



**Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties  
Annual Progress Report 2023-2024**

**Contact:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme</li></ul>	Name: Susan Thompson Telephone: 07525 898850 Email: <a href="mailto:susan.thompson@setrust.hscni.net">susan.thompson@setrust.hscni.net</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan</li></ul>	Name: Susan Thompson Telephone: 07525 898850 Email: <a href="mailto:susan.thompson@setrust.hscni.net">susan.thompson@setrust.hscni.net</a>

Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found by clicking [here](#)

**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 implementing Equality Scheme commitments and Disability Action Plans.**

**This report reflects progress made between April 2023 and March 2024**

## **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 2023-24, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.

*Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.*

This is the 17th Annual Progress Report on Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) prepared by the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (the Trust). As with previous reports, the Trust has used the template provided by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

The Trust has also produced a more accessible and user-friendly publication in the form of the Equality and Human Rights Newsletter to highlight some of the innovative work that the Trust advances to promote equality of opportunity and good relations and in addition the work to promote the disability duties.

The report also goes to provide assurance to Trust Board and the Executive Management Team on how the Trust has fulfilled its legislative duties and in many instances, gone beyond compliance to achieve best practice and therein improve outcomes for patients, service users, carers and families and our staff.

The South Eastern Trust is an employer of approximately 16,268 staff (including bank staff) providing integrated health and social care to the population of the Trust and beyond, and we are committed to instilling equality, good relations and human rights at the heart of all that we do, in service provision, employment and procurement.

The Trust has compiled Part A of this report to provide an overview of the work undertaken to progress statutory implementation of its Equality Scheme. It is important to note that the content within this annual report does not comprise an exhaustive list of all the work that the Trust undertakes to address inequalities. The Trust has as part of its core business the aim to improve health and wellbeing and to address inequalities and therefore not all the activities which address inequalities will be detailed in this report.

#### **Part A:**

Section 1: highlights the range of corporate work to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

Section 2 is based on progress to date in regard to our Equality Action Plan (2018-2023). Full progress update on our Equality Action Plan for 2023-2024 is appended for ease of reference and details achievements in this year. (See Appendix 1).

It then goes on to illustrate our compliance with the Trust's Equality Scheme including details on Screening and Equality Impact Assessments, Consultation, Training, Information Provision, Access, Monitoring and Complaints.

Section 3 of Part A "Looking Forward" seeks to lay out what work will be taken forward in regard to compliance with the Equality Scheme in the next reporting period.

**Part B** is appended (Appendix 1) and relates wholly to compliance with our legislative duties under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order (DDO): to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and to encourage their full participation in public life. This corresponds to our Disability Action Plan (2018-2023) and what we have achieved in the year 2023-2024.

## **Policy and Service Delivery Developments**

### **Action Based Plan and Disability Action Plan 2018-2023**

The Trust has continued to work in partnership with fellow Health and Social Care organisations to deliver the actions, as consulted on and agreed, in the five-year Equality and Disability Action Plans 2018-2023. Further detail of the progress on these two Action Plans can be found in Appendices 1 and 2.

The six HSC Trusts have regionally revised and our Five Year Equality Action Plan 2024-2029 and Disability Action Plan 2024- 2029. To inform these new Plans, the six Trusts have worked collaboratively to collate available research and data to identify emerging themes.

These themes were shared with a range of stakeholders at regional listening events in June, July and October 2022. Stakeholders included service users, carers, staff and trade unions representatives. We drafted our New Plans based on our consideration of the research and the feedback from the listening events hopefully to make a real and meaningful difference to the lives of people in Northern Ireland by considering the inequalities they experience and to better promote equality of opportunity.

The Trusts organised a Joint Regional Consultation process, which ran for 16 weeks from 5 June 2023 to the end of September 2023. Trusts then continued to work together to facilitate two consultation listening events via virtual and face-to-face engagement sessions in September 2023. The Trusts then took the necessary time to carefully consider feedback, amend the Plans and develop the Consultation Feedback Report, prior to bringing forward for approval.

The Plans have now been taken through the Trust approval process of the People and Culture Committee and Trust Board in May 2024. The Plans will be shared with local and regional stakeholders. Easy Read versions have also been produced.

Work has commenced on Actions identified for Year 1, which will be reported on in the 2024- 2025 Annual Progress Report.

## **Health and Social Care Values**

A key action from the Regional HSC Collective Leadership Strategy (2017) was the development and embedding of a set of values and associated behaviours for everyone working in health and social care. There was an HSC extensive communication and engagement process last year, involving staff and the people who use our services right across the HSC system in Northern Ireland. This resulted in four values and associated behaviours for everybody working in, and using, Health and Social Care.

The HSC 'Values for All' are Working Together, Excellence, Compassion, Openness, and Honesty. These values are reflective of the principles established and commitments made in our Equality Scheme, Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan. The Trust has also developed its People Plan, which includes a pledge to each other to improve the experience of everyone working in the Trust. The People Plan has five people priorities; Belonging, Wellbeing, Growing, Empowering and Leading.

## **Multi-Cultural and Beliefs Handbook**

The Multi-Cultural and Beliefs Handbook is available on the Trust Intranet and is promoted during Equality and Human Rights staff training. The Handbook has been updated to include information on the Roma Community and is subject to ongoing review to reflect changes in the Trust population and current migration trends. This has proved to be a very useful resource for staff. Please see link below:

[Multi-Cultural and Beliefs Handbook](#)

## **Provision of Face to Face and Telephone Interpreting**

The Trust continues to provide a robust face to face and telephone interpreting service for patients and clients who do not speak English as a first language. This is a part of the Trust's commitment to ensuring and promoting equality of access to all our services.

During 2023-24 the total number of face to face and telephone interpreting episodes was 8448 The top four languages for the year of 2023-24 are Arabic, Polish, Bulgarian, Lithuanian and Russian

To support this work the Trust has, in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Health & Social Care Interpreting Service (NIHSCIS) Manager, delivered 2 Working Well with Interpreters training sessions all online over Zoom. This was extremely successful as we have 40 members of staff who attended these online sessions from all Trust facilities. The top five location requests for an interpreter in the 2023-2029 period were: Maternity (Ulster), Physiotherapy, Health Visiting and Radiology.

The Trust has continued to utilise the advantages of virtual training to increase access for staff from all sectors and geographical areas. The Trust was the first in NI to deliver

this training virtually and it has been extremely successful, with other Trusts following this approach.

### **Regional Sign Language Remote Interpreting Service**

A free remote Interpreting Service SignVideo for British Sign Language (BSL) and Irish Sign Language (ISL) users in Northern Ireland has been introduced to meet the ongoing needs of our deaf and hard of hearing patients and clients and to provide support to the deaf community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To compliment face to face Sign Language Interpreters, Trust staff can now access the Video Relay Service (VRS) and the Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) to facilitate communication with service users who require sign language interpreting services, in both community and acute settings.

### **Making Communication Accessible for All**

The “Making Communication Accessible to All” Guide was co-produced with the community and voluntary sector. The guide provides practical tips, advice and guidelines to enable staff to communicate more effectively with people who are disabled or have a communication support need including face-to-face communication, telephone communication, written communication or information on the web. It also builds on supporting people with a disability in becoming well informed and expert in their own needs.

This Guide is available on the Equality and Human Rights Intranet pages and in alternate formats and languages on request.

Please see link below:

[Making Communication Accessible for All Guidance](#)

### **Good Relations Statement**

The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust is committed to the promotion of Good Relations amongst people of different religious belief, race or political opinion.

Over the last year the Trust as continued to promote good relations between people of different race, religion or political opinion.

We celebrated Good Relations week in September 2023 by raising awareness of the Trust Good Relations Statement, which is displayed on service users and staff notice boards in Wards and Facilities throughout the Trust. This Good Relations Statement was produced in partnership with the 5 Regional Trusts and key stakeholders to develop a clear, consistent and meaningful regional Health and Social Care Statement. This statement illustrates our Trust commitment to promoting good relations amongst people of different race, religious belief or political opinion, which extends to our patients, service users, carers, visitors and to our staff.

We have updated our Access to HSC Booklet and now have it in 15 different languages and this provides health and social care information for any newcomers to Northern Ireland.

Further information or additional copies are available from the Equality Team.  
Contact – Rachel.McAlernon@setrust.hscni.net

### **Workplace Guidance on Marks of Remembrance**

The Equal Opportunities Regional Group has revised the current guidance on the display of marks of remembrance in the workplace, subject to the general caveat as set out in the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's (ECNI) guidance – 'Promoting a Good and Harmonious Working Environment'.

This guidance advises that 'when these and other marks of identity are displayed with decorum during the designated time and with a sense of due proportion, then they are unlikely to create or sustain a hostile environment'.

HSC Trusts, NI Ambulance Service (NIAS) and Business Services Organisation (BSO) are in support of the recommendation this provides, giving clarity for staff and management on the appropriate display of marks of remembrance in the workplace.

### **Staff Training - 'Making a Difference' eLearning module**

The Trust continues to develop and implement new ways for all staff to be aware of their Equality responsibilities and to access 3 yearly mandatory Equality, Human Rights and Good Relations training.

A regionally developed eLearning module entitled 'Making a Difference' has continued to be promoted and utilised by staff during 2023-2024. The aim of the module is to raise awareness and show staff how they can really make a difference by promoting positive attitudes to diversity by ensuring their actions and behaviours are in keeping with HSC organisational values and equality legislation.

The e-Learning programme is accompanied by a Training Manual, which complements the module. The module has recently been updated to reflect changes in the access marriage legislation.

The interactive module takes 30 minutes to complete and is scenario based introducing the concepts of equality, good relations and human rights. Part 1 is to be completed by all staff and part 2 by staff with line management responsibilities. A digital guide called Molly the Mentor takes staff through the training and feedback on the training has been very positive.

### **Equality and Human Rights Training Update**

The Equality Team delivers various types of training to ensure that all staff within the South Eastern Trust are equipped with the necessary Section 75 knowledge and expertise to work effectively with each other and to ensure everyone can access our services on an equal to all basis.

Training this year was provided to over 5322 staff, which has ranged across a range of different types of training. Staff were trained on Equality based training programmes,

completed Equality & Human Rights training online through E-Learning, and accessed Equality & Human Rights information when attending face-to-face training. This face-to-face training was primarily Patient Experience and Patient Experience Supervisor staff, in addition to Working Well with Interpreters training over Zoom.

The substantial 60% increase in staff attending training year on year, has been achieved through a combination of actions. These include signposting our staff to the e-learning training, new staff being required to complete all mandatory training before commencing in post, current staff updating their 3 yearly mandatory training portfolio following COVID-19 challenges, and a return to planned and bespoke face to face training sessions.

We hope to continue to deliver training via face-to-face and virtual methods giving a blended approach and providing training at a time and place that suits staff.

### **The Disability Toolkit**

The Trust Disability Toolkit is in place to support our staff. The toolkit holds information, which is helpful to managers when considering disability issues in the workplace. The advice and information in this Tool Kit is based on the HSC's Disability Equality Policy informed by best practice drawing upon the Equality Commission's 'Disability Code of Practice – Employment and Occupation', relevant case law and operational experience. The toolkit is user friendly and is presented in a PowerPoint presentation lay out so Managers can easily click on areas relevant to their needs.

As an inclusive organisation and a leader in diversity, the SEHSCT is committed to the promotion of equality and to creating and sustaining an environment that values and celebrates the diversity of its staff and service users. The Trust aims to be representative of the community it serves and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best.

Awareness of the toolkit has been achieved through appearances on PC Background and Trustwide emails. The Equality Officer and Equality Manager have attended team meetings throughout the Trust to promote and give advice on the toolkit. The Disability Toolkit can be found on I-connect or please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department for further information

To supplement the toolkit there is 'Good Practice booklet', which informs readers of practical tips on how to interact and communicate effectively with people with disabilities.

The guidance and toolkit have been well received with in the Trust especially our colleagues in Occupational Health.

### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Regional Group**

This regional group has been chaired again by the SET Equality officer and group members include equality officers/managers and data analysts from each Trust and the Business Services Organisation.

The objective of the group to share good practice and learning. The group has jointly created the 2023 -2028 Employment Equality Action Plan. The plan acts as a baseline

for a consistent approach to employment equality in each of the Trusts and arms lengths bodies.

Actions include the development of learning tools, policies and guidelines, which affect all staff within HSCNI. Actions for the first year of the Plan include the development and launch of the Rainbow Pin initiative and the Disability Passport, which is to be implemented in each of the Trusts.

### **Multi-Cultural Forum**

In 2021, the Trust established the Trust Multi Cultural Forum. The Forum continues to develop and is co- chaired by the Equality Officer and Rafiat O'Rourke a nurse within the Trust.

The Forum has had continuous support from the Trusts Executive Directors who have attended each meeting to open the Forum and welcome members. It has been fantastic to have the commitment and support from the 'top table'.

The Forum meets quarterly and gives participants the opportunity to speak about their learning, experiences and challenges.

Within the previous year, the Forum has launched the Mutual Mentoring programme where a person from a diverse background mentors a senior leader to bestow upon them and an insight into what life is like within the South Eastern Trust. The Mutual Mentoring programme is to be rolled out as part of other staff forums within the South Eastern Trust in the coming year.

### **Drop in Clinics**

The Equality Team launched the Disabilities Advisory clinic in December 2023 in the Ulster Hospital Site. A further clinic was held in February 2024 in Lagan Valley Hospital.

The clinic is made of teams within the Trust such as Occupational Health, Car parking, IT, Encompass, Condition Management Programme, Ergonomics and Human Resources. Staff and managers are able to attend clinics to receive informal advice.

The clinics were well attended however we learned that, going forward, it would be better for the clinics to be appointments based for our staff to book a spot ahead of time.

### **Staff with Disabilities Forum**

The Equality Team continues to facilitate the Staff with Disabilities Forum. The Forum is co-chaired by Henry McLaughlin, a Social Worker in Cuan Court and our TU colleague Gillian Foley, the Unison Chair. The Forum meets quarterly and is attended by staff from many different backgrounds throughout the Trust.

The Forum was invited to review AccessAble, a new tool used within the Trust to support services users when planning their appointments across our sites.

The Equality Team visited SMTs, designed posters, worked with the wider HR team, communications team and tweeted to ensure word of the Forum was shared.

### **Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights Forum**

The Trust continues to work collaboratively with fellow Trusts and Regional organisations and working together in partnership is a key way to drive improvement in health and social care as highlighted in the Regional Strategy Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together.

The Trust Equality Manager is a member of the Regional Joint Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights Forum, which welcomes representatives from the 6 HSC Trusts and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, the NI Human Rights Commission and the Community Relations Council. The Chair of the Forum is rotated through all Trusts and Commissions.

HSC Trust Equality Leads have a long and successful history of working together, and with others, to promote equality of opportunity, good relations and human rights for all the people of Northern Ireland.

The Forum met virtually and in person in the past year and recently held a Joint Forum workshop to discuss the next steps and what initiatives to take forward via collaborative working.

The next meeting of the Joint Forum will take place on 16 September 2024 and will be hosted by the NI Human Rights Commission. This date will coincide with Good Relations Week 2024 and will enable the Forum to look at current work being undertaken and also plan for the future to demonstrate how good community relationships are fundamental to enabling us to work together to promote inclusive and sustainable growth.

The Theme of Good Relations Week 2024 is 'Opportunity – a call to action to create a brighter, inclusive future for all'. The week runs from 16th - 22nd September 2024.

### **Quarterly Screening Report**

The Trust continues to carry out Equality Screening on all new and revised policies and proposals. The aim of this is to identify any potential adverse impact for any of the nine protected characteristics included in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act.

From April 2023- March 2024 a total of 24 policies have been screened and the results of these screenings are published on the Trust website every three months in a Quarterly Screening Report to promote transparency and to raise awareness to all staff of new policies in place.

## **Work Experience**

The SET Work Inspiration Programme has meant that 2,971 local students have participated to date. This supports the Trust outreach to schools and the aim of making the Trust an employer of choice. Continued support in communication with schools in inspiring future workforce for SEHSCT

There is currently an Indemnity Agreement in place between the Trust and the Educational Authority that began in April 2023. Regional work is ongoing to develop a fit for purpose MOU.

Following a pause due to COVID-19, in-person work experience resumed in Spring 2024. Physiotherapy Work Inspiration has now resumed and virtual session on social work is planned Discussion has begun about resuming nursing /midwifery work experience opportunities

Work Inspiration Videos including 18 storyboards for 3 occupational areas have been developed The Trust will take all opportunities going forward to continue to showcase what it is like to work within the SETrust in varied roles

## **Encompass**

The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust was the first Trust to go live with encompass on 9th November 2023.

The Equality Team has been considering the implementation and carrying out an ongoing Equality Screening of the proposals locally to identify if there are any potential adverse impacts for any of our Trust staff.

This work goes hand in hand with our Trust Management of Change process, which looks at issues such as redeployment, retraining and possible additional expenses for someone having to travel further to their place of work.

The Equality Team will continue to update the equality screening following go-live and to gather information on any potential impact and note any mitigation, which takes place.

## **PC Computer Background**

The Equality Team in the South Eastern Trust is keen to promote equal opportunities for staff and service users. To ensure our staff are kept up to date with services, we regularly book a slot on the PC background of all Trust computers.

Over the course of the year, we have displayed multiple PC backgrounds, which have included the Disability Toolkit, and information of how to access Interpreters for alternative languages including Sign Language.

If you wish to learn further information on any of the PC backgrounds we have had then please contact our

Equality and HR Assistant Rachel.McAlernon@setrust.hscni.net

### **Information Poster for Staff to Support Service Users who are Deaf or have Hearing loss**

The Trust worked in partnership with fellow Trusts to produce an eye-catching poster giving guidance to staff who may work with service users who are deaf, have hearing loss or communication support needs. These service users rely heavily on visual clues for effective communication, including body language, facial expression and lip reading etc.

The Trust has distributed this poster to all wards and facilities for display on staff and patient notice boards. The Trust has also raised awareness of this poster as part of its on-going Face to Face Training strategy. Feedback on the poster has been very positive and we have received requests for additional posters from a number of wards.

### **Time to Read – Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative**

The Trust has a long tradition of volunteers taking part in the Time to Read initiative and supporting Key Stage 2 pupils to develop their reading skills in a one to one setting in their school environment.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Time to Read was temporarily paused in Schools. The Trust has a number of dedicated volunteers who are returning to their schools and pupils to continue these important sessions.

The Trust will be recruiting volunteers in August 2024 for 'Time to Read' 'Time to Code' and 'Time to Count'.

### **Access to Health and Social Care Booklet**

The Trust is aware that arriving in a different country can be an overwhelming experience, and has worked in partnership with fellow Trusts to put together some information which newcomers to Northern Ireland might find useful. This booklet aims to inform about health and social care services and how to access them. This booklet advises on the various Trusts across Northern Ireland and the health and social care system and services, along with the rights of a person who is not proficient in English, to have professionally trained interpreters.

The booklet has been translated into 15 languages and will be a timely resource for engagement with those who have come to Northern Ireland from Ukraine and Afghanistan.

## **LGBT Staff Network**

The Equality Team supports the LGBTQ+ Regional Network. The network was re-established in 2022 and the Forum is focused on

- To create visibility for LGBTQ+ people in our organisation
- To provide a point of contact and to sign post for LGBTQ+ employees
- To be actively involved in HSC policy development
- To be accessible with a mailing list, meetings, activities/events
- Improve our knowledge of intersectionality in our LGBTQ+ community

The Forum is promoted through emails, training, staff networks and 'In the Loop' the virtual Trust wide communication programme. Information has also been shared through directorate meetings and specialised teams such as SAS Doctors.

## **Staff Carers Forum**

The Trust continues to hold the Staff Carers Forum. The forum has had many speakers and support carers lunches and activities. The Forum is chaired by Pamela Smyth Carers Coordinator and is supported by the Health and Wellbeing Lead and the Equality Officer.

## **Rural Needs Act**

During the past year, the Trust has continued to address its responsibilities under the Rural Needs Act 2016.

Staff within the Equality Team provide advice and guidance to staff regarding the completion of Rural Needs Impact Assessment and provide support to services, including signposting staff to guidance. The Team is responsible for central co-ordination and approval of the monitoring report on behalf of the Trust.

Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts have worked collaboratively to ensure the rural needs assessment template is user-friendly and relevant to HSC business. The key components of the template issued by DAERA have been used in compliance with the legislative obligations.

Advice and guidance is provided on the Trust's intranet to raise awareness and support staff when completing rural needs assessments.

To ensure effective mainstreaming, the Trust's Policy development teams also signpost staff to requirements relating to the Rural Needs Act.

The 2023/2024 Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report has been sent to DAERA to be included in their Annual Report 2024

### **Rural Needs Toolkit**

In 2023, the Trust participated in the launch of the Rural Needs Toolkit for Health and Social Care. This toolkit aims to assist Trust staff as they seek to address the needs of the Rural Population. This Toolkit was adapted for use in Northern Ireland in partnership with Health and Social Care and is available on the Equality and Human Rights i-connect pages.

Trusts in Northern Ireland. It was developed by the National Centre for Health and Social Care, assisted by local partners Rural Community Network NI. This is a Northern Ireland version of the initial toolkit.

### **Collection and Validation of Equality Data**

The Trust is currently working to ensure that it successfully collects and records Equality Data. By updating equality information, we can monitor how proposals may impact our staff and better understand inequality or unfair treatment or the different experiences people may have.

All information held on HRPTS is confidential, any data used will be anonymous, and individual staff will not be able to be identified.

Why does the Trust collect this data?

- We want our workplace to be inclusive and welcoming of all staff
- We want to be able to accurately monitor the recruitment and retention of our staff within all characteristics
- We want to be able to review the impact of policies and practices on different groups in the Trust
- Staff HRPTS profile will help us carry out equality screening of policies and proposals
- The Equality Team may contact you for your input and support regarding services or events related to a protected characteristic

## **Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy**

The Trust is pleased to launch its Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Workplace Policy for all staff. This reinforces the Trust's commitment to address domestic abuse, break the cycle of silence and extend a lifeline of support to those in need, within the workforce. Domestic abuse and sexual violence affects countless people across all walks of life. A number of dedicated staff across the Trust have received specialised training to serve as 'Domestic Abuse Champions'.

These champions offer peer support, lending a compassionate ear and guiding colleagues who need practical help to ensure their safety and well-being. Sometimes confiding in a colleague can be easier rather than a line manager due to misplaced feelings of self-blame, embarrassment and shame.

The policy pledges to provide essential assistance to employees facing domestic abuse and sexual violence, including facilitated time off for legal and medical appointments in compliance with the new Domestic Abuse (Safe Leave) Act and office base relocation where necessary. Recognising the complexities involved in leaving an abusive relationship, the Trust remains vigilant to the risk of separation and the possibility of abusers targeting victims in the workplace.

## **Multi-Cultural Event – September 2023**

The Equality Team in partnership with Trade Union Colleagues organised a Diversity event for staff from across the globe to celebrate a night of Diversity. The Trust provided food, music and dance from a range of different cultures. The event, held at Ards Community Hospital, celebrated the rich tapestry of cultures across the organisation. The Trust said it has always been committed to fostering an inclusive and diverse environment, recognising that a diverse workforce enhances the quality of patient care.

The Diversity evening event gave staff an opportunity to appreciate the unique skills, experiences and perspectives that staff from all over the world bring to the organisation.

The evening featured a variety of activities, which highlighted the cultural diversity within the healthcare community, including traditional music, dance performances and a global cuisine showcase. In addition, those attending had an opportunity to engage with staff from different countries to learn about their backgrounds and gain a deeper understanding of the diverse cultures that contribute to the excellence of our healthcare delivery in the organisation.

Among many compliments received on the night, Downe Hospital staff nurse, Chisteena Seraphin, said, "the event was lovely; it was a wonderful opportunity

to celebrate our differences and try to understand each other. I really appreciate the Trust organising this, I have made a lot of friends here and I am glad to spend time with them.”

### **Black History Month**

Black History Month is an opportunity to recognise and celebrate the rich contributions the Black community makes to our society in Health and Social care within the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust.

It is an opportunity for individuals to share their insights, experiences and contributions, which are an invaluable part of diversity within the Trust. Sharing these narratives provides an opportunity to foster a greater understanding, appreciation and unity. The aim is not just to celebrate Black History Month, but also to educate, inspire and encourage dialogue.

Reflecting on Black History Month Staff Nurse Fatima Farrah shared her story - “I am originally from Somalia and my family moved to the United Arab Emirates in 1982 when I was five years old. I lived there for 40 years and started my nursing career there in 1997. I really wanted to become a Nurse, as I care a lot about people. I then decided it was time to move to Northern Ireland for the benefit of my children”

“I have undertaken further education and have achieved a Diploma in Psychology, a Diploma in Nutrition and a Diploma in Physical Activity. My next goal is to become a Mental Health Nurse. People in Northern Ireland are so very kind and caring, when I help them, I feel connected with them. I am enjoying every moment here”.

### **Launch of Rainbow Pin**

The Rainbow pin initiative aims to make a positive difference by promoting a message of equality, diversity, and inclusion. The Rainbow Badge itself highlights that South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust offers open, non-judgemental and inclusive care for patients, service users and their families, who identify as LGBTQ+. To date over 600 pins have been sent to staff.

The Rainbow Badge was created by Guy’s and St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust in London, in partnership with Evelina London Children’s Hospital. The badge is a special rainbow edition of the HSC logo. Badges are handed to HSC staff who have pledged to reduce inequalities and provide support and signposting to LGBTQ+ people.

Wearing this badge brings responsibilities and it is expected that staff will be a respectful listening ear, know how to signpost to relevant information and act as an ally in all matters relating to LGBTQ+

## **LGBTQ+ Pride Engagement Event**

During July 2023, the Equality Team worked in partnership with Trade Unions to engage with our colleagues. Lanyards, travel mugs and pens were distributed to promote LGBTQ+ visibility. Initiatives included discussing the gender identity policy and launching the 'Rainbow Pin'. Over 500 staff visited the stands located on the Downe, Lagan Valley and Ulster hospital sites.

## **Lakewood Videos**

"Difference is Normal" is the theme of a series of both informative and imaginative training videos, made by staff at Lakewood Regional Secure Care Centre in Bangor to raise awareness of LGBTQI+ issues to mark Belfast Pride Week.

The lively training videos were posted during Pride week 2023 on the South Eastern Trust's social media channels and have been developed for young people and staff and hosted by Marcus Hunter Neill, known to many as Lady Portia Di'Monte.

The videos cover many wide-ranging issues such as support networks available for young people and staff about sexual health, diversity and equality, the importance of pronouns and we hear from same sex couples who foster children.

Highlighting the value these sessions will bring to the young people in the centre, Governance & Improvement Lead, Chris Millar said, "I feel raising awareness about LGBTQI+ issues here in Lakewood Centre is very important. We have realised over the last few years, there is a higher number of young people struggling with their identity and have questions about their sexuality".

## **Looked After Children Pre-Employment Initiative – Equality Input**

The pre-employment programme is an initiative to support care experienced young people that could be working towards a "Jobstart" role within the Trust or simply just looking for support with moving into the world of Employment.

As corporate parents the SETrust will be providing an opportunity for care experienced young people to grow/thrive and become financially independent through employment, guidance, support, co-productive working. The employment programme will enable trauma experienced young people to play a positive active role, which will instil pride, confidence, promote positive mental health and empower young people to become positive role models.

What the participants got out of the programme.

Participants developed and enhanced a range of transferable skills which can be linked to a workplace environment.

Participants increased an awareness of mental health issues, developed methods of self-management and awareness of support services. Participants identified positive interview skills including dress code, body language and do's and don'ts when participating on interviews, created a C.V., completed research on Education, Training and Employment opportunities with the completion of application/ referral forms, partook in mock interviews and developed general employment skills and experiences.

Participants took part in a tour of Ulster Hospital hosted by the CSSD and catering departments, which involved information sessions from employees of the Trust and a past care experienced young person sharing their journey.

The day also included input from the Equality Team who shared information and background on the Trust Values and Behaviours, our People Plan and advice on potential language to use during future interviews. Participants also gained knowledge of emotional intelligence and methods of self-reflection and building resilience.

### **Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan 2024-2029**

The 5 Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts and the NI Ambulance Service (NIAS) work collaboratively on the promotion of equality of opportunity to share good practice and facilitate regional consistency. Over the past year, the Trusts have been working together to develop and consult on a five-year Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan.

The Equality Action Plan was informed by an audit of inequalities and focuses on actions to achieve better accessibility in service provision and to promote inclusion and diversity for those who work in health and social care.

The Disability Action Plan has been developed to outline the measures, which we take to fulfil the disability duties under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, which are to promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability and encourage their full participation in public life. The Plans were shaped and developed with input from a range of stakeholders during three pre-consultation online listening events.

On 5 June 2023, we commenced a public consultation on the Plans, providing the opportunity for interested parties to comment on the proposed content and to share ideas, knowledge and experiences to inform the final plans. Two consultation listening events were held at the end of September 2023. The Trusts then took the necessary time to carefully consider feedback, amend the

PART A

Plans and develop the Consultation Feedback Report, prior to bringing forward for approval.

The Plans have now been through the Trust approval process and will be shared with local and regional stakeholders. Work has commenced on Actions identified for Year 1, which will be reported on in the 2024- 2025 Annual Progress Report.

- 2** Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/measures** in 2023-24 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

Please see Appendix 1 for a detailed update of actions progressed in Year 5 (2023-2024) 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 2023-24 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

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

Please provide any details and examples:

Equality Scheme Commitment	Action	Difference Made for Individuals
<b>Arrangements for assessing our compliance with S75 duties</b>		
Ensure S75 duties are mainstreamed within the Trust	A comprehensive, mandatory programme of training and awareness raising for all levels of staff. Training on conducting Equality Screening and EQIA.	Individuals aware of the Trust's commitment to equality duties.  Trust staff aware of equality duties.
Prepare Section 75 Annual Progress Report (APR) and include section in Trust's own Annual Report	Annual Progress Report supported by "Equality Newsletter" to ensure updates available in accessible format.	Copies of APR and Newsletter added to Intranet, Internet and 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.
Ensure S75 duties are mainstreamed within the Trust.	The Trust's Equality Team provide staff with the information, training and resources to support staff to have the appropriate level of knowledge, expertise and skill to mainstream S75 duties.  The regional Equality, Good Relations and	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

	Human Rights; Making a Difference eLearning programme is mandatory and compliance is monitored	promoting good relations.
Prepare Section 75 Annual Progress Report (APR).	Annual Progress Report supported by Equality Newsletter to ensure updates available in a more accessible format.	Consultees sent copy of newsletter and informed of availability of progress report - improving awareness of Trust's S75 duties and outcomes of work programme.
<b>Action Plan</b>		
Continued delivery of Year 5 Actions in Action Based Plan 2018-2023 to include actions measures 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 5 and progress on actions carried forward from Year 4.	Its implementation is intended to have a positive impact on S75 groups
<b>Arrangements for consulting</b>		
Consultation list reviewed and updated	Consultation list continues to be reviewed.	New consultees were added to consultation list resulting in more robust engagement process.
Training re Consultation	The Trust recognises the importance of proper and timely consultation as an integral part of fulfilling its S75 duties when making decisions and planning services.	S75 groups and consultees engaged consulted on Trust decisions.

	Equality Team works in partnership with Engagement and Involvement Manager	
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.	During reporting period new and revised policies or proposals were screened and the result published in the Quarterly Screening Report (QSR).	Views of representative groups and individuals considered during decision making process.
Provide feedback report to consultees in timely manner in formats suited to consultees.	When final decision has been made, consultees are made aware of consultation outcome report and are informed of how their feedback influenced the decision made. Consultation feedback reports are available on the Trust website. All Trust documents can be made available in an alternative format on request.	Representative groups and individuals informed of how their feedback influenced the decision made.
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.  Screening Template due to be revised and updated regionally in 2024-2025  During the reporting period the Trust	Transparent decision making process for consultees and impact on S75 groups identified during policy development process.

	screened 24 policies and proposals.	
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.	During the reporting period there was 1 EQIA consultation carried out.  Comprehensive Section 75 equality screenings have been completed and published on all plans implemented by SETrust.	When EQIA carried out consultees receive feedback on the proposed changes as part of the Trust Consultation Outcome Report
<b>Monitoring</b>		
Review of monitoring information.	<p>The Trust continues to monitor by Section 75 categories and this has been enhanced by HRPTS Self-Service functions. During the reporting period this monitoring information was accessed for S75 screenings.</p> <p>The Guide to Ethnic Monitoring of Services Users in HSC in NI helps providers to robustly capture critical patient/service user information on existing and emerging BME communities using HSC services.</p>	<p>Increased understanding of the make-up of the workforce to ensure promotion of equality of opportunity and better information to identify any potential impact.</p> <p>Guidance supports HSC organisations to identify any unmet need and to target their resources thus tackling health inequalities experienced by BME communities.</p>

Staff Training		
Draw up a detailed training plan.	<p>During reporting period, implementation of the Trust's Equality Training Strategy continued.</p> <p>The regional Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights: Making a Difference Programme has been rolled out across the Trust and compliance is monitored.</p>	<p>5322 staff received equality and human rights training during the reporting period.</p> <p>This is a 60% increase year on year.</p>
Specific Targeted Training.	<p>During the reporting period the Equality Team were able to provide focused training for specific staff groups.</p>	<p>It is hoped that the Equality Team will continue to deliver training via a blended approach in 2024-2025 to meet the needs of our staff.</p>
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.	<p>Information is provided in alternative formats on request and Trust's website has been designed to ensure accessibility.</p> <p>During reporting period, a total of 8448 requests for interpreting.</p>	<p>Improved access to information and services for equality groups – specifically those whose first language is not English and people with a disability.</p>
Provide information in alternative formats on request.	<p>Trust staff access the translation of written material through the Regional Contract.</p> <p>The Access to Health and Social Care Booklet has been regionally revised and translated into 15 languages and is</p>	<p>Information provided in alternative formats to increase understanding, ensure effective communication and improved access to services.</p>

	<p>available on our website.</p> <p>Consultation documents were provided in Easy Read format to enable full access by our stakeholders.</p>	
Provide interpreters and sign language interpreters.	A total of 8448 episodes were delivered in 2023 - 2024	Service users and staff supported to ensure good governance in information provision and communication.
<b>Complaints Procedure</b>		
How complaints are raised, timetable for responding etc.	The Trust received one complaint relating to the implementation of its Equality Scheme in the reporting period.	This is an ongoing process in partnership with ECNI and will be reported on in the 2024-2025 Annual Progress Report
<b>Any other measures proposed in equality scheme</b>		
Work closely with other public authorities to exchange learning and best practice.	During reporting period Trust participated in Regional Equality and Human Rights Steering Group, the Regional Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights Forum and the Regional Equality Leads meetings.	Collaborative working ensures 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 Equality Scheme is maintained.	During reporting period the Trust met regularly with ECNI on S75 implementation and in the Regional Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights Forum	Ensures effective use of resources and S75 implementation.

**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?

There have been many tangible differences resulting from the equality screening of policies, procedures and ways of working. There has been better engagement with service users and those affected by the relevant policies – ensuring people’s opinions are included and central to decisions made.

There has been more explicit consideration of reasonable adjustments in regard to each policy and a greater emphasis placed on ensuring communication, in all its forms, is accessible.

Increased awareness of the need to arrange for an interpreter for a person whose first language is not English, and for materials to be translated into other languages.

Virtual consultations continue to be undertaken by the Trust. However, the Trust is mindful that virtual consultations will not always be suitable for every person.

The screening of policies often results in service leads thinking differently about their service, considering new perspectives. Please also see column 3 above.

**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 see examples above

As a result of what was identified through the EQIA and consultation exercise  
There was 1 EQIA carried out as part of Trust Consultation process on service proposals during the reporting period.

As a result of analysis from monitoring the impact  
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

PART A

The provision of interpreters and translated accessible information continues to result in effective information provision and better communication in situations where a clear understanding is required

A remote sign language interpreting service has been set up and service users can download an app to access a free online remote sign language interpreter 24/7.

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 2023- 24 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 Trust Values of Compassion, Working Together, Openness and Honesty and Excellence are displayed in full in each job description The values are rooted in equality and specifically reference compassion, dignity, integrity, openness and honesty.

All employees are required to comply with the procedures, policies and codes of practice within the Trust which include the Equality Scheme and the Equal Opportunities Policy.

The Job Descriptions of the Trust Equality Manager and Equality Officer specifically reflect responsibility for day to day delivery of Section 75 Targets for each year. Job Descriptions for the Director of People and Organisational Development, and the Assistant Director People and Organisational Development also reflect their responsibility with regard to the Section 75 statutory duties.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2023-24 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 Trust Individual Staff Performance Plans, as part of Staff Appraisal Conversations, are clearly aligned with the Section 75 duties and principles of equality and human rights. These conversations are set within the context of the Trust's overall values and objectives and make explicit reference to ensuring 'staff are supported to deliver safe, compassionate patient-centred care and Equality Training.

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.

### **Guidance for Trust Board Members**

In response to the ECNI report 'Section 75 statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties: Acting on the evidence of public authority practices' June 2018 and in recognition that effective leadership is critical to the successful implementation of our Equality Scheme, guidance for Board Members has been developed and circulated. With an emphasis on mainstreaming equality the guide aims to support HSC Board Members to understand the statutory Board responsibilities as they relate to matters of equality, good relations and human rights.

6 In the 2023-24 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 2023-2024 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Section 75 duties are incorporated and mainstreamed at a strategic level into the business of the Trust. The Trust’s Equality Team sits within the People and Organisational Development Directorate and supports all Trust Directorates through Equality Business Partners to ensure Section 75 is integral to planning processes.

Please also see answers noted in Question 5.

**Equality action plans/measures**

7 Within the 2023-24 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of actions completed:

Actions Completed	7	Actions ongoing	5	Actions to commence	Actions in New Plans
-------------------	---	-----------------	---	---------------------	----------------------

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2023-24 reporting period:

Any amendments are noted in appended Equality Action Plan update.

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2023-24 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 – New Regional 2024-2029 Action Plans have been developed consulted on and approved.
- 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

The Trust carries out targeted consultation for relevant consultees as required.

As aforementioned, the Trust consulted on one EQIA as part of Trust proposals during this reporting period. In accordance with our Equality Scheme obligations, screening outcome reports were uploaded onto the Trust website on a quarterly basis.

- 11 Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2023-2024 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:

#### **Quarterly Screening Report**

The Trust continues to carry out Equality Screening on all new and revised policies and proposals. The aim of this is to identify any potential opposing impacts for any of the nine protected characteristics included in Section 75 Northern Ireland Act.

During 2023-2024, a total of 24 policies have been screened and the results of these screenings are published on the Trust website every three months in a Quarterly Screening Report to promote transparency and to raise awareness to all staff of new policies in place.

#### **The Future Provision of Urgent and Emergency Care Services – Ards and North Down area'**

The Equality Team worked with Trust colleagues as part of the development of the Consultation documents for the above proposals.

The public consultation on 'The Future Provision of Urgent and Emergency Care Services – Ards and North Down area' was an opportunity for interested parties and members of the public to comment on the proposed option being considered and to share experiences, knowledge or suggestions that would help to inform decision-making.

In an attempt to ensure that the consultation document was easy to understand, an Easy Read format was provided. The Trust also included an Equality Impact Assessment and Rural Needs Impact Assessment, which examined how the

proposed option may have an impact on equality groups and those who live rurally.

**12** In the 2023-2024 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
- 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*):

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:

The Trust provides in person consultation events and meetings in parallel with virtual consultation opportunities. There are clearly advantages to a blended approach to engagement and online consultation provides the opportunity for lots of different interaction, including the chance to use break out rooms, run polls, allow people to share their screens and to use 'chat' to comment and share responses.

- 13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2023-2024 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes       No       Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

**Initiatives include**

- Staff Training and Awareness Raising
- Staff Summary of Equality and Human Rights responsibilities
- Guidance for Board members
- Consultation documents available on website and Citizenspace and in EasyRead format.
- QSR publication on website
- Team working with Equality Team and Engagement and Involvement Manager
- PPI Strategy
- Consultation and Engagement exercises
- Guidance and Briefings to EMT and Trust Board
- Dissemination of Section 75 Annual Progress Report
- Equality Newsletter available on Trust Intranet, Trust Internet and disseminated to consultees
- Equality Information in Trust Annual Report

- 14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes       No       Not applicable – no commitment to review

Whilst there was no formal review of the consultation list, when the list is used to distribute information, it is reviewed and amended afterwards, because of undeliverable emails and stakeholder feedback.

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

During 2023-2024 a total of 24 policies were screened and published on the Trust website in the Quarterly Screening Report.

Please click [here](#) to access Quarterly Screening reports

**16 Please provide the number of assessments that were consulted upon during 2023-2024:**

There was 1 EQIA Consultation during this reporting period.

**17 Please provide details of the main consultations conducted on an assessment (as described above) or other matters relevant to the Section 75 duties:**

**The Future Provision of Urgent and Emergency Care Services – Ards and North Down area'**

The Equality Team worked with Trust colleagues as part of the development of the Consultation documents for the above proposals.

The public consultation on 'The Future Provision of Urgent and Emergency Care Services – Ards and North Down area' was an opportunity for interested parties and members of the public to comment on the proposed option being considered and to share experiences, knowledge or suggestions that would help to inform decision-making.

In an attempt to ensure that the consultation document was easy to understand, an Easy Read format was provided. The Trust also included an Equality Impact Assessment and Rural Needs Impact Assessment, which examined how the proposed option may have an impact on equality groups and those who live rurally.

Consultation period was 8 February 2023 - 3 May 2023. A total of 460 Regional Organisations and Representative Groups were informed with 642 Local Groups and organisations informed. In total, 3 Public Engagement Events were held with 121 stakeholder attendees. A total of 388 Responses were received, and 1 public Petition with 19,033 signatures.



update their health information, and it will make it easier for appropriate Health and Social Care staff to securely view important information about their patients and service users.

The EQUIP system will be implemented and reported on in the next reporting period.

The Trust is currently working to ensure that it successfully collects and records Equality Data. By updating equality information, we can monitor how proposals may impact our staff and better understand inequality or unfair treatment or the different experiences people may have

In addition the Trust will continue to monitor via:

- Staff Monitoring
- Publication of Quarterly Screening Reports
- Collection and analysis of Interpreting provision and uptake
- Gathering of Ethnic Monitoring data
- The Trust's Audit of Inequalities required for the development of its previous and new Action Based Plan 2023-2028, was reviewed and updated during the reporting period and will influence the consultation documents in partnership with feedback from the stakeholder listening events.
- 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.

**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: N/A

**22** Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2023-2024 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

Monitoring is integral to ongoing screening of policies and proposals. The Trust's policy development process ensures that all policies are monitored and reviewed. The process also ensures that if there are any substantial changes to a policy it is screened again to identify any adverse impact across the 9 equality categories.

**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:

### Monitoring via HRPTS

Within HRPTS, staff are able to log into the Employee Self Service function to update their own Equality and Diversity data which includes disability and ethnic background information. This provides more accurate information for conducting Equality Screening and EQIA's.

### 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 2023-2024, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

The Trust recognises that statutory and mandatory training is of vital importance in the provision of high-quality services to our patients and clients and is essential for effective risk management and the maintenance of required standards

#### Training Initiatives

During the reporting period the Trust continued to training and provide advice and support on equality duties to Trust staff/project leads.

The Trust Equality Team delivers a range of training to ensure that staff is equipped with the necessary S75 knowledge and expertise to work effectively with each other and to ensure everyone can access our services. During 2023-2024, a total of 5322 staff have attended or accessed training.

#### Training includes:

Corporate Induction (Patient Experience)	287
Line Managers Training – e-learning	125
Working Well with Interpreters	40
E-Learning Module	4914
Total	5322

As with previous years the Trust has promoted the e-Learning module 'Making a Difference' which is available through The Leadership Centre platform. This regional module enables staff who may move from Trust to Trust to carry forward Equality and Human Rights training as part of their ongoing Training Portfolio.

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
- Disability Toolkit
- Making Communication Accessible for all
- Screening Guidance

- 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:

### **Targeted Training**

The Trust has identified the need for specific training to be developed and delivered to staff groups at a time and in a place that is appropriate for them. Specific Equality and Human Rights training has been delivered to Patient Experience staff as part of their induction.

### **Working Well with Interpreters Training**

To support staff a series of 'Working Well with Interpreters' training Sessions have been held hosted by Claire Hamilton, the Regional Interpreting Manager. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic rather than commuting to different Trust locations the Equality Team adapted their approach and moved our training online to Zoom. This training has been very successful as it resulted in 40 members of staff attending from a wide variety of Trust locations. Feedback has been very positive with 91% of participants strongly agreeing or agreeing that the training met their expectations.

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

- 26 Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2023-2024, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

- 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, including sign language interpreters, to help patients and clients and staff to communicate when using services.
- Guidance and information leaflets about COVID-19 in a range of different languages are now available on the Trust website and Intranet.
- Monitoring of uptake of face to face and telephone interpreting provision. The top five languages requested in the Trust area were - Arabic, Polish, Bulgarian, Romanian and Lithuanian. A total of 8448 episodes were provided during 2023-2024. The monitoring of interpreting usage ensures

the Trust can provide its information in the main languages requested. 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 and is promoted to staff. Face to face interpreters are then available for more complex or sensitive appointments.

- 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.
- It is clear from monitoring information that the Trust's population is culturally and linguistically diverse and the Multi-Cultural and Beliefs Handbook continues to be a useful resource for staff which is available on the Trust's intranet and now includes information on the Roma community.
- Monitoring of requests for Written Translation services which enable staff to produce information in alternate languages and format. For example, the Trust has translated appointment letters into a range of languages including Arabic, Lithuanian, Spanish and Bulgarian.
- The Trust continues to use Care Opinion to allow patients, carers and visitors to provide real time feedback on their experience. Information is entered online and this is then passed to the relevant service manager to allow them to respond and to welcome positive feedback or learn from negative feedback and make necessary changes.

### **Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)**

**27** How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2023-2024?

During the reporting period, one complaint was raised with regard to the application of commitments in the Equality Scheme.

This is an ongoing complaint resolution process and the Trust is working in partnership with the ECNI. The outcome of this process will be reported on in the Annual Progress Report 2024-2025.

The Equality Team have forged a strong working relationship with the Complaints and Compliments Team and their advice is sought in regard to issues where any of the 9 Section 75 protected groups, human rights, good relations or discrimination are cited.

### Section 3: Looking Forward

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

During this reporting period, the Trust along with other HSC Trusts, has undertaken a significant programme of work to scope an audit of Section 75 inequalities, which has helped to inform our 5-year regional Equality Action Plan 2024 – 2025.

The audit of inequalities covers the nine Section 75 categories but also, given the impact of COVID-19, has a further section on the inequalities exacerbated or created by the pandemic. The Trust has carried out a five-year review on the effectiveness of our Equality Scheme.

The purpose of the 5-year review is to examine how the arrangements set out in the Scheme have been applied and to assess how effective they have been in assisting the Trust in complying with the Section 75 duties.

The Trusts have also been working in partnership to draft a five-year Disability Action Plan 2024- 2029 to further promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability and to encourage their full participation in public life.

Consultation and engagement took place for 16 weeks ending in September 2023.the Trusts have compiled a consultation outcome report and have taken their Action Plans through Trust approval processes.

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 Trust will be focused on the outcomes of the new five-year Action Plans and consultation outcomes of recent service proposals.

#### Training

On-going delivery and evaluation of a wide range of training and awareness raising for staff in a blended approach or virtual and face-to-face. In the coming year the Trust will continue to promote the use of the regional e-learning module 'Making a Difference'. Training materials are subject to on-going review and are updated in the light of new case law and information.

30 In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2024-2025) reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

Employment

Goods, facilities and services

PART A

- Legislative changes
- Organisational changes/ new functions
- Nothing specific, more of the same
- Other (please state):