



## Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report 2022-2023

**Contact:**

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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 2022 and March 2023**

## **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 2022-23, 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 16th 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 11,400 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 2022-2023 is appended for ease of reference and details achievements in Year 5 (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 our fifth year 2022-2023.

## **Policy and Service Delivery Developments**

### **Response to COVID-19 Pandemic**

In this reporting period, as we continued to slowly and carefully move out of the pandemic, the Trust priorities focused on the rebuilding of services.

Throughout the pandemic, the Trust implemented a series of rebuild and resilience plans to detail service provision in response to fluctuating levels of COVID-19.

COVID-19 will continue to impact on how we deliver our services safely, including managing the availability of staff, ongoing requirements for social distancing, increased cleaning / sanitising and infection prevention control measures.

The Trust is committed to its legal duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 as detailed in our approved Equality Scheme. All Service Delivery Plans were screened for equality impacts with mitigation measures introduced if potential adverse impacts were identified as appropriate.

The coronavirus pandemic has created new challenges for the Trust but we have continued our commitment to promoting equality, eliminating discrimination and delivering accessible services that meet the needs of everyone living in the Trust area.

The impact on Trust staff as a result of the pandemic has been recognised and specific measures have been taken that should have a positive impact including the development of resources which highlight a range of options that are available, including information on support helplines, downloadable resources, wellbeing webinars and links to drop-in mindfulness sessions, coaching opportunities and the establishment of a dedicated psychological support helpline with particular emphasis on high-intensity COVID-impacted settings, to support staff through the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

### **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 are regionally revising and drafting our Five Year Equality Action Plan 2023-2028 and Disability Action Plan 2023- 2028. To inform these new Plans, the six Trusts have worked collaboratively to collate available research and data to identify emerging themes.

These themes were then 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 have drafted our New Plans based on our consideration of the research and the feedback from the listening events to hopefully 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 have organised a Joint Regional consultation process which will run for 16 weeks from 5 June 2023 to the end of September 2023. Trusts will work together to facilitate a virtual engagement event and face to face engagement session in September 2023.

Following consultation, it is intended that Trusts will take plans to Trust Boards for approval in October/November 2023.

### **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 and 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.

### **Regional Screening Template and Toolkit**

Regional work has been carried out to develop a two-part screening template that has been piloted in Belfast Trust. The aim is to develop a user-friendly template for policy makers. There has been engagement with Equality Commission (ECNI) colleagues and suggested amendments have been incorporated and shared with the Commission for ratification. It is envisaged that this template will be adopted by the Trusts in the year 2023 - 2024 in collaboration with the Commission.

### **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 2022-23 the total number of face to face and telephone interpreting episodes was 7620. The top four languages for the year of 2022-23 are Arabic, Polish, Bulgarian, Polish and Lithuanian.

To support this work the Trust has, in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Health & Social Care Interpreting Service (NIHSCIS) Manager, delivered 4 Working Well with Interpreters training sessions all online over Zoom. This was extremely successful as we have 89 members of staff who attended these online sessions from all Trust facilities. The top five location requests for an interpreter in the 2022-2023 period were: Maternity (Ulster), Outpatients, Physiotherapy, Radiology and Child Health.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic rather than commuting to different trust locations the Equality team adapted and moved our training online to Zoom. The Trust was the first in NI to deliver this training virtually and it was extremely successful with 89 staff who attended these online sessions from all Trust facilities.

This training has been very successful and evaluation is carried out following each session. During the reporting period a total of 91% of respondents reported that they strongly agreed or agreed that the Training met their expectations. Following each session, we see an increase in the number of staff self-registering to book interpreters for their patients and clients. The Equality Team plan to continue to deliver Working Well with Interpreters Sessions via a blended approach of face to face (Covid-19 risk assessments permitting) and virtual sessions to meet the needs of our Trust staff. Each session will be evaluated and the training adapted in light of this.

### **Regional Sign Language Remote Interpreting Service during Covid-19**

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.

As face to face Sign Language Interpreters were not as available during COVID-19, 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 are 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 2022 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.

Before and during development of the guidance, the network consulted with staff, Trade Unions and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. It is believed that this will help to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. The outworkings will be closely monitored and kept under review in the interests of maintaining a harmonious working environment.

### **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 2022-2023. 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 2079 staff, which has ranged across different types of training. Of these staff who were trained on Equality based training programmes, completed Equality & Human Rights training online through E-Learning, Equality & Human Rights when attending face to face training which was mostly Patient Experience and Patient Experience Supervisor staff and Working Well with Interpreters training over Zoom.

As the Trust returns to face to face training on a larger scale the Equality Team anticipates an increase in the number of staff who will access our training in 2023-2024.

We hope 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 now has in place its Disability Toolkit. 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 presented in a power point presentation so managers can easily click on areas relevant to their needs. This toolkit recognises that employees who are able to be themselves in work are more likely to enjoy going to work, feel included and can achieve their full potential.

The Trust is committed to the provision of equality for all staff regardless of gender, including gender identity and expression, religious belief, political opinion, marital/civil partnership or family status, race/ ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, disability and whether or not they have dependants. Selection for employment and advancement will be on the basis of ability, qualifications and aptitude for the work.

The toolkit has been communicated to staff through appearances on PC Background and Trustwide emails. The Equality Officer and Manager have attended Directorate Team meetings throughout the Trust to promote and advise on the toolkit.

Bespoke training courses have been held for teams who would like additional assistance with the Toolkit. Promotion and guidance of the Toolkit is presented at the Practical Manager Training sessions.

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.

### **What's in the Toolkit?**

This toolkit applies to all staff and covers

- What is a disability?
- What is a reasonable adjustment?
- What is positive action?
- Practical guidance for Managers
- Practical guidance for Staff
- Training resources

The Disability Toolkit can be found on our i-connect pages or please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department for further information.

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### **Equal Opportunities Regional Group**

For the second year running the Equality officer chairing regional Employment Equality group. The group consists of 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 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, chaired by Equality Officer and Rafiat O'Rourke a Trust Nurse.

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 every other month and gives participants the opportunity to speak about their learning, experiences and challenges.

Within the previous year the Forum has initiated a Mutual Mentoring programme where a person from a diverse background mentors a senior leader to bestow upon them insight into what life is like within the South Eastern H&SC Trust for them.

The Mutual Mentoring programme is to be rolled out as part of other staff Forums in South Eastern Trust.

### **Drop in Clinics**

As direct result of the Multi-Cultural Forum the Trust has held two Drop in Clinics in the 2022/2023 year. One in Downshire Hospital and one at the Ulster Hospital Site. The clinics were a chance for members of the Multi-Cultural forum to 'drop in' and meet the Co- Chairs of the Multi-Cultural Forum. We also had the Trust Chairman 'drop in' to see how the Forum was getting along. The results of the clinics were positive and facilitated staff with a chance to share their experiences within the Trust.

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

The Trust Equality Manager is a member of the Regional Joint Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights Forum.

The Joint Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights Forum 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. The South Eastern Trust will chair a Forum Meeting in the coming year and our Chairman, Jonathan Patton has kindly agreed to attend the meeting and offer support for the ongoing work.

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.

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 in September 2023 and will demonstrate how good community relationships are fundamental to enabling us to work together to promote inclusive and sustainable growth.

The Forum will in September 2023 focus on the theme of Good Relations Week which is "Together...". Further information is available on the website. [www.goodrelationsweek.com](http://www.goodrelationsweek.com). Good Relations Week runs from 18<sup>th</sup> -24<sup>th</sup> September 2023

## **Patient Experience Equality & Values Cultural Training**

After the success of the Equality and Values training with CSSD colleagues the Equality team have embarked on a journey of partnership working with our colleagues in the Patient Experience Catering Team.

A half day Values & Equality training was developed by the Equality Team and the OWD Team and has had positive feedback to date. The training is still ongoing and has been paused due to 'action short of strike' with the Teams.

## **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 2022- March 2023 a total of 18 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**

In 2022-2023, regionally HSCNI moved to a planning and scoping phase for the return of in-person work experience and the South Eastern Trust internally started this process. This meant that in-person work experience placements for post-primary school students, 16 – 19 years old pupils, including students at college on Level 2 or 3 qualifications did not occur but conversations commenced about work experience in preparation for academic year 2023/2024.

The Regional HSCNI Work Experience Placement group (chaired by Hilary McConnell in the Trust) have resumed discussions with the Education Authority (EA) and are making progress in resolving some paperwork issues to aid a streamlined return of in-person work experience and progress plans for a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with EA.

Activities continue to be delivered virtually for students:

Virtual nursing Q&A on 15 June 2022. There were 28 schools participating with 120 student

Virtual nursing Q&A on 15 November 2022. There were 23 schools participating with 136 students

Virtual midwifery Q&A on 16 November 2022. There were 24 school's participation with 123 students

## **Encompass**

As the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust works towards being the first Trust to go live with encompass on 9 November 2023, the Equality Team is working with Trust colleagues on the Equality Screening of implementation of the programme. This equality screening will identify there are any potential adverse impacts for any of our Trust staff.

A Regional Equality Screening will be undertaken by the encompass programme owner and this will have a strategic and regional focus on the programme approach and aspirations.

Our local Trust Screening will then flow from this and reference the overarching piece. Work has been carried out to identify the staff who may be impacted by the initiative.

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

### **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, New Policy updates and information of how to access Interpreters for alternative languages including sign language.

### **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.

### **Forum for staff with Disabilities**

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

The Forum plans to review the Trust Disability Toolkit, and also takes part in reviewing Trust policies that affect staff before they are ratified and aims to host an event later in 2023.

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

Members of the Staff with Disabilities forum are planning to take part in the Trusts Mutual Mentoring initiatives to enhance awareness at senior level of issues that affect staff with disabilities on a day to day basis.

The next meeting is planned to be held in September 2023.

### **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 beginning to return to their schools and pupils to continue these important sessions.

The Trust will be recruiting volunteers in August 2023 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 October 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

### **Staff Carers Forum**

In November 2022 the Trust held its first Staff Carers Forum. The meeting was attended by Chairman Jonathan Patton who thanked staff carers for the work that they do.

The Forum is chaired by Pamela Smyth, Trust Carers Coordinator and Elaine Sommerville, Assistant Director for Social Work, and is supported by the Health and Wellbeing Lead and the Equality Officer.

The Forum meets quarterly and has recently produced a staff carers video. To view the video click here [Valuing Working Carers](#)

The Forum plans to work on a Staff Carers Framework which will help with training and staff support.

### **Rural Needs Act**

The Trust has continued to address its responsibilities under the Rural Needs Act 2016. The Directorate of People and Organisational Development responsible for central co-ordination 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.

Staff within the Equality Team of the People and Organisational Development Directorate provide advice and guidance to staff regarding the completion of Rural Needs Impact Assessment and also provide support to services, including signposting staff to guidance.

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

The Equality Team have recently taken on the responsibility for providing advice guidance and support to staff as they complete the Rural Needs Assessment Tool for new and revised policy and proposals.

The 2022/2023 Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report has been sent to DAERA to be included in their Annual Report 2023.

### **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

Trusts in Northern Ireland. It was authored 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 that was researched and written in England.

## **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 and 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

PART A

- 2** Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/measures** in 2022-23 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

Please see Appendix 1 for a detailed update of actions progressed in Year 5 (2022-2023) 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 2022-23 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. Use of limited and Covid-19 compliant face to face, eLearning module promoted and specifically designed training for staff.	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	Individuals aware of the Trust's commitment to equality duties.  Trust staff aware of equality duties and Trust

	<p>knowledge, expertise and skill to mainstream S75 duties.</p> <p>The regional Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights; Making a Difference eLearning programme is mandatory and compliance is monitored</p>	<p>commitment to not only avoiding discrimination but also to pursuing good practice, embracing diversity and promoting good relations.</p>
<p>Prepare Section 75 Annual Progress Report (APR).</p>	<p>Annual Progress Report supported by Equality Newsletter to ensure updates available in a more accessible format.</p>	<p>Consultees sent copy of newsletter and informed of availability of progress report - improving awareness of Trust's S75 duties and outcomes of work programme.</p>
<b>Action Plan</b>		
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Its implementation is intended to have a positive impact on S75 groups</p>
<b>Arrangements for consulting</b>		
<p>Consultation list reviewed and updated</p>	<p>Consultation list continues to be reviewed.</p>	<p>New consultees were added to consultation list resulting in more robust engagement process.</p>
<p>Training re Consultation</p>	<p>The Trust recognises the importance of proper</p>	<p>S75 groups and consultees engaged</p>

PART A

	and timely consultation as an integral part of fulfilling its S75 duties when making decisions and planning services. Equality Team works in partnership with Engagement and Involvement Manager	consulted on Trust decisions.
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.

<p>Revise screening template and accompanying guidance notes.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Screening Template due to be revised and updated regionally in 2023-2024</p> <p>During the reporting period the Trust screened 18 policies and proposals.</p>	<p>Transparent decision making process for consultees and impact on S75 groups identified during policy development process.</p>
<p>Publish reports quarterly and in accessible formats on request.</p>	<p>All quarterly reports for the reporting period were made available on the Trust's website.</p>	<p>Screening outcomes available to the public for consideration.</p>
<p>Publishing of EQIA reports.</p>	<p>During the reporting period there were 2 EQIA consultations carried out.</p> <p>Comprehensive Section 75 equality screenings have been completed and published on all plans implemented by SETrust.</p>	<p>When EQIA carried out consultees receive feedback on the proposed changes as part of the Trust Consultation Outcome Report</p>
<b>Monitoring</b>		
<p>Review of monitoring information.</p>	<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>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>

	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.	Guidance supports HSC organisations to identify any unmet need and to target their resources thus tackling health inequalities experienced by BME communities.
<b>Staff Training</b>		
Draw up a detailed training plan.	During reporting period, implementation of the Trust's Equality Training Strategy continued within the restrictions of the Covid-19 guidance.  The regional Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights: Making a Difference Programme has been rolled out across the Trust and compliance is monitored.	2079 staff received equality and human rights training during the reporting period.  This is in line with the figures from 2021-2022.
Specific Targeted Training.	During the reporting period the Equality Team were able to provide focused training for specific staff groups.	It is hoped that the Equality Team will continue to deliver training via a blended approach in 2023-2024 to meet the needs of our staff, still being aware of the ongoing COVID-19 guidance.
<b>Arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and services we provide</b>		
Ensure information we disseminate and services we provide are fully accessible to all	Information is provided in alternative formats on request and Trust's website has been	Improved access to information and services for equality groups – specifically those whose first language is not

parts of the community in Northern Ireland.	designed to ensure accessibility.  During reporting period, a total of 7620 requests for interpreting.	English and people with a disability.
Provide information in alternative formats on request.	Trust staff access the translation of written material through the Regional Contract.  The Access to Health and Social Care Booklet has been regionally revised and translated into 15 languages and is available on our website.  Consultation documents were provided in Easy Read format to enable full access by our stakeholders.	Information provided in alternative formats to increase understanding, ensure effective communication and improved access to services.
Provide interpreters and sign language interpreters.	A total 7620 episodes were delivered in 2022 - 2023	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 no complaints relating to the implementation of its Equality Scheme.	N/A
<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.

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<p>Liaise closely with the ECNI to ensure that progress on the implementation of our Equality Scheme is maintained.</p>	<p>During reporting period the Trust met regularly with ECNI on S75 implementation and in the Regional Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights Forum</p>	<p>Ensures effective use of resources and S75 implementation.</p>
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**3a** With regard to the change(s) made to policies, practices or procedures and/or service delivery areas, what **difference was made, or will be made, for individuals**, i.e. the impact on those according to Section 75 category?

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 were 2 EQIA’s carried out as part of Trust Consultation process on service proposals.

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



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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 new 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 2022- 23 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 2022-23 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.

#### **HR Balanced Scorecard**

The HR Balanced Scorecard is updated on a quarterly basis. It includes the actions of ensuring Equality Screening of all policies and proposals and staff being able to access an interpreter either face to face or telephone.

#### **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 2022-23 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

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- 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 2022-2023 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 2022-23 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of actions completed:

Actions Completed	14	Actions ongoing	7	Actions to commence	7
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8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2022-23 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 2022-23 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 5 Years plans being developed.

- 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 two EQIA's 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 2022-2023 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 2022-2023 a total of 18 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.

#### **Public Consultation on the Temporary Changes to Urgent and Emergency Care Services at Lagan Valley Hospital, Lisburn**

The Equality Team worked in partnership with Strategic Planning and Hospital Service colleagues as part of the initiative to consult on the proposal for temporary changes to Urgent and Emergency Care Services at Lagan Valley Hospital.

An Equality Screening and Rural Needs Assessment for this proposal were developed and included in the EMT and Trust Board approved consultation documents. The consultation period ran for 8 weeks from 23 February 2022 – 22 April 2022.

## 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 2022-2023 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,

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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 2022-2023 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 2022-23 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, as a result of undeliverable emails and stakeholder feedback.

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

During 2022-2023 a total of 18 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 2022-2023:**

There were 2 EQIA consultations 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:**

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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.

- 18** Were any screening decisions (or equivalent initial assessments of relevance) reviewed following concerns raised by consultees? (*tick one box only*)

Yes                       No concerns were raised                       No                       Not applicable

Screening was reviewed and responses to the concerns included in the Trust Consultation Outcome Reports.

**Arrangements for publishing the results of assessments (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)**

- 19** Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2022-23 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes                       No                       Not applicable

**Arrangements for monitoring and publishing the results of monitoring (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)**

- 20** From the Equality Scheme monitoring arrangements, was there an audit of existing information systems during the 2022-2023 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes     No, already taken place  
 No, scheduled to take place at a later date                       Not applicable

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

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

**Encompass**

The encompass programme is a HSC-wide initiative which will introduce a digital integrated care record to Northern Ireland. This will support the HSCNI vision to transform health and social care in order to improve health outcomes and create better experiences for those receiving, using and delivering services.

Encompass will create a single digital care record for every citizen in Northern Ireland who receives health and social care. It will be in use across all Health and Social Care Trusts to create better experiences for patients, service users and

staff. encompass will give patients and service users the ability to view and 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 2022-2023 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 2022-2023, 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 provide limited Covid-19 compliant 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 2022-2023 a total of 2079 staff have attended or accessed training.

#### Training includes:

Corporate Induction (Patient Experience)	236
Patient Experience Supervisor Training	19
Working Well with Interpreters	89
E-Learning Module	1735
Total	2079

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 and within the COVID-19 guidance and restrictions. Specific Equality and Human Rights training has been delivered to Patient Experience staff as part of their induction. This has taken been undertaken following risk assessments, adherence to maximum numbers in training rooms, social distancing, ventilation, hand sanitising and mask wearing,

### **Delivering Training in the Post Covid-19 World.**

The Equality Team recognises that new ways of delivering training will need to be developed and implemented. As with other training programmes it is envisaged that the Team will take a blended approach to training. Face to Face training will be delivered for appropriate staff groups and will take into account social distancing, group size, IPC guidelines and suitable location/accommodation. Virtual training will be delivered when possible and appropriate. As always the training delivered will be evaluated and adapted to staff requirements

These training sessions continue to be well received and staff feedback would demonstrate that staff respond positively to this type of training.

### **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 89 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 2022-2023, 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 7620 episodes were provided during 2022-2023. 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 2022-2023?

No complaints were raised in regard to the Equality Scheme. 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 2023 – 2028.

The audit of inequalities covers the nine Section 75 categories but also, given the impact of Covid, has a further section on the inequalities exacerbated or created by the pandemic. In the next reporting period the Trust will undertake a five-year review on the effectiveness of our Equality Schemes.

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 2023- 2028 to further promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability and to encourage their full participation in public life.

Consultation and engagement is taking place for 16 weeks ending in September 2023. In the next reporting period the Trust will report on the outcomes of the consultation and assess feedback on the draft audit of inequalities, the effectiveness of our Equality Schemes and what actions would make a meaningful difference in addressing inequalities and taking forward the disability duties.

- 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 ongoing Action Plan consultations 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 (2023-2024) reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

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