

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

## **Progress Report**

### **Business Services Organisation**

#### **What we did between April 2020 and March 2021**

If you need this document in another format please get in touch with us. Our contact details are at the back of this document. Our Equality and Disability Action Plan 2018-23 can be found on our website at:

<http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/pdf/1.pdf>

**Equality Action Plan 2020-21: What we will do to promote equality and good relations**

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
<p><b>Information Technology Services (ITS)</b></p> <p>1. Women in senior ITS roles: Review and compare the % of women and men within senior ITS roles over various periods of time. Create workshops to explore any barriers for career progression of women within ITS.</p>	<p>More representative gender balance in senior ITS roles.</p>	<p>Workshops held. Increased share of women working at senior levels (quantifiable targets to be determined following review.</p>	<p>Director of Customer Care and Performance.  By end of March 2021.</p>
<p><b>What we did over the last year:</b></p> <p>ITS have continued to encourage female staff to apply for senior roles within ITS. The Senior team now consists of 5 females. The focus for ITS moving forward will be the Reorganisation of the current structures which will include succession planning and talent management plus attracting staff to various roles. The Women in Leadership courses have been held over the last number of years and these will continue to be rolled out. ITS equality representative will also work with HR on the reorganisation project and ensure consideration of gender issues.</p> <p><b>This action has been completed.</b></p>			

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What we will do	What we are trying to achieve	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
<p><b>Family Practitioner Services</b></p> <p>4. Invitation to health screening programmes (cervical and bowel): Together with our customer, the Public Health Agency, review the process for inviting persons of different gender identities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify any changes required to the registration system.</li> </ul>	<p>Service users who identify as transgender or non-binary are invited to appropriate health screening programmes in line with gender-specific clinical risks.</p>	<p>Weaknesses in the current process are identified with input from service users.</p> <p>Changes to the process are agreed with input from service users.</p>	<p>Director of Operations.</p> <p>By end of March 2021.</p>
<p><b>What we did over the last year</b></p> <p>We performed a review of patients on the National Health Application and Infrastructure Services, who have had a change of gender status, to ensure that participants who identify as transgender are correctly identified and included/excluded from the Cervical Screening Programme as required.</p> <p><b>This action has been completed.</b></p>			
<p><b>Human Resources</b></p> <p>5. Staff who are carers: Provide information for staff on available policies and measures that</p>	<p>Staff who are carers feel more supported in the workplace.</p>	<p>Baseline staff survey and after 3 years (quantifiable targets to be determined following baseline survey).</p>	<p>Director of Human Resources with support from Equality Unit.</p>

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<p>might meet their needs; including sign-posting to relevant support organisations.</p> <p>Monitor requests for uptake of work-life balance policies.</p>			By end of March 2021.
<p><b>What we did over the last year</b></p> <p>The last year was a challenging one for all staff in BSO due to Covid 19. All staff where possible were required to work from home. Appropriate IT equipment was provided to help facilitate this. Covid 19 had an impact on carer arrangements including closure of schools and day centres. BSO encouraged managers to be more flexible with how their staff carried out their work which would enable them to carry out home schooling and provide caring arrangements. We also provided our staff with access to information and a range of resources on managing their mental health and well-being.</p> <p>BSO also carried out two working from home surveys with our staff. One of the areas that was surveyed was flexibility and having a good work life balance. The feedback indicated that 60% of staff had a more flexible schedule and 63% had a better work life balance. The survey also collected demographic data including on caring responsibilities. We are committed to further analysing the survey data by dependant status to find out more about the experience, views and needs of our staff who are carers – both during the pandemic and going forward – and to what extent they differ from staff who do not have caring responsibilities.</p>			

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<p>A Working from Home Policy was developed to help support staff and managers during the pandemic.</p> <p><b>This action has been completed.</b></p>			
<p><b>Human Resources</b></p> <p>6. Develop support mechanisms for staff experiencing domestic violence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scope best practice across the HSC and beyond.</li> <li>• Develop measures to support staff with experience of domestic violence.</li> <li>• Undertake awareness raising relating to new mechanisms.</li> </ul>	<p>Staff with experience of domestic violence feel better supported.</p>	<p>Feedback from staff who have drawn support through the mechanisms indicates a positive experience.</p>	<p>Director of Human Resources.</p> <p>By end of March 2021.</p>
<p><b>What we did over the last year</b></p> <p>A Domestic Abuse policy was developed with 3 supporting awareness sessions provided for staff. Unfortunately it was not as well attended as we hoped, however, those who did attend felt the facilitator was excellent and used examples throughout which made the information easier to understand. Others felt it was very relevant information with an inspiring presenter with an insightful presentation. Others suggested further information on how to spot the signs of domestic abuse would be useful. The session was presented by a representative from the voluntary sector. In addition to these sessions, supporting</p>			

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<p>information was placed on the Health and Wellbeing sharepoint site which has had over 14,000 hits. Looking ahead, the BSO will be working with other HSC organisations to develop a regional policy and approach to Domestic Abuse which will ensure the HSC is consistent in the support and advice we are providing to our staff.</p> <p><b>We need to do more work on this action.</b></p>			
<p><b>Human Resources</b></p> <p>7. Fair Participation in the Workplace:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake outreach work with relevant community and voluntary sector groups to encourage applications for posts from under-represented groups</li> <li>• Identify under-represented groups.</li> <li>• Undertake targeted outreach work.</li> </ul>	<p>The workforce is more representative of the Section 75 profile of the working age population in NI.</p>	<p>Article 55 report and monitoring data indicates a more representative workforce</p>	<p>Director of Human Resources</p> <p>By end of March 2021</p>
<p><b>What we did over the last year</b></p> <p>As mentioned above, 2020/21 was a challenging year. Schools, Colleges and Universities were closed and community events were cancelled due to government restrictions. We were not in a position to carry out as much outreach work as we</p>			

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<p>have liked due to the Covid restrictions. However, BSO HR supported the Regional HSC Workforce Appeal which was an exercise to encourage all members of the public who had a range of skills to apply to the HSC to support the Covid work. BSO also supported the HSC in the recruitment of Contact Tracing Workers and Vaccinators to work across the province. This was very successful.</p> <p>BSO will continue to monitor its applicants and identify any affirmative action measures that need to be taken to ensure under represented sectors are encouraged to apply.</p> <p><b>We did not complete this action.</b></p>			
<p><b>Human Resources</b></p> <p>8. Roll-out of the Gender Identity and Expression Employment Policy:</p> <p>Deliver awareness and training initiatives to relevant staff</p>	<p>Staff who identify as transgender and non-binary feel more supported in the workplace</p>	<p>Feedback from staff who have drawn support through the policy indicates a positive experience.</p>	<p>Director of Human Resources with support from Equality Unit</p> <p>By end of March 2021</p>
<p><b>What we did over the last year</b></p> <p>Apart from the ongoing roll-out of the Making a Difference eLearning for all staff, which includes a dedicated scenario in relation to gender identity, no additional awareness and training initiatives were delivered to staff during the year.</p>			

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<b>We did not complete this action.</b>			

- We completed **3** actions (Numbers 1, 4, 5)
- We still have some more work to do in order to complete 1 action (Number 6)
- We did not complete 2 actions (Numbers 7, 8)
- All of the actions in our action plan are at regional and at local level.



**Disability Action Plan 2020-21: What we will do to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in public life**

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
<p><b>Awareness Days</b></p> <p>1. Raise awareness of specific barriers faced by people with disabilities including through linking in with National Awareness Days or Weeks (such as Mind your Health Day).</p>	<p>Increased staff awareness of a range of disabilities and needs.</p>	<p>2 awareness days profiled every year.</p> <p>&gt;50% of staff taking part in the evaluation indicate they know more about people living with disabilities as a result of the awareness days.</p>	<p>Equality Unit.</p> <p>By end of March 2021.</p>

**What we did over the last year**

During 2021-21 we held 2 Awareness Days. We asked staff which disabilities they wanted to know more about. They told us they wanted to know more about Deafness and Hearing Loss and Bipolar Disorder.

We emailed staff to let them know about the Awareness Days. We also wrote about the Awareness Days in our staff newsletter and added information to the Tapestry website <http://tapestry.hscni.net/> .

On the Deafness and Hearing Loss day we set up a Zoom meeting. We had a speaker from a deaf and hearing loss organisation (Royal National Institute for the Deaf). The speaker explained the problems that deaf people face, especially during Covid when people wear masks which make lip-reading difficult. Two of our staff who are deaf wrote about their experience of working during Covid; we added their stories to the Tapestry website.

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<p>The other Awareness Day was about Living with Bipolar Disorder. Again we set up a Zoom meeting and had two speakers who know a lot about mental health conditions. One of the speakers lives with Bipolar Disorder.</p> <p>The videos of both awareness days are on the Tapestry website.</p> <p>Next year we will do a survey to ask staff what they thought of the Awareness Days.</p> <p><b>This action has been completed.</b></p>			
<p><b>Placement Scheme</b></p> <p>2. Create and promote meaningful placement opportunities for people with disabilities.</p>	<p>People with a disability gain meaningful work experience.</p>	<p>At least 10 placements offered by BSO every year.</p> <p>Feedback through annual evaluation of scheme indicates that placement meets expectations.</p> <p>At least 2 placement participants are successful in applying for paid employment within 12 months of completing their placement.</p>	<p>Senior Management Team (SMT) with support from Equality Unit.</p> <p>By end of March 2021.</p>
<p><b>What we did over the last year</b></p> <p>Due to Covid related government guidelines the Placement Scheme was suspended during 20-21. The Scheme will resume</p>			

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<p>as soon as it is safe to do so.</p> <p><b>We did not complete this action.</b></p>			
<p><b>Tapestry</b></p> <p>3. Promote and encourage staff to participate in the disability staff network and support the network in the delivery of its action plan.</p>	<p>Staff with a disability feel more confident that their voice is heard in decision-making.</p> <p>Staff with a disability feel better supported.</p>	<p>Tapestry staff survey in 2022-23.</p>	<p>SMT with support from Equality Unit.</p> <p>By end of March 2021.</p>
<p><b>What we did over the last year</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During 2020-21, a few new members came to Tapestry meetings and joined the Tapestry mailing list. This was a 10% increase from last years' numbers. Tapestry was promoted to all staff in the regional HSC organisations through posters, emails, and staff newsletters. We also included information on Tapestry at training sessions and events.</li> <li>• Another member of staff with a disability came forward to tell their story and act as a role model. Their story was published on the Tapestry website. At our meetings, we encouraged staff with disabilities in each of the regional HSC organisations to act as role models for others.</li> </ul>			

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This year, our meetings went virtual using the online meeting software Zoom in light of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Members were able to join remotely from offices or home.</li> <li>• The Equality Unit held several surveys throughout 2020-21 for Tapestry members on their experiences of working through Covid-19 and the wearing of face masks to better understand the impacts and what we as employers, line managers and colleagues can do to offer support.</li> </ul> <p><b>This action has been completed.</b></p>			
<p><b>Monitoring</b></p> <p>4. Encourage staff to declare that they have a disability or care for a person with a disability through awareness raising and providing guidance to staff on the importance of monitoring.</p>	<p>More accurate data in place.</p> <p>Greater number of staff feel comfortable declaring they have a disability.</p>	<p>Increase in completion of disability monitoring information by staff to 90%.</p>	<p>SMT with support from Equality Unit.</p> <p>By end of March 2021.</p>
<p><b>What we did over the last year</b></p> <p>A reminder email was sent out to all staff across the regional HSC organisations to update their equality information on the Human Resources IT system, with instructions telling them how to do this.</p>			

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<p>An article was also published in 'Business Matters' our Staff newsletter, telling staff about the importance of completing their equality information (including disability status). This also showed staff how to update their information.</p> <p>On the Disability Awareness Days, staff were told about the benefits of telling their employer if they had a disability both by speakers from the voluntary sector, and in the emails that went out to staff publicising the events.</p> <p>The most recent staff monitoring data this year show the numbers of staff in the BSO who told us whether they had a disability or not had increased, but only slightly - from 49% in March 2020 to 50% in March 2021. This means that we have to keep encouraging staff to complete the information. In total, 1.9% of staff had declared that they have a disability. This figure is almost the same as last year.</p> <p><b>This action has been completed.</b></p>			
<p><b>Training</b></p> <p>5. In collaboration with disabled people design, deliver and evaluate training for staff and Board Members on disability equality and disability legislation.</p>	<p>Increased staff and Board Member awareness of the range of disabilities and needs.</p>	<p>Number of staff trained (general and bespoke) through eLearning or interactive sessions.</p> <p>Staff awareness initiatives delivered.</p> <p>Feedback from staff who have a disability indicates satisfaction with support provided.</p>	<p>SMT with support from Equality Unit.</p> <p>By end of March 2021.</p>

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<p><b>What we did over the last year</b></p> <p>The Making A Difference e-learning programme includes a number of scenarios that involve people with a disability and asks staff to think through how best to support individuals, as well as giving information on disability legislation. All our staff have to complete the programme. During 20/21, 425 staff completed the Making A Difference Training.</p> <p>19 staff completed Disability Awareness eLearning (module 5 of Discovering Diversity).</p> <p><b>This action has been completed.</b></p>			
<p>8. Use our influence to scope the possibility of monitoring disability-related absences across the HSC, together with our partners.</p>	<p>Improved data quality.</p> <p>Enable meaningful monitoring of the impact of positive action targeted at staff who have a disability on reducing any absence due to their disability.</p>	<p>Discussion held with HSC partners.</p>	<p>Director of Human Resources.</p> <p>By end of March 2021.</p>
<p><b>What we did over the last year</b></p> <p>BSO HR continues to monitor absence and link in with Occupational Health to support those staff that have a disability. The Regional Employment Equality Network had developed a regionally agreed disability toolkit and advice to support those who</p>			

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<p>have a disability and their respective managers. The intention of this is to encourage those staff with a disability to advise their manager and update the HRPTS self-service portal with their disability details. Whilst the intention was to roll this out in 2020/21, Covid delayed us from doing this; however, it is intended to launch this before 30/06/2021.</p> <p><b>We need to do more work on this action.</b></p>			
<p>9. Raise awareness about arrangements to cover costs of making reasonable adjustments for staff with disabilities.</p>	<p>Staff with a disability are better supported to join or stay in the workplace.</p> <p>Managers are supported to make reasonable adjustments in a timely manner.</p>	<p>Feedback from staff with a disability indicates satisfaction with reasonable adjustments in place.</p>	<p>Equality Unit.</p> <p>By end of March 2021.</p>
<p><b>What we did over the last year</b></p> <p>We did not deliver on this action during 2020-21.</p> <p><b>We did not complete this action.</b></p>			
<p><b>Procurement and Logistics Service</b></p>	<p>Greater participation of people with a disability in</p>	<p>Number of contracts considered for appropriateness as a reserved</p>	<p>Director of Operations.</p>

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<p>15. The law on procurement by public sector organisations allows for ‘reserving’ contracts in certain circumstances*. This means that in those cases, only organisations whose main aim is to integrate disabled or disadvantaged people can bid for the work. It can also mean that the work under the contract is done through ‘sheltered employment programmes’ where at least 30% of staff have a disability or are disadvantaged.</p> <p>We will use our influence to explore these provisions and together with Trust Contract Adjudication Groups determine the appropriateness to reserve suitable contracts.</p> <p>* Article 20 of the Public Contracts Directive</p>	<p>employment.</p>	<p>contract.</p> <p>Number and nature of contracts where the decision to reserve is taken.</p> <p>Number of employees with a disability of participating operators.</p>	<p>By end of March 2021.</p>



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<p><b>What we did over the last year</b></p> <p>We placed. The contract commenced 1 September 20. This contract supports both the creation and sustaining of paid employment for those long term unemployed and those who face barriers to employment including living with disabilities and mental ill health. The contract is with AEL Limited, a registered charity. AEL run a number of social enterprises of which Clearer Water is one. AEL Limited employ approximately 50 people, 40% of these people are identified as having a disability and/or mental ill health. Specifically, Clearer Water social enterprise employs 9 people of whom 7 have a disability.</p> <p>The product is supplied in bulk to BSO PaLS warehouse and distributed throughout HSC by BSO PaLS. BSO PaLS previously purchased Clearer Water through a sub-contracting arrangement with a major foodservice operator. This new arrangement provides greater flexibility to the social enterprise in working with BSO and HSC.</p> <p><b>This action has been completed.</b></p>			
<p><b>Clinical Education Centre (CEC)</b></p> <p>16. Raise awareness of Visual Impairment and the impact it has on people receiving assessment and treatment from health professionals</p>	<p>CEC staff are enabled and more confident in meeting the needs of people with visual impairment.</p>	<p>Number of staff trained.</p>	<p>Head of Clinical Education Centre.</p> <p>By end of March 2021.</p>

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What we will do	What we are trying to achieve	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
<p><b>What we did over the last year</b> Resources to heighten awareness of visual impairment have been shared and discussed across all staff groups in CEC.</p> <p><b>This action has been completed.</b></p>			
<p><b>Clinical Education Centre</b></p> <p>17. Identify and facilitate the involvement of disabled people in our work such as in relation to wheelchair training or shared decision making training as programmes are reviewed or new programmes are being developed.</p> <p>* relating to mental health ** relating to physical disability</p>	<p>Programmes are informed by experts by experience.</p> <p>Greater participation of people with a disability in public life.</p>	<p>Number and nature of programmes where people with a disability have been involved and how.</p>	<p>Head of Clinical Education Centre.</p> <p>By end of March 2021.</p>
<p><b>What we did over the last year</b></p>			

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<p>Across all CEC programmes at least 20-25 programmes involve a service user/expert patient either sharing their lived experience or teaching onto a programme.</p> <p><b>This action has been completed.</b></p>			

### Additional Measures

- We always include Disability on our list of things to talk about at the quarterly Equality Forum with our partner organisations.
- We report on progress against our Disability Action Plan to our Board and Senior Management Team (the people at the top of our organisation) every year.

### Encourage Others

- We include questions relating to the two duties in our equality and human rights screening form. The screening form will be completed for policies and decisions.

### Monitoring

- We monitored progress on joint actions in our plans together with our partner organisations at our quarterly forum meetings.

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### **Revisions**

- We have made some small changes to our Disability Action Plans 2021-22.

### **Conclusions**

- We completed 7 actions (Numbers 1, 3, 4, 5, 15, 16, 17)
- We still have some more work to do in order to complete 1 action (Number 8)
- We didn't do what we said we would do for 2 actions (Numbers 2, 9)
- All of the actions in our action plan are at regional and at local level.
- Our action plan is a live document. If we make any big changes to our plan we will involve people with a disability. We will tell the Equality Commission about any changes.

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Signed by:

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Chair

Date:

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Chief Executive

Date:



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