



Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-28

Northern Ireland Practice and
Education Council for Nursing
and Midwifery

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We will consider any request for this document in another format or language. Please contact us at:

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1. Introduction

Mr Kieran McCormick (Interim Chair) and Ms Linda Kelly (Chief Executive) of the Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery are committed to promoting equality and good relations. For people with a disability, we recognise that we could do more to promote positive attitudes and to encourage their participation in public life. Opportunities for more participation in public life should be afforded to all those with a disability.

We want to make sure we do this in a way that makes a difference to people. We will put in place what is necessary to do so. This includes people, time and money. Where it is right to do so, we will include actions from this plan in the yearly plans we develop for the organisation as a whole. These are called 'corporate' or 'business' plans.

We will also put everything in place in the organisation to make sure that we do what we have to under the law. This includes making one person responsible overall for making sure we do what we say we are going to do in our Equality and Disability Action Plans.

We will make sure we let our staff know of what is in our plans. We will also train our staff and help them understand what they need to do.

The person in our organisation who is responsible for making sure that we do what we have promised to do is Ms Jill Jackson. If you have any questions you can contact her at:

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2. Who we are and what we do

The Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council (NIPEC) is part of health and social care in Northern Ireland. Our aim is to improve standards of practice, education and professional development of nurses and midwives to facilitate delivery of safe, effective and person-centred practice.

We work with our colleagues across health and social care and with education providers to:

- promote:
 - high standards of practice among nurses and midwives
 - high standards of education and learning for nurses and midwives
 - professional development of nurses and midwives
- and provide:
 - guidance on the best practice for nurses and midwives
 - advice and information on matters relating to nursing and midwifery.

3. How people can be involved in our work

There are a number of ways in which people can be involved in the work of NIPEC, including:

- Applying to be a lay or professional member of NIPEC Council
- The public can attend our Council meetings. Dates of these are published on our website in advance of the Council meeting
- Participation, via established voluntary and community groups, in relevant project and working groups which require user input
- Applying to be a member of NIPEC's Personal and Public Involvement (PPI) e-Forum

- Engagement with NIPEC's work through opportunities offered via the Patient Client Council membership scheme

Responding to a consultation or survey posted on our website <https://nipec.hscni.net>

The recruitment and selection of our lay and professional members to our Council is managed by the Department of Health's Public Appointments Unit, and the final selection of members is made by the Minister for Health. Professional members must be registered as a nurse or midwife, whilst lay members, do not have to be registered as a nurse or midwife. All members are usually appointed for a 4-year term and can serve a maximum of two terms. Recruitment of new members does not take place on a regular basis but rather as and when vacancies arise either as terms of office end or if a member steps down from their position. Vacancies are advertised by the Public Appointments Unit in the regional media and online via the Department.

4. What the law says

NIPEC has to follow the law under **Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998**. It says that in our work we have to promote equality and good relations. We have to treat people fairly and based on their needs and to make things better for staff and people who use our services. It also says that we have to build better relationships between different groups of people.

There are nine different equality groups that the law requires us to look at:

- Gender (and gender identities)
- Age
- Religion
- Political opinion
- Ethnicity
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Marital status
- Having dependants or not.

There are three good relations groups we need to consider:

- Religion
- Political opinion
- Ethnicity.

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We also have to follow the law under the **Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006**, which says that we have to:

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

This includes people with any type of disability, whether for example, physical disabilities; sensory disabilities (such as sight loss or hearing loss); autism; learning disabilities; dyslexia; mental health conditions (such as depression); or conditions that are longterm (such as cancer or diabetes). Some of these disabilities may be hidden, others may be visible.

Both pieces of legislation require us to develop an action plan: an Equality Action Plan and a Disability Action Plan. We have to send these plans to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and then report every year on what we have done.

5. How we reviewed our last plans and developed these

new plans

In starting off to develop this plan we looked at what we have done so far to promote equality and good relations, to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and to encourage their participation in public life.

As part of our Five-Year Review, we thought through the following questions:

- What has worked well?
- What hasn't worked well?
- What lessons have we learned?
- Did we do what we said we would do?
- Has this made a difference for people in the way we thought it would?

For the new plans, we considered two questions:

- What are the key issues for people in the equality groupings relating to our functions?

- What can we do to address these issues?

We encouraged our staff to look at a range of sources of information such as:

our Five Year Review of Equality Scheme

- monitoring data
- new research or data
- equality screening exercises that have been completed
- their professional experience and knowledge
- issues raised in consultations or through other engagement with staff and service users.

We engaged closely with Tapestry, our Disability Staff Network, in the development of our Disability Action Plans. We held a focus group with them to find out what issues important to them as a member of staff with a disability or as a carer they think the organisation should address as a priority.

We also read up on what the Equality Commission says would be good to do. All this helped us think about what else we could do to make a difference.

6. What we have done so far

This is some of the work that we have done to promote equality under our previous Equality Action Plan:

- We adopted a Workplace Policy on Domestic Abuse. This policy outlines our organisation's support to members of staff affected by domestic abuse and aims to raise awareness and understanding of domestic abuse, signposting key resources and support available.

Continued to provide our staff with training in the equality legislation and how they can make a difference by promoting positive attitudes to diversity and behaving in a way that is in keeping with HSC values and equality and human rights law.

Completion of the making a difference e-learning programme is mandatory.

- Stakeholder feedback senior project leads continue to find ways to improve communication and access to our resources

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by our stakeholders. Some of this work will be taken forward in this plan by the Senior Communications Officer.

Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people

- To date, we have held 17 disability awareness days for our staff. Each looked at a different disability. The aim is to increase the knowledge and awareness of our staff including on how to support a person with that particular disability. Since the pandemic we have been holding these online via Zoom. The sessions are recorded and uploaded to the website of Tapestry, our disability staff network.
- We have developed a dedicated module on disability as part of our e-learning resource called 'Making a Difference'. It is available to all Health and Social Care staff. All our staff have been advised that this training is mandatory.
- We have delivered training sessions on mental health awareness to our staff, including on mental health first aid, mindfulness and managing stress, and courses for staff who are carers.
- One of our non-executive board members is the Disability Champion at board level.

Encourage the participation of disabled people in public life

- Together with our partners, we set up Tapestry, a disability network for our staff. Part of the role of this network is to raise disability issues with decision makers in our organisation.

7. What we have learned so far

Some of the key points we have learned from developing and implementing our action plans and from collaborating with our partners are described below.

Disability Awareness Days

- Since we moved our days online we have seen a rise in numbers of staff attending our joint events.
- Recording the sessions has been a great success. This means staff who can't attend on the day can access the event whenever it suits them.
There is a huge information need of staff who are carers of a person with a disability, for example of a person living with ADHD or with dementia.
- Staff are interested in learning more about how to support a family member, not just colleagues in the workplace.

We have found that attendance at awareness events is greatest when the subject is most relevant to staff. This can be because they have the condition themselves or they know or work with someone who has the condition. We will continue to ask staff which areas relating to disability they would like more information on.

Tapestry – Disability Staff Network

- Staff fora need refreshed and promoted on an ongoing basis.
- For a forum to be effective in its supporting and influencing role, a committed HR presence at senior level is essential as is the timely engagement and consultation on policies/decisions/strategies etc. to inform the development of these.

Disability Champions

- A Champion who is a Non-Executive board member can be a powerful advocate for the consideration of disability issues in decision-making and its scrutiny.

To date, we have made little progress on the carer's agenda in employment.

8. What is in the new plans

There are two separate tables below. The first table lists all the actions that we will do to promote equality and good relations. This is our Equality Action Plan.

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The second table describes what we will do to promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability and to encourage their participation in public life. This is our Disability Action Plan.

In both plans we also say what difference we hope to make and when we will do these actions.

9. How we will monitor these plans

Every year we will write up what we have done. We will also explain when we haven't done something. We send this report to the Equality Commission. We also publish this report on our website: <https://nipec.hscni.net/publications/equality-human-rights/>

We will have a look at the plans every year to see whether we need to make any changes to them. If we need to, we will write those changes into the plans. Before we make any big changes we talk to people in the equality groupings to see what they think.

When we finish an action we will take it off the plans for the next year. That way we will keep our plans up to date. They will show what we still have to do.

After five years we will look at our plans again to see how we have done. We will also see what else we could do.

Whenever we develop or look at our plans we will invite people who have a disability to help us.

The plans are also available on our website:
<https://nipec.hscni.net/publications/equality-human-rights/>

We will send our plans to all organisations and individuals on our consultation list when we have finalised them and also when we have made major changes to them.

To find out whether what we do makes a difference, we will do a number of things, for example, for training and awareness events, we ask our staff about what learning they are taking away with them.

You can find further information on how we will monitor each action in the plans themselves.

10. Equality Action Plan 2023-28: What we will do to promote equality and good relations

| What we will do | What we are trying to achieve and who for (i.e. which Section 75 category specifically) | Performance Indicator and Target | By whom and when |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>Stakeholder engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benchmark what other HSC organisations have done to improve engagement with Section 75 groups in particular members of the Global Majority Community working in NI. Implement learning from other HSC Organisations as to how they engage with registrants from this group. Pilot collecting equality/diversity information on a voluntary basis as part of our online events booking system and NIPEC Surveys. | <p>Improved communication and engagement with those involved in our work</p> | <p>Establishment of a collaborative to seek views from members of the Global Majority Community working in NI. As per NIPEC's 23/24 Business Plan.</p> <p>Feedback surveys issued and reviewed at all stakeholder and engagement events.</p> | <p>NIPEC Professional Team March 2025</p> |

| What we will do | What we are trying to achieve and who for (i.e. which Section 75 category specifically) | Performance Indicator and Target | By whom and when |
|------------------------|--|---|-------------------------|
|------------------------|--|---|-------------------------|

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice and guidance on postgraduate access to education for Global Majority Community members working in NI. | <p>Ensuring that Global Majority Community members working in NI have equal access and are aware of the Postgraduate Education programme.</p> | <p>Establishment of a collaborative to engage with Global Majority Community members working in NI.</p> <p>Achievement of related objective on NIPEC's 23/24 Business Plan.</p> <p>Monitoring of how many members have accessed training.</p> | <p>NIPEC Professional Team</p> <p>March 2024</p> |
| <p>What we will do</p> | <p>What we are trying to achieve and who for (i.e. which Section 75 category specifically)</p> | <p>Performance Indicator and Target</p> | <p>By whom and when</p> |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|-----------------------------|
| | | | |
| <p>Workforce / Human Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in partnership with BSO and other HSC organisations in undertaking a Carers' survey of our staff. • Develop Action Plan and amend NIPEC's Flexible Working Policy if required. | <p>Staff with caring responsibilities feel well supported and that their needs are met Signposting to and increased awareness of support for and existing policies and procedures available to staff who have caring responsibilities</p> | <p>Carer's survey undertaken and action plan developed to respond to any gaps identified in feedback received</p> <p>Feedback suggests that 80% of staff with caring responsibilities who had a need to draw on support felt well supported.</p> | <p>NIPEC March 2025</p> |

11. Disability Action Plan 2023-28: What we will do to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in public life

| What we will do | What we are trying to achieve | Performance Indicator and Target | By whom and when |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
|-----------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p>Monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to reassure and encourage staff to complete equality and diversity information to strengthen data. • The need to complete equality and diversity information will be included as part of the NIPEC Induction pack and added as an agenda item to the Health and Wellbeing Committee. | <p>More accurate data in place Greater number of staff feel comfortable declaring they have a disability</p> | <p>Increase in completion of disability monitoring information by staff to 90%</p> | <p>NIPEC Business Team with support from Equality Unit</p> <p>March 2024</p> |
| <p>Training</p> <p>Train Council members on their responsibilities on disability equality and disability legislation.</p> | <p>Increased staff and Council Member awareness of the range of disabilities and needs</p> | <p>All staff and Council members trained within 2 years through interactive sessions</p> | <p>NIPEC Business Team with support from Equality Unit</p> <p>December 2023</p> |
| <p>What we will do</p> | <p>What we are trying to achieve</p> | <p>Performance Indicator and Target</p> | <p>By whom and when</p> |

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|--|--|--|--|
| | | <p>and staff awareness initiatives</p> <p>Dedicated Equality Workshop for Council members on their duties in relation to Equality in 2023.</p> | |
| <p>Communication</p> <p>Carry out an accessibility audit on both of NIPEC's websites to include disability testing for users.</p> | <p>Users with a disability have full access to all information and functionalities of NIPEC's websites. Users from a range of disabilities are involved in user testing.</p> <p>Continue to meet best practice and guidance including legislative requirements</p> | <p>Website accessibility complies with Accessibility Regulations (2018)</p> <p>Action Plan to address any accessibility issues</p> | <p>NIPEC Business Team</p> <p>March 2025</p> |

| What we will do | What we are trying to achieve | Performance Indicator and Target | By whom and when |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p>Awareness Days Raise awareness of the lived experience of people with specific disabilities and conditions.</p> | <p>Increased staff awareness of a range of disabilities and conditions.</p> | <p>Two awareness days profiled every year. >50% of staff taking part in the evaluation indicate they know more about people living with disabilities and conditions as a result of the awareness days.</p> | <p>NIPEC Business Team with support from BSO Equality Unit End Mar 2028</p> |
| <p>Placement Scheme Create and promote a meaningful placement opportunity for people with disabilities.</p> | <p>People with a disability gain meaningful work experience.</p> | <p>At least one placement offered each year. Feedback through annual evaluation of scheme indicates that placement meets expectations.</p> | <p>NIPEC Business Team with support from BSO Equality Unit. End Mar 2028</p> |

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|---|--|---|---|
| <p>Tapestry NIPEC Business Team to approach Tapestry to attend a NIPEC staff</p> | <p>Staff with a disability feel more confident that their voice is heard in decision-making.</p> | <p>Increases in Tapestry membership or in participation at meetings Tapestry attend</p> | <p>NIPEC Business Team, with support from Equality Unit</p> |
| <p>What we will do</p> | <p>What we are trying to achieve</p> | <p>Performance Indicator and Target</p> | <p>By whom and when</p> |
| <p>meeting to talk about Tapestry, its aims and objectives.</p> | <p>Staff with a disability feel better supported.</p> | | <p>March 2024</p> |

Signed by:



Interim Chair

Date: 20/09/23



Chief Executive

Date: 20/09/23



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