Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties

Annual Progress Report 2025-26

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Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:

https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/articles/equality-scheme

Signature:

James Rider

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 2025 and March 2026.

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 2025-26, 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.

Throughout the 2025-26 reporting period, The Executive Office remained committed to fulfilling its equality and good relations duties across all policy and service delivery areas. This commitment is reflected in the priority given to advancing equality in accordance with our Equality Scheme commitments. The developments, outcomes and improvements delivered across these work areas are outlined below.

Together: Building a United Community

Launched in 2013, The Together: Building a United Community (T: BUC) Strategy, reflects the Executive's commitment to improving community relations and continued progress towards a more united and shared society. The Strategy is focused on four key priorities of:

- children & young people;
- safe community;
- shared community; and
- cultural expression.

There are seven targeted headline actions included in the strategy:

- Establish ten new shared education campuses
- Getting 10,000 young people, not in education, employment or training, a place on the new United Youth volunteering programme
- Establishing ten new shared housing schemes
- Developing four urban village schemes

- Developing a significant programme of cross-community sporting events
- Removing interface barriers by 2023

Executive Departments are working together to ensure that strategic outcomes are delivered on the ground, with each headline action having a responsible department. Wider good relations programmes such as the Central Good Relations Fund (CGRF), District Council Good Relations Programme (DCGRP), and programmes delivered by the Community Relations Council (CRC) are aligned with the strategic objectives of the T:BUC Strategy.

Considerable progress has been made across a number of the headline action targets. Several have been fully achieved, including T:BUC Camps, Urban Villages, Shared Housing, while work continues in more complex areas, such as the removal of interface barriers, where progress is necessarily longer term.

Central Good Relations Fund

The Central Good Relations Fund (CGRF) provides funding to constituted voluntary and community sector groups to deliver projects that address identified good relations needs and contribute to the achievement of the Executive's strategic objectives in this area.

Funding should be used for the delivery of projects which aim to address any of the following:

- where there is an identified good relations need and the aim is to work with those most in need of a good relations intervention within specific areas of impact;
- where there is, or potential for, heightened social unrest;
- where there has been a significant change in local demographics;
- where there has been an increase in racist/sectarian hate incidents; and
- where emerging issues within communities warrant a Good Relations intervention.

CGRF projects all have a good relations focus but also include a wide range of activities such as sport and the arts to engage with and make a difference in local communities whilst contributing to peace building and reconciliation.

In addition, these projects provide important opportunities to develop new skills, gain qualifications, build self-confidence, develop new friendships, and to celebrate and embrace cultural diversity.

All CGRF groups work closely with Good Relations outcomes to monitor and measure the outcomes and impact of their projects. At assessment, implementation and evaluation there is a strong focus on how the deliverables of funded projects contribute to the key aims of the T:BUC strategy.

CGRF is an annual fund with eligible delivery occurring between 1st April and 31st March each year. Calls for applications to project funding open November/December each year, and groups are notified of the outcomes of their application after assessment and when budget confirmation has been received. Small grants of up to £2,000 are also available through CGRF.

Throughout 2025/26 a total award of £2.817m was made to CGRF, which enabled the delivery of 97 projects provincewide with approx. 40,000 direct participants. 54 projects focused on children & young people, 17 on shared community, 10 on safe community, 16 on cultural expression.

PEACEPLUS

PEACEPLUS is a cross-border funding Programme supported by the European Union, the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Government of Ireland, and the Executive . It is delivering across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland. It officially launched in June 2023, and Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) administer the funding across 22 investments.

TEO is the accountable Department for PEACEPLUS investment areas 1.1 Local Community Action Plans, 1.3 Building Positive Relations and 4.3 Support for Victims and Survivors, with total funding of €170 million, with TEO contributing €25.3 million in match funding.

The €110million Investment Area 1.1 Co-design Local Community Peace Action Plans was a closed call for local councils only and all applications have been approved. The implementation phase has now commenced across all Council areas.

15 projects have been approved under the €35million Investment Area 1.3, Building Positive Relations, with a number of projects in a reserve list. All projects are now at implementation stage. This investment area aims to promote positive relations through projects which transcend local boundaries, with cross border dimensions where possible.

T:BUC Camps

Beginning in summer 2015, the programme provided a range of opportunities for young people aged 11 to 19 across Northern Ireland to come together to build positive relationships across what have become divided parts of our community. The Camps are about challenging historic positions, encouraging debate and discussion and providing a way for young people to get to know each other, try new experiences, have fun and help to build longer term relationships. Camps must be delivered on a cross-community basis. The programme is delivered in partnership with the Education Authority and Department of Education. Over 3,600 young people participated in camps in 2024/25 with 112 camps successfully delivered.

The latest available outcomes from the 2024/25 Programme indicate that:

- 91.3% of participants who plan to stay in contact with friends made at camp after the project ends.
- 76.2% have a better understanding of other cultural traditions and

backgrounds.

- 71.1% of participants feel more strongly that the culture and traditions of different ethnic backgrounds add to the richness and diversity of Northern Ireland.

Planned Interventions Programme (PIP)

The Planned Interventions Programme (PIP) continues to fund crucial community activity to engage those young people most at risk of entering the youth justice system and/or paramilitary recruitment. Through the provision of positive alternatives for our young people, it seeks to mitigate the impacts anti-social behaviour can have on community tensions and in turn good relations.

The programme is delivered in partnership with the Education Authority and Department of Education.

In 2025/26, TEO provided £475k to enable funding of a total of 79 groups engaging c.1500 young people.

The latest available outcomes from the 2024/25 Programme indicate that:

- 97% of participants feel that they are less likely to engage in negative behaviour.
- 82% of participants feel more favourable towards people from a different religious/community background.

TEO officials regularly analyse the distribution of funding and seek to address any gaps in funding provision.

District Council Good Relations Programme (DCGRP)

The key aim of the District Council Good Relations Programme is to develop relations within and between District Council areas and to provide local solutions to local good relations issues. The Programme is joint funded by TEO in partnership with the District

Councils (75% TEO; 25% District Councils) and is delivered by Good Relations Officers within Councils who have the local knowledge and expertise to maximise delivery and positive outcomes from good relations provision.

The Programme has a strong outcome focus. Every element of funded provision has one or more defined and measurable outcomes linked to one or more of the four key aims of T:BUC. Delivering the Programme through Councils enables the activity and outcomes from the Programme to be designed in such a way as to complement the delivery of existing funding schemes and community plans.

The Programme runs annually from the 1st of April to the 31st March. It is evaluated internally at the end of every funding cycle and periodic external evaluations are conducted. Learning from these evaluations is used to inform and add value to future iterations of the Programme.

During 2025/26 approximately 73 good relations programmes were funded across the 11 District Councils, with over 69,000 direct participants. 19 projects focused on “Children & Young People “, 11 on “ Shared Community “, 18 on “Safe Community “, 21 on “Cultural Expression “and four covering all four themes. It should be noted that councils have until June to submit final claims and reports. Additionally, councils are afforded flexibility within the Programme allowing funding to be reallocated throughout the year to address emerging needs. As such these figures are subject to change when final reporting is completed.

The latest verified data (2024/2025) shows that:

- 97% of participants would recommend participating in a Good Relations programme to family and friends.
- 96% of participants felt that DCGRP events played a positive role in bringing people from different backgrounds together.

Good Relations Outcomes Team

Two aspects of the Good Relations Outcomes are highlighted:

1. **Improving accessibility within the annual TEO T:BUC Good Relations Outcomes questionnaire reporting cycle**

During the 2025–26 annual Good Relations questionnaire reporting cycle, the Good Relations Outcomes team progressed work to strengthen the accessibility of questionnaires, guidance and supporting processes used by funding programmes including the Central Good Relations Funding Programme, District Council Good Relations Programme, some Community Relations Council funded projects, and the NIHE's Housing for All. This built on learning from previous reporting rounds. The need for this work was identified through routine assurance of returns, feedback from delivery partners, project leaders, and wider organisational learning. In response, the team reviewed the annual questionnaires (including translated versions) and guidance documents. Improvements were implemented to improve accessibility and provide further clarity to groups supporting participants to complete questionnaires.

Additionally, accessibility considerations are built into the annual reporting process, supporting improved consistency, transparency and defensibility of data. The aim is to embed accessibility more fully within the annual cycle, drawing on learning from each reporting round to make improvements where appropriate, practicable and proportionate across the range of programmes, projects, settings and participants.

2. **Strengthening developmentally appropriate methods within annual reporting for children and young people**

During the reporting year, the team undertook focused work to improve the use of developmentally appropriate methods within the annual questionnaire reporting cycle for children and young people. This was prompted by evidence that standardised questions did not always generate meaningful or reliable responses across different age groups, identified through analysis of response quality, engagement patterns and sector feedback, alongside wider evidence on child-centred evaluation in good relations settings.

In response, the team reviewed existing questions and guidance, engaged informally with delivery partners, and sought input from academics to explore alternative approaches that would better reflect different developmental stages while maintaining assurance and comparability. Views were sought on issues such as identity formation, practical feasibility, alignment with delivery realities, and the need to avoid unnecessary burden or disruption.

Consideration is now being given to piloting revised approaches. Subject to the outcome of this work, the next phase will focus on their incremental introduction through future reporting cycles, using learning from implementation to strengthen the voice of children and young people within the process, refine guidance, and improve the robustness of outcomes data.

The T:BUC Engagement Forum

T:BUC Engagement Forum was established to support wider stakeholder engagement and now meets three times per year. The Forum aims to provide an opportunity for local knowledge, experience and expertise to influence the implementation of the T:BUC Strategy and to promote a more collaborative, outcome-focused approach. It provides a key mechanism of engagement between the community and voluntary sector, central and local government officials involved in the delivery of T:BUC headlines actions and associated programmes, representatives from T:BUC advisory groups and other key good relations funders. Formal contributions from academics, government, statutory agencies, community and voluntary organisations provide the backdrop for workshops and wider discussions.

During 2025-26, three Engagement Forums focused on themes including:

- a Community Temperature Check in wake of social unrest in June 2025 and provided an opportunity for community organisations to highlight current and emerging issues affecting communities, helping to inform discussion on the delivery of good relations interventions.

- Social Media and its Impact on Good Relations and young people; and
- the Good Relations Awards 2026 highlighting exceptional achievement in promoting good community relations, intercultural work and peacebuilding in Northern Ireland.

Insights and issues emerging from this Engagement Forum also assisted with informing the development of 'Include' as the theme for Good Relations Week 2026, ensuring that the programme reflects community concerns and stakeholder feedback.

Across all three events, participants shared experience and explored challenges and opportunities relating to T:BUC delivery. Evaluation feedback showed that 95% of participants gained greater insight into the range and extent of T:BUC delivery.

North Belfast Strategic Good Relations Programme (NBSGRP)

The North Belfast Strategic Good Relations Programme (NBSGRP) was established by Ministers in 2010 to address the particular issues in North Belfast.

The key aim of the NBSGRP is to develop relations within and between communities in North Belfast. The programme is delivered in partnership with the Community Relations Council (CRC), which is responsible for the day-to-day management and governance, programme policy management and administrative functions. TEO funds the programme and is responsible for the strategic direction and evaluation of the Programme. The Programme is delivered by 10 contract holders who have local knowledge and expertise of the North Belfast area to maximise the effectiveness of the funding. Contract holder forums are held throughout the funding cycle to enable contract holders to share examples of best practice and to address relevant issues with CRC and TEO officials. TEO and CRC work closely together to ensure that the Programme operates efficiently and effectively, while ensuring that as many participants as possible in the North Belfast area can avail of the good relations provision.

Communities in Transition Project

While the programme is not specifically focused on 'good relations,' its objectives align with broader efforts to support safer, more resilient and inclusive communities. During Phase 3, Year 1 of the Tackling Paramilitary Activity, Criminality and Organised Crime Programme, the project supported 35 initiatives across the eight areas of focus. Phase 3, year 1 activity has now concluded. Year 2 activity runs from 1 April 2026 until 31 March 2027.

Draft Framework for Race Relations

The Racial Equality Strategy 2015-2025, which expired at the end of December 2025, provided a framework for action by Executive departments and partners to tackle racial inequalities, widen opportunity, and address racism and hate crime. Alongside the Together: Building a United Community strategy, it also sought to promote good race relations and social cohesion.

A new draft Framework for Race Relations and associated 2-year Delivery Plan has been developed using learning from other Public Health approach strategies across the Executive. It has been informed by engagement with both minority ethnic communities and wider society which has included:

- a Visioning Day with the Racial Equality Subgroup;
- workshops with the Traveller and Roma Thematic Groups; and
- a public Call for Views.

A 12-week public consultation on the draft Framework and associated Delivery Plan 2026 -2028 began on 11 March 2026. A range of consultation events will take place with stakeholders throughout the consultation period, which ends on 3rd June 2026, to garner valuable lived experience across all Section 75 groupings.

In addition to extensive local engagement, the development of the draft Framework has been shaped by key international standards. These ensure that the draft Framework aligns with best practice and international human rights commitments

including:

- UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which sets out global obligations to combat racial discrimination in all its forms;
- ADI-ROM – Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues, which provides guidance on improving the situation of Roma and Traveller communities across Europe;
- European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), whose recommendations support member states in addressing racial and ethnic discrimination.

Refugee Integration Strategy

The Refugee Integration Strategy and its associated Delivery Framework were published on 29 May 2025. The Strategy sets out how the Executive will take action to support people seeking protection here, in the form of asylum and refuge, to ensure that they are valued and respected, are safe and feel secure, exercise their rights and responsibilities, and are supported to achieve their full potential.

Four priority actions have been identified and progressed since publication and an inaugural annual report on progress of delivery is being prepared.

Truth Recovery

EQIA

During 2025–26, The Executive Office progressed equality and good relations considerations for the Truth Recovery policy proposals to establish a statutory public inquiry and associated financial redress schemes for Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was undertaken and published for the public consultation in 2024, assessing potential impacts across the Section 75 categories and identifying mitigations to support accessibility and participation, including measures for older people and disabled people and a trauma-informed approach.

The EqIA also considered good relations considerations in the context of community background (including the distribution of admissions across Catholic-run and Protestant-run institutions) and set out mitigations to support awareness and engagement across communities.

An updated EqIA, including the Stage 6 report, was published on the TEO website in September 2025. The Stage 6 report summarised consultation feedback on the EqIA and resulting policy refinements, including strengthening participation and support arrangements for victims and survivors (including provision for the Chair to appoint a Victims and Survivors Advisory Panel), and clarifying scheme scope and eligibility to ensure an evidence-based and equitable approach.

Urban Villages

Revenue Projects

Urban Villages operates across five areas in Belfast and Derry/Londonderry with a history of deprivation and social tension. The programme remains committed to transformative community empowerment, fostering collaboration, and long-term positive change in Urban Villages areas, prioritising the completion and sustainability of the remaining capital portfolio projects. This work has provided much-needed physical regeneration, creating thriving places and making a positive difference to people's lives.

Revenue funding was provided to strengthen the capacity of UV community partners acting as project promoter for a UV capital project. A range of good relations initiatives and programmes have been delivered in this financial year including Good Relations workshops, mental health projects, intergenerational workshops, summer intervention programmes, active family programmes, focussed employment & integration training resource, OCNI accredited training programmes, accredited music programmes and a number of community engagement events.

Revenue funding was also provided for capacity building support to UV community organisations taking forward large capital projects, with emphasis on operational readiness and facility management expertise to successfully lead and sustain large community buildings/assets and deliver long term UV objectives and social, economic, environmental and good relations outcomes. These two revenue funding strands have strengthened the capacity of Project Promoters across the five areas to support Section 75 groups, including young people and ethnic minorities, beyond completion of their capital projects.

Capital Projects – Urban Villages

Together with partners in the community and government, up to £132m is being invested in a diverse range of capital build proposals including parks, community hubs and the transformation of vacant and derelict sites. Of a total of 75 capital projects, 62 are now complete. Investment up to 30 June 2026 for capital projects was c£66.2m (including partnership funding) with a further £65.8m of planned investment up to March 2031.

Programme for Government (PfG)

The current Programme for Government (PfG) 2024 – 2027 sets out the Executive's priorities for the period, alongside three long-term 'Missions' (People, Planet and Prosperity), underpinned by a cross-cutting commitment to Peace. Within the current PfG, the First Minister and deputy First Minister set out their responsibility to ensure equality of opportunity and good relations, and equality considerations were embedded throughout the development and delivery of the PfG, including through the use of impact assessments, public consultation and ongoing engagement with departments and stakeholders. The PfG is underpinned by the Wellbeing Framework designed to assess whether policies and programmes are improving outcomes for all sections of society.

On 27 May 2026, the Executive published the first PfG Annual Report which was for 2025-26 and within this, the First Minister and deputy First Minister reaffirmed their

commitment to equality of opportunity in the PfG. The report also included an update on the associated Wellbeing Framework Report.

The PfG Annual Report provides transparent information on delivery, outcomes and progress towards longer-term wellbeing goals across all sections of society. This addresses feedback received as part of the PfG consultation 'to understand what actions would be taken to deliver the priorities and when delivery would happen and were keen that this information was made available to the public.' (PfG Consultation Report, Point 4, p.3)

The PfG Annual Report noted a range of key achievements against PfG priorities and missions during the reporting period, designed to better promote equality of opportunity. Some of these include:

- Growing a globally competitive and sustainable economy, particularly in relation to regional balance;
- Improving support for children and young people with Special Educational Needs;
- Providing more social, affordable and sustainable housing, including housing support for vulnerable individuals;
- Ending violence against women and girls;
- Anti-poverty and social inclusion initiatives, including progress on the Draft Executive Disability Strategy 2025-2035 and the new Active Ageing Strategy, as well as promotion of good relations including the Race Relations Framework, the Refugee Integration Strategy, PEACE PLUS funding and investment across central and local good relations programmes, T: BUC Headline Actions, the Community Relations Council and the Minority Ethnic Development Fund.

Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG)

The Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) Strategic Framework contributes to advancing equality for women and girls by addressing the disproportionate prevalence and impacts of violence experienced by women and girls

through measures aimed at prevention, improving safety, and tackling harmful attitudes and behaviours.

TEO invested over £5 million during the 15 months (January 2025 to March 2026) in community-based action (the EVAWG Change Fund comprising both local and regional funds) to help end violence against women and girls. Under the Local Change Fund, funding will equip grass roots community groups to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls across local communities to ensure wide societal reach.

The Regional Change Fund will strengthen the impact and reach of programmes offered by key regional community and voluntary sector organisations with EVAWG expertise.

Collectively, the Change Fund has supported 158 Local Change Fund projects, eight Regional Expert Organisations and Council led Momentum activity to deliver over 5,200 activities to 90,165 participants in schools, workplaces, sports and community settings.

In partnership with DAERA the EVAWG team have commissioned a Community Led Review on Rural Women and Girls. The review represents a significant step in ensuring that the experiences of rural women and girls inform policy development, following extensive engagement which identified particular vulnerabilities and barriers faced by those living in rural areas.

Research is underway with Queen's University to identify evidence gaps in understanding attitudes and behaviours of men and boys aged 16-24. This will help inform how men and boys can be engaged in ending violence against women and girls as part of delivery of the Strategic Framework.

Healthy relationships work is a core component of the EVAWG Strategic Framework, focusing on prevention through early engagement with children and young people.

The development of a cross-departmental action plan, delivered in partnership with the Department of Education and wider stakeholders, provides a coordinated, whole-system approach across schools, youth settings and communities to promote positive attitudes and behaviours. This work aims to equip boys and girls with the knowledge, skills and confidence to build respectful relationships, recognise harmful attitudes and behaviours, and challenge them where they arise.

Period Products

Period Products (Free Provision) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 – Delivery through Libraries NI

During 2025–26, The Executive Office continued to meet its obligations under the Period Products (Free Provision) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 by providing free period products on a universal basis through Libraries NI. Products are available free of charge in all public and mobile libraries across Northern Ireland, ensuring widespread and accessible provision.

The scheme supports the Executive Office's Section 75 duties by promoting equality of opportunity and reducing barriers to accessing essential period products. The universal, non-means-tested model allows anyone who needs access to products to obtain them discreetly and without stigma in trusted community settings. Libraries are accessible, inclusive environments, while mobile libraries help reach people who may face mobility or transport difficulties.

Accessibility and equality considerations, including the needs of disabled people, informed the design and delivery of the scheme. Self-service access, clear signage and no requirement to request products from staff help support dignity, privacy and independent access.

Public engagement has demonstrated strong demand for the scheme, and provision through the library network has improved awareness and accessibility. The policy also promotes period dignity, wellbeing and inclusion by helping to normalise

conversations around menstruation. Through its universal availability in shared public spaces, the scheme supports fairness, inclusivity and good relations across communities.

Proxy collection

The fact that products can be collected by someone else on behalf of a user directly supports people with severe physical disabilities, and those with care dependencies, removing a major access barrier.

Range of products and choice

The scheme provides different types of products (including reusable products such as cups, pads etc) which can support users with sensory needs, dexterity issues, continence or health related requirements.

Digital access tools

Locations can be found via the PickUpMyPeriod app and various websites. This helps users plan accessible visits.

Rights, Language and Identity Branch (RLI)

In 2025-26 Rights, Language and Identity Branch was responsible for the establishment of three Arm's Length Bodies(ALBs), namely The Irish Language Commissioner (ILC), The Commissioner for the Ulster Scots and Ulster British tradition (CUSUBt) and the Office of Identity and Cultural Expression (OICE). These ALBs must deliver the statutory functions set out in the Identity and Language (NI) Act 2022.

The Act makes provision for public authorities in Northern Ireland to have due regard to the national and cultural identity principles defined in the context of a person's religious belief, political opinion or racial group. The establishment of the bodies will have a positive impact on groups and promote good relations.

In particular, the OICE will support the delivery of the following statutory aims:

- to promote cultural pluralism and respect for diversity in Northern Ireland;
- to promote social cohesion and reconciliation between those with different national and cultural identities;
- to increase the capacity and resilience of people in Northern Ireland to address issues related to differences in national and cultural identity;
- to support, and promote the celebration of, the cultural and linguistic heritage of all people living in Northern Ireland.

In addition, the establishment of the CUSUBt will make a positive contribution to the fulfilment of international treaty obligations including United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC). This will have a positive impact on another of the S75 groups, namely age.

RLI Branch has enabled promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations by establishing the three new ALB's.

Equality Matters

The Equality Matters website has been developed to enhance access to and dissemination of equality data to support more effective policy development and decision making. It was developed through collaboration between TEO and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), with funding provided by TEO.

The website launched on 18 May 2026 and can be accessed at the following link: https://explore.nisra.gov.uk/equality-matters/.

The website supports TEO and others in discharging their equality and good relations duties. Expected use includes policy development and evaluation, including Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs), analysis and research, and briefing, advice and decision-making.

Equality

The Executive Office (TEO) has an Equality and Human Rights Unit with key functions that include developing and maintaining the department's Equality Scheme and providing advice and guidance to staff within the Department on equality issues to help ensure that effective internal arrangements are in place in order that Section 75 is mainstreamed across the Department. This includes advising policy makers on equality screening, consultation and general best practice.

The Unit also chairs an Inter-Departmental Equality Practitioners Group, made up of Equality Officers from all NI Civil Service departments (NICS). This group aims to share good practice and recommendations and encourage links with the voluntary and community sector. The group met three times between April 2025 and March 2026, and ongoing liaison exists between members throughout the year.

TEO and NISRA have developed the Guidance on the collection and reporting of section 75 categories which was published on the NISRA website in August 2024. This document is designed to provide guidance on the collection and reporting of Section 75 categories in NI based on the GSS Harmonised standards and guidance. The guidance has been promoted across the NICS and public sector.

Our work with the Equality Commission and the Human Rights Commission

The TEO Equality and Human Rights Unit works on an ongoing basis with the Equality Commission and the Human Rights Commission in areas such as training and advice in our continued and ongoing efforts to fulfil our duties under Section 75 NI Act 1998. Officials from the TEO Equality and Human Rights Unit collaborated with Equality Commission staff to present a suite of Section 75 renewed virtual classroom training products for staff across the NICS, including courses on "A Focus on Screening," "Section 75 – Duties & Equality Assessments," and "Section 75 – The Monitoring Requirements." These courses are presented on a biannual basis.

Diversity

The Executive Office (TEO) follows the NI Civil Service (NICS) principles of equality, diversity and inclusion to ensure that diversity and inclusion are firmly embedded within the Department in a way that embraces and values difference.

The TEO Diversity Champion, in conjunction with representatives from all other NICS Departments, looks at what the NI Civil Service needs to do in overall terms to advance awareness, knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity issues.

As an internal voluntary staff network, the TEO Diversity Advisory Group primarily provides a forum for discussion, awareness-raising and engagement on equality, diversity and inclusion matters within the Department.

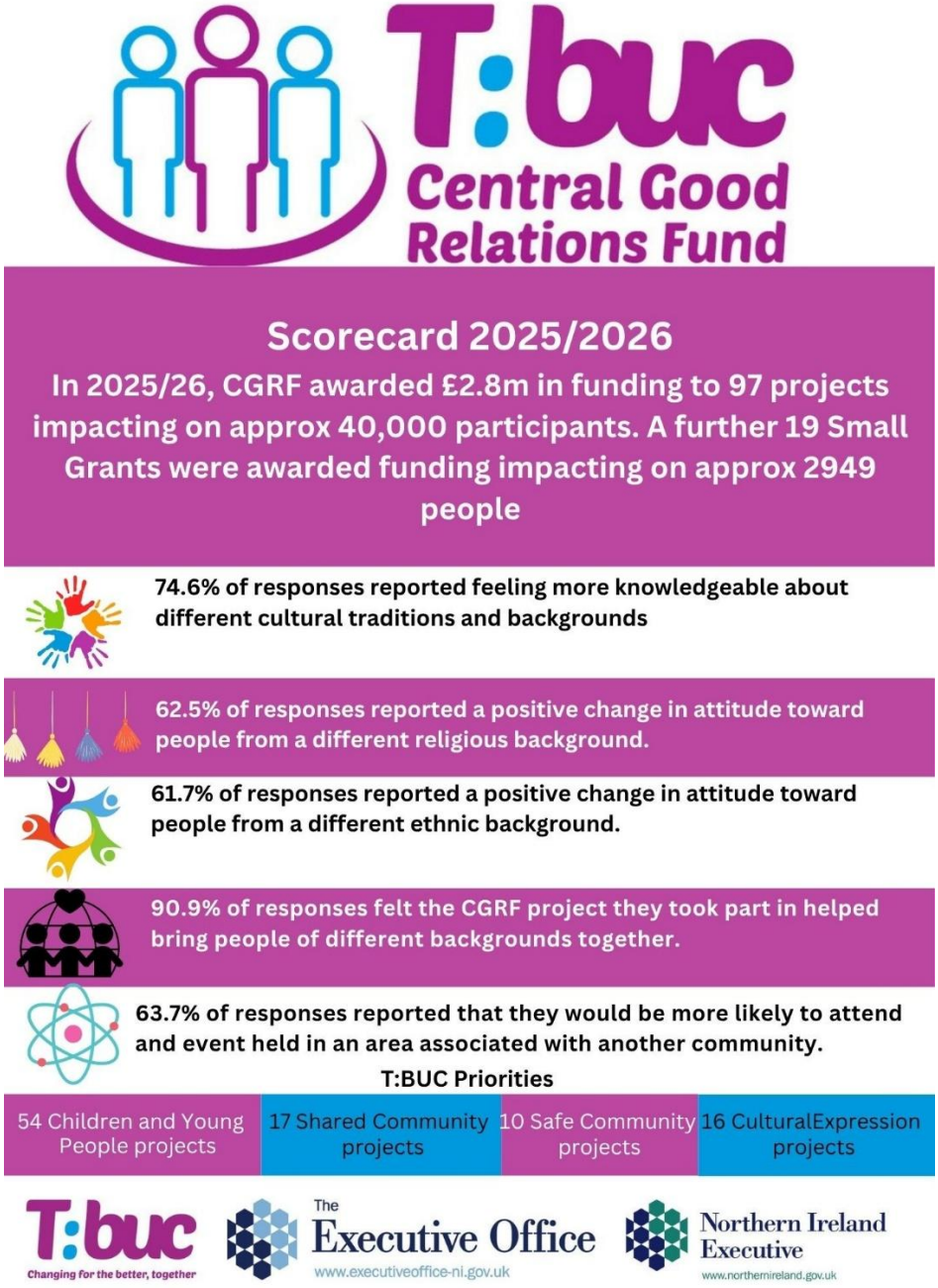
Disability

The Equality and Human Rights Unit produces and maintains the departmental Disability Action Plan which sets out what steps the department will take to fulfil its obligations in respect of the disability duties under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. In addition to having an NICS Disability Champion, TEO assists staff in facilitating reasonable adjustments in the workplace. Line managers play an important role in identifying and implementing appropriate adjustments in line with NICS policy and guidance, supported by Corporate Services and specialist advice where required.

2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2025-26 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

Central Good Relations Fund (CGRF)

The following infographic shows the key outcomes from CGRF in 2025/26 and 2024/25, which reflects the data that has been fully analysed within the timeframe of this report.



Planned Interventions Programme (PIP)

The following infographic shows the latest available outcomes for PIP (2024/25).

T:buc Planned Interventions

PROGRAMME SUMMARY 2024 - 2025

THE PLANNED INTERVENTIONS PROGRAMME FUNDS COMMUNITY ACTIVITY TO PROVIDE POSITIVE ALTERNATIVES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK OF BECOMING INVOLVED IN ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, SECTARIANISM, RACISM AND RECRUITMENT FROM PARAMILITARY GANGS, AND TO ADDRESS HEIGHTENED INTER AND INTRA-COMMUNITY TENSION AROUND INTERFACES (INCLUDING NOT ONLY PHYSICAL PEACE WALLS, BUT ANYWHERE THERE IS A POTENTIAL FOR COMMUNITY TENSIONS TO ARISE).

HOW MUCH DID WE DO?

122 PROJECTS WERE DELIVERED IN 2024/25.

2,845 YOUNG PEOPLE PARTICIPATED.

SCAN FOR MORE INFORMATION

HOW WELL DID WE DO IT?

99% of participants felt they were well treated during the programme

97% of young people completed the project

IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

97% of participants felt less likely to engage in negative behaviour

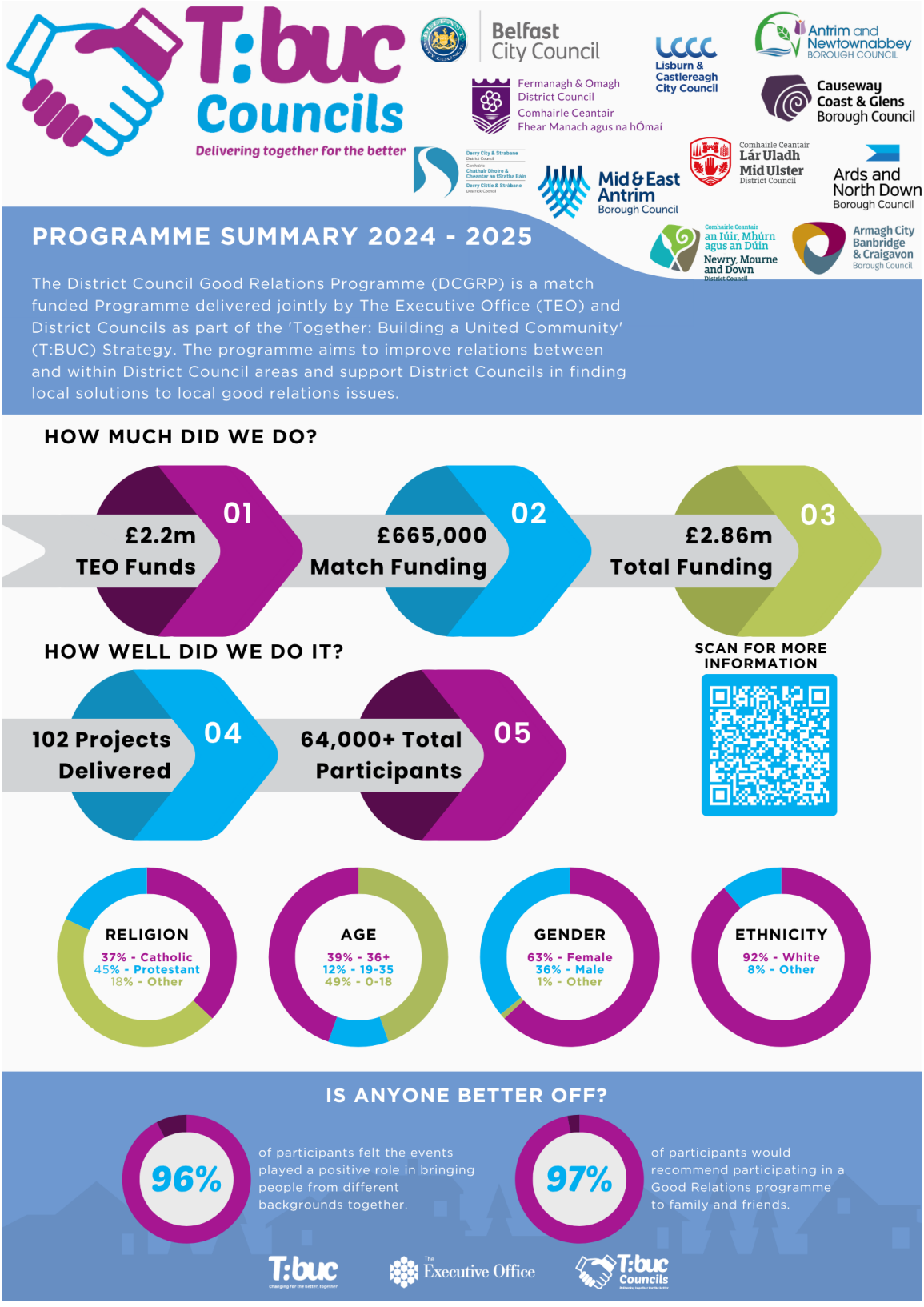
96% of participants felt their confidence has increased after taking part in the programe

82% of participants felt more favourable towards people from a different religious or community background

The Executive Office · T:buc · Department of Education www.education-ni.gov.uk · ea Education Authority

District Council Good Relations Programme (DCGRP)

The following infographic shows the latest available outcomes for the DCGRP (2024/25).



T:BUC Camps

The following infographic shows the latest available outcomes for the Camps programme (2024/25).

Draft Framework for Race Relations

In developing the draft Framework for Race Relations, an equality screening as well as Rural Needs Impact Assessment and Child Rights Impact Assessment were carried out and are

available as part of the consultation papers. Within each Outcome of the draft Framework, various issues and the potential interventions to combat them were identified. These were identified from engagement with minority ethnic communities, thematic groups and wider society as well as emerging issues from statistics and work being carried out in other administrations.

Initial priority interventions have been identified and selected for delivery in the first two years, as set out in the accompanying Delivery Plan. During consultation, we will continue to gather data on these key interventions to determine whether they are the right ones to focus on and how we can best deliver them to meet the needs and maximise outcomes.
In delivering the interventions, we will also remain flexible to ensure we can respond to emerging issues, and delivery will be informed by feedback from stakeholders, partners and monitoring mechanisms.

Refugee Integration Strategy

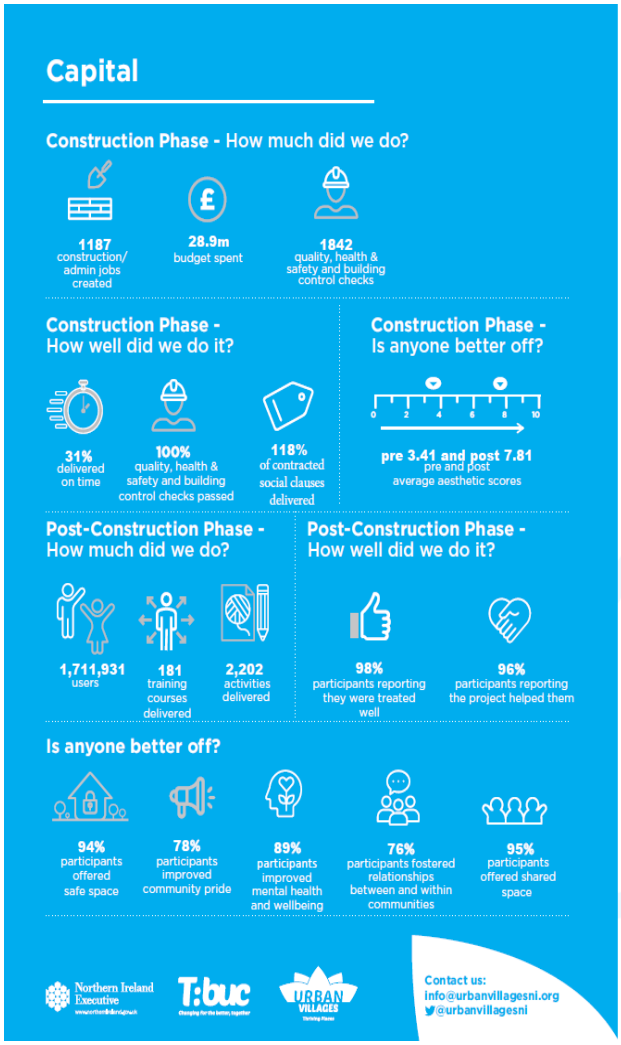
The implementation of the Refugee Integration Strategy has been progressed by identifying and taking forward initial priority actions including:

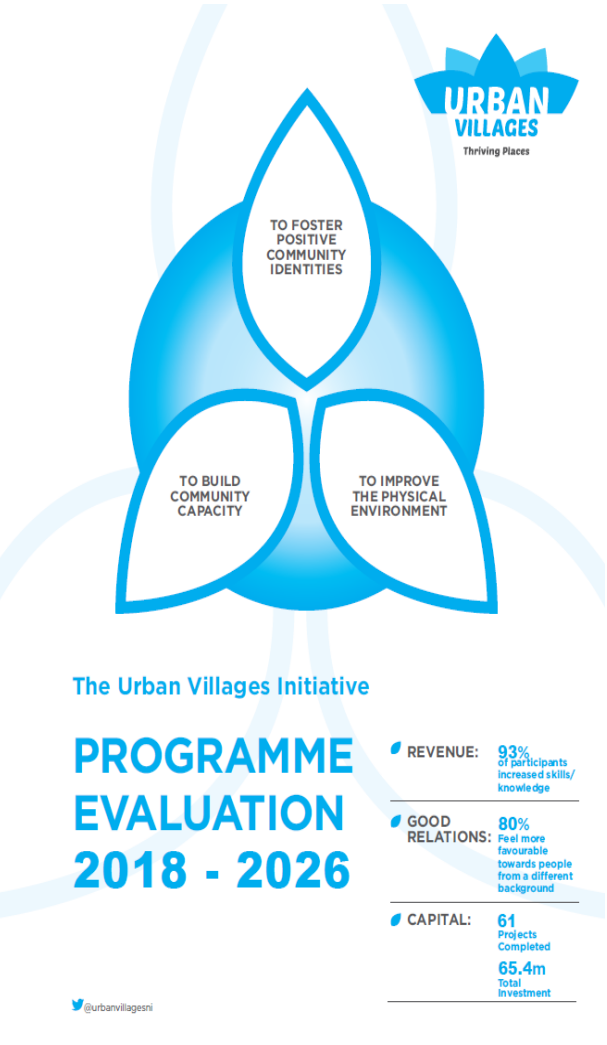
- The establishment of resource hubs across council areas to provide support, advice and signposting for refugees and asylum seekers is well advanced;
- A skills and employment survey which sought to know more about the skills, qualifications and employment experience of refugees and asylum seekers, including any barriers to employment has been completed. Over 200 responses were received and analysis is underway;
- Funding was committed to provide regional immigration advice and information for asylum seekers and refugees; and
- The TEO led, multi-agency Community Cohesion Group has been developing a range of interventions to help address the root causes of tensions, including interventions to enhance communications.

These actions have been progressed in the first year of the Refugee Integration Strategy and will continue to be progressed in line with the Delivery Plan.

Urban Villages

The following infographic shows the Urban Villages Initiative Programme Evaluation 2018 – 2026.





Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG)

TEO invested over £5 million during the 15 months (January 2025 to March 2026) in

community-based action – the EVAWG Change Fund - to help end violence against women and girls.

The Change Fund (which was subject to equality screening) operates in two strands: Local and Regional:

- The Local Change Fund is providing grant funding direct to local grassroot community groups, to build capacity and allow them to take local action.
- The Regional Change Fund provides grants to regional expert organisations in this field to support their awareness raising, prevention and capacity building work.

In support of the Local Change Fund, all councils have also utilised 'Momentum' support (totalling £1.4m) across January - March 2025 and January – March 2026 period, with a diverse range of initiatives delivered to raise awareness and public engagement on EVAWG.

Momentum Funding enabled Councils to implement awareness raising and building on-the-ground momentum for the Local Change Fund. Councils have used this funding to take a strategic, locally informed approach to ending violence against women and girls, tailoring support, and prevention efforts to the unique needs of their communities. This action will have a lasting impact addressing the priorities within the Strategic Framework.

This strategic investment by TEO has mobilised all 11 councils in bringing EVAWG to the fore in each locality, raising awareness and establishing the basis for longer term coordination The Local Change Fund delivered by Councils made awards to local groups ranging from £1,000 up to £25,000 as part of the overall £2.1m funding provided. Councils opened calls for applications during January-March 2025, and awards supported 158 projects delivering from April 2025 to March 2026.

Eight EVAWG Expert organisations have delivered events, training and new resource

development as part of the £2million funding for Regional Change Fund, which covers activity from 1 January 2025 to 31 March 2026.

This collective body of work will strengthen the impact and reach of EVAWG expertise and programmes, offered by key regional community and voluntary sector organisations, to support schools, youth groups, communities, and workplaces in preventing violence against women and girls.

Programme for Government

On 27 May 2026, the Executive published the PfG Annual Report 2025-26, outlining progress towards achieving its aims, including on the actions to promote equality of opportunity and good relations outlined in response to Question 1. An update on the indicators in the Wellbeing Framework was published alongside the PFG Annual Report 2025-26.

Truth Recovery

Inquiry and Redress Scheme Bill

On foot of the consultation the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill was introduced into the Assembly in June 2025 and completed its Committee Stage at the end of January 2026.

The Bill provides that the Chair must take such steps they consider reasonable to ensure that members of the public are able;

1. to attend the inquiry or see simultaneous transmission of the proceedings
2. to obtain or view a record of evidence and documents produced, provided or given unless subject to a restriction order.

This provides equality of access to all to the inquiry regardless of gender, age, religious belief, racial group, disability, marital status, political opinion, etc.

The Bill further provides that the Chair may appoint an advisory panel. This will help ensure that this is a victim centred process taking account of individual characteristics including those related to Section 75 groupings.

Clause 35 of the Bill introduced in June 2025 provides a power for the Redress Service to prioritise applications, with particular regard to an applicant's age and health. Applicants who are terminally ill must be prioritised. This supports equality of opportunity by ensuring that older people and those with serious ill-health or disabilities are not disadvantaged by delays in a high-demand scheme, and by applying a proportionate, needs-based approach so that those at greatest risk of being unable to access the process in time can receive a decision and support without undue delay.

Initiative to reach Protestant women

One concern raised through the public consultation on the EqiA was that the experiences of Protestant women may not always be fully recognised, in part because there has been a significant public focus on Catholic run institutions and also, they do not necessarily associate their experiences with what are commonly understood as mother and baby institutions. In response, during 2025 the Independent Panel, appointed by TEO, undertook a range of outreach actions to encourage women from a Protestant community background to come forward and provide testimony. This included a leaflet drop to every household inviting those affected to engage with the Panel in confidence, alongside engagement with the main churches and the publication of articles across a range of denominational publications encouraging participation.

Rights, Language and Identity Branch

The three new Arm's Length Bodies (ALB's) were established in November 2025. They will now work on plans to provide outcomes related to their S75 duties.

3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2025-26 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

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

Please provide any details and examples:

Good Relations Outcomes Team

The team continues work to improve accessibility within the annual TEO T:BUC Good Relations Outcomes questionnaires reporting cycle. This supports processes used by funding programmes including the Central Good Relations Funding Programme, District Council Good Relations Programme, some Community Relations Council funded projects, and the NIHE's Housing for All. The team also continues work to strengthen the use of age-appropriate methods within annual reporting for children and young people.

The Refugee Integration Strategy

The establishment of council hubs will provide support services and signposting for members of minority ethnic communities, as well as to individuals generally. The delivery of these services includes all council areas.

Funding has been provided to ensure that there is regional immigration advice and information for asylum seekers and refugees.

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:

Good Relations Outcomes Team

The team continues work to improve its processes, requirements and documentation in ways to better meet the needs of the range of programmes, projects, settings and participants using its annual reporting cycle materials. One example is ongoing work to support and enable the voices of children and young people using developmentally appropriate methods and questions.

The Refugee Integration Strategy

The establishment of council hubs in all council areas to provide support services and signposting for members of minority ethnic communities, will ensure that individuals will not be disadvantaged irrespective of where they are accommodated by the immigration system, or allocated housing.

The provision of regional immigration advice and information for asylum seekers and refugees helps to ensure that individuals from those groups are not disadvantaged in respect of accessing support and advice.

The analysis of the skills and employment survey, when complete, will enable greater insight and knowledge of the skills, qualifications and employment experience of refugees and asylum seekers, including information about barriers to employment. The analysis of the survey will enable better informed policy decisions to be made in relation to refugees and asylum seekers.

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):*
In developing the draft Framework for Race Relations, an equality screening as well as Rural Needs Impact Assessment and Child Rights Impact Assessment were carried out and are available as part of the consultation papers. Within each Outcome of the draft Framework, various issues and the potential interventions to combat them were identified. These were identified from engagement with minority ethnic communities, thematic groups and wider society as well as emerging issues from statistics and work being carried out in other administrations.

☒ As a result of what was identified through the EQIA and consultation exercise *(please give details):*
The draft Framework for Race Relations was screened out. However, in

developing the draft Framework for Race Relations, initial priority interventions have been identified and selected for delivery in the first two years, as set out in the accompanying Delivery Plan. During consultation, TEO will continue to gather data on these key interventions to determine whether they are the right ones to focus on and how we can best deliver them to meet the needs and maximise outcomes. Equality considerations around this work remain ongoing.

☐ As a result of analysis from monitoring the impact *(please give details):*

☐ As a result of changes to access to information and services *(please specify and give details)*:

☒ Other *(please specify and give details)*:

The Refugee Integration Strategy

The actions in the Refugee Integration Strategy Delivery Plan have arisen due to the publication of the Strategy and the need to commence implementation of key high-level actions in furtherance of the Strategy outcomes. TEO will continue to monitor any impact on the Equality Impact Screening.

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 2025-26 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

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2025-26 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

Please provide any details and examples:

Staff in the Department are aware of the need to comply with equality duties in the development of policy and service delivery.

The Department makes training available to all staff throughout the reporting period.

The Equality & Human Rights Branch Equality staff have statutory duties built into performance plans.

6 In the 2025-26 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? *(tick all that apply)*

- ☐ Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- ☐ Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning

☐ Yes, in some departments/jobs

☒ No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's ongoing corporate plan

☐ No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2024-25 report

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

As evidence of mainstreaming of the Equality duties, during 2025–26, The Executive Office (TEO) progressed equality and good relations considerations for the Truth Recovery policy proposals to establish a statutory public inquiry and associated financial redress schemes for Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses.

Wider Equality and Diversity considerations were built into corporate plans such as the 2024-2026 TEO Business Improvement Plan.

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2025-26 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:		Actions ongoing:	2	Actions to commence:	

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

<u>Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) (ONGOING)</u>

During the 2025/26 period the EVAWG Directorate has had ongoing engagement with relevant stakeholders.

As part of the Regional Change Fund, the EVAWG directorate has held quarterly Regional Delivery Forums involving, TEO, The Regional Delivery Organisations and Belfast City Council who administer the scheme.

The Forum allows for the sharing of knowledge, successes and challenges affecting the programme, how delivery is progressing and ensuring that buy in from stakeholders is maintained.

This activity is also supplemented by one-to-one meetings as required with the Delivery Organisations relevant to any specific issues they are encountering.

Representatives from the Regional Change Fund are also sitting members (on rotation) of the EVAWG Oversight and Programme Boards.

A shared learning event was held in June 2025 in relation to the Local Change Fund, allowing for the showcasing of activities being delivered, sharing of programme insight with the goal to build awareness of the projects being delivered and to create further collaboration between the Local and Regional Change Funds.

The Councils are also involved in regular update meetings with the EVAWG directorate to ensure that projects are progressing as planned with intent to create a quarterly forum akin the Regional Delivery Forum.

Both the Regional and Local Change Funds are subject to quarterly monitoring returns, which provides an opportunity to assess progress and to address any concerns that are being raised.

In terms of actions completed, during 2025–26, The Executive Office (TEO) progressed equality and good relations considerations for the Truth Recovery policy proposals to establish a statutory public inquiry and associated financial redress schemes for Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses.

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2025-26 reporting period *(points not identified in an appended plan)*:
N/A

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2025-26 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

During 2025–26, The Executive Office progressed equality and good relations considerations for the Truth Recovery policy proposals to establish a statutory public inquiry and associated financial redress schemes for Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was undertaken and published for the public consultation in 2024, assessing potential impacts across the Section 75 categories and identifying mitigations to support accessibility and participation, including measures for older people and disabled people and a trauma-informed approach.

The EqIA also considered good relations considerations in the context of community background (including the distribution of admissions across Catholic-run and Protestant-run institutions) and set out mitigations to support awareness and engagement across communities.

An updated EqIA, including the Stage 6 report, was published on the TEO website in September 2025. The Stage 6 report summarised consultation feedback on the EqIA and resulting policy refinements, including strengthening participation and support arrangements for victims and survivors (including provision for the Chair to appoint a

Victims and Survivors Advisory Panel), and clarifying scheme scope and eligibility to ensure an evidence-based and equitable approach.

11 Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2025-26 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:

Ending Violence against Women and Girls (EVAWG)

The EVAWG Directorate was not engaged in formal consultation during the 2025/26 period but has ongoing engagement with a wide range of stakeholders. This included regular engagement with statutory partners, the community and voluntary sector, academia, and representative organisations to gather perspectives, inform policy development, and support implementation of the Strategy. The Directorate also engaged with stakeholders as part of the Rural Community-Led Review of the EVAWG Strategy, providing an opportunity to explore the lived experiences, needs and barriers faced by women and girls in rural communities and to ensure these perspectives inform future policy and delivery considerations.

Truth Recovery

Prior to the introduction of the draft Bill for the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill in June 2025, a series of meetings and smaller engagement sessions were held with Victims and Survivors.

Officials and dedicated professional support were in place to support those providing evidence to Committee in real time to empower, encourage participation from a wide range of Victims and Survivors e.g. Birth Mothers, adopted Children Now Adults, relatives and those advocating on behalf of a deceased relative.

While this has been an emotional and emotive process, it has provided a positive opportunity for ‘voices to be heard’ to help influence policy development and sustain good relations.

12 In the 2025-26 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently <u>used</u> 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:

<u>Truth Recovery</u>

Ongoing engagement with victims and survivors has taken place through the Consultation Forum, smaller engagement sessions and individual meetings. Participants have included individuals from a range of Section 75 categories, particularly women, who represent a significant proportion of those directly affected by Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses.

A mix of in person and online meetings was offered to support participation and accommodate those with disabilities. In addition, the Truth Recovery team maintained regular contact with victims and survivors by correspondence providing opportunities for ongoing feedback.

Wider consultation processes were carried out using citizen space and similar online mechanisms.

13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2025-26 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

N/A

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2025-26 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Not applicable – no commitment to review

The Executive Office Equality Consultee List

The Executive Office Equality Consultee List will be updated in 2026 following engagement with stakeholders via correspondence.

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

In support of the arrangements set out in our Equality Scheme, The Executive Office (TEO) has also undertaken to publish Quarterly Screening Reports containing details of all Policies screened in each quarter within the 2025 / 26 reporting period. The link to our Screening page and quarterly screening reports is set out below.

The Executive Office Quarterly Summary Screening Page

The Executive Office Policy and Consultations are published on the Executive Office website at:

https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications

https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/consultations

During 2025–26, The Executive Office progressed equality and good relations considerations for the Truth Recovery policy proposals to establish a statutory public inquiry and associated financial redress schemes for Mother and Baby Institutions,

Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses. Details of this are outlined at: https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/inquiry-mother-and-baby-institutions-magdalene-laundries-and-workhouses-and-redress-scheme-bill-impact-assessments

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

5

16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2025-26:

5	Policy consultations conducted with **screening** assessment presented.
1	Policy consultations conducted **with an equality impact assessment** (EQIA) presented.
	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:

During 2025–26, The Executive Office progressed equality and good relations considerations for the Truth Recovery policy proposals to establish a statutory public inquiry and associated financial redress schemes for Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was undertaken and published for the public consultation in 2024, assessing potential impacts across the Section 75 categories and identifying mitigations to support accessibility and participation, including measures for older people, disabled people and a trauma-informed approach.

The EqIA also considered good relations considerations in the context of community background (including the distribution of admissions across Catholic-run and

Protestant-run institutions) and set out mitigations to support awareness and engagement across communities.

An updated EqIA, including the Stage 6 report, was published on the TEO website in September 2025. The Stage 6 report summarised consultation feedback on the EqIA and resulting policy refinements, including strengthening participation and support arrangements for victims and survivors (including provision for the Chair to appoint a Victims and Survivors Advisory Panel), and clarifying scheme scope and eligibility to ensure an evidence-based and equitable approach.

In developing the draft Framework for Race Relations, an equality screening as well as Rural Needs Impact Assessment and Child Rights Impact Assessment were carried out and are available as part of the consultation papers. Wider consultation was also carried out on the Framework.

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:

None in the reporting period.

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 2025-26 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Truth Recovery

An updated EqIA, including the Stage 6 Truth Recovery EQIA report, was published on the TEO website in September 2025.

An EQIA on the policy was published here:

https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultations/execoffice/truth-

recovery-eqia.pdf

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 2025-26 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:

A review of Programme for Government governance, monitoring and reporting structures and processes by NICS Internal Audit Services is arranged to take place in Q2 2026-27.

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 2025-26 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

N/A

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:

Programme for Government

On 27 May 2026, the Executive published the first PfG Annual Report for 2025-26. An associated Wellbeing Framework Report, which provides an overview as to whether policies and programmes are improving long term outcomes for all sections of society, was published alongside the PfG Annual Report.

Wellbeing Framework

The Wellbeing Framework sits alongside the Programme for Government and helps us track wellbeing trends in Northern Ireland. It provides a common goal for government departments, external stakeholders and delivery partners to work towards.
Wellbeing is a combination of social, environmental, economic, and democratic factors which are essential for society to flourish. These factors align to the PfG Missions of People, Planet, Prosperity and the cross-cutting commitment to Peace.

The PfG Missions have been broken down across ten strategic domains of wellbeing, each of which is supported by a selection of indicators, all high-quality official statistics.

Where the data allows, indicators are broken down by different demographic groups such as sex, age, marital status, religion, disability, ethnic group, sexual orientation, those with and without dependants, and political opinion. Geographic breakdowns are also provided to make sure that inequalities that exist between council areas, assembly areas, between urban and rural areas and areas of multiple deprivation are clear for all to see.

The Wellbeing Framework dashboard is available to view at:
https://northernireland.gov.uk/wellbeing

24 Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2025-26, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

NICS Training Course and TEO Completion Figures – 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

Equality and Diversity Essentials (e-Learning)	471
Introduction to Diversity and Inclusion (e-Learning)	468
Introduction to Section 75 (e-Learning)	12
Racial Equality NICS (e-Learning)	10
Section 75 Duties - A Focus On Screening (Virtual Classroom)	3
Section 75 Duties and Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA) (Training video) (e-Learning)	1
Unconscious Bias (e-Learning)	6
Grand Total	**971**

Equality & Human Rights

Equality & Human Rights Officials and colleagues in NICSHR facilitated training for all NICS staff, including those in TEO, through virtual classroom training products, arranged with ECNI in January and February 2026.

Three virtual classroom training products; "Section 75 – A Focus on Screening," "Section 75 – Duties & Equality Assessments," and "Section 75 – The Monitoring Requirements." In addition, The NICSHR L&D Links platform also hosts training videos on Screening: Course: Section 75 Screening Video (e-Learning) and Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA): Section 75 Duties and Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA).

Where appropriate, training was provided to ensure that all staff are aware of the issues experienced by the range of Section 75 groups. When appropriate and on an ongoing basis, arrangements were made to ensure that all staff are kept up to date with Section 75 developments.

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:

Feedback from staff following the biannual training sessions; "Section 75 – A Focus on Screening", "Section 75 – Duties & Equality Assessments", and "Section 75 – The Monitoring Requirements" remains positive.

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

26 Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2025-26, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

N/A

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

27 How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2025-26?

Insert number here: 0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

Section 3: Looking Forward

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

Through a process of ongoing review, and the support of the Equality Commission, The Executive Office (TEO) continues to look to how it can support its Equality Scheme and improve upon its overall delivery.

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 Executive Office (TEO) will continue to look at all areas of its Equality Scheme arrangements to support its Equality Scheme and improve upon its overall delivery. We anticipate there will be a focus on improved section 75 data analysis.

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):

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:

15	**2**	
Fully achieved	Partially achieved	Not achieved

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

- Promote positive images of disabled people participating in our society.
- Promote awareness and understanding of issues faced by disabled people and to ensure staff have appropriate skills.
- Promote Awareness of International Day of Persons with Disabilities and World Autism Awareness Day amongst all TEO staff.
- Ensure that TEO staff are trained to meet their disability and equality obligations under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act including JAM Card awareness.
- Improve the scope of disability training available to TEO staff.
- Ensure the views of disabled people receive the same consideration as others.
- Make information available to everyone in a format that meets their needs.
- Use technology to increase the participation of disabled people.
- Encourage more disabled people to apply for public appointments.
- Improve the working environment for disabled colleagues.
- Ensure that Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans are completed as required.
- Engage with the NICS Disability Working Group.
- Monitor equality and diversity improvements across the department.
- Monitor TEO staff attitudes via a regular staff survey.
- Publish an annual report on Equality and Disability Actions.

PART B

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[i]	Outcomes / Impact[ii]
National[iii]	Encourage more disabled people to apply for public appointments.	Issue 43 of the bi-annual "All Aboard" newssheet providing information about forthcoming public appointments vacancies was issued in March 2026 to individuals and organisations held on the TEO mailing lists including organisations representing S75 groups. The Newssheet is also published on the TEO internet website. All Aboard | The Executive Office	Greater and more targeted sharing of information relating to public Appointment opportunities.
Regional[iv]	Encourage more disabled people to apply for public appointments.	The use of the Guaranteed Interview Scheme is considered in Executive Office public appointments.	Public Appointments process to ensure greater diversity with better reflects wider society.
Local[v]	Ensure the views of disabled people receive the same consideration as others.	Ensure that consideration is given to accessibility when selecting public venues for events including "Changing Places" facilities.	By selecting accessible venues, more disabled people will feel more able to attend events and share their views to help shape future policies.
Local[v]	Accessible Information and Communications	TEO is committed to ensuring that documents and publications published on our website are accessible to all users. Publications are prepared in line with recognised accessibility	Disabled people are better able to access government information online. Information is more accessible to users who rely on assistive technologies.

		standards, with accessibility checks undertaken before publication to promote compatibility with assistive technologies and compliance with statutory accessibility requirements. Documents and publications published on TEO website are prepared in line with recognised accessibility standards. Accessibility checks are undertaken before publication. Publications are designed to be compatible with assistive technologies and to comply with statutory accessibility requirements.	Reduced barriers to accessing information supports disabled people to engage with government activity, consultations and wider public life. Improved compliance with accessibility requirements promotes greater inclusion and participation for disabled people.

2(b) What **training action measures** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Improve the scope of disability training available to TEO staff - Staff Disability Awareness training.	NICS People and Organisational Development team in partnership with Employers for Disability Northern Ireland (EFDNI) offered a Disability Awareness Programme in 2025/26 to NICS / TEO staff. The programme included seven sessions on	Improved staff awareness of neurodiversity and disability positive training. Two TEO staff members received Disability Positive accreditation.

		a range of disability awareness topics including Neurodiversity and Disability Positive.	
2	Promote awareness and understanding of issues faced by people with a disability and to ensure staff have appropriate skills - Staff Visual Awareness training.	NICS People and Organisational Development team in partnership with Employers for Disability Northern Ireland (EFDNI) offered a Disability Awareness Programme in 2025/26 to NICS / TEO staff, this included a session on Supporting people with Hidden / Less Visible Difficulties.	Increased staff understanding of how to support colleagues with hidden disabilities. Eight TEO staff members attended.
3	Promote awareness and understanding of issues faced by people with a disability and to ensure staff have appropriate skills -Promoting Mental Health Session.	NICS People and Organisational Development team in partnership with Employers for Disability Northern Ireland (EFDNI) offered a Disability Awareness Programme in 2025/26 to NICS/ TEO staff.	Training made available for staff to raise awareness of effective tools to manage stress and support mental health.
4	Promote awareness and understanding of issues faced by people with a disability and to ensure staff have appropriate skills - Disability Positive session held	People and Organisational Development in partnership with Employers for Disability Northern Ireland (EFDNI) hosted two Disability Positive training sessions in 2025/26.	Training made available for staff on the challenges faced, inside and outside work by disabled people, to improve accessibility and accessing services. Two TEO staff members received Disability Positive accreditation.
5	Promote awareness and understanding of issues faced by people with a disability and to ensure staff have appropriate skills and training.	NICS People and Organisational Development team in partnership with Employers for Disability Northern Ireland (EFDNI) offered a Disability Awareness Programme in 2025/26 to all NICS / TEO staff, this included a session on Neurodiversity Awareness.	This builds on the Neurodiversity toolkit for TEO Line managers which is available on the LInKS platform.
6	Promote awareness and understanding of issues faced by people with a disability and to	Web Accessibility Training Course, first Launched on LInKS in April 2024 continue to raise awareness of barriers that people	Increased training made available to NICS / TEO staff on the LInKS e-platform of understanding barriers to digital Accessibility and improved accessibility

	ensure staff have appropriate skills - Web Accessibility Training Course Launched on LInKS April 2024.	can face when using digital platforms.	methods used.
7	Ensure that TEO staff are trained to meet their disability and equality obligations under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act including JAM Card awareness - JAM card training.	Staff are proactively encouraged to complete training to achieve Disability Positive accreditation.	Training made available for TEO Staff.
8	Monitor TEO staff attitudes via a regular staff survey.	The NICS People Survey has been conducted biennially since 2023. The latest People Survey was conducted April/May 2025.	Increased awareness of staff attitudes and awareness.
9	Publish an annual report on Equality and Disability Actions.	The Annual Progress report 2024/25 was submitted to ECNI in September 2025.	Annual Progress Report completed to reflect TEO commitment to fulfilling its statutory equality and good relations duties.

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

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Improve the working environment for TEO staff with disabilities - Workplace Health Improvement Programme events in 2025/26	Workplace Health Improvement Programme events held various health sessions in 2025/26 for all TEO staff including • 3 days of Health Checks • Healthy Eating Seminar • Musculoskeletal Health Seminar •	Increased staff understanding of a variety of health issues, including specific health support and understanding.

2	Promote Awareness of International Day of Persons with disabilities and World Autism Awareness Day amongst all TEO staff	April 2025 was Autism Awareness Month an opportunity to increase awareness and understanding of autism and to recognise and celebrate the unique skills and talents autistic people bring to our society and workforce. TEO Staff were made of aware of the cross-departmental Autism Strategy 2023-28 and associated Delivery Plan and the key commitments and actions being delivered to enhance and improve support for autistic people and their families.	Increased staff understanding of disability issues and support for the dignity, rights, and well-being of persons with disabilities, particularly within our own workforce.
	Promote Awareness of International Day of Persons with disabilities and World Autism Awareness Day amongst all TEO staff	World Autism Day 2026 was marked on 02 April this year. The theme was “Autism and Humanity – Every Life Has Value” which aimed to highlight the dignity and worth of all autistic people. This day was dedicated to raising awareness about autism spectrum disorder, promoting acceptance, inclusion, and support for individuals with autism, and advocating for policies that promote neuroinclusive environments in various sectors. TEO Staff were made aware of the importance of the day and the key commitments and actions being delivered to enhance and improve support for autistic people and their families.	Increased staff understanding of disability issues and support for the dignity, rights, and well-being of persons with disabilities, particularly within our own workforce.

	Improve the working environment for TEO staff with Staff WELL Events.	Mental Health Awareness Week took place from 12 to 18 May 2025 – the theme was - 'community.' Staff were encouraged to join colleagues from across the NICS community and to attend one of the of the events that were provided as part of the NICS the Well Programme including: • Aware NI - Mental Health Webinar • Mindfulness for Self-Compassion • Well Nutrition Talk-Emotional Eating • Think Well Resilience	An opportunity for staff to take time to consider their mental health and wellbeing and how to manage and navigate the challenges we all face daily.
	Improve the Health and Wellbeing for All NICS staff, including TEO Staff	Improving health and wellbeing across the Civil Service is at the heart of our People Strategy. We are committed to creating a workplace that's healthy, resilient, and inclusive - where every colleague feels valued, supported, and empowered to thrive. This includes raising TEO staff awareness of the wellbeing support on health matters including World Menopause Day, International Men's Day and Cancer Awareness.	

PART B

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Good Relations Programmes - Promote awareness and understanding of issues faced by people with a disability and to ensure staff have appropriate skills.	T:BUC and all TEO's good relations programmes aim to encourage people of all ages, genders, ethnicities, abilities and religious beliefs to take part in activities and learning events which break down traditional preconceptions and enhance community relations.	A more integrated and diverse community, better community relations.

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
1	Ensure that Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans are completed as required - Line Managers, with advice from Corporate Services as required, will take forward Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs).	Corporate Service staff will seek to raise Line Managers' Awareness of their responsibility to complete PEEPs as required.	Corporate Services issues annually to all business areas, includes a section on PEEPs. This asks managers whether they have a member of staff with mobility/ other relevant issues and, if so, whether a PEEP has been agreed. As such it helps to provide an assurance that PEEPs are in place where required.

PART B

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

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	Participate in the Departmental Diversity Group.	Identify and raise awareness of issues that affect diversity within the daily working life of TEO.	Raised awareness of all diversity groups.	Officials have been engaged with the wider NICS Diversity networks.
2	Create work placement/job-shadowing opportunities for disabled people.	Initiatives to support the employment of disabled people such as participation in International Job Shadow Day.	Continued provision of work experience opportunities to disabled people through support participation in International Job Shadow Day.	TEO was open to all candidates who engage in International Job Shadow Day.

4. Please outline what action measures **have <u>not</u> been achieved** and the reasons why.

N/A

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 Executive Office (TEO) continues to work to improve the collection of section 75 data for better monitoring of policies and better information around the participation of disabled people in TEO delivery areas. The Programme for Government Wellbeing Framework Dashboard Launched in 2024 remains a valuable tool to do so and is available at:

https://datavis.nisra.gov.uk/executiveofficeni/pfg_wellbeing_dashboard.html

(b) Quantitative

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?

N/A

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?

The Disability Action Plan remains a live document and subject to review where required. We are currently conducting a formal review of The Executive Office (TEO) Disability Action Plan with a view to publish an updated plan in 2026.

[i] **Outputs** – defined as act of producing, amount of something produced over a period, processes undertaken to implement the action measure e.g. Undertook 10 training sessions with 100 people at customer service level.

[ii] **Outcome / Impact** – what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action? Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training.

[iii] **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments

[iv] **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level

[v] **Local :** Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one-off consultations, local fora.

[v] **Local :** Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one-off consultations, local fora.