

Chapters 1&2 Northern Ireland Social Care Council

Northern Ireland

Social

Care

Council

Public Authority Statutory Equality, Good Relations and Disability Duties - Annual Progress Report 2025-26

Contact:

Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme	Name: Sandra Stranaghan Telephone: 028 9536 2947 Email: Sandra.Stranaghan@nisc.hscni.net
Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan	As above ☒

Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:
(ECNI Q28):

<https://nisc.hscni.net/equality-and-diversity/>

The report on our most recent Five Year Review of Equality Scheme can also be found at the above link.

Our Equality Scheme is due to be reviewed again by 30th June 2026.

Signature:



This report has been prepared adapting a template circulated by the Equality Commission. It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and disability duties. This report reflects progress made between April 2025 and March 2026.

Contents

Chapter	Page
1. Summary Quantitative Report	3
2. Section 75 Progress Report	5
3. Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report (ECNI Q2)	Chap 3 (separate document)
4. Equality and Disability Action Plans (ECNI Q8,9)	Chap 4 (separate document)
5. Screening Report (ECNI Q18)	Chap 5 (separate document)
6. Mitigation Report (ECNI Q1,3,3a,3b)	Chap 6 (separate document)
Appendix – Further Explanatory Notes (ECNI Q10,13,14,20)	13

Chapter 1 Summary Quantitative Report

(ECNI Q15,16,19)

Screening, EQIAs and Consultation

1. Number of policies screened (as recorded in screening reports). (see also Chapter 6)	Screened in	Screened out with mitigation	Screened out without mitigation	Screening decision reviewed following concerns raised by consultees
1		1		No concerns were raised by consultees on screening published in 2025-26
2. Number of policies subjected to Equality Impact Assessment.	0			
3. Indicate the stage of progress of each EQIA.	Title and Stage N/A			

4. Number of policy consultations conducted	0
5. Number of policy consultations conducted with screening presented. (See also Chapter 2, Table 2)	N/A

(ECNI Q24)
Training

6. Staff training undertaken during 2025-26. (See also Chapter 2, Q6)

Course	No of Staff Trained	No of Board Members Trained
Equality Screening Training	3	
Equality Impact Assessment Training		
Total	3	

eLearning: Making a Difference

Part 1 – All Staff	17
Part 2 – Line Managers	1

(ECNI Q27)
Complaints

7. Number of complaints in relation to the Equality Scheme received during 2025-26

0

Please provide detail of any complaints:

N/A

(ECNI Q7)
Equality Action Plan (see also Chapter 3)

8. Within the 2025-26 reporting period, please indicate the number of:

Actions completed: 1 Actions ongoing: 0 Actions to commence: 2

(ECNI Part B Q1)

Disability Action Plan (see also Chapter 4)

9. Within the 2025-26 reporting period, please indicate the number of:

Actions completed:	3	Actions ongoing:	0	Actions to commence:	2
--------------------	--------------------------------	------------------	--------------------------------	----------------------	--------------------------------

Chapter 2 Section 75 Progress Report

(ECNI Q1,2,3,3a,3b,23)

1. In 2025-26, 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.

Table 1 below outlines progress to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations¹.

¹ This includes as a result of

- screening / Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs)
- monitoring
- staff training
- engagement and consultation
- improvements in access to information and services
- implementation of Equality and Disability Action Plans.

In most cases, it is not possible to ascribe developments and changes to one single factor. New initiatives are not necessarily an outcome of screenings or Equality and Disability Action Plan implementation.

As mainstreaming progresses and the promotion of equality becomes part of the organisational culture and way of working, the more difficult it becomes to ascribe activities and outcomes to the application of a specific element of Equality Scheme implementation.

Table 1:

	Outline new developments or changes in policies or practices and the difference they have made for specific equality groupings.
Persons of different religious belief	None
Persons of different political opinion	None
Persons of different racial groups	Ensuring that the diversity of our workforce are represented and that there are no barriers to inclusion. We also work with the wider regional network to actively condemn racism in all forms
Persons of different age	None
Persons with different marital status	None
Persons of different sexual orientation	None
Persons of different genders and gender identities	None

Persons with and without a disability	None
Persons with and without dependants	None

Equality Portal

Over the past reporting year, development has continued on the SharePoint Equality Portal. New content includes a range of screening guidance documents for example guidance for screening the procurement of a service. Screening evidence has been added, such as up-to-date data on regional interpreting service statistics and signposting to the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership interactive map-based data on Children and Young People in NI.

In addition, clients can now access clear information on how to book foreign language and sign language interpreting services.

Quarterly Equality Forum meeting papers are also now hosted on the Equality Portal. This supports version control and good governance, and ensures members can quickly access the most up-to-date papers.

Where changes resulted from screenings, these will be listed in Chapter 6, the mitigation report.

The following changes resulted from EQIAs: **N/A**

(ECNI Q4,5,6)

2. During the 2025-26 reporting period

(a) were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within...?

	Yes/No	Details
Job descriptions	Yes	For all new posts, the Job Description includes the following: "Assist the organisation in fulfilling its statutory duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to promote equality of opportunity and good relations and under the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. Staff are also required to support the organisation in complying with its obligations

		under Human Rights Legislation.”
Performance objectives for staff	Yes	This has been included in specific individuals objectives including managers.

(b) were objectives and targets relating to Section 75 integrated into...?

	Yes/No	Details
Corporate/strategic plans	Yes	This is included in the new Strategic Plan including work to support Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
Annual business plans	Yes	This is included in the Business Plan for 2025/26 including to support Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

(ECNI Q11,12,17)

3. Please provide any details and examples of good practice in consultation during the 2025-26 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:

Table 2

Policy publicly consulted on	What equality document did you issue alongside the policy consultation document?	Which Section 75 groups did you consult with?	What consultation methods did you use? AND Which of these drew the greatest number of responses from consultees?	Please tell us about anything you feel worked particularly well / not so well in this consultation.
	☐ Screening template ☐ EQIA report ☐ none			
	☐ Screening template ☐ EQIA report ☐ none			

(ECNI Q21, 26)

4. In analysing monitoring information gathered, was any action taken to change/review any policies?

Not applicable

(ECNI Q22)

5. Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2025-26 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

Not applicable

(ECNI Q25)

6. 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:

The organisation avails of the joint Section 75 training programme that is coordinated and delivered by the BSO Equality Unit for staff across all 11 partner organisations. The following statistics thus relate to the evaluations undertaken by all participants for the training:

Screening Training Evaluations

The figures in bold below represent the percentage of participants who selected 'Very Well' or 'Well'. Participants were asked: "Overall how well do you think the course met its aims":

- To develop an understanding of the statutory requirements for screening: **100%**
- To develop an understanding of the benefits of screening: **100%**
- To develop an understanding of the screening process: **94%**
- To develop skills in practically carrying out screening: **94%**

(ECNI Q29)

7. 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)

Five Year Reviews

During the reporting year, supported by the BSO Equality Unit, the Northern Ireland Social Care Council commenced the Five Year Review of its Equality Scheme. The organisation adopted an approach and methodology developed by the Equality Unit that is closely aligned with the Equality Commission's guidance and that is based on the principles of collaboration, proportionality, and making maximum use of limited resources.

Much emphasis herein was placed in identifying and discussing learning and good practice across partner organisations at quarterly Equality Forum meetings. This involved presentations from individual partner organisations and Forum discussions.

Appendix – Further Explanatory Notes

1 Consultation and Engagement

(ECNI Q10)

targeting –

e did not undertake any public consultations or pre-consultation exercises during the year.

(ECNI Q13)

awareness raising for consultees on Equality Scheme commitments –

During the year, in our quarterly screening reports we raised awareness as to our commitments relating to equality screenings and their publication. In any EQIA reports we explained our commitments relating to Equality Impact Assessments.

(ECNI Q14)

consultation list – During the year, we reviewed our consultation list every quarter.

2 Audit of Information Systems

(ECNI Q20)

We completed an audit of information systems at an early stage of our Equality Scheme implementation, in line with our Scheme commitments.