

# Equality Action Plan - **Draft** 2017 - 2022



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## **Acknowledgement**

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who participated in the development of our draft Section 75 Action Plan– both those we have engaged with over the years and those who attended the regional stakeholder event in January 2017. This invaluable input and expertise has helped to identify priorities and to shape our final draft Plans for consultation.

## 1. Welcome

Welcome to our new Equality Action Plan. This Plan sets out the actions the five Health and Social Care Trusts and the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service will take forward collaboratively over the next five years. The Plan includes actions aimed at:

- Simplifying our Section 75 processes
- Promoting equality in our services
- Supporting our Staff

The principles of *fairness, equality, respectfulness and dignity* will inform our work.

Actions and priorities in this Plan have been informed by our audit of inequalities. We have consulted widely with an extensive range of stakeholders to inform the content of the Plan and to identify our key priorities. Many of the actions in the Plan are not resource dependent and are intended to make sure that the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations are mainstreamed in existing programmes of work. For further information please see the list of contacts in each organisation on page 17.

## 2. Working in partnership

In October 2016, the then Health Minister, Michelle O'Neill launched her 10-year vision to transform the current health and social care system. Her report set out the need for change and made a commitment to work in partnership with service users and carers to realise that change. Building on the good practice that already exists across health and social care we will adopt creative and innovative ways to maximise involvement in the challenging times ahead. We will continue to work with individuals, representative groups and our trade unions to make sure that our actions make a real difference both for our service users and for our staff.

In the spirit of true partnership working we propose to create a Joint Consultative Forum so that we, as HSC Trusts, continue to work closely with the Equality Commission for NI, the Community Relations Council and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission in taking forward this Plan.

### 3. Review of our first Plans and achievements to date

As we are at the end of the three years implementation of our first equality plans we have carried out a review to consider what actions to include in our new plans. In carrying out the review we considered what actions had already been delivered and if intended outcomes had been achieved. We also looked at a range of new research and the issues that have been raised with us during consultations and engagements carried out over the last three years.

Substantial progress has been made since the Trusts published their first Plans on 1 May 2014. For details of what we have done so far, please refer to our respective Annual Progress Reports which are available online and in alternative formats on request.

[www.belfasttrust.hscni.net](http://www.belfasttrust.hscni.net)

[nias.hscni.net](http://nias.hscni.net)

[www.northerntrust.hscni.net](http://www.northerntrust.hscni.net)

[www.setrust.hscni.net](http://www.setrust.hscni.net)

[www.southerntrust.hscni.net](http://www.southerntrust.hscni.net)

[www.westerntrust.hscni.net](http://www.westerntrust.hscni.net)

## 4. How we developed our Plan

We wanted to engage with a wide range of key stakeholders on the development of our new Plan. A regional stakeholder event was held on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2017 providing the opportunity to engage with a wide range of service users, carers, voluntary and community groups and trade union representatives. We came to the event with a “blank canvas” and to ensure that our Plan was developed in partnership with a wide range of participants. This is in keeping with the clear direction set out in Health and Wellbeing: 2026 Delivering Together.

A copy of the outcome report from this event and a DVD can be found on the Trusts’ websites or by contacting any of the Equality Units – contact details on page 17.

## 5. What is in our Equality Action Plan

The following tables outline our actions for the next five years. This Plan is designed to be flexible and responsive to changing circumstances and needs. While the majority of our actions are identified as beginning in year one and two it is important to note that realising the actions may take the full lifetime of the Plan. Our Plan will be reviewed on an on-going basis and when the Equality Commission publishes their statement on key inequalities in health. We will report annually via our S75 Annual Progress Report to the Equality Commission for NI which is submitted at the end of August each year and available on all of our websites or by contacting the Equality Units.

## Section 1 – Simplifying our Section 75 processes

Feedback from consultees has indicated that implementation of our Equality Schemes tends to be process-driven. We recognise the value of having a legislative framework that promotes equality of opportunity and good relations however we want to ensure that the focus is on outcomes for people within the nine Section 75 equality categories and making a positive difference for them. The following actions are therefore aimed at simplifying the process.

Actions	Measures	Timescale
We will develop Screening and Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Tool Kit to guide staff through the process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A regional toolkit available for policy and decision makers.</li> <li>• Decision-making more transparent and better influenced as a result of more robust and regionally consistent screening/EQIAs.</li> </ul>	Year 1
We will review our staff training to ensure best practice in screening and EQIAs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to date training programme for all policy makers across health and social care.</li> <li>• Skilled staff, policy leads and decision makers.</li> <li>• Consistent and effective approach in the training programme across all Trusts.</li> <li>• Effective compliance with the S75 Equality Duties.</li> </ul>	Year 2
We will develop good practice guidance on effective engagement, consultation, co-design and co-production to include best use of a range of methods including social media and Citizen’s Space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance on effective engagement in place for health and social care staff that links with Personal and Public Involvement (PPI) best practice.</li> <li>• Citizens/people closer to decision making and offering innovative ways of engagement and involvement</li> </ul>	Year 1

Actions	Measures	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent approach used across health and social care.</li> <li>• More effective and timely engagement with stakeholders and more involvement in addressing key inequalities.</li> </ul>	
We will set up a Regional Consultative Forum to work in partnership with the Equality Commission, Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Community Relations Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two meetings annually between health and social care sector and the respective Commissions.</li> <li>• Better communication and collaboration between Equality Commission, Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Community Relations Commission</li> <li>• Better partnership working to optimise outcomes for S75 groups.</li> </ul>	Year 1
We will develop and implement a communication strategy to ensure that stakeholders are aware of Trust Equality Units, their functions and how they can be engaged on equality and human rights issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy in place to improve communication.</li> <li>• Raised awareness among Section 75 groups of Trust Equality Units and how they can be involved in and influence Trust equality agenda.</li> </ul>	Year 2
We will develop a checklist to make sure Equality, Disability and Human Rights are at the heart of procurement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Checklist developed and adhered to by staff with responsibility for buying goods and services.</li> <li>• Raised awareness among staff of equality and human rights obligations in procurement process.</li> <li>• S75 and human rights issues identified at an early stage of procurement process.</li> </ul>	Year 2

Actions	Measures	Timescale
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional event to raise awareness of potential implications of the new legislation on health and social care provision.</li> <li>• Better understanding amongst staff on the implications of the legislation.</li> </ul>	Year 2

## Section 2 – Promoting equality in our services

While consultees were positive about all the work that has been done to date to promote equality of opportunity they provided many suggestions on how to improve equality of access to health and social care services. We know that the people who use our services come from many different cultures, communities, and backgrounds and being responsive to the diverse range of needs is a responsibility we take very seriously. 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.

Actions	Measures	Timescale
We will review our equality training programme in collaboration with service users, carers and their advocates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent staff training and awareness raising, co-produced and delivered, where appropriate, across health and social care.</li> <li>• Raised awareness among staff of the best way to promote equality of opportunity for service users.</li> </ul>	Year 2
We will work with staff and service users to review how information is produced in alternative formats.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Library of information in alternative formats available for health and social care staff and available on websites for service users and carers.</li> <li>• Staff have better access to alternative format resources.</li> <li>• Service users and carers have better access to accessible information.</li> </ul>	Year 5
We will work with service users, carers and representative organisations to ensure Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• User friendly HSC websites containing up to date information.</li> <li>• Better communication with service users, carers and</li> </ul>	Year 2

Actions	Measures	Timescale
Websites are accessible, user friendly and easy to navigate.	the public.	
We will engage with the Regional HSC Interpreting Service to establish a process that ensures access to interpreting support when HSC practitioners refer into the voluntary sector for services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear, consistent process established.</li> <li>• Improved access to interpreting support when referred to voluntary or community sector service.</li> </ul>	
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 Ombudman’s office.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training on a human rights based approach to complaints management delivered to all staff who deal with complaints.</li> <li>• Complaints resolution process that embeds human rights values and principles.</li> <li>• Improved satisfaction with health and social care complaints management process.</li> </ul>	Year 2
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent up to date staff guidance developed in partnership with LGBT organisations.</li> <li>• Enhanced awareness of access barriers for LGBT service users and carers.</li> <li>• Improved satisfaction with health and social care services for LGBT service users and carers.</li> </ul>	Year 2
We will work in partnership with Black and Minority Ethnic Groups to develop guidance for health and social care staff on meeting the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff guidance co-produced with BME communities and representative organisations.</li> <li>• Raised profile of needs of BME older people.</li> <li>• Increased awareness among staff of the needs of</li> </ul>	Year 2

Actions	Measures	Timescale
needs of older people in Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities and ensure access to services.	<p>BME older people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved access to services for BME older people.</li> </ul>	
We will work to progress our Good Relations responsibilities and ensure all Trusts have a Good Relations Strategy in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear and workable framework in all Trusts – which formalises the commitment to the promotion of good relations</li> <li>Improved good relations among staff and service users.</li> <li>Improved communication and engagement with key stakeholders.</li> <li>An environment where staff feel comfortable at work and service users and carers feel welcome when using health and social care services.</li> </ul>	Year 5
We will co-design a staff information booklet in partnership with representatives from the Traveller Community aimed at raising staff awareness and understanding of Traveller History and Cultural.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff information booklet available for all staff working across health and social care.</li> <li>Increased staff awareness and understanding of traveller cultural</li> <li>Provision of culturally sensitive services that take account of Traveller needs</li> </ul>	Year 2
We will hold an annual event to showcase best practice in equality and diversity within the health and social care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Equality and Diversity event</li> <li>Health and social care seen as a sector that promotes equality and diversity</li> <li>Improved awareness of equality and diversity best practice models</li> <li>Best practice in equality and diversity shared across health and social care and beyond.</li> </ul>	Year 1 and annually

### Section 3 –Supporting our staff

We recognise that our staff are our most valuable resource and that they deserve to be treated with dignity and respect and can expect to experience equality of opportunity and good relations in the workplace. Similarly every member of Trust staff shares a responsibility to promote equality of opportunity and good relations with their co-workers, service users and carers. The following actions will 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	Measures	Timescale
We will work with regional recruitment colleagues and Shared Services to ensure equality is promoted within recruitment and selection policy and procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of best practice across health and social care.</li> <li>• Consistent approach to the management of recruitment.</li> <li>• More effective use of resources.</li> </ul>	Year 1
We will work with regional colleagues and representative organisations to support the development of a Regional Gender Identity and Expression Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy in place that promotes an inclusive workplace for Transgender and Non-Binary people.</li> <li>• Transgender and Non-Binary people feel comfortable to express their gender identity and can fulfil their full potential and fully contribute to the workplace.</li> <li>• Promotion of best practice across the all health and social care organisations.</li> <li>• Raised awareness among staff that discrimination against transgender and non-binary people is not acceptable.</li> </ul>	Year 1

Action	Measures	Timescale
We will simplify our Recruitment and Selection Process through development of an easy-to-follow information leaflet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy to follow information leaflet available for people applying to work in health and social care to include overview of process, tips for successful application form, interview preparation and a section on frequently asked questions.</li> <li>• Raised awareness of process among applicants.</li> <li>• Improved access for hard to reach groups and those unfamiliar with the health and social care recruitment and selection process.</li> </ul>	Year 1
We will work in collaboration with relevant stakeholders to extend the remit of our Employability Schemes to enhance employment opportunities for marginalised S75 groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employability scheme available to other marginalised S75 groups.</li> <li>• Improved employment opportunities for marginalised S75 groups.</li> <li>• Access to employment is improved for marginalised S75 groups.</li> </ul>	Year 1 scope Years 2-5
We will work with relevant organisations and Trade Unions to develop best practice in supporting our staff who are victims of Domestic Violence/Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best practice model established that with support mechanisms for staff experiencing Domestic Violence/Abuse.</li> <li>• Improved support for staff who are victims of Domestic Violence/Abuse.</li> <li>• Raised awareness among staff of the best way to support colleagues who are victims of Domestic Violence/Abuse.</li> </ul>	Year 3
We will make sure that our staff who are carers are supported in the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent regional approach established to support carers in our workforce.</li> </ul>	Year 3

Action	Measures	Timescale
workplace so that they can continue with their caring role.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved support for staff who are carers.</li> <li>• Raised awareness among staff of the best way to support staff who are carers.</li> </ul>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent regional approach to ensuring all health and social care environments are welcoming to everyone.</li> </ul>	Year 2
We will launch our new E-Learning Module and Equality and Diversity Staff Training Manual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E-Learning Training Programme for staff and managers and Equality and Diversity Staff Training Manual available for all health and social care staff.</li> <li>• Marketing strategy to increase uptake of training.</li> <li>• Improved access to equality and diversity training for those with access to computers.</li> <li>• Improved access to training for staff who do not have access to a computer through provision of the Staff Training Manual.</li> <li>• Improved uptake of equality training.</li> </ul>	Year 1
We will ensure compliance with any new legislation governing gender pay reporting and address any inequalities identified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pay structure that ensures fairness and equity in pay and reward arrangements.</li> </ul>	Year 1

Action	Measures	Timescale
We will improve awareness of options for flexible working arrangements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible, easy to follow information available to all staff on flexible working arrangements.</li> <li>• Improved awareness of and access to of flexible working options for staff with caring responsibilities and for those with disabilities.</li> <li>• Promotion of diversity in the workplace.</li> <li>• Improved health and wellbeing of staff.</li> </ul>	Year 1
We will revise Equality, Human Rights and Disability guidelines for our Non-Executive Trust Board members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to date guidelines in place for Non-Executive Directors</li> <li>• Increased awareness among Non-Executive Directors of statutory compliance and responsibilities.</li> </ul>	Year 1 and ongoing

## Equality Teams in your area: Contact Details

<p><b>Orla Barron</b> Equality Lead</p>	<p><b>Belfast HSC Trust</b> Tel: 028 9504 6567 Mobile / Text 0782 514 6432 Email: <a href="mailto:orla.barron@belfasttrust.hscni.net">orla.barron@belfasttrust.hscni.net</a></p>
<p><b>Alison Irwin</b> Head of Equality</p>	<p><b>Northern HSC Trust</b> Tel: 028 276 61377 Mobile / Text: 0782 566 7154 E-mail: <a href="mailto:equality.unit@northerntrust.hscni.net">equality.unit@northerntrust.hscni.net</a></p>
<p><b>Lynda Gordon</b> Equality Lead</p>	<p><b>Southern HSC Trust</b> Tel: 028 3756 4151 Email: <a href="mailto:lynda.gordon@southerntrust.hscni.net">lynda.gordon@southerntrust.hscni.net</a></p>
<p><b>Susan Thompson</b> Equality Lead</p>	<p><b>South Eastern HSC Trust</b> Tel: 028 9151 2177 Text phone: 028 91510137 Email: <a href="mailto:Susan.thompson@setrust.hscni.net">Susan.thompson@setrust.hscni.net</a></p>
<p><b>Siobhan O'Donnell</b> Head of Equality &amp; Involvement</p>	<p><b>Western HSC Trust</b> Tel: 028 8283 5278 Email: <a href="mailto:Equality.Admin@westerntrust.hscni.net">Equality.Admin@westerntrust.hscni.net</a></p>
<p><b>Michelle Lemon</b> Assistant Director: Equality, PPI &amp; Patient Experience</p>	<p><b>Northern Ireland Ambulance Service</b> Tel: 028 9040 0999 Text phone: 028 9040 0871 Email: <a href="mailto:michelle.lemon@nias.hscni.net">michelle.lemon@nias.hscni.net</a></p>