

**Chapter 3**

**Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-2028**

**What we did between 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024**

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: [www.niscc.info](http://www.niscc.info)

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

**Action 1:** Social Care Council(by end of March 2024)

**What we will do:** Develop a protocol to ensure that service users who are carers are accommodated and facilitated at meetings organised by Social Care Council.

**What we are trying to achieve:** People who are service users and who are carers are better able to participate on a voluntary basis with Social Care Council

**Performance Indicator and Target:** Increased attendance at events and meetings. More flexible ways to communicate and engage introduced

**What we did over the last year:**

We reached out to our Participation Partnership and ran an ‘In your shoes’ pilot which looks at what engagement looks like. The time that carers spend engaging is valuable and is not easy given their caring responsibilities. The Participation Partnership area active and connected with good attendance now at meetings. This work will also inform our engagement strategy and our service users and carers have been very supportive and involved in this emerging piece of work. As an extension to this work we are also developing an accessibility framework and this will further embed the work we have jointly delivered with the Participation Partnership to date.

**Action 2:** Social Care Council (by end of March 2024)

**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. However, we will fold this work into our work during 2024/25 in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion.

**Action 3:** Social Care CouncilandBSO Human Resources (by end of March 2024)

**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.

We did not progress this work. However we will be promoting this work actively during Quarter 3 of 2024/25 on the back of the Department of Health’s Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy which was launched in September 2024.

**Equality Action Plan - Conclusions**

* We completed 1 actions (Action no. 1).
* We didn’t do any work on 2 actions (Action numbers 2 and 3).
* 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 2018-2023: 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 2024)

**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:** Twoawareness 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 AwarenessDays covering Stroke and Schizophrenia. For our Stroke Awareness Day, we had two speakers (Annie Rea, Advanced Practitioner Occupational Therapist, and Claire Murphy, Speech and Language Therapist) from the Community Stroke Team in the South Eastern HSC Trust. They explained what a stroke is, signs and symptoms, as well as hidden effects. They also presented information on stroke and work and on caring for someone with a stroke, and signposted to further advice and information. Nearly 50 staff and board members joined the call, some of whom also engaged in the Question and Answer session.

At our Awareness Day on Schizophrenia, Martina Doherty (Nurse Education Consultant from the BSO Clinical Education Centre) covered a wide range of issues including what schizophrenia is, myths and misconceptions, symptoms, spotting the signs, management and support, and how to help. She likewise responded to questions by attendees, many of whom focused on how to support a family member or friend who is unwilling to seek help.

The session was chaired by Prof. Dorothy Whittington, a non-executive Director on the BSO Board and the BSO Disability Champion.

Our survey on the Awareness Days at the end of the year suggested the following:

Strokes (out of 14 staff who attended a session on the day or accessed any of the materials)

* 14 staff felt they knew more about Strokes as a result;
* 8 indicated they knew more about supporting a friend or family member;
* 8 indicated they knew more about supporting a colleague.

Schizophrenia (out of 13 staff who attended a session on the day or accessed any of the materials)

* 10 felt they knew more about Schizophrenia;
* 11 indicated they knew more about supporting a friend or family member;
* 5 indicated they knew more about supporting a colleague.

Following the sessions, we uploaded the presentation or a recording of the session to the Tapestry website for those unable to attend on the day.

**We completed this action.**

**Action 2:** Senior Management with support from BSO Equality Unit. (by end of March 2024)

**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 2023-24, we took time to review the Disability Placement Scheme that we have been running for nearly 10 years. We also spoke to a number of voluntary sector organisations who run or are involved in running programmes for people with a disability that include work placements. We wanted to find out how other programmes work.

We have decided that we want to move away from running a cohort scheme where all participants start and finish at the same time. We think that giving greater flexibility as to when people start and how long placements last will allow more people to undertake placements with us.

**We did not progress this work.**

**Action 3:** Senior Management with support from BSO Equality Unit (by end of March 2024)

**What we will do: Tapestry -** Promote and encourage staff to participate in the disability staff network and support the network in the delivery of its priorities

**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:**

During 2023-24, we made a conscious effort to raise the profile of the Network across all organisations. Over the month of November the network was on site in various locations across the region raising awareness and promoting the benefits of the Network. As well as corporate communications and posters, information and merchandise stands were set up and information shared over 6 half days in November. Over 200 staff engaged with the promotion and shared their experiences. In terms of the growth of the Network, as a result of the recent promotion, membership has grown by 60% and attendance at meetings has increased significantly in the last year.

As a result of this growth, it was decided that a formal Business Plan was needed. A Business Planning meeting was held with Tapestry members on 14th February. A new vision, objectives, and actions were developed as a result of the input on the day and these were shared and agreed with the wider network at the March 24 meeting.

**We completed this action.**

**Action 4:** Social Care Council (by end of March 2024)

**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:**

We made some progress with this work by promoting Tapestry to staff. We have a promotion campaign arranged for January 2025 to complete this action.

**Action 5:** Social Care Council by 2024 (development)

**What we will do: Engagement and Communications -** We will work with service users, carers and people with a disability to ensure they have opportunities to inform our work and are supported to attend events, including training.

**What we are trying to achieve:** We want to ensure our engagement with service users, carers and people with a disability is meaningful and meets their expectations, experiences and needs.

**Performance Indicator and Target:** We will develop an engagement programme with service users, carers and people with a disability that we can adopt as a model for future years.

**What we did over the last year:**

We reached out to our Participation Partnership and ran an ‘In your shoes’ pilot which looks at what engagement looks like. The time that carers spend engaging is valuable and is not easy given their caring responsibilities. The Participation Partnership area active and connected with good attendance now at meetings. This work will also inform our engagement strategy and our service users and carers have been very supportive and involved in this emerging piece of work. As an extension to this work we are also developing an accessibility framework and this will further embed the work we have jointly delivered with the Participation Partnership to date.

**We completed this action.**

**Action 6:** Social Care Council (by end of March 2024)

**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 made some progress with this work including looking at accessibility in all forms. We did not have the resources to complete this work which will be delivered in 2024/25.

**Action 7:** Social Care Council (by end of March 2024)

**What we will do: Engagement and Communications -** We will undertake an audit of our website to: 1) identify key information to be made available in signed video format and 2) ensure relevant contact details are available and up to date.

**What we are trying to achieve:** Key information and any important documents are available so that people who are D/deaf are receiving the same information as others. Structural information, description of what the team functions are and contact details will assist those outside the organisation to identify and reach the correct person.

**Performance Indicator and Target:** Plans to develop and extend access to information in place.

**What we did over the last year:**

We updated our website to make it compliant.

**We completed this action.**

**Action 8:** Social Care Council (by end of March 2024)

**What we will do: Leadership -** We will ensure a Board member is appointed as a Disability Champion and that they are supported in this role to promote and lead the organisation on issues affecting people with a disability.

**What we are trying to achieve:** We want to demonstrate that the organisation is committed to supporting people with a disability and that this is part of the Board’s programme of work.

**Performance Indicator and Target:** We will appoint a Board member and ensure they have suitable training and all staff know of the appointment and the Board member’s role regarding supporting and promoting disability awareness.

**What we did over the last year:**

We appointed a Champion at Board level.

**We completed this action.**

**Action 9:** Social Care Council with support from BSO Human Resources (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 actively encouraged staff to keep their data current and correct. We will continue to do this every year on a regular basis.

**We completed this action.**

**(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.

 **(6) Revisions**

* During the year we reviewed our Equality and Disability Action Plans 2018-23. We are currently consulting on our new Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-28.

**Disability Action Plan - Conclusions**

* We completed 5 actions (Actions 1, 3, 5, 7 and 8).
* We did some work on but didn’t complete 2 actions (Actions 4 and 6).
* We didn’t do any work on 1 action (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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