



# Equality Action Plan

**April 2022**  
*Draft for consultation*

## **Accessibility statement**

Any request for the document in another format or language will be considered.

Please contact [equality.unit@eani.org.uk](mailto:equality.unit@eani.org.uk)

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# Introduction

This document sets out the Education Authority's (EA) response to our Audit of Inequalities. The Equality Action Plan is aligned to the EA Strategic Plan 2017-2027. This is the second of two plans. The first plan covered a four year period (2018-2022) followed by this new plan, covering a five year period (2022-2027). Progress will be measured annually with opportunities to amend the plan should this be necessary during each monitoring cycle. In its development, a review of the previous audit of inequalities was carried out and consideration was given to new and emerging priorities/ themes.

This plan is a 'live' document and as such will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

The actions in this plan are reflective of actions and commitments included in the Education Authority's Strategic Plan. A number of the actions relate specifically to the transformation of services and will be reviewed as part of the on-going programme of change.

## Equality scheme commitments

The Equality Action Plan outlines actions relating to our functions and takes account of our equality scheme commitments relating to Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Our equality scheme is available on our website: [www.eani.org.uk](http://www.eani.org.uk)

The law requires EA to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity across nine equality categories; age, gender, disability, marital status, political opinion, caring responsibilities, sexual orientation, religion and ethnicity. It also requires us to consider good relations in relation to political opinion, religion and ethnicity. These duties are central to how and when we carry out our work and equality remains a core value of the organisation.

In our equality scheme we gave a commitment to monitoring progress and updating the plan as necessary. We also said we would engage and consult with stakeholders when reviewing this action plan.

# What we do

Northern Ireland has a complex educational structure; its educational administration and schools reflect its geographical, historical, economic and social context. As a post-conflict society with religious and political divisions, schools themselves are aligned along social and linguistic as well as religious lines.

- There are approximately 1100 schools for a pupil population of approximately 335,000 pupils. There are urban schools, rural schools, coastal schools, border schools all with their individual strengths and challenges, not least isolation and deprivation.
- In Northern Ireland every child is entitled to a funded place in nursery education from the age of 3. Compulsory primary education for all children begins at age 4 and continues to age 11.
- Post primary education is compulsory until age 16. Young people may choose to continue their education until age 18 in school or in a college of further education or training settings.
- Northern Ireland’s school system is distinctive in that certain areas operate an academically selective system of education at secondary level. All post primary schools offer the same curriculum.
- Schools are governed, supported and challenged by a range of partner organisations including employing authorities, arms-length bodies and government departments.

The Education Authority was established on 1 April 2015 and since then we have been transforming the structures and functions bringing together the five former Education and Library Boards to create a single organisation. The Education Authority is one of the largest educational bodies in the United Kingdom and a major employer in Northern Ireland.



We are responsible for ensuring that efficient and effective primary and secondary education services are available to meet the needs of children and young people. We also ensure the provision of efficient and effective youth services.

**NON-DEPARTMENTAL PUBLIC BODY**  
sponsored by the Department of Education

**EMPLOYING AUTHORITY**  
for all staff at Controlled Schools and non-teaching staff at Catholic Maintained Schools.

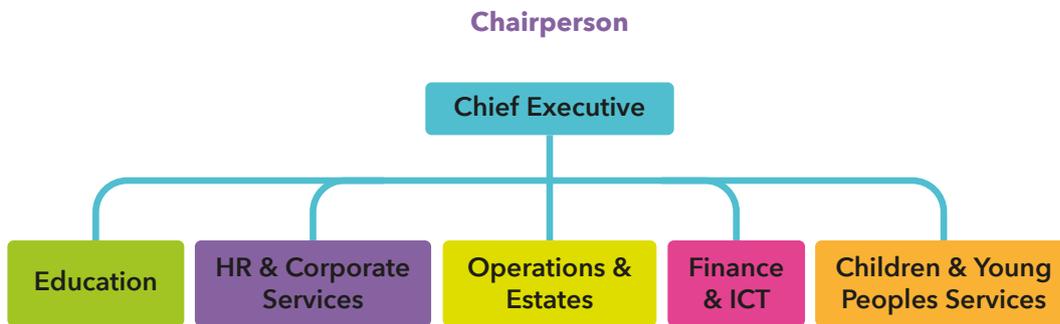
**RESPONSIBILITY**  
for regional youth services funding and support



**WORK IN PARTNERSHIP**  
with a wide range of bodies which include: the Controlled Schools' Support Council (CSSC); the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS); the Governing Bodies Association NI (GBA); the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE), Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG), and the Transferor Representatives' Council (TRC).

**FUNDING AUTHORITY**  
for voluntary grammar, Catholic maintained and grant maintained integrated schools

## EA’s structure comprises five directorates and the Chief Executive’s Office.



Each Directorate is responsible for a range of services and functions.

### Education

The Education Directorate is responsible for leading the implementation of key DE strategies and policies across the education system over the short to medium term. These include; School Improvement policy, Learning Leaders Strategy, Sustainable Schools policy, Reducing Educational Disadvantage strategy, A Fair Start, Mainstreaming shared education strategy, Entitlement Framework 14-19 policy,

The Education directorate is also responsible for:

Special Schools and Specialist Provision in Mainstream Schools; School Governance in controlled schools; Shared Education duty and associated programmes; Sectoral Support: Irish Medium, Integrated Education duty and associated programmes Community Planning; Community Use of Schools, C2k Managed Service for Schools, Education Information Solutions (EdIS) Project, Music Service Education Library Service, Eatv, Amma Creative Learning Centre, Magilligan Outdoor Education Centre, as well as oversight of the school based substitution costs.

### Human Resources and Corporate Services

The HR & CS Directorate is responsible for HR Policies and Procedures; Employee Health and Wellbeing; Recruitment; Employee Records; Legal Services; Industrial and Employee Relations and HR Advisory Services for Schools. The Directorate also includes the Corporate Services function for the organisation responsible for Equality Monitoring; Equal Opportunities; Equality and Human Rights, Transformation, Continuous Improvement, Corporate Planning and Performance, Information Governance; Corporate Complaints; Corporate Governance and Organisational Development and Learning.

## Operations & Estates

The Operations and Estates Directorate is responsible for Capital Development; Estate Services and Maintenance; Energy Management and Efficiency; Health and Safety; Catering Service; Emergency Management and Planning; Free School Meals and Clothing; Transport Service; Schools Admissions; Corporate Planning; Student Finance, Reprographics; and Registry.

## Finance & ICT

The Finance and ICT Directorate is responsible for Budgetary Control; Management Accounting; Financial Accounts; Financial Planning; LMS; Payroll and Pensions; Accounts Payable; Accounts Receivable; Cash Management; Income Generation; and ICT.

## Children & Young Peoples Services

The Children and Young People's Services Directorate is responsible for Special Education Operations and Provision; Pupil Support Services; Pupil Welfare Services (including Child Protection); Youth Service and Early Years.

## Chief Executives Office

The Chief Executive's Office is responsible for Strategic Leadership and Operational Delivery; Change Management; Financial Management; Communications and Internal Audit. The Chief Executive is EA's Accounting Officer.

# How we developed this plan

During research for the first Audit of Inequalities in 2018 a number of themes became apparent. These themes re-emerged as enduring issues, during stakeholder engagement for the development of this Plan.

Firstly, it is clear that inequalities exist across the education system that extend beyond the remit of the Education Authority alone, and therefore require a wider, joined up cross departmental approach to tackling those inequalities.

Secondly, it became clear that the Section 75 related common themes across education identified in 2016 remain valid. During engagement stakeholders consistently highlighted the significance of socio-economic inequalities to educational outcomes. The common themes are carried over into the revised Equality Action Plan for 2022-27 with added focus on socio-economic actions.

An additional theme was discussed by stakeholders with a recommendation to add a focus on 'Enabling Opportunities' - primarily aimed at supporting 16-19 year olds who 'fall out of education' with limited opportunities.

Our action plan reflects the evidence gathered in the audit and seeks to tackle inequalities under the identified themes across education. Where EA, within our remit and functions, can take action and tackle inequalities, we will commit to doing so. Where a wider educational approach is required, either in addition to, or as a standalone approach, then we will seek to adopt that approach and engage our partners to undertake actions as part of a wider partnership.

We presented the previous thematic areas and discussed possible emerging trends, data and actions with a wide range of stakeholders both internally and externally over a 14 week period. This included community and voluntary groups representing a range of stakeholders, including children and young people; trade union colleges; EA staff including principals and teachers; and EA Board members.

# Review of EAs first Equality Action Plan and achievements to date

The aim of the first EA Equality Action Plan 2017-2022 was to lay the foundations across EA for identifying and tackling enduring inequalities across six identified themes.

Significant progress has been made against the first Equality Action Plan, some of the highlights include:

- Guidance developed for Schools, EOTAS Centres, and Youth Service on supporting Transgender Young People;
- Website Accessibility has been improved ensuring our information is more accessible and there is more consistency across EA;
- Work on embedding socio-economic impacts into EA's decision making;
- Guidance developed for staff and schools, including child friendly and easy read, to support schools and young people to participate in a meaningful way in the implementation of the SEND Act;
- A framework for consultation & engagement was developed to ensure consistency of approach across EA in engaging and consulting with stakeholders;
- Rural Needs duty embedded into screening and training rolled out across EA;
- Access to improved benchmarking against key outcomes for all Roma, Traveller and Newcomer children and young people to support the delivery plan for EA to tackling inequalities;
- Regional Assessment of Need for Young People, targeted research carried out across a number of themes including rural needs, young carers, domestic violence;
- Pilot scheme rolled out across NI, identifying and supporting schools of sanctuary, where cultural diversity is valued;
- EA's first Gender Action Plan developed for the organisation and associated work including targeted recruitment campaigns to seek males and females in non-traditional roles, new workplace policies, including EAs award winning Menopause Workplace Policy, training and support for aspiring staff;
- Joint declaration of protection at work signed and implemented with Trade Union colleagues;
- Staff Networks established and supported, including GLaM, EAs LGBT Staff Network and EA LINK, EAs Disability and Carers Staff Network;
- EA Placement scheme designed to encourage young people to work for EA - including taking part in the Department for Communities JobStart Programme, offering young people opportunities to work in the EA.

Whilst significant work has been carried out over the course of the first Equality Action Plan, the first plan focused on establishing good foundations for EA, as a newly formed organisation, and setting the organisation up to succeed in terms of addressing enduring inequalities.

# What is in our Equality Action Plan?

**This current Action Plan 2022 - 2027 seeks to take this work further across the next five years and identify and tackle key enduring inequalities and deliver better outcomes for all our children and young people.**

It is important to highlight that the Action Plan has been designed to be flexible, adaptable and responsive to changing circumstances and needs.

COVID19 and the global pandemic has changed the context in which many of our schools and EA corporate services have to operate. The national lockdowns, which included schools closures have seen many of our children and young people impacted in terms of access to education and mental health and emotional well-being, with many of our school leaders reporting unsettled children and an increase in anxiety amongst our young people. Coupled with safety concerns and staff shortages, many schools are having to adapt and respond to constantly changing circumstances.

This plan is an attempt to also respond to what could be long term impacts of the COVID19 pandemic for young people, particularly around mental health and emotional wellbeing; to provide interventions and monitor impacts on an on-going basis and make data driven decisions on what appropriate interventions will be.

It is important to note that this Plan has been developed in the absence of an agreed three year budget and the delivery of actions will be subject to available funds. The Plan has been designed to be flexible and adaptable, responding to changing policy and financial circumstances.

The broad themes where the Authority considers targeted actions could address key inequalities and advance equality of opportunity and good relations are:

- Learning Experiences and Outcomes (Attainment)
- Access to education
- Bullying
- Data and Monitoring
- Enabling Opportunities
- Mental health and emotional wellbeing
- EA Workforce

# How we will measure success

**This five year plan is intended to be transformative in nature and sets out EAs outcomes based accountability approach to equality of opportunity.**

This plan is structured in a way that will help us track the outputs we undertake to achieve an overall outcome. For example, for each of our themes we have an overarching outcome that will be measured annually, but which we expect to see progress over five years.

Each of the themes also have outputs that seek to achieve that aim, these will be measured annually.

So every year we will report on the overarching outcome measure for each theme, and all the relevant outputs.

Given that the plan has been developed in advance of an agreed three year budget, it is designed to be flexible, adaptable and agile, responding when required to changing policy, financial and/or societal circumstances.

Table 1 outlines our actions for the next five years. We will keep this plan under regular review and report annually on progress to the Equality Commission NI. We will undertake a wider review in four years and will involve Section 75 equality groups and individuals in that review, producing a new five year plan.

## Reviewing our plan

As this plan is intended to be a *'living'* document, it will evolve and be reviewed in line with the EA's corporate and business planning processes. This linkage to the corporate planning cycle will also ensure that equality of opportunity and promotion of good relations are incorporated and mainstreamed at a strategic level.

This document is also available on our website: [www.eani.org.uk](http://www.eani.org.uk)

# Who to contact

The person in our organisation who is responsible for making sure that the actions in this plan are taken forward is Matthew McDermott.

Contact details:

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# Equality Action Plan Themes & Actions

## 1. Learning Experiences and Outcomes (Attainment)

The evidence of inequalities and poorer outcomes around attainment for certain groups seems to be enduring. Although previous actions were implemented to support a move toward improved outcomes, and some success was noted, this work was foundational. It is evident that a more strategic, sustained intervention is required across the system. The Education Authority's School Improvement Strategy sets out the Authority's blueprint for driving and enabling school and system improvement. The SIS makes an uncompromising commitment to making a profound and positive difference in the learning and lives of all children and young people, especially those who experience disadvantage.

Groups considered under this theme, as those with lowest attainment levels include; looked after children (LAC), children from minority ethnic backgrounds, including Traveller and Roma children and children with a disability. Children and young people entitled to free school meals persistently underperform in public examinations and fail to match their potential through this formal measure.

As socio economic background, poverty and deprivation play a pivotal role in in young people's attendance; the home support they receive and learning outcomes they achieve, this is a key consideration of the actions going forward. Whilst not an 'equality' ground in of itself, socio-economic impacts cross almost all equality characteristics which requires significant interventions.

This theme will also seek to address what achievement means for our children and young people, how we can support the raising of aspiration for all young people within and across schools and how we can support and inspire young people to be the best that they can be.

The Education Authority's School Improvement Strategy sets out an ambitious, coherent and integrated approach to securing school and system improvement; an approach underpinned by strong partnerships, dynamic collective leadership and shared solutions. It is set firmly within the broader School Improvement policy and strategic landscape and has been informed by and developed with current and recently retired practitioners. The Strategy provides a framework which will drive the implementation of DE Learning Leaders Strategy for Teacher Professional Learning and support the realisation of the recommendations and actions identified in 'A Fair Start' Report.

The School Improvement Strategy will provide the anchor for key developmental work aimed at raising the quality of learning experiences and outcomes for all children and young people.

### Outcome

Pupils who experience lower levels of attainment due to, equality characteristics, compared with their peers, will see improvements in their attainment outcomes.

## Measure

Percentage improvements in the attainment levels of pupils reported to experience lower levels of attainment outcomes as compared to their peers.

Action	Output	Measure	Lead and timeframe
1.1 EA will work with stakeholders to ensure services are joined up to more holistically support our children and young people in line with 'A Fair Start' Report.	Realisation of the recommendations identified in 'A Fair Start' Report	Children and Young people from across the equality groups, socio economic background and Irish Medium sector will be better supported	Director of Education Year 1-4
1.2 EA will use best practice from across the UK, to embed a reporting framework to tackle socio economic disadvantage across the areas of responsibility for EA	Socio-economic framework developed	Meaningful impact assessments to understand the consequences of socio-economic disadvantage	Director of Human Resources and Corporate Services Year 2 - 5
1.3 EA will develop and implement a robust SEN transformational improvement plan	A robust SEN Programme	Children and Young People with Special Education Needs are supported and enabled to be the best that they can be	Director of Children and Young People's Services Years 1-5
1.4 Support the establishment of formal professional partnerships or area learning communities for nursery and primary schools to secure an agile interdependent education system where all learn from each other.	Formal professional partnerships or area learning communities established	Each Nursery and primary school will be actively engaged in a formal partnership or an area learning community	Director of Education Year 3
1.5 Support the development of teaching and learning subgroups within post primary area learning communities (ALC) that focus on pedagogical development and teacher professional learning	Teaching and Learning sub groups established in all area learning communities	Each post primary ALC will have a teaching and learning group in place focused on identifying, sharing and developing practice.	Director of Education Year 2
1.6 An "Educating and Engaging Boys" Toolkit that addresses factors limiting boys' progress will be developed in collaboration with schools and other organisations	Toolkit, in the form of an online hub for all stakeholders developed Boys benefit from tailored approaches to teaching and learning Teachers are challenged and supported to have high expectations and employ strategies designed to challenge and engage boys	An "Educating and Engaging Boys" toolkit (Hub) is widely used and informs practice in schools. Maximising boys' potential will be a priority, where appropriate, in School Development Plans	Director of Education Year 2 - 3

## 2. Access to Education

Access to Education includes many issues that impact many of our section 75 groups. It remains the case that there are a number of equality groups that face particular and unique barriers to fully accessing the curriculum. The aim of this plan is to better support schools to ensure that all young people, regardless of their background or circumstances, can access the curriculum.

The particular areas of focus for this theme include special educational needs and access and achievement levels for Travellers and newcomers.

This theme also addresses issues of full access to EA information and services for all communities in Northern Ireland.

### Outcome

A reduction in the barriers faced by a number of equality groups in their ability to access the full education curriculum all of the time.

### Measure

Percentage improvement of Children and Young People from across the equality groups accessing education all of the time.

Action	Output	Measure	Timescale and Lead Service
2.1 The Education Authority will work with the voluntary sector to develop guidance for schools on supporting our black and minority ethnic pupils and wider school community  The Education Authority will develop an e-learning module for EA staff, school based staff and school leaders to share best practice in tackling race related issues	Guidance developed for schools and Youth Services  E-learning module developed	Uptake in use of Guidance  Uptake in e-learning	Director of Human Resources and Corporate Services / Director of Children and Young People's Services Year 2 Director of Human Resources and Corporate Services / Director of Children and Young People's Services Year 3-4
2.2 EA will embed rural impact assessment into all Area Planning equality screenings	Rural Impact considerations are evidenced in all area planning decisions	Rural Impact considerations evidenced within Area Planning screening	Director of Human Resources and Corporate Services / Education Year 2

2.3	EA will identify number of children who present barriers to using I.T. and conduct a review of assistive technologies and resources to enhance and support the learning experience	Review undertaken and report presented to EA Board	Access for visually or medically impaired children who cannot use IT	Director of Children and Young People's Services Year 2
2.4	EA will develop formal channels with a range of organisations and community groups to capture their contributions and address external challenges and raise the quality of learning	Partnerships will be developed with community organisations to support increased access to education for all children and young people	Number of partnerships developed	Director of Education Year 2-5
2.5.	EA will develop a strategic cross directorate action plan to promote and progress Irish Medium Education Services	Development and delivery of strategic cross directorate plan for Irish Medium Education provision	Plan developed and initiatives delivered and reported on	Director of Education Year 1-3

### 3. Bullying

The Audit of Inequalities identifies bullying as an issue that transcends many of the section 75 groups, with some pupils from particular backgrounds more susceptible to being bullied. Children and young people should feel safe and welcome in their schools, as the absence of this environment for young people impacts on their learning. There are higher instances of bullying, or likelihood of bullying for our minority ethnic pupils, lesbian, gay or bisexual pupils, pupils with SEN and or a disability and transgender young people.

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 has been introduced and EA will continue to work to support schools to ensure they are complying with the provisions of the Act. We also work, and will continue to work closely, with the NI Anti Bullying Forum. A growing body of evidence shows that severe and frequent bullying can have a long-lasting impact on children's mental wellbeing and development.

The COVID19 pandemic has evidenced a 20% increase on time spent by people, including children and young people, on social media. Bullying online is less easy to spot and children and young people using the internet are prone to online harassment at least once in their lives.

#### Outcome

There will be a decrease in the reported instances of bullying and an increase in the number of schools who feel better supported to tackle bullying.

#### Measure

Reduction in reported instances in bullying and increase in schools reporting feeling better equipped.

Outcome	Action	Measure	Lead and timeframe
3.1. Creation of a new EA team to focus on supporting the implementation of the Addressing Bullying in schools Act and to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embed cultures that eradicate bullying for young people across educational settings;</li> <li>• Implement the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act 2016 with success across all schools;</li> <li>• Connect with community organisations and partner agencies to eradicate bullying in the community and online for our young people in Northern Ireland;</li> <li>• Support national and international events across NI raising the profile of anti-bullying work;</li> <li>• Deliver a continuum of support to all schools related to anti-bullying work;</li> <li>• Include a focus on research in anti-bullying approaches across the region; and</li> <li>• Celebrate positive anti-bullying cultures and embed charter style approaches across the sector</li> </ul>	A new EA team is developed and resourced	Number of staff employed  Number of schools supported	Director of Children and Young People's Services  Team established Year 1  Rollout Years 2-5
3.2. EA will support schools to embed equality and diversity into their school ethos	Schools will adopt the EA model Equality and Diversity policy	Number of schools who adopt EAs model equality and diversity policy	Director of Human Resources and Corporate Services Year 1-5
3.3. Guidance and support on sexual harassment and sexual exploitation to be developed for schools	Guidance developed for schools and disseminated	Number of schools availing of support	Director of Human Resources and Corporate Services and Director of Children and Young People's Services Year 3

## 4. Data

Data gaps continue to be an issue across the sector. Digital transformation projects are live across the organisation. Since the previous Plan EA has made significant steps to ensure inclusion of robust data that can be disaggregated and used to inform screening and policy decision making.

A major new integrated data collection system covering the whole workforce is being rolled-out which influences our equal opportunities monitoring and equality screening processes.

The Equality team continues to support the Education Directorate in developing a new school-based system which includes capacity to capture reliable equality data for all our children and young people.

### Outcome

EA will have a better understanding of need and changing experiences/outcomes, new systems will be developed to collect and exchange information and resources will be better targeted to address need through data driven decision making improving outcomes for children and young people.

### Measures

An increase in the availability of disaggregated data on equality characteristics of children and young people using EA services, including in schools.

Action	Output	Measure	Lead and timeframe
<p>4.1</p> <p>Research will be carried out on the following topics:                      Meeting the needs of children and young people with physical and/or sensory needs.                      Encouraging young people to stay in education (NEETS).                      The impact C19 has had on the mental health of children and young people.                      Life outside social media.                      Rural youth provision                      Integration and inclusion of young travellers into youth provision.                      The impact cost of living is having on young people.                      Connectivity – the impact the digital divide has on children and young people.</p>	<p>Research reports published</p>	<p>Increase in available data and knowledge</p>	<p>Director of Children and Young People's Services                      Year 1-5</p>
<p>4.2</p> <p>A schools data profile will be developed and used by key services within EA to target resources and expertise, implement a risk based approach to school improvement and build relationships for learning.</p>	<p>The dashboard will be used to enable more rigorous self-evaluation, tailor interventions, plan support and evaluate impact</p>	<p>Data profile developed and in use by schools and across all Directorates</p>	<p>Director of Education                      June 2023</p>
<p>4.3</p> <p>The school management information system within EdIS will be developed to ensure that data entered once and available in a range of formats will be used by schools to analyse trends that are automatically identified, including links to system wide data for comparison</p>	<p>Schools will use dashboard of system wide data to benchmark practice, evaluate the impact of the intervention and inform their school improvement journey</p>	<p>Interventions in school benchmarked against system wide data</p>	<p>Director of Education                      June 2025</p>

## 5. Enabling Opportunities

During engagement with key stakeholder on the audit of inequalities and equality action plan, a number of stakeholders identified trends and the need for EA to focus, within the parameters of our functions, on meeting the needs of young people who fall out of education with limited opportunities. An additional theme, around 'enabling opportunities' has therefore been added into the Equality Action Plan 2022-2027.

The focus of this theme is to use the functions of the Authority as an employer, service provider and educational and youth service provider to enhance the opportunities that exist for all our young people, opening pathways for those young people that may, for complex and varied reasons, still leave the education system with limited opportunities.

### Outcome

Improved opportunities for young people leaving the education system at age 16-19 years old.

### Measures

Reduction in the number of young people leaving the education system at 16-19 years old with limited opportunities, and an enhancement of the number of opportunities for those young people that do leave the system at 16-19 years old.

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Lead and timeframe</b>
5.1	Develop a set of public procurement specifications to be applied to major contracts that supports enhanced opportunities to employment opportunities for 16-19 year olds with limited qualifications	Change to large procurement specifications that EA are tendering requiring large bidders to enhance opportunities for 16-19 year olds	Number of contracts amended	Director of Operations and Estates Year 1-5
5.2	Deliver a Youth Leadership Programme that aims to reduce educational under-achievement and develop youth leadership within local communities	Youth Leadership Programme developed	Number of young people engaged in programme	Director of Children and Young People's Services Year 2-4
5.3	Develop a robust and effective transition offering for children and young people with Special Educational Needs post 16-19 years old	Transition plan for each young person in place	Number of young people with	Director of Children and Young People's Services Year 2
5.4	Develop interventions and support for young people from rural areas, through EA Youth Service, who leave formal education with limited qualifications, to upskill and support an enhancement of their opportunities	Intervention programme for young people in rural areas in place	Number of young people engaged in programme	Director of Children and Young People's Services Year 2-4
5.5	Develop a robust placement programme to support young people, people who are long term unemployed and people with limited opportunities to come and work in EA	Placement programme in place	Number of young people engaged in placement scheme	Director of Human Resources and Corporate Services Year 1 – 2

## 6. Emotional Health and Wellbeing

Mental health and emotional wellbeing remains a significant issue for our children and young people. The COVID19 pandemic has had significant impacts on the mental health and wellbeing for our children and young people with schools reporting unsettled children and heightened anxiety amongst young people. How schools respond to issues around anxiety, stress and depression can have a hugely positive or negative impact on the young person's recovery and / or development. This can be particularly important to those from abusive homes.

The issue of mental health and wellbeing transcends many of the Section 75 groups. It was an issue raised by young people through engagement and the NI Commissioner for Children and Young People stated in a recent report that the health and wellbeing of children and young people remains a serious issue.

### Outcome

Throughout the lifetime of this action plan, schools and youth services will be better equipped to support children and young people displaying mental health and wellbeing issues.

### Measure

Number of schools reporting that they are better equipped and supported to provide support to children and young people with mental health and wellbeing issues.

Action	Output	Measure	Lead and timeframe
6.1 EA will support schools through the Looked After Children Team to ensure looked-after children have access to any physical or mental health care they may need	LAC support package for schools	Looked after children accessing the health and wellbeing support they need through schools	Director of Children and Young People's Services Years 1-5
6.2 EA work with partners across the sector to build an equality, diversity and inclusion training matrix of organisations to assist schools	Training matrix of organisations to assist schools available	Number of schools aware of matrix	Director of Human Resources and Corporate Services Year 1
6.3 Support educational settings to promote emotional health and wellbeing through a holistic, multi-disciplinary approach, and provide early and enhanced support for those children and young people who may be at risk or showing signs of needing further help	Implementation of the Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing in Education Framework	Number of schools using framework	Director of Children and Young People's Services / Director of Education Year 1-5
6.5 EA will support schools in creating a culture which emphasises the importance of staff wellbeing	Training will consist of 4 webinars, a handbook and termly cluster groups. The efficacy of each training course will be evaluated	The EPS School Staff Wellbeing Pilot Project will provide training for school staff	Director of Children and Young People's Services Year 1

## 7. Workforce

EA values the need for staff to be empowered and given the right tools to do their job. We will ensure all our staff are able to positively contribute to the realisation of EA's vision, regardless of their background. EA realise the world of work is changing and we aim to continue to deliver excellence in the evolving hybrid working environment by;

- Having a workforce that is highly capable, engaged and empowered;
- Promoting a culture of inclusion at all levels;
- Creating a safe and supportive environment for people to be their authentic selves;
- Ensuring we have highly capable leaders and managers who demonstrate and embed the EA value of Equality; and
- Building a respectful environment that embraces diversity and engages all employees in fulfilling EAs core values.

### Outcome

EA will be an employer of choice for all communities in Northern Ireland. People will want to work and build a career with the Education Authority.

### Measure

Satisfaction rates of EA staff.

Action	Output	Measure	Lead and timeframe
7.1 EA will build on the 'Joint Declaration of Protection at Work and Inclusive Working Environment' and produce a Good Relations Policy to tackle prejudice and promote understanding across political opinion, religious belief and race	Good Relations Policy produced with associated training	Staff using policy and promoting inclusive working environment	Director of Human Resources and Corporate Services Year 2-4
7.2 In line with the Organisational Development and Learning Strategy EA will support staff through mentoring circles on topics such as; return to work, menopause and career advancement	Mentoring Circles in place	Staff availing of mentoring	Director of Human Resources and Corporate Services Year 1-2
7.3 EA will conduct a gender pay gap analysis to inform the next Gender Action Plan	Gender Pay Gap Analysis completed	Gender Pay Gap measured	Director of Human Resources and Corporate Services Year 1-2
7.4 EA will develop equality and diversity eLearning for all EA staff	Training suite of E Learning modules developed to include: Sex discrimination, Disability, Good Relations and Anti-Racism	Training figures for staff taking training	Director of Human Resources and Corporate Services Year 1-3
7.5 EA will support and encourage staff through talent management and the development of a people plan	People Plan developed	Staff progression and retention rates	Director of Human Resources and Corporate Services Year 2-5
7.6 Mental Health First Aid will be supported in the workplace by training staff to be trainers, therefore having more staff availability to train internally and increase awareness of mental health	Roll out MHFA Train the Trainer programme	Staff availing of Train the Trainer	Director of Human Resources and Corporate Services Year 1-5
7.7 EA will evaluate the Disability Employment Support Service to inform future resourcing, practices, and procurement processes and also relationship with Access to Work	Updated Service materials and guidance in place. Suitable resources in place to ensure support for staff across EA	Data on staff availing of DESS	Director of Human Resources and Corporate Services Year 1-2
7.8 Code of Conduct on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace to be developed	Code of Conduct on Sexual Harassment in place	Numbers of complaints	Director of Human Resources and Corporate Services Year 1-2



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