN)

The SDN, facilitated by the LGSC, comprises of relevant officers (with responsibility for the statutory duties) from all 11 Councils. The group meets 5 or 6 times a year (with additional meetings arranged as may be necessary) with meetings rotated amongst all Councils.

Council continues to proactively participate in the SDN. The network provides a forum to debate a broad range of equality of opportunity and good relations matters, look at service delivery practices across Councils, agree responses to relevant consultations as well as provide opportunities for agreed feedback to, principally, the Equality Commission in respect of their Section 75 responsibilities.

Staff from the Equality Commission have attended several SDN meetings recently in relation to the Commission and the local government sector working more closely together and the SDN group being a channel to Councils for relevant statutory duty activity as per the remit of the ECNI (for example, utilising the SDN to provide feedback on, support and promote new/revised guidance etc.).

This approach from the Commission is broadly welcomed by the SDN who would view such working together as a reciprocal arrangement which should be of benefit to both the Commission and Councils and consequently all the designated groups.

Targeted Networking & Conferences/Seminars Attended

The EO continues to participate in and support relevant networks pertinent to equality of opportunity and attend meetings, seminars and conferences which offer opportunities to gain and/or update knowledge and look at good practice locally and nationally etc. For those seminars and conferences held by the ECNI and NIHRC these

also provide an opportunity for Council/the EO to feedback into their respective areas of responsibility.

The above seminars and conferences would include, for example, ethnic minority groups, disability and LGB-T groups amongst others. All relevant information would as necessary be included in Council activity going forward.

Employers for Disability NI (EfD NI)

The EO in association with colleagues in the training unit identified that disability awareness training was required to keep officers updated in this important area and that this training would include areas such as autism and dementia, which had been identified by front-line officers themselves, as areas where they considered they needed further training.

EfD, of which L&CCC is a member, undertook some 19 disability awareness sessions across Council in this reporting period. The 19 sessions covered some 364 officers of Council and feedback was extremely positive from all who attended.

Indeed all those who attended (100%) found the training useful with the following exemplifying the comments provided in the evaluation – “superb” and “really enjoyed this and it will definitely come in useful”.

The format and delivery of the presenters was also commented upon and again the overwhelming majority provided comments such as – “good format, mixed use of visual and language”, “different way of thinking”, “fantastic and well-paced”, “the honesty of there not always being a hard and fast rule was very interesting” and finally, “the videos were great because to see something sometimes hits home more effectively”.

Such feedback indicates very clearly that targeted training delivered effectively to the appropriate officers – something that Council continually aims to achieve – works for both individual officers and the organisation.

Good Relations

In respect of the good relations duty, Section 75 (2), a range of activities are developed and implemented under the main Together: Building a United Community (TBUC) priorities of (and a summary of each is given below):

1. Our Children & Young People

The programmes undertaken under this heading covered the following.

Young people engaged in bringing the community together;

Launched in 2018 with 24 members the local Youth Council continues to be developed through partnerships with PSNI, PCSP and the EA. Such an initiative enables young people to engage with key decision makers, input to local issues and be a representative voice for all local young people with the aim of affecting change for the benefit of all.

Improving the attitudes of young people from different backgrounds;

Council will use International Children's Day (01 June) to promote social inclusion and improve community relations through a children's based activity festival in a centralised and shared space within the City.

Groups will include representatives from Poland, Lithuania, India, South Africa as well as the Filipino community amongst others as well as local community groups. Stalls will be provided by voluntary and community groups as well as statutory agencies and local businesses.

Such exposure to different cultures will help individuals develop an understanding of other groups, build trust and respect and, importantly, challenge the stereotyping of other cultures and communities.

2. Our Cultural Expression

The programmes undertaken under this heading covered the following.

Cultural diversity is celebrated;

The aim is to increase the percentage of people open to experiencing cultural traditions distinct from their own and appreciate that such traditions add to the richness and diversity of NI. The "Park Life" programme (a series of arts centred community events) focussed on young families and park users (residents and visitors) to promote shared spaces.

Increased sense of community belonging;

This project will work with 4 communities – 2 rural and 2 urban with the aim of developing opportunities for addressing sectarianism and racism and encourage respect and dialogue between/amongst different groups.

Rural communities may face silent sectarianism, have inter community tensions/issues and consequently there is little or no middle ground on which to build positive dialogue with others. Space would often not be shared and village halls etc. are often associated predominantly only with one group.

Urban communities have similar issues but often presented more overtly through symbols and flags which mark territory and serve to exclude other groups. The above necessitates the need to build capacity in order to engage in appropriate good relations activity.

An increase in the percentage of people who feel a sense of belonging to NI as a whole;

Building on previous work which focussed on the significance of World War 1 this particular programme will develop this theme but with a more local focus. Workshops (facilitated by a local political historian) as well as a Dublin residential will provide participants with information on relevant/related historical themes (the Boyne, 1916, Irish Great War dead, Carson and so on) and allow them the opportunity to apply such learning with a view to utilising same in their own communities.

3. Our Safe Community

The programmes undertaken under this heading covered the following.

Reduce the prevalence of hate crime and intimidation;

This programme aims to build a bank of trained mediators who can work across the area in helping to address low level “conflict” issues in local communities i.e. minimise “conflict” situations early to prevent them developing into more serious/acute situations. A total of 12 individuals completed an OCN Level 2 Mediation Course and all indicate increased confidence in dealing with low level conflict situations.

A community where places and spaces are safe for all;

A parallel approach will be taken to achieving this aim. A promotional/educational video will be produced to explore identity issues locally (especially relevant given the relocation of some 250+ Syrian refugees in the Council area). Also, related promotional products will be produced to support the “be part of here” campaign.

With racist activity increasing generally in the recent past it is essential that greater understanding across all groups is actively promoted with a view to increasing respect and tolerance for all. Central to this is ensuring that places and spaces are safe for everyone.

4. *Our Shared Community*

The programmes undertaken under this heading covered the following.

Increased use of shared spaces and services;

A Good Relations Audit will be conducted to not only facilitate the available TEO funding stream but also to inform the development of the GR Action Plan going forward for the next 3 year period.

As would be anticipated a broad range of areas will be included in the audit – consultation and engagement with stakeholders, the scoping of GR activity locally, present service delivery evaluation, TBUC strategy implications as well as the impact of no devolved government being in place at this time.

By undertaking the above a “locally focussed” GR strategy and action plan will be facilitated whereby targeted activities will aim to achieve the necessary agreed outcomes with consequent evaluation and monitoring undertaken accordingly.

An increase in the percentage of people who consider the area they live in as welcoming to all communities;

This programme utilises the Good Relations Grant Scheme to provide funding to some 20 groups locally with a view to enhance capacity for cross-community dialogue in respect of all the TBUC priorities.

Conclusion

In relation to all the above programmes and activities it is estimated that close to 13000 participants were directly involved over the period in question with indirect participation

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accounting for a further estimated 30000 individuals (totalling nearly 43000 individuals).

- 2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2018-19 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

The action plan is seen as a “work in progress” as not only will some actions be completed and thus fall off the plan while others remain part of the plan, but that other identified actions may be required to be added to the plan as, for example, services and/or activities of Council develop over time.

Further mainstreaming information and accessible services

Providing information in the right format is central to ensuring that all groups can access Council services. Consequently, Council continues to provide alternative formats on request to a variety of service users. Additionally, for example, when events are held which may call for a sign language interpreter a professionally qualified and registered interpreter will be provided as necessary.

To facilitate the above Council maintains links with a number of alternative format providers with a view to providing information in a timely fashion to users of alternative formats. Language interpretation is available through a telephone based provider (BigWord) and ensures that information can be provided to those for whom English is not their first language.

Council also at this time is giving consideration to the provision of a service to enable those with a hearing impairment to be able to communicate directly (via “video”) with Council in respect of service provision and general queries etc. If introduced, on a trial basis, it will be reported on in the next reporting period.

Again this serves to indicate the commitment of Council to ensuring information and services are accessible to all groups.

Continuing and improved networking and engagement

Networks have to be continually reviewed and built upon to help ensure that engagement is appropriate and effective. Council would maintain links across all sectors and for particular groups, where it is considered that contact should be positively developed, representative organisations at all levels (community, local, regional and indeed national) will be part of such networking and engagement.

For example, networks are in place with the local Health Trust as well as both local, regional and national groups in respect of areas such as disability and age. By maintaining links with the statutory agencies as well as representative organisations (and their individual members) this helps ensure that such networks are proactive and can deal effectively, individually or in partnership, with any matters that may arise.

Internal meetings

As noted earlier the Equality Officer meets with other Council officers on both a planned basis and also ad-hoc to deal with particular queries that may arise from time to time. Such meetings continue to reinforce the requirement that all Council policies (new or

revised) are subject to the statutory process and ensure that Council meets its commitments as given in its approved Equality Scheme.

By increasing the number of policies screened (many of which relate to the “volume” services of Council) this too continues to ensure that policies cover all groups with an aim of ensuring services are provided to all.

Conferences and seminars

Attendance at appropriate conferences and seminars is one way of keeping updated on a broad range of areas relevant to the statutory duties. Such external resources can serve to highlight good practice within sectors, service developments in respect of particular groups and promote feedback from both individuals and their representative organisations. All of which can be brought back into Council for consideration.

Indeed the Statutory Duty Network (SDN), noted earlier, can also act as a catalyst for developments within Council as often these may well be transferable between or amongst Councils. In effect the SDN therefore compliments the above by, in part, being an internal resource for the same.

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3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2018-19 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes No (go to Q.4) Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

There has been a continuing substantial increase in policies screened across Council within this reporting period. This is due in large part to “due process” being underlined and reinforced at all available opportunities to officers and has included both the development of new policies as well as the revision of existing policies. Consequently the designated groups are being given appropriate weight and consideration within the policy development/screening process.

3a With regard to the change(s) made to policies, practices or procedures and/or service delivery areas, what **difference was made, or will be made, for individuals**, i.e. the impact on those according to Section 75 category?

Please provide any details and examples:

It is considered that the above will ensure that services will be available to all groups. For those groups where differential impacts may be identified in respect of any policy (this may include groups such as older people, ethnic groups, those with a disability etc.) the fullest consideration will be given to ensuring that services are equitably provided to all.

3b What aspect of the Equality Scheme prompted or led to the change(s)? *(tick all that apply)*

As a result of the organisation’s screening of a policy *(please give details):*

As a result of what was identified through the EQIA and consultation exercise *(please give details):*

As a result of analysis from monitoring the impact *(please give details):*

As a result of changes to access to information and services *(please specify and give details):*

Other (*please specify and give details*):

Through the training (be it generic or specific) undertaken a number of central components of the statutory duty process were underlined. For example, that the duty is a continuing duty and also one that can't be delegated to someone else. Also, ensuring that any decision made is transparent and based on evidence continues to be forcefully presented within such sessions. All of these factors serve to illustrate a comprehensive approach to implementing the statutory duties within Council for the benefit of all residents, all groups.

Section 2: Progress on Equality Scheme commitments and action plans/measures

Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)

4 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2018-19 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The Section 75 duties are integrated across Council with content related to the particular post in question. This underlines to officers, with relevant responsibilities attached to the statutory duties, the importance of the statutory duties and their implementation at all times.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2018-19 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done

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Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

As with the above performance plans would operate in a similar way thus ensuring the statutory duties are integrated in plans at an appropriate level for all officers.

6 In the 2018-19 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? *(tick all that apply)*

- Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
- Yes, in some departments/jobs
- No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's ongoing corporate plan
- No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2018-19 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2018-19 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed: Actions ongoing: Actions to commence:

Please provide any details and examples *(in addition to question 2)*:

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2018-19 reporting period *(points not identified in an appended plan)*:

N/A

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2018-19 reporting period, the following have been identified: *(tick all that apply)*

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- Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the known inequality
- Action(s) to address the known inequality in a different way
- Action(s) to address newly identified inequalities/recently prioritised inequalities
- Measures to address a prioritised inequality have been completed

Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)

10 Following the initial notification of consultations, a targeted approach was taken – and consultation with those for whom the issue was of particular relevance: *(tick one box only)*

- All the time Sometimes Never

11 Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2018-19 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

The relevant Head of Service as well as other Council officers, along with the independent external consultant undertaking the PRS EQIA on behalf of Council, met with representatives of the visual impaired community to discuss a range of matters pertinent to the Public Realm Scheme draft EQIA. This allowed concerns to be voiced to and noted by Council prior to their written responses to the consultation being received at a later date. (Also see 12 & 17 below). It also provided an opportunity for Council to provide further detail and information on the content of the draft EQIA report to this particular Sec 75 group.

12 In the 2018-19 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: *(tick all that apply)*

- Face to face meetings
- Focus groups
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- Questionnaires
- Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
- Internet discussions
- Telephone consultations

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- Other (*please specify*): Attending conferences and seminars alongside maintaining and developing relevant networks across all the designated groups allows for a dialogue to be initiated and supported between Council and representative groups and individual members of those groups. This is particularly important in respect of groups such as “disability” and the LGBT community.

Please provide any details or examples of the uptake of these methods of consultation in relation to the consultees’ membership of particular Section 75 categories:

The offer of a face to face meeting was taken up by members of the local visual impairment community regarding the PRS EQIA (see 17 below). The meeting took place after the draft EQIA document was out for consultation and a broad range of matters relevant to the content of the draft EQIA were discussed. Those members of the visual impaired community present requested an extension to the closing date to allow them to respond fully to the draft EQIA document. Council agreed to a 4 week extension (over and above the additional 2 weeks allowed to cover the Christmas 2018/New Year 2019 period) which meant that the draft PRS EQIA was out for consultation for a total of 18 weeks. All consultees were informed of this 4 week extension at this time.

- 13** Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2018-19 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

- 14** Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2018-19 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes No Not applicable – no commitment to review

Arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

Please log on to <https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk> where relevant documents relating to Sec 75 can be found.

- 15** Please provide the **number** of policies screened during the year (*as recorded in screening reports*):

69

16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2018-19:

	Policy consultations conducted with screening assessment presented.
	Policy consultations conducted with an equality impact assessment (EQIA) presented.
1	Consultations for an EQIA alone.

17 Please provide details of the **main consultations** conducted on an assessment (as described above) or other matters relevant to the Section 75 duties:

The EQIA consultation above relates to the consultation undertaken with respect to the Lisburn Public Realm Scheme. The draft EQIA report was issued for consultation in Autumn 2018 with a closing date for the receipt of responses initially in February 2019. The closing date was extended by 4 weeks (to late March 2019) to accommodate the receipt of responses particularly from members of the local visually impaired community. This formal consultation represented step 5 in the EQIA 7 step process and was undertaken according to the ECNI guidance.

18 Were any screening decisions (or equivalent initial assessments of relevance) reviewed following concerns raised by consultees? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes
 No concerns were raised
 No
 Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Arrangements for publishing the results of assessments (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

19 Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2018-19 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes
 No
 Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The draft PRS EQIA report (see 12 & 17 above) was out for consultation during this reporting period. It can be noted, however, that the final report on which a decision may be made will not be available until the following (2019-2020) reporting period and will be reported accordingly.

The draft EQIA report was “published” on the Council’s website etc. as per commitments in our Equality Scheme.

Arrangements for monitoring and publishing the results of monitoring (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

20 From the Equality Scheme monitoring arrangements, was there an audit of existing information systems during the 2018-19 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes No, already taken place
 No, scheduled to take place at a later date Not applicable

Please provide any details:

21 In analysing monitoring information gathered, was any action taken to change/review any policies? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

22 Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2018-19 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

N/A

23 Please provide any details or examples of monitoring that has contributed to the availability of equality and good relations information/data for service delivery planning or policy development:

N/A

Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)

24 Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2018-19, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

As previously advised Council had contacted the Equality Commission in order to develop an initial “pilot” training session in respect of new functions/capital programmes of Council to cover both relevant officers as well as Elected Members.

Two sessions for relevant officers were held toward the end of the present reporting period and covered not just the statutory duties, but references to case law as well as emphasising the importance of the decision maker (i.e. Elected Members) within this process as too the value of “good” leadership.

Those attending found the sessions very relevant and informative and a broad range of areas discussed with some being noted for further potential work. For example, the Equality Commission has now produced a draft document (What District Council Planners Need to Know) and this is presently being discussed by a sub-group of planners within Councils. Of course such documents can and will need to cover other areas such as Elected Member involvement in the statutory duty process, the economic development function as well as community planning/safety etc.

It is anticipated that further sessions will be held in the present reporting period (2019-2020) as may be required and as “guidance documents” from the Equality Commission may become available these would hopefully provide a focussed baseline on which to base such sessions for those attending.

- 25** Please provide **any examples** of relevant training shown to have worked well, in that participants have achieved the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve the stated objectives:

A need was identified to include areas such as autism within any forthcoming disability awareness training. The training was delivered by Employers for Disability NI and the sessions had the aim of providing information to officers in respect of a broad range of disabilities (including autism/dementia etc.) as well as using case studies to exemplify problems and issues as well as potential solutions.

Very many officers prefer such practical training sessions as these build and maintain their confidence which in turn is supported through both the latest information being made available to them and within an approach that considers real impacts on those with disabilities through the use of real examples.

This disability awareness training was a huge success and all attendees gave extremely positive feedback on the training received. It can be emphasised that the sessions delivered by EfD NI covered some 364 staff across all of Council. Such “depth of coverage” serves to illustrate the commitment to training given within the Equality Scheme of Council.

Public Access to Information and Services (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 6)

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2018-19, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

N/A

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

- 27 How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2018-19?

Insert number here:

0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

Section 3: Looking Forward

- 28 Please indicate when the Equality Scheme is due for review:

The present Equality Scheme of Council was submitted to the Equality Commission on 26 November 2014 and approved by the Commission on 25 March 2015. Consequently, following the guidance, in that an Equality Scheme should be reviewed within 5 years of submission to the Commission, this would mean that the Equality Scheme of Council is reviewed prior to the 26 November 2019.

- 29 Are there areas of the Equality Scheme arrangements (screening/consultation/training) your organisation anticipates will be focused upon in the next reporting period? (*please provide details*)

There are several areas of relevance in this context and these are noted below. A number are directly linked to the Equality Scheme and others, although not being directly linked to the Equality Scheme, that also have an important impact on its implementation. It can also be noted that some of these activities are already being planned while some will require to be taken forward afresh.

Training:

As indicated in our last annual report (2017-2018) training in respect of “new functions/capital projects” was identified as a priority for Council. Indeed working with the Commission to facilitate the delivery of such training was identified as a crucial partnership for taking this forward.

In the present reporting period two sessions for officers from two relevant core units of Council (planning and economic development) was undertaken by Commission staff. A further session, to include Elected Members, is scheduled to take place in September 2019. Consequently this will be reported in the next annual feedback report.

It is expected that “refresher Sec 75 training” will be provided to relevant officers (Heads of Service, managers, other nominated officers etc.) in autumn 2019/new year 2020 also. These

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will parallel the sessions (above, delivered by the Commission) and serve to reinforce the need to follow due process at all levels and for all activities of Council, inclusive of the “new functions”.

In addition to the above it has been established that awareness training is required in respect of the Rural Needs Act/Rural Needs Impact Assessment (given its links to and similarities with the Section 75 processes) and it’s anticipated that this will be delivered by DAERA officers as part of the autumn/new year “refresher training” for Council officers.

Such on-going targeted training is viewed as central in enabling all staff to ensure the statutory duties are implemented effectively at all times as provided for in the commitments given in our Equality Scheme.

Data and Information:

Data continues to be recognised as an essential part of ensuring the statutory duties are met. Council will continue to keep data sources under review and by utilising local data maintain a focus on equality of opportunity and good relations at the local level.

It is recognised that post the 2015 RPA boundary changes etc. that it will take some time before the “estimates” that Council is working with presently will be replaced with clean “finite” data for the L&CCC area. Consequently, inclusive service delivery for all would continue to be enhanced over time.

Ongoing Engagement:

As noted earlier the Equality Officers meets with other officers both on a regular and an ad-hoc basis as required. Also, renewed engagement with organisations outside Council (statutory and voluntary etc.) is deemed necessary to further inform the statutory duties within Council through gaining the latest knowledge and data with respect to the designated groups. Such organisations would include the local HSCT, groups representing those with disabilities, the LGBT community as well as ethnic group representatives and so on.

Policy Audit and Development:

A policy “audit” initiative will be started in the next reporting period to capture all policies (inclusive of strategies, plans etc. as well as “operational/service policies”) within Council. This is with a view to reviewing policies (as may be necessary), developing policies, linking policies across various “service streams” etc. and to do so within an encompassing governance framework.

Such an audit will facilitate the implementation of the statutory duties across Council by indicating work to date, policies in possible need of review, “gaps” where “new” policy development may require to be undertaken and so on.

Internal Structures:

While much good work has been undertaken in this reporting period in respect of the statutory duties e.g. the number of policies screened and the continued “catchment” of a greater number of officers involved within this process, it is recognised that “gaps” remain.

For example, one such gap is the recognition that more senior staff (i.e. above manager level) should be involved more directly in the screening process on a consistent and regular basis. Such involvement would not only underline the value and importance of following due process at all times but make explicit the support of senior staff for doing so appropriately at all times across all departments/units of Council.

This coupled with the training programme (inclusive of ECNI input) will serve to exemplify the need for strong positive high-level leadership to ensure effective delivery of the statutory duties at all times.

30 In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2019-20) reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

- Employment
- Goods, facilities and services
- Legislative changes
- Organisational changes/ new functions
- Nothing specific, more of the same
- Other (please state):

PART B - Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Disability Action Plans

1. Number of action measures for this reporting period that have been:



Fully achieved



Partially achieved



Not achieved

2. Please outline below details on all actions that have been fully achieved in the reporting period.

2 (a) Please highlight what **public life measures** have been achieved to encourage disabled people to participate in public life at National, Regional and Local levels:

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs ⁱ	Outcomes / Impact ⁱⁱ
National ⁱⁱⁱ	Maintain existing and develop new contacts/networks with a view to positively impacting upon policy at the highest level.	Increase the number of such contacts. Emphasise the importance of ensuring the national cascades down to the regional and local levels.	Information, learning, good practice developed and applied as appropriate.
Regional ^{iv}	Maintain existing and develop new contacts/networks with a view to positively impacting upon policy at the regional level.	Increase the number of such contacts. Emphasise the importance of vertically linking the regional to the national and the local.	Information, learning, good practice developed and applied as appropriate.
Local ^v	Maintain existing and develop new contacts/networks with a view to	Increase the number of such contacts. Emphasise the	Information, learning, good practice developed and applied as

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	positively impacting upon policy at the local level.	importance of vertically linking the local to the regional and the national. Where engagement takes place with local groups that this facilitates the assessment of local needs and how best to meet these.	appropriate. Feedback from any engagement taken into account in respect of policy/service development.
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2(b) What **training action measures** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Both generic and specific training is undertaken as required.	<p>Generic training provides a baseline of information for officers and serves to place disability centrally within the work of Council and consequently help facilitate the Sec 49 duties.</p> <p>If a requirement for specific training is identified this will be delivered as effectively and as soon as may be practicable with the aim of providing officers with the knowledge and skills required to enable them to provide their service to all and enhance the service as may be required.</p>	<p>Training can involve officers at different points in time. Those who are customer facing require training to enable them to deliver a good practice service to all and have such training updated as service requirements may develop.</p> <p>Other officers are trained as required/when a need is identified within their Units/Departments.</p> <p>Training may be delivered as a one-off session or as part of a wider training programme across Council.</p> <p>This approach serves to ensure that officers receive the training relevant to their service/training needs and consequently that Council officers are best placed to support the</p>

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			Sec 49 disability duties.
2			

2(c) What Positive attitudes **action measures** in the area of **Communications** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Communication channels are maintained and reviewed to ensure effectiveness at all levels.	<p>Requests for alternative formats kept under review.</p> <p>A corporate approach to communication taken.</p> <p>Other related matters given consideration as they may arise.</p>	<p>Alternative formats provided on request.</p> <p>Impact of new technologies noted.</p> <p>Communication linked directly to the Sec 75 duties.</p> <p>Positive attitudes promoted in respect of alternative formats to all groups.</p>
2	Contacts/networks maintained across relevant sectors at the necessary level.	<p>Contacts/networks maintained.</p> <p>As new contacts are initiated/developed these are progressed as necessary.</p>	<p>Inputs from contacts/networks given consideration and progressed as necessary.</p> <p>Ensure communication with all groups is effective and delivered within a good practice service framework.</p>

2 (d) What action measures were achieved to ‘**encourage others**’ to promote the two duties:

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	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	A social model approach is taken to disability within Council.	<p>Positively promote disability.</p> <p>Provide information in the appropriate format.</p> <p>Sign-post to other groups/organisations where appropriate.</p> <p>Maintain contact with the local Health Trust and convene meetings/activities as required.</p>	<p>Continue to ensure that officers have a positive attitude toward all disabilities.</p> <p>Ensure the continued accessibility of services.</p> <p>Support the contribution of those with a disability in all areas.</p>
2	Continue to promote and support the removal of barriers relating to disability across Council.	<p>Highlight/emphasise the positives of removing barriers.</p> <p>Promote relevant activities at every opportunity.</p> <p>Meet with other stakeholders to facilitate the above as required.</p>	<p>Promote good practice at all times.</p> <p>Internal working arrangements complimented by external contacts/networks to promote inclusion.</p> <p>The breadth of disabilities promoted and individuals supported with appropriate approaches taken at all times.</p>

2 (e) Please outline **any additional action measures** that were fully achieved other than those listed in the tables above:

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	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1			
2			

3. Please outline what action measures have been **partly achieved** as follows:

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1				
2				

4. Please outline what action measures **have not been achieved** and the reasons why.

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	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1		
2		

5. What **monitoring tools** have been put in place to evaluate the degree to which actions have been effective / develop new opportunities for action?

(a) Qualitative

Contact is maintained with a broad range of disability groups both locally and regionally. Discussions with and feedback from individuals with disabilities and also their representative groups provides insights into their particular needs and requirements. By placing Council service provision alongside this officers can not only identify “gaps” in services but likewise can identify and promote good practice already taking place.

For example, one long-standing outcome of such contact with the local visually impaired community was that the Council publication “News and Views” (which is delivered to every local household) goes in the appropriate alternative format to the visually impaired individual at the same time as the publication is distributed to all residents.

(b) Quantitative

There are a number of regimes in place to assist with the monitoring of relevant actions and these would include the following:

Internal data would include performance indicators which would provide “trend data” in respect of Council services.

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Complaints (as well as compliments/comments) would be recorded through the Customer Care system and analysed to identify particular service areas and service users.

Where the Equality Officer is contacted directly in respect of any Disability Action Plan matter this is fed through to the relevant Unit/Department for a response and monitored as required.

External data would cover all relevant data available through, for example, NISRA/NINIS as well as data provided by national, regional and local voluntary and community organisations in respect of the broad spectrum of disabilities. Research undertaken/published by universities and similar organisations can also be usefully referenced in this instance. Indeed, a new NI public policy think tank “PIVOTAL” was launched recently and this too may provide useful information and data within the public policy context in due course.

6. As a result of monitoring progress against actions has your organisation either:

- made any **revisions** to your plan during the reporting period or
- taken any **additional steps** to meet the disability duties which were **not outlined in your original** disability action plan / any other changes?

No

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1			
2			
3			
4			

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5			
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7. Do you intend to make any further **revisions to your plan** in light of your organisation’s annual review of the plan? If so, please outline proposed changes?

Further quantification of the outcomes of any actions taken is recognised as one way in which to facilitate targets being met. By helping to meet the disability duties in this way it may be objectively shown where further development and/or revision of the plan may be needed. The Disability Action Plan (DAP) is due to be reviewed and relevant stakeholders will be invited to feedback into the DAP prior to implementation.

It is worth noting that at a recent Equality Commission NI seminar in relation to DAP’s those individuals with a disability who were present, as well as their representative organisations, unanimously took the view that a small number of actions that were achievable, and that would impact positively on those with disabilities, was preferable to a long list of longer-term/ongoing (and potentially undeliverable) actions.

Any review of the DAP will be progressed accordingly with the aim of implementing positive actions in the shorter term. This will therefore facilitate meeting the legislative requirements of Sec 49A and ensure that an effective DAP is implemented across all activities of Council.

ⁱ **Outputs** – defined as act of producing, amount of something produced over a period, processes undertaken to implement the action measure e.g. Undertook 10 training sessions with 100 people at customer service level.
ⁱⁱ **Outcome / Impact** – what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action? Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training.
ⁱⁱⁱ **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments
^{iv} **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level
^v **Local** : Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.