



Derry City & Strabane
District Council

Comhairle
**Chathair Dhoire &
Cheantar an tSratha Báin**

Derry Cittie & Stràbane
Deistrick Cooncil

Derry City and Strabane District Council Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties

Annual Progress Report

Contact details:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme	Name: Ellen Cavanagh, Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer and Hollie Carroll, Policy Officer (Equality) Telephone: +442871253253 Email: equality@derrystrabane.com
<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:	www.derrystrabane.com
Signature:	
	John Kelpie, Chief Executive

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 2024 and March 2025.

PART A – Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Scheme

- 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.

Our compliance with the section 75 duties

During 2024-25 Derry City and Strabane District Council continued to progress equality and good relations work under the Council's new Equality Action Plan which covers the period 2024-2027, as well as through other general work to promote equality and good relations. The Equality Action Plan (and the Disability Action Plan) were updated and presented to the Governance and Strategic Planning Committee, which recommended adoption of same at their meeting in January 2025, and which was then ratified by Council the same month. This report reflects progress on the Measures in the two action plans for year one.

Our implementation of our statutory equality and good relations duties and our Equality Scheme

Consulting

Public consultation of the following Equality Impact Assessments was completed during 2024-25:

1. Equality Impact Assessment of Draft Equality Action Plan (concluding September 2024)
2. Equality Impact Assessment of Draft Disability Action Plan (concluding September 2024)
3. Equality Impact Assessment of Dual Language Street Naming Policy (concluding July 2024)

Assessing, monitoring and publishing the impact of policies

The following policies were screened during 2024-25, in line with our Equality Scheme:

4. Audit of Inequalities 2023/24
5. Review of fees for Civil Marriage & Civil Partnership Solemnisation ceremonies

6. Citizen Recognition Policy
7. Newtown Stewart Town Centre Regeneration Framework
8. Draft Entertainments Licensing Policy
9. Proposal to introduce Time Management Software in Leisure Services
10. Review of Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy.
11. Review of Hybrid Working policy
12. Draft Good Relations Action Plan 2025-26
13. Performance Improvement Objectives 2024-25
14. New Dual Language Street Naming policy¹
15. Hazelbank Play Park/Plan
16. Riversdale Leisure Complex next stage
17. New Anti-Poverty Action Plan
18. Melvin Sports Centre
19. Be Active Physical Activity, Wellbeing and Sports Strategy
20. Delivery of the Community Support Fund (CSF) and the Good Relations Grant Aid for 2025-26 onwards via the Consensual Grant Making Process
21. Strategic Support Unit Directorate Delivery Plan 25-26
22. Striking of the Rate 25-26

The following policies were passed at committee during the year and were derived from other policy/strategies already screened

23. CSF Rural and GR Priority Action Plans form part of the GR Action Plan, which was screened during 2023.
24. The Consensual Grant Making Action Plans form part of the Independent Evaluation of Consensual Grant Making which was screened during 2023.
25. The Age Friendly Guide to Services forms part of the Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan, which was screened during 2023.

Progress made on building equality of opportunity and good relations into key initiatives

Progress has been made on building equality of opportunity and good relations into key Council initiatives and day to day activities. Examples include:

- Establishment of LGBTQI+ Working Group
- Section 75 equality screening training for staff

¹ And subsequently an Equality Impact Assessment

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- Meeting of Equality Assurance and Oversight Group, with attendees representing age, disability, women and race, to name a few
- RNIB Visual Awareness training for staff and Elected Members
- Human Resources provided initiatives for staff during Mental Health Awareness Week
- Delivery of OCR Level 1 Introduction to Ulster Scots for staff and elected members
- Men's Health Awareness Week
- Mayor promotes Council support for migrant communities
- Launch of new live commentary service for blind and partially sighted fans, with Derry City Football Club and RNIB at the Ryan McBride Brandywell Stadium
- A Mayor's birthday party for children and young people with autism and complex needs
- Section 75 monitoring of individuals requesting assistance through the Home Safety Service
- Continued progress in achieving UNICEF Child Friendly Status. Video link to NW Ministry of Youth – Voice of CYP across the DCSDC area:
<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/td95uo3bk2drtt7mbtwg9/youth-2.mp4?rlkey=6i5loqary442fga1wyy6owqal&st=i2k3229e&dl=0>
- Delivery of an Age Friendly programme (update report attached as Appendix 1)
- Delivery of targeted initiative in leisure for women and people with disabilities
- Ongoing programme of language initiatives and services
- Delivery of the Good Relations Programme
- Delivery of PEACEPlus Programme

Details of press coverage of a range of initiatives targeting Section 75 groups is provided in Appendix 2.

Mayor's Initiatives

The following were initiatives were championed by the Mayor during April 2024 to March 2025:

- Our Guildhall, Our Space Youth Events

- Mayor's Inclusive Birthday Party
- Conference/Information session on Baby Loss Services
- Mayor's Inclusive Christmas Concert
- Mayor's Community Christmas Dinner
- Ending Violence Against Women and Girls

Motions carried

During the year Elected Members carried motions/ resolutions in relation to Section 75 groups as a result of which:

- a. Council welcomed the Executive Strategy for Affordable and Accessible Childcare (C334/24)
- b. Council worked with venues to ensure Assistance for Blind and Partially Sighted People in Local Hospitality Venues (C387/24)
- c. Council condemned Recent Racist Attacks and intimidation in Belfast and the Planned Protests in [Derry] and wrote to the First Minister, Deputy First Minister and the Justice Minister calling for the immediate publication of hate crime legislation. (SC85/24)
- d. Council wrote to the Ministers for Communities, Economy, Education and Health, requesting legislation providing legal protection for young people over the age of 19 with Special Educational Needs (Caleb's Cause) (C435/24)
- e. Council wrote to the Stormont Executive to express alarm that there is no mention in particular of child poverty in the Programme for Government and to call for the removal of the two-child limit. It will also write to the Stormont Executive calling for the introduction of legislation which tackles regional imbalance. (C436/24)
- f. Council welcomed the Independent Review of Regional Tier 4a and Tier 4b Addiction Services. (C469/24)
- g. Council wrote to the Minister for Communities requesting he urgently meet with Council and all Anti-Poverty organisations, Women's groups, LGBTQIA+ groups and disability rights organisations who have requested meetings with him; and announce a date for the implementation of an anti-poverty strategy. (C469/24)
- h. Council endorsed the Unite the Union-initiated pledge letter calling for the reinstatement of the Winter Fuel Payment. (SC104/24)
- i. Council committed to exploring the implementation of a sports development programme that supports people from

underrepresented groups including women, children, younger and older people, ethnic minorities and people living with disabilities. (C487/24)

- j. Council wrote to the Western Health and Social Care Trust, The Public Health Agency and central government to highlight the current gap here in the North West in relation to the non-existence of a menopause clinic. (C490/24)
- k. Council agreed to work proactively with other councils to establish and implement best practice across the facilities it manages to enhance safety measures and ensure women and girls feel safe in all public places (SC109/24)
- l. Council wrote to the Minister for Health expressing disappointment that funding will be lost from April 2025 from the mental health support fund and to seek an immediate alternative source of funding. (HC300/24).
- m. Council wrote to the Health Minister for clarification on the Department for Health's strategy to improve provisions for those suffering with Endometriosis in the Western Trust and called on the Minister to prioritise the progression of a women's health strategy. (C107/25)
- n. Council wrote to the relevant Executive Departments asking for details on support for young adults with special needs. (C143/25)
- o. Council wrote to the British government expressing concern and opposition to proposed cuts to disability payments (C146/25).
- p. Council wrote to the Minister of Education and the Minister for Health regarding Lengthy Waiting Times for Autism Assessments. (C216/24).
- q. Council wrote to the Executive Office calling on the Northern Ireland Executive to prioritise Cross Departmental financing of viable Early Years Childcare Strategy. (C217/24)
- r. Council wrote to the Minister for the Economy calling on him to introduce legislation that guarantees at least five days of paid carers' leave; and further wrote to the Minister for Communities calling on him to work with the Minister of Finance to raise the Carer's Allowance earnings threshold to the equivalent of 21 hours per week at the National Living Wage. (C219/24)
- s. Council wrote to the Minister of Health requesting his commitment to fund the roll-out of hybrid closed loop treatment to anyone eligible

through the HSC in the coming years, as it will be through the NHS in England and Wales. (C220/24)

- t. Council invited representatives from the Western Trust and Department for Health to relevant committee to update members on plans to improve access to child occupational therapy. (C293/24)

Deputations

The Council received a number of deputations related to the S75 groups during the period, including:

1. Janis Scallon, Director of Inclusion at the Department of Education to brief Members on cuts to Special Educational Needs Budget. Committee ref GSP 75/23
2. Alexander Brennan, Coordinator, NI Women's Budget Group and Aoife Mallon, Research and Engagement Associate at Ulster University – Re : Gender Budgeting
3. Rainbow Youth Project (Alexa Moore - Policy, Campaigns and Communications Manager; James McGoldrick - Health and Wellbeing Officer)
4. Sara McCracken, CEO from Angel Eyes NI to Provide a Progress Update on the QR Code Campaign (C387/24; SHC27/24)
5. Eliza Browning, Senior Policy Officer, Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) and Becca Bor, Development Coordinator, Northern Ireland Anti-Poverty Network (NIAPN) from the Equality Coalition Following Minute Reference GSP 94/24 (GSP156/24)
6. A presentation from Adrian Loughrey, Centre Manager, Koram Centre, Strabane (C50/23 & 506/23)
7. Ms Fiona McGinn, Future Schools Officer and Mr Sean Pettis, Parental Engagement Campaign Manager to advise Members of the purpose and aims of the Future Schools Project

Staff Training

Training for staff and Elected Members was delivered as set out in the attached Equality Action Plan (Appendix 4).

Ensuring public access to information and services we provide

Information on Council services is available online via the Council's website, at Council facilities, by phone, in person and in a range of formats including other languages on request. Provision is made at facilities to ensure accessibility and

at Council events. Access arrangements are supported by the Council's Codes of Practice on Producing Information and Access Events.

Notification of our screening exercises was made via email to our consultee list and published on the Council's website www.derrystrabane.com

Complaints

No complaints were received during the period.

Publication of our Equality Scheme

Our Equality Scheme was available on the Council's website :
www.derrystrabane.com

- 2** Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2024-25 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

See attached plan (Appendix 4) with updates on action measures/ progress highlighted.

3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2024-25 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes

No (go to Q.4)

Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

The application of the Equality Scheme commitments resulted in changes to the following policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas:

- Following screening of the Citizens Recognition Policy it was believed, based on anecdotal evidence, that most of the awards in the past were conferred on males and that all of them were conferred on white people. In future, living recipients will be asked to complete a monitoring form.
- A screening exercise of the review of the Safeguarding Policy for Children and Young People identified a number of S75 groups with different needs. A policy statement was added as follows:

“Derry City and Strabane District Council is committed to safeguarding children and young people in Council’s facilities, or while taking part in council-organised activities elsewhere. Where necessary Council will be aware of children and young people with increased vulnerabilities i.e. Looked After Children (LAC), Children in Supported Accommodation or who are homeless, Fostered Children, Children of Parents with Additional Needs, Trafficked or Enslaved Children, Children with Disabilities, LGBTQIA+ Young People, girls at risk of violence and Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic communities.”

The Policy Officer (Equality) has also incorporated this learning into our quarterly Equality Scheme training for the period 2025-26, and has disseminated the information to our Safeguarding team to increase colleagues’ knowledge.

- A screening of the Hybrid Working Policy did not lead to any changes but identified that females and those with dependants would be most likely to benefit from the policy’s continuation.
- A screening of the Dual Language Street Naming policy in March 2023 recommended that an EQIA should be conducted to gather further information – details of which follow later in this report. The

final policy facilitated the approval of applications from minority language groups.

- 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?

Please provide any details and examples:

Monitoring the Citizens Recognition Policy will give elected members a statistical basis to consider how reflective nominations are of our population, in terms of naming of the following:

- The award of the Freedom of the City and District
- The naming of Council assets and
- The installation of new infrastructural elements in or on Council property e.g. plaques, statues, etc
- Festivals, events and other initiatives

The changes in Newtownstewart Town Centre Regeneration Framework will make the town more accessible, safer and more welcoming to all.

Individuals with vulnerabilities or different needs will be better protected through our revised Safeguarding Policy for Children and Young People.

Greater visibility of minority languages via inclusion on street signage.

- 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 give details*):

Screening has lead to the introduction of monitoring in the Citizens Recognition Policy.

As a result of what was identified through the EQIA and consultation exercise (*please give details*)

Consultation on the draft Equality and Disability Action Plans led to additions to proposed action measures, commitments to specific training and consideration of how we engage with our local stakeholders via the Equality Assurance & Oversight Group.

An EQIA of the Dual Language Street Naming Policy led to potential positive impact for some racial groups for whom English is not a first language by reducing the support requirement from 2/3 to 15%. Via a working group on the matter Elected Members' deliberations led to a number of mitigations and changes that were not in the existing Street Naming and Numbering Policy. These included:

- Provision to have street names in different languages in different parts of 'long streets'
- Process for handling of multiple language requests
- Details of Council discretion in applying the policy
- Introduction of a three-year period in respect of unsuccessful language requests under the new policy (before reconsideration of a further application for the same language)
- In respect of successful language applications, the introduction of a ten-year period before a further, different request will be considered
- In exercising its discretion and in accordance with paragraph 7.7 of the policy, the Environment and Regeneration (E&R) Committee may seek further information prior to making a recommendation in respect of a naming proposal. Such information may relate to issues related to the process, demography of the street, stakeholder views, screening and impact assessment, etc. Where information/consideration is required in relation to a potential good relations impact, for the purposes of the policy, the E&R Committee will be the Designated Working Group as defined in the Council's Equality Scheme.

Other (*please specify and give details*):

Feedback from meetings of the Council's consultative forum, the Equality Assurance and Oversight Group inform changes to services and business planning. Feedback via the Council's complaints procedure also prompts consideration of service improvements when issues are highlighted.

**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 2024-25 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:

Included as standard in all staff job descriptions is the requirement to comply with and actively promote Council's policies and procedures, including all equality legislation, including the S75 and Disability Duties, as appropriate to the role.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2024-25 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:

At a operational level the Section 75 duties are integrated into all Directorate Delivery Plans.

Whilst all staff job descriptions include Section 75 responsibilities, specific staff have key responsibilities for implementing the Section 75 duties which is reflected in personal work plans.

6 In the 2024-25 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? *(tick all that apply)*

- Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
- Yes, in some departments/jobs
- No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's corporate plan
- No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2024-25 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Directorate Delivery Plans includes a section on the S75 duties as appropriate to the function.

The Directorate Delivery Plans are a key part of the Council's overall performance management framework and provide a vital link between the Inclusive Strategic Growth Plan 2017 - 2032 (Community Plan) and corporate objectives through to frontline services.

All directorates play a role in delivering aspects of the Council's Equality Action Plan.

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2024-25 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:

5

Actions ongoing:

34

Actions to commence:

11

Please provide any details and examples (*in addition to question 2*):

See attached Equality Action Plan (Appendix 4) for progress against actions.

- 8** Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2024-25 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

None

- 9** In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2024-25 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
- 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

- 11** 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:

An EQIA was completed for the Dual Language Street Naming Policy because it was determined that “further assessment [would provide] a valuable opportunity to examine evidence and develop recommendations.”²

Council also decided to submit our Equality Action Plan to a full equality impact assessment and public consultation. This was to get feedback from the public/affected groups on whether the actions we have included are the right ones and will be effective in addressing the inequalities identified in our Audit of Inequalities.

Similarly, whilst initial equality screening had concluded that there are no negative impacts associated with the draft Disability Action Plan, a public consultation was carried out to get feedback from the target beneficiaries - people with disabilities - and their representative groups.

We specifically wanted to check with disabled people that the actions set out in the draft Plan are the right ones and whether there are other key actions we should be taking that will better deliver the outcomes required by the DDA Disability Duties.

12 In the 2024-25 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 by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
- Internet discussions
- Telephone consultations
- Other (*please specify*): Click or tap here to enter text.

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:

² www.equalityni.org

The Equality Assurance and Oversight Group were consulted on the Dual Language Street Naming Policy, and by Community Development, Leisure Services and by the Age Friendly team.

- 13** Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2024-25 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

- Yes
 No
 Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Face to face meetings of the Equality and Assurance Oversight Group took place and new organisations were invited to join.

- 14** Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2024-25 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

- Yes
 No
 Not applicable – no commitment to review

Arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

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

22

- 16** Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2024-25:

Three Policy consultations conducted with **screening** assessment presented.

Three Policy consultations conducted **with an equality impact assessment** (EQIA) presented.

Zero Consultations for an **EQIA** alone.

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

Screening consultations:

- Consultation on new Equality and Disability Action Plans for 2024-2027 with associated Audit of Inequalities 2023/24.
- Consultation on proposed new Dual Language Street Naming Policy (with EQIA)
- Consultation on Council's Draft Improvement Objectives for 2024-25.

EQIA consultations:

- Equality Impact Assessment of Draft Equality Action Plan and Draft Disability Action Plan (2 policies) (concluding September 2024)
- Equality Impact Assessment of Dual Language Street Naming Policy (concluding July 2024)

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

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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 2024-25 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Equality Impact Assessment report for Equality Action Plan and for Disability Action Plan published.

Equality Impact Assessment report for Revised Dual Language Street Naming Policy.

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 2024-25 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

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

Please provide any details:

Council has monitored the make-up of our Elected Members and monitors participation of staff and Members in training where feasible.

There is ongoing monitoring of participation in sports services which will be strengthened in the roll-out of the Be Active Physical Activity, Wellbeing and Sports Strategy.

Older people who participate in activities as part of the Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan are monitored and this is reported annually.

Community Venue Fund – applications and success rates were monitored.

Participation in Arts and Cultural activities is monitored.

Individuals who make a request via the Home Safety Service are asked to complete a monitoring form.

Individuals providing feedback to Council (via the feedback/ complaints handling and consultation processes) are requested to provide equality monitoring data.

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:

22 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:

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:

The Council undertook a range of monitoring activities that contributed to the availability of equality information for planning, development, and improvement of service provision. The Council also undertook an Audit of Inequalities which was circulated with the Equality and Disability Action Plans for consultation.

The following examples are within Leisure and Sports Services, which has an annual throughput of approximately 1.5-2 million service users annually:

1. Membership and Participation Monitoring:

Equality data was collected from members and participants across leisure centres and sports programmes. This included Section 75 monitoring categories such as age, gender, disability, and ethnic background. Analysis of this data helped to identify underrepresented groups and informed the design of targeted outreach initiatives.

2. Programme-Specific Equality Monitoring:

Monitoring was built into the delivery of specific funded programmes, such

as inclusive swimming sessions, women and girls’ participation initiatives, and disability sport development. Equality outcomes were reviewed against programme objectives to inform future planning and ensure alignment with need.

3. User Feedback and Consultation:

User surveys were completed to gather qualitative feedback on accessibility, facilities, services, delivery standards and barriers to participation. For example, feedback from disability user groups has directly informed the timing and design of inclusive swim sessions.

4. Partnership Working with Representative Groups:

The Council worked closely with organisations such as Disability Sport NI, Women in Sport, Mencap, and local ethnic minority groups. These partnerships provided additional monitoring insights and helped verify if services are equitable and accessible.

5. Annual Reporting and Performance Review:

Monitoring outcomes were included in internal performance reports. This ensured an ongoing review of how well leisure and sports services met the needs of diverse user groups.

These monitoring activities have supported evidence-based decision-making, enabling the Council to continuously improve the inclusivity and accessibility of its leisure and sports provision.

Work was initiated in this service area in 2024/5 on a gender budgeting pilot.

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 2024-25, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

Training commitment in Equality Scheme (section 5.4)	The extent to which commitments have been met
We will develop a summary of this equality scheme and make it available to all staff.	Not met, and will be developed to reflect the revised Equality Scheme 2025.
We will provide access to copies of the full equality scheme for all staff; ensure	Fully met.

PART A

that any queries or questions of clarification from staff are addressed effectively.	
Staff in the Derry City and Strabane District Council will receive a briefing on this equality scheme within 6 months of the approval of this scheme	Met for some staff.
The Section 75 statutory duties will form part of induction training for new staff.	The Equal Opportunities Policy was part of the induction training for new staff.
Focused training is provided for key staff within Derry City and Strabane District Council who are directly engaged in taking forward the implementation of our equality scheme commitments (for example those involved in research and data collection, policy development, service design, conducting equality impact assessments, consultation, monitoring and evaluation).	Met by request. A more structured training plan has been designed for 2025-26 to fully meet this commitment.
Where appropriate, training will be provided to ensure staff are aware of the issues experienced by the range of Section 75 groups.	Fully met, see training list below.
When appropriate and on an ongoing basis, arrangements will be made to ensure staff are kept up to date with Section 75 developments.	Fully met through the Senior Leadership Team meetings.

Examples of training delivered during the period are listed below, with feedback by participants. Training was also delivered via our Good Relations team, our Access & Inclusion Co-ordinator, our Children and Young People’s Co-ordinator and our Age Friendly Co-ordinator.

Training session	Feedback
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Visual Awareness sessions for staff and Elected Members	<i>"[I'll be] putting into practice what I have learned and Council level when making decisions. Inclusion is key!"</i> Elected Member
Disability Awareness sessions for staff and Elected Members	<i>"[I learned to] take time to listen to people who live with disabilities. Get information from their perspective."</i> Elected Member
Dementia Awareness training for staff and Elected Members	<i>"It was a great workshop."</i> Member of staff <i>"This session was absolutely brilliant and enlightening."</i> Elected Member
Section 75/Equality Screening for staff on three occasions	<i>"[It was an] excellent training session – I found this very useful and applicable to my job. More interaction may have been useful or use of examples/breakouts/ discussion."</i> Member of staff
Visual Awareness Training	<i>"I've discovered that those with visual problems need empathy more than sympathy."</i> Member of staff

- 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:

Participants, both staff and Elected Members, particularly rated the value and effectiveness of training that was delivered by or in conjunction with people of lived experience of inequality, e.g., people with disabilities.

All attendees of the Dementia Training and Awareness Session stated that they had further increased their knowledge of dementia, and all stated that they would feel more confident putting this learning into action in their work.

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

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2024-25, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

During 2024-25 monitoring was built into the delivery of specific funded leisure programmes, such as inclusive swimming sessions, women and girls' participation initiatives, and disability sport development. Equality outcomes were reviewed against programme objectives to inform future planning and ensure alignment with need.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

- 27** How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2024-25?

Insert number here: Zero

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

N/a

Section 3: Looking Forward

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

The review was initiated in quarter four of 2024, and following liaison with the Equality Commission in May 2025 it was agreed that the review will be submitted to the Equality Commission by December 2025.

- 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)*

A training plan for staff has been developed for implementation in the reporting period 2025-26. It is also reflected in our Equality and Disability Action Plans. Training will also be delivered via our Policy Officer (Equality), Good Relations team, our Access & Inclusion Co-ordinator, our Children and Young People's Co-ordinator and our Age Friendly Co-ordinator. Digital resources are being prepared for use in the 25/26 year.

Human Resources are considering mandatory equality awareness course, potentially through the online training portal.

A quarterly screening report will be submitted to the Senior Leadership Team meetings.

- 30** In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next 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):

Further advice in relation to addressing the impact of the Supreme Court judgment in 'For Women Scotland Ltd v The Scottish Ministers'.

PART B

PART B - Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Disability Action Plans

1. *Number of action measures for this reporting period that have been:*

14	4	14
Fully achieved	Partially achieved	Not achieved

2. *Please outline below details on **all actions that have been fully achieved** in the reporting period.*

2 (a) Please highlight what **public life measures** have been achieved to encourage disabled people to participate in public life at National, Regional and Local levels:

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
National	n/a		
Regional	2.2 Participate in Diversity Ambassador Programme	Attendance at meetings	Better understanding of disability issues both internal and external by Ambassadors.
Local	1.1 and 3.1 Holding 2 Equality Assurance and Oversight Group (EAOG) meetings per year to discuss policy and service development in Council. Rebuild/enhance membership of people with a disability/representative groups.	2 meetings held.	Our services will be more accessible. People with disabilities are involved in decision-making.

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Local	1.2 Continue to screen all new policies	100% of policies screened	
Local	1.3 and 3.6 Involve people with a disability in the planning & development stage of events / service planning and pre-development exercises 3.7 Develop bespoke initiatives for targeted disability needs (including autism, dementia and mental health) and 3.11 Programme at least one show per annum which is delivered by/include performers who have a disability.	Achieved through FestivALL (annual facilitation and participatory programme and showcase event that celebrates the abilities of all who attend and give everyone the opportunity to perform and participate in physical challenges in a fun and social environment.) Dementia Engaged and Empowered Derry delivered training to elected members in April 2024.	Increased participation of people with a disability and their carers.
Local	1.4 Review and report on progress of the Disability Action Plan annually.	2024-5 report herein.	Increased awareness of employees' responsibility towards Council's compliance and achievements in relation to disability duties.

<p>Local</p>	<p>3.12 Ensure leisure services provide inclusive services for disabled users.</p>	<p>Higher satisfaction with accessibility of services/facilities.</p>	<p>Increased participation of people with a disability³ including through inclusive programming, engagement and consultation and awareness and promotion.</p> <p>1. Inclusive Programming & Pricing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive swimming sessions • Boccia, wheelchair basketball, and other inclusive sports in partnership with local disability sports clubs • Additional Needs Swim lessons available at our 4 wet centres (small groups) • Inclusive swim sessions available at our 4 wet centres • Inclusive play sessions (Melvin soft play) • Host Autism Cafes • Concession membership and off peak rates for persons with disabilities available (25% reduction)
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Target participation numbers set via the directorate plan with quarterly updates on this provided, target achieved for 2024-25• Funding provided for local disability groups through Councils Grant Aid programme <p>2. Engagement and Consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Council regularly consults with disability organisations, service users, and carers to ensure that their voices are reflected in service planning, most recently this was completed as part of the draft improvement plan objectives where groups from the equality and assurance oversight group were asked to consult and feedback on the directorate improvement objectives.• Feedback mechanisms are in place to capture ongoing user
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PART B

			<p>experiences, which inform programme development and delivery.</p> <p>3. Awareness and Promotion Accessibility and inclusive programme information is clearly promoted on our website and through targeted outreach in collaboration with disability advocacy groups.</p>
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2(b) What **training action measures** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
	1.5 Ensure that training on screening includes Disability Duties	Included in all screening training	Increased awareness of employees' responsibility towards Council's compliance and achievements in relation to disability duty.
	2.5 All front line staff in Derry Road offices and Strand Road offices have been offered awareness training in Autism, JAM card and sight impairment.	6 reception staff participated	Improved customer care for autistic service users and those with sight impairment.

2 © What Positive attitudes **action measures** in the area of **Communications** were achieved in this reporting period?

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	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
	1.6 Feedback encouraged from people with a disability and their representative groups on the disability duties.	People with a disability have had an opportunity to have their voice heard at 2 EAOG meetings. Leisure Services and Development conducted an audit with Mencap.	Report on Healthier Me survey, by Mencap NI with all 11 Councils. Feedback reflected in Council initiatives.
	3.13 Programmes and services are promoted to people with a disability using suitable channels/media.	% of participants in services/activities/programmes who have a disability	Participation encouraged via effective communication and access to information for people with a disability. Code of Practice on Producing information in place.

2 (d) What action measures were achieved to '**encourage others**' to promote the two duties:

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
	None identified		

2 (e) Please outline **any additional action measures** that were fully achieved other than those listed in the tables above:

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
	None identified		

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3. Please outline what action measures have been **partly achieved** as follows:

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
	2.7 Sharing Best Practice with and learning from other Councils through the Statutory Duty Network	Sharing of initiatives which have been successful in promoting positive attitudes towards People with a Disability	Improvement of opportunities through sharing best practice for people with a disability	More work to be progressed via Internal Equality Working Group
	3.4 People with a disability are actively involved in devising a checklist and guidance on accessibility of Council facilities and open spaces	People with a disability have been involved in taster and 'audit' activities in leisure services	People with a disability are involved in service review/design/accessibility	Work ongoing
	3.5 Involve people with a disability in the delivery of disability related training to elected members and staff.	Visually Aware training provided to Elected Members and Staff who were blind or had a visual impairment.	Increased awareness of disability issues. Participation by people with a disability makes them feel valued and visible Promotion of positive attitudes towards those with a disability.	Work ongoing
	3.8 Put in place reasonable adjustments to support people with a disability to access and participate in Council events.	Accessible arrangements in place for events. Code of	Ensure that all Council events are accessible to	Work ongoing inc review of CoP

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	(Accessible guidelines for large public events issued to raise public awareness).	Practice on Accessible Events	people with a disability and their families	
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4. Please outline what action measures **have not been achieved** and the reasons why.

Action Measures not met	Reasons
2.1 Celebratory/training event	All actions not met form part of a three year plan and will be delivered within that timescale.
2.3 Staff Training and Awareness Raising	
2.4 Staff Training and Awareness Raising. Training assets developed for use virtually or in person (includes complaint handling and target topic areas).	
2.6 Awareness raising with representative Disability organisations to provide opportunities for job shadowing/ work experience.	
2.8 Ring-fence at least 2 posts per annum for people with a disability. Target to be reviewed in year 2 with a view to increasing.	
2.9 To avail of NIUSE and Employers for Disability Job Bulletin Board to advertise ring-fenced job vacancies throughout the Disability community	

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	2.10 Attend job fairs and job shadow days to raise awareness of Council's progress and opportunities in employing people with a disability.	
	2.11 Provide staff on selection panels for ring-fenced posts with enhanced disability awareness training.	
	3.2 Encourage involvement and participation in the development of Local Area Growth Plans including the Cluster Village Plans	
	3.3 Re-introduce a shadowing initiative to allow people with a disability to spend a day with Mayor/Deputy Mayor	
	3.9 Services and Facilities - Consult with and scope out the needs of the local d/Deaf community to meet their access needs in line with the commitment to the BDA Sign Language Charter / in line with introduction of new sign language Bill	
	3.10 Work in partnership with representative groups and statutory bodies to develop initiatives and explore funding opportunities which will enhance the lives of people with a disability	
	4.1 Conduct a confidential employee survey to determine the number of staff with a disability - As per LGSC Initiative	
	4.2 Review/develop monitoring arrangements to audit access to communication arrangements for people with a disability (internally for staff members and externally for members of the community).	

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5. What **monitoring tools** have been put in place to evaluate the degree to which actions have been effective / develop new opportunities for action?

(a) Qualitative

The Equality and Assurance Oversight Group met twice during the year and have generated new actions. Feedback from the Age Friendly Over 50's Reference Group has also lead to the development of new opportunities, for example accessibility audits.

(b) Quantitative

Through equality screening exercises, all project leaders encouraged to put in place appropriate monitoring arrangements for equality purposes and not only performance measurement purposes.

6. As a result of monitoring progress against actions has your organisation either:

- made any **revisions** to your plan during the reporting period or
- taken any **additional steps** to meet the disability duties which were **not outlined in your original** disability action plan / any other changes?

No

7. Do you intend to make any further **revisions to your plan** in light of your organisation's annual review of the plan? If so, please outline proposed changes?

No.

PART B

Appendices

1: Unicef Child Friendly Annual Report 24/25



UNICEF Child Friendly
Annual Report 24-25.i

2: Age Friendly Update Report



App 2_ Age Friendly
Initiatives April 24 - M

3: Press Coverage



App 3_ Press
Releases.docx

4: Equality Action Progress Update (**separate document**)