

Business Services Organisation



Public Authority Statutory Equality, Good Relations and Disability Duties - Annual Progress Report 2024-25

Contact:

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan	As above <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at: **(ECNI Q28):**

<https://bso.hscni.net/directorates/people-and-place/equality-and-human-rights/equality-screening/>

The report on our most recent Five Year Review of Equality Scheme can be found at:

<https://bso.hscni.net/directorates/people-and-place/equality-and-human-rights/bso-equality-scheme-and-reports/>

Our Equality Scheme is due to be reviewed again by 30th June 2026.

Signature:

This report has been prepared adapting a template circulated by the Equality Commission. It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and disability duties. This report reflects progress made between April 2024 and March 2025.

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Chapter 1 Summary Quantitative Report

(ECNI Q15,16,19)

Screening, EQIAs and Consultation

<p>1. Number of policies screened (as recorded in screening reports). (see also Chapter 6)</p> <p>7</p>	<p>Screened in</p> <p>0</p>	<p>Screened out with mitigation</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Screened out without mitigation</p> <p>3</p>	<p>Screening decision reviewed following concerns raised by consultees</p> <p>No concerns were raised by consultees on screening published in 2024-25</p>
<p>2. Number of policies subjected to Equality Impact Assessment.</p>	<p>0</p>			
<p>3. Indicate the stage of progress of each EQIA.</p>	<p>Title and Stage</p> <p>n/a</p>			

<p>4. Number of policy consultations conducted</p>	<p>0</p>
<p>5. Number of policy consultations conducted with screening presented. (See also Chapter 2, Table 2)</p>	<p>0</p>

(ECNI Q24)
Training

6. Staff training undertaken during 2024-25. (See also Chapter 2, Q6)

Course	No of Staff Trained	No of Board Members Trained
Equality Screening Training	8	0
Total	8	0

eLearning: Making a Difference

Part 1 – All Staff	639
Part 2 – Line Managers	65

(ECNI Q27)
Complaints

7. Number of complaints in relation to the Equality Scheme received during 2024-25

0

Please provide detail of any complaints:

n/a

(ECNI Q7)
Equality Action Plan (see also Chapter 3)

8. Within the 2024-25 reporting period, please indicate the number of:

Actions completed:

2

Actions ongoing:

9

Actions to commence:

4

(ECNI Part B Q1)
Disability Action Plan (see also Chapter 4)

9. Within the 2024-25 reporting period, please indicate the number of:

Actions completed: Actions ongoing: Actions to commence:

Chapter 2 Section 75 Progress Report

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

1. In 2024-25, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved. Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.

Table 1 below outlines progress to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations¹.

¹This includes as a result of

- screening / Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs)
- monitoring
- staff training
- engagement and consultation
- improvements in access to information and services
- implementation of Equality and Disability Action Plans.

In most cases, it is not possible to ascribe developments and changes to one single factor. New initiatives, such as the Gender Identity Employment Policy, for instance are not necessarily an outcome of screenings or Equality and Disability Action Plan implementation.

As mainstreaming progresses and the promotion of equality becomes part of the organisational culture and way of working, the more difficult it becomes to ascribe activities and outcomes to the application of a specific element of Equality Scheme implementation.

Table 1:

	<p>Outline new developments or changes in policies or practices and the difference they have made for specific equality groupings.</p>
<p>Those disadvantaged in the labour market (including young people, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, women and older people)</p>	<p>Directorate of Digital</p> <p><i>Note: In public sector procurement, social value clauses are used to ensure contracts deliver added social value. In this table we include some examples where added social value has made a difference for particular S75 groups.</i></p> <p><u>Social value in ITS Procurement:</u> As part of the Core Laboratory Information Management System Programme, supplier CliniSys have provided 26 weeks training for a new entrant trainee from a priority group, 2 weeks work placement and 8 hours of business education activities for people who are considered to be disadvantaged in the labour market along with 8 hours working with the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector.</p>
<p>Persons of different racial groups</p>	<p>BSO Interpreting Service</p> <p>BSO Interpreting Service GP Practice Awareness Training: “Practice Based Learning” Sessions delivered to 155 GP Practice Staff via Eastern GP Federation. This training will be rolled out to other GP Federations in 2025/26. The intended outcome of this training is enhanced GP awareness and appropriate provision of language support leading to improved access to GP services for service users who do not speak English proficiently.</p> <p>New BSO Interpreting Service HSC Staff Posters were developed and shared with HSC organisations. Furthermore, new BSO Interpreting Service Patient</p>

	<p>leaflets were developed and translated into top 10 languages. The aim of the posters/leaflets was to increase awareness of the interpreting service and to ensure appropriate provision of language support to service users, thereby improving access to HSCNI services for service users who do not speak English proficiently.</p> <p>To address emerging needs, eighteen new Interpreters were registered for a range of languages including: Bengali, Cantonese, Farsi, Hungarian, Malayalam, Pashto, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Spanish, Tagalog, Ukrainian, Urdu, Punjabi.</p>
Persons of different age	<p>Directorate of Digital</p> <p><u>Social value in ITS Procurement</u>: Training days were held by CIVICA for group of 10 pupils with disabilities from the Priory College Belfast, who spent a day at Civica offices to gain work experience in an IT environment. This included the provision of IT equipment and awareness raising of cyber crime.</p>
Persons of different genders and gender identities	<p>Directorate of Digital</p> <p>As part of the Gender Pathway the NI Digital Identity Service programme have submitted a paper to Department of Health to review gender identity within digital systems.</p>

<p>Persons with and without a disability</p>	<p>Directorate of Digital</p> <p><u>Social value in ITS Procurement:</u> As part of the General Medical Services programme, the supplier, EMIS, have delivered 40 hours of Open College Network vocational skills qualification to persons disadvantaged in the labour market and 75 hours demonstrating good cyber security practice to persons with a disability.</p> <p><u>Social value in ITS Procurement:</u> Digital Inclusion Initiative as part of the Technical Enablement Programme, working with the Voluntary, Community or Social Enterprise sector (VCSE), NOW Group & Specialisme NI providing IT equipment alongside education and training on how to use this equipment.</p>
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Equality Portal

This year saw the launch of a new Equality Portal, which is a Microsoft Sharepoint site, providing our staff with comprehensive access to a range of equality services provided by the Equality Unit in BSO. The Equality Portal was co-designed with clients, to feature what staff need to know as they consider and mainstream equality in their work and in the workplace, including detailed guidance and resources for use when undertaking equality screenings.

Where changes resulted from screenings, these will be listed in Chapter 6, the mitigation report. No changes resulted from EQIAs.

(ECNI Q4,5,6)

2. During the 2024-25 reporting period

(a) were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within...?

	Yes/No	Details
Job descriptions	Yes	For all new posts, the Job Description includes the following: “Assist the organisation in fulfilling its statutory duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to promote equality of opportunity and good relations and under the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. Staff are also required to support the organisation in complying with its obligations under Human Rights Legislation.”
Performance objectives for staff	No	None other than for BSO Equality Unit staff.

(b) were objectives and targets relating to Section 75 integrated into...?

	Yes/No	Details
Corporate/strategic plans	No	No Section 75 objectives or targets included in BSO Corporate Plan 2024-27.
Annual business plans	Yes	One key performance indicator in BSO Business Plan 2024-25 relates to S75: Delivery of Equality and Disability Action Plans year 1 actions by March 25.

(ECNI Q11,12,17)

3. Please provide any details and examples of good practice in consultation during the 2024-25 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:

No consultations undertaken during 2024-25.

(ECNI Q21, 26)

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

No

Please provide any details and examples:

Directorate of Legal Services (DLS)

We undertook a recruitment of Counsel panel to carry out DLS work. This recruitment has just finished, the data is being analysed and DLS will be liaising with the Bar Council, the regulatory body of Counsel. We collected data on the following groups: gender, marital status, religion, ethnic group, nationality and caring responsibilities. Analysis of this data is ongoing.

(ECNI Q22)

5. Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2024-25 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

Not applicable.

(ECNI Q25)

6. Please provide any examples of relevant training shown to have worked well, in that participants have achieved the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve the stated objectives:

The organisation avails of the joint Section 75 training programme that is coordinated and delivered by the BSO Equality Unit for staff across all 11 partner organisations. The following statistics thus relate to the evaluations undertaken by all participants for the training:

Screening Training Evaluations

The figures in bold below represent the percentage of participants who selected 'Very Well' or 'Well'. Participants were asked: "Overall how well do you think the course met its aims":

- To develop an understanding of the statutory requirements for screening: **100%**
- To develop an understanding of the benefits of screening: **96%**
- To develop an understanding of the screening process: **96%**
- To develop skills in practically carrying out screening: **86%**

(ECNI Q29)

7. 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)

Five Year Review of Equality Scheme will commence during 2025-26

Equality Screening anticipated during 2025-26:

Chief Executive's Office

Conflict of Interest Policy

Digital

All programmes commissioned by DHCNI, ALB's and Trusts for ITS to deliver.

Strategy, Engagement & Improvement

Performance & Improvement Framework

Annual Report 2025-26

Corporate Business Plan

Annual Business Plan.

Clinical Education Centre

New Programme developments, guidance, procedures and plans

Family Practitioner Service

FPS Data Strategy

FPS System Strategy

Appendix – Further Explanatory Notes

1 Consultation and Engagement

(ECNI Q10)

targeting –

We did not undertake any public consultations or pre-consultation exercises during the year.

(ECNI Q13)

awareness raising for consultees on Equality Scheme commitments –

During the year, in our quarterly screening reports we raised awareness as to our commitments relating to equality screenings and their publication.

(ECNI Q14)

consultation list – During the year, we reviewed our consultation list every quarter.

2 Audit of Information Systems

(ECNI Q20)

We completed an audit of information systems at an early stage of our Equality Scheme implementation, in line with our Scheme commitments.