



Chapter 3

Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-2028

What we did between 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025

If you need this document in another format please get in touch with us. Our contact details are at the back of this document. Our Equality and Disability Action Plan 2023-28 can be found on our website at: [Equality and Diversity - NISCC](#)

Equality Action Plan 2023-28: What we will do to promote equality and good relations

Action 1: Social Care Council (by end of March 2025)

What we will do: Undertake a review including engagement with representative groups and individuals to take account of gender identities and develop an action plan as a result.

What we are trying to achieve: Service users who identify as transgender, non-binary and intersex feel more supported.

Performance Indicator and Target: Evidence of consideration and actions to address any issues reported on in annual review of progress.

What we did over the last year:

We did not progress this work. We have focused our resources on developing an Engagement Strategy which will include indicators of success and surveys. We will use the surveys in 2026/27 to help us understand to what extent service users who identify as transgender, non-binary and intersex feel supported, and how we can improve that experience.

Action 2: Social Care Council and BSO Human Resources (by end of March 2025)

What we will do: Domestic Violence- Undertake awareness raising relating to new support mechanisms (developed by BSO) to support staff with experience of domestic violence.

What we are trying to achieve: Staff with experience of domestic violence feel better supported.

Performance Indicator and Target: Feedback from staff who have drawn support through the mechanisms indicates a positive experience.

Completed. We circulated material and resources to staff throughout the year. However we have now extended this action to include engaging an organisation called 'ONUS' who are a social enterprise who provide training and advice to businesses to support victims of domestic violence or abuse. They are working with us to review our Domestic Abuse Policy and provide awareness sessions to staff, and more specialised training to managers. This will form part of an ongoing programme and collaboration to improve awareness and resources at all times.

Action 3: Social Care Council with BSO Human Resources (By end of March 2025)

What we will do: Monitoring - We will encourage all staff to keep their Section 75 data up to date including whether they have a disability and/or have caring responsibilities once every year.

What we are trying to achieve: We want to ensure that the data we use for equality screening is up to date and accurate so that we can ensure we are identifying any potential issues and mitigating against these when making decisions or policies.

Performance Indicator and Target: We will work with staff to ensure at least 70% of staff have added their Section 75 data to HRPTS.

Completed. We actively encouraged staff to update their Section 75 data on HRPTS. We also prompt staff twice a year about the importance and value of keeping their Section 75 data updated. We have data on almost 80% of staff.

Action 4: Social Care Council (By end of March 2025)

What we will do: Monitoring - We will review our section 75 data for staff and how this supports our workforce to ensure that we address any gaps identified.

What we are trying to achieve: We want to ensure that we have a diverse workforce reflective of the community.

Performance Indicator and Target: We will seek to address any gaps identified.

Completed. We carried out this work as part of our Fair Employment Monitoring Return for 2024/25. We have a diverse workforce across the Section 75 groups, with under-representation of males. We continue to ensure all staff sitting on recruitment panels are trained, and that job descriptions are reviewed to ensure they encourage inclusivity. We also include a full welcoming statement on our job descriptions and recruitment opportunities. We continue to appoint on merit and will continue to encourage all people to apply for opportunities.

Action 5: Social Care Council (By end of March 2025)

What we will do: Embracing Equality, Diversity and Good Relations We will work with staff to ensure equality, diversity and good relations is part of our culture and can be readily evidenced as a positive experience for all.

What we are trying to achieve: We want to ensure that our culture is a positive experience for all and that staff demonstrate the values and behaviours that underpin an inclusive working environment.

Performance Indicator and Target: We will organise a staff workshop to examine how equality, diversity and good relations operate within the organisation and will develop an action plan to address any gaps.

Completed. We held a workshop with staff in January 2025. We also held a workshop with the Board and our Participation Partnership members in February 2025. We gathered a lot of information about the experience of staff in our organisation. We established an internal group of staff to support our journey in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and this group are currently looking at an action plan to help us improve our approach and ensure our culture is a positive experience for everyone.

Equality Action Plan - Conclusions

- We completed 4 actions (actions: 2, 3, 4 and 5).
- We didn't start work on 1 action (action: 1).
- All of the actions in our action plan are at regional and at local level.
- Our action plan is a live document. If we make any big changes to our plan we will involve people in the Section 75 categories. We will tell the Equality Commission about any changes.

Disability Action Plan 2023-2028: What we will do to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in public life

Action 1: Senior Management with support from BSO Equality Unit (by end of March 2025)

What we will do: Awareness Days - Raise awareness of the lived experience of people with specific disabilities and conditions.

What we are trying to achieve: Increased staff awareness of a range of disabilities and conditions.

Performance Indicator and Target: Two awareness days profiled every year. >50% of staff taking part in the evaluation indicate they know more about people living with disabilities and conditions as a result of the awareness days.

What we did over the last year:

We held two Awareness Days during the year, one covering Arthritis and one on Neurodiversity. Our Arthritis Awareness Day was held on 3 December 2024 which is the UN International Day of People with Disabilities. We wanted to highlight and celebrate this important day with all our workplace colleagues who may/or may not be disabled. Lisa Carlisle, NI Regional Officer for Versus Arthritis facilitated the Arthritis Awareness Day. Lisa talked about Arthritis and working and covered a range of topics including why work matters; the impact of Arthritis on working; research undertaken by Versus Arthritis; the rights of disabled people and reasonable adjustments requirements and how to manage the condition of Arthritis in the workplace.

Following the session, we uploaded a recording of the Arthritis Awareness session and a copy of the facilitator's slide presentation to the Equality Unit Portal for information for all staff.

Our Awareness Day on Neurodiversity was held 21 March 2025 during Neurodiversity Celebration Week which is a worldwide initiative that takes place during 17 -23 March. This session focused on Autism and ADHD and

was led and facilitated by Sharon Didrichsen and Elaine Stephens from Specialisterne, which is a not for profit organisation specialising in Autism and ADHD. The content of this session was co-designed with staff in advance. This helped Specialisterne develop an awareness session which focused on the Neurodiversity information needs of staff attending, in relation to working with or managing a colleague who may be neurodivergent.

This session was not recorded, however Specialisterne have produced an aide-memoire of the session which is available to all staff through the Equality Unit Portal.

We completed this action.

Action 2: Senior Management with support from BSO Equality Unit. (by end of March 2025)

What we will do: Placement Scheme - Create and promote meaningful placement opportunities for people with disabilities.

What we are trying to achieve: Promoting positive attitudes and Encouraging participation in public life:

People with a disability gain meaningful work experience. People with a disability are successful in applying for paid employment after they have completed a placement.

Performance Indicator and Target: At least 1 placement offered every year. Feedback through annual evaluation of scheme indicates that placement meets expectations. At least 1 placement participant is successful in applying for paid employment within 12 months of completing their placement.

What we did over the last year:

During the year, together with voluntary sector partners we developed new arrangements for offering placements for people with a disability. We have agreed to offer one set of placements together with Disability Action and another set together with Supported Employment Solutions. This way, we want to reach as broad a

range of people with a disability as possible. Instead of a fixed starting point and a fixed duration, we will now offer placements throughout the year and for any length between two and six months, depending on the nature of the placement. By the end of March 2025, we had drafted a policy and guidance documents as well as a Memorandum of Understanding. We want to agree these and start offering placements early in 2025-26.

We did not complete this action.

Action 3: Social Care Council with support from BSO Equality Unit (by end of March 2025)

What we will do: Tapestry - Consolidate Tapestry into the Social Care Council's Health and Wellbeing Committee to encourage uptake and awareness as part of the organisation's wellbeing programme.

What we are trying to achieve: Encouraging participation in public life: Staff with a disability feel more confident that their voice is heard in decision-making. Staff with a disability feel better supported.

Performance Indicator and Target: Increases in Tapestry membership or in participation at meetings. Tapestry staff survey.

What we did over the last year:

Tapestry, jointly with BSO HR, ran a Lunch and Learn session on Reasonable Adjustments on 8th November. This session covered the legislation in relation to Reasonable Adjustments and was very well attended by staff and managers alike.

Engagement - Tapestry are currently working on several engagement projects including looking at their overall experience of the accessibility of Sharepoint, NIPEC's new website, the Equip program. Tapestry members also attended a PHA event on 4th December in order to promote the Network.

Carers - Tapestry also furthered the Carers Agenda, it was added as a standing item on quarterly meeting agendas and, most recently hosted a presentation by Carers NI who discussed issues for working carers and sign-posted members to support resources.

A recent survey with members showed that a majority (80%) would welcome some of the meetings be hosted face to face. It was agreed that going forward, at least 2 quarterly meetings per year will be held in person.

We completed this action.

Action 4: Social Care Council (by end of March 2025)

What we will do: Engagement and Communications - We will add a section to our intranet detailing how to book a sign language interpreter for both service user and staff/workplace settings.

What we are trying to achieve: All staff will know how to book a sign language interpreter – including new staff.

Performance Indicator and Target: Ability to engage an interpreter when needed.

What we did over the last year:

We developed our accessibility agenda including how we share information on our website. We have taken a holistic approach to accessibility including how to book interpreting services. We will finish this work during 2025/26 including training for staff.

We progressed this work

Action 5: Social Care Council with support from BSO Human Resources (By end of March 2025 /annually)

What we will do: Encourage staff to declare that they have a disability or care for a person with a disability through awareness raising and providing guidance to staff on the importance of monitoring. Prompt staff to keep up to date their personal equality monitoring records (via self-service on new Human Resources IT system).

What we are trying to achieve: More accurate data in place. Greater number of staff feel comfortable declaring they have a disability.

Performance Indicator and Target: Increase in completion of disability monitoring information by staff to 90%.

What we did over the last year:

We engaged staff to encourage them to declare if they had a disability or cared for someone with a disability. We shared useful resources to staff and managers and encouraged staff to update their Section 75 data in this regard on HRPTS. We will continue to promote this on an ongoing basis.

Completed

(5) Additional Measures

- We always include Disability on our list of things to talk about at our quarterly Equality Forum with our partner organisations.
- We report on progress against our Disability Action Plan to our Board and Senior Management Team (the people at the top of our organisation) every year.

Disability Action Plan - Conclusions

- We completed 3 actions (actions 1, 3, and 5).
- We did some work on one action (action 4).

- We didn't do any work on one actions (action 2)
- All of the actions in our action plan are at regional and at local level.
- Our action plan is a live document. If we make any big changes to our plan we will involve people with a disability. We will tell the Equality Commission about any changes.



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