

Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties

Annual Progress Report

Contact details:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme 	Name: Desi Miskelly Telephone: 028 3839 9441 Email: desi.miskelly@librariesni.org.uk
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan 	As above <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Name: Telephone: Email:
Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:	https://www.librariesni.org.uk/about-us/corporate-documents-and-information/equality/
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 2023 and March 2024

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 2023-24, 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. 2023/24 once again saw the public library service face an extraordinarily challenging operational context. Resourcing of public services came under sustained pressure for much of the year and as a result the scale and scope of our service offering was limited.
- b. This new crisis highlighted once again the role of the public library service in making a difference to the lives of people in our local communities. While 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, proved difficult a core offering was maintained, meeting the needs of many of our customers.
- c. The importance of digital choices and inclusion remained high on our agenda, and throughout 2023/24 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. While we were forced to curtail our services, 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 Summer Reading Challenge 2023, 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, community planning and wider government priorities and 2023/24 saw 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.

PART A

- f. Libraries NI continued to play a key role as a statutory partner in the Community Planning process and as local Councils and other Community Planning partners regained momentum following the pandemic the emphasis for 2023/24 has been on actions aimed at addressing the longer term impacts the subsequent economic and cost of living crisis.
- g. Libraries NI continues to be committed to the Equality Commission 'Every Customer Counts – Promoting Accessible Services' initiative.
- h. All of 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 2023-24 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

Libraries NI examples of outcome/impact of Equality actions/measures and statistics for 2023-24

The exceptionally challenging funding position in 2023/24 impact on many area of our service delivery, preventing or significantly constraining our activities and requiring the organisation to adapt at short notice to the frequently changing economic landscape. Despite these limitations 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 Health and Wellbeing.

2023-24 Supporting Headline Statistics

Number of new members	80,370	
eBook and Audiobook activity (items accessed/borrowed)	1,976,326	
Participation in Reading Challenges	20,000	(packs delivered to schools)

Stock spend (inclusive of electronic media)	£2,961,000	
Customer Feedback	1,029 item of feedback received	(52% positive compliments)

A range of inclusive events and programmes were delivered by libraries throughout 2023/24

Supporting People, Supporting Communities – Welcoming, Trusted Community Spaces

Through the network of libraries we continued to offer welcoming, free and inclusive spaces to our diverse range of customers, helping combat loneliness and social isolation, contributing to positive health and wellbeing, supporting life opportunities and learning and promoting literacy and oracy through our range of services, resources, facilities, programmes, events and activities. The role of libraries in supporting people and communities was epitomised through the signposting of information on the cost of living crisis, facilitating the launch of Belfast City Council's cost of living guidance in Belfast Central Library, the launch of the Chatty Library in Dungannon, Magherafelt and Cookstown libraries providing information and a space to talk about loneliness and promoting the Department for Communities Make the Call service.

Other events and activities included partnering with Kith & Kin Financial Wellbeing Social Enterprise delivering sessions in libraries on topics such as the menopause, motherhood, divorce and separation, illness, women's pensions and individual financial consultations. Positive Ageing Month in October promoted active ageing while a collaboration with Compassionate Communities NI saw the introduction of Death Positive Libraries, incorporating book collections with content aimed at removing the barriers to talking about death and dying and the launch of the book Positively Palliative, Stories of Care, Loss and Love a collection of personal stories and poems from various contributors expressing their journey of palliative care with their loved ones. National Empathy Day on 8 June, saw children encouraged to become "Empathy Superheros" with reading groups focusing on titles from the Empathy Lab curated booklists and a diverse range of storytelling, creative writing, empathy resolutions, empathy, altruism and volunteering workshops also delivered.

Rural communities remain a priority with services and access to library resources delivered to people living in rural areas through designated rural libraries, Out of Hours libraries, mobile and Homecall services.

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. There was an increased emphasis on online promotion with two new Podcast series delivered where reading groups in Northern Ireland were able to connect and meet with reading groups across the world including Woodstock Library in Belfast, England, upstate New York and Ontario, Canada. Reading Groups from Derry, Northern Ireland and Derry New Hampshire, USA also participated in Reading Across The Pond 2.

To Celebrate Books and Reading we delivered BookWeek NI with our partner BBC NI, featured on the BBC Radio 2 Zoe Ball show, participated in festivals and national initiatives, including AE Russell, Armagh and National Crime Reading Month. We delivered cross border book clubs with Cavan and Leitrim libraries and collaborated with the Crime Writers Association, the Education Authority and Queen's University Belfast.

The 2023 Big Summer Read children's challenge themed Ready Steady Read! delivered promotional resources for 20,000 children with 172,645 loans achieved during the reading challenge period. Other initiatives involved a celebration of Shakespeare Week in March and participation in the national BookTrust Storytime Prize with children voting for their favourite book to determine the nation's prizewinning title.

Heritage Week was celebrated in March with the headline online event Tales from the Townlands delivered by Dr Frances Kane and Professor Keith Lilley from Queen's University Belfast (QUB) and a workshop showcasing the Theatre Collection with an online and physical exhibition which was the outcome of research carried out by a QUB Internship. Falls Road Library hosted a placenames event by Dr Brian Devlin who gave a brief history of language on the island of Ireland while Lurgan Library hosted two events celebrating Ulster Scots music, a talk and a family heritage taster session.

Digital Choices and Digital Inclusion Activities

Over 800 Digital Inclusion Activities were offered through libraries, including during Get Online Week, launched by Dr Jayne Brady, Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, which saw 57 Go On IT events and courses delivered across the library network. The range of courses, programmes and activities included 1-2-1 eClinics, shopping online, scam awareness, using tablet devices such as iPads, and Safer Internet Day promoting safer online activity, scam awareness, privacy and safer shopping online. Libraries NI also worked with BT/EE to engage with customers to promote new digital technologies and provide information on the Landline Switch Off 2025. Further digital learning opportunities were provided as part of our programme to support the annual Belfast Festival of Learning with sessions including an author visit and two science workshops from the Royal Academy of Engineering.

Children and Young People

In December, following public and stakeholder engagement and with a focus on younger library customers and families, the Reimagined Children's Library at Whiterock was launched by the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People. The NICCY Exhibition 'For Every Child...Every Right' continues to tour libraries providing information and opportunity for young people to learn about their rights .

Combatting child poverty remains an important societal issue and Libraries NI continues to play its role by promoting free resources, support and activities for children, often in conjunction with partners such as Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council through initiatives like Community Planning.

Working with our charity partner Action Mental Health, on the theme My Voice Matters children were encouraged to share their thoughts and feelings with the aim of improving their mental wellbeing during Children's Mental Health Week in February. We promoted the Reading Agency Reading Well collections and Action Mental Health produced a series of infographics highlighting 5 Ways to Wellbeing for children and this was streamed on our social media platforms.

Diversity and Equality of Access

During 2023/24 Libraries NI worked with The Executive Office to plan and prepare for the implementation of new legislation which would deliver universal access to free period products through the library network. Refugee Week took place in a range of libraries in June 2023 with Compassion as its central theme. In September we celebrated the accreditation of Ormeau Road Library as our first Library of Sanctuary with a stakeholder launch featuring multi-cultural storytelling, partner information stands and the promotion of Libraries NI services and resources. Libraries NI participated for the first time in the Belfast Pride Parade with library services and information promoted via a mobile library float and a library membership stall at the Pride Village.

Libraries NI marked Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January 2024 and events this year included the launch of the Ambassadors for Peace Project, The Power of Words Exhibition and in addition libraries facilitated the Northern Ireland War Memorial Museum Holocaust themed reminiscence sessions.

Working in partnership with the Ulster Scots Agency and the Ulster Scots Community Network a series of 21 Ulster Scots Events were delivered in 16 libraries based around the Ulster Scots language, creative writing, genealogy and music. We hosted Seachtain na Gaeilge le Energia International Irish language Festival activities including workshops based on storytelling, basics of Irish Language, Irish place names and common words in a range of libraries.

The theme for Good Relations Week in September was 'Together' we can make a difference in breaking down barriers and building more inclusive communities. In partnership, Libraries NI delivered, hosted and facilitated more than 20 events including, Disability on the Record a PRONI exhibition, a reading by Canadian children's author Heather Bradley from her new picture book "We Both Speak English but...", the Carnegie UK Trust, Engaging Libraries project 'Turning Heads' exhibition, visits from local Syrian communities in partnership with Empowering Refugees and Newcomer Organisations and a coffee morning with the Link Family and Community Centre in Newtownards.

Engaging with Creativity and Creative Spaces

An art exhibition showcasing the work of service users from the Carlisle House Substance Use Treatment Centre and the Gray's Court Move-On Supported Living 'Hope' Project was launched in Belfast Central Library in February. An intergenerational, multi-cultural music and storytelling event featuring the African Drumming Circle and Storyteller in partnership with Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council was attended by over 30 people from a range of countries and backgrounds. A Lambeg Drum and Ulster Scots storytelling session was also delivered through the same partnership. Polish National Independence Day was celebrated in Bangor Carnegie Library while a number of creative workshops were delivered in the Omagh Library and surrounding area by local Libraries NI creative resident author and illustrator, Clive MacFarland.

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 and the impact of the cost of living crisis and addressing education inequalities and under achievement.

Positive Health and Wellbeing

On World Mental Health Day participants were invited to Go Purple with suggested activities that help support the importance of keeping minds active for good health and wellbeing. Between October 2023 and March 2024, as part of the Get Moving with Libraries NI wellbeing initiative 25 Yoga and Chi Me virtual events were delivered to over 600 participants. In February Libraries NI encouraged everyone to Give it a Go with a programme of online and in person events including line drawing and cookery demos designed to encourage and inspire people to try something new, acquire a new skill, be more active, read more, enhance overall health and wellbeing, expand knowledge or take up a hobby.

Libraries participated in the Brew Monday initiative in January 2024 which is supported by the Samaritans and promotes positive mental health by inviting people to come to the library for tea and a chat

- 3** Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2023-24 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 2023-24 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 adopted and mainstreamed an inclusive approach into our approach to service provision and delivery which ensures implementation of the Equality Scheme is incorporated into Corporate, Service and Branch Plans and features in Staff Appraisals.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2023-24 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

☒ Yes, organisation wide

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- ☐ 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 2023-24 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 2023-24 report
- ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Libraries NI is 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.

Equality action plans/measures

- 7 Within the 2023-24 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 2023/24. 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 2023-24 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

Not applicable

- 9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2023-24 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

While 2023/24 saw a return to a more normal, post-Covid operating environment significant new challenges emerged in the form of financial/economic pressures. This volatile business environment provided little opportunity to revisit and reinvigorate the equality action plan, as a consequence much of 2023/24 has been spent in

‘survival mode’ and it has very much been yet another year of consolidation 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 2023-24 reporting period

- 11** Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2023-24 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 2023-24 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

PART A

☐ 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 2023-24 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 2023-24 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not applicable – no commitment to review

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

[Libraries NI Policy Screening Outcome Reports](#)

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

11 (eleven)

- 16** Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2023-24:

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 2023-24 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 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes

☐ No

☒ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

No EQIA were undertaken during 2023-24

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 2023-24 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 2023-24 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

There were no changes 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:

While we had hoped 2023/24 and the passing of the Covid pandemic would have allowed a return to a more stable business environment the financial crisis which emerged in the NI public sector significantly impacted 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 2023-24, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

Although staff training provision was significantly constrained by the funding landscape and attendance at training events was impacted by industrial action, we endeavoured 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 include:

- 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 2023/24 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, Effective Time Management and Dealing with Difficult Situations.
- Staff were given the opportunity to attend a range of professional development workshops and conferences. These included: CILIP/LAI Joint Conference, Harkin Conference and CIPD NI Annual 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 LNI.

The following activities are worth highlighting in particular 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.
- Staff attended the Harkin International Disability Employment Summit for the 2-day event aimed at supporting and enabling persons with disabilities to achieve their career aspirations. The conference, in partnership with The Harkin Institute for Public Policy & Citizen Engagement and the Northern Ireland Department for Communities aimed to positively reframe the narrative on approaching, supporting, and enabling persons with disabilities to achieve their career goals and aspirations and bring together senior leaders to highlight and address disability issues and showcase employment best practice.
- 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 2023-24, 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 2023-24?

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 under review (mid 2024) with a view to completion of the review in early 2025 and to align an updated Scheme with the anticipated roll out of a refreshed Corporate Business 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 taking 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
- ☐ 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

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 ⁱ	Outcomes / Impact ⁱⁱ
National ⁱⁱⁱ	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Regional ^{iv}	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Local ^v	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

PART B

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

PART B

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 2023/24 a communication and advertising programme was delivered aimed at informing the public of the free and accessible services available through libraries. The programme emphasised the benefits of joining and using the library to inform and educate children, as a source of support during the cost of living crisis, a free access point to online eResources further raised awareness of public library services through informational advertising on radio and social media and a place of entertainment and relaxation. For example the 'Get the Library Habit' campaign was followed up by the 'Go Digital' campaign, which resulted in increased use of eResources.	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	2023/24 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 in particular those from DfC relating to benefits and the assistance available to help in addressing the cost of living pressures was significantly extended.	A greater number of people were able to access government assistance and support

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	Libraries NI remains committed to promoting positive attitudes and implements an inclusive approach to service provision.	Ormeau Road Library became the first accredited Library of Sanctuary encouraging and facilitating diversity and welcoming people from all cultural backgrounds. Libraries NI participated for the first time in the Belfast Pride Parade with library services and information promoted via a mobile library float and a library membership stall at the Pride Village	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	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.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

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	Raise awareness of specific barriers faced by people with disabilities including through linking in with National Awareness Days or Weeks (such as World Mental Health Day) 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.

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	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 access and used by all people	Limited financial resources limited ability to respond fully to needs.

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.

PART B

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 updating 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.
4	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
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 (October2024) we do not intend to make any further revisions to our Plan however continual review may result in changes being introduced at a later date.

PART B

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.