



**Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties
Annual Progress Report 2023-24**

This report presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties as per Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order 1995 (as amended). The report also provides an update and review of the implementation of our Equality Scheme commitments and Equality and Disability Action Plans 2017-2023.

This report reflects progress for the period: April 2023 and March 2024 and has been drafted using a template provided by the NI Equality Commission

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

[Publications | Belfast Health & Social Care Trust website \(hscni.net\)](#)

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Orla Barron'. The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned on a white rectangular background within a larger grey-bordered box.

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Introduction

This is the **17th Annual Progress Report** prepared by Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) for submission to the Equality Commission of Northern Ireland (ECNI). The report highlights compliance with the Trust's Equality Scheme including details on Screening and Equality Impact Assessments, Consultation, Training, Information Provision, Access, Monitoring and Complaints.

Part A of the report illustrates how the Trust has complied with its statutory responsibilities under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (S75 duties) and has three sections:

Section 1 highlights the range of corporate work undertaken to promote Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations. .

Section 2 is based on progress to date in regard to our Equality Action Plan (2018-2023).

Section 3 outlines the work that will be taken forward in regard to compliance with the Equality Scheme in the next reporting period

Part B of the report illustrates how the Trust has complied with its statutory responsibilities under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order 1995 (as amended) (Disability Duties).

Appendix 1 of the report provides a full progress update on our Equality Action Plan for 2023/24 and for ease of reference details achievements on both a regional and local level.

Appendix 2 of the report provides an update on our Disability Action Plan (2018-2023) and details achievements on both a regional and local level.

Internally, this 17th Annual Progress Report contributes to Trust accountability arrangements. It is an integral part of the Trust Integrated Governance and Assurance Framework for Trust Board and Executive Team members. The report not only identifies how legislative duties are complied with in relation to public sector equality, good relations and disability duties, but it also indicates how the Trust regularly goes beyond compliance to achieve best practice. Being Belfast, we are committed to delivering safe, effective and compassionate care by mainstreaming equality, good relations and disability considerations in all that we do and across all of our functions – service provision, employment and procurement.

This report was approved by Executive Team and Trust Board members on the 12th September 2024 and will be available on the Trust website.

Background

Who we are and what we do

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust is the largest integrated Trust in the United Kingdom. Employing more 20,000 staff it delivers health and social care to the population of Belfast, Castlereagh and across Northern Ireland through its regional service provision.

Figure1: BHSCT Organisational Structure

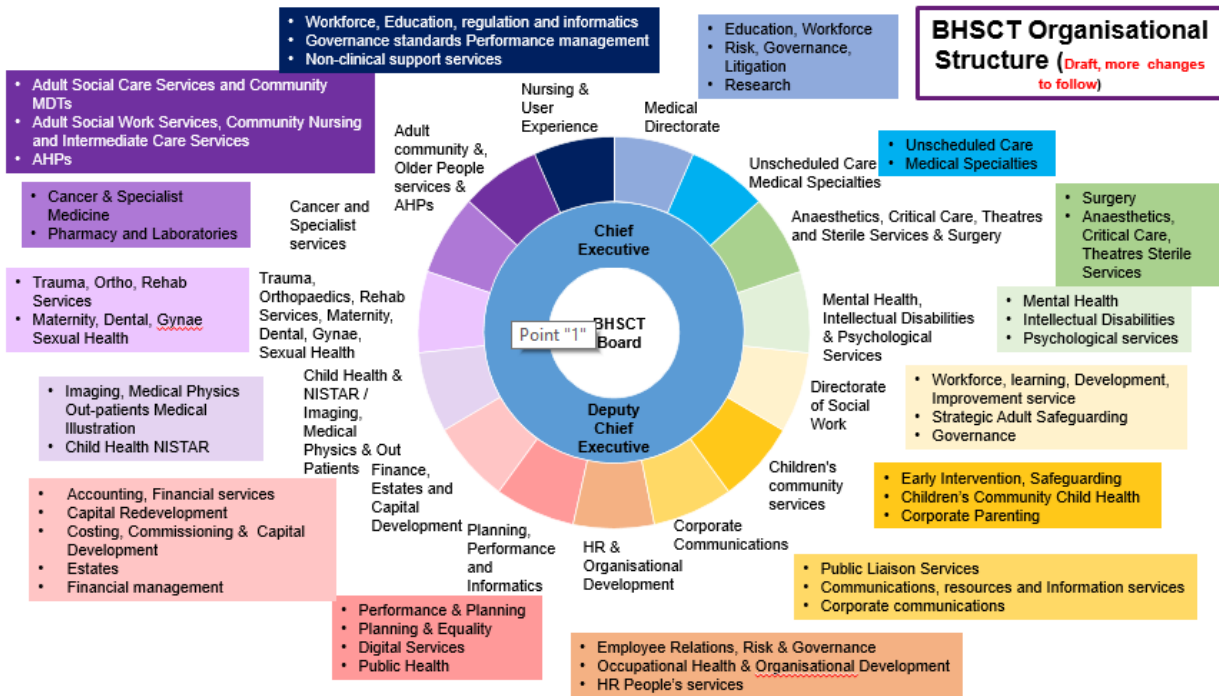
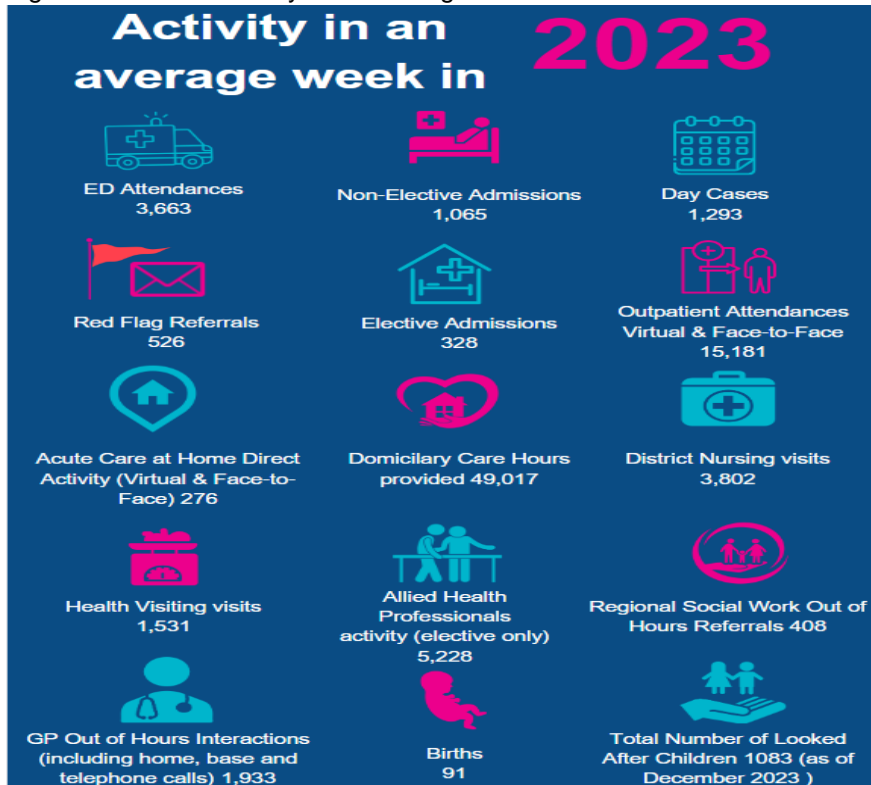


Figure 2: BHSCT Activity in an average week in 2023



Inequalities in Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust is one of five health and social care Trusts in Northern Ireland. We deliver health and social care to people in Belfast and Castlereagh and across Northern Ireland in terms of our regional services. Health and social inequalities persist in Northern Ireland. Using the expertise within the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA) Information Analysis Directorate (IAD) within the Department of Health (DoH) an annual health inequalities report is conducted to monitor and report on health experiences and outcomes. Findings from the [Health Inequalities Annual Report 2024 \(health-ni.gov.uk\)](https://health-ni.gov.uk) indicate that for the majority of health outcomes monitored Belfast Trust was worse than the NI average:

Figure 3: Health Outcomes Per Trust

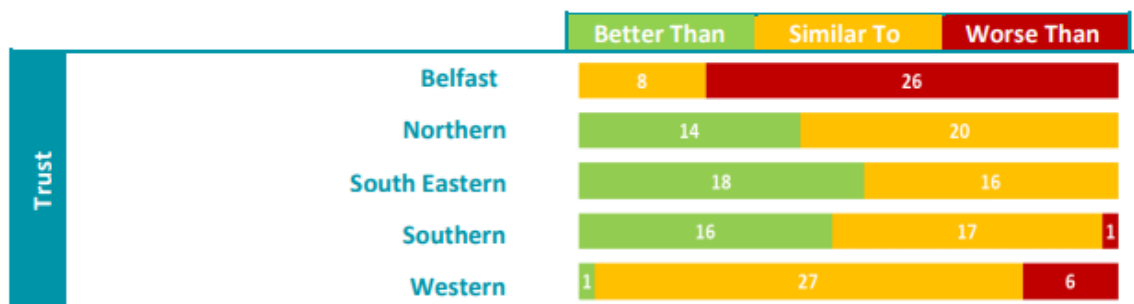
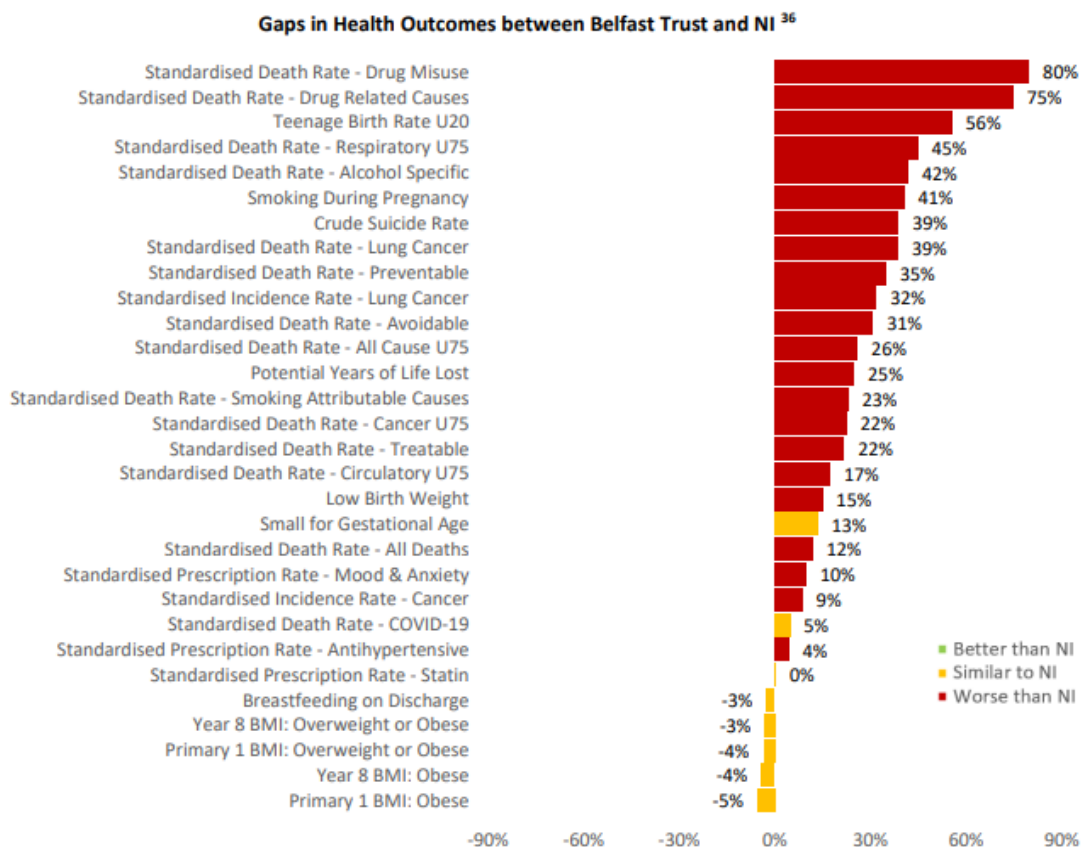


Figure 4: Gaps in Health Outcomes between BHSCT & NI



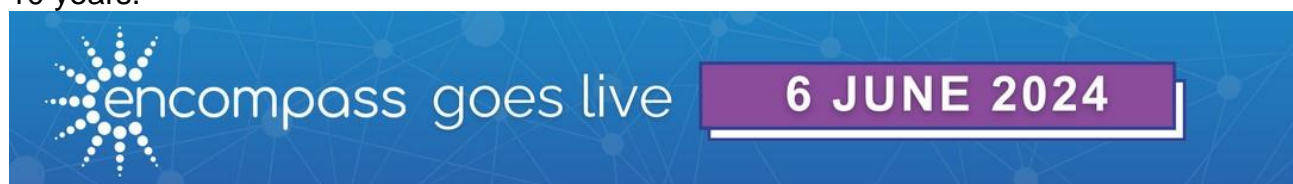
Of the 34 health outcome indicators analysed **for Belfast Trust residents**, 26 were worse than the NI average, eight were similar to the NI average, and none of the health outcomes analysed were better than the NI average.

Regionally, health inequalities persist. Of the 52 indicators analysed regionally, 35 indicators had inequality gaps that showed no notable change over the last five years. Over the same period, inequality gaps narrowed for eleven of the 52 indicators, including male and female, disability free, life expectancies, lung cancer, mortality, and breastfeeding on discharge. However, inequality gaps widened for six indicators, including preventable mortality, smoking attributable mortality and deaths due to drug misuse.

The current Minister for Health in NI (June 24) recently highlighted that applying modelling from England to Northern Ireland, it can be estimated that health inequalities cost Northern Ireland up to £1.7bn every year through such factors as health service costs, lost productivity, welfare costs etc.

Introduction of Digital Platform: Encompass

In this reporting period, 23/24, Belfast Trust has been preparing for the Trust-wide implementation of a NI regional Health and Social Care initiative to introduce a single digital platform across all HSC Trusts. The digital platform is called encompass and is being delivered by a multi-national company called Epic, following a competitive tendering process managed by the Department of Health NI. Total expenditure will be approximately £300m (the bulk of which is coming from DoH capital funding) over the course of the next 10 years.



Encompass replaces the many and often disjointed IT platforms that have existed across Belfast Trust and replaces more than 70 disparate IT systems and a reliance on paper records, and provides new functionality. The new system will be used by most of the 22,000 plus staff, who deliver care both locally and regionally across 10 Hospitals, 9 Health Centres, 23 Day centres, 7 Health & Well-being centres, 11 residential facilities, and 8 Supported Housing facilities.

Encompass is an important part of the transformation of the Health and Care sector in Northern Ireland. It is more than just an IT system – it is a clinical and operational change that will help our staff, to deliver the best services and care they can to people in Northern Ireland. It simplifies things, allows care workers to see the right information at the right time, eliminates cumbersome paper records, reduces duplication of tests and makes communication much more efficient between and within multi-disciplinary teams. It makes managing medicines easier for our pharmacists, and provides better quality data for improvement of our services in the future.

Implementation of the system has been subject to a detailed equality screening and extensive engagement with a range of Disabled People's groups and disabled people.

PART A: Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme

Section 1: Equality and Good Relations outcomes, impacts and good practice: Corporate work undertaken by BHSCT to promote and positively impact Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations.

*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.*

In 2023/24, responsibility for leading on the co-ordination and promotion of Trust statutory equality and good relations duties and the equality scheme remain with the Planning and Equality Team, located within the Planning, Performance and Informatics Directorate. This function is complemented by the work of the Trust Community Development and Workforce Equality Team.

The following key policy/initiatives occurred during the reporting period 23/24 and each promotes and positively impacts Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations.

Belfast Trust Corporate Plan: Belfast Plan 24+

Belfast Trust's Corporate Plan places equality of opportunity, good relations and enhanced participation at the heart of the Trust culture and operational activities

The Programme for Government (PfG) Framework sets out the major outcomes that the Northern Ireland Executive wants to achieve for the NI society. By setting clear priorities, the PfG Framework informs the targeting of funds across all sectors. Belfast Trust reflects these priorities (and outcomes) in our Corporate Plan.

Our Corporate Plan details the Trust vision, values, culture, priorities and its commitments to patients, service users and staff and these are cascaded to Directorate, Division and Service Areas. The priorities translated into local management plans and to individual team plans and individual staff development reviews. This means that every member of staff, at all levels, knows what the priorities are, what behaviour is expected and how everyone contributes to meeting Trust aims, objectives and outcomes including those directly and indirectly linked to Equality and Good Relations.

The current Corporate Plan was originally produced as a single year plan for 2020/21 to facilitate a Department of Health (DoH) commitment to align the corporate planning schedule with the Programme for Government. The 20/21 plan was then extended and amended for a further three years (21/22- 23/24) focusing on **our 6 key priorities** which include:

Figure 5: Key Priorities for BHSCT 2024+



For further context, the **DOH strategic objectives** for 23/24 included:

- Maximising what can be delivered from within resources available
- Delivering Systems Improvement - review, redesign & transformation of services
- Better understanding of our systems and our performance
- A Framework for 'Our People' –supporting, improving and empowering our staff through an improved wellbeing, leadership and skills framework
- Resilience – remaining agile and ready to deal with potential future events including pandemics or health security matters.
- Corporate Governance – ensuring that appropriate direction and control is exercised

A range of strategic drivers informs our strategic thinking in terms of setting our priorities, the decisions we make and our behaviour. These include (but are not limited to):

- Making Life Better
- Transforming Your Care
- Children's and Young People's Strategy
- Belfast Agenda
- Systems Not Structures
- Mental Health Strategy 2021-2031
- Power to People
- Caring Together in Belfast 2023 onwards | Belfast Health & Social Care Trust website (hscni.net)
- Digital Strategy - HSC Northern Ireland 2022 - 2030 | Department of Health (health-ni.gov.uk)
- Personal & Public Involvement (PPI) – Involving You, Improving Care (hscni.net)

In this reporting period, our Corporate Plan 'Belfast Plan 2024+' has been developed to replace the current corporate plan from April 2024. It has retained key service priorities and expanded these to provide more detail on what we will do. The Plan reiterates our

commitment to being a listening and learning organisation, which seeks to deliver excellence in safety and quality and reaffirms our commitment to our service users, carers and families and to our staff. The Belfast Plan 24+ will remain flexible in its timeframe in order to respond to DoH arrangements for the next Programme for Government.

The Plan has been developed following discussions with service users and carers, community and voluntary sector reps, across teams internally and with partners in primary care, the disability steering group and trades union colleagues.

A specific engagement event was convened to inform the new corporate plan and was attended by a range of community and voluntary sector organisations and individuals with an interest in developing the plan. This session was introduced by Mr Ciaran Mulgrew, the Chairman of the Trust and was facilitated by the Planning and Equality Team and Involvement Team.

Image 1: Corporate Plan 2024+ Engagement Event



A communications plan will ensure distribution and awareness to our partners across the community. Alternative versions will be available including Easy Read and ISL/BSL versions of the Easy read to meet the needs of the Deaf community (sign language).

Trust Governance and Assurance Framework: Quality Management System

The Trust Governance and Assurance Framework sets out the arrangements for integrated governance and details the organisational structure and accountability arrangements by which Trust Board's responsibilities are fulfilled.

In March 2023, all Divisions and Directorates were invited to develop local management plans for 2023-24 with a new template. Key to this new template was a new **Quality Management System**. To ensure the Right Care is delivered at the Right Time and in the Right Place, the Trust now measures and reports on achievements and progress against a number of key metrics within a Quality Management System (QMS). 6 key parameters including Equity were established within the QMS. The 6 parameters included (with examples):

- **Safety** e.g. Mortality data / SAls / HCAs / Safeguarding / Audit findings / Trust performance related to recognised service standards and specialty specific clinical indicators (with Trust data benchmarked against peer were relevant)
- **Experience** e.g. patient/service user and staff experience scores. This includes independently assessed real time feedback
- **Effectiveness** e.g. Population Health outcomes

- **Efficiency** e.g. Workforce indicators (sickness and absence), agency spend, vacancies, financial indicators, use of estate, Length of Stay
- **Timeliness** e.g. Access to services including waiting lists across services (hospital and community), response time
- **Equity** e.g. Trust progress on the N.I. Equality legislative requirements / Equality impact assessments on service change and development, Equity of service in unscheduled programs of care work.

The Quality Management System model ensures clear and robust accountability and assurance arrangements to deliver better outcomes for patients and service users. It provides consistency of approach across the Trust, reducing variability and better streamlining of how the Trust operates.

By making Equity a parameter of our Quality Management System not only are we visibly demonstrating our commitment to making equality considerations an integral part of decision making but also our accountability and governance systems. Operationally it means that equality considerations must form an integral part of all management plans across the Trust.

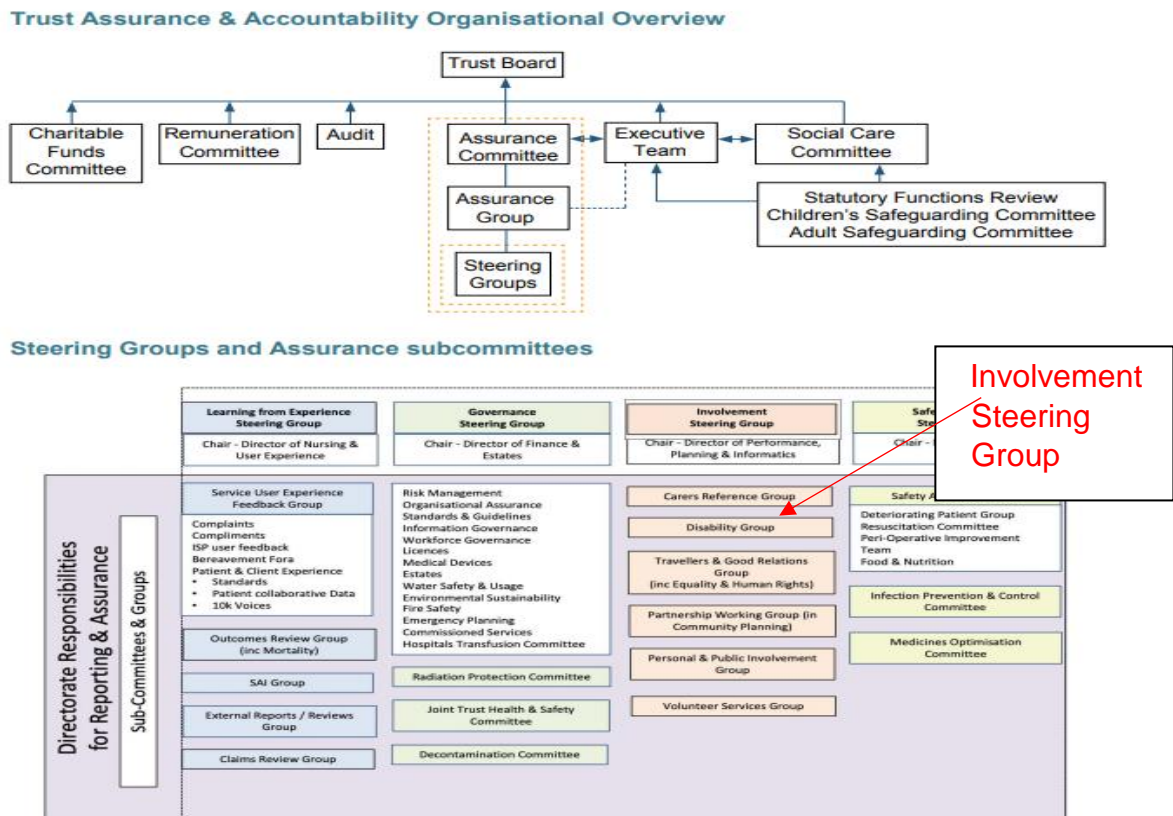
Trust Governance and Assurance Framework: [Involvement Steering Group](#)

Robust accountability structures within the Trust ensure that the work relating to the fulfilment of Section 75 duties and commitment and awareness of the duties is known across the Strategic Leadership Team in the Trust.

The Involvement Steering Group is part of the Trust Assurance and Accountability Framework which provides Strategic Leadership, holds to account, unblocks and assists with problem solving, seeks assurance, provides challenge and leadership and escalates risks to appropriate Trust Board Committees.

Quarterly reports from a range of committees including the **Disability, Carers, Volunteers, Involvement and Healthy Relations** Committees are provided to the Involvement Steering Group chaired by the Director of Planning, Performance and Informatics. The group includes service user and carer representation and a Non-Executive Director, who is the designated champion for Equality, Involvement and Carers at Trust Board.

Figure 6: Trust Assurance & Accountability Organisational Overview



This means that the Trust has established an oversight group for committees and work in regard to equality, disability, good relations, carers, community development, work with asylum seekers and refugees, and personal and public involvement activity.

The Involvement Steering Group's role is to provide assurance to the Trust Board around the Trust's activities in relation to engagement, partnership and equality of patients, clients, service users, carers and communities.

Trust Governance and Assurance Framework: Policy Standards & Guidelines

In terms of policy development, Belfast Trust has developed a range of assurances to ensure that leaders, policy makers and decision makers are aware of our Section 75 and wider equality duties. These assurances include:

- Policies considered and approved by Belfast Trust Policy Committee and Policy and External Guidance Assurance Committee (formally known as the Standards and Guidelines Committee) provided they have been subject to an equality screening.
- All equality screening templates require a tripartite signature by the policy lead, an equality manager and an employment equality manager as appropriate.
- All of our completed and approved equality screenings are uploaded quarterly and are available on the Trust website.
- Our Policy template and 'How to Write' a policy guidance are all available on the staff intranet 'The LOOP' contains explicit reference to the need for an equality screening.

Trust HSC Values & Being Belfast

Everything we do in the Belfast Trust is about people and for people.

Our **Trust Values** of Working Together, Excellence, Openness and Honesty, and Compassion underpin our commitment to provide safe, effective, compassionate and person-centred care.

Figure 7: HSC & Trust Values



To support this, we developed our 'People & Culture' priorities within our **Being Belfast** framework to show staff what it means to be a leader in Belfast Trust. The framework was developed following large-scale listening sessions with staff and means that all staff are accountable for ensuring that acceptable standards of care, delivery and practice are adhered to.

Figure 8: Leaders and Managers in the Belfast Trust: Being Belfast



As individuals, staff are accountable for their own behaviours; however, everyone has a role in ensuring that the Trust Values and **Code of Conduct for HSC Employees** are followed. Professional staff are also expected to follow the code of conduct for each of their own Professions.

The Code of Conduct for HSC Employees, identifies the values and core standards expected of all staff. It details a number of key principles that all staff must follow, alongside staff responsibilities when an individual staff member has concerns about improper conduct or poor standards. The principles expect all HSC employees to:

- Make the care and safety of patients and clients their first concern and act to protect them from risk
- Contribute to improving and protecting the health of the population as appropriate to their role

- Maintain confidentiality, respecting and protecting, at all times patients/clients, service users and their families' right to confidentiality, privacy and dignity
- Communicate openly and honestly to promote the health and well-being of patients/clients, service users and their families.
- Respect the public, patients, clients, relatives, carers, HSC employees and teams and partners in other agencies. Show commitment to working constructively as a team member by working collaboratively with all colleagues in the HSC and the wider community
- Be accountable and accept responsibility for their own work and be honest and act with integrity
- Share responsibility for their learning and development in order to improve the quality of care to patients/ clients/service users and their families.

○

Belfast Trust Board expects that all staff working within the Belfast Trust, familiarise themselves with this Code and crucially, if any staff member has a concern, that an acceptable standard of care or practice is not being adhered to, that they should always raise that concern.

Belfast Trust Disability Steering Committee

Image 2: Members of BHSCT Disability Steering Committee



Our Disability Committee has been in situ for over 15 years and continues to meet on a quarterly each year. The Group aims to provide strategic leadership and direction regarding the compliance of statutory requirements across employment, procurement and service delivery activities.

The group is co-chaired by the Trust's Equality and Corporate Planning Lead and the Chief Executive of Disability Action. Membership includes representatives from across the Trust, community/voluntary organisations that represent disabled people and people with disabilities. Key objectives of the group include:

- To ensure and promote commitment at a corporate and strategic level working in partnership and collaboratively with disabled people.

- In partnership, to provide leadership, direction and commitment in the development, implementation and evaluation of Trust’s Disability Action Plan.
- To provide the necessary support, resources and infrastructure to ensure an integrated and cohesive approach is undertaken in the development, promotion, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of a range of initiatives as set out in the Disability Action Plan.
- To equip staff with the relevant skills and knowledge to identify, remove or reduce barriers faced by people with disabilities in terms of accessing services / employment.
- Promote, support and encourage a human rights based approach to service delivery.

The agenda, set by members, have included in this reporting period items such as: an update/discussion on the EQIA consultation re implementation of the DOH decision to close Muckamore Abbey Hospital, notification of and discussion about the proposed reconfiguration of the GP Out of Hours (GPOOH) to one site and introduction of a skill mix. In addition, in the reporting period there was input on the new staff toolkit around accessible communication, the staff disability passport plus presentations regarding the work of Autism NI and Disability Action’s attendance at the UNCRPD Special Inquiry in Geneva in August 2023.

In addition, the group has been responsible for overseeing change and improvements in accessibility and experience for people with disabilities – patients, visitors and staff.

Good Relations

Our 3rd generation **Good Relations Strategy** [Healthy Relations for a Healthy Future 3](#) was launched, following extensive engagement and a public consultation. The strategy maps out a clear strategic direction for the Trust in regard to Good Relations. It is based on the three pillars of the regional co-designed **Good Relations Statement** of:

- Actively addressing and challenging racism and sectarianism
- Treating each other fairly, with respect and dignity
- Making sure our spaces are shared, welcoming and safe.

Figure 9: BHSCT/HSC Good Relations Statement



Implementation and monitoring of the strategy is undertaken by members of the Trust **Healthy Relations Committee**, which comprises representatives from Belfast Trust

Planning & Equality, Employment Equality, Community Development, Health Improvement and Chaplaincy teams with representatives from Trade Unions, BHSCT Ethnic Minority Steering Group and the Community Relations Council. The group meets 4 times per year.

The purpose of the Healthy Relations Steering Committee is to ensure a coordinated and proactive approach to meeting the health and wellbeing needs of BAME and Traveller communities in a culturally sensitive and accessible way and to provide oversight of the Trusts statutory Good Relations duty.

Image 3: Staff & Fane Street Choir at the Good Relations event September 2023



A number of achievements in 2023/2024 related to Good Relations include:

- Application to become **Trust of Sanctuary** completed
- Celebration of **Good Relations Week** achieved
- **Multi-faith Training** for staff produced
- Celebration of **Black History Month**
- **Cultural Competency Training** staff resource reviewed
- Guidance updated - re booklet on '**Access to HSC in NI**'
- **Faith, Spiritual & Cultural Handbook** for Staff updated
- **Race Equality Week** celebrated
- **International Nurses Day** celebrated
- **18th & 19th editions of the Good Relations Bulletin** produced and proactively disseminated to all staff and to 450+ organisations

Of particular note:

Our **Trust of Sanctuary** application is the first in UK. We are confident that with our proactive and far-reaching work around good relations and our commitment to offer compassionate health and social care to asylum seekers and refugees, that our application will be well received. If, and, when we are awarded this status we will celebrate it widely to staff and service user raise awareness.

Good Relations Week took place in September 2023 and the Trust was delighted to yet again celebrate Good Relations and promote the year's message of 'Together.....' The Trust's take on this was '**Better Together**' as this is very much aligned to our 'Being Belfast' vision, where every staff member is a leader and all staff are expected not only to

respect diversity but actively promote Good Relations when delivering safe, effective and compassionate services and in the workplace.

With this in mind, the Trust hosted an **event** to launch Good Relations Week on 18th September 2023, in partnership with The Executive Office (TEO) and the Community Relations Council, to showcasing our Good Relations work.

Every speaker highlighted how we work better when we come together and this in turn impacts positively on our services users, carers, staff and communities. There was also a children's choir from Fane Street School, Chinese dancers, our staff gallery which celebrated the diversity of our staff. A very powerful video involving consultant Dr Jeganathan was shared at the event: click [here](#) to watch the video

Image 3: Speakers at the BHSCT Good Relations Week event September 2023:

- Orla Barron, Trust Corporate Planning and Equality Lead
- Professor Martin Bradley, Non-Executive Director of Belfast Trust.
- Chris Gardner The Executive Office
- Kate Nicholl MLA

Other speakers included representatives from the Community Relations Council, Northern Ireland New Entrants Service, Action Mental Health, Lead Nurse for Safer Staffing and BHSCT staff Ethnic Minorities Network.



Image 4: Chinese dancers and Fane Street Primary School Choir (School of Sanctuary) at Good Relations Event during Good Relations Week 2023



To learn more about the action-packed event, please listen [here](#).

In the reporting period our Community Development Team undertook an extensive range of **work with Ethnic Minority Communities** as summarised below:

Services are commissioned with 4 organisations to ensure early intervention and support for **Traveller communities**. The organisations include:

- **Barnardos** are providing early years sessions to approximately **74** Traveller children and parents per month. Support includes early development, reaching of

developmental milestones and preparing for nursery and primary schools. In addition, innovative transition programmes have been designed to support Traveller children as they transition from primary to post primary education.

- **Extern** provide an assertive social work outreach service to Traveller families who are experiencing housing distress and are at risk of homelessness or living in hostels.
- **The HEART Project Healthy Living Centre** provides a service on behalf of three Healthy Living Centres in North and West Belfast and supports people from the Traveller communities to access services in those healthy living centres e.g. Travellers are now attending the GP Health Wise Scheme and the West Belfast Health and wellbeing project. The project provides significant support to Travellers to access other health and social care services including registration with GPs. During this year, a project has commenced to work with women and teenagers.
- **Community Restorative Justice:** Conflict resolution services were prioritised using a multi-agency approach. Individual personal development programmes have been delivered with particular reference to coping mechanisms, anger management and drugs and alcohol. During this period, a pilot was undertaken to work with families who have been affected by drug misuse.

The Trust continues to operate a **Refugee Resettlement Scheme** for Afghan families which includes GP registration, referral to child health services and the Northern Ireland New Entrants Scheme (NINES), advice and signposting. In previous years the Trust has led the Schemes for the resettlement of Syrian and Ukrainian families.

The Trust works closely with the Department of Health and has been funded to implement a Community Inclusion Project which will support the integration of people who are seeking international protection.

Language barriers remain a key issue when accessing Health and Social Care. The Trust has clear communication guidance and toolkit in place for staff in relation to interpreting and translation services. Alongside this, the Trust received funding to pilot handheld translation devices for unscheduled care or emergency situations. Funding was awarded from the Department of Health to pilot the devices in 2024/25.

New Equality and Disability Action Plans (2024-2029)

Following a significant programme of work (including a 16 week public consultation), the 6 HSC Trusts drafted Equality and Disability Action Plans for the period 2024/2029. These plans were approved at Trust Board level within Belfast Trust.

As with previous plans, the 6 HSC Trusts worked collaboratively to draft the plans and will work efficiently to implement the plans. The aim of this collaboratively approach is to ensure consistency of approach, sharing of best practice/experiences across the region and to avoid duplication of work.

Our 2024 – 2029 Equality Action Plan contains a total of 30 actions whilst there are 22 actions in our Disability Action Plan. Our Equality Action Plan has been structured across four themes namely:

- Improving the data we use to support decision-making
- Addressing barriers to accessing health and social care

- Supporting our staff
- Supporting informal/family carers

The Disability Action Plan is framed around the two Disability Public Sector Duties namely:

- Actions to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Actions to encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

The Equality & Disability Action Plans have been transcribed into easy read format to ensure maximum accessibility and are located on the Trust website and staff intranet.

Figure 10: Front Covers: EAP/DAP plus Consultation Feedback Report inc Easy Read Versions



Every Customer Counts Campaign Extends

Belfast Trust is a signatory of the NI Equality Commission’s ‘Every Customer Counts’ campaign. Using this framework, the Trust has undertaken a number of projects aimed at improving the accessibility of services, buildings and facilities for anyone who is disabled whether a visitor, carer, patient or service user.

Initially, a working group of staff, service users and carers was established to consider improving access at the **Eye Outpatient Diagnostic Unit (EODU)** in the RVH. An Access Audit identified some barriers from a patient perspective and benchmarking commenced. Significant changes were initiated including the Sighted Guide Scheme, a walk through video, an online map, improved signage and new seating. This continues to be work in progress.



Staff at the **Regional Fertility Clinic** also used the 'Every Customer Counts' framework to review the accessibility of its communication following feedback from a patient with dyslexia around the issue of consent. A patient survey was carried out asking about the accessibility of patient literature and seeking views on how it could be improved. In addition, 'mystery shopping' was carried out including by an advocate of the British Deaf Association. From the 100 questionnaires completed, a number of issues and recommendations identified. Disability Awareness training was delivered, physical access was improved, a more proactive explicit approach to facilitate patients requesting reasonable adjustments was introduced and the patient protocol was amended to embed the need to ask about reasonable adjustments.

The following feedback was provided by a patient on Care Opinion, which illustrates the value of the 'Every Customer Counts' initiative:

"Great idea. I came across an excellent and really helpful video on-line showing how to get from the RVH main entrance up to the EODU reception.

It is a good distance and requires using 2 different elevators (if you are able to, stairs are available) and of course long corridors with lots of signposts to the various departments. So having this video will help get you to the correct area quickly and allow you to proceed straight to the reception without having to keep checking all the various signs etc. along those long corridors."

Going forward, a number of other services have voiced interest in adopting the 'Every Customer Counts' framework including the GUM Clinic and the Complaints Department.

Shopmobility & Sighted Guide Services @RVH



Our Shopmobility and the Sighted Guide services are available to anyone who requires support to access buildings/services on the large RVH site. Both services are now located within the main foyer of the RVH and continue to grow in demand.

In partnership with Shopmobility Belfast electric scooters and manual wheelchairs are provided free of charge to any service user, patient or visitor who requires it. This gives many disabled people independence when getting to an appointment, visiting a loved one or when being admitted or discharged. The contract is reviewed annually to ensure value for money and impact. A steering group exists to oversee and promote the project.

A Sighted Guide Service at the RVH is a tangible demonstration of Belfast Trust's continued commitment to deliver accessible services to disabled people. More than 30 Trust staff were trained by the sensory support team to 'meet and greet' anyone with a visual impairment to support them to get around the large complex RVH site.

Feedback from those that have used the services includes:

- Excellent service. Very friendly and helpful. I could not have attended my appointment without this service. It is too far for me to walk
- Very good service. Helpful to go to see my son.
- Excellent service. Very efficient & friendly service. Made it comfortable to attend appt.
- The help I received was great and friendly. I have mobility problems and without help wouldn't have been able to reach the department I had to get to.

Improved Navigation @ RVH via AccessAble Project



Funding was secured through the Trust Charitable Funds income stream to finance a significant [AccessAble](#) project on the RVH site. Almost £50k was allocated to fund access auditors to visit public facing buildings and services on the RVH site to produce approximately 150 digital access guides in order to improve wayfinding across this busy, complex acute site.

The guides will be available to members of the public via Belfast Trust website and AccessAble website [Home | AccessAble](#) and will support disabled people to access and navigate the site as a service user, patient or visitor to the RVH. The guides provide factual information and photographs of car parking arrangements, accessible toilet facilities, loop systems etc. and is available in alternative formats such as Easy Read.

In addition to the guides best practice guides and a low cost improvement matrix and RAG status matrix have been produced to assist our Estates and Capital Development Teams in terms of capital projects and AccessAble@RVH is live from June 2024 and will be officially launched and celebrated in December 2024 during International Day for Disabled People.

Accessible and Inclusive Communications Toolkit for Staff



An online [Accessible and Inclusive Communication Toolkit for Staff](#) was co-designed to support staff with ensuring how they communicate with patients, service users and carers in an accessible and inclusive way. The toolkit was drafted designed and produced in partnership with the Trust Disability Steering Group, Staff, Speech & Language Therapists, the Mae Murray Foundation and Occupational Health colleagues. The toolkit was shared extensively with staff

Read&Write Software Support for Staff

The Trust is the only health Trust in NI to have a license for Read&Write Assistive Technology software. The software is available to all staff, Trust wide without the need for disclosure of a disability. It is particularly supportive of staff who have difficulties with reading and writing online e.g. neurodiverse staff, staff with a visual impairment, staff whose first language is not English and staff with anxiety. In addition, it is available to families of staff. 500+ staff have accessed the software. It is recommended by Occupational Health colleagues, part of the staff B-Well support hub and promoted by the Social Workers learning and development team particularly for new social workers who use the software in University.

Investment in this software underpins our commitment to provide reasonable adjustments and equity of access for our staff. The software is easily and freely available to all our staff and has proved invaluable in the timely reduction of barriers to online communication. An online [Read&Write Staff Guidance](#) has been designed to help staff access the software and to optimise use of the software.

Trust Domestic & Sexual Abuse/Violence Supports for Staff

With over 22,000 staff and a growing number of domestic and sexual abuse/violence incidents in NI including death, Belfast Trust has in place an extensive range of activities (noted below) to directly and indirectly support staff who may be experiencing domestic and/or sexual abuse/violence. Regrettably Northern Ireland has the highest rate of domestic homicides across all of Europe.

Belfast Trust has worked in partnership with Trade Unions to offer a **support service for staff** who are experiencing domestic and sexual abuse and/or violence. The confidential support service (accessed via a dedicated email/phone number) involves volunteers (both male and female) from across the Trust completing a training programme involving a range of organisations including Women’s Aid, The Rainbow Project and Nexus, to provide emotional support, practical help and to signpost to other sources of help internally (HR) and externally (Women’s Aid One Stop Shop & 24 Hour Helpline).

A **Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Support Toolkit** resource has been co-produced by the Planning and Equality team and Employment Equality colleagues in partnership with the Belfast Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategic Partnership providing input. A HPMa winner, judges noted that the toolkit is

“A truly impressive project with far reaching consequences and benefit for transforming the lives of staff.”

Staff are also supported via our **Domestic and Sexual Abuse Policy**.

To promote the Domestic & Sexual Abuse Support Service, the Planning & Equality team produce **15,000 branded Annual Calendars each year**. These are distributed widely across the organisation.

In addition, each year we organise a **Christmas Appeal** for Belfast and Lisburn Women’s Aid and the Welcome Organisation.

Image 5: Christmas 23 Appeal



Figure 11: 2024 Calendar



Each year staff continue to show unbelievable generosity with their contributions with a huge volume of toys, clothes, toiletries and vouchers and financial donations collected. The Chief Executive and Finance Officer from Belfast and Lisburn Women’s Aid, Kelly Andrews and Liz Johnston and Kieran Hughes from the Welcome Organisation came to the Trust to receive the donations Kelly said, “Thank you so much the generous donations,

my staff have noted the high quality of gifts that were donated. Most have already been distributed Please pass on my thanks to the wider staff teams.”

Sign language Support & User Forum

From 1 April 2023 a new service was commissioned by SPPG to provide a regional communication support for people who are Deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing. **Sign Language Interactions (SLI)** provided a full range of communication supports including: Face to Face Sign Language Interpreting and Remote Sign Language Interpreting.

In November 2023, the Trust held a workshop to hear about the experience of deaf people when using Trust services and access to interpretation services. A number of areas for action were identified which have been taken forward including working with the IT Department to ensure that users could access the interpreting services provided by Sign Language Interactions more easily via their own mobile devices.

A key outcome from this workshop was to increase staff knowledge about how to book both face to face and remote interpreters and to avoid connectivity issues. Working with identified services across the Trust, a poster was designed for staff with helpful hints and reminders plus a new QR code was created. 500 posters were distributed Trust-wide across both acute and community services and online.

Figure 12: Poster to help staff book a Sign Language Interpreter

BOOKING A SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER

Staff Notice

A Sign Language Interpreter **must** be organised by Trust staff for any Deaf service user, patient or carer that uses British or Irish Sign Language. This is a **legal duty**.
 Using an interpreter assists with **informed consent, privacy** and reducing **missed appointments**. Please **do not** ask family or friends to interpret.
 Registered Interpreters can be booked to interpret face-to-face or remote/online.

<h4 style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Face-to-Face Interpreter</h4>  <p>This means the interpreter attends the appointment to support better communication. Such Interpreters should be used if preferred & for complex/difficult clinical conversations. To Book:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Telephone: 0333 344 7712 (available 24/7) ✓ E-mail: bookingsni@signlanguageinteractions.com ✓ Web: signlanguageinteractions.com/hscni <p>Remember!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Pre-book an interpreter, as early as possible, as there are a limited numbers available. ✓ Tell the Deaf person that an interpreter has been booked. ✓ To avoid costs always cancel a booking if not needed. ✓ To contact a Deaf person either text, email or phone 0333 344 6012 (BSL user) 0333 305 1143 (ISL user) 	<h4 style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Online/Remote Interpreter</h4>  <p>This means the interpreter is online or on the telephone and is only used if face-to-face is not possible. To Access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Log into the 'HSC_Guest' Wi-Fi & accept the T&Cs ✓ Scan the QR Code below & select either British or Irish Sign Language <p>Remember!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Close all other websites /apps on your device. ✓ If connection is poor, turn off & retry! ✓ Limit movement as this can upset connectivity. ✓ Make sure your device has a camera and a microphone <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Scan here to access a virtual interpreter</p>   </div>
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Belfast Trust in partnership with the British Deaf Association and members of the Deaf Community have established a **Sign Language User Forum**. The aim of the Forum is to ensure that the lived experience of the Deaf community, using Belfast Trust services, impacts change and improvement. For e.g.

- Emergency Department communication for Deaf community in RVH
- Input to disability strategy
- Input to work within the Fertility clinic
- Assisting Care Opinion to make their service accessible

Making Communication more Accessible

Mindful of our disability equality duties, Belfast Trust led on the drafting, review and production of the regional staff resource [Making Communications Accessible: A Guide for HSC Staff](#).

In addition the Trust now provides **Plain English Training** for staff. During 23/24 we ran 5 training courses and 59 people attended. The Trust has a **Reader Panel** which brings together service users and carers to help Trust services deliver clear and more accessible health literature to patients and staff. In addition, staff now have access to an Easy Read - Page Tiger Resource [Click Here](#) produced by Speech and Language Therapists. The Trust are also represented on the regional Health Literacy Forum.

Examples of work undertaken by the reader panel include:

Service-area	Topic
Breast-Screening	Patient-information-leaflet
Paediatric-dentistry-and-orthodontics	Patient-information-leaflet
IMC-Community-Discharge-Service	Patient-information-leaflet
Acquired-Brain-Injury-Services	Patient-information-leaflet
Carers-Service	Carers-Strategy
Falls-team	Booklet
Frailty-Assessment-Unit-(MPH)	Patient-information-leaflets
Planning-and-Equality	Disability-Committee-Terms-of-reference

TILII Translates: Easy Read Service



The Trust has an annual contract with TILII Translates as part of its range of Day Opportunities for people with a learning disability. **TILII Translates is** an easy read translation service involving an advocacy group of men and women with a learning disability.

Through this translation service, TILII Translates have been translating information for Belfast Trust into easy-to-understand formats so that people with a learning disability

understand difficult information, make informed choices and are more independent in terms of health care.

The key to easy reads is the use of simple words, avoiding jargon, using short sentences to explain key messages and pictures to help explain what is being said.

The team of experts by experience find that not only is their translated information used by people with a learning disability but also is popular with people who find reading and writing difficult or do not speak English as their first language!

As Michael from TILII Translates said: "I can't read, so don't give me words...help me with pictures, it's not rocket science"

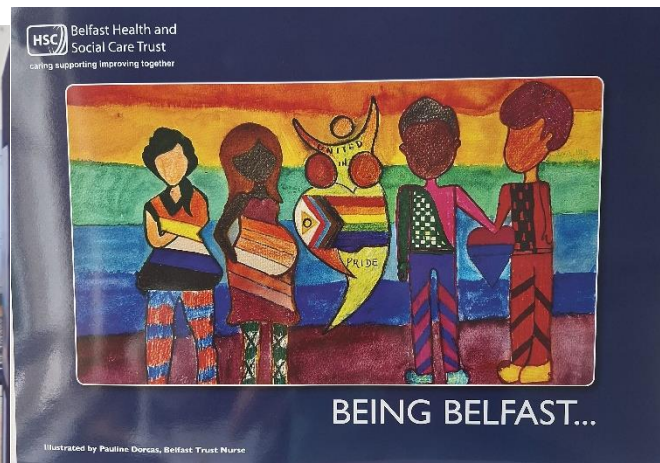
Celebrating Pride 2023

As a Health and Social Care provider and employer, the Trust is committed to ensuring



that its services, facilities and workplace are inclusive and welcoming to everyone equally regardless of who they are or who they love.

We were delighted to once again be visible about celebrating Pride week in Belfast in 2023. It was a busy but enjoyable week as we organised a range of diverse activities to mark this significant event in our calendar. These included a series of **Lunchtime walks entitled Stride for Pride. An Art competition** for staff on what **United in Pride** meant to them was judged by the Trust Chairman, the Arts in Health Coordinator and Fidelma Carolan, an LGBT champion. The winning entry was then printed on posters and is displayed widely across the Trust.



The Trust also partook in the **Belfast Pride parade** and a stand in the **Belfast Pride village**. We also offered staff **rainbow lanyards** to wear that week to show their support for Belfast Pride.



Belfast Trust Support for Carers

The **Carers Strategy Committee** works to support and guide the work with Carers across the Trust. The Group is made up of Trust Directorate representatives. The Carer Support Service works in partnership with Service Areas across the Trust to implement the carer strategy and a range of carer supports.

A **Carers Network** was established in 2022 to work in partnership with the Trust to identify carer priorities and co-produce the Carer Strategy. Over 20 carers are active members of the Carer Network who meet regularly either on-line or face to face to advance this work.

Working with the Trust, the Carer Network identified four priorities and associated actions. These are:

- Reach all carers
- Navigate carer support
- Support carer health and wellbeing
- Actively connect and involve carers.

The **Carer Strategy** 'Caring Together in Belfast 2023 onwards' was presented to the Carer Strategy Committee in April 2023 and Trust Board in June. The draft strategy was then launched during Carers Week for a 12-week consultation period. During the consultation period Belfast Trust hosted a variety of engagement activities / events including:

- Draft Strategy launch
- 2 face to face community based events
- 2 on-line events
- Focus group with Deaf carers
- On-line questionnaire through Citizen Space
- Posted 1000 newsletters to carers promoting their opportunity to give feedback
- Promoted the consultation through our Carer Information list which has over 3,600 Carers on it

Over 250 responses were received with an overwhelming positive response to the four priorities.

Carers Week is the annual week during which the vital role that Carers play in our society is recognised. During the week, the Trust Carers Support Service hosted 16 events and activities for carers. We worked with a range of partners to provide a wide variety of support activities including health and wellbeing events such as yoga, tai chi, set dancing and a Bog Meadows walk. The programme of events helps to raise awareness about carer information and supports available. During the week, there were **196 attendances and 603 short break hours** delivered. A third of carers who provided feedback had never attended an event prior to carer's week.

Quotes from carers who took part in activities during the week included:

'I feel seen, understood, less isolated'. 'We all came home elated and exhilarated'.

Work also continues to support **Trust staff who have a caring responsibility** and monthly HR 'Let's Talk Carers' sessions continue to promote carer supports available.

During the Trust Summer / Autumn a **Carer Newsletter** was posted to **1,000 carers** on the Information List and widely distributed to Trust services including Day Centres.

Carer grants or one-off payments continue to be awarded as a support for carers. From April – September 2023, a total of **1468** grants were awarded, totalling **£244,136** and **66** Young Carers grants totalling **£7,750**.

Figure 12: Trust Carer Newsletter & Strategy



The Trust continues to offer a **Carer Counselling service** which is delivered by Lifeline and referrals continue to be raised for this emotional support service. From April to June 23, **25** carers were referred to the service with **92** counselling sessions delivered to carers.

Personal and Public Involvement (PPI) - Involving People in our Services

Belfast Trust has a Statutory Duty to involve and consult in the design, delivery and planning of services which can mean any activity along a continuum from informing and educating to engaging and consulting, co-design and co-production. The Trust Involvement and Community Development Team works to implement the 'Involving You' Strategy to promote and support this work across the Trust.

The Trust undertakes bi-annual PPI Monitoring which seeks to collate all involvement activity being undertaken across service areas. This is then shared with the PHA as part of our assurance and governance processes.

- From April – September 2023 there were **94** Involvement activities reported
- From October 23 to March 24 there were **70** involvement activities reported
- Between April 2023 – March 2024 there were **17,130** occurrences at an involvement activity and details of who those people are is noted in the table below:

Number of Public	Number of Service Users	Number of staff	Number of Carers	Total number
1906	3424	1618	4522	11470
778	1901	2107	874	5660
2684	2684	3725	5396	17130

A **Trust Involvement network** exists and includes individual service users and carers, community and voluntary organisations and Trust staff. Work is ongoing to increase reach and awareness throughout the Trust staff base and the wider community.

The 10th and 11th editions of the **Involvement Newsletter** were published and circulated in June and December 2023. The Newsletter is circulated to all members of the Involvement network who signed up to receive it. [Involvement Newsletter Issue 10](#). [Involvement Newsletter Issue 11](#).

Figure 13: Involvement Newsletter Issue 10 & 11



To support staff to access **PPI tools, guides and 2 information booklets** are now available on the staff intranet – the LOOP.

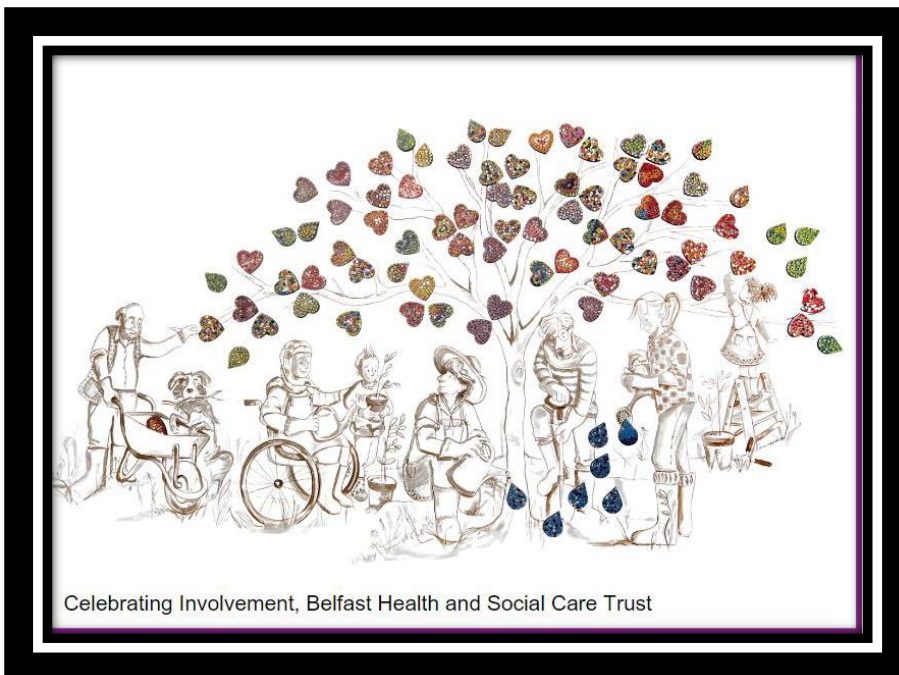
A **Trust Involvement network** exists and includes individual service users and carers, community and voluntary organisations and Trust staff. Work is ongoing to increase reach and awareness throughout the Trust staff base and the wider community.

In June 2023, the Involvement Team hosted an event to celebrate Involvement across the Trust. This was held in Belfast City Hall and 15 Teams were in attendance which brought together staff, service users and carers. At the event, the Trust Artist in Residence, led a piece of work to enable participants to create individual mosaics. The individual mosaic's will form part of an artwork which will be created and displayed on a Trust site to celebrate and recognise involvement.

Figure 14: Involvement Celebration Event @ Belfast City Hall



The Involvement Team support the Learning Disability Community Forum, which brings together people with a Learning Disability and carers. The Forum has developed a **Future Home Guide Accommodation booklet** for adults with learning disability which has been up-dated. Easy read versions have been produced by TILII. A Learning Disability Newsletter was circulated in January 2024.



Joint HSC Forum on Equality, Human Rights and Good Relations

The Joint Forum comprising the Equality Leads from each of the 6 HSC Trusts and the Department of Health continued to meet with representatives from the Equality Commission, the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, and the Community Relations Council.

The purpose of it is to provide a regular forum to enhance communication and collaboration between Health and Social Care and the respective Commissions and Council to our mutual benefit and to better optimise outcomes for people covered by the relevant legislation.

During this reporting period, the Forum has met on 2 different occasions. The role of chairing and hosting is rotated across all the member organisations to share ownership and mutual benefit to all concerned. The host organisation invites a senior representative to come along and listen to the collaborative work and to, in turn, articulate the corporate commitment to equality, good relations and human rights. Belfast Trust hosted the forum meeting in September 2023 and Northern Trust hosted the forum meeting in February 2024, with respective Trust Chairs in attendance. Topics covered Good Relations week plans, Budgets, Period Poverty, updating on consultation on the regional Disability Action plan and Equality Action plan, the consultation on the draft EQIA on the implementation of the DOH decision to close Muckamore, as well as the new digital HSC record encompass and the new staff information system Equip.

Figure 15: Members of the Joint HSC Equality & Human Rights Forum with Patrice Hardy (Equality Commission NI) and BHSCT Chairman Ciaran Mulgrew



Highly immersive virtual learning environment opens in Children's Hospital

The Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children opened a new 'virtual learning suite' to help staff work with children who have complex medical needs.

B-Hive (Belfast Highly Immersive Virtual Environment) is an immersive simulation pod to be used as a virtual learning environment. It is the first immersive learning environment to be installed in a healthcare suite or facility in Northern Ireland.

The new simulation pod will be used for staff and student training, patient and parent involvement, simulation based education and technology enhanced educational research.

Simulation Education Fellow, Kate Mullan said:

“This new space will also be used by hospital teachers, Health Play Specialists, social workers and others to work alongside families and patients. We know that a hospital stay can be stressful, so it is fantastic that this suite can be used as a sensory room that will provide fun, stimulation and relaxation for children.

Not only will we be able to train our current and future healthcare professionals in a safe, immersive environment, we hope to provide a sanctuary for our patients and families in the years ahead.”



Supporting Staff: The Belfast Way

bwell ... u matter

Employment Equality & Improving Working Lives Resources

Contact the Equality Team [↻](#)

Contact the IWL team [↻](#)

BELFAST TRUST
ETHNIC MINORITIES STAFF NETWORK

HSC
HSC Rainbow Badges

Learn **HSC NI**

VIRTUAL MARKETPLACE

Click here to access training catalogue

Improving Working Lives
028 9615 9615

Domestic Violence Toolkit

Your Equality Data

Supporting Employee Wellbeing

WELCOME TO BELFAST HSC TRUST

International Nursing

Staff in the Employment Equality and the Improving Working Lives teams within our Human Resources and Organisational Development Directorate work with staff and managers to promote equality of opportunity and inclusion, to tackle inequality and prevent discrimination and harassment.

The team achieve this not only by giving advice, signposting and training but also through an extensive range of online and in person resources, initiatives and projects that have been developed with staff, trade unions and colleagues across the Region. An integral part of this work is supporting staff to achieve a balanced work/home life and the promotion of good health and wellbeing. We have developed a comprehensive range of support resources to raise and increase awareness of options available and can provide bespoke training to teams.

A page tiger resource was created to inform staff about support staff can access to improve their Working Life and to improve their Wellbeing: [Improving Working Lives Staff Support](#) [Supporting Employee Wellbeing Staff Resource](#).



Staff support groups include:

- **Ethnic Minorities Staff Network**
- **LGBTQ+ HSC Forum**
- **THRIVE forum** (for internationally recruited staff)

Ability Passport Introduced

The Trust has developed an Ability Passport, which is a document that an employee with a disability may choose to complete with their line manager. This means that everyone is clear about what adjustments have been agreed, provides a basis for review and means that when moving jobs within the Trust, the record can be used.

Ongoing support for Working Parents

Belfast Trust works in partnership with **Parenting NI** to provide invaluable information for parents and carers on a range of topics from school and education, early years development, supporting teens, health and childcare.

Support for our staff as Carers

The Trust recognises the challenges that our staff experience as they combine their employment with caring commitments. We have a wide range of support resources available for carers and this is available on our [bWell Website](#). As part of our Carers Framework, the Trust provides monthly, virtual sessions on a range of topics for staff as carers and these are popular and well attended. Recent sessions included, Supporting Young Carers, Financial Wellbeing, Health Improvement, Caring for a Child or Young Person with Autism, Understanding Dementia



2023 Summer Childcare Scheme

In 2023, over 6 weeks in the summer **400 children** attended our Summer Scheme. The scheme is run across four locations: Victoria College (off the Lisburn road); Fullerton House (opposite the Belfast City Hospital); Downey House (off the Ravenhill Road) and St Joseph's Primary School (Slate Street - close to Royal Victoria Hospital site)

B-Well Belfast / Here 4 U Support Service for Staff

Belfast Trust has a [B Well Belfast](#) programme which delivers popular and free sessions and activities through the Here 4 U support service to improve staff health and well-being. Everything from Yoga, Pilates, Gel Print Workshops, Men's Health sessions, Healthy Eating programmes, Smoking Cessation support and Active Travel Challenges is available.

Supporting International Nurses: Recruitment & Integration

Due to the nursing vacancies in Northern Ireland, we continue to recruit international nurses through our regional project. HR & Nursing colleagues continue to work to facilitate the safe arrival of nurses, to support them in their orientation to the Trust and to the City of Belfast. We have developed bespoke induction, a **THRIVE forum** and a virtual resource for staff and managers.

NI Professional and Education Council (NIPEC) Project Board

HR, Allied Health Professional and Nursing colleagues are working collaboratively with NIPEC as part of a regional ethnic diversity partnership group to support the progression of equal access to education and leadership opportunities for all.

Supporting New Staff via 'On Boarding' Induction and Virtual Marketplace

All new staff (with the exception of Doctors in training) are invited to complete a **Digital Welcome Pack**. The Welcome Pack is designed to give new staff an insight into our culture, values and how we operate. It also ensures that all new staff have the core awareness necessary to keep them safe and support available before starting their new role. Every new Trust staff member must complete the introductory pieces of **Statutory Mandatory Training** in the Welcome Pack which includes the mandatory equality, good relations and human rights training. HR are currently developing single sign-on arrangements that include pre-boarding, on-boarding and completion of statutory mandatory training and we anticipate an in-person marketplace event in early Autumn. At this event, HR will highlight the various EDI initiatives, support groups and resources available, e.g. HSC LGBTQ+ Forum, Carers Forum, THRIVE etc.

Supporting our Ageing Workforce

The Trust provides a range of support for our ageing workforce including support for staff as **Carers**. We also work in partnership with external organisations to provide awareness sessions for carers on a range of issues such dementia, mental health etc.

Regular **pensions awareness sessions** are co-delivered with the Leadership Centre & HSC Pensions throughout the year – the sessions are specifically for our ageing workforce and those who are nearing retirement age to increase awareness and signpost to sources of support.

Each month, the Trust co-delivers, in partnership with Ulster University, a range of **lunch and learn sessions** that cover a range of topics include menopause and mood, menopause and diet.

Disclosure of Staff Equality Data Promoted



We continue to encourage our staff to ensure their Section 75 Equality Monitoring Information is up to-date. A user friendly guide on why as an employer we need the data, how we use the data and how staff can keep their information up-to-date is available via our intranet platform – The Loop.

Disability Accreditation Achieved



The Trust has been accredited as Disability Positive with AAA* accreditation Status The Trust scored more than 90% on the Employers for Disability Member Audit to self-evaluate progress in implementing good disability practice. This award recognises the commitment demonstrated by Belfast Trust in implementing an array of practical measures to attract and retain employees and service users with disabilities.

SECTION 2:

Please provide examples of outcomes and/or the impact of equality action plans/ measures in 2023-2024 (or append the plan with progress/examples identified).

Full details regarding progress on the Trust Equality Action Plan (2018-2023) is attached to this document for ease of reference in **Appendix A**.

Our Equality Action Plan was extended to 2024 to facilitate the development of a new Equality Action Plan – this involved significant engagement, public consultation (including an outcome report) and alternative formats being produced (eg easy read).

The Trust Equality Action Plan (2018-23) has regional and local elements to support the optimising of resources with colleagues across all 5 Trusts (inc NI Ambulance Service).

Has the application of the Equality Scheme commitments resulted in any changes to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2022-23 reporting period? (tick one box only)

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

Please provide any details and examples:

The table below details how the application of our Equality Scheme commitments resulted in any changes to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during 2023-24

Table 1: Arrangements for assessing our compliance with S75 duties		
Equality Scheme	Action	Difference made for individuals

Commitment		
Arrangements for assessing our compliance with S75 duties		
Have in place appropriate structures and reporting mechanisms.	<p>The Trust has prioritised Section 75 in all aspects of its business agenda and has established a range of governance, management and reporting mechanisms that reflect this.</p> <p>The Trust's Involvement Group reports directly to the Trust's Assurance and Improvement Group, which reports through the Executive Team to Trust Board.</p> <p>All Annual Progress Reports and EQIAs and Equality screening reports are passed through these mechanisms to provide assurance.</p>	<p>Section 75 duties integral to Trust's Governance and Assurance Framework. Trust senior teams aware of and comply with statutory requirements during decision-making.</p>
Ensure S75 duties are mainstreamed within the Trust.	<p>The Trust's Planning and Equality Team provides staff with the information, training and resources to support staff to have the appropriate level of knowledge, expertise and skill to mainstream S75 duties.</p> <p>The six quality parameters of our Quality Management System (QMS) includes an 'Equity' domain, as noted in our Corporate Plan 2021 -2024. This ensure that clear and robust arrangements are in place to deliver better outcomes for patients and service users.</p> <p>The regional Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights; Making a Difference eLearning programme is mandatory and compliance is monitored twice each year.</p>	<p>All Trust staff are made aware of the Trust's commitment to equality duties and attend mandatory equality training. Operationally, it means that teams and managers must report quarterly with regard to the Equity dimension to the Executive Team and Trust Board.</p> <p>Trust staff aware of equality duties and Trust commitment to not only avoiding discrimination but also to pursuing good practice, embracing diversity and promoting good relations.</p>

<p>Prepare Section 75 Annual Progress Report (APR) and include section in Trust's own Annual Report.</p>	<p>Annual Progress Report supported by "Equality Bites" Newsletter to ensure updates available in a more accessible format.</p> <p>Equality Bites features some of the highlights from the Trust's Annual Report.</p>	<p>All consultees sent copy of newsletter and informed of availability of our Annual Progress Report - improving awareness of Trust's S75 duties and outcomes of work programme</p>
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<p>Action Plan</p>		
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<p>Development of Action Based Plan to include performance indicators and timescales.</p>	<p>Five-year S75 Equality Action Plan developed in partnership with representative organisations. See Appendix 1 for actions progressed in year and progress on actions carried forward from year.</p>	<p>Its implementation is intended to have a positive impact on S75 groups.</p>
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<p>Arrangements for Consulting</p>		
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<p>Consultation list reviewed and updated.</p>	<p>Consultation list continues to be reviewed.</p>	<p>New consultees added to the consultation list on an on-going basis.</p>
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<p>Training re: Consultation.</p>	<p>Co-production webinars promoted throughout Divisions to develop capacity in partnership working. Working regionally to ensure consistency on when to consult</p>	<p>Support transformation and service change by involving service users, carers and the community and voluntary sector.</p>
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<p>In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy.</p>	<p>Our Policy Development Process for 'Writing A Policy' ensures engagement and consultation. No policy can be approved without having been screened.</p>	<p>Views of representation groups and individuals considered during decision-making process.</p>
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<p>Provide feedback report to consultees in timely manner in formats suited to consultees.</p>	<p>All service users and carers involved in Trust projects received detailed feedback reports. Reports available on Trust website.</p>	<p>Representative groups and individuals informed of how their feedback influenced the decision made.</p>
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Screening		
Revise screening template and accompanying guidance notes.	<p>Trust policy development process ensures all Trust policies are screened. All policies approved during the reporting period were subject to S75 screening and appropriate consultation. Screening masterclass convened to senior managers to ensure policy makers and decision makers are clear on their responsibilities.</p> <p>During the reporting period, the Trust screened 56 policies and proposals (including 1 EQIA).</p>	Transparent decision-making process for consultees and impact on S75 groups identified during policy development process.
Publish reports quarterly and in accessible formats on request.	All quarterly reports for the reporting period are made available on the Trust's website.	Screening outcomes available to the public for consideration.
Publishing of EQIA reports.	<p>1 EQIA completed during reporting period.</p> <p>Comprehensive Section 75 equality screenings have been completed and published on all plans implemented by BHSCT up to the end of this reporting period</p>	
Monitoring		
Review of monitoring information	<p>The Trust continues to monitor staff by Section 75 categories. This has been enhanced by HRPTS Self-Service functions and by continually asking staff to update / provide this data. During the reporting period, this monitoring information was assessed for S75 screenings.</p>	Increased understanding of the make-up of the workforce to ensure promotion of equality of opportunity and better information to identify any potential impact.

Staff Training		
Draw up a detailed training plan.	<p>The regional Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights: 'Making a Difference' Programme has been rolled out across the Trust and compliance is monitored. Staff in Belfast Trust must complete this training every five years and is part of the mandatory training matrix.</p>	<p>Improved access to equality, good relations and human rights training and diversity training through availability of more condensed training package for staff and managers as well as the availability of a training manual for those who do not have access to computers.</p>
Focussed training.	<p>During the reporting period, Planning & Equality team delivered facilitated online (mandatory equality human rights and good relations, disability awareness, human rights) as part of our HSC Learn portfolio. Bespoke sessions are also delivered when requested.</p> <p>New staff complete mandatory equality, good relations and human rights training as part of their 'on boarding' journey.</p> <p>Planning and Equality Team continued to provide advice and support to Trust staff/project leads.</p> <p>Equality Screening Masterclass was delivered to senior managers across the Trust following a proactive and focused approach to promoting the training.</p>	<p>Enhanced skills of Trust policy makers.</p> <p>Targeted training delivered by specialist facilitator enhanced the skills of Trust staff.</p>

Arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and services we provide		
Ensure information we disseminate and services we provide are fully accessible to all parts of the Community in NI.	<p>Information is provided in alternative formats on request and Trust's website has been designed to ensure accessibility.</p> <p>During reporting period, a total of 44,472 requests were made for face-to-face interpreting made to NIHSCIS.</p>	<p>Improved access to information and services for equality groups – specifically those whose first language is not English and people with a disability</p>

	<p>Over the reporting period, the Trust's annual expenditure on telephone interpreting via the Big Word was £99,545</p> <p>The Sighted Guide scheme at the Royal offers people with sight loss or who are blind assistance to get to their appointments. 20 people used this service in 23/24 on the RVH site.</p> <p>Shopmobility allows people with limited mobility to get to their appointments safely and independently on the Royal site. There were over 300 people who were provided with a scooter via Shopmobility in the RVH in 23/24.</p>	
<p>Provide information in alternative formats on request .</p>	<p>Library of translated documents available to Trust staff.</p> <p>The Trust has a contract with TILII Translates (TT) as part of our menu of day opportunities. TT is a group of people with learning disabilities who translate documents into easyread with support from speech and language staff and ARC NI.</p> <p>Information is provided in Braille on request</p> <p>The newly drafted Disability and Equality Action plans have been transcribed into easyread and also signed in British and Irish Sign language.</p>	<p>Information provided in alternative formats to increase understanding, ensure effective communication, informed consent, improved outcomes and enhanced access to services.</p>

	<p>Read&Write is available to all staff. It is Assistive Technology software that provides supports staff with regard to reading and writing online. It has 14 features which not only beneficial staff who are neuro-diverse, are visually impaired, find concentration difficult due to anxiety etc. The software delivers benefits for service users who require information in audio format, whose first language is not English or who prefer easy read format. Over 500 staff have used the software in 22/23.</p>	
<p>Provide interpreters and sign language interpreters</p>	<p>Ongoing provision of communication support (verbally and in writing) facilitated through contracts with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIHSC Interpreting Service • The Big Word Telephone Service • Sign Language Interactions • Flex <p>£68,293.22 was spent on translations in 23/24.</p> <p>Sign Language Interactions is managed by SPPG (formally known as the Health Board)</p>	<p>Service users and staff supported to ensure good governance in information provision and safe, effective and responsive communication.</p>
<p>Complaints Procedure</p>		
<p>How complaints are raised, timetable for responding etc.</p>	<p>No S75 complaints received.</p> <p>Trust Equality Lead has sight of any equality related complaints and provides advice.</p>	

Any other measures proposed in equality scheme		
<p>Work closely with other public authorities to exchange learning and best practice</p>	<p>During this reporting period, the Trust participated in the Regional Equality and Human Rights Steering Group and Regional Equality Leads meetings.</p> <p>In addition, a Joint Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights Forum continued to meet in partnership with ECNI, HRC and CRC – the forum met twice during this reporting period.</p> <p>The Trust Equality Lead is a member of the Shared City Partnership hosted by Belfast City Council.</p> <p>The Trust has been successfully co-chairing a Trust GP Forum for the last 4 years.</p> <p>Equality Managers have sought to promote best practice and exchange learning with other public authorities. For example input to the Post Graduate for AHPs at the Ulster University in relation to Collective Leadership and delivery of a session to the Local Government</p>	<p>More effective use of resources and consistent approach across health and social care</p> <p>Regional consistency and better working together with colleagues in Commissions and Council</p> <p>Sharing best practice</p> <p>Smoother working between primary and secondary care</p>
<p>Liaise closely with the ECNI to ensure that progress on the implementation of our Equality Scheme is maintained</p>	<p>The joint forum as aforementioned has helped to facilitate regular communication with the Equality Commission. The Equality Commission is also a member of our Disability Steering Group and the Healthy Relations Group.</p> <p>The Equality Commission is sent any pubic consultations</p>	<p>Ensures effective use of resources and S75 implementation.</p>

	that we have undertaken eg our new Equality & Disability Action Plans, our new Good Relations Strategy	
--	--	--

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:

The process of equality screening changes to policy, new processes and new initiatives with the GUM clinic, Absent Without Leave (AWOL) policies for mental health inpatient units, the NINES referral service, the Lifeline proposal to record calls, our post mortem policy, access to Glenview accommodation and changing criteria for supported living facilities generated new thinking, amendments to proposals/policies and proposed changes being paused. Specifically:

- Posters were created to in the waiting area to let service users know they can request a private area
- Equality and human rights statements added to the policy as a reminder to staff to always consider equality and to promote and protect human rights.
- Need to involve patients and carers in discussions more explicit in policy wording
- Guidance provided on the issue of accessible car parking provision
- Commitment to engage and communicate more with patients
- A section in the policy added regarding the need for accessible communication
- Explicit reference introduced to a policy regarding the need to book an interpreter and/or to organise a translator – as an aide memoir for staff
- Leaflets regarding consent created in easy read to ensure people who have difficulty understanding complex sentences meaning choices are informed
- Pilot introduced to allow for learning about potential impact on service users
- Change to access criteria completely reviewed once it was realised that older people with a disability would be adversely impacted

- Enhanced signage regarding the provision of a service in a new location

**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):
As per previous question (pg 43)

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

One EQIA undertaken during this reporting period – the implementation of the DOH decision to close Muckamore Abbey Hospital. As a result of the engagement events and the consultation on the EQIA, the following commitments were made:

- BHSCT to submit a business case for Assessment & Treatment Unit to SPPG
- Continuously monitor holistically, and risk assess throughout and after the resettlement process
- Regular individual care reviews to address changing needs – including aging.
- Further promote our Carer’s Strategy and Carer Assessments.
- Liaise with the Department of Health, other Trusts and other statutory authorities regarding the access to Muckamore swimming pool.
- Undertake a review of transport provision.
- Consider the recommendations of the independent review of advocates, in the review of our current advocacy contract.
- Promote the availability of our community support workers
- The Trust has undertaken a full review of assessed need for respite
- Continue to work in partnership through an Appreciative Inquiry approach so all appropriate stakeholders are fully involved in the evolution of the service model.
- Continue work to ensure that all the staff in Muckamore are effectively redeployed.
- Ensure staff have access to the training and resources so that they are equipped to deliver safe, effective, compassionate and person-centred care.

√ As a result of changes to access to information and services

As per previous question (pg 43)

Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)

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:

Section 75 statutory duties are integrated within job descriptions across the organisation. Job descriptions note the following general responsibilities:

- *'At all times provide a caring service and to treat those with whom they come into contact in a courteous and respectful manner*
- *Adhere to Equality and Good Relations duties throughout the course of their employment.'*

In addition, the Trust Values are displayed in full in each job description. The values are rooted in equality and specifically reference compassion, dignity, integrity, openness and honesty:

Figure 16: Trust Values explained to new staff in terms of expected and acceptable behaviour

What does this mean?	What does this look like in practice?
 <p>Working together We work together for the best outcomes for people we care for and support. We work across Health and Social Care and with other external organisations and agencies, recognising that leadership is the responsibility of all.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I work with others and value everyone's contribution• I treat people with respect and dignity• I work as part of a team looking for opportunities to support and help people in both my own and other teams• I actively engage people on issues that affect them• I look for feedback and examples of good practice, aiming to improve where possible.
 <p>Excellence We commit to being the best we can be in our work, aiming to improve and develop services to achieve positive changes. We deliver safe, high quality, compassionate care and support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I put the people I care for and support at the centre of all I do to make a difference• I take responsibility for my decisions and actions• I commit to best practice and sharing learning, while continually learning and developing• I try to improve by asking 'could we do this better?'
 <p>Openness & Honesty We are open and honest with each other and act with integrity and candour.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I am open and honest in order to develop trusting relationships• I ask someone to help when needed• I speak up if I have concerns• I challenge inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour and practice.
 <p>Compassion We are sensitive, caring, respectful and understanding towards those we care for and support and our colleagues. We listen carefully to others to better understand and take action to help them and ourselves.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I am sensitive to the different needs and feelings of others and treat people with kindness• I learn from others by listening carefully to them• I look after my own health and wellbeing so that I can care and support others.

Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2022-23 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:

The Trust individual Staff Performance Plans, as part of Staff Development Reviews, are clearly aligned with the Section 75 duties and principles of equality and human rights. Staff Development Reviews are set within the context of the Trust’s overall values and objectives and make explicit reference to ensuring ‘staff are supported to deliver safe, compassionate patient-centred care.’ The 6th core KSF dimension in staff reviews is called ‘Equality and Diversity’, which offers a dedicated space for staff to provide examples of how they can demonstrate their knowledge and skills in this area and identify areas for development in the forthcoming year.

In the 2022-2023 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)

X Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan

X Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning

To evidence please refer to **Part A Section 1** of this report regarding

- Trust Governance and Assurance Framework
- Belfast Trust Corporate Plan : Belfast Plan 24+

Equality Action Plans/Measures:

Within the 2023-24 reporting period, please indicate the number of:

Regional actions completed	13	Regional actions to commence/rollover	2
Local actions completed	11	Local actions to commence/rollover	2

Please provide any details and examples.

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):

Any amendments are detailed in the appended equality action plan update. In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2022-23 reporting period, the following have been identified: (tick all that apply)

Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the known

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

HSC Trusts have completed their actions for year 5 of their outgoing plan (2018 – 2023) and have now consulted upon and drafted another 5 year plan – some of the inequalities are residual and so the Trusts will continue to address them through different action measures.

Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)

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

Formal consultation took place regarding the Trust's implementation of the DOH decision to close Muckamore Abbey Hospital. This was achieved using Citizenspace and was proactively advertised amongst our consultees and via our Trust website. Many engagement events were convened for carers, families, service users and staff. The Trust extended the consultation period to 5 months to optimise opportunities for engagement and consultation.

Please provide any details and examples of good practice in consultation during the 2023-2024 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:

Implementation of the DoH decision to close Muckamore Abbey Hospital EQIA involved the following consultation activity:

- Facilitated engagement sessions online and in person on the EQIA on the implementation of the DOH decision to close MAH
- Easy Read formats produced using (Service User Group) TILII Translates

In addition, planned engagement sessions with targeted groups after the EQIA was completed were arranged to communicate the findings and next steps

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 with staff and various community groups, Trade Unions
- ✓ 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:

Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2022-2023 reporting period?

(tick one box only)

Yes

No

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The Trust's Equality & Planning team produces 2 important publications published bi-annually and disseminated to all staff and to over 600 key stakeholders including community and voluntary sector and MLAs. Each publication is available on the Trust website, with alternative formats are provided on request.

The publications are available on the Belfast Trust website [Publications | Belfast Health & Social Care Trust website \(hscni.net\)](#) and include:

- **Equality Bites Bulletin** outlines progress made and initiatives undertaken in the areas of equality, good relations and human rights and is directly related to our Equality Scheme commitments.
- **Good Relations Bulletin** provides updates around the promotion and exemplar work to further Good Relations across the Trust.

In the reporting period 2023/2024 **4 bulletins** noted below were drafted, promoted and disseminated.





**Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2023-2024 reporting period?
(tick one box only)**

Yes

No

Not applicable

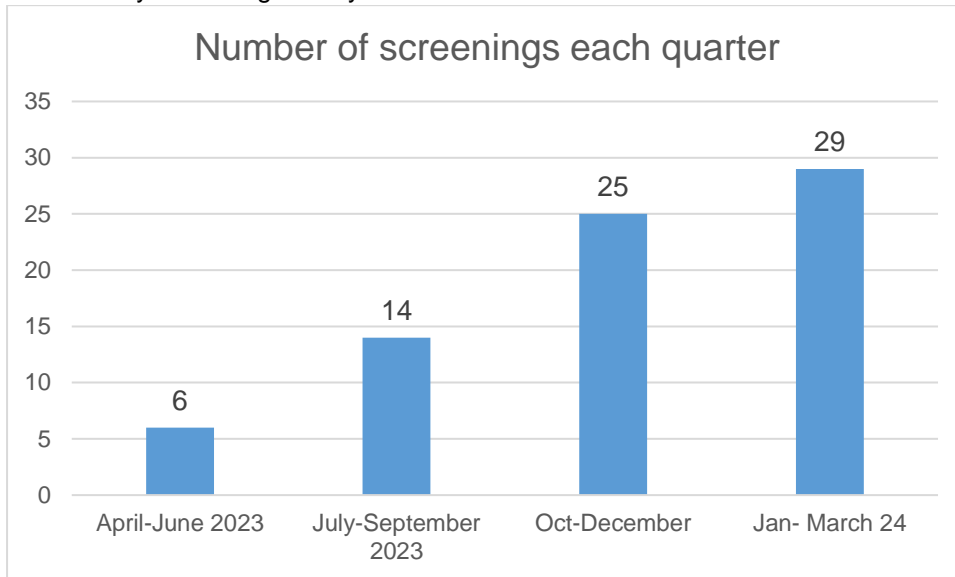
Review of the consultation list undertaken proactively and on an ongoing basis to ensure it is up to date and accurate. There is both regional collaboration and internal collaboration on this to ensure a meaningful up to date consultee list exists.

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

There were **75 equality screenings including 1 EQIA** were undertaken in this reporting period. Details of each screening is available on the Trust website in the quarterly outcome report as noted below:

- [Outcome Report April - June 2023.docx](#)
- [Outcome Report July - Sept 2023.docx](#)
- [Outcome Report Oct - Dec 2023.docx](#)
- [Outcome Report Jan - Mar 2024.docx](#)

Figure 16: Quarterly screening activity 2023/2024



Please provide the number of assessments consulted upon during 2023-24:

74	Policy consultations conducted with screening assessment presented.
1	Policy consultations conducted with an equality impact assessment (EQIA) presented.

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

An EQIA was undertaken on the implementation of the Department of Health’s decision to close Muckamore Abbey Hospital. Belfast Trust issued the draft EQIA for formal consultation on 30th November 2023. The scheduled closing date for responses was extended from the 1st March 2024 to 30th April at the request of some carers, who wanted more opportunities for engagement to inform the future service model.

An extensive range of consultations events with key stakeholders was undertaken and provided for a rich pool of feedback which will influence the way forward with Muckamore Abbey Hospital.

Figure 17: Table of engagement events

Service User, Carer and Family meeting	21 st February 2024	Crown Plaza	In person event
Service Users, Carers and Family meeting	19 th February 2024	Microsoft Teams (MS Teams)	Virtual Meeting
Staff Feedback Session	23 rd February 2024	MS Teams	Virtual Meeting
Stakeholder Event	4 th March 2024	MS Teams	Virtual Event

Stakeholder Event	21 st March 2024	MS Teams	Virtual Event
Service User, Carer and Family meeting	16 th April 2024	Orchardville Day Centre	In person event
Service User, Carer and Family meeting	18 th April 2024	Edgcumbe Day Centre	In person event
Service User, Carer and Family meeting	22 nd April 2024	Everton Day Centre	In person event
Service User, Carer and Family meeting	24 th April 2024	Suffolk Day Centre	In person event

The Trust received **77 responses** to the consultation and facilitated a series of engagement events over the extended five-month consultation period. Responses included one hand-written response, five responses via email, 25 individual responses on the easy read questionnaire and 46 responses via Citizenspace.

The Trust has grouped responses into overarching, recurring themes and addressed them accordingly in the outcome report.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for more engagement and co-production
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terminology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipatory principles and unique needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback on Muckamore
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human rights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographic considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeframe
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New proposed model
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of resettlement on families and carers

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New accommodation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring arrangements/Use of Advocates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to Muckamore swimming pool
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future use of site
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Learning Disability Model
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff

The Trust engaged on the proposal to have GP out of hours on one site and is in the process of drafting a consultation paper and equality screening on the proposed reconfiguration of GP Out of Hours service with an enhanced Multi-Disciplinary Team.

The Trust is also scoping the use of Body Worn Videos in certain areas across the Trust and has met with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission to discuss the potential rights that would be engaged for patients, residents and staff. The Trust is undertaking a risk assessment in terms of where there is most aggression recorded to help inform where the videos will potentially be used. If the Trust proceeds, this would require a full public consultation, an equality and human rights impact assessment and a data protection impact assessment.

The Trust also engaged on the draft corporate plan within Divisions, Directorates, its Disability Steering Group, Primary Care and Trade Union colleagues. An engagement session was also held on 19th February 2024 in the Mount for service users, carers and community and voluntary sector members to provide their feedback on the plan. All of the feedback has helped inform the final Belfast plan.

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:

No concerns raised

Arrangements for publishing the results of assessments (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

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

Whilst not technically within the reporting period 2023/2024 however it seems sensible to comment on the following:

An outcome paper (Stage 6) relating to the EQIA carried out on the Implementation of the Department of Health's decision to close Muckamore Abbey Hospital was approved at the Trust Board meeting of on 12th June 2024. The report was drafted following a public consultation launched on 30th November 2023 and closed on the 30th April 2024.

The full outcome report plus a summary report was published on Trust website: [Consultation Outcomes re EQIA on Implementation of the DoH decision to close MAH](#) and proactively disseminated to consultees. An easy read version has been commissioned and once completed by TILII Translates (local people with learning disabilities) this also will be published.

Arrangements for monitoring and publishing the results of monitoring (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

From the Equality Scheme monitoring arrangements, was there an audit of existing information systems during the 2022-23 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes

No

Not applicable

Please provide any details:

The new regional digital platform Encompass will create a single digital care record for every citizen in Northern Ireland who receives health and social care. It will be in use across all Health and Social Care Trusts to create better experiences for patients, service users and staff. Encompass will give patients and service users the ability to view and update their health information, and it will make it easier for appropriate Health and Social Care staff to securely view important information about their patients and service users.

Encompass replaces the many and often disjointed IT platforms that have existed across Belfast Trust. It replaces more than 70 disparate IT systems and a reliance on paper records, and provides new functionality. The new system will be used by most of the 22,000 plus staff, who deliver care both locally and regionally across 10 Hospitals, 9 Health Centres, 23 Day centres, 7 Health & Well-being centres, 11 residential facilities, and 8 Supported Housing facilities.

Throughout the encompass build for Belfast Trust, the need for information and data to be collated around the nine Section 75 protected groups has been discussed to ensure this single source of information will support an improved analysis of impact and mitigation going forward.

Encompass will be introduced on a rolling basis across all of the Health Trusts in Northern Ireland. Belfast Trust went live with Encompass June 2024.

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:

An example includes the decision not to change the access criteria to Glenview accommodation on the Belfast City Hospital site for those being treated with cancer and their families. The data gathered for the equality screening clearly showed that the proposal would disproportionately adversely affect older people, carers and those with mobility disabilities.

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:

The development of a new audit of inequalities has helped to inform the new actions within our Equality & Disability Action Plans 2024 – 2029.

Across the Trust the policies, proposals and plans are influenced by the existence of Equity as a parameter of our Quality Monitoring System. This means that staff must report on and be accountable for decisions taken in relation to equity.

Review of mandatory equality training compliance has led to divisions and directorates committing in their 24/25 local management plans under equity to improve on compliance rates.

-
-

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:

Differential and adverse impacts were included in equality screenings and taken into consideration in the development of Plans.

Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)

Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2023-2024, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) recognises that statutory and mandatory training is the cornerstone to supporting staff to provide high-quality accessible, inclusive and welcoming services to our patients, service users, carers and visitors. It is also necessary for effective risk management.

Recognising that time is precious (especially for clinical staff) and that people have different leaning styles, the Planning and Equality team with Human Resources colleagues delivered our Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights training using a number of methods – e-learning, facilitated online, face to face and via our Corporate Induction. This training is mandatory for all staff and must be undertaken every five years. The basis of all of the training is the ‘Making A Difference’ training developed by Equality Managers from all Health Trusts.



Over 7,000 staff completed the mandatory Equality, Good Relations & Human Rights

Figure 17: Staff training figures for the reporting period



In terms of the **Corporate Induction**, all new staff (with the exception of Doctors in training) are asked to complete a Digital Welcome Pack. New staff are asked to complete the Mandatory Training section of the Welcome Pack (10 items of training including equality, good relations & human rights) to ensure each person has the core awareness necessary to keep them safe and to know what behaviour is acceptable in the workplace and when delivering services. Every new Trust staff member must complete the

introductory pieces of Statutory Mandatory Training in the Welcome Pack ahead of their



first day.

In addition to the mandatory training the Planning & Equality team delivered a facilitated online Disability Awareness training session to a total of **129 staff**. In addition approximately **80 senior managers** attended two (face to face and via MS Teams) **equality screening masterclass sessions** in March 2024. A facilitated online Human Rights training was also delivered to **36 staff**.

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 word clouds below have been generated from training evaluation forms and would best illustrate the impact and feedback about the training.

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

Please list any examples of where monitoring during 2023-2024, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation to access to Information and services:

Feedback from patients, service users, carers and visitors is always monitored and actioned to improve services, experiences and outcomes. Committed to a learning culture and to excellence in service delivery (NI HSC value) Belfast Trust welcomes all and any feedback.

In addition, Belfast Trust is committed to Quality Improvement and have a dedicated faculty to promote, deliver and advise with regard to how changes can be made within an evidence based environment in terms of service delivery of which access to information and services is a priority.

A range of methodology and platforms exist to help action and improve access to information and services including:

- Feedback on specific services – EODU: Eye Outpatient Diagnostic Unit
- Care Opinion

- Complaints
- NI HSC Interpreting
- Every Customer Counts – Regional Fertility Clinic
- TILII Translates

Examples of Improvements in access to information and services include:

- Production of an Accessible & Inclusive Communication Toolkit for ‘front line’ staff
- Dedicated Midwife for women who are asylum seekers and refugees and find it challenging to access services due to language barriers
- Information Pack about accommodation choices for people with a learning disability drafted in Easy Read format using TILII Translates
- AccessAble to improve navigation
- Diabetic eye clinic signage



Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

How many complaints in relation to the Equality Scheme have been received during 2023-2024?

Insert number here:

0

Section 3: Looking Forward

Please indicate when the Equality Scheme is due for review:

The Trust undertook a **5 year review of its Equality Scheme** in 2023 and in particular examined how the arrangements set out in the Scheme have been applied. The next review is due to be completed in 2028.

The review assessed how effective the arrangements have been in terms of supporting the Trust to comply with Section 75 duties. The review was endorsed by the Executive Team and Trust Board in June 2023.

The purpose of the review was to take learning and set direction for the coming years by critically evaluating the way Belfast Trust has implemented Section 75 duties over the past five years.

Key questions guiding the 5-year review were used together with available evidence from the nine matrices recommended by the Equality Commission to:

- Examine how Section 75 duties arrangements have been applied
- Identify how effective the arrangements have been in assisting the Trust in complying with the Section 75 duties.

The review involved looking at what has been achieved, what remains to be done, and lessons learned. The review noted that whilst material changes to the current Equality Scheme are not required **more work** needs to be done around:

- Monitoring the impact of actions, evaluating actions & good practice initiatives.
- Mainstreaming Section 75 duties - as this is key to the effective implementation of our Equality Scheme.

The Trust has produced a third generation **5 year Good Relations Strategy 2023- 2028**. The strategy contains a range of actions to actively address and challenge racism and sectarianism, to ensure we treat each other fairly, with respect and dignity and to ensure that our spaces are shared, welcoming and safe.

In partnership with other NI HSC Trusts Belfast Trust carried out extensive engagement and formal public consultation with regard to the drafting of its new **5 year Equality and Disability Action Plans (2023-2028)**

Our Equality & Disability Action Plans and our Good Relations Strategy provide a strategic road map and a proactive approach to Good Relations, Addressing Section 75 inequalities and Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people whilst also encouraging everyone with a disability to fully participate in public life over the next 5 years.

Our strategic road map with regard to Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights will progress in tandem with our day to day statutory compliance duties eg making reasonable

adjustments and using interpreters (to ensure understanding and informed consent). In addition the road map is very much aligned to our Quality Management System (QMS) as Equity is one of 4 parameters as noted previously.

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)

In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what equality and good relations priorities are anticipated over the next reporting period?

Our Priorities and Our Focus for 24/25 include:

- Using the new digital platform - encompass - to produce data around the 9 protected S75 groups. This will support effective screening activity.
- Continuing to promote and highlight the importance of staff providing their equality data. HR promote this on a quarterly basis using a digital resource that highlights the benefits and clarifying for staff why the data is collected and the importance of providing and updating the data.
- Continuing to encourage the mainstreaming of S75 duties particularly the duty to undertake an equality screening as early as possible in the process/change/drafting.
- Promoting good practice across a staffing cohort of approx. 22,000 staff.
- Ensuring transformational projects involve s75 duties in the design and planning stage.
- Improving rates of training compliance re mandatory equality, good relations and human rights programme.
- Continuing to update and review not only who we consult with but also how we consult.
- Continuing to monitor the impact and evaluation of actions and good practice initiatives.

Appendix 1: Update on Equality Action Plan 2018-2023

**Equality Action Plan
Regional Actions**

2018 – 2023

Progress Report

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Section 1 – Ensuring the effective discharge of our Section 75 Equality Duties

We want to ensure that the focus is on outcomes for people within the nine Section 75 equality categories and to make a positive difference for them. The following actions are therefore aimed at simplifying the process.

Action Measure	Completed
<p>1 We will develop a Screening and Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Tool Kit to guide staff through the process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A toolkit will be available for policy and decision makers. More robust and regionally consistent screening/EQIAs 	<p>Belfast Trust continues to use its two part template to allow clinical or technical policies with no bearing on equality of opportunity or good relations can be readily screened out in part a whilst part a and part b are used for all other screening whether it relates to Service User, Staff or both. A screening toolkit has been developed to help policy makers when completing equality screenings. Equality Screening Toolkit.</p>
Action Measure	Completed
<p>2 We will review our staff training to ensure best practice is followed when screening and conducting EQIAs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to date training programme for all policy makers across health and social care will be made available to ensure best practice. Skilled staff, policy leads and decision makers. Consistent and effective approach in the training programme across all Trusts (targets to be set). Effective compliance with the S75 Equality Duties 	<p>HSC Trust Equality Units continue to provide policy leaders and decision makers across HSC with specific advice and support on best practice in screening and EQIAs.</p> <p>The extensive training programme offered by Belfast Trust is detailed in the main body of the report and offers a range of different options in terms of online self-directed training or facilitated training. All new starts undertake mandatory equality training as part of their induction. There is also specific human rights training and disability awareness training provided for staff. Equality screening masterclasses are offered regularly to ensure our policy leads and decision makers have the requisite knowledge and skills to mainstream equality considerations and due process to enhance the quality of decision making and policy formulation.</p>
Action Measure	Rollover to new 5 year equality action plan
<p>3. We will work with the Department of Health and other relevant stakeholders to make sure we are prepared for the introduction of Age Discrimination Regulations.</p>	<p>Rollover to next Equality Action Plan as Legislation is not in place.</p>

Section 2 – Promoting Equality in our Services

The following actions have been developed in response to what we have heard and are aimed at providing welcoming, person-centred and accessible services for everyone.

Action Measure	Completed
<p>4. We will review our equality training programme in collaboration with service users, carers and their advocates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent staff training and awareness raising, co-produced and delivered, where appropriate, across health and social care. • Raised awareness among staff of the best way to promote equality of opportunity for service users. Each Trust to identify a process to monitor e-learning. 	<p>During this reporting period, Northern Trust led on developing a training video resource featuring people with disabilities on behalf of the region. This offers practical support and tips when engaging with disabled people and is a worthwhile and valuable resource. This is now included in Belfast Trust disability awareness training https://vimeo.com/771500523</p> <p>The Mandatory Equality Training for Staff and Management is continually featured through the People Organisational Development Annual training portfolio. Management and staff can complete the training through the Regional HSC e- Learning platform or request a facilitated Learning package to be delivered by the Planning and Equality Team and/or HR Diversity Inclusion Team.</p>
Action Measure	Completed
<p>5 We will work in partnership with LGBT representative organisations to develop guidance for health and social care staff to ensure LGBT service users have access to services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent up to date staff guidance developed in partnership with LGBT organisations. • Enhanced awareness of access barriers for LGBT service users and carers. • Improved satisfaction with health and social care services for LGBT service users and carers 	<p>Work on the specific guidance has not progressed due to other work pressures but will be progressed in the next reporting period. However there is ongoing work to ensure service users who identify as LGBT+ can access services through training provision and sharing of best practice. The Trust has also publicly supported Pride week over the last 2 years.</p>

Action Measure	Completed
<p data-bbox="163 204 947 384">6 We will work in partnership with Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups and groups representing BME older people to develop guidance for health and social care staff on meeting the needs of older people in BME communities and ensure access to services.</p> <ul data-bbox="163 389 947 619" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="163 389 947 459">• Staff guidance co-produced with BME communities and representative organisations. <li data-bbox="163 464 947 499">• Raised profile of needs of BME older people. <li data-bbox="163 504 947 574">• Increased awareness among staff of the needs of BME older people. <li data-bbox="163 579 947 619">• Improved access to services for BME older people. 	<p data-bbox="992 204 2078 274">Belfast Trust commissioned research into inequalities experienced by Black, Asian, minority ethnic and Traveller people living in Belfast.</p> <p data-bbox="992 325 2049 544">The research was undertaken by Lucy Michael Research with the African and Caribbean Support Organisation of Northern Ireland (ACSONI) and Polish Language, Culture, and Affairs (POLCA). A team of 11 researchers, including eight peer researchers, conducted interviews with 131 minority ethnic and migrant residents of Belfast in English and eight other first languages.</p> <p data-bbox="992 595 1966 700">The Trust is committed to addressing the recommendations from this research through its Healthy Relations Steering Group and the good relations proactive strategy work.</p>
Action Measure	Completed
<p data-bbox="163 804 947 954">7 We will work with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission to develop a training programme on a human rights approach to dealing with complaints – building on work done by the Ombudsman’s Office.</p>	<p data-bbox="992 804 2049 954">HSC had decided to re-prioritise this training with a focus instead on residential care for vulnerable people. The training will be based on case studies provided by the Trusts, to ensure that it is meaningful, realistic and impactful to participants.</p> <p data-bbox="992 989 2072 1107">Initial work has taken place during this reporting period to scope the training, the format and the audience. Further work is needed but it is anticipated this will be delivered in the next reporting period</p>

Action Measure	Completed
<p>8 We will hold an annual event to showcase best practice in equality and diversity within health and social care.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An annual Equality and Diversity event delivered. • Health and social care viewed as a sector that promotes equality and diversity. • Improved awareness of equality and diversity best practice models and shared across health and social care and beyond. 	<p>During this year, the Trust marked a range of different days and initiatives including International Human Rights Day, Good Relations week, Pride 2023, international day of people with disabilities, Carers' week.</p> <p>A regional event was convened in November 2022 on respiratory health and differential impacts in health outcomes for people from black and minority ethnic communities.</p> <p>As referenced in the main body of the report, the Trust also produced and consulted on a draft Celebrating and Marking of events policy. This was on the advice of the Equality Commission as a result of a successful case that they supported for a Trust employee. It was also to ensure that there was a clear policy framework in place to outline the Trust's intention in marking and celebrating events as previously when the Trust had celebrated certain diverse events, it led to Freedom of Information requests as to the governance in deciding to mark different days or initiatives.</p>

Section 3 – Supporting our Staff

The following actions help to promote equality of opportunity for our staff and support them to understand their responsibilities in valuing differences and advancing equality of opportunity to ensure an inclusive and welcoming environment.

Action Measure	Rollover
<p>9 We will ensure compliance with any new legislation governing gender pay reporting and address any inequalities identified.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pay structure that ensures fairness and equity in pay and reward arrangements in line with any new legislation.</p>	<p>Legislation has yet to be enacted by the NI Assembly. We will need to rollover this over to the next Equality Action Plan.</p>
Action Measure	Completed for this year

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<p>10 We will work in collaboration with relevant stakeholders to extend the remit of our Employability Schemes to enhance employment opportunities for marginalised S75 groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope in year 1 opportunities and availability for our employability schemes. • Employability scheme available to other marginalised S75 groups. • Improved employment opportunities for marginalised S75 groups. • Access to employment is improved for marginalised S75 groups. 	<p>This partnership work has recommenced with Belfast Met and 'Positive Action' will now be offered across a pan-disability basis. It had been halted by the pandemic. The programme ran from October to May and successful candidates will complete their OCN Level 1. Following this, the Trust hopes to have some available positions for those graduating, as well as with employers in the Belfast area.</p>
<p>Action Measure</p>	<p>Completed</p>
<p>11 We will review our harmonious working environment advice in light of any new findings and recommendations from the work conducted by the Commission on Flags, Identity, Culture and Traditions.</p> <p>Consistent regional approach to ensuring all health and social care environments are welcoming to everyone.</p>	<p>The Trust has published its HSC Good Relations statement on a poster and shared it across its facilities for display. Trusts have worked collaboratively to review the Harmonious Working Environment Statement and Joint Declaration of Protection on display throughout its facilities. This declares that the Trust will aim to provide a good and harmonious working environment. It therefore prohibits the display of flags emblems etc., which may give offence or cause apprehension to other employees.</p>
<p>Action Measure</p>	<p>Completed</p>

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<p>12 We will work with relevant organisations and Trade Unions to develop best practice in supporting our staff who are victims of Domestic Violence/Abuse.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practice model established in each Trust with support mechanisms for staff experiencing Domestic Violence/Abuse. • Improved support for staff who are victims of Domestic Violence/Abuse. • Raised awareness among staff of the best way to support colleagues who are victims of Domestic Violence/Abuse. 	<p>As per the main body of the report, the Trust and Trade Unions won first prize in the national HPMA awards for its support service and digital toolkit. It has also been featured in the Healthcare Management National Journal. Other Trusts will work to adopt the model support service and policy.</p> <p>New support officers have been interviewed and recruited to this voluntary role and training will take place in the next reporting period.</p>				
<p>Action Measure</p>	<p>Completed</p>				
<p>13 We will make sure that our staff who are carers are supported in the workplace so that they can continue with their caring role.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent regional approach established to support carers in our workforce. • Improved support for staff who are carers. • Raised awareness among staff of the best way to support staff who are carers. 	<p>Engagement work has been underway as detailed in the main body of the report in terms of a new Carers Strategy for Belfast Trust. It is envisaged that this will be issued for formal consultation in the next reporting year. Belfast Trust carers support services have also developed online training for GPs in terms of the impact of caring and how they can refer in for support for carers.</p> <p>The Trust provides a summer scheme for children of staff members and also offers a range of flexible working options for staff.</p>				
<p>Total actions Year 5</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>Total actions completed in Year 5</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>Rolled over to next plan</p>	<p>2</p>

Equality Action Plan


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Action Measure	Performance measures	Completed
<p>We will continue to contribute to the development and implementation of the Trust Carer's strategy.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach to carers of all ages. • Developing Carer Support Pathways. • Development of Carer support plans. • Enhanced communication and involvement with carers. 	<p>New Carers Strategy 'Caring Together in Belfast 2023 onwards' approved by Trust Board following extensive engagement and formal 12 week public consultation with over 250 people providing feedback.</p> <p>Priorities identified included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach to carers of all ages. • Carer Support Pathways. • Carer Support plans. • Communication & involvement with carers. <p>Carer Supports continue across the Trust.</p>

Action Measure	Performance measures	Completed
<p>2. We will ensure new projects such as the New Children's Hospital have equality and diversity considerations to the fore.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities and services which incorporate best practice in terms of Section 75 groups. • More responsive, inclusive and accessible services. 	<p>Surveyors from AccessAble funded by Charitable Funds (£50k) completed work at RVH site to develop Detailed Access Guides, Best Practice matrix and Minor Works matrix in relation to patient facing buildings on the Royal site which will also influence new capital projects.</p>
Action Measure	Performance measures	Completed

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3. We will assess our readiness as an employer to cater for an older workforce and take forward key findings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus groups facilitated across organisation and feedback used to inform action plan. • Implementation and monitoring of readiness checklist. 	Belfast Trust continues to assess our readiness as an employer that caters for an older workforce. The Trust's HR department hosts regular half-day sessions for members of staff who are preparing for retirement.
Action Measure	Performance measures	Policy Completed – Gender action plan to be completed
4) We will take forward a Gender Project and action plan.	<p>Ensure gender equality in recruitment, training, promotion.</p> <p>Develop a gender action plan following a workplace audit and benchmarking exercise</p> <p>Implement a Gender Identity and Expression Policy.</p>	The Gender Identity and Expression Policy was launched two years ago. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance and advice to staff and managers on the recruitment and retention of transgender and non-binary staff. The policy ensures there must be no discrimination, victimisation or harassment against any applicant, potential applicant or employee on grounds of their gender including gender identity and expression.
Action Measure	Performance measures	Completed
5. We will progress our Affirmative Action Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure our work places provide for fair participation and promotes good and harmonious environments for all staff. • Work with stakeholders to redress under-representations identified through the Fair Employment Article 55 Review process. 	
Action Measure	Performance measures	Completed

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<p>6. We will continue to implement our Health and Wellbeing at Work Strategy and Action Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible information available for HSC staff on flexible working arrangements. • Promotion of B Well online and app resource for staff. • Uptake of B-Well initiatives. 	<p>The Trust has developed a range of interactive toolkits and resources to support staff and signpost availability. These are accessible outside of work also i.e. smart phone or personal device.</p> <p>Improving Working Lives - 1 (pagetiger.com) Supporting Employee Wellbeing 1 - 1 (pagetiger.com)</p> <p>The Trust also has a B well website and app. https://bwellbelfast.hscni.net . Bwell is the health and wellbeing site for staff of Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. B Well is the Trust’s commitment to improving employee health and wellbeing by providing employees with support and information on a wide range of health and wellbeing issues.</p>
Action Measure	Performance measures	Completed
<p>7. We will develop an Action Plan in response to the staff survey to promote equality/work life balance/ and address fully any potential instances of harassment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation and monitoring of staff survey action plan. • Conduct further staff survey 	<p>In this reporting period, the Trust has continued to monitor the effectiveness of its Equality Policies and Work Life Balance Flexible Working Policies and Practices. Bullying & Harassment Support Service: The Trust continues with this support service for staff.</p>

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Action Measure	Performance measures	Completed
8. We will proactively and overtly promote our corporate commitment to equality and diversity through roadshows and resources to support LGBT, Carers, Antiracism and anti-sectarianism and the other Section 75 protected groups.	<input type="checkbox"/> Public expression of corporate commitment to equality and diversity.	<p>We celebrate and raise awareness an extensive range of days/weeks throughout the year including Pride, Good Relations Week, Sign Language Week, Autism Week, International Day for People with Disabilities and Refugee Week. The equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) events we often observe and celebrate are in line with our policy to celebrate and mark events throughout the year.</p>
Action Measure	Performance measures	Completed
9. We will continue to support our staff who have caring responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and monitor uptake of range of initiatives including flexible working, summer scheme provision, childcare vouchers. • Carers Group/Strategy 	<p>We deliver awareness and information sessions for our staff who are carers and deliver a 6 week Summer Scheme for staff each year across 4 sites.</p>
Action Measure	Performance measures	Completed
10. We will consult and implement Healthy Relations for a Healthy Future 2 strategy (the Trust's Good Relations strategy).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd generation Good Relations strategy for Belfast Trust. • Initiatives to promote good relations for people of different racial groups, religious beliefs and political opinions. 	<p>Third good relations strategy consulted on and launched and disseminated to key stakeholders. Our Healthy Relations Steering Group provide governance around the completion of actions within the strategy.</p>

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Action Measure	Performance measures	Completed
<p>11. We will develop a communications strategy to best promote awareness amongst staff and managers of domestic abuse support service in the workplace.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New technology to facilitate enhanced multi-disciplinary working to tackle domestic violence and support victims and their families. • Enhanced knowledge of support mechanisms available in the workplace to help people who they are experiencing domestic abuse. • Increased confidence and volume of staff accessing the support. 	<p>Awareness raising is achieved through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular articles on the staff intranet The Loop • Distribution of 15,000 calendars to staff • Promotion of our page tiger toolkit • Appointment and training of new support officers across the Trust • Christmas Appeal in aid of families supported by Women's Aid • Working in partnership with Occupational Health colleagues to routinely query and flag possible concerns with staff

Total actions Year 5	11	Total actions completed in Year 5	11	Actions ongoing into Year 5	0
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Appendix 2: Update on Disability Action Plan 2018-2023

**Disability Action Plan
Regional Actions
2018 – 2023**

**Progress Report
Year 5 2023 -2024**

Section 1 – Promoting positive actions and increased participation through training, awareness and resources

Disabled people have told us that promoting well-informed social attitudes to disability is central to securing the right to equality for all disabled people. We are committed to providing training and resources to support our staff in the implementation of our disability duties.

Actions to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people:

Action Measure	Completed
<p>1. We will co-design and deliver bespoke disability equality training for frontline staff in partnership with disabled people.</p>	<p>During this reporting period, Northern Trust led on developing a training video resource featuring people with disabilities on behalf of the region. This offers practical support and tips when engaging with disabled people and is a worthwhile and valuable resource. This is now included in Belfast Trust disability awareness and disability equality training https://vimeo.com/771500523</p> <p>A raft of online resources are being co-developed by Belfast Trust and disabled people’s representative organisations and disabled people – this includes an Accessible Communication guide, Neurodiversity guidance, How to produce information in an easyread document. These will help staff to provide a responsive, respectful and compassionate service.</p>
Action Measure	Completed
<p>2. We will work with the consortium of mental health organisations and the ECNI to ensure health and social care is signed up to the Mental Health Charter.</p>	<p>Belfast Recovery College offers a range of free courses that are available for anyone with an interest in mental health and wellbeing including: service users, family members and staff.</p> <p>Creating and delivering courses together using the combined expertise of mental health professionals and peer trainers with real life experience, breaks down traditional barriers and allows people to learn together.</p> <p>The Trust’s B Well website and app have a specific section on Mind Your Mind, which provide resources, self-help guides and training opportunities.</p> <p>Here 4 u is a Trust wellbeing initiative and offers free activities for staff to look after their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.</p>

Actions to encourage participation by disabled people in public life:

Action Measure	Drafted and to be launched in next reporting year
<p>3. We will develop for staff a welcome pack with information about accessibility such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements for sign language interpreting. • Provision of auxiliary aids. • Disability etiquette. • Alternative formats. 	<p>A new pagetiger guide on interpreting, translations and organising a sign language interpreter has been developed as well as a range of other resources including a pack on accessible communication, posters on guide dogs etiquette and communicating effectively with people with hearing loss or who are deaf.</p> <p>The Planning and Equality Team offers disability training to ensure staff are fully equipped and feel confident in providing a responsive and accessible service to people with a disability.</p>
Action Measure	Ongoing
<p>4. We will work with relevant organisations to adopt a communication standard in line with the Accessible Communication Standard in England to ensure information is accessible for all disabled people including those with autism and those with communication disability.</p>	<p>Trusts have been actively engaging with Encompass to stress the need for accessibility for all users going forward with the new health and social care system.</p> <p>Responsibility for the Accessible Communication Standard has been assumed by SPPG and DOH colleagues. This is further to their previous work on a Regional Physical and Sensory Disability Strategy, which has led to the establishment of a Regional Disabled People's Forum. The Forum consists of Trust representatives, Dept. of Education, Dept. of Infrastructure, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and Service Users. The accessible communication standard work will be taken forward when a Regional Sensory Group is established.</p>

Section 2 – Supporting full participation of disabled people by improving accessibility

We have done much work over the years in enhancing the accessibility of health and social care services but disabled people continue to tell us that barriers to full accessibility remain. We are committed to working with disabled people on the initiatives listed below to improve accessibility for and participation of disabled people when accessing our buildings, information and services.

Actions to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people:

Action Measure	Ongoing. Awaiting Age Discrimination legislation
<p>5. We will work with disabled people to make sure we are ready for the introduction of new legislation including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Capacity. • Age Discrimination (Goods/Facilities/Services). 	<p>The Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016, when fully implemented, will bring together mental capacity and mental health law for those aged 16 years and over within a single piece of legislation. The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards as set out in the Mental Capacity Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 (MCA) have been in law since December 2019.</p> <p>Age Discrimination legislation has not progressed.</p>

Actions to encourage participation by disabled people in public life:

Action Measure	Completed
<p>6. We will work with representative groups to develop an accessibility checklist to ensure that health and social care facilities are considered accessible spaces for all.</p> <p>Accessibility checklist for HSC facilities developed in partnership with ECNI and voluntary and community sector.</p>	<p>The Trust has commenced a programme of work through AccessAble (a not-for-profit organisation) to enhance accessibility across the Royal Hospital site, in the first instance. This work has been made possible through a successful bid to Charitable Funds. The programme improves wayfinding for disabled patients/service users, carers, and visitors, in relation to one of our busiest acute sites.</p> <p>Detailed Access Guides will be produced for RVH site including Children's and Maternity Hospitals and these will include factual information about parking, the distance and route to the clinic, to the toilet facilities. The guides will be online and will feature facts, figures and photos and will be regularly updated. After extensive</p>

	onsite review by the contractors, the guides will be quality assured by disabled people to ensure that they are fit for purpose and inclusive.
Action Measure	Completed
<p>7. We will join the Equality Commission's 'Every Customer Counts' initiative to try and ensure that services and the physical environment are accessible.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Public commitment to 'Every Customer Counts' and formal sign up by all Trusts being a campaign signatory.</p>	<p>Every Customer Counts Sub-Group: Every Customer Counts is an initiative created and developed by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, with the aim of increasing access to services for people with a disability.</p> <p>A successful Every Customer Counts programme has been undertaken in an Eye Outpatient Diagnostic Unit on the Royal site. This is an initiative produced by the ECNI and the Trust secured people with disabilities to go on mystery patient exercises and provide feedback on their experience in trying to get to the unit from the car park. Their feedback has helped inform improvements in accessibility – a photo map, an online video and additional seating along the long corridor.</p> <p>A similar initiative will be rolled out in the Regional Fertility Clinic.</p> <p>Sighted Guide Scheme</p> <p>A new Sighted Guide Service has been launched at the Royal Victoria Hospital as part of Belfast Trust's continued commitment to deliver accessible services to disabled people. The service was launched on 3rd December 2021 - International Day for Persons with Disabilities to demonstrate our commitment to meeting our equality obligations, whilst also striving for best practice, ultimately to enhance our service user, patient and visitor experiences.</p> <p>The Sensory Support Team at Belfast Trust has trained more than 30 staff and 'Meet and Greet' volunteers as Sighted Guides, to assist a person who is blind or has a severe sight impairment to access their appointment.</p>

	Following the successful launch of the Sighted guide scheme, the Every Customer Counts steering group has been contacted to enquire about extending the service to a health and wellbeing centre which provides a range of ophthalmology clinics.
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Section 3 – Supporting full participation of disabled people in our workforce

We know that there continues to be gaps between the proportion of disabled people employed in health and social care compared with non-disabled people. We are committed to ensuring that disabled people are afforded equality of opportunity in respect of entering and continuing employment in health and social care. We will work in partnership with disabled people to make sure our employment policies and practices and working environments are as inclusive and accessible as possible. Please note the nature of the actions detailed below will relate directly to participation by disabled people in public life.

Action Measure	Completed
<p>8. We will work with staff, schools and disability organisations to promote health and social care as a disability friendly employer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of our work placements and employability programmes. Improved awareness of the Trust as a disability friendly employer through increased work placements and promotion at careers conventions. 	<p>HSC Trusts continue to work with the Disability Sector to promote itself as an Equal Opportunity Employer. The Trust works with partners in its Disability Steering Group including RNIB, RNID, Disability Action, Northern Ireland Rare Diseases partnership and Mencap to collaborate on initiatives to enhance employment opportunities for people with disabilities. All Trusts are actively exploring ways to encourage the participation of persons with a disability in the workplace. We work closely with the Department for Work and Pensions in implementing a range of programmes to support disabled employees.</p>
Action Measure	Ongoing
<p>9. We will develop guidance on supporting people with autism in employment in partnership with representative organisations.</p>	<p>Draft guidance for staff in relation to best practice both in terms of neurodiversity in the workplace and service delivery has been produced. There has been extensive engagement with staff in autism services and the community and voluntary sector. Further work will be taken forward to refine this draft and finalise the guidance during the next reporting period.</p>

Total actions Year 5	9	Total actions completed in Year 5	5	Actions ongoing	4
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Disability Action Plan 2018 – 2023
Local Actions
Progress Report Year 4
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Action Measure	Completed
<p>1 We will proactively engage with the Employers Forum on Disability to access resources.</p> <p>We will organise 2 briefings per year for staff on relevant and topical disability related issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership renewed. • 2 Briefings per year delivered by the Employers Forum on Disability. • Attendance at events as appropriate. <p>Increased staff awareness of the needs and experiences of disabled service users.</p>	<p>Relevant information briefings and updates from EFDNI are circulated to key members of staff and members of the Trust's Disability Steering Group.</p> <p>Employers for Disability continue to facilitate three awareness sessions providing important information to managers on supporting staff.</p>
<p>2 We will use our internal methods of communicating with staff e.g. The Hub, Chief Executive's Briefings, Team meetings etc. to raise awareness of national awareness days / weeks particularly in terms of hidden disabilities.</p> <p>□ Increased staff awareness and understanding of the needs of disabled people and how to better support disabled people.</p>	<p>Ongoing media, social media, newsletters etc. conducted by individual Trusts</p> <p>Belfast Trust produces 2 bi-annual bulletins - Equality Bites Newsletter and Good Relations Bulletin. Both proactively disseminated to all staff and approximately 600 on Section 75 consultee list including community and voluntary groups/ Council / Politicians and Ethnic Minority Groups etc. Positive feedback is regularly received on both.</p> <p>Articles are drafted for staff and published on the Trust intranet (The LOOP) whilst the Trust external website has a dedicated Equality section where Equality Screenings, Annual Progress Report, DAP/EAP and bi-annual newsletter/bulletin are published.</p>

Action Measure	Completed
<p>3 We will continue to engage with representative groups through our Disability Steering Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Steering Group. • Membership reviewed. • Quarterly Meetings. <p>Actions as appropriate.</p>	<p>The Trust's Disability Committee continues to meet on a quarterly basis and has been in situ since 2008, with considerable success in co-design. The group is co-chaired by the Trust's Equality and Corporate Planning Lead and the Chief Executive of Disability Action and comprises representatives from across the Trust and disabled people's representative organisations and disabled people.</p> <p>The purpose of the Disability Steering Group is to provide strategic leadership and direction to ensure that the Trust complies with its statutory and legislative requirements with regard to employment and service provision.</p> <p>The group have been responsible for overseeing change and improvements in accessibility and experience for people with disabilities – patients, visitors and staff.</p> <p>Engagement with the group has been instrumental in helping to inform the five year draft HSC Trust Disability Action Plan</p>
Action Measure	Completed
<p>4 Work strategically to promote best practice in the New Children's Hospital build.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work collaboratively with the design team to promote best practice: • Sensory friendly waiting areas. <p>□ Scope Changing places changing area.</p>	<p>Progress continues in the development of the New Children's Hospital and making it as welcoming and accessible as possible. The new hospital will have 155 beds, as opposed to 97 beds which is the current bed capacity and will have 10 floors. Work was done with Autism Initiatives and smaller dens will be developed to help children with ASD and provide them with safe spaces. The Design Team have advised that there will be 2 changing places units in the new hospital. Each room will have enough space to accommodate parents to sleep over.</p> <p>Oliver Jeffers, a local children's author, who now lives in USA and has provided access to his works to help wayfinding – each floor will have a different theme – ranging from deep blue sea to the space as the top floor and specific characters assigned to each floor. There will be play areas and coffee pods on each ward to allow children and parents to be able to socialise. A Children's hospital website will be launched in due course.</p>

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Action Measure	Completed
<p>5 We will continue to deliver and promote Disability Equality Training and Disability and Reasonable Adjustment training for managers.</p> <p>Staff awareness of disability equality issues increased so that they are better able to deliver a service to disabled users that meets their needs and to manage disabled staff.</p>	<p>Disability Awareness training continues to be a popular training course for Trust staff. Tailored sessions are also delivered for particular service areas upon request. The Planning and Equality Team have developed and delivered a facilitated disability training session via MS Teams as detailed in the Annual Progress Report.</p> <p>The launch of the Disability Policy and Regional HSC Disability Toolkit, assist both management and staff to further develop their knowledge and awareness regarding the area of Disability and advise them on how working with employees who have or develop a disability or long term illness whilst in employment.</p>
Action Measure	Completed
<p>6 We will promote our staff's health and wellbeing particularly in terms of mental ill health.</p> <p>We will link and align our Health and Wellbeing at Work Strategy and Action Plan to the Mental Health Charter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced understanding of how to maintain good mental health. • Enhanced awareness of mental health issues. • Supportive work environment for staff with mental ill health 	<p>Belfast Recovery College offers a range of free courses that are available for anyone with an interest in mental health and wellbeing including: service users, family members and staff.</p> <p>Creating and delivering courses together using the combined expertise of mental health professionals and peer trainers with real life experience, breaks down traditional barriers and allows people to learn together.</p> <p>The Trust's B Well website and app have a specific section on Mind Your Mind, which provide resources, self-help guides and training opportunities.</p> <p>Here 4 u is a Trust wellbeing initiative and offers free activities for staff to look after their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.</p>
Action Measure	Completed
<p>7 Together with disabled people and advocates, we will develop a training resource to feature in our training recounting personal experiences of accessing and using health and social care services in NI.</p>	<p>Northern Trust led on this video resource obo the region as previously detailed.</p>

PART B

Action Measure		Completed			
<p>8 We will work collaboratively with members of our Trust Board to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver disability equality training. • Consider a disability champion. • Create work shadowing opportunities • Increased awareness of disability equality issues. • Promotion of disability equality issues. • Offering experiences and improving opportunities 		<p>A Trust Non-Executive Director is the disability champion, as well as champion for involvement, equality and carers.</p>			
Total actions Year 5	8	Total actions completed in Year 5	8	Actions ongoing	0