**Chapters 1 & 2**

**Northern Ireland Social Care Council**



**Acme Company**

**Public Authority Statutory Equality, Good Relations and Disability Duties - Annual Progress Report 2023-24**

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| --- | --- |
| **Contact:** | |
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| * 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://niscc.info/equality-and-diversity/>  Our Equality Scheme is due to be reviewed again by 31st March 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 2023 and March 2024**

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**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)   3 | Screened in  **0** | Screened out with mitigation  3 | Screened out without mitigation  0 | Screening decision reviewed following concerns raised by consultees  No concerns were raised by consultees on screening published in 2023-24 |
| 1. Number of policies subjected to Equality Impact Assessment. | 0 | | | |
| 1. Indicate the stage of progress of each EQIA. | **Title and Stage**  **N/A** | | | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Number of policy consultations conducted | 0 |
| 1. Number of policy consultations conducted with screening presented. (See also Chapter 2, Table 2) | 0 |

**(ECNI Q24)**

**Training**

1. Staff training undertaken during 2023-24. (See also Chapter 2, Q6)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Course** | **No of Staff Trained** | **No of Board Members Trained** |
| Equality Screening Training | 3 | 0 |
| Equality Impact Assessment Training |  |  |
| **Total** | **3** | **0** |

eLearning: Making a Difference to date (up to 31 March 2024)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Part 1 – All Staff | 98% |
| Part 2 – Line Managers | 94% |

**(ECNI Q27)**

**Complaints**

|  |
| --- |
| 0 |

1. Number of complaints in relation to the Equality Scheme received during 2023-24

Please provide detail of any complaints:

|  |
| --- |
| N/A |

**(ECNI Q7)**

**Equality Action Plan (see also Chapter 3)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Within the 2023-24 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)**

1. Within the 2023-24 reporting period, please indicate the number of:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Actions completed: | 5 | Actions ongoing: | 2 | Actions to commence: | 1 |

**Chapter 2 Section 75 Progress Report**

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

1. In 2023-24, 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 relations[[1]](#footnote-1).

**Agile Working**

During the year we finalised our agile working policy which had also been equality screened. It had been designed by staff and all staff continued to provide feedback on how well the policy was working. It was designed to provide an equality of opportunity to agile working while still delivering the business objectives. It also supported those who were carers, with or without disabilities, with or without dependants, and those with multiple needs from each of the Section 75 groups.

**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 | None |
| 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 | Further work on promoting equality for people with a disability in the workplace is reported on in detail in Chapter 3 (the Equality and Disability Action Plan – Progress Report 2023-24). |
| Persons with and without dependants | Flexibility in the Agile Working Policy |

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

The following changes resulted from EQIAs: none undertaken

**(ECNI Q4,5,6)**

1. During the 2023-24 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 | In Part | 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 2023/24 including work to support Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. |

**(ECNI Q11,12,17)**

1. Please provide any details and examples of good practice in consultation during the 2023-24 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.** |
| Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-28 | Screening template  EQIA report  none | Full Section 75 consultation list | Online questionnaire (greatest number of responses received)  Free written comments  Online events  One-to-one meeting | Most of those who responded were either from professional organisations (such as the Royal Colleges) or staff members. Only very few Section 75 voluntary sector organisations engaged with us, possibly reflecting their significantly reduced capacity to do so. |
|  | Screening template  EQIA report  none |  |  |  |

**(ECNI Q21, 26)**

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

Not applicable

**(ECNI Q22)**

1. Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2023-24 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed: None reported

**(ECNI Q25)**

1. 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: **85%**
* To develop an understanding of the benefits of screening: **88%**
* To develop an understanding of the screening process: **77%**
* To develop skills in practically carrying out screening: **63%**

**(ECNI Q29)**

1. Are there areas of the Equality Scheme arrangements (screening/consultation/training) your organisation anticipates will be focused upon in the next reporting period?

During 2024-25 we will focus on:

* Promoting our work in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
* Encouraging uptake of screening training for relevant staff
* Promoting events including Belfast Pride
* Testing the culture of the organisation and how well diversity and equality are embedded.

**Appendix – Further Explanatory Notes**

**1 Consultation and Engagement**

**(ECNI Q13)  
awareness raising for consultees on Equality Scheme commitments** – During the year, at the consultation events on our Equality and Disability Action Plans, we raised awareness of our commitments in relation to the Plans. 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.

**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.

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, such as the Gender Identity Employment Policy, for instance 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)