



Progress Update Equality and Disability Action Plans – Year 4 Action Measures  
Section 2 - S75 Annual Progress Report Refers

Equality Action Plan  
Regional Actions  
2018 – 2023

Progress Report  
Year 4: 2021-2022

**To be noted: This reporting period coincided with the Covid Pandemic therefore some of the actions within have had to be carried over to year 5.**

## 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A regional toolkit will be available for policy and decision makers.</li> <li>• More robust and regionally consistent screening/EQIAs.</li> </ul>
<b>Progress Year 4 – Completed for this reporting period and on-going in Year 5</b>	
Following on from ECNI recommendations the Trust’s current screening template is not in a fully accessible format – a new requirement for all published information. Online resources and a regional screening toolkit will be provided on Trust intranet for policy/service more comprehensive and timely completion of screening templates. The Trust will adopt in year 5 the ECNI screening template to ensure ease of completion and maximum accessibility when published on the Trust website. We will provide on-line screening training for policy/service leads on new toolkit– to include S75 and Rural Needs.	
Action Measure	Description
We will review our staff training to ensure best practice is followed when screening and conducting EQIAs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to date training programme for all policy makers across health and social care will be made available to ensure best practice.</li> <li>• Skilled staff, policy leads and decision makers.</li> <li>• Consistent and effective approach in the training programme across all Trusts (targets to be set).</li> <li>• Effective compliance with the S75 Equality Duties.</li> </ul>
<b>Progress Year 4 – Completed and Rollover Year 5</b>	

Given the pandemic the decision has been made to stand down much of our face to face training. The online 'Making a Difference' training is still available for staff and compliance continues to be monitored. The Trust's Equality Team continues to provide policy leaders and decision makers across the Trust with specific advice and support on best practice in screening and potential EQIAs.

HSC Trust Equality Units continue to provide policy leaders and decision makers across HSC with specific advice and support on best practice in screening and EQIAs. The roles of Trust Boards and Executive Management Teams are essential in ensuring that a meaningful and effective approach to implementing the Section 75 duties and have been provided with a Regional HSC Equality, Human Rights and Good Relations manual to ensure leaders, senior managers and decision makers in HSC Trusts demonstrate good governance and best practice in equality screening and equality impact assessments.

<b>Action Measure</b>	<b>Description</b>
<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One regional event to raise awareness of potential implications of the new legislation on health and social care provision.</li> <li>• Better understanding amongst staff on the implications of the legislation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Progress Year 4 - Ongoing Rollover Year 5</b></p> <p>Rolled forward as legislation not yet in place.</p>	

## 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
<p>We will review our equality training programme in collaboration with service users, carers and their advocates.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent staff training and awareness raising, co-produced and delivered, where appropriate, across health and social care.</li> <li>• Raised awareness among staff of the best way to promote equality of opportunity for service users.</li> <li>• Each Trust to identify a process to monitor e-learning.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Progress Year 4 - Completed for this reporting period</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>We carried out a review of this training programme, which has 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.</p> <p>Regional guidance was reviewed and amended 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” was disseminated to Trust Board members.</p> <p>HSC Trusts engaged in an online event with representatives from Community Relations Council, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and staff and stakeholders from ethnic minority communities, to co-design a regional HSC Good Relations statement that was unequivocal and easily understood in our joint commitment to actively address and challenge racism and sectarianism in all its forms. This has been developed into a poster and 4000 posters have been printed and disseminated for display across the 6 HSC Trusts.</p> <p>An Assistance Dog Etiquette poster was regionally designed for display in appropriate Trust areas.</p> <p>The Trust’s Equality Team continues to provide staff with information, training and resources to ensure that they have the appropriate</p>	

level of knowledge, expertise and skill to mainstream Section 75 duties

**Action Measure**

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.

**Description**

- 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 and roll forward for Year 5**

Work is underway with the HSC Trusts, Rainbow Project and Transgender NI and Trade Union colleagues to co-develop guidance for health and social care staff to ensure LGBT service users have access to services. This will be informed by a webinar/lunchtime engagement session facilitated by Fidelma Carolan, Chair of Regional HSC LGBT Network with a presentation from Alexa Moore, Transgender NI and Trust staff from the Trans community to discuss their experience in the workplace. This guidance will cover good practice, etiquette, use of pronouns, and responsive service provision and employment.

**Action Measure**

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.

**Description**

- 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, ongoing and roll forward for Year 5**

The Trust has worked with the Public Health Agency to provide translated public health materials related to Covid 19, including

infection control and information about the vaccine.

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.

In Spring 2021, the Trust established a Multi-Cultural Forum to support our colleagues and to identify ways in which the Trust can actively meet this commitment, working in partnership with internal and external stakeholders. Our Chairman, Chief Executive and Directors have attended the Forum to reiterate the Trust commitment to supporting our colleagues at this time and in the future.

Feedback from participants has been positive. The Trust is currently taking forward a Reverse Mentoring Pilot project during this reporting period. The project is being evaluated and it is hoped to expand this initiative across the Trust during the next year.

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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training on a human rights based approach to complaints management delivered to all staff who deal with complaints.</li> <li>• Complaints resolution process that embeds human rights values and principles.</li> <li>• Improved satisfaction with health and social care complaints management process.</li> </ul>

**Progress Year 4 - Rollover Year 5**

HSC Trusts have decided to re-prioritise this training with a focus instead on residential care for vulnerable people. HSC Trusts engaged with the NIHRC to commission this training and they have 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. (2 sessions to be designed & delivered by March 2022).

The training will be based on case studies provided by the Trusts, to ensure that it is meaningful, realistic and impactful to participants.

Unfortunately the training did not take place within the reporting period and the Commission has indicated that they would not have sufficient resources to take this forward in this reporting period. Trusts have written to the Commission to underpin the value and importance of such a training session for HSC staff.

Action Measure	Description
We will hold an annual event to showcase best practice in equality and diversity within the health and social care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An annual Equality and Diversity event delivered.</li> <li>• Health and social care viewed as a sector that promotes equality and diversity.</li> <li>• Improved awareness of equality and diversity best practice models and</li> </ul>

	shared across health and social care and beyond.
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**Progress Year 4 - Completed and roll forward for Year 5**

The Trust raised awareness of a number of events during this reporting period including Pride Week, Good Relations Week and International Day of Disability. The Trust also celebrated the first anniversary of the launch of the Multi-Cultural Forum Spring 2022. HSC Trusts did not have a regional showcase event during this period but will do so in the next reporting period.

## 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pay structure that ensures fairness and equity in pay and reward arrangements in line with any new legislation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Progress Year 4– Rollover Year 5</b></p> <p>Legislation has yet to be enacted by the NI Assembly. Further developments in this area have been halted due to the pandemic and we await information on the enactment of legislation within NI.</p>	
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scope in year 1 opportunities and availability for our employability schemes.</li> <li>• Employability scheme available to other marginalised S75 groups.</li> <li>• Improved employment opportunities for marginalised S75 groups.</li> <li>• Access to employment is improved for marginalised S75 groups.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Progress Year 4 –Rollover Year 5</b></p> <p>Due to Covid-19 pressures and the priority to maintain essential service provision progress has been affected. The 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.</p>	



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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent regional approach to ensuring all health and social care environments are welcoming to everyone.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Progress Year 4 – Completed Roll over to year 5</b></p> <p>HSC Good Relations statement poster has been shared across Trust wards and facilities for display for both services users and staff. The Trust has received very good feedback on the poster and also received additional requests for posters. The Trust refers to and promotes the ECNI ‘Promoting a Good and Harmonious Working Environment’ guide for employers and employees.</p>	
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best practice model established in each Trust with support mechanisms for staff experiencing Domestic Violence/Abuse.</li> <li>• Improved support for staff who are victims of Domestic Violence/Abuse.</li> <li>• Raised awareness among staff of the best way to support colleagues who are victims of Domestic Violence/Abuse.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Progress Year 4 – Completed Rollover to year 5</b></p> <p>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 leads for Domestic Violence also shared their learning and experience in a roundtable discussion with stakeholders across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, which was convened by the Home Office.</p>	
Action Measure	Description
We will make sure that our staff who are carers are supported in the workplace so that they can continue with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent regional approach established to support carers in our workforce.</li> <li>• Improved support for staff who are carers.</li> </ul>

their caring role.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raised awareness among staff of the best way to support staff who are carers.</li> <li>• To pilot digital resources for carers and 'jointly app' carers app in Northern Trust area with learning disseminated regionally.</li> </ul>
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**Progress Year 4 - Completed for this reporting period**

The Trust Carer Support Service operates to develop a support infrastructure for carers known to the Trust. It is a central point of contact for carers to receive advice, information, signposting and referral to other relevant services. The Carer Support Service continues to support carers through a number of services including carer information sessions, wellbeing events, activities and short break programmes.

Any staff member can avail of these services and can request a Carer Conversation. This intervention provides them with time to talk to someone about the impact of the caring role on their everyday lives. As a result of identified need, they are entitled to a small grant that will assist them in having a break from the caring role or to help with activities that will assist to maintain their health and wellbeing.

The Service has organised many online information and activity sessions by zoom during the pandemic for carers registered with the Service. These have included sessions on coping with anxiety and stress, mindfulness and self-advocacy and carer rights, including working carers' rights. Activities have included online gardening, facials, and watercolour sessions, sketching for fun, cookery, Boxercise, Chi-me and craft. These have been offered at various times of the day and at weekends in order for working carers to avail of sessions.

<b>Total Actions in Year 4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>Total Actions Completed in Year 4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>Actions ongoing into Year 5</b>	<b>4</b>
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Disability Action Plan  
Regional Actions  
2018 – 2023

Progress Report  
Year 4: 2021 - 22

## 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
<p>We will co-design and deliver bespoke disability equality training for frontline staff in partnership with disabled people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent staff training and awareness raising, co-designed and delivered, where appropriate, across health and social care.</li> <li>• Co-designed training programme in each Trust that includes specific guidance on communication on disability and autism.</li> <li>• Increased staff awareness on disability equality and how to promote positive attitudes and participation in public life.</li> <li>• Disability equality training that will reflect all disabilities (including hidden, autism, sensory) and will challenge negative stereotypes / attitudes about disabled people.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Progress Year 4 – Completed</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Work has been ongoing to regionally coproduce training with disabled people. Progress is not as far advanced as originally intended due to Covid-19 pandemic and associated priorities. A regional programme will be finalised incorporating input and involvement from people with disabilities and it is planned that this will be rolled out in Year 5. This will complement existing resources such as the ‘Making Communication Accessible for All’ Guide and the Regional HSC Disability Toolkit.</p>	

Action Measure	Description
<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workplace that welcomes and supports staff with a mental health issue.</li> <li>• Development of best practice models that ensure services are accessible to people with a mental health issue.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Progress Year 4 - Completed for this reporting period and ongoing</b></p> <p>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 and Wellbeing Strategy and via the Trust Livewell site.</p> <p>The Trust has taken steps to promote and support the mental health and wellbeing of staff and during the outbreak of Covid 19 including signposting staff to the many resources available to support their mental health and wellbeing. This has included the HR Covid-19 Workforce Helpline, Psychological Services helpline, and access to coaching sessions, care packages for staff, wobble and quiet rooms available at ward level and spaces for listening opportunities. The Trust also has staff and resilience training and crucial conversation support.</p> <p>Staff have access to online training and webinars looking at how to cope with the symptoms of Menopause, preparing for retirement, and advice on financial planning in the current economic climate.</p>	

### Actions to encourage participation by disabled people in public life

Action Measure	Description
<p>We will develop for staff a welcome pack with information about accessibility such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• arrangements for sign language interpreting</li> <li>• provision of auxiliary aids</li> <li>• disability etiquette</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility welcome pack available for all disabled service users to improve access to services.</li> <li>• Improved service user and carer experience.</li> <li>• Resource available for staff to support them to meet the needs of disabled service users and carers.</li> </ul>

- Alternative formats.

### **Progress Year 4 – Rollover to year 5**

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. The Trust also works with RNID for provision of Sign Language Interpreters.

When the pandemic first hit we were provided with a lot of vital information about how to stay safe. Information about the Coronavirus, guidance on staying home and social distancing along with information about the vaccine process was just some of the information we received. This information was translated into various languages, put into easy read format and provided in alternative formats. This information was made available on the Trust i-connect and website and shared regionally.

The Equality Team provide advice and support on disability etiquette, how to access interpreters and written translation services and also share the Making Communication Accessible resource.

Action Measure	Description
<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of a consistent communication standard across all Trusts.</li> <li>• Improved communication with service users and carers.</li> <li>• Improved experience for people using our services.</li> <li>• Improved accessibility to information and services.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Progress Year 4 - Rollover to year 5</b></p> <p>Work had progressed during Year 4 with HSC Trusts, RNIB, RNID and Speech and Language Therapists to look at the development of an accessible communication standard. This work did not progress due to competing priorities and pressures associated with Covid.</p>	

## 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
<p>We will work with disabled people to make sure we are ready for the introduction of new legislation including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental Capacity</li> <li>• Age Discrimination (Goods/Facilities/Services)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actions plans available to ensure readiness for forthcoming legislation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Progress Year 4 - Completed for this reporting period and waiting for legislation in year 5</b></p> <p>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 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2019 - following an extension by the Department of Health.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>This new law states that by December 2020, 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. Simulation training was convened for practitioners to help them understand the complexities and intricacies of the legislation and its implementation. A Mental Capacity Implementation Team has been established along with</p>	



appointment of Short Term Detention authorisers and coordination of Authorisation Panels. Much of the work has been led regionally to coordinate implementation and ensure consistency of approach across the region. Regular regional meetings are convened with the Department of Health and Trusts. Regular newsletters are produced to ensure there is a high level of awareness.

Unfortunately the Age Discrimination Legislation has not progressed and action will be rolled forward to year 5.

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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of all available media (including social media) considered.</li> <li>• Guidance available for staff to ensure effective engagement with disabled people.</li> <li>• Improved development of policy and practice by drawing on wide range of views and experiences.</li> </ul>

**Progress Year 4 - Completed for this reporting period and ongoing**

The Trust is committed to the principles of the HSCB Co-Production-Guide. This guide illustrates the commitment to promoting partnerships between people and Health and Social Care and promoting health and wellbeing with people, for people, and by people, This includes people with a disability and representative organisations.

### 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility checklist for health and social care facilities developed in partnership with ECNI and voluntary and community sector.</li> <li>• Health and social care facilities accessible for service users and carers.</li> <li>• Information from checklist to support prioritisation of programme of accessibility works.</li> <li>• Resource developed to promote best practice in the built environment including autism friendly spaces.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of best practice when working with colleagues on modernisation projects or new builds.</li> <li>• Guidance available on autism friendly spaces. Promote principles of autism friendly spaces and services.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Progress Year 4– Completed for this reporting period and ongoing for year 5</b></p> <p>The Trust is starting to work with AccessAble, a third party provider, to potentially survey and document all aspects of accessibility at the SET main acute hospital sites ie UHD, LVH, The Downe and Ards Community Hospital. This will result in detailed access guides for these sites to aid all patients and clients as they plan their visit to the Trust.</p> <p>These surveys will be managed through close working and co-operation with our Trust Estate Services. The detailed guides will be available to access both through the Trust website and as a mobile app and will be offered in a wide range of accessible formats.</p>	
<p><b>Action Measure</b></p>	<p><b>Description</b></p>
<p>We will join the Equality Commission’s ‘Every Customer Counts’ initiative to try and ensure that services and the physical environment are accessible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public commitment to ‘Every Customer Counts’ and formal sign up by all Trusts being a campaign signatory.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Progress Year 4 – Completed and ongoing for Year 5</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>The Trust is also currently working with AccessAble, as noted above, to potentially survey and document all aspects of accessibility at the SET main acute hospital sites ie UHD, LVH, The Downe and Ards Community Hospital. This will result in detailed access guides for these sites to aid all patients and clients as they plan their visit to the Trust.</p>	

### 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
<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barriers to recruitment and selection process improved.</li> <li>• Best practice model developed in relation to online recruitment.</li> <li>• Increased applications from people with a disability.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Progress Year 4 – Completed for this reporting period</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Trusts have been working collaboratively to improve access for those seeking employment with the Trusts. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvements in website accessibility – providing greater ease of access for job applicants.</li> <li>• Production of a series of recruitment - How to Guides.</li> </ul>	

- Outreach measures – regional and local career events to promote the HSC as an employer of choice

The new Disability Toolkit was agreed regionally with Trade Union partners and introduced within each Trust in 2021. This resource was informed with input from 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.

Action Measure	Description
We will work with staff, schools and disability organisations to promote health and social care as a disability friendly employer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of our work placements and employability programmes.</li> <li>• Improved awareness of the Trust as a disability friendly employer through increased work placements and promotion at careers conventions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Progress Year 4 – Completed</b></p> <p>HSC Trusts continue to work with the Disability Sector to promote itself as an Equal Opportunity Employer. The Trust works with partners including RNIB, RNID, and Disability Action to try to enhance employment opportunities for people with disabilities.</p> <p>All Trusts are actively exploring ways to encourage the participation of persons with a disability in the workplace including the Access to Work and the Workable Scheme. Examples include experiential job placements, job shadowing and the Workable Programme ‘Positive Action’ approach.</p>	
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of revised best practice guidance on employing persons with a disability.</li> <li>• Development and delivery of bespoke equality and human rights training to Occupational Health staff.</li> <li>• Awareness campaign to highlight the benefits of referral to Occupational Health - for staff and for managers.</li> <li>• Improved support for disabled staff.</li> <li>• More robust reasonable adjustment process.</li> </ul>

**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.  
 Promotion of the role of Occupational Health in helping to identify and support staff and managers implement reasonable adjustments.

<b>Action Measure</b>	<b>Description</b>
We will develop guidance on supporting people with autism in employment in partnership with representative organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-designed guidance produced which will raise awareness among staff of reasonable adjustments for people with autism.</li> <li>• Promotion of guidance across health and social care.</li> </ul>

**Progress Year 4 - Completed for this reporting period or Ongoing Rollover Year 5**

A first draft of guidance for staff in relation to best practice both in terms of neuro-diversity in the workplace and service delivery has been drafted. Engagement with staff in autism services and the community and voluntary sector was paused due to ongoing Covid priorities. A working group with key stakeholders is planned in the coming year in order to progress this piece of work.

<b>Total Actions in Year 4</b>	12	<b>Total Actions Completed in Year 4</b>	10	<b>Actions ongoing into Year 5</b>	2
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