

Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report

Contact:

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Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:
<http://www.northerntrust.hscni.net/services>

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 Disability Action Plan. This report reflects progress made between April 2021 and March 2022.

Introduction

This is the Trust's 15th Annual Progress Report on Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order (DDO) for submission to the Equality Commission of Northern Ireland. In preparing this Annual Progress Report, the Trust has used the template provided by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. The Report provides assurance to Trust Board on how the Trust has fulfilled its legislative obligations and gone beyond compliance to achieve best practice in promoting equality of opportunity and good relations.

Part A of this Report provides an overview of the work undertaken in compliance with Equality Scheme obligations. It is important to note that this Report does not detail all of the work that the Trust carries out to promote equality of opportunity and good relations and to address inequalities as a key element of the Trust's business is to improve health and wellbeing and address inequalities.

A full progress update on our Equality Action Plan for 2021-2022 is appended (**Appendix 1**) for ease of reference and details both achievements on both a regional and local level.

(**Appendix 2**) relates to **compliance** with our legislative duties under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) (DDA) to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and to encourage their full participation in public life. It provides an update on the progress of our **Disability Action Plan** (2018-2023) and achievement in year 4 2021-22.

The Trust has developed 'Equality News' – a user friendly newsletter for stakeholders and staff to highlight the extensive work that has taken place across the Trust to promote equality of opportunity, good relations and the disability duties.

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 2021-22, 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.

Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

During the reporting period, the Covid-19 pandemic meant that yet again, we had to respond to a continually evolving situation but we have continued our commitment to promoting equality, eliminating discrimination, building strong community relations and delivering accessible services that meet the needs of everyone living in the Northern Trust area.

Comprehensive Section 75 equality screenings have been completed and approved on all plans implemented by NHSCT up to the end of this reporting period, March 2022 in response to Covid-19 pandemic. These include the:

- Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT) COVID-19 Response: Rebuilding Services Plan, Phase 3 (1st April – 30th June 2021)
- Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT) COVID-19 Response: Service Delivery Plan (1st July – 31st August 2021)
- Response to COVID surge (4th wave), Winter Pressures and delivery of key priorities October 21 to March 22 COVID response

The Trust has committed to completing a full EQIA and public consultation on any actions detailed within these plans that may be taken forward on a permanent basis.

The Trust has also completed detailed screenings for specific services and initiatives put in place as a response to the pandemic and as a part of our rebuilding services planning. These included an element of public involvement and feedback and include:

- Reprovision of Mental Health inpatient services
- Robinson Hospital redevelopment
- Interim theatre at Antrim Area Hospital
- Additional inpatient beds at Antrim Area Hospital
- Nightingale Whiteabbey – enhanced nursing and therapies rehabilitation and step down unit regional service (on-going and updated screening)

BAME Task Group

The Trust is committed to maintaining a safe and positive working environment for BAME (Black Asian Minority Ethnic) staff and the elimination of racial discrimination for employees and patients. The Trust's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Steering Group was formed in October 2021 to help deliver our commitment to '*Valuing Diversity and Promoting Inclusion*' in the workplace. The Group aim to support our staff and ensure that all staff are treated equitably. Chair of the Trust's Ethnic Diversity Task Group and member of the Trust's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Steering Group, Dr Darshan Hanumanth Kumar was 'highly commended' in the 2022 Good Relations Awards, recognising his commitment to equality, diversity and good relations and driving forward best practice within the Trust.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Workplace Framework

The Trust's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Steering Group was formed in October 2021 to help deliver our commitment to '*Valuing Diversity and Promoting Inclusion*' in the workplace. The strategy provides staff with access to opportunities and experience working with a diverse range of people that reflects the society we work and live in, to which we all belong and are welcomed. This Framework brings together the work of the Steering Group with our People and Culture Plan and strategy to promote health, wellbeing and inclusion in the workplace.



EDI Framework.pdf

Mental Health Charter Update

The Trust has signed up to the Equality Commission's Mental Health Charter demonstrating a commitment to improving the working lives of staff experiencing mental ill-health. Hosted by the Mental Health Foundation, Mental Health Awareness Week took place from 10th to 16th May. In recognition of the challenges we have experienced, the theme was 'Nature'. During the pandemic millions of us turned to nature and research on the mental health impacts of the pandemic showed being outside was one of our top coping strategies. It was a great opportunity to reflect on the benefits we have all experienced. A range of information and support is available for staff including self-help leaflets, Covid Resources for Psychological Wellbeing, Psychology led helpline for NHSCT Staff and Drop in Clinics on hospital sites and a range of counselling supports.

Equality Matters Leaflet update

The staff leaflet covering Equality and Human Rights was updated to reflect current training and information availability at the end of 2021 and an updated version is now available on Staffnet as a resource to support staff.



Equality Matters
Staff Information Le

Deaf Awareness Poster

Deaf Awareness Poster was co-designed with a service user following a complaint. The poster provides guidelines for staff when in the presence of someone who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Posters have been disseminated for display in all HSC facilities to remind staff of the importance of good communication.



Deaf Awareness
Poster v2.pdf

Access to HSC services information booklet

Access to Health and Social Care Services information booklet has been developed for visitors arriving in Northern Ireland, which provides information on health and social care services and information on eligibility to ensure everyone receives services that meet individual needs - produced in a range of languages and is available on Staffnet and Northern Trust Website.



Access to HSC.pdf

AccessAble Guides

The Trust has worked with AccessAble to develop guides for disabled people to access services in Causeway and Antrim Area Hospitals. AccessAble guides are now available via links on the Trust website, AccessAble website or by mobile application. The Northern Health and Social Care Trust Access Guide consists of 84 Detailed Access Guides, these Access Guides are published on www.AccessAble.co.uk and the AccessAble App. The official launch took place virtually on Tuesday 11 May 2021.



Northern Health &
Social Care Trust Lau

During 2022 the Northern Health and Social Care Trust Accessibility Guide had 10,807 Users and 18,744 Page Views. This breaks down to a monthly average of **1,801** Users and **3,124** Page Views.

The Top 5 Access Guides used were -

1. Northern Health and Social Care Trust – Ross Thompson Unit
2. Northern Health and Social Care Trust – Radiology – X-Ray/CT/Ultrasound
3. Northern Health and Social Care Trust – Ward C3
4. Northern Health and Social Care Trust – Children’s Ambulatory Unit
5. Northern Health and Social Care Trust – MRI Unit

Regional Communication Support Service

Regional procurement process has commenced for the provision a Health and Social Care Communication Support Service for People who are d/Deaf, d/Deafblind and Hard of Hearing which will be contracted directly by the Strategic Planning and Performance Group. By April 2023, a specialist Provider will be secured to deliver a range of high quality, accessible, regionally consistent, and sustainable communication supports for people who are d/Deaf, d/Deafblind, or Hard of Hearing across all HSC services. The design and development of the service reflects the RQIA Review of Sensory Support Services in 2011 and subsequent extensive research, public consultation and engagement with sign language users and interpreters

Supporting Carers

The Northern Trust Carer Hub, launched on Carers Rights Day, November 2019, is a central point of contact for carers and staff for signposting and support.

Our Carer Support Programme is based on the Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing. During 2021/22 there were over 13,000 contacts with carers, whether by email or by telephone and over 10,835 mail outs of information. Sixty three classes were held in the carer support programme with 1170 carers attending.

The Trust has good links with community and voluntary sector partners to provide essential support to family carers in each locality. The Trust established a Carer Network to bring together representatives in the community and voluntary sector who have a carer support strand to their services and the group meets 2-3 times a year, sharing information and updating each other with what services are available.

The designated carers website for Northern Trust www.carersdigital.org has been updated by Carers UK and now includes the following featured sections: **You and Your Wellbeing**, **Spotlight on Nutrition and Caring**, **About Me** (building resilience) and **Working and Skills** e-learning for working carers. Any carer in Northern Trust can access the website by creating an account and there are currently over 600 current users.

Supporting Working Carers

Northern Trust is a member of 'Employers for Carers' via Carers UK which is a designated website designed to help our own members of staff who are also looking after or supporting a loved one with long term illness or disability. During Carers Week 2021 colleagues in Human Resources developed a poster for staff who are carers and this information was publicised on Staffnet as a news story.

Accessible Communication

During the reporting period, the Northern Trust made a total of 13,263 requests for interpreters through the Northern Ireland Regional Health and Social Care Interpreting Service. The top three languages requested within the Northern Trust during 2021/22 were as follows:

Language	Numbers
Polish	3678
Romanian	2802
Arabic	2397

A total of 886 appointments were supported with sign language interpreters and 271 documents were translated into minority languages.

Remote Sign Language Interpreting Service

Our remote sign language interpreting service continues to ensure that our service users have access to health and social care appointments. The service user can download an app to access a free online remote sign language interpreter 24/7. The service user can use this service to contact GP surgeries, hospitals, dentists, social care services etc.

2 Please provide examples of outcomes and/or the impact of equality action plans/ measures in 2021-22 (or append the plan with progress/examples identified).

Please see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 for a detailed update of actions progressed in year 4 (2021-2022) of the Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan.

3 Has the application of the Equality Scheme commitments resulted in any changes to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2021-22 reporting period? (tick one box only)

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

Please provide any details and examples:

The table below details how application of the Equality Scheme commitments resulted in any changes to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during 2021-22

Equality Scheme Commitment	Action	Difference made for individuals
Arrangements for assessing our compliance with S75 duties		
Have in place appropriate structures and reporting mechanisms	The Trust has prioritised Section 75 in all aspects of its business agenda and has established a range of governance, management and reporting mechanisms that reflect this. The Trust's Employment, Engagement, Experience and Equality Group (Quadruple EG). Quadruple EG reports directly to the Trust's Assurance and Improvement Group, which reports through the Executive Team to Trust Board.  Quad E Update Reports 21-22.zip	Section 75 duties integral to Trust's Assurance Framework. Trust senior teams aware of and comply with statutory requirements during decision making.
Ensure S75 duties are mainstreamed within the Trust.	Membership of the Employment, Engagement, Experience and Equality Group (Quadruple EG) includes Trust Directors who are responsible for the mainstreaming of equality duties across their Divisions. The Trust's Equality Unit provides staff with the information, training and resources to support	Individuals aware of the Trust's commitment to equality duties. Trust staff aware of equality duties and Trust commitment to not only avoiding discrimination, but also to pursuing good practice, embracing diversity and promoting good relations.

	staff to have the appropriate level of knowledge, expertise and skill to mainstream S75 duties. The regional Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights; Making a Difference eLearning programme is mandatory and compliance is monitored twice each year.	
Prepare Section 75 Annual Progress Report (APR) and include section in Trust's own Annual Report.	Annual Progress Report supported by "Equality News" to ensure updates available in a more accessible format. Equality Matters section included in the Trust's Annual Report.	All consultees sent copy of newsletter and informed of availability of progress report - improving awareness of Trust's S75 duties and outcomes of work programme.
Action Plan		
Development of Action Based Plan to include performance indicators and timescales. Aligned to corporate and business planning cycle	Five year S75 Equality Action Plan developed in partnership with representative organisations. See Appendix 1 for actions progressed in year 4 and progress on actions carried forward from year 2.	The implementation is intended to have a positive impact on S75 groups.
Arrangements for consulting		
Consultation list reviewed and updated	Review of consultation list ongoing.	New consultees added to the consultation list on an on-going basis.
Training re. Consultation	Facilitation Training delivered to develop capacity in partnership working. During the reporting period 68	Support transformation and service change by involving service users, carers and the community and voluntary sector.

	people attended facilitation training.	
In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy	Policy Development Process ensures engagement and consultation.	Views of representation groups and individuals considered during decision-making process.
Provide feedback report to consultees in timely manner in formats suited to consultees	All service users and carers involved in Trust projects received detailed feedback reports. Reports available on staffnet and website.	Representative groups and individuals informed of how their feedback influenced the decision made.
Screening		
Revise screening template and accompanying guidance notes.	Trust policy development process ensures all Trust policies are screened. All policies approved during the reporting period were subject to S75 screening and appropriate consultation. During the reporting period, the Trust screened 116 policies and proposals.	Transparent decision-making process for consultees and impact on S75 groups identified during policy development process.
Publish reports quarterly and in accessible formats on request.	All quarterly reports for the reporting period were made available on the Trust's website.	Screening outcomes available to the public for consideration.
Publishing of EQIA reports.	No EQIAs completed during reporting period. Comprehensive Section 75 equality screenings have been completed and published on all plans implemented by NHSCT up to the end of	

	this reporting period, March 2021 in response to Covid-19 pandemic. Detailed screenings have also been completed for specific services and initiatives put in place as a response to the pandemic and as a part of our rebuilding services planning. These included an element of public involvement and feedback and include: - Nightingale Whiteabbey – enhanced nursing and therapies rehabilitation and step down unit regional service - My Journey podcast project - Domiciliary Care provided by non-statutory providers - Robinson Hospital redevelopment”	
Monitoring		
Review of monitoring information	The Trust continues to monitor staff by Section 75 categories and this has been enhanced by HRPTS Self-Service functions. During the reporting period this monitoring information was assessed for S75 screenings.	Increased understanding of the make-up of the workforce to ensure promotion of equality of opportunity and better information to identify any potential impact.

Staff Training		
Draw up a detailed training plan	The regional Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights: Making a Difference Programme has been rolled out across the Trust via Broadcast and Staffnet and compliance is monitored.	Improved access to equality, good relations and human rights training and diversity training through availability of more condensed training package for staff and managers as well as the availability of a training manual for those who do not have access to computers.
Focused training	During the reporting period the Trust stood down all face to face training. Equality Unit continued to provide advice and support to Trust staff/project leads. During the year, the Trust held specialised online workshops and training to support the continued development of a coproduction culture, including facilitation training and training on Citizen Space – an on-line questionnaire platform. During the reporting period, staff attended Virtual LGBT Awareness Training, the training provided staff with an understanding of sexual orientation & gender identity and use of appropriate terminology.	Enhanced skills of Trust policy makers. Targeted training delivered by specialist facilitator enhanced the skills of Trust staff.

	As part of the implementation of Care Opinion and to raise staff awareness, the Trust held online Responder Training to provide staff with the knowledge and skills to respond to feedback using Care Opinion best practice in responding.	
Arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and services we provide		
Ensure information we disseminate and services we provide are fully accessible to all parts of the community in Northern Ireland	Information is provided in alternative formats on request and Trust's website has been designed to ensure accessibility. During the reporting period a total of 13,263 requests for face to face interpreting were made to NIHSCIS, which was a significant increase following the COVID19 restrictions the previous year. During the reporting period a total of 886 appointments were supported with sign language interpreting support.	Improved access to information and services for equality groups – specifically those whose first language is not English and people with a disability.
Provide information in alternative formats on request	271 documents translated into minority languages during reporting period. All minutes of Disability Consultation Panel provided on disk or Braille and minutes of	Information provided in alternative formats to increase understanding, ensure effective communication and improved access to services.

	Learning Disability Panel provided in Easy read. Library of translated documents available to trust staff.	
Provide interpreters and sign language interpreters	On-going provision of communication support. 886 appointments supported with Sign Language Interpreter. 13,263 interpreters were requested from NIHSCIS. We continue to use telephone interpreting.	Service users and staff supported to ensure good governance in information provision and communication.
Complaints Procedure		
How complaints are raised, timetable for responding etc	No S75 complaints received	
Any other measures proposed in equality scheme		
Work closely with other public authorities to exchange learning and best practice	During the reporting period the Trust participated in Regional Equality and Human Rights Steering Group and Regional Equality Leads meetings. The Joint Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights Forum established in partnership with ECNI, HRC and CRC continued to meet during the reporting period.	More effective use of resources and consistent approach across health and social care
Liaise closely with the ECNI to ensure that progress on the implementation of our	During the reporting period the Trust met with ECNI on S75 implementation.	Ensures effective use of resources and S75 implementation.

Equality Scheme is maintained		
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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:

Please see third column in above table. It is important to note that the screening of policies, practices or procedures and/or service delivery areas has resulted in many considerations on how to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. For example there is better engagement with those affected by policies and decisions including with service users and carers. Through the screening process, decision makers are more aware of the need for effective and accessible communication. Staff affected by policies and decisions in relation to management of change are engaged to ensure that any adverse impact can be mitigated as required. This is done on an on-going basis and because of confidentiality issues relating to reasonable adjustments that are made this information is not included in many of the screening templates.

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*):

Examples provided above

NHSCT/21/1565 Operational Policy – Acute Frailty Unit Ward A5. The issues identified related to mixed gender accommodation and the requirement to identify whether each patient has capacity to consent to examination, treatment and care. Mitigation has been considered by the policy makers by acknowledgement, and commitment to adhere to, the associated NHSCT policies covering each of these respective areas.

My Journey Project. Suitable mitigation measures will be implemented (alternative delivery routes and accessible formats) to ensure that “My Journey” elements remain accessible to all service users and therefore there should be no impact upon equality of opportunity.

- ☒ As a result of what was identified through the EQIA and consultation exercise (*please give details*):
No Equality Impact Assessments carried out during reporting period.
The Trust carried out 2 public consultations as follows.

The public consultation and S75 screening of the temporary closure of the Robinson Memorial Hospital for refurbishment has resulted in the establishment of a user group to oversee the refurbishment process.

From 6 September 2021 until 29 November 2021 the publicly consulted on how we propose to procure/purchase and deliver domiciliary care services from non-statutory providers in the future. Feedback on the S75 screening has fed into the ongoing development of a new model of purchasing domiciliary care services to ensure that the policy actively promotes equality of opportunity for both patients/clients and staff.

- ☒ As a result of analysis from monitoring the impact (*please give details*):
The Trust continues to monitor its workforce across the 9 equality categories. This monitoring information is used for all S75 screenings of proposals that impact on staff. This supports the assessment of impact and the identification of potential adverse impact.
- ☒ **As a result of changes to access to information and services** (*please specify and give details*):

The remote sign language interpreting service continues to ensure that our service users have access to health and social care appointments. The service user can download an app to access a free online remote sign language interpreter 24/7. The service user can use this service to contact the NHS111 Northern Ireland COVID19 Helpline, NI COVID19 Community Helpline, GP surgeries, hospitals, dentists, social care services etc.

- ☐ Other (*please specify and give details*):

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 2021-22 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:

5. Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2021-22 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 national Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) continues to be the process linked to annual development reviews of all Trust staff and personal development plans. Equality and diversity is one of the 6 Core Dimensions and it reflects a key aspect of all jobs and underpins all dimensions in the KSF.

Equality training is mandatory in the Trust and attendance at/completion of all mandatory training is determined through the appraisal process. Compliance is monitored and reported through the Trust's accountability framework.

6. In the 2021-22 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 2016-17 report
- ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The Trust continues to prioritise Section 75 within all aspects of its business agenda and has established a range of governance, management and reporting mechanisms to reflect this. The Trust's Equality Unit sits within the Strategic Development and Business Services Division and supports all Trust Divisions to ensure Section 75 is mainstreamed and integral to planning processes. Objectives and targets relating to the Trust's duties under Section 75 are built into its corporate and directorate planning processes. The Trust has set appropriate objectives and targets for individual responsible officers.

The Trust's Employment, Engagement, Experience and Equality Group (Quadruple EG) ensures compliance with and mainstreaming of Section 75 duties. The Group seeks assurance that the Trust is compliant with Equality, including Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Human Rights Act 1998 and Section 49a of the Disability Discrimination Act and in doing so ensures that the above is embedded in decision-

making. The Director of Operations chairs the Group and membership includes Trust Directors and Non-executive Directors.

Equality action plans/measures

- 7 **Within the 2021-22 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*):
Plan Examples provided in Appendix 1
- 8 **Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2021-22 reporting period** (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

Detailed update provided in Appendix 1
- 9 **In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2021-22 reporting period, the following have been identified:** (*tick all that apply*)
☒ 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 2021-22 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:**

This has been another extraordinary year. The Covid-19 pandemic meant that yet again we had to respond to a continually evolving situation and rapidly reconfigure services and provide care in new and different ways. Engaging and involving the people who use services and their carers was as important as ever. Over the last year we have continued to be restricted by the guidance on physical distancing and shielding, nonetheless, we have been committed to engaging with service users, carers and the public in a meaningful way during these challenging and exceptional

times. Online engagement events continued to be our preferred method of engagement due to the continued restrictions.

The Trust recognises the importance of proper and timely consultation as an integral part of fulfilling its Section 75 obligations when making decisions and planning services. For all public consultations, the details are sent out to over 1,500 individuals, groups and organisation on the Trust's Consultation Database. Consultation documents are available on the Trust's website with the consultation document is available in alternative formats. Following consultation, a detailed consultation feedback report is drafted and time is taken to consider all the responses. All of those who provided feedback and participated in the consultation process are informed of how their feedback influenced the final decisions.

The table below highlights the Trust's public consultations carried out during the reporting period and associated good practice.

Consultation	Good Practice
How we propose to purchase domiciliary care provided by non-statutory providers	• Use of Citizen Space, a web based software consultation tool which allows rich media embeds, PDF document viewers and on-demand fact banks. • Pre-engagement event with service users, carers and the independent sector to shape the consultation document. • Direct engagement and meetings with independent sector domiciliary care providers • Two Public engagement events held online using zoom to engage directly with service users, carers, the public and local representatives, and directly with the independent sector domiciliary care providers. • Review of existing research
Refurbishment of the Robinson Memorial Community Hospital	• Availability of Citizen Space, an online consultation platform, to simplify the process of responding to the public consultation • Public engagement event online using zoom to engage directly with service users,

	carers, the public and local representatives • Documents all available online and in alternative formats.
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The Trust also recognises the importance of better engagement with affected and interested parties to develop shared decision-making. The following are examples of good practice in targeted engagement/involvement in decision making during the reporting period.

Acute Frailty Service User and Carer Engagement Event

The Trust held an engagement event with a number of service users, carers and representative groups using Zoom on 27 October 2021. This event provided the opportunity to share information about the development of a new model for Frailty Care in Antrim Area Hospital. Participants were provided with a detailed presentation on Phase 1 of the Frailty Model, which has seen the launch of a 10 bedded Acute Frailty Unit in mid-2020, with the aim of providing specialist management of frail patients.

The Trust welcomed the opportunity to engage and discuss developments and future plans for the Acute Frailty Unit as well as discussing the vision for the wider Frailty Model. The event was extremely positive and beneficial and the many valuable contributions, questions and feedback received from those present will help to inform communications and planning moving forward.

Post Covid Recovery Support Group

Service users from the Clinical Health Psychology Post Covid Syndrome Service were integral to the development of a Recovery Support Group.

A focus group took place, via Zoom, on Thursday 3 February 2022 with a group of service users who took part in the Post Covid-19 Rehabilitation Programme and Post Covid-19 Clinical Health Psychology. The focus group gave us the opportunity to talk with the service users about their experience of Rehabilitation and Clinical Health Psychology.

Service users also gave feedback via the Specialist Pulmonary Rehabilitation Programme for those living with Post Covid Syndrome. They highlighted the benefits of hearing from others experiencing similar symptoms and recovery journeys. These benefits include a reduction in isolation and an increase in hope and understanding of recovery post Covid.

The Recovery Support Group was established and held its first meeting in March 2022. The Group meet online every month, facilitated by Clinical Health Psychology.

PPI and Co-production for the MS Fatigue Management Programme

Fatigue has been identified as one of the main symptoms of MS which greatly impacts quality of life. Due to an increasing demand for fatigue management in this client group the Occupational Therapy Neurology Outpatient Service developed an MS Fatigue Management Programme, as a pilot with a small group of service users. The initial pilot proved very successful and was positively evaluated by service users. Following on from the pilot, the service sought to engage with service users to help inform and further develop the programme.

Service users who took part in the initial pilot programme were invited to participate in a focus group using Zoom on 6 May 2021. Prior to the focus group session a citizen survey was also completed with participants to gather feedback on their experience. The session then provided the opportunity to discuss further and in detail the findings from the survey, helping to shape what the future programme will look like.

The service user group also supported and co-produced the programme information leaflet which is now shared with all new clients coming onto the programme.

Rheumatology Physiotherapy service for patients with Axial Spondyloarthropathy

The Trust's Rheumatology Physiotherapy Team proposed the development of a more co-ordinated service for patients with axial spondyloarthropathy or inflammatory back pain in line with current guidelines and recommendations. There are variations in this service between Trusts and also nationally and as physiotherapists within the Rheumatology MDT we felt low back pain was an area where we could provide expert treatment.

As a team, the Rheumatology Physiotherapists, with the help of the Trust's Involvement Team, held a focus group via Zoom with a number of service users with Spondyloarthropathy. Service user thoughts, opinions and suggestions about this yearly one stop clinic to chart the progress of their condition were explored. Results were collated going forward we plan to establish this clinic and address the concerns raised for patients with this condition and to ensure their needs are met following best practice guidelines.

MSK Physiotherapy Low back Pain Webinar

A low back pain webinar is currently being developed by the Trust's MSK Physiotherapy Team. Since the start of the pandemic waiting times within our service have increased so we wanted to develop a webinar to enable service users with low back pain to have access to timely information / key health messages while they await face to face contact with the Physiotherapy team.

Prior to the commencement of this project, the team engaged with 50 service users currently on the waiting list with low back pain to gain an understanding of key information they required to help manage their condition. From this service user feedback the content and delivery of the webinar was designed and includes information

and management of low back pain, physical activity guidelines and when to seek further urgent investigation. We are currently in the process of recording the webinar and rolling it out to our service users.

Carer Support

As a result of the Trust's on-going engagement with carers, all information for carers is co-designed and available to support carers in their caring role as follows.

- Promotion of Carer Hub – Carer Hub information is shared amongst teams in the Trust and at Carer Assessment Training, Mental Health induction training and via internal networks.
- Carer newsletter – two issues were circulated in 2021/2022 with carers contributing various pieces of content including; a “carers column” where carers write their own personal story for the benefit of others.
- Launch of ‘Carers Collective Creations – Voice of Carers’ – this co-produced book is a collection of creatively written carer stories and poems talking about the caring role and written entirely by carers. It was launched during Carers Week 2021 by the Health Minister.
- Carer Pathway Steering Group – the Steering Group is made up of carers, HSC staff and community and voluntary sector organisations. The Group is carer led and the carer membership endorses any suggestions of support for carers to ensure family carers receive the right support. This year the Group met quarterly throughout to COVID, by Zoom, to discuss ongoing support for carers. In December 2021 an engagement event was held to co-develop the new Carer Action Plan 2022-2025.
- Peer Support – during the last two years carers have highlighted that they have felt most supported by each other especially when a class runs weekly or monthly. In November 2021 an engagement event was held with carers to explore peer support, what it looks like and how it is a beneficial aspect of the carer support programme. The carers involved developed an infographic detailing carer peer support.



Infographic.docx.p
df

- Carer ID card – when the Department of Health carer ID card expired in May 2021, carers told us they were disappointed as the card made them feel acknowledged and that their caring role was recognised. The Northern Health and Social Care Trust developed and launched its own Carer ID in December 2021.

- Co-delivering carer support – in developing the quarterly support programme carers tell us exactly what classes they would like to see, to help them in the caring role. Carers have also told us that meeting others, reducing isolation and building networks is vital in sustaining the caring role – our support programme ran successfully throughout the pandemic with over 900 carers joining classes in 2020/2021 and over 1100 in 2021/22.
- Carer register form – this year again the carers register form has been updated and rebranded to encourage staff with caring responsibilities to sign up to the Trusts Carer Register (a contact list of all carers to communicate effectively throughout the year).

12 In the 2021-22 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 – via zoom
- ☒ 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
- ☒ Other (please specify):

The Trust's Involvement Network

The Northern Trust's Involvement Network is made up of service users, carers and representative groups who live or are based in the Northern Trust area offering opportunities to support the Trust to help to improve services. Over the last year, we have seen our Involvement Network go from strength to strength. Members have received 66 involvement opportunities and 232 members have attended more than 13 engagement events. This has helped to shape a number of service improvements including the My Journey Initiative, set up to help services communicate more effectively with service users and carers.

Engagement Advisory Board

Given the challenges faced by health and social care we are always open to new ideas and ways of working and have publicly advertised the opportunity to become a member of a new Engagement Advisory Board. Over 60 expressions of interest have been received and after final interviews members of the EAB have been appointed to reflect the communities we serve. Members will work with Trust staff to ensure we are approaching our engagement in a way that

meets the needs and interests of all communities, with a focus on targeting the most hard to reach groups

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:

Please refer to Trust's Personal and Public Involvement and Co-production Annual Report

- 13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2021-22 reporting period? (tick one box only)**

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

During the reporting period the following activities supported awareness raising of Equality Scheme commitments among consultees.

- Dissemination of Section 75 Annual Progress Report
- Equality Newsletter disseminated to all consultees
- "Equality Matters" section of Trust's Annual Report
- Staff training programme
- All engagement exercises
- S75 screening reports published
- Ongoing guidance and briefings to senior management and Trust Board
- Equality section on Trust internet and intranet

- 14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2021-22 reporting period? (tick one box only)**

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not applicable – no commitment to review

The consultation list is reviewed on an ongoing basis.

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

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

106

16 Please provide the number of assessments that were consulted upon during 2021-22:

Two public consultations were carried out during the reporting period as follows.

- How we propose to purchase domiciliary care provided by non-statutory providers
- Refurbishment of the Robinson Memorial Community Hospital

Detailed Section 75 screening were also consulted on during the consultation period. Copies of consultation document and screenings can be found at [Consultations - Northern Health and Social Care Trust \(hscni.net\)](#)

Comprehensive Section 75 equality screenings have been completed and published on all plans implemented by NHSCT up to the end of this reporting period, March 2022 in response to Covid-19 pandemic.

An online version of Screening Outcome Reports can be found on the Trust website under Screening – see link below:

<https://www.northerntrust.hscni.net/about-the-trust/corporate-information/equality-and-diversity/>

2	Policy consultations conducted with screening assessment presented.
0	Policy consultations conducted with an equality impact assessment (EQIA) presented.
0	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:**

Consultation	S75 assessment consulted on
How we propose to purchase domiciliary care provided by non-statutory providers	- Completed S75 screening template – providing detailed assessment and outcome for consideration - Rural Needs Assessment completed.
Refurbishment of the Robinson Memorial Community Hospital	- Completed S75 screening template – providing detailed assessment and outcome for consideration - Rural Needs Assessment completed.

- 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 2021-22 reporting period? (tick one box only)**

☐ Yes
 ☐ No
 ☒ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

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 2021-22 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:

Staff monitoring is reviewed annually via HRPTS to ensure the Trust has an up to date equality profile of its workforce to support more effective screening of proposals and policies that may have an impact of staff.

Continual monitoring of interpreting identifies the top five languages requested in the Trust and ensures the Trust can provide accessible information and the appropriate type of interpreting is used for appointments.

It is envisaged that Encompass will greatly enhance and streamline HSC records and systems, which will in turn help us capture better quality and consistent section 75 information for our service users. The encompass programme is a HSC-wide initiative that will introduce a digital integrated care record to Northern Ireland. This will support the HSCNI vision to transform health and social care in order to improve health outcomes and create better experiences for those receiving, using and delivering services. The roll out of Encompass will allow service users to access their own information and use the system to communicate with their health and social care team, view test results and manage appointments. The roll out has been delayed as a result of Covid19 but the project has now been re-established.

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 2021-22 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

The Trust's policy development process ensures that all policies are monitored and reviewed.

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:

The Trust continues to monitor the staff across the 9 equality categories and through this monitoring process. The monitoring of staff is enhanced by the self-service function of the Human Resources, Payroll, Travel and Subsistence System (HRPTS). It is anticipated that staff will be more likely to record their equality information on this online system. This information is used for screening purposes and helps to identify specific issues that need to be addressed to ensure the promotion of equality of opportunity.

Ethnic Monitoring of Service Users continues in a number of information systems including Child Health System, SOS CARE and NIMATS.

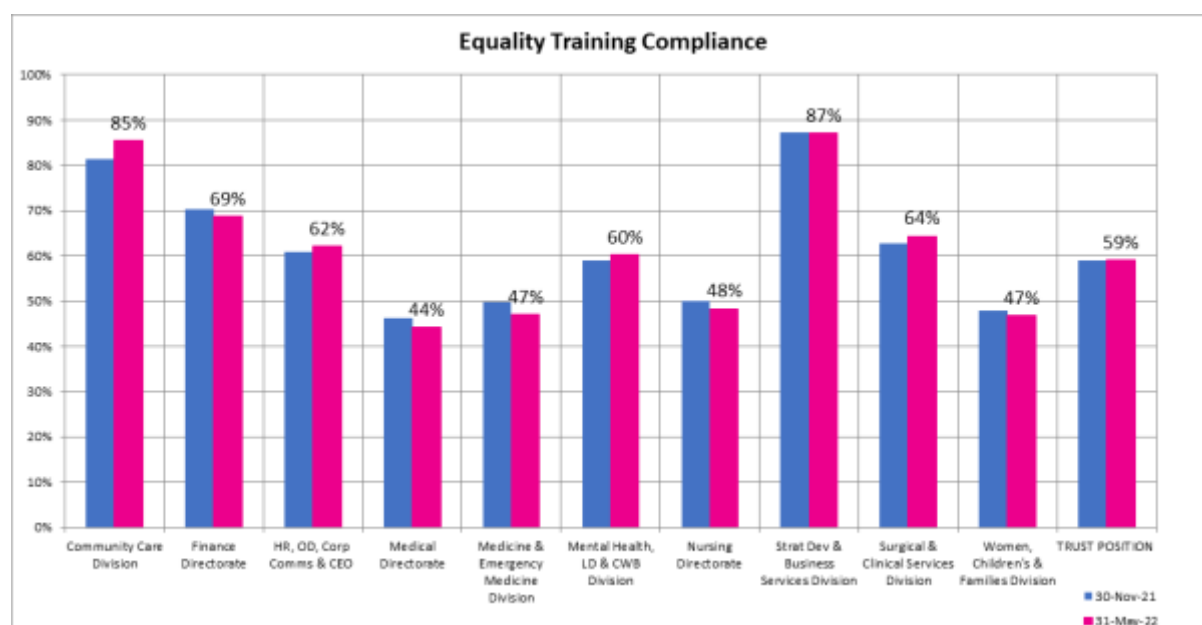
The Trust completes an Article 55 Review Report every three years, which involves gathering and analysing to inform the completion of the review.

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 2021-22, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

During the reporting period, the Trust continues to stand down all face to face training. The Equality Unit continued to provide advice and support on equality duties to Trust staff/project leads. During the year, the Trust held specialised online workshops and training to support the continued development of a coproduction culture.

Equality training is mandatory and must be completed by all staff every three years. Uptake is monitored twice each year. The table below details compliance across all of the Trust Divisions.



During 2021-2022 the following numbers of staff have attended or accessed training

Equality and Human Rights e-Learning	2568
Dissemination of Equality Training Manual	310

Equality training is included in the Trust's Corporate Welcome Statutory Mandatory Training. During this reporting period, 390 staff undertook Corporate Induction training.

The Trust delivers clinics to managers on a variety of employment equality matters including Disability and Managing Reasonable Adjustments, Flexible Working, Managing Attendance and Recruitment and Selection.

The Trust has a range of resources available for staff to increase awareness of equality and diversity matters including the following:

- Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights – A Training Manual for Staff
- Multi-Cultural and Beliefs Handbook
- Disability Etiquette Booklet
- Making Communication Accessible for all
- Screening Guidance
- Easy Way to EQIA

During the reporting period 80 members of staff received Working Well With Interpreters training, which provides staff with a good knowledge and understanding of the interpreting service and the dangers of using untrained interpreters. The training also covered the benefits of using the telephone interpreting service, especially during the last year when social distancing was essential, and made staff aware of the process of booking a sign language interpreter via the Equality Unit. To ensure that social distancing measures were adhered to remote appointments were facilitated through online platforms.

Staff attended Virtual LGBT Awareness Training via zoom, which had the following key themes.

Key Themes

- Understanding sexual orientation & gender identity and use of appropriate terminology
- Key health inequalities experienced by LGBT people in Northern Ireland
- Different forms of prejudice
- Barriers to accessing mainstream statutory/community/voluntary service provision
- Tips for improving practice and building confidence to support LGBT people

There is also an LGBT E-learning module, which is targeted at all health and social care service staff and can be accessed via the following link (<http://www.lgbtelearning.hscni.net>). This module takes approximately 45 minutes to complete and will give participants a better understanding of issues for lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender colleagues and service users. It is also useful for managers to ensure you are creating inclusive workplaces.

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:

Covid-19 has been the driving force behind the move to on-line training and we have continued to provide training programmes online and in virtual formats and we have discovered a number of benefits. Online training provides a safe and effective alternative to in person training. Attending training can be as simple as setting up a computer and logging on. The time spend travelling to training venues can be put to better use elsewhere and less travel is also better for the planet. As we come out of the pandemic,

on-line training will continue to be a valuable method of delivering training to a large number of staff.

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

26 Please list any examples of where monitoring during 2021-22, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation to access to information and services:

As a result of continually assessing the information provided in alternative formats the Trust continued to extend its library of translated material during the reporting period. This is available on Staffnet and the Internet for both staff and service users. Guidance and information leaflets about COVID-19 in a range of different languages is available on the Trust website and disseminated to local representative organisations.

The Trust is committed to ensuring everyone is given equal access to information about services in a format they can understand. The Trust provides interpreting services on request to help patients and clients and staff to communicate when using services.

The monitoring of interpreting usage ensures the Trust can provide its information in the main languages. It also ensures that the appropriate type of interpreting is used for appointments. For simple, straightforward and short appointments, telephone interpreting is the most appropriate and most cost effective. Face to face, interpreters are then available for more complex or sensitive appointments.

During the reporting period the top 20 languages supported in the Northern Trust area were as follows.

Language	Number of bookings
Polish	3678
Romanian	2802
Arabic	2397
Bulgarian	648
Portuguese	644
Slovak	521
Lithuanian	488
Tetum	379
Mandarin	271
Czech	267
Latvian	180
Turkish	175
Hungarian	172
Cantonese	148
Russian	131
Somali	84

Bengali	41
Pashto	38
Spanish	38
Urdu	27

Interpreters are provided and funded regionally through the Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Interpreting Service (NIHSCIS). Interpreters are professionally trained and adhere to a Terms of Engagement. Interpreters are bound by confidentiality and provide their services on a 24/7 basis. Following a register update, NIHSCIS now has 342 Interpreters registered in 35 different languages.

During 2021/22 the NIHSCIS:

- Processed 95,517 requests
- Achieved 98% provision rate
- Provided for 2,493 video calls (414 NHSCT requests)
- Registered 23 new Interpreters in languages including Arabic, Albanian, Czech, Somali, Kurdish-Sorani, Tigrinya, Urdu, Turkish, Latvian, Russian, Spanish, Bengali and Italian
- Initiated work to build Interpreter capacity for a significant number of Ukrainian Arrivals (a number of new Ukrainian Interpreters were registered in May 2022 although this falls outside the year)
- Top 5 NHSCT Languages: Polish, Romanian, Arabic, Bulgarian and Portuguese

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

27 How many complaints in relation to the Equality Scheme have been received during 2021-22

Insert number here:

0

Section 3: Looking Forward

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

During 2022/23 the Trust, in partnership with other HSC Trusts, will be undertaking a significant programme of work to review the Audit of Inequalities to inform our new 5 year regional equality action plan. During this period HSC Trusts will also undertake a five-year review on the effectiveness of our respective Equality Schemes. The Trusts will also draft a five year Disability Action Plan to further promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability and to encourage their full participation in public life. Consultation and engagement will be integral to this review process.

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)

The main focus of the next reporting period will be,

- Review of audit of inequalities
- Engagement on key priorities with representative groups and individuals
- Development of a new Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan for public consultation.
- Regional public consultation on draft plans
- Review of effectiveness of Equality Scheme

30 In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what equality and good relations priorities are anticipated over the next 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):

Please note progress against actions progressed in year 4 of the Disability Action Plan can be seen in Appendix 2.

Appendix 1

Equality Action Plan

Year 4 Progress Report

2021/2022

Please note: This reporting period coincided with the ongoing pressures due to the Covid- 19 pandemic and therefore some of the actions have been rolled over to year five as resources have had to be focussed on essential service provision. Some actions are ongoing throughout the lifetime of this plan.

Section 1 – Ensuring the effective discharge of our Section 75 Equality Duties

We want to ensure that the focus is on outcomes for people within the nine Section 75 equality categories and to make a positive difference for them. The following actions are therefore aimed at simplifying the process.

Action Measure	Description
We will develop a Screening and Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Tool Kit to guide staff through the process.	• A regional toolkit will be available for policy and decision makers. • More robust and regionally consistent screening/EQIAs.
Progress Year 4 - Completed for this reporting period and ongoing Screening Toolkit finalised and will be launched in September 2022 to support staff with S75 screening along with scheduled screening clinics.	
Action Measure	Description
We will develop a checklist to make sure Equality, Disability and Human Rights are at the heart of procurement.	• Checklist developed and adhered to by staff with responsibility for buying goods and services. • Raised awareness among staff of equality and human rights obligations in procurement process. • S75 and human rights issues identified at an early stage of procurement process.
Progress Year 4 – Ongoing - rollover year 5 A Flowchart has been drafted and this will then be shared more widely for agreement across the region. Discussion has taken place in terms of integrating an agreed flowchart into procurement training. This action has not fully been achieved as a result of Covid 19 pressures and will be picked up in year 5.	
Action Measure	Description

We will review our staff training to ensure best practice is followed when screening and conducting EQIAs.	• Up to date training programme for all policy makers across health and social care will be made available to ensure best practice. • Skilled staff, policy leads and decision makers. • Consistent and effective approach in the training programme across all Trusts (targets to be set). • Effective compliance with the S75 Equality Duties.
Progress Year 4 – Ongoing Rollover Year 5 The online Making a Difference training is still available for staff and compliance continues to be monitored. The Trust's Equality Unit continues to provide policy leaders and decision makers across the Trust with specific advice and support on best practice in screening and EQIAs. As stated above we will provide on-line screening training for policy/service leads on new screening toolkit– to include S75 and Rural Needs.	
Action Measure	Description
We will develop and implement a communication strategy to ensure that stakeholders are aware of Trust Equality Units, their functions and how they can be engaged on equality and human rights issues.	• Strategy in place to improve communication. • Raised awareness among S75 groups of Trust Equality Units and how they can be involved in and influence Trust equality agenda.
Progress Year 4 – Completed for this reporting period The Trust uses a range of methods to communicate with stakeholders, representative groups and individuals. This includes ongoing media, social media, newsletters. The Equality Section of the Trust's website includes screening outcome reports, Annual Progress Report, Disability and Equality Action Plans and newsletters/bulletins are published regularly. Communication and awareness raising also continues through social media including Facebook and Twitter as well as press coverage of events/initiatives etc. Frequent articles are also drafted for staff and published on the Trust Staffnet. The NHSCT Trust Board considers the Section 75 Annual Progress Report for approval - a further means of raising awareness and highlighting key achievements during the current reporting period. The Trust continues to raise awareness through established networks and user panels such as the Equality, Human Rights and Good Relations Joint Consultative Forum, which facilitates ongoing communication and collaboration between the Equality and Human Rights Commissions and the Community Relations Council in order to optimise outcomes for Section 75 groups.	

Over the last year, we have seen our Involvement Network go from strength to strength. Members have received 66 involvement opportunities and 232 members have attended more than 13 engagement events. This has helped to shape a number of service improvements.

Action Measure	Description
We will work with the Department of Health and other relevant stakeholders to make sure we are prepared for the introduction of Age Discrimination Regulations.	• One regional event to raise awareness of potential implications of the new legislation on health and social care provision. • Better understanding amongst staff on the implications of the legislation.
Progress Year 4 - Rollover Year 5 Rolled forward as legislation not yet in place.	

Section 2 – Promoting Equality in our Services

The following actions have been developed in response to what we have heard and are aimed at providing welcoming, person-centred and accessible services for everyone.

Action Measure	Description
We will review our equality training programme in collaboration with service users, carers and their advocates.	• Consistent staff training and awareness raising, co-produced and delivered, where appropriate, across health and social care. • Raised awareness among staff of the best way to promote equality of opportunity for service users. • Each Trust to identify a process to monitor e learning.
Progress Year 4 - Completed for this reporting period The regional Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights; Making a Difference eLearning programme is mandatory for all HSC Staff. The Trust monitors compliance, which is, reported through the governance and accountability structures. The Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights training manual is available online as a resource to complement the training and to act as an aide memoire for staff. We disseminate hard copies to staff who do not have access to a PC. A review of this training programme resulted in a number of amendments including a revision of the content of this programme to acknowledge that same sex marriage is now legalised in NI. Regional guidance has been developed to help inform Trust Board members of their roles and responsibilities in respect of equality, good relations and human rights. "Promoting Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights in HSC – Guidance for Board Members 2020" During the reporting period staff attended Virtual LGBT Awareness Training via zoom which had the following key themes. Key Themes • Understanding sexual orientation & gender identity and use of appropriate terminology • Key health inequalities experienced by LGBT people in Northern Ireland • Different forms of prejudice • Barriers to accessing mainstream statutory/community/voluntary service provision • Tips for improving practice and building confidence to support LGBT people A co-produced regional good relations statement is displaying in offices and waiting areas.	

The Trust's Equality Unit continues to provide staff with information, training and resources to ensure that have the appropriate level of knowledge, expertise and skill to mainstream Section 75 duties.

Deaf Awareness Poster co-designed with a service user following a complaint to provide guidelines for staff when in the presence of someone who is D/deaf or Hard of Hearing. Posters have been disseminated for display in all HSC facilities to remind staff of the importance of good communication.

The Trust raised awareness of Sign Language Week 14-20 March 2022. The aim of this year's campaign was #BSL Brings Us Together and people of all ages are encouraged to take up the challenge of learning some BSL to become better at communicating.

The Trust delivers HR clinics to managers on a variety of employment equality matters including Disability and Managing Reasonable Adjustments, Flexible Working, Managing Attendance and Recruitment and Selection.

Action Measure	Description
We will work with service users, carers and representative organisations to ensure Trust websites are accessible, user friendly and easy to navigate.	• User friendly HSC websites containing up to date information. • Better communication with service users, carers and the public on access to our websites information.

Progress Year 4 - Completed for this reporting period

Website accessibility regulations came into force on 23 September 2018. The regulations mean that public sector bodies now have a legal obligation to meet accessibility requirements for their websites. To check how well the public sector is meeting the requirements, the Government Digital Service monitored a sample of public sector websites. The Northern Health and Social Care Trust website was selected as part of this sample. On 18 September 2020, the website was checked against the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA standard. Based on testing, <http://www.northerntrust.hscni.net/> was partially compliant with WCAG 2.1 AA.

Following the audit, the Trust has made a number of improvements to the website including: improved accessibility via keyboard functions; a visible focus to help users know which element they are on the page; removal of images of text; more descriptive link names; removal of moving information such as the homepage carousel; improved alternative text for images; and, subtitling and transcripts for videos. The colour contrast across all pages has also been reviewed and changed to make is easier for people with sight loss to access information. The Trust published an Accessibility Statement and will seek to make further improvements to the website.

Action Measure	Description
We will work in partnership with LGBT representative organisations to develop guidance for health and social care staff to ensure LGBT service users have access to services.	• Consistent up to date staff guidance developed in partnership with LGBT organisations. • Enhanced awareness of access barriers for LGBT service users and carers. • Improved satisfaction with health and social care services for LGBT service users and carers.
Progress Year 4 - Completed for this reporting period During the reporting period, the Trust worked in partnership with Rainbow NI and the Health Promotion Agency offering staff the opportunity to attend Virtual LGBT Awareness Training. The training provided staff with an understanding into key themes such as understanding sexual orientation & gender identity and use of appropriate terminology, health inequalities experienced by LGBT people in Northern Ireland, barriers to accessing mainstream and the different forms of prejudice.	
Action Measure	Description
We will work in partnership with Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups and groups representing BME older people to develop guidance for health and social care staff on meeting the needs of older people in BME communities and ensure access to services.	• Staff guidance co-produced with BME communities and representative organisations. • Raised profile of needs of BME older people. • Increased awareness among staff of the needs of BME older people. • Improved access to services for BME older people.
Progress Year 4 – Completed for the reporting period The Trust is committed to maintaining a safe and positive working environment for Black Asian Minority Ethnic staff and the elimination of racial discrimination for employees and patients. In Summer 2020, the Trust established Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Steering Group to identify ways in which the Trust can actively meet this commitment working in partnership with internal and external stakeholders. An Access to Health and Social Care Services information booklet has been developed for visitors arriving in Northern Ireland, which provides information on health and social care services and information on eligibility to ensure everyone receives services that meet individual needs - produced in a range of languages and is available on staffnet and Northern Trust Website.	

Action Measure	Description
We will work with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission to develop a training programme on a human rights approach to dealing with complaints – building on work done by the Ombudsman’s Office.	• Training on a human rights based approach to complaints management delivered to all staff who deal with complaints. • Complaints resolution process that embeds human rights values and principles. • Improved satisfaction with health and social care complaints management process.
Progress Year 4 – Rollover Year 5 As a result of reviews HSC will focus this training on residential care for vulnerable people. HSC Trusts have engaged with the NIHRC to commission this training and it has committed the following in their business plan: Design and deliver a regional human rights training session in partnership with NI Health and Social Trusts on residential care for vulnerable adults. It was planned that 2 sessions would be designed & delivered by March 2022 and it would be based on case studies with lawyers in NIHRC advising Trust staff on human rights considerations in delivery of care and decision-making. The training did not take place within the reporting period due to continued pressures in HSC and the NIHRC indicated they had insufficient resources to take this forward in this reporting period. Trusts will now work together to map out the HR considerations in the case studies and develop bespoke in-house training.	
Action Measure	Description
We will hold an annual event to showcase best practice in equality and diversity within the health and social care.	• An annual Equality and Diversity event delivered. • Health and social care viewed as a sector that promotes equality and diversity. • Improved awareness of equality and diversity best practice models and shared across health and social care and beyond.
Progress Year 4 - Completed for this reporting period The Northern Health and Social Care Trust becomes the first healthcare Trust in Northern Ireland to partner with AccessAble; the UK’s leading provider of detailed disabled-access information. The Trust has worked with AccessAble to develop guides for disabled people to access services in Causeway and Antrim Area Hospitals. AccessAble guides are now available via links on the Trust website, AccessAble website or by mobile application. The official regional launch took place virtually on Tuesday 11 May 2021 and showcased the value of the partnership work. Between 1st May 2021 and 30th April 2022, 18,371 people used the Guides. These people looked at the 84 Detailed Access Guides we have across Antrim Area Hospital and Causeway Hospital 30,538 times. 4.6 million people have used the AccessAble website over the last year.	

Section 3 – Supporting our Staff

The following actions help to promote equality of opportunity for our staff and support them to understand their responsibilities in valuing differences and advancing equality of opportunity to ensure an inclusive and welcoming environment.

Action Measure	Description
We will ensure compliance with any new legislation governing gender pay reporting and address any inequalities identified.	• Pay structure that ensures fairness and equity in pay and reward arrangements in line with any new legislation.
Progress Year 4 – Rollover Year 5 Legislation has yet to be enacted by the NI Assembly. A Position Paper setting out the key requirements of this new legislation has been shared with the HSC Human Resources Directors Forum. Further developments in this area have been halted due to the pandemic and we await information on the enactment of legislation within NI.	
Action Measure	Description
We will work in collaboration with relevant stakeholders to extend the remit of our Employability Schemes to enhance employment opportunities for marginalised S75 groups.	• Scope in year 1 opportunities and availability for our employability schemes. • Employability scheme available to other marginalised S75 groups. • Improved employment opportunities for marginalised S75 groups. • Access to employment is improved for marginalised S75 groups.
Progress Year 4 –Rollover Year 5 Due to Covid-19 pressures and the priority to maintain essential service provision progress has been affected. The Trust's new EDI Workplace Steering Group formed in 2021 are reviewing the Trust's equality data with a view to developing appropriate outreach strategies to be incorporated into our recruitment and selection programme. group plan to drive forward this work stream as soon as business activities resume and Trust working groups are given the go ahead to reconvene.	

Action Measure	Description
We will revise Equality, Human Rights and Disability guidelines for our Non-Executive Trust Board members.	• Up to date guidelines in place for Non-Executive Directors. • Increased awareness among Non-Executive Directors of statutory compliance and responsibilities.
Progress Year 4 – Completed for this reporting period Regional guidance available to help inform Trust Board members of their roles and responsibilities in respect of equality, good relations and human rights. “Promoting Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights in HSC – Guidance for Board Members 2020” disseminated to Trust Board members. Ongoing information and advice is provided to Trust Board members as required.	
Action Measure	Description
We will review our harmonious working environment advice in light of any new findings and recommendations from the work conducted by the Commission on Flags, Identity, Culture and Traditions.	• Consistent regional approach to ensuring all health and social care environments are welcoming to everyone.
Progress Year 4 – Roll over to year 5 HSC Good Relations statement poster has been shared it across its facilities for display. The Trust also has the Good and Harmonious Working Environment Statement (Joint Declaration of Protection). This states that the Trust will aim to provide a good and harmonious working environment. It therefore prohibits the display of flags emblems etc., which may give offence or cause apprehension to other employees.	
Action Measure	Description
We will launch our new E-Learning Module and Equality and Diversity Staff Training Manual	• 20 minute E-Learning Training Programme for staff and managers and Equality and Diversity Staff Training Manual launched and available for all health and social care staff. • Marketing strategy to increase uptake of training across all Trusts. • Improved access to training for staff who do not have access to a computer through provision of the Staff Training Manual. • Improved uptake of equality training, each Trust to set targets.

Progress Year 4 – Completed for this reporting period

Trust continues to monitor compliance of mandatory Making a Difference, Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights eLearning training. The main body of the Annual Progress Report provides uptake during the reporting period.

Action Measure	Description
We will work with relevant organisations and Trade Unions to develop best practice in supporting our staff who are victims of Domestic Violence/Abuse.	• Best practice model established in each Trust with support mechanisms for staff experiencing Domestic Violence/Abuse. • Improved support for staff who are victims of Domestic Violence/Abuse. • Raised awareness among staff of the best way to support colleagues who are victims of Domestic Violence/Abuse.

Progress Year 4 - Rollover to year 5

Regional meetings have been conducted with all Trusts with a view to adopting a similar policy and approach to ensure consistency and equality of opportunity for all HSC staff, who may be experiencing domestic and/or sexual abuse or violence. The Trust's domestic and sexual abuse workplace policy been updated aimed at making the workplace a safe and supportive environment for all employees of the Trust who experience domestic or sexual abuse. The objectives of the policy are to offer support to our employees in addressing problems arising from domestic or sexual abuse sympathetically to maximise the safety of our employees, and to deal appropriately with alleged or confirmed perpetrators of domestic or sexual abuse among our workforce. The Trust is in the process of recruiting Trusted Colleagues to provide support.

Action Measure	Description
We will make sure that our staff who are carers are supported in the workplace so that they can continue with their caring role.	• Consistent regional approach established to support carers in our workforce. • Improved support for staff who are carers. • Raised awareness among staff of the best way to support staff who are carers. • To pilot digital resources for carers and 'jointly app' carers app in Northern Trust area with learning disseminated regionally Year 3.

Progress Year 4 - Completed for this reporting period

The Northern Trust Carer Hub, launched on Carers Rights Day, November 2019, is a central point of contact for carers and staff for signposting and support. This includes working carers. The Northern Health and Social Care Trust supports working carers, and is

an active member of Carers UK's business forum, Employers for Carers. We as an organisation recognise that support needs are different for everyone and this can be particularly true for working carers who try to juggle varying work patterns with their caring role. The Carer Hub continued to respond to the ongoing Covid 19 pressures to make sure that carers were supported and there was someone at the end of the phone. The Hub sent carers information on public health guidance, carers newsletter, carer support programme or other relevant material such as DOH A-Z Handbook for Carers. Support is also provided through sharing information that is relevant to carers in their caring role such as condition specific information or information regarding relevant departmental changes. Throughout the year, carers regularly receive information by post whether the carers newsletter, carer support programme or other relevant material. During 2021-2022 the Carer Hub has had 10,041 mail outs, 13,817 contacts with carers by email or telephone and 1171 carers attended the 63 events in the support programme.

The designated carers website for Northern Trust www.carersdigital.org has been updated by Carers UK and now includes the following featured sections You and Your Wellbeing, Spotlight on Nutrition and Caring, About Me (building resilience) and Working and Skills e-learning for working carers. Any carer in Northern Trust can access the website by creating an account and Northern Trust remains the only Trust to offer this specific carer website.

During Carers Week (8-13 June 2021) the Carer Hub launched a new resource developed and co-produced by a group of informal family carers. "Carers Collective Creations, Voices of Carers" is a book created following a successful Journaling course at the beginning of the year which lead to a further creative writing class for six weeks. Carers from across the Trust worked with the facilitator to share their experiences of caring through creatively written stories and poems as a way of supporting others in the caring role. The Health Minister, Robin Swann MLA launched the book during Carers Week and every carer on the Trust's Carer Register and all staff who attended the Trust's Leadership Conference have received a copy.

Total Actions in Year 4	18	Total Actions Completed in Year 4	10	Actions rolled over into Year 5	8
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Equality Action Plan - Local Actions

Actions	Measures
We will develop an Equality Training Programme to ensure that our mandatory equality training is delivered to all Trust staff including our medical staff and to those who do not have access to a computer.	• 30 minute E-Learning Training Programme for staff and managers and Equality and Diversity Staff Training Manual available for all health and social care staff. • Local strategy to increase uptake of training. • Improved access to equality and diversity training for those with access to computers. • Improved access to training for staff who do not have access to a computer through provision of the Staff Training Manual. • Improved local uptake of equality training.
Progress Year 4 – Completed in year and on-going Equality training in the Trust is mandatory and must be completed every three years. As part of its wider monitoring of statutory and mandatory training, the Trust has commenced formal compliance reporting on the uptake of Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights; Making a Difference training twice each year. Compliance is monitored through the Trust's governance and accountability frameworks. This eLearning programme is supported by the development and dissemination of a regional training manual for staff who may not have access to a computer. An online version has also been uploaded to Staffnet (the Trust's intranet) enabling central access to those staff who have access to computers. Equality Training is included as part of the Trust's Corporate Welcome Induction Training and during the reporting period, 390 members of staff have attended. Feedback received to date has indicated that this is a valuable training resource.	
We will test effective models of engagement, including the Deliberative Democracy model, to establish an ongoing engagement process to support our Reform and Modernisation Programme (RAMP)	• Deliberative Democracy event in partnership with NIHR and Newcastle University • Analysis of deliberative democracy as method of engagement. • Establishment of 4 locality engagement forums across the Trust area • Evidence of effective engagement in all RAMP projects
Progress Year 4 – Completed in year and ongoing The Trust's <u>Involvement Report for 2021/22</u> outlines the work the Trust is doing to promote personal and public involvement, co-production and patient client experience in the planning and delivery of services and highlights some of the best practice across the organisation.	

Actions	Measures
We will review and update our Good Relations Strategy Action Plan in partnership with representative groups to ensure effective ongoing implementation.	• Review group established • Survey of staff and service users/carers • New Good Relations Action plan developed in partnership with representative organisations
Progress Year 4 – Completed and ongoing The co-produced HSC Good Relations statement is displayed in all HSC facilities.	
We will work in partnership with carers on the implementation of our Carers Support Action Plan to support both family carers and carers in our workforce.	• Ongoing development of carer led Carers Pathway Steering Group • Carers Support Action Plan detailing how carers will be supported • Identification of good practice that already exists • Establish project in partnership with Carers UK to support our staff who are carers using creative and innovative technology.
Progress Year 4 – Completed and on-going The Trust's new coproduced Carer Support Action Plan see attached below. Carer Action Plan 2022-2025.pdf The Carer Hub continues to work in partnership with community and voluntary sector partners to ensure carers receive up to date information. The Carer Hub has established a Carer Network for organisations with specific carer support built in. The network provides an opportunity for organisations to share information to make sure carers are kept up to date. Members include; Barnardos Young Carers Service, Action for Children Young Adult Carers, Mindwise Carer Support, MEAAP, Community Navigators, Sense, Mae Murray Foundation, Causeway Age Concern, Alzheimers Society. The group meets 3 times a year and feedback received has	

Actions	Measures
been positive from other members “thank you Northern Trust for bringing this together, it is great to hear what is available”, “so glad to be part of this Group – thanks to the Trust for hosting, great to hear and share with others.”	
We will work with trade union colleagues to ensure the issues raised in the staff survey are addressed.	• Staff Survey results shared and being used as one of our 3 people measurement tools (including Investors in People and Cultural Assessment Tool) to inform the Corporate People agenda.
Progress Year 4 – Completed and on-going The Trust carried out a Culture Assessment Survey in September 2020 and we will continue to work in partnership with our Trade Union Colleagues to drive forward improvements. A Culture Framework has been designed to promote the elements that support the #TeamNORTH culture, exploring the role of the Organisation, Managers, Individuals and Teams. The Trust has developed a Steering Group to co-ordinate the implementation of an open, just and learning culture across the organisation. We are currently engaging with a range of stakeholders to develop our action plan. Examples of engagement mechanisms include ‘Pull up a chair’ and ‘A day in the life of’. Regional HR policies, including the Disciplinary and Grievance Policy, have been reviewed to incorporate the open, just and learning principles.	

Total Actions in Year 4	5	Total Actions Completed in Year 4	5	Actions rolled over into Year 5	0
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Appendix 2

Disability Action Plan

Year 4 Progress Report

2021/2022

Section 1 – Promoting positive actions and increased participation through training, awareness and resources

Disabled people have told us that promoting well-informed social attitudes to disability is central to securing the right to equality for all disabled people. We are committed to providing training and resources to support our staff in the implementation of our disability duties.

Actions to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people

Action Measure	Description
We will co-design and deliver bespoke disability equality training for frontline staff in partnership with disabled people.	• Consistent staff training and awareness raising, co-designed and delivered, where appropriate, across health and social care. • Co-designed training programme in each Trust that includes specific guidance on communication on disability and autism. • Increased staff awareness on disability equality and how to promote positive attitudes and participation in public life. • Disability equality training that will reflect all disabilities (including hidden, autism, sensory) and will challenge negative stereotypes / attitudes about disabled people.
Progress Year 4 – Complete for this reporting period and ongoing The Making A Difference E-Learning mandatory training is the main training resource which all staff are required to complete. This incorporates disability awareness training and scenario based learning. In addition, HSC Trusts have revised the Staff Disability Etiquette Booklet which includes important information on Autism. This resource is aimed at raising staff awareness. Work to coproduce training with disabled people is complete. A video will provide information on disability equality. Contents have been coproduced and the video is delivered solely by disabled people. We will launch the video in September 2022 and share it regionally both within HSC and with partners.	

Action Measure	Description
We will work with the consortium of mental health organisations and the ECNI to ensure health and social care is signed up to the Mental Health Charter.	• Workplace that welcomes and supports staff with a mental health issue. • Development of best practice models that ensure services are accessible to people with a mental health issue. • Availability of long-term sustainable information and training support that will help managers to identify and offer help and support to staff with a mental health issue.
Progress Year 4 - Completed for this reporting period and ongoing The Trust has signed up to the Mental Health Charter in collaboration with the Equality Commission for NI. The Charter commitments are currently being mainstreamed in the outworking of the Trust's Health, Well-Being and Inclusion Strategy. The Trust promotes and supports the mental health and wellbeing of staff and during the outbreak of Covid 19, many resources to support mental health and wellbeing have been disseminated. The Trust celebrated and promoted Mental Health Awareness Week; 'Nature' was this year's theme, encouraging staff to connect with nature to improve our psychological and emotional health.	
Action Measure	Description
We will continue to support the implementation of the Regional Physical and Sensory Disability Strategy.	• Promotion of regional sensory awareness e-learning programme. • Improve awareness among staff on how to ensure people with sensory impairment have access to information, services and supports.
Progress Year 4 - Rollover to year 5 The Physical and Sensory Disability Strategy is led by HSCB and it has been agreed that the work on the Regional Accessible Information Standard should also be led by a regional organisation rather than a Trust. The HSCB has engaged with DoH and PHA on how this can be taken forward. The Trusts will of course continue to be involved in this work given the commitment made in their respective Disability Action Plans. It is important to note that this will continue to be a priority piece of work, particularly highlighted by the importance of providing clear accessible information as we continue to deal with the pandemic, rebuild HSC services and roll out the Encompass project.	

Actions to encourage participation by disabled people in public life

Action Measure	Description
We will develop for staff a welcome pack with information about accessibility such as: • arrangements for sign language interpreting • provision of auxiliary aids • disability etiquette • alternative formats.	• Accessibility welcome pack available for all disabled service users to improve access to services. • Improved service user and carer experience. • Resource available for staff to support them to meet the needs of disabled service users and carers.
Progress Year 4 – Completed and ongoing The remote sign language interpreting service established during Covid continues to support sign language users with access to services. The service user can download an app to access a free online remote sign language interpreter 24/7. The service user can use this service to contact the NHS111 Northern Ireland COVID19 Helpline, NI COVID19 Community Helpline, GP surgeries, hospitals, dentists, social care services etc. A regional procurement process is ongoing for the provision a Health and Social Care Communication Support Service for People who are d/Deaf, d/Deafblind and Hard of Hearing which will be contracted directly by the Strategic Planning and Performance Group. By April 2023 a specialist Provider will be secured to deliver a range of high quality, accessible, regionally consistent, and sustainable communication supports for people who are d/Deaf, d/Deafblind, or Hard of Hearing across all HSC services. The Northern Health and Social Care Trust becomes the first healthcare Trust in Northern Ireland to partner with AccessAble; the UK's leading provider of detailed disabled-access information. The Trust has worked with AccessAble to develop guides for disabled people to access services in Causeway and Antrim Area Hospitals. AccessAble guides are now available via links on the Trust website, AccessAble website or by mobile application. The official regional launch took place virtually on Tuesday 11 May 2021 and showcased the value of the partnership work. Between 1st May 2021 and 30th April 2022, 18,371 people used the Guides. These people looked at the 84 Detailed Access Guides we have across Antrim Area Hospital and Causeway Hospital 30,538 times. 4.6 million people have used the AccessAble website over the last year.	

Action Measure	Description
We will work with relevant organisations to adopt a communication standard in line with the Accessible Communication Standard in England to ensure information is accessible for all disabled people including those with autism and those with communication disability.	• Establishment of a consistent communication standard across all Trusts. • Improved communication with service users and carers. • Improved experience for people using our services. • Improved accessibility to information and services.
Progress Year 4 - Rollover to year 5 The Physical and Sensory Disability Strategy is led by HSCB and it has been agreed that the work on the Regional Accessible Information Standard should also be led by a regional organisation rather than a Trust. The HSCB has engaged with DoH and PHA on how this can be taken forward. The Trusts will of course continue to be involved in this work given the commitment made in their respective Disability Action Plans. It is important to note that this will continue to be a priority piece of work, particularly highlighted by the importance of providing clear accessible information as we continue to deal with the pandemic, rebuild HSC services and roll out the Encompass project.	

Section 2 – Supporting full participation of disabled people by improving accessibility

We have done much work over the years in enhancing the accessibility of health and social care services but disabled people continue to tell us that barriers to full accessibility remain. We are committed to working with disabled people on the initiatives listed below to improve accessibility for and participation of disabled people when accessing our buildings, information and services.

Actions to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people

Action Measure	Description
We will work with disabled people to make sure we are ready for the introduction of new legislation including: • Mental Capacity • Age Discrimination (Goods/Facilities/Services)	• Actions plans available to ensure readiness for forthcoming legislation
Progress Year 4 - Completed for this reporting period and ongoing The Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016 ('the Act') is a piece of legislation which, when fully implemented, will bring together mental capacity and mental health law for those aged 16 years and over within a single piece of legislation. The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards as set out in the Mental Capacity Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 (MCA) became law on 2nd December 2019 - following an extension by the Department of Health. The Act provides a statutory framework for people who lack capacity to make a decision and people who now have capacity but wish to make preparations for a time in the future when they lack capacity. Where a person who lacks capacity is being deprived of their liberty, the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards must be applied. This new law states that the Trust must make sure that everyone who is currently deprived of their liberty has been reviewed and safeguards have been put in place by a special Trust Panel known as a Trust Authorisation Panel which can authorise a 'deprivation of liberty'. There are different levels of training – according to people's role within the Trust and under the legislation – much of this is mandatory. The NHSCT established a Project Board and an Implementation Group. Much of the work has been led regionally to coordinate implementation and ensure consistency of approach across the region. Regular newsletters ensure there is a high level of awareness.	

Age Discrimination legislation has not progressed.

Action Measure	Description
We will review how we communicate with and seek feedback from disabled people (staff and service users) about health and social care and develop guidance to ensure effective engagement in the future	Introduction of new methods of seeking feedback and communication identified such as Citizen Space. • Use of all available media (including social media) considered. • Guidance available for staff to ensure effective engagement with disabled people. • Improved development of policy and practice by drawing on wide range of views and experiences.
Progress Year 4 - Completed for this reporting period and ongoing Details of the extensive work carried out can be found in our Involvement Report.	

Actions to encourage participation by disabled people in public life

Action Measure	Description
We will work with representative groups to develop an accessibility checklist to ensure that health and social care facilities are considered accessible spaces for all.	• Accessibility checklist for health and social care facilities developed in partnership with ECNI and voluntary and community sector. • Health and social care facilities accessible for service users and carers. • Information from checklist to support prioritisation of programme of accessibility works. • Resource developed to promote best practice in the built environment including autism friendly spaces. • Promotion of best practice when working with colleagues on modernisation projects or new builds. • Guidance available on autism friendly spaces. Promote principles of autism friendly spaces and services.

Progress Year 4 – Completed for this reporting period and ongoing

As detailed above the Northern Trust, in partnership with the Trust's Disability Consultation Panel, became the first healthcare Trust in Northern Ireland to partner with AccessAble to develop guides for disabled people to access services in Causeway and Antrim Area Hospitals. AccessAble guides are now available via links on the Trust website, AccessAble website or by mobile application.

Plans for the New Mental Health Inpatient Service which will be constructed in Antrim, are well underway. A Service User Reference Group was established at the beginning of this project. Service Users and carers who have had direct experience of inpatient services in the Northern Trust continue to be engaged at every level in the project, with members attending an on site visit to the grounds. The Reference Group has been set up to actively influence, support and work together with the Trust on the design and development of the inpatient service on the Antrim Area Hospital site. The overall aim of this group is to ensure that the voice of the service user and carer is heard throughout the rebuild project.

The Northern Area Autism Reference Group makes sure that the services provided for all autistic people are appropriate and equitably, whilst working to reduce any stigma attached to autism. This Group is committed to encouraging best practice and continuous service improvement. The Group has compiled a list of books that have supported them through their journey as an autistic individual and/or a parent/carer, and these will form part of the extension of The Read Yourself Well Initiative into a number of community venues. (Read Yourself Well provides free access to a range of health books in accessible community settings, with the aim of enabling people to better understand and manage their health and wellbeing through self-help reading). Supported by the Northern Area Autism Reference Group, in partnership with NOW Group (an organisation that supports people with autism and learning difficulties into employment) the Trust has become a JAM Card friendly organisation. The JAM Card stands for **Just A Minute** and was developed because service users said they would like a discreet way of telling people that sometimes they need a little extra time and patience. Initially created as card and has recently been developed into an app for smartphones. There are currently approximately 70,000 JAM card users, and over 5,500 JAM Card App users.

The Trust has some services which are accessed through the Central Referral Management System (CRMS): Physical Health and Disability Team, Community Nursing, Learning Disability, Continence Advisory Service and Sensory Support. To improve accessibility for people who are deaf, the Trust now has a signed video in both British and Irish Sign Language on its website explaining how to contact CRMS.

The Northern Trust co-designed a Deaf Awareness Poster with a service user following a complaint. The poster provides guidelines for staff when in the presence of someone who is D/deaf or Hard of Hearing. Posters have been disseminated regionally for display in all HSC facilities to remind staff of the importance of good communication.

A health literacy toolkit has been developed for those who provide health and care information and services. The health literacy logo and strapline 'Take time to ask, make time to listen' was co-developed by service users who wanted people, like them to feel more confident to ask questions so they can better understand their health condition.

Action Measure	Description
We will work to ensure access to all forms of communication support including support for BSL/ISL users, Makaton users and people who have Autism Spectrum Disorder.	• Regional services established for the provision of communication support for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. • Health and social care communication accessible to all service users and carers. • Improved access to services. • Improved communication with service users and carers. • Improved experience for people using our services.

Progress Year 4 – Rollover year 5

In 2013 the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) initiated a regional review of the provision of Communication Support Services in Northern Ireland to determine the most appropriate arrangements for providing the service in the future. The review concluded in January 2016 and proposed that communication support services should be supplied in future on the basis of a regional shared service provided by the Business Services Organisation. In June 2016 a consultation on the recommendations from the regional review of communication support services for people who are deaf or hard of hearing across Northern Ireland was launched. The public consultation supported the recommendation that the Business Services Organisation would be commissioned to supply Regional Communication Support Services (RCSS) for deaf and hard of hearing people who need to access to health and social care across Northern Ireland. The RCSS service development has been driven by the need to improve the accessibility, quality and safety of current communication support to service users as intended by RQIA in its Recommendation in 2011. The RCSS Service Delivery Model has been developed based on the recommendations from the review of communication support in 2016. During the reporting period a regional procurement process was established for the provision a Health and Social Care Communication Support Service for People who are d/Deaf, d/Deafblind and Hard of Hearing which will be contracted directly by the Strategic Planning and Performance Group. By April 2023 a specialist Provider will be secured to deliver a range of high quality, accessible, regionally

consistent, and sustainable communication supports for people who are d/Deaf, d/Deafblind, or Hard of Hearing across all HSC services.

A new remote sign language interpreting service has been set up, primarily to ensure that our service users have access to health and social care appointments during the pandemic. The service user can download an app to access a free online remote sign language interpreter 24/7. The service user can use this service to contact the NHS111 Northern Ireland COVID19 Helpline, NI COVID19 Community Helpline, GP surgeries, hospitals, dentists, social care services etc. This new service was published on our social media and disseminated through our established networks. We also wrote out to service users who had previously booked a sign language interpreter through our services.

Action Measure	Description
We will join the Equality Commission's 'Every Customer Counts' initiative to try and ensure that services and the physical environment are accessible.	• Public commitment to 'Every Customer Counts' and formal sign up by all Trusts being a campaign signatory. • Health and social care services accessible and open to all potential service users and carers. Raised awareness of three good practice guides to illustrate reasonable adjustments which have been made by various service providers in a range of sectors.

Progress Year 4 – Completed for this reporting period

Every Customer Counts is an initiative developed by the Equality Commission to help organisations to make their services more accessible and inclusive to all our service users, patients, visitors and carers. The aims are closely linked to HSC Trusts regional values.

The Northern Trust, in partnership with the Trust's Disability Consultation Panel, completed and launched, on 11 May 2021, access guides for Antrim Area Hospital and Causeway Hospital. AccessAble, a third party provider, who was appointed in March 2020 to survey and document all aspects of accessibility at the two hospital sites, completed the surveying and documentation of all aspects of accessibility at the two acute hospital sites in Antrim and Coleraine during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. This was managed through close working and co-operation with Estate Services. The detailed guides are available to access both through the website and as a mobile application and are offered in a wide range of accessible formats.

Section 3 – Supporting full participation of disabled people in our workforce

We know that there continues to be gaps between the proportion of disabled people employed in health and social care compared with non-disabled people. We are committed to ensuring that disabled people are afforded equality of opportunity in respect of entering and continuing employment in health and social care. We will work in partnership with disabled people to make sure our employment policies and practices and working environments are as inclusive and accessible as possible. Please note the nature of the actions detailed below will relate directly to participation by disabled people in public life.

Action Measure	Description
We will work in partnership with Recruitment Shared Services to promote a review of recruitment and selection processes to promote equality and ensure any barriers that may discourage a disabled person from applying are identified and mitigated action as appropriate.	• Barriers to recruitment and selection process improved. • Best practice model developed in relation to online recruitment. • Increased applications from people with a disability.
Progress Year 4 – Completed for this reporting period	
The Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy 2026: Delivering for Our People sets out ambitious goals for a workforce that will match the requirements of a transformed health and social care system. It also addresses the need to tackle serious challenges with supply, recruitment and retention of staff. The Strategy document includes a very detailed look at the workforce issues and challenges facing health and social care in Northern Ireland. Theme 1 in the Strategy is about Attracting, Recruiting and Retaining and includes the commitment to set up and roll out a regional HSC careers service to help ensure a good supply of people in the future; to inform and excite people on the range of jobs and professions and to publicise health and social care as a career option. Trusts have been working collaboratively to improve access for those seeking employment with the Trusts. Examples include: • Improvements in website accessibility – providing greater ease of access for job applicants. • Production of a series of recruitment - How to Guides. • Outreach measures – regional and local career events to promote the HSC as an employer of choice.	

The new Disability Equality Policy and Reasonable Adjustment Toolkit was agreed regionally with Trade Union partners and introduced within each Trust. The NHSCT is currently developing a communication plan to raise awareness among staff and managers. The Disability Sector, ECNI, managers and staff informed this resource. The Tool Kit provides very practical advice for both managers and staff when managing disability in the work place and will be used across the region as a resource to aid best practice and understanding of the out workings of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Action Measure

We will work with staff, schools and disability organisations to promote health and social care as a disability friendly employer.

Description

- **Development of our work placements and employability programmes.**
- **Improved awareness of the Trust as a disability friendly employer through increased work placements and promotion at careers conventions.**

Progress Year 4 – Rollover year 5

Due to Covid-19 pressures and the priority to maintain essential service provision progress has been affected. We will further consider this work stream as soon as business activities resume and Trust working groups can reconvene.

Action Measure

We will review opportunities for staff to disclose their disability.

Description

- **Staff encouraged to declare that they have a disability.**
- **Promotion of the benefits of disclosure and importance of monitoring.**
- **Increased awareness of the importance of staff keeping personal equality monitoring records up to date (via HRPTS).**
- **Increased staff disclosure and staff supported.**
- **Robust equality monitoring statistics to ensure meaningful analysis to support decision making and benchmark workforce profile.**

Progress Year 4 – Completed

A staff information booklet entitled 'Should I Disclose to My Employer that I have a Disability' has now been produced setting out the benefits of disclosure. Whilst disclosure is voluntary, there are clear benefits for an employee in being open and transparent about their disability status. Firstly, it enables an employer, in this instance HSC Trusts, to provide for timely and practical implementation of reasonable adjustment in the workplace for new or existing employees with a disability. This is particularly important where there are

health and safety considerations. This staff information booklet draws on best practice advice provided by Disability Action. This booklet has now been launched alongside the Trust's Disability Equality Policy and Reasonable Adjustment Toolkit.

Action Measure	Description
We will work in partnership with disabled people and Occupational Health Services to ensure that disabled people are supported to continue in employment.	• Promotion of revised best practice guidance on employing persons with a disability. • Development and delivery of bespoke equality and human rights training to Occupational Health staff. • Awareness campaign to highlight the benefits of referral to Occupational Health - for staff and for managers. • Improved support for disabled staff. • More robust reasonable adjustment process.
Progress Year 4 – Completed and ongoing The new Disability Tool Kit includes a complete section on Reasonable Adjustments in the Workplace to ensure managers fully understand their legal responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The Toolkit was launched through a series of HR Clinics for staff and managers to assist in implementation and to signpost support and further guidance. Promotion of the role of Occupational Health in helping to identify and support staff and managers implement reasonable adjustments. Unfortunately, due to Covid pressures, which have significantly affected Occupational Health resources, some of the actions have had to be deferred. We are currently reviewing our regional attendance management framework recognising the importance of equality principles and in particular the reasonable adjustment duty.	
Action Measure	Description
We will develop guidance on supporting people with autism in employment in partnership with representative organisations.	• Co-designed guidance produced which will raise awareness among staff of reasonable adjustments for people with autism. • Promotion of guidance across health and social care.

Progress Year 4 – Completed and ongoing

The Northern Trust's ASD Service Improvement Coordinator is working with HR to link resources to support people with autism to the Trust's new Reasonable Adjustment Toolkit. The Northern Trust's ASD Service provided a neurodiversity session and autistic wellbeing session and additional autism specific training for managers will be offered this year.

Total Actions in Year 4	15	Total Actions Completed in Year 4	11	Actions ongoing into Year 5	4
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Disability Action Plan - Local Actions

Action Measure	Description
We will review the current processes and systems available for booking appointments for outpatient clinics and identify methods to improve accessibility for people with sensory disability.	• Review group established – membership to include service users • Review of current processes and systems used in the Trust to check if these meet the needs of the service users • Improved access for disability groups to booking systems in acute services • Improved patient experience and outcomes • Patient confidentiality maintained
Progress Year 4 – Rollover Year 5	
The HSCB will lead on developing an Accessible Information Standard - in line with the Accessible Information Standard in England - for the provision of appropriate personalised, accessible information to disabled people by health and social care organisations. The Trust has signed up to the ECNI 'Every Customer Counts' initiative. Ongoing engagement with the Trust's Disability Consultation Panel ensures the implementation and monitoring of this initiative. The Trust continues to promote the best practice advice and guidance to staff on communication is accessible. "Making Communication Accessible for All – A Guide for Health and Social Care Staff" was developed by Trusts, in partnership with disabled	

Action Measure	Description
people, through the ongoing implementation of Trusts' Disability Action Plans. The guidance is available on our website and staffnet and we continue to highlight the important of accessible communication during training. It is important to note that many of the current information systems in health and social care present a challenge for recording accessible communication needs of service users. While much work has been done to attempt to address this the Encompass programme provides the opportunity to ensure communication needs can be recorded centrally and can be accessed by all HSC staff providing treatment and care. The Trust's Disability Consultation Panel has engaged with Encompass programme to ensure the voice of disabled service users are heard and their needs are integrated into the new system. It is a legal requirement to make your website and apps accessible to all service users and much work has been done by our Communication Team to improve accessibility in our digital communications, starting with our website to ensure it meets regulations.	
We will review our library of accessible information and ensure staff are aware of the availability of alternative formats.	• Availability of material reviewed • Gaps in material identified • New material in alternative formats sourced from other Trusts and organisations • Promote availability of translation library • Increased awareness among staff of need for alternative formats and availability of library of material.

Progress Year 4 - Completed and ongoing

The Trust's library of accessible information is reviewed on an ongoing basis.

We will work in partnership with our Disability Consultation Panel to review our current methods of involving disabled people and develop new guidelines for staff.

- **Develop baseline of current methods of involvement used**
- **Engage with disabled people specifically when developing our Personal and Public Involvement Strategy to ensure their specific needs are addressed**
- **PPI Strategy that identifies the most effective methods of involving disabled people in decision making**

Progress Year 4- Completed and ongoing

Ongoing engagement with the Trust's Disability Consultation Panel ensures the implementation and monitoring of this initiative including,

- AccessAble – worked in partnership with the Trust's Disability Consultation Panel to create access guides for Antrim Area Hospital and Causeway Hospital. Virtual Launch took place on 11 May 2021.
- Encompass – Epic, global leaders in technology to develop an integrated digital care record for Northern Ireland enabling everyone involved with a person's care to work from a single health and care record. DCP Panel members involved in the encompass programme as service user reps

Details of the extensive work carried out can be found in our [Involvement Report](#)

Action Measure	Description
We will Review our Disability Equality Training in partnership with disabled people to ensure that it reflects awareness of and our commitment to the 'disability duties'.	• Training review group established • Current training programme reviewed • Identification of good practice that already exists • Model of co-delivery established • Increased awareness among staff of disability duties
Progress Year 4 – Rollover to year 5 The Trust's Disability Consultation Panel has reviewed and amended the Disability Equality Training. All face-to-face training stood down during reporting period. Work to coproduce training video with disabled people is complete. A video will provide information on disability equality. Contents have been coproduced and the video is delivered solely by disabled people. We will launch the video in September 2022 and share it regionally both within HSC and with partners.	
We will work with sign language users in the Trust area to ensure a smooth transition into the new regional sign language interpreting service.	• Support BSO in development of new service • Provide guidance for Trust staff on new procedures • Inform service users of new process
Progress Year 4 –Rollover Year 5 During the reporting period a regional procurement process was established for the provision a Health and Social Care Communication Support Service for People who are d/Deaf, d/Deafblind and Hard of Hearing which will be contracted directly by the Strategic Planning and Performance Group. By April 2023 a specialist Provider will be secured to deliver a range of high quality, accessible, regionally consistent, and sustainable communication supports for people who are d/Deaf, d/Deafblind, or Hard of Hearing across all HSC services. The Trust continued to participate in all the meetings held with sign language service users and a range of organisations and individuals across all of the Trust areas to discuss the new service model.	
We will provide training for managers to provide them with the skills and resources to support members of their team who have a disability.	• Review current training in partnership with Disability Consultation Panel members • Survey staff with a disability to identify how support could be provided • New training developed and 4 sessions provided for managers each year • Increased awareness among managers of the range of ways to support staff with a disability

Action Measure	Description
Progress Year 4 – Completed and ongoing	
The new Disability Equality Policy and Reasonable Adjustment Toolkit was agreed regionally with Trade Union partners and introduced within each Trust in 2021. The NHSCT are currently developing a communication plan to raise awareness of staff and managers. This resource was informed by the Disability Sector, ECNI, managers and staff across HSC as well as Equality practitioners. The Tool Kit provides very practical advice for both managers and staff when managing disability in the work place and will be used across the region as a resource to aid best practice and understanding of the out workings of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.	

Total Actions in Year 4	6	Total Actions Completed in Year 4	3	Actions ongoing into Year 5	3
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