

DEPARTMENT FOR THE ECONOMY



Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report 2018-19

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Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at
Equality Scheme submitted to EQNI - publication is pending subject to acceptance by EQNI

Signature: Owen Gillespie (Department for the Economy, Equality Officer)



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 2018 and March 2019

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 2018-19, 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 NI Executive gave a commitment in the Stormont House Agreement to reduce the number of government departments from twelve to nine. As a result, the Department for the Economy (DfE) was established in May 2016. DfE combines the functions of the former Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) and the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL), with the exception of the Employment Service which is now part of the Department for Communities.

The draft Programme for Government (PfG) sets out the vision, outcomes and key actions agreed by the Executive as a basis for the forward work programme for the Northern Ireland Civil Service and its key partners. It is a programme which is designed to tackle the biggest issues facing our society, and its ambition is continually to improve the things that matter most to people. The PfG is characterised by a determination to improve wellbeing for all, through tackling disadvantage and driving economic growth.

During the period of this report the draft PfG set out 12 Outcomes which, taken together, best describe the society in which we wish to live. The Department is responsible for leading on the delivery of three of the 12 Outcomes, namely:

1. We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy;
5. We are an innovative, creative society where people can fulfil their potential; and
6. We have more people working in better jobs.

Progress towards the Outcomes in the PfG is measured primarily through a series of population level Indicators, with each Outcome having its own set of supporting Indicators. The Department leads on ten of these economic indicators.

Given the alignment between the two documents, the final Northern Ireland Industrial Strategy will be the effective delivery mechanism for the economic PfG Outcomes and Indicators.

Production of the Department's Equality Scheme for the period 2016-21 has been delayed due to the ongoing absence of Ministers. In order to avoid further delay, the Department released drafts of an Equality Scheme, Audit of Inequalities and Disability Action Plan for public consultation during this reporting period. The consultation period closed on 16 April 2019 and, following consideration of responses by consultees, some amendments were made to the Equality Scheme. The Equality Scheme, Audit of Inequalities and Disability Action Plan were submitted to the Equality Commission for consideration and formal acceptance on 1 July 2019.

In addition to the commitments contained in the Equality Scheme, the Department's Six Monthly Assurance Statement includes an assurance, given by all heads of Division, that Divisions, Units and Branches within the Department that Staff have been made aware of the organisation's Health and Safety Policy and Equality Policies and that these are being complied with, and that all Divisions conduct S.75 equality screening and, if appropriate, Equality Impact Assessments, on all new policies/amendments to existing policies, both internal and external, in line with Section 75 of the NI Act 1998.

The process of equality screening and the robustness of future decisions taken will continue to develop and improve throughout the Department. The need for the collection and use of data from a variety of sources to inform screening decisions is now embedded in the process. Increasing use of informal discussions with Section 75 representative groups has also assisted the process of arriving at screening findings.

The Department's Equality Unit is responsible for co-ordinating the Department's Section 75 activity. The Unit supports managers and staff throughout the Department, guiding them through their equality responsibilities and ensuring that the equality duties are to the fore in all policy considerations.

DfE has screened policies and built equality issues into policies and programmes from an early stage of policy development. We also recognise the importance of ensuring all our policies comply with the Human Rights Act 1998. During 2018/19, equality screening exercises resulted in 7 policies being screened out. There were no full Equality Impact Assessments carried out during the reporting period.

Links to DfE Policies screened during 2018/19 are provided below:

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/student-fees-and-education-regulations-amendment-2019>

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/draft-gas-designation-pipelines-order-northern-ireland-2019>

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/equality-screening-citb-ni-training-levy-order-2018>

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/equality-screening-future-northern-ireland-non-domestic-renewable-heat-incentive-scheme>

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/equality-screening-funding-model-higher-level-apprenticeships>

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/student-fees-amounts-amendment-regulations-northern-ireland-2017>

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/continuation-northern-ireland-renewable-heat-incentive-cost-control-measures>

The Department's Health and Safety Team within Corporate Services branch, ensures that Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) are a key element of office Risk Assessment for managers, whether they have a member of staff with mobility/other related issues or not. If a PEEP is required it will be agreed with such staff.

Throughout the reporting year 2018/19 Corporate Services Health and Safety team made themselves available to assist managers in assessing a range of workplace reasonable adjustments. Requests included specialised seating, variable height desks, and consideration of suitable working arrangements. Phased return to work was also granted to a number of staff who returned after lengthy sick absences. In a small number of instances referrals were made to the NICS Occupational Health Service, where additional advice on particular cases was sought, including for example, recommendations for provision of special equipment to assist individual members of staff to resume their duties.

Public Appointments

DfE, in conjunction with all other Departments, continues to work towards achieving targets agreed by the NI Executive in February 2016 to achieve gender equality (in aggregated public appointments) by 2020/21. The number of female applicants rose from 39% in 17/18 to 40.3% in 2018/2019.

We are continually committed to looking at new ways to increase the numbers of applications from people with disabilities, people from ethnic minorities and younger people. Staff representatives from the Department's Public Appointments Unit (PAU) take part in diversity related initiatives, including workshops led by the Commissioners for Public appointments in Northern Ireland (CPANI), participating on the DfE Diversity Group, and attending the cross-departmental Public Appointment Forum.

The General Consumer Council NI and Southern Regional College Boards of DfE sponsored bodies have also agreed to participate in the 2019 Queen's University

Graduate School Mentoring Scheme - aimed at encouraging participation rates of people new to the public appointment arena and to make public bodies more representative of the communities they serve.

During 2018/19 DfE ran two open Board Chair competitions and appointed Board Chairs for the Northern Regional College and South West Regional College. A total of 31 applications were received – 23 male (74%) and 26 female (39%). A new member's competition was also run for NI Screen. A total of 52 applications were received – 31 male (60%) and 21 female (40%).

The Department continues to use Twitter, LinkedIN, Facebook and Mailing Lists to publicise our new public appointment competitions. We are continually looking for new ways to promote DfE's competitions and enhance outreach for equality.

In 2018/19 the Department's PAU distributed "Target Audience Woman" flyers at the following events – International Women's Day, Woman in Leadership, CEO Breakfast Forum, NI Women's Leadership and Business of Diversity Lunch. Also, PAU issued 4000 "Target Audience Women" posters to libraries and GP Surgeries for promotion purposes. The Unit continually looks for similar opportunities both internally and externally.

In 2018/19 PAU met with the Politics Plus Peace Programme to discuss their outreach initiatives, which are closely linked to DfE. PAU also participated in some of their sessions later in the year.

DfE Diversity Group

The DfE Diversity Group continued to meet on a quarterly basis. The Diversity Group was established to:

- promote and encourage good diversity practice
- consider all diversity/inclusion issues as they affect staff in the Department
- identify actions to enhance the way we work with each other
- support the DfE Diversity Champion and DfE Racial Champion

The Diversity Group's membership is representative of job roles directly related to equality and diversity, Trade Union Side and volunteers who have a particular interest in diversity.

During 2018/19 the Diversity Group published 29 diversity related articles on the Department's Intranet site, and to mark International Men's and International Women's Day arranged for 2 seminars for staff covering flexible working and shared parental leave.

Contact with the Voluntary and Community Sector continues through various fora for the benefit of both the sector and the Department.

Employment Rights Legislation

The promotion of equality continues to be fundamental in the Department's efforts to provide an effective employment rights framework for all workers in Northern Ireland. All new employment legislation undergoes extensive public consultation at the draft stage.

Representatives of Section 75 groups are included in all consultations and specific representation is sought depending on the nature of the proposals. New employment rights policies are "screened" to determine the impact they will have on the promotion of equality of opportunity and the promotion of good relations within the terms of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. During 2018/19 there were no new employment rights consultations.

The Employment Agency Inspectorate

The Employment Agency Inspectorate (EAI) sits within the Employment Relations Policy and Legislation Branch. The EAI employs two permanent employment agency inspectors. The Inspectorate continues to implement a risk-based approach to inspection during 2018/19, in order to ensure compliance with the Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005 (the Conduct Regulations), particularly in respect of those agencies who dealt with work seekers who were most vulnerable to exploitation.

Between April 2018 and March 2019, 35 inspections and investigations were carried out. The EAI conducted 3 information visits to new or existing agencies to provide advice on the requirements under the Conduct Regulations.

The EAI also sits on the DoJ Organised Task Force on Immigration and Human Trafficking. Membership of this body allows the EAI to maintain an awareness and understanding of the work being carried out by other investigative bodies.

Migrant Workers

The Department is a member of the Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership (NISMP) which is one of a number of similar partnerships within the UK that takes its membership from the statutory, non-statutory, and voluntary and community sectors. Throughout 2018/19, the Department continued to work with the NISMP to ensure that Northern Ireland is a welcoming place for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

The (NISMP) Partnership is a multi-agency, cross-party and cross-departmental body working to reflect the regionally specific needs of Northern Ireland in the development and implementation of UK immigration policy. It works across spheres of government, private and voluntary sectors in the region to ensure that Northern Ireland is a welcoming place for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, and supports the retention and integration of people in a way which meets skills and labour requirements to support future economic growth. The Partnership is an independent

body made up of relevant stakeholders and is hosted by its lead partner, the Northern Ireland Local Government Association, and is funded by the Home Office.

The NISMP aims to work in partnership with others, including the Department, in order to help deliver Northern Ireland's own distinct economic, welfare and labour force requirements. This has been facilitated through the work of three NISMP sub-groups:

- Welfare;
- Integration and Social Cohesion; and
- Labour and Skills.

Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme 2014-2020

The Strategic Aim of the ESF Programme 2014-2020 is to combat poverty and enhance social inclusion by reducing economic inactivity and to increase the skills base of those currently in work and future potential participants in the workforce.

The programme funds activity to enhance and extend employment opportunities, in particular for those groups at a disadvantage in the labour market who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or economically inactive. There is also a focus on supporting young people aged 16-24 who are not in employment, education or training and on people with a disability.

In addition, the programme includes the Community Family Support Programme (CFSP). CFSP provides a wraparound family intervention support and employability mentoring service that aims to support all family members and break the cycle of intergenerational unemployment and associated poverty in communities (Priority 1 and 2). A separate Apprenticeships priority is also funded (Priority 3).

Projects are selected for funding via open and publicly advertised calls for applications. In Call 1, under ESF Priorities 1 & 2 of the Programme, 65 projects were supported. Following a Second Call for projects under ESF Priorities 1 & 2, DfE issued funding offers to 69 successful applicants covering the period 01 April 2018 – 31 March 2022. There are currently 66 projects remaining in Call 2.

The ESF programme has been developed in line with the Section 75 requirements, and was subject to equality screening as a customary part of the policy development process. Policies on which the ESF programme is based have been subject to equality screening. Also, as part of the application process, applicants for funding were also required to demonstrate their commitment to equality and equal opportunities.

An electronic S75 survey has been developed for Call 2 projects. The URL for this survey and detailed instructions are provided to participants by the organisations that provide their training/support. Participants are encouraged to complete and submit a return to assist in the ongoing review of the Programme and inform future funding priorities.

Training for Success

The Training for Success Programme (TfS) provides training for young people who have not yet found full time employment. It is designed to enable young people to progress to higher level training, further education, or employment. It provides training to address personal and social development needs, develop occupational and employability skills and, where necessary, Essential Skills. The structure and components of the programme are detailed below:-

TfS consists of the following four strands: Skills for your Life, Skills for Work level 1, Skills for Work level 2, and Skills for Work level 3. While the Department provides a guarantee of a training place to those who are unemployed and in the 16 & 17 year old age group, there is extended eligibility criteria in TfS for those aged under 22 with a disability; and under 24 for those young people who qualify under the Children (Leaving Care) Act (NI) (2002).

Participants will receive an entitlement of 104 weeks on the Training for Success programme, or up to 156 weeks for those with a disability who have an identified need for additional time. Suppliers are required to maximise the outcomes available to young people and progress them through the strands at a pace which is appropriate to individual needs. The length of time which individuals will spend on each strand of the programme will be determined by the individual need as ascertained by the initial assessment process. This is specified on a Personal Training Plan for all individual participants.

Skills for Your Life

This strand is designed to address the personal and development needs of young people who have disengaged from learning and/or have significant obstacles. It is designed to address the need for more focused provision for the significant minority of young people for whom Skills for Work is not suitable.

This group is difficult to define, such is the range and complexity of individual characteristics displayed by the group. The young people often have multiple barriers to education, training or employment, for example regular alcohol, solvent or drug related abuse or dependencies; health related problems; homelessness or family problems; second or third generation unemployed; involvement in illegal or anti-social criminal activities. In addition, most of these young people have Essential Skills needs, poor records of attendance and achievement in school, as well as attitudinal problems to education, training and / or employment.

Skills for Work level 1

This strand is designed to help young people gain skills and qualifications at level 1, to be able to gain employment, to progress to Skills for Work level 2 or ApprenticeshipsNI.

Participants are offered two pathways on this strand, as specified below:

Work sampling: for those participants who are unclear about a preferred occupational area, there should be a period of work sampling followed by professional and technical training in their chosen occupational area; and / or

Professional and technical training: for those who have already chosen an occupational area and for those who choose an area after a period of job sampling.

Skills for Work level 2

This strand is designed to ensure that those who have been assessed as being capable of achieving at level 2, but who have not yet secured employment, are prepared for future progression to employment as an apprentice.

Skills for Work level 3

To ensure that those who have achieved all targeted qualifications in the Skills for Work level 2 provision and who have residual training entitlement and have not yet progressed to employment can develop level 3 knowledge.

Additional Learning Support

Additional learning support is the direct responsibility of the Supplier. Support services are offered directly to participants by qualified and experienced staff or via external providers with the expertise to deliver the support required.

Such support is targeted at participants who have significant barriers to learning and employment, and/or require additional input of resources in terms of training time, equipment, or support, but do not fall into the disabled category.

Traineeships

A new Northern Ireland strategy for youth training (Generating Our Success) was published in June 2015. The new system, to be introduced from September 2020, will deliver a step-change to the youth training system at level 2, which will be branded 'Traineeships'.

ApprenticeshipsNI

This programme is open to those who have attained the minimum school-leaving age, are either entering or already in employment and contracted to work a minimum of 21 hours per week. Apprentices follow a national training framework which leads to attainment of a competence based qualification at level 2 or 3, Essential Skills and a knowledge based qualification. The frameworks are agreed with the relevant Industry Representative Bodies (through employer-led Sectoral Partnerships) to meet the need of each particular sector.

In the case of apprentices aged 16-24, the Department for the Economy funds 100% of the cost of off-the-job training. Funding for apprentices aged 25 years and over is focused on priority economic areas and set at fifty percent of that available for 16-24 year olds.

Higher Level Apprenticeships

This programme provides an all age service for Apprenticeships at levels 4, 5, 6 and 7, with training provided through a local FE College, HE Institution or CAFRE. The Department for the Economy funds 100% of the cost of the off-the-job training for all eligible participants, and disability support may be payable to provide additional resources in terms of training time, specialist equipment or other support in order for participants to benefit fully from training. The programme is part funded through the European Social Fund at levels 4 and 5.

Disability Support

For both ApprenticeshipsNI and Training for Success, Disability Support is available from Disability Support Suppliers (DSS) separately contracted by the Department. Training Suppliers work with these organisations to ensure that appropriate arrangements are put in place to assist participants in their training and in the achievement of the best possible outcomes, where such support is deemed to be of benefit to the participant. It should be noted that not every participant with a disability will require such support.

In addition, disability supplements or enhanced weekly training fees may be payable to Training Suppliers to provide additional resources in terms of training time, specialist equipment or other support in order for participants to benefit fully from training.

Assured Skills

Assured Skills is a joint programme between the Department for the Economy and Invest Northern Ireland which seeks to ensure the delivery of a range of activities and interventions guaranteeing potential inward investment companies, or existing companies wishing to expand, that NI has the ability to satisfy their future skills and training needs.

During 2017-18, Assured Skills provided 7 Academy programmes. A total of 133 applicants were invited onto the academies, comprising 102 males and 31 females. 10 applicants were from individuals who declared they came from a minority ethnic background.

The following statement is contained within the Assured Skills letters of offer to our clients:

“The Client shall comply with the relevant statutory provisions from time to time in force in Northern Ireland imposing obligations on the Client in relation to discrimination on the grounds of religious belief, political opinion (including in relation to section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998), racial group, marital status, age, sexual orientation, gender, disability and having dependants”.

Bridge to Employment

Bridge to Employment is a pre-employment programme aimed at providing customised training courses to equip unemployed people, as well as those returning

to the labour market, with the skills necessary to compete for new employment opportunities on an equal basis with others.

During 2018/19, Bridge to Employment provided 15 programmes. A total of 60 people participated on the programmes, 46 male (77%) and 14 female (23%). No participants declared that they had a disability.

Both the Assured Skills and Bridge to Employment programmes are open to applicants irrespective of age, gender, disability, ethnicity or community background.

Skills Focus and InnovateUs The two employer support programmes are skills development programme funded by the Department and delivered across Northern Ireland by the (six) FE colleges. In delivering the InnovateUs and Skills Focus programmes, colleges focus on providing support to employers; identifying future skills needs; collaboration with employers/skills groups; and being both proactive and reactive to employer needs.

Skills Focus and InnovateUs are open to all companies irrespective of age, gender or religion of employees. It is up to the company who they select to send on the programmes. The following statement is contained within our letters of offer to the colleges:

The College shall comply with all applicable fair employment, equality of treatment, and anti-discrimination legislation, including, in particular, the Employment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002, the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Orders 1976 and 1988, the Equal Pay Act (Northern Ireland) 1970, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997, the Employment Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1999, and the Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996, and shall use its best endeavours to ensure that, in its employment policies and practices, and in the delivery of the services required of the College under this agreement, it has given due regard to the need to promote equality of treatment and opportunity between:

- persons of different religious beliefs or political opinions;
- men and women, or married and unmarried persons;
- persons with and without dependants (including women who are pregnant, or on maternity leave, and men on paternity leave);
- persons of different racial groups (within the meaning of the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997);
- persons with and without a disability (within the meaning of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995);
- persons of different ages; and
- persons of differing sexual orientation

Higher Education

Widening Participation

Widening participation in higher education (HE) is a key priority for the Department. Widening participation in higher education facilitates and increases the participation of those groups which are currently underrepresented in HE in particular students from disadvantaged backgrounds and students with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Since 2000 the Department has been addressing the issue of widening participation in higher education through a number of broad policy directions and a number of specific actions. These actions have included:

- an increase in HE provision in universities and in higher education provision delivered in the Further Education Colleges (includes anything at level 4 and above e.g. HND, HNC and Foundation Degrees) ;
- the introduction of Foundation Degrees;
- a widening participation premium paid to HE Institutions in respect of students from disadvantaged backgrounds;
- a widening access premium paid to HE Institutions in respect of students with disabilities;
- special initiative funding to develop partnerships between the universities and schools, colleges and local communities in areas of high deprivation and with traditionally low levels of participation in HE;
- capital funding to assist the universities improve access for disabled students;
- a wide range of Student Support measures including means-tested maintenance grants, loans and allowances. Disabled Students Allowances (DSA) covers the extra costs of any support a student may require throughout their course as a direct result of their disability, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty. DSA can be available to provide specialist equipment, non-medical helpers support and reasonable extra travel costs incurred by the student to attend the university or college course as a result of a disability; and
- the introduction of a requirement upon higher education providers who wish to charge tuition fees above the standard level to have a Widening Access and Participation Plan in place which includes the provision of; bursaries for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and “outreach” activities to promote / support widening participation in higher education.

The higher education providers have demonstrated a significant commitment to widening participation. As a result, Northern Ireland’s record of participation in higher education has increased steadily and compares very favourably to other areas of the United Kingdom – with participation rates for young people at just over 50%.

Northern Ireland has also been very successful in achieving its objectives of raising motivation, aspirations and attainment of students who otherwise may not have considered going to higher education. In academic year 2017/18 around 34% of our

higher education students came from the two most-deprived Multiple Deprivation Quintiles of Northern Ireland.

However, despite the above success certain parts of the Northern Ireland community continue to be under-represented in higher education. The Department recognises that addressing disadvantage and social exclusion will require coordinated action and consequently it is leading on the delivery of Access to Success, an integrated Regional Strategy for Widening Participation in Higher Education. It is being supported in this by other government departments the Higher Education Institutions, the Further Education Colleges and other relevant stakeholders.

The Department's vision is that by 2020 any appropriately qualified individual in Northern Ireland should be able to gain access to higher education that is right for them, irrespective of their personal or social background or location of study. Learners should be able to progress to a level which fulfils their potential and to get proper recognition and respect for their achievements from employers, educationalists and the wider community. Efforts should be focused on ensuring that the people who are most able but least likely to participate are given every encouragement and support to achieve the necessary qualifications to apply to, and to benefit from, the higher education that is right for them.

The Department has continued to implement 'Access to Success'. This is a strategy with a strong focus on the creation of a more accessible sector in which the people who are most able but least likely to participate are given every encouragement and support to apply to, and to benefit from, higher education.

Significant progress has been made on a range of measures in the strategy. These include:

- the launch in March 2014 of "Reach Higher" a single, centralised and co-ordinated higher education awareness and aspiration raising campaign to better communicate the benefits of higher education to under-represented sections of the community;
- the introduction in 2015 of the "Reach" programme which aims to expand the range of aspiration and educational attainment raising programmes at school, college, community and the workplace;
- the introduction of Widening Access and Participation Plans –which include a summary of an institution's widening participation strategy, a review of its past achievement against regional benchmarks and a detailed programme of anticipated progress each year towards its own targets;
- the development of additional support measures for students to sustain continuing participation; and
- an expansion in employer demand led Foundation Degrees in the workplace.

Young People not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

This Department takes the lead on the Executive's 'Pathways to Success' strategy for young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). The strategy contains a three tier package aimed at:

- preventing young people missing opportunities for Education and Training, and/or becoming unemployed;
- helping young people in the 16-18 age group, especially those facing barriers; and
- assisting unemployed young people aged 18-24 more generally.

'Pathways to Success' had a particular focus on helping those young people who face barriers to participation, while also dovetailing with complementary proposals and actions to tackle the wider problem of youth unemployment at the time of the challenging economic context.

Barriers are characteristics of a young person's circumstances that may have been present from early on in a person's life. Young people who are not in education, employment or training and face barriers are, for the most part, young people who: are or have been in care; left care; or are on the edge of care; have had a negative experience of education; have suffered from bullying at school; have literacy and numeracy problems; are carers; are parents; have been involved with drug and alcohol abuse; have a physical or learning disability; have committed a crime; have a mental illness; suffer an economic disadvantage; and/or are homeless.

These characteristics are often not mutually exclusive and in many cases a young person will experience several of them simultaneously. In addition to this, the relationship between individual factors is also complex. Young people who are not in education, employment or training are not a homogeneous group and there exists a wide spectrum of problems and barriers which can be multiple and compounded, often from their earliest years.

A formal evaluation of Pathways to Success (PtS) was undertaken by the Centre for Economic & Social Inclusion, (CESI, a London based not-for-profit company) and more recently the Department has provided funding for the voluntary and community sector NEETs Forum to develop a report and come up with recommendations for a revised priorities and action plan. The Department has facilitated "Have Your Say" events for NEET young people and has talked directly to this group to establish current barriers these young people face, and how government can help them progress. Taking the learning and views from the NEET young people, the learning from a multi-agency workshop facilitated recently by the Department - the Department is in the process of creating a new multi-agency steering group to develop a revised priorities and action plan aimed at removing the barriers young people who are NEET continue to face. The Department has partnered with the community and voluntary sector to take this work forward.

Peace4Youth

Peace4Youth is a multi-outcome programme that will engage 7,400 disadvantaged and marginalised 14–24 year olds across NI and the Border Region of Ireland between 2017–21, supporting them to develop capabilities in the areas of personal development, good relations and citizenship, ultimately enhancing their employability and improving their life chances. The programme is targeting 14-24 year olds who are disadvantaged, excluded or marginalised; have deep social and emotional needs; and are at risk of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour, violence or paramilitary activity. This includes young people who are not in education, employment or training, as well as those of are at risk of falling into that category.

Peace4Youth is built on 12 essential design features drawn from the United Youth pilot phase evaluation, and the programme has a strong focus on engaging, non-formal learning approaches delivered via a professionally-founded youth work approach.

Following a call for applications and a two-stage assessment process, 11 projects (each made up of a consortium of delivery organisations with a lead partner) were selected. A range of organisations are involved, including youth/community/voluntary sector organisations, training providers and Further Education colleges. A Quality & Impact Body (a partnership of Co-operation Ireland, Ulster University, POBAL and the National Youth Council of Ireland) was also appointed to perform a quality assurance and impact support role with the projects.

Delivery commenced in late 2017. Phase 1, involving 1,875 young people, has now concluded and following a successful evaluation, Phase 2 commenced in early 2019 and will run until December 2021.

The evaluation of Phase 1 was highly positive, with the majority of indicators under the main programme outcome areas (good relations, personal development and citizenship) showing clear progression for young people as a result of their participation in Peace4Youth projects.

In terms of progression and qualifications attainment, almost 80% of the young people surveyed indicated they were going to progress to education, training, employment or voluntary/community engagement, and almost 90% had gained a qualification in at least one area during their time on Peace4Youth.

Queen's University was appointed as impact evaluator for the programme, and two further reports will be completed in 2020 and 2022.

Careers Service

The Department's Careers Service provides careers advice and guidance on an all-age, all-ability basis to all. The Careers Service has developed and implemented a social

inclusion policy which focuses on addressing the needs of people facing, or vulnerable to, social exclusion, including clients with a disability.

Formal partnership agreements are in place with 100% of publicly funded post-primary schools in Northern Ireland, including special schools. The agreements are reviewed annually and provide a mechanism for schools and the Careers Service, to ensure services delivered are appropriate to the individual needs of pupils.

Those most at risk of leaving school early or at risk of not successfully transferring to education, training or employment are identified early in school, and actively supported until they are settled in a positive destination.

Careers Advisers attend Transition Planning meetings for Year 10 pupils and subsequent Annual Reviews for pupils who have a statement of special educational need. This helps young people and their parents/guardians to make informed decisions about the options available to them on leaving school. The most recent available data shows that during the 2017/18 academic year, careers advisers attended and provided careers guidance at 1237 Transition Planning meetings and a further 1924 annual reviews.

The Careers Service, with parental /guardian consent as appropriate, refer school leavers with a disability or learning difficulty who are interested in progressing into training to one of DfE's contracted Disability Support Providers. These providers specialise in disability and learning support and give every child the best possible training experience and outcome.

The Careers Service is represented on the Autism Strategy Regional Multi-Agency Implementation Team (ASRMAIT) and networks with partner organisations to ensure appropriate and timely provision of careers services to clients with autism. The Careers Service has established links with all 5 Health Trust Regional Autism Co-ordinators to ensure that appropriate referral arrangements are in place and that clients with Autism are aware of and have access to careers services.

To support the social inclusion of all hard to reach groups the Careers Service has established effective partnership working arrangements with a wide range of community, voluntary and statutory organisations who advocate on behalf of vulnerable young people and adults to help them in their career planning and help them access education, training or employment.

The Careers Service also has Partnership Agreements in place to support specific potentially vulnerable groups including with:

- all five Health and Social Care Trusts, for young people 16+ in and leaving care; and
- the Youth Justice Agency for young people referred to the justice system either a community or custodial setting.

PART A

The Careers Advisory Forum advises both the Department for the Economy and the Department of Education on current and future Careers provision in the context of the refreshed Careers Strategy, 'Preparing for Success 2015-2020'. The Forum comprises representation from education, business, and other key stakeholders such as parents' representatives and Disability Action.

- 2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2018-19 (or append the plan with progress/examples identified).

The Department's Diversity Group

Part of the DfE Diversity Group's remit includes the promotion and encouragement of good diversity practice, and raising awareness of diversity issues among the Department's staff. During 2018/19 the Diversity Group published 29 diversity related articles on the Department's Intranet site and to mark International Men's and International Women's Day arranged for 2 seminars for staff covering flexible working and shared parental leave.

The Department's Consumerline and Trading Standards Service

One of the objectives of DfE's Equality Action Plan is to gather more information about those contacting the Department's Consumerline. Based on the analysis of information collected through previous customer surveys, and other intelligence sources, the Trading Standards Service (TSS) in Northern Ireland engaged with a wide range of stakeholders to highlight the financial and psychological harm caused by scams, doorstep crime and to work in partnership to tackle this major issue.

Each year mass marketing mail scams, which often target vulnerable or disadvantaged consumers, cause approximately £3.5 billion worth of detriment to UK consumers. The Trading Standards Service helps tackle mass marketing scams and disrupts the operations of perpetrators behind mail scams. It works in partnership with agencies across the country to identify and support victims of mass marketing fraud.

TSS has been working extremely closely with the Trading Standards National Scams Team, to reach out to all the known scam victims in Northern Ireland – names that appear on a list of people that have sent money off to scammers - in the majority of cases victims have lost thousands of pounds and have been identified as incredibly vulnerable. TSS has also seen many examples of individuals that have lost not just tens of thousands but hundreds of thousands of pounds to scammers. TSS officers have been visiting these victims and providing valuable advice and support to each person as well as investigating, where possible.

The Trading Standards Service has worked extremely hard this year to help combat the scourge of scams on consumers in Northern Ireland. Ongoing criminal investigations as well as a robust education and awareness-raising policy has seen the problem of scams brought to the fore of the public's consciousness. Consumers are becoming increasingly savvy to the scammers and are contacting Trading Standards in their thousands to alert us to the latest cons and tricks. TSS has generated a large amount of publicity highlighting the latest scams through national and local media outlets and has worked closely with the BBC NI's Spotlight programme on a dedicated scams episode.

The NI Trading Standards Service is also been member of the UK Mass Marketing Scams Group which shares intelligence and helps formulate policy on protecting vulnerable consumers in the UK from being caught out by sophisticated and extremely detrimental

scams. The group contains members of all the major enforcement bodies such as the TSI National Scams Team, the Competition and Markets Authority, the NCA, and Regional Scambusters for example.

During 2018-19 TSS assigned a significant level of resource to undertaking pro-active work in combating mass marketed scams, this work has included:-

- Actively participating in the COSLA/NTSST initiative involving the training of local Royal Mail staff which will enable postal workers to identify scam posts and make referrals to their internal security teams. These referrals help the Trading Standards Service to identify potential scam victims;
- Presenting at major charity/government events to local community groups on the issue of mass-marketed scams; Attending the Older Persons Commissioner's Office round table meeting;
- Meetings with a wide range of organisations/stakeholders to highlight the detriment caused to citizens by scams e.g. PSNI, Church Leaders, Health and Social Care Board, Safeguarding Teams in the Health Care Trusts, Older Persons Commissioner's Office, Carer Groups, the Rural Community Network, Dementia Care and others;
- Identifying opportunities for a more 'joined up' working approach to combating scams e.g. TSS has been working with local Crime Prevention Officers, local Policing and Community Safety Partnerships, Community Police and Liaison Committees and Neighbourhood Watch Groups as it appears that scam victims are also targeted by rogue doorstep traders;
- Undertaking educational work with Social Workers, Carers, Dementia Groups to help them identify scam victims. This has already proven to be very worthwhile in that scam victims have been identified by care workers. This has resulted in referrals to TSS that has enabled officers to provide the victims one to one advice and to persuade them to stop responding to scam mail;
- Assisting the National Scams Team by participating in a pilot project relating to the use of Call Blockers as a means to disrupt telephone scammers. (These are devices which block scam phone calls while allowing legitimate callers to get through); Working with our colleagues in the Department of Justice and the Northern Ireland Policing Board to secure funding for the purchase of call blockers;
- Contributing to the Police Service of Northern Ireland initiative to produce 'No Cold Calling' Stickers. The display of such stickers is to

prevent a person from becoming the victim of a rogue doorstep trader; working with DOJ and PSNI to pilot selected “No Cold Calling Zones” to determine their effectiveness in reducing crime.

- Working with Health Trust representatives who have responsibilities for safeguarding vulnerable individuals;
- Press releases issued to the local media concerning the latest scams; Regular local and national TV and radio appearances highlighting scams on shows such as the On Your Behalf Programme, the One Show, the Secret Scammer, Rip Off Britain and Spotlight; Working with the BBC NI's Spotlight programme on a dedicated scams episode. Placing posts on the TSS social media to alert followers to scams; Currently the #1 ranked TSS Facebook page in the UK; Working with the Scamwise NI partnership on media advertising campaigns
- Social Security Agency - referring scam victims, who may be entitled to extra benefit; and
- Action Fraud - making referrals.

In addition, TSS worked very closely with the Consumer Empowerment Alliance and the National Scams Team. Part of this work included visiting people who TSS believe are responding to scam mail, scam phone calls, scam e-mails and scam text messages. During each visit, an officer would provide specialist one to one advice.

Customers that contact TSS for consumer advice are made aware of their consumer rights and their business obligations. Consumers in particular, are more able to obtain redress for their consumer problem/issue as a result of the advice which they have received from the Service.

The above initiatives promote access to TSS services across Northern Ireland and to all Section 75 groups. In particular, scam victims benefit from one to one advice which is an important part of the service provided.

3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2018-19 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

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

Please provide any details and examples:

Public Appointments

- During 2018-19 DfE, in conjunction with all other Departments, progressed work towards achieving targets agreed by the NI Executive in February 2016 to achieve gender equality (in aggregated public appointments) by 2020/21. The number of female applicants rose from 39% in 17/18 to 40.3% in 2018/2019.
- Throughout the reporting year 2018-19 the Department pursued activities to raise awareness and stimulate a greater the number of applications for public appointments from people with disabilities, people from ethnic minorities and younger people. DfE's Public Appointments Unit (PAU) staff take part in diversity related initiatives including participating in CPANI led workshops, sitting on the DfE Diversity Group and attending the cross-departmental Public Appointment Forum.
- During 2018/19 the Department's Diversity Group delivered a programme of work to raise awareness of diversity issues among our staff, for example, publishing 29 diversity-related factsheets and articles on the Department's intranet site. Also, factsheets were produced to promote understanding among staff of the needs of all Section 75 groups and to encourage best practice within the Department. The factsheets focused on a wide variety of subjects, and provided background information and advice for staff and line managers to encourage understanding and promote positive attitudes toward diversity; for example, a factsheet was provided to staff as part of participation in World Autism Awareness Day 2018.

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:

Public Appointments

The wider promotion of opportunities and the design and choice of criteria has seen an increase in the number of women and those with a disability applying for public appointments.

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):*

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

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

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

DfE's Equality Scheme includes a commitment to achieving effective communication and ensuring that all our services are fully accessible to everyone in the community across the Section 75 categories.

Other *(please specify and give details):*

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 2018-19 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

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Please provide any details and examples:

Job descriptions for staff in DfE's Equality Unit reflect their contributions to the discharge of the Section 75 statutory duties

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2018-19 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:

Under the NICS Performance Management Framework, commitments set out in DfE's Equality Scheme are reflected in the Performance Assessments of relevant staff and reviewed throughout the year.

6 In the 2018-19 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 ongoing corporate plan
- No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2018-19 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

In addition to existing commitments already contained in the Equality Scheme, the Department's Six Monthly Assurance Statement includes an assurance, given by all Heads of Division, that Divisions, Units and Branches within the Department that staff have been made aware of the organisation's Health and Safety Policy and Equality Policies and that these are being complied with and all Divisions conduct equality screening and, if

appropriate, Equality Impact Assessments, on all new policies/amendments to existing policies, both internal and external, in line with Section 75 of the NI Act 1998.

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2018-19 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:

Actions ongoing:

13

Actions to commence:

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

Public Appointments

DfE, in conjunction with all other Departments, continues to progress work towards achieving targets agreed by the NI Executive in February 2016 to achieve gender equality (in aggregated public appointments) by 2017/18 for in-year appointments and by 2020/21 for all other appointments.

We are also committed to seeking new ways to increase the numbers of applications from people with disabilities, people from ethnic minorities and younger people. In practice, this means integrating ideas and recommendations made by CPANI in their 2014 report on 'Under representation and lack of diversity in public appointments'.

Various boards of DfE sponsored bodies have also agreed and continue to participate in two mentoring schemes – The Boardroom Apprentice and the Queen's University Graduate School Mentoring Scheme - aimed at encouraging participation rates of under-represented groups and to make public bodies more representative of the communities they serve.

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2018-19 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

A new Equality Action Plan (2016-2021) was drafted for the Department which combines the functions of the former Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment and the Department for Employment and Learning, with the exception of the Employment Service which is now part of the Department for Communities. During 2018/19 no changes or amendments have been made to the (draft) Equality Action Plan as the commitments remain relevant to our functions and work. However, the Equality unit continues to monitor the implementation of the existing commitments and the actions set out in the Plan.

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2018-19 reporting period, the following have been identified: (*tick all that apply*):

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- 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)*

- All the time Sometimes Never

11 Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2018-19 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:

12 In the 2018-19 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/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:

A formal evaluation of Pathways to Success (PtS) was undertaken by the Centre for Economic & Social Inclusion, (CESI, a London based not-for-profit company) and more recently the Department has provided funding for the voluntary and community sector

PART A

NEETs Forum to develop a report and come up with recommendations for a revised priorities and action plan. The Department has facilitated “Have Your Say” events for NEET young people and has talked directly to this group to establish current barriers these young people face, and how government can help them progress. Taking the learning and views from the NEET young people, the learning from a multi-agency workshop facilitated recently by the Department - the Department is in the process of creating a new multi-agency steering group to develop a revised priorities and action plan aimed at removing the barriers young people who are NEET continue to face. The Department has partnered with the community and voluntary sector to take this work forward.

13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2018-19 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

(Equality Scheme has not yet been finalised)

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2018-19 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)

[Insert link to any web pages where screening templates and/or other reports associated with Equality Scheme commitments are published]

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/consultations>

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/department-economy-equality>

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

7

16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2018-19:

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0	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:

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:

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

19 Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2018-19 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

- Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

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 2018-19 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:

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

Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

- 22** Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2018-19 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

None identified.

- 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:

None identified.

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 2018-19, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

During 2018/2019 the DfE People Plan contained a commitment to review the Departmental Induction package. Induction within the NICS comprises three main layers: Corporate NICS-level induction, Departmental level induction and local induction (led by line managers). The broad range of topics and level of detail in the NICS-level induction has allowed for a more focussed approach at Departmental-level. A comprehensive supporting induction checklist has also been developed for use and completion by line managers. Departmental Induction is mandatory for all staff and includes the need to agree a Personal Development Plan identify all mandatory training and consider additional training requirements for the post. Line managers have a responsibility to advise new staff of the various methods of development including how to enrol on HR Connect for mandatory training and how to access information regarding providers e.g. Centre for Applied Learning (CAL)/LINKS.

NICS also offers a range of training, both classroom based and e-learning, which seeks to assist staff in achieving both the understanding and skills required to promote equality of opportunity and good relations and to make equality central to the whole range of public policy decision-making. In addition to assisting the department achieve its statutory duties in respect of service to the people of Northern Ireland, the range of training available also

seeks to ensure that the principles of equal opportunity and fair treatment are also extended to staff by colleagues and managers alike.

A range of the training undertaken by DfE staff in 2018/19 is outlined below:

Autism Spectrum Disorder Awareness

This e-learning course was been developed by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, providing information about what ASD is and the challenges faced by individuals living with it. Having an awareness of ASD will help staff understand why an individual with ASD may be acting or reacting in a particular way and it will help create and maintain positive working relationships. During 2018/19, 15 staff completed training.

Disability Awareness for front line staff

The aim of this e-learning training is to increase staff knowledge of disability and to provide frontline staff with an introduction to disability awareness. The course is aimed at staff at all grades who are in, or new to a post that deals with the public. During 2018/19, 11 staff completed the training.

Supporting Vulnerable People

This e-learning course has been designed to assist staff in supporting vulnerable people who may seek to use the services offered by the department. On completion of the course staff should be able to describe and define what a vulnerable person is, recognise ways to identify vulnerable people, explain ways to support vulnerable people, including methods for dealing with third parties, and state the sources of help, advice and support available in the NICS for employees. The course is entirely voluntary and during 2018/19, 8 members of staff completed, or registered an interest in completing, the training.

Unconscious Bias

This e-learning course aims to help staff discover what personal bias they may have, explore its causes and consider some techniques to manage it. On completion of the course staff should be able to define what Unconscious Bias is; explain how Unconscious Bias can impact in the workplace and state ways to tackle Unconscious Bias. During 2017/18 this course was mandatory for completion by all DfE staff in management grades i.e. EOII and above and 690 staff successfully completed the training. In addition to this a further 13 senior officials from DfE attended a classroom based training course. During 2018/19, 3 members of staff completed the training.

Introduction to Section 75

Staff who require this e-learning training are those with responsibility for policy development or policy review and staff involved with the implementation of Section 75 duties, whether directly or indirectly. The aim of this course is to familiarise participants with the two statutory duties as outlined in Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and the guidance

provided by the Equality Commission NI. 15 DfE staff received training in this area during 2018/19.

- 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:

Workshops - Section 75 Duties and Equality Screening

The Department's Equality Unit liaised with the Equality Commission to design bespoke training for departmental staff who are currently involved, or likely become involved in undertaking or 'signing-off' Section 75 equality screenings. The training took the form of workshops that aimed to provide an introduction to Section 75 and also practicable information that would enable staff to undertake an effective Section 75 screening.

Two workshops were provided (in October and November 2018) by the Equality Commission's Advisory Services Team at two of the Department's main offices in Belfast, Netherleigh and Adelaide House. The workshops were well attended, and feedback from staff indicated that the workshops were both well received and effective in meeting their objectives. It was also encouraging to note that the workshops had appeared to stimulate an interest among staff in following-up some of the issues discussed at the workshops; this was reflected by an increase in the level of queries and requests for information received by the Equality Unit.

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

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2018-19, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

None identified.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

- 27** How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2018-19?

Insert number here:

0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

Section 3: Looking Forward

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

Production of the Department's Equality Scheme for the period 2016-21 has been delayed due to the ongoing absence of Ministers. During the reporting year the Department issued a draft Equality Scheme for public consultation (which closed on 16 April 2019) and was subsequently submitted to the Equality Commission on 1 July 2019 for consideration and formal acceptance.

The current progress report focuses upon those elements of the former DETI and DEL Equality Schemes that continue to be relevant to DfE, and also recent equality issues and activities that feature in the draft DfE Equality Scheme (2016-2021).

With regard to the Equality Schemes for the former DETI and DEL, these were reviewed in 2016. Given formal acceptance of the Equality Scheme (2016-2021) by the Equality Commission, the Scheme will become due for review after approximately 1 year, and will help to inform the development of a new Equality Scheme for succeeding years.

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*)

It is anticipated that departmental activity planned for the next reporting period will broadly benefit areas including, awareness raising of section 75 responsibilities, training, and Section 75 equality screening.

Raising awareness

With regard to raising awareness, the Equality Unit plan to meet with senior staff in business areas across the department's business areas. The intention is to discuss the commitments comprised by the new Equality Scheme (2016-2021), which is pending acceptance by the Equality Commission, and to ensure that senior staff in particular, are directly apprised of the implications for their business areas. We also hope to use these meetings as platform for raising awareness of the Equality Forum's Data Signposting document (if finalised); it would be helpful to discuss the Data Signposting document in the context of equality screening, and available resources available to those involved in equality screening policy.

The Equality Unit also plans to produce intranet articles to further raise awareness and to complement the anticipated meetings with senior staff. In particular, it is planned to issue a summary of the new Equality Scheme via the intranet, alongside ad hoc items intended to engage staff attention on the Equality Scheme - such as a 'quiz' for example (an approach which has proved effective on other subjects).

In addition, the Department's Diversity Group plans to deliver a broad programme of activities that are designed to raise awareness of diversity issues among departmental staff. The focus of

the these activities will include many issues such as, ethnicity, disability and gender identity for example, that directly impact upon our equality and good relations duties, and delivery of our services.

Training

The Department recently announced its support for a new initiative that will support people with a communication difficulty – the JAM Card. Created by participants at the NOW Group the JAM Card is a simple and discreet way of letting someone you want to talk to, or who wants to talk to you, know that you need a little more time - **Just A Minute** of patience and understanding.

To be recognised as a 'JAM Card friendly organisation' 60 per cent of staff need to complete the training. The Department aims to surpass this threshold, and over the coming year the Equality Unit will continue to encourage all departmental staff to complete a training programme to ensure they are aware of how they can provide support to customers and colleagues with communication difficulties. Line managers, especially those with staff in front facing roles, will be required to ensure that all staff in their team are provided with the time needed to complete the awareness training.

Equality Screening

Following a departmental review of Programme and Project Management for major projects, new arrangements are being developed for project management and support. The creation of a new Project Assurance and Support Branch (PBSB) is underway, which will have a broad remit to establishment a quality project management methodology for major projects. The various products planned as part of this methodology, include a checklist that will provide an assurance that projects have required management products in place from the initiation stage through to completion. It has been agreed that Section 75 equality screening will be included in the checklist, which will be applied to all major programmes and projects, and will also form part of an assurance report provided to the Departmental Board on a regular basis. This initiative goes beyond existing assurance arrangements and will give further prominence to equality issues and equality screening within the Department.

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30 In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2018-19) reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

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

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:

9

Fully achieved

1

Partially achieved

0

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	DfE, as part of the cross-departmental Public Appointment Forum (PAF), will work to address the recommendations made by the Commissioner for Public Appointments, Northern Ireland (CPANI), in his report on under-representation and lack of diversity in public appointments in Northern Ireland – published in January 2014.	Public Appointments Forum meetings attended quarterly and Department has contributed to actions being co-ordinated centrally.	The number of applications from women and people with a disability has increased because of our efforts on the publicity front and work on helping applicants to understand the criteria. CPANI are aware of financial factors which can act as a barrier for people with a disability.

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	<p>We continue to seek to identify additional measures which might increase the appeal of DfE public appointments to a wider audience.</p>	<p>Use of social media (Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook) to publicise competitions, the placing of articles in publications and on websites and the distribution of flyers at events targeting under-represented groups to reach new audiences.</p> <p>All venues are checked to ensure they are accessible for people with disabilities to attend and make their contribution and any other reasonable adjustments requested are accommodated.</p>	<p>Total applications received/those who declared a disability/percentage:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>2013/14</td> <td>121/3</td> <td>(2.5%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2014/15</td> <td>291/8</td> <td>(2.7%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2015/16</td> <td>71/6</td> <td>(8%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016/17</td> <td>55/7</td> <td>(13%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2017/18</td> <td>173/17</td> <td>(10%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2018/19</td> <td>52/2</td> <td>(4%)</td> </tr> </table>	2013/14	121/3	(2.5%)	2014/15	291/8	(2.7%)	2015/16	71/6	(8%)	2016/17	55/7	(13%)	2017/18	173/17	(10%)	2018/19	52/2	(4%)
2013/14	121/3	(2.5%)																			
2014/15	291/8	(2.7%)																			
2015/16	71/6	(8%)																			
2016/17	55/7	(13%)																			
2017/18	173/17	(10%)																			
2018/19	52/2	(4%)																			
<p>Regional^{iv}</p>	<p>Further Education Capital Projects Team continues to support FE Colleges by funding capital works to ensure compliance with Disability Discrimination Act legislation.</p> <p>All venues for external events checked to ensure they are accessible for people with disabilities to attend and make their contribution.</p>	<p>We are currently investing over £200m in six new campuses and a major refurbishment across Northern Ireland to replace ageing facilities.</p>	<p>These new modern facilities will be modern and are designed to be fully accessible</p> <p>Evaluation of and feedback from events helps to inform future management.</p>																		

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			The views / contribution from people with disabilities will help inform future policy.
Local ^v	<p>All venues for external events checked to ensure they are accessible for people with disabilities to attend and make their contribution.</p> <p>DfE will maintain and review the adjustments it has taken for staff to comply with DDA requirements.</p>	Ensure all identified reasonable adjustments, including employee and customer access, have been considered and subsequently implemented, as appropriate.	<p>Evaluation of and feedback from events helps to inform future management.</p> <p>The views / contribution from people with disabilities will help inform future policy.</p> <p>In 2017/18 the Department continued to examine equipment solutions to assist staff with any form of disability.</p>

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Line Managers to provide induction training for all new entrants, which includes	A new online Departmental e-zine Induction programme has been developed for DfE staff.	The online Departmental e-zine Induction programme was made available via the departmental Intranet. The Corporate Engagement Team has responsibility for the

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	NICS/Departmental Policies and Procedures		quarterly review of material included in the Induction programme.
2	The NI Civil Service has an updated Diversity Training package which promotes an inclusive working environment and stresses the importance of valuing differences. The package also includes material on the duty to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and on current disability equality legislation.	All new recruits to the NICS to attend classroom based Diversity training delivered by the Centre for Applied Learning. Module 1 of a series of modules to address diversity training was produced during 16/17 with departmental involvement and rolled out during 2017.	Staff are encouraged to recognise the importance of an inclusive working environment and the importance of valuing differences.

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	In line with the Autism Strategy 2013-2020 and associated Action Plan 2013-2016 which were launched on 15 January	Autism Factsheet to be distributed to all DfE staff and their NDPBs.	The Autism Factsheet was distributed to all DfE staff as part of participation in World Autism Awareness Day 2018.

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	2014, DfE will raise awareness of autism amongst all DfE staff.		
2	The DfE Diversity Group continues to produce factsheets to promote understanding amongst staff of the needs of all Section 75 groups and to encourage best practice within DfE. Each factsheet will focus on a different subject, providing background information and advice for staff and line managers to encourage understanding and promote more positive attitudes as well as raising awareness of the types of reasonable adjustments available.	The Diversity and Staff Induction internal web pages have been updated.	During 2018/19 the Diversity Group published 29 diversity related articles on the Department's Intranet site and to mark International Men's and International Women's Day arranged for 2 seminars for staff covering flexible working and shared parental leave. e

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

	'Encourage others' Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Attendance at OFMdfM/ECNI etc. events.	DfE Equality Unit staff seeks to provide colleagues in DfE and NDPBs with	Representatives from DfE's Equality Unit attended series of ECNI-led equality events during 2018-19.

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		details of relevant TEO/ECNI etc. events.	
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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	Line Managers, with advice from Corporate Services as required, will take forward Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs).	Corporate Service staff will seek to raise Line Managers' Awareness of their responsibility to complete PEEPs as required.	<p>Business areas are asked to advise DfE's Equality Unit how many PEEPs have been revised/ developed during the reporting period for inclusion in the Annual Report to ECNI.</p> <p>In addition, the Office Risk Assessment Exercise, which Corporate Services issues annually to all business areas, includes a section on PEEPs. This asks managers whether they have a member of staff with mobility/ other relevant issues and, if so, whether a PEEP has been agreed. As such it helps to provide an assurance that PEEPs are in place where required.</p>

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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	The implementation of Access to Success an integrated regional strategy for widening participation in higher education in Northern Ireland by students from disadvantaged backgrounds including students with learning difficulties and disabilities.	<p>Significant milestones in the implementation of the Access to Success strategy during 2018/19 include:</p> <p>the approval of institutional Widening Access and Participation Plans (WAPP) in respect of academic year 2019/20, which include detailed programmes to accelerate progress towards the higher education institutions' individual WP targets;</p> <p>the monitoring of each institution's performance against commitments set</p>	<p>Funding is available for universities and colleges to develop specific initiatives to raise the aspirations and educational attainment of students with learning difficulties and disabilities.</p> <p>In line with the expectations in Access to Success all HE providers have in their 2019/20 WAPPs identified students with disabilities as a target group for interventions to raise aspirations and educational attainment in</p>	The Access to Success strategy articulates a longer term vision for widening participation in Northern Ireland by 2020, and maps the actions required to deliver it. Although the strategy envisages a 2020 timeframe for its full effects to be realised, Access to Success has been formally reviewed and updated to ensure that it can meet the identified needs at this time.

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		out in their Access Agreements for 2016/17	<p>order to encourage and support them to apply to and benefit from the HE that is right for them.</p> <p>Monitoring of the widening participation commitments in respect of academic year 2016/17 - including detail on expenditure on bursaries, outreach activity, and progress against WP targets and milestones was carried out as part of the 2019/20 WAPP process.</p>	
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4. Please outline what action measures **have not been achieved** and the reasons why.

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1		
2		

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

(b) Quantitative

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:

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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?

None planned.

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

ⁱⁱ **Outcome / Impact** – what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action? Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training.

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

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

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