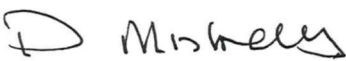


## Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties

### Annual Progress Report

#### Contact details:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme</li> </ul>	Name: Desi Miskelly Telephone: 028 3839 9441 Email: desi.miskelly@librariesni.org.uk
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan</li> </ul>	As above <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Name: Telephone: Email:
Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:	<a href="https://www.librariesni.org.uk/about-us/corporate-documents-and-information/equality/">https://www.librariesni.org.uk/about-us/corporate-documents-and-information/equality/</a>
Signature:	

**This report has been prepared using a template circulated by the Equality Commission.**

**It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties, and implementing Equality Scheme commitments and Disability Action Plans.**

**This report reflects progress made between April 2024 and March 2025**

## **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 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.*

- a. 2024/25 once again saw the public library service face a challenging operational context with significant uncertainty around annual resourcing budgets, giving rise to sustained pressure for much of the year and as a result the scale and scope of our service offering was limited once again.
- b. Despite the constraining impacts of these significant funding challenges the public library service continued to play a key role in making a difference to the lives of people in our local communities, providing a safe, welcoming and inclusive space and place where people were able to meet, connect and make use of an accessible and free library service
- c. The importance of digital choices and inclusion remained high on our agenda, and throughout 2024/25 Libraries NI offered a range of programmes and activities aimed at facilitating digital inclusion and helping people to carry out more day-to-day tasks online, access resources effectively and engage with government departments and bodies through official websites such as NIDirect. With a continuing focus on showing people how to stay connected and how the internet can make life easier, cheaper, healthier and more fun.
- d. Although our service offering was constrained for much of the year, we continued to recognise that the most significant occasions to improve life opportunities exist in the form of early interventions. Consequently, activities aimed at children and young people formed a key element of Libraries NI's approach to tackling social exclusion. Rhythm and Rhyme sessions designed to help develop pre-literacy and early learning skills continued to be popular, attracting substantial numbers of children and their parents and carers. Support and resources within library settings as well as online resources, providing tools, tips and fun learning activities, were available to give parents and carers increased confidence to support their young children with the early stages of reading and emotional development. Storytimes, reading groups and the Big Summer Read 2024, provide examples of activities that encourage reading for pleasure, which, research shows, is linked to improved educational outcomes.
- e. Our work and the services we provide continued to be informed by the Department for Communities Building Inclusive Communities Strategy 2020/25, community planning and wider government priorities and 2024/25 saw renewed efforts to strengthen the contribution that libraries make to social, community and economic wellbeing as community hubs where people can access a wide variety

of learning, information and social resources that make a difference to their quality of life in both the short and long term.

- f. Libraries NI continued to play a key role as a statutory partner in the Community Planning process represented on and participate in all 11 community planning partnerships. The benefits of reading, the network of libraries, services, facilities and resources were promoted through council and statutory partner communication channels. In 2024/25 a number of Community Plans were reviewed and input was provided to place shaping and place plans developed for several localities.
- h. All the activities, programmes and services provided by Libraries NI during this period were inclusive and where appropriate looked to increase the understanding of and respect for other cultures, traditions and beliefs. Libraries NI continues to be accessible to all whether for social interaction, learning a new skill or exploring different cultural traditions.
- i. Quarterly policy screening reports were issued to consultees and published on the Libraries NI website

- 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*).

**Libraries NI examples of outcome/impact of Equality actions/measures and statistics for 2024-25**

Despite 2024/25 proving to be another challenging year in terms of resourcing our service 2023/24 we adapted our service offerings and delivery models so we could provide alternative inclusive and accessible services throughout the year. A range of programmes, activities and services were delivered either in libraries or in virtual environments to support our equality action plan outcomes:

- Reading and Reader Development (access to information, materials and support)
- Children and Young People (targeted activities)
- Digital Information, Inclusion and Learning
- Shared, Safe Spaces for Culture and Creative Development
- Cultural Heritage
- Support for positive Health and Wellbeing.

**2024-25 Supporting Headline Statistics**

Number of new members	83,634
eBook and Audiobook activity (items accessed/borrowed)	2,459,080

Participation in Reading Challenges	26,440	(Children 0-11 borrowing at least one item between July and August)
Stock spend (inclusive of electronic media)	£3,506,000	
Customer Feedback	673 items of feedback received	(64% positive compliments)

A range of inclusive events and programmes were delivered by libraries throughout 2024/25

### **Supporting People, Supporting Communities – Welcoming, Trusted Community Spaces**

Continuing our ethos of libraries as trusted, welcoming, inclusive, safe spaces we delivered a diverse offer of core activities, programming and initiatives. One such example was Chat and Chapters Befriending Services which enables people experiencing isolation or distress to engage in supportive discussions and to connect with PIPS Suicide Prevention Charity volunteers.

The programme for Empathy Day, 6 June, was structured around Empathy Lab's three calls to action – Read, Connect, Act, and was delivered through a host of engaging activities including empathy focused storytelling.

Loneliness Awareness Week, 10 – 16 June, created supportive communities through having open, honest conversations.

The Death Positive Initiative, which aims to provide supportive approaches to death, dying and grief, was further extended to Magherafelt and Draperstown Libraries who are now offering, in partnership with MacMillan Cancer Support, curated collections of books for all age groups with the aim of supporting those affected by advanced illness or loss and encouraging open and honest conversations.

Positive Ageing Month, October, showcased the contribution that older people make to our communities while in April the Commissioner for Older People NI (COPNI), The Open University Ireland (OU) and Libraries NI came together to share the important message of embracing a proactive approach to ageing well with Changing Attitudes to Ageing Events in Omagh and Derry Central libraries attended by over 170 people and delivered through a mix of talks, workshops and exhibitions, including South West Age Partnership, PSNI Crime Prevention, Omagh Healthy Living Network and Age NI. The events reinforced Libraries NI's commitment to promoting positive perceptions of ageing, positive wellbeing, celebrating the invaluable contributions of older adults in our communities and providing a range of services and programmes that support reading and continuous learning.

### **Collections – Reading and Reader Development and Cultural Heritage**

Libraries NI continued to promote Reading and Reader Development and the works of local, national and international authors.

Book Week NI was delivered from the 21 – 27 October in partnership with BBC NI. Bookcited a brand-new weekly podcast celebrating books, authors and readers was launched while Gogglebook designed to engage families with a unique, interactive

reading experience saw five families encouraged to create video diaries documenting their reactions and thoughts on book titles provided.

### **Digital Choices and Digital Inclusion Activities**

We continued to offer a range of digital choice and digital access offers including BT Digital Switchover Information Sessions in libraries to raise awareness and answer questions on the switch from analogue to digital.

The annual Get Online Week to help empower individuals with the skills and confidence to navigate the digital world delivered a range of Go On classes and individual sessions on the themes of getting the best from your library through accessing eBooks, eAudio Books, eMagazines and eNewspapers and on using devices and online safety.

The online safety theme continued during Safer Internet Day 'Too good to be true? Keeping yourself and others safe from scams online'. Libraries participated by delivering programming and events for all age groups including Cyber Storytime.

Collaborating to Strengthen Cyber Resilience was the theme for CyberNI Week 2025, co-ordinated by the Northern Ireland Cyber Security Centre to raise awareness of cyber security Internet Scams (and how to avoid them), tips on how to stay safe online, Media Literacy: Understanding Fake News, and Internet Safety for Parents.

The newly introduced and very successful Learn at Lunch learning opportunities allowed people to enjoy a series of 30-minute online workshops and micro-lectures on topics including, creative writing through environmental issues, writing science fiction, and photography, all delivered by experienced facilitators without anyone having to move from their desk.

### **Children and Young People**

Libraries NI delivers specific activities for all ages of children and young people up to 16 years old. These activities aim to promote language development, encourage a love of reading and books, enhance creativity, and together with the programme of formal education for children, these activities help to build empathy and resilience, support inclusion and give access to greater opportunities for societal participation and wellbeing in later life.

Belfast Central Library participated in the walk with Little Amal, a giant puppet of a ten-year-old Syrian refugee who represents children fleeing war, violence and persecution. We contributed a book to Little Amal for her onward journey and the recipient of Libraries NI Creative Bursary, Clive McFarland also gave a copy of his book 'Caterpillar Dreams' a story that encourages young readers to believe in themselves and follow their dreams.

Fun learning opportunities for children and young people continued with 50 Robotics Workshops in August and September helping children learn and understand coding, increase problem solving abilities and develop teamwork and collaboration skills.

Events delivered during the NI Science Festival included 12 STEM workshops using LEGO coding techniques to engage Key Stage 2 children and to support and promote STEM learning.

The newly reimagined children's library at Whiterock delivered innovative family engagement activities promoted as Christmas Experiences.

### **Diversity and Equality of Access**

Libraries NI again participated in Belfast Pride 2024 with colleagues, family and friends represented in the parade and promoting library membership and services to visitors to the Libraries NI stall in the Pride Village.

Seachtain na Gaeilge le Energia, a celebration of the Irish Language and Culture saw participating libraries offering Irish language taster sessions, traditional music workshops and storytelling and crafts for children while Leid Week/Ulster Scots Week in partnership with the Department for Communities (DfC) focused on Ulster Scots language and literature which included a presentation and question and answer session in Falls Road Library.

On Burns Night, 25 January, libraries took part in a commemoration of the life and works of Scottish poet Robert Burns, including Burns Night Neeps and Tatties in Coleraine and Portstewart Libraries, Burns Night Rhyme Time in Newcastle Library and a celebration of the oral storytelling tradition in partnership with The Armstrong Storytelling Trust.

On Holocaust Memorial Day, 27 January, the theme For a Better Future commemorated the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi concentration camp complex, and the 30th anniversary of the genocide in Bosnia.

The theme of Autism Acceptance Week was colour and 21 libraries participated offering dedicated quiet time, sensory playtime, themed book displays and Rhythm and Rhyme and Storytime sessions.

Global Intergenerational Week, established to address the gap between the older and younger generations, was also held in April with a range of intergenerational activities including crafts, games, Timeless Reads and Rhymes held in libraries.

In June, Lisburn City Library hosted the Black British Ballet to perform the Windrush Ballet, a 30-minute performance depicting the story of a Caribbean family, their links with the Windrush and set to original reggae, calypso, contemporary black British music by the youth music charity Kinetika Bloco.

While in July Lisburn City Library hosted Fascinating Facts About Guide Dogs welcoming guide dogs and owners with participants given insight into the work of raising and training guide dogs. To celebrate Braille's 200th anniversary, the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) delivered events to mark Braille 200 inviting customers to note this milestone for the blind and partially sighted community.

A series of events and activities was delivered for Good Relations Week 2024, the theme was 'OpportUNITY' – a call to action to create a brighter, inclusive future for all. International Women's Day in March featured a selection of women writers celebrating their contributions to literature across the online catalogue and digital lending platforms including inspiring children's books to empower young girls.

### **Shared, Safe Spaces for Culture and Creative Development**

Libraries NI has Gallery Spaces in 38 libraries, during the year we hosted 172 exhibitions ranging from sculpture, ceramic, glass, crafts, flower arranging to photography with AdvantAGE celebrating the advantages of ageing., National touring exhibitions saw Fantasy Realms of Imagination and Beyond the Bassline: 500 years of Black British Music from the British Library and a range of exhibitions on subjects including Heritage with Ireland and the Birth of Europe, Many Memories Many Voices, Glimpses of the Past, the role of the High Sheriff, Ulster Scots Place Names, Mapping Monuments, global with the Holocaust, Activism, Refugees and Positive Health and Wellbeing promoting

Maternal Advocacy and Support, Family Carers 'My Perfect Day- Our Perfect Day', Mental Health Arts Festival and INSPIRED, the mental health and wellbeing charity celebrating its 65th anniversary with an exhibition bring together the stories of users and staff.

### **Community Planning**

Libraries NI continues to be closely involved as a statutory partner in Community Planning with senior staff participating in roles of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Members of the Community Planning Strategic Partnership Boards across all 11 councils. Other staff are actively involved in sub-groups and/or action groups within the partnerships. Partners, including Libraries NI have delivered, supported and promoted programmes, projects, information, advice and guidance to contribute to promoting positive wellbeing, mitigating against social isolation, economic challenges and addressing education inequalities and under achievement.

### **Positive Health and Wellbeing**

We continue to deliver a wide range of positive health and wellbeing activities and programmes, standalone or in partnership, exhibitions, information stands, online and in person programming, curated reading lists and a range of daily activities for all age groups. These include Online Yoga and Mindfulness Sessions, Mental Health Awareness Week, what is ME, Dementia Week, Men's Health Week, Loneliness Awareness Week, Brew Monday, Children's Mental Health Week and in partnership with our nominated charity Action Mental Health, Libraries NI participated in Festive Splash, Go Purple for World Mental Health Day, Children's Mental Health Awareness Week and the Big Purple Picnic, raising over £1,900 for our chosen charity



- 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:

Click or tap here to enter text.

- 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:

Not applicable see response to 3 above

- 3b** What aspect of the Equality Scheme prompted or led to the change(s)? *(tick all that apply)*

☐ As a result of the organisation's screening of a policy *(please give details):*

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.



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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

## 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:

We have previously adopted and continue to mainstream an inclusive ethos into our approach to service provision and delivery which ensures implementation of the Equality Scheme is incorporated into our organisational values 'We will provide a safe, friendly and welcoming environment, we will promote a culture of openness and transparency, respect diversity and treat our customers, staff and partners fairly'. These values are also incorporated into Corporate, Service and Branch Plans, and feature in Staff Appraisals.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2024-25 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

☒ Yes, organisation wide

PART A

- ☐ 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:

Libraries NI remains committed to an inclusive approach to service delivery and continually reviews services to people with disabilities, access to buildings and supports continuous improvement through training programmes. Libraries NI works in partnership with other organisations to maximise inclusive service delivery.

- 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:

During the 2024/25 reporting period the Libraries NI Corporate Plan 2020-24 provided the framework within which the 2024/25 business plan was drafted. The annual business plan expanded on the corporate vision of an 'accessible and inclusive library service at the heart of communities' and the ethos of 'respect for users of our service and for each other.' Libraries NI continued its committed to an inclusive approach to service delivery and to reviewing services to people with disabilities, access to buildings and supporting continuous improvement through training programmes. Libraries NI worked in partnership with a range of organisations to maximise inclusive service delivery.

### Equality action plans/measures

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

Actions completed:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Actions ongoing:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Actions to commence:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Libraries NI has continued to deliver a range of activities, events, programmes and initiatives through its network of 98 libraries and via online services throughout 2024/25. Many of these are delivered in conjunction with strategic and local partnerships supported by formal Memoranda of Understanding and service level agreements.

- 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*):

Not applicable – no material changes were made to the equality action plan/measures during 2024/25

- 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

2024/25 saw a continuation of the challenging financial/economic environment faced in previous years. Addressing the issues arising from this uncertain and at times volatile business environment required a greater focus on maintaining service provisions than was desirable and diverted resources from revisiting and reinvigorating the equality action plan,

as a consequence much of 2024/25 has been spent in maintaining delivery of existing actions as set out in our Equality Scheme

**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

Not Applicable - There were no consultations undertaken in the 2024-25 reporting period

- 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:

Not applicable - No policy was screened in during the period

- 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:

[See responses to 10 & 11. Above - There were no consultations undertaken in the 2023-24 reporting period](#)

- 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:

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

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

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not applicable – no commitment to review

[Minor revision made to reflect the ongoing status of certain consultees i.e. some organisation ceased to exist, or their functions transferred.](#)

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

<https://www.librariesni.org.uk/about-us/corporate-documents-and-information/equality/>

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

16 (Sixteen)

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

0 (zero) - Policy consultations conducted with **screening** assessment presented.

0 (zero) - Policy consultations conducted **with an equality impact assessment (EQIA)** presented.

0 (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:

Not Applicable - There were no consultations undertaken in the 2024-25 reporting period

- 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:

No EQIA were undertaken during 2024-25

**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:

Click or tap here to enter text.

- 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:

Click or tap here to enter text.

- 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:

There were no 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 ongoing resourcing pressures faced by the NI public sector continued to impact on the scale and scope of our service delivery to the public. As a result, the drivers for how and why the public accessed our services continued to evolve, shaping the data and feedback on the accessibility and the reach of our services which in turn informed our response (all be it constrained by funding limits).

### **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.

As with many aspects of our service the scope of our staff training provision was once again constrained by the funding landscape however, we continued to include in our training plan a range of activities aimed at increasing staff's awareness and understanding of equality issues and ensuring that service provision was accessible to all. These activities included:

- A robust staff induction process
- Targeted training interventions aimed at enabling and increasing participation in library services by Section 75 groups
- Opportunity for specialist staff to increase their knowledge and understanding of issues facing both staff and customers

In 2024/25 the following training opportunities were provided:

- Access to the CAL e-learning Unconscious Bias module for all newly appointed staff

- Access to the CAL e-learning Introduction to Section 75 and Introduction to Human Rights modules for newly appointed middle and senior managers
- Access to the CAL e-learning Fire Safety Awareness module for all staff
- First Aid at Work accredited training provided to designated First Aiders
- Attendance at various training events addressing issues such as Customer Care - Managing Customer Expectations, Managing Personal Stress and Resilience, Dealing with Difficult Situations and Safeguarding.

Staff were given the opportunity to attend a range of professional development workshops and conferences. These included: CILIP/LAI Joint Conference, Edge Conference, CIPD NI Annual Conference, Legal Island Annual Review of Employment Law and LAI Youth Libraries Youth Conference

The delivery of these training activities helped to ensure that the training objectives, as detailed in the Equality Scheme, continued to be met.

- 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:

The training activities detailed at 24 above are those from a list of Corporate, Service and Personal Development interventions with a particular emphasis on meeting the training objectives as set out in the Equality Scheme and as offered to staff throughout Libraries NI.

The following activities are worth highlighting in and are examples of education and training opportunities that has worked well and specifically increasing staff's awareness of the needs of those from a variety of Section 75 groups:

- All Recruitment and Selection Panel members were provided with Recruitment and Selection training, including awareness of equality of opportunity and practical considerations in relation to applicants with particular needs.
- All staff were able to avail of training and information around Unconscious Bias refreshing their knowledge and highlighting areas of their work where potential bias may impact.

#### **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**:

There have been no occasions where monitoring has resulted in action and/or improvement in relation to access to information and services

### 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 (0)**

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

Click or tap here to enter text.

### Section 3: Looking Forward

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

The Libraries NI Equality Scheme is currently subject to a scheduled 5 yearly review with the aim being to complete the review mid- 2025 and to avail of such opportunities as may arise to better align the Scheme with the recently updated and approved Corporate Plan covering the 2025/30 period.

- 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)*

No specific areas have been highlighted to date, the review of the scheme will consider arrangements in the round and take account of the service delivery environment prevalent at the time.

- 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

PART A

☐ Nothing specific, more of the same

☒ Other (please state):

We anticipate we will continue in reviewing and updating a range of policies relating to employees and delivery of our services and may seek advice from the Commission when doing so.

## 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:

Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
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 <sup>i</sup>	Outcomes / Impact <sup>ii</sup>
National <sup>iii</sup>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Regional <sup>iv</sup>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Local <sup>v</sup>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Provision of the Equality Scheme and a Summary of the Scheme on the staff SharePoint site and external website.	All staff have access to the Scheme	Ensured that staff have appropriate and relevant awareness, knowledge and skills in the delivery of customer focused services, including to customers with needs specific to Section 75 categories.
2	Awareness raising of the Scheme as part of Staff Induction	Delivered to all new starts (permanent and temporary) and agency staff via local and corporate (LNI staff only) induction	Ensured that staff have appropriate and relevant awareness, knowledge and skills in the delivery of customer focused services, including to customers with needs specific to Section 75 categories
3	Access to the e-learning Unconscious Bias module	Module undertaken by newly appointed staff	Ensured that staff have appropriate and relevant awareness, knowledge and skills in the delivery of customer focused services, including to customers with needs specific to Section 75 categories
4	Access to the e-learning Introduction to Section 75 module	Module undertaken by middle and senior managers	Ensured that staff have appropriate and relevant awareness, knowledge and skills in the delivery of customer focused services, including to customers with needs specific to Section 75 categories
5	Access to the e-learning Introduction to Human Rights module	Module undertaken by middle and senior managers	Ensured that staff have appropriate and relevant awareness, knowledge and skills in the delivery of customer focused services, including to customers with needs specific to Section 75 categories
6	Safeguarding (Children and Adults at Risk) Awareness training	All newly appointed staff (including agency/temporary contracts)	Ensured that staff have appropriate and relevant awareness, knowledge and skills in the delivery of customer focused services, including to customers with needs specific to Section 75 categories

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	Throughout 2024/25 a communication and advertising programme was delivered aimed at informing the public of the free and accessible services available through libraries. With external adverts promoting the library service in key locations across Northern Ireland the programme emphasised the benefits of joining and using the library to inform, educate and access support	Public informed and made aware of the facilities, services and resources available to them through public library services.	Significantly raised profile with all sectors of society of free to access public services in a safe environment and promoted the library as an access point for other public services.
2	2024/25 saw continued collaboration between Libraries NI, the Department for Communities, other Government departments and Local Councils (via the community planning partnerships). To promote library services and access to government services via the public library interface.	The reach of government communications, and particularly those from DfC relating to benefits and the assistance available to help in understanding changes was significantly extended.	A greater number of people were able to access government assistance and support
3	The 'Making a Difference' publication was established and printed which increased awareness of the impact of Libraries NI services and events. In the first publication, along with a supporting video, the work in the Macmillan Cancer and Support Centre was highlighted along with the event in Derry Central Library delivered in partnership with the Open University and the Commissioner for Older People staff.	Our stakeholders/public were informed and made aware of events, initiatives, facilities, and resources available in libraries to help address specific life challenges.	People were better able to make informed life choices.



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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Libraries NI remained committed to promoting positive attitudes and implements an inclusive approach to service provision.	<p>With Ormeau Road Library established as the first accredited Library of Sanctuary we continued to develop and deliver activities and events aimed at encouraging and facilitating diversity and welcoming people from all cultural backgrounds.</p> <p>Libraries NI participated in the Belfast Pride Parade with library services and information promoted via stall at the Pride Village</p> <p>During 2024/25 The Executive Office (TEO), Free Period Products in Libraries was launched</p>	The public library services reinforced the accessibility of services to all communities and provided safe, neutral spaces to allow people from diverse backgrounds to meet, interact and develop.

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	Raising awareness of specific barriers faced by people with disabilities including through linking in with National Awareness Days or Weeks (such as Mental Health Awareness Week, what is ME, Dementia Week, Men's Health Week, Loneliness Awareness Week) and collaboration with specific organisations e.g. RNIB, Autism NI, Dementia NI etc	Increased awareness of a range of disabilities and the challenges for individuals in accessing public services.	People better informed of the impacts of disabilities on individual lives and measures to address challenges.

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	Ensure that all Libraries NI owned or managed premises and other infrastructure are accessible.	All facilities remain accessible to all people	Facilities can easily and safely be access and used by all people	Responding to intermittent failure of equipment e.g. passenger lifts has at times been constrained by limited financial resources delaying repairs and reducing accessibility options.

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
2	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Customer and staff feedback processes are in place, formal complaints procedure available to all users.

(b) Quantitative

The number and nature of subject of complaints/compliments/feedback is recorded and measured and reported to SMT and relevant Board Committees. All feedback is responded to, and individuals engaged with where more complex resolutions are called for.

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?

Please select - No. Libraries NI Disability Action Plan has previously been reviewed and will be subject to further review in line with the review of the Equality Scheme current in progress, no further revisions have been made during this reporting period

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
2	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
3	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
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5	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

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?

At the time of drafting of this report (August 2025) we have no specific plans to make any further revisions to our Plan however continual review may result in changes being introduced later.

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<sup>i</sup> **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.

<sup>ii</sup> **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.

<sup>iii</sup> **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments

<sup>iv</sup> **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level

<sup>v</sup> **Local** : Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.