

Local Government Staff Commission



Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties

Annual Progress Report

Contact details:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme 	Name: Paula Hamilton Telephone: 028 9031 3200 Email: paula.hamilton@lgsc.org.uk
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan 	As above <input type="checkbox"/> Name: Click or tap here to enter text. Telephone: Click or tap here to enter text. Email: Click or tap here to enter text.
Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:	N/A Click or tap here to enter text.
Signature:	Paula Hamilton

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

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

This report reflects progress made between April 2023 and March 2024

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

Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice

1. In 2023-24, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.

Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.

The LGSC has a dual role in relation to the statutory duties:

- Mainstreaming Equality of Opportunities and Good Relations into our own functions
- A broader influencing role in relation to the 11 Councils and Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE).

The LGSC continue to operate on hybrid working model.

Equality and Diversity Group

The LGSC continue to facilitate the Local Government Equality and Diversity Group. The purpose of the Equality and Diversity Group is to prioritise and influence equality, good relations and diversity initiatives across local government.

The Equality and Diversity Group is chaired by Rodger Wilson, Chief Executive of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council and membership is drawn from stakeholder bodies across the local government sector and includes Diversity Ambassadors, Equality Officers, Good Relations Officers and HR Officers in Councils, Trade Union and LGSC members, as well as representatives from external stakeholder bodies.

The Equality and Diversity Group has reviewed how it sets out its ambitions and how best it can support local government to build an inclusive culture that has a positive impact on the communities served. The draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024 – 2026 builds on what we have already learnt. It also takes account of internal and external changes and constraints. The Strategy has been informed by consultation/focus groups with partners. The outcome includes a continued focus on supporting and assisting Councils to ensure Equality, Diversity and Inclusion as an Civil Leader, an Employer and Service Provider.

Diversity Ambassador programme

The Diversity Ambassadors' programme is made up of Elected Members and Officers from the Councils.

Led by LGSC the Diversity Ambassadors have been instrumental in leading a progressive programme of work, demonstrating significant improvements in service delivery, communication methods and working practice. It was agreed that the LGSC would deliver a programme of best practice events and information sessions/networking events to learn from each other and subject experts. The programme was codesigned and delivered in collaboration with NILGA to ensure alignment with the NI Member Development Charter and the Member Development Skills Framework.

From April 2023 – March 2024 the following events have taken hosted:

Event 1 – November 2023 – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Setting the Context
Event 2 – March 2024 – Delivering for the Community: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Service Provision.

The LGSC is committed to arranging sign language interpreters at Diversity Ambassador events.

Equality Schemes

The LGSC support Councils/NIHE to promote best practice in Equality and Diversity issues; this includes facilitating the Statutory Duty Network. The LGSC, through the Statutory Duty Network supported the continued implementation of Equality Schemes through meetings and the group had presentations from the Equality Commission, S75 Progress Report, Education Authority, Beyond the Lanyard, Creating an Inclusive Workplace and the Equality Commission regularly provides detailed updates.

Through the Statutory Duty Network, a 'Guidance for Local Government Trans Equality' was issued by the LGSC and the full list of S75 consultees were invited to provide feedback.

Equality Initiatives and Events

The LGSC support Councils/NIHE to promote best practice in Health and Wellbeing issues; this includes facilitating the Health and Wellbeing Group. The LGSC, through the Health and Wellbeing Group support the continued implementation of Health and Wellbeing Initiatives through meetings and the group had presentations from DfC, Suicide Awareness and Money and Pension Services.

In recognition of Women's Health Week, a cancer awareness session was provided for female colleagues by Pink Ladies offered out to Councils/NIHE.

PART A

In recognition of Men's Health Week, a cancer awareness session was provided for male colleagues by Pink Ladies offered out to Councils/NIHE.

In recognition of World's Arthritis Day, an arthritis awareness session was provided and offered out to Councils/NIHE.

To support the regional Mental Health Strategy, Inspire Wellbeing hosted a webinar on behalf of the LGSC for line managers 'Managers Promoting Mental Health'.

With discussion with the Health and Wellbeing Group and in consultation with Councils' Human Resource departments a Maternity Information pack was created for line managers and employees.

LGSC staff are also encouraged to visit the dedicated Health and Wellbeing Hub on the intranet to explore the range of services, resources, initiatives, activities, procedures on offer that help support health and wellbeing in the workplace.

Health and Wellbeing News and Updates are also regularly circulated throughout the reporting period.

Career Progression in Local Government

Led by the LGSC research is being facilitated to make key findings and recommendations in relation to mentoring, talent management, succession planning, job evaluation and potential barriers to progression to senior positions within the local government sector.

The LGSC has facilitated a 'Boost Mentoring Programme' within Councils/NIHE. The programme created 29 mentoring partnerships.

The LGSC has been carrying out work to address these findings, work continues into 2024; these include:

1. Discussions on a quarterly basis throughout the year with a group of dedicated HR Managers focusing on talent management.
2. Roundtable discussion with Heads of Service of Human Resource on the issues faced within Councils/NIHE on a range of HR topics.

Within this reporting period, work committed on the Review of the Chief Executive Performance Appraisal, Draft Disciplinary Policy and Procedure for Local Government Employees and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy with further work to continue into 2024 once the consultation period ends for all documents.

PART A

- 2** Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2023-24 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

The LGSC operates a culture of open communication and participation where staff feel valued and involved.

Training is provided regularly to all staff and Commission Members.

Work has been completed on reviewing the Employment Monitoring form for all Councils.

.

3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes

No (go to Q.4)

Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

Equality screening and monitoring has resulted in targeted consultation as well as consultation processes becoming more accessible, increase awareness of presenting information in different formats.

BSL interpreters made available for events.

3a With regard to the change(s) made to policies, practices or procedures and/or service delivery areas, what **difference was made, or will be made, for individuals**, i.e. the impact on those according to Section 75 category?

Please provide any details and examples:

Evidence of accessibility being considered in advance, identify a particular need of Diversity Ambassadors and promoting Talent Management initials to support individuals who may consider themselves to have a disability.

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

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

PART A

Due to additions in screening documents, there has been increased awareness on individuality and accessibility e.g. BSL Interpreters.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

Other *(please specify and give details)*:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Section 2: Progress on Equality Scheme commitments and action plans/measures

Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)

4 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes, organisation wide

Yes, some departments/jobs

No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment

No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The LGSC Job Descriptions indicate a commitment to promote Equality of Opportunities and the Strategic Plan places a commitment to Equality of Opportunities.

PART A

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans 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:

Consideration to Section 75 duties is a key consideration. In the development of the LGSC's Strategic and Business Plan.

6 In the 2023-24 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? *(tick all that apply)*

- Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
- Yes, in some departments/jobs
- No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's corporate plan
- No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2023-24 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Equality of Opportunities and Good Relations are integrated to the LGSC Corporate Plan.

Equality action plans/measures

PART A

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

Actions completed: 2

Click or tap here to enter text.

Actions ongoing: 2

Click or tap here to enter text.

Actions to commence:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Majority of actions are ongoing/recurring actions.

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2023-24 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

No changes made during 2023/24 reporting period. Consideration will be given to reviewing plan in 2024/25.

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2023-24 reporting period, the following have been identified: (*tick all that apply*)

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

Action(s) to address the known inequality in a different way

Action(s) to address newly identified inequalities/recently prioritised inequalities

Measures to address a prioritised inequality have been completed

Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)

10 Following the initial notification of consultations, a targeted approach was taken – and consultation with those for whom the issue was of particular relevance: (*tick one box only*)

PART A

All the time

Sometimes

Never

- 11** Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2023-24 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

The LGSC facilitates and Chairs the Local Government Statutory Duty Network, comprising equality officers from the 11 Councils/NIHE. The group meet quarterly. The group have developed a close support network ensuring collaboration and assistance on all equality related issues.

The LGSC facilitates the Local Government Equality and Diversity Working Group, comprising of internal and external stakeholders.

- 12** In the 2023-24 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: (*tick all that apply*)

Face to face meetings

Focus groups

Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing

Questionnaires

Information by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation

Internet discussions

Telephone consultations

Other (*please specify*): Click or tap here to enter text.

PART A

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:

Click or tap here to enter text.

- 13** Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes

No

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The LGSC held a number of events for Commission Members, Diversity Ambassadors and Equality Officers throughout the year.

- 14** Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes

No

Not applicable – no commitment to review

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

N/A

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

2

- 16** Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2023-24:
- 1 Policy consultations conducted with **screening** assessment presented.
 - 0 Policy consultations conducted **with an equality impact assessment** (EQIA) presented.
 - 0 Consultations for an **EQIA** alone.

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

As discussed in 1.1 the consultations included:

Guidance of Local Government Trans Equality and suggested actions have been taken into consideration.

Work has also begun on the Chief Executive Appraisal Scheme, the Draft Disciplinary Policy and Procedure for Local Government Employees and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

- 18** Were any screening decisions (or equivalent initial assessments of relevance) reviewed following concerns raised by consultees? (*tick one box only*)

Yes

No concerns were raised

No

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

PART A

- 19** Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

- 20** From the Equality Scheme monitoring arrangements, was there an audit of existing information systems during the 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

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

Please provide any details:

Click or tap here to enter text.

- 21** In analysing monitoring information gathered, was any action taken to change/review any policies? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

PART A

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

- 22** Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2023-24 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

Not applicable

- 23** Please provide any details or examples of monitoring that has contributed to the availability of equality and good relations information/data for service delivery planning or policy development:

Facilitated by the LGSC research has been carried out on key findings and recommendations in relation to mentoring, talent management, succession planning, job evaluation and potential barriers to progression to senior positions within local government.

Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)

- 24** Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2023-24, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

All staff have access to the LGSC's Equality Scheme. New staff receive S75 training as part of their induction process as well as equality and diversity issues and good relations.

- 25** Please provide **any examples** of relevant training shown to have worked well, in that participants have achieved the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve the stated objectives:

Training provided by the LGSC over the year has received positive feedback.

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

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2023-24, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

During the reporting period virtual provision continued to support individuals who do not wish to meet in person. Virtual information is on both the LGSC's service and events, displayed on Staywell Hub.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

- 27** How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2023-24?

Insert number here: 0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Section 3: Looking Forward

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

2025.

The LGSC is due to be dissolved in March 2027.

- 29** Are there areas of the Equality Scheme arrangements (screening/consultation/training) your organisation anticipates will be focused upon in the next reporting period? *(please provide details)*

The LGSC is due to be dissolved in March 2027.

- 30** In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

PART A

- Employment
- Goods, facilities and services
- Legislative changes
- Organisational changes/ new functions
- Nothing specific, more of the same
- Other (please state):

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

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

Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
All	Partially achieved	Not achieved

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

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

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs ⁱ	Outcomes / Impact ⁱⁱ
National ⁱⁱⁱ	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Regional ^{iv}	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Local ^v	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

PART B

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Commission members received training on Good Governance	Rolled out to all Commission members	Evaluation of the training revealed that members found it useful
2	Diversity Ambassador Programme training	Rolled out to all 11 Councils to appoint Diversity Ambassadors both officer and elected members	Together all Diversity Ambassadors will promote equality, good relations and diversity as well as act as points of contacts for advice, guidance and support
	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

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

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
2	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

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

PART B

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
2	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

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

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
2	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

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

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
2	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

PART B

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	Review our LGSC's website	Availability of providers and cost
2	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

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

(a) Qualitative

Click or tap here to enter text.

(b) Quantitative

Click or tap here to enter text.

PART B

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

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

Please select

If yes please outline below:

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

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

PART B

ii **Outcome / Impact** – what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action?

Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training.

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

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

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