

Department for Employment and Learning



**Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties
Annual Progress Report 2014-15**

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Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:

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

Signature:



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 2014 and March 2015

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 2014-15, 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.

This is the Department for Employment and Learning's fifteenth report on progress with the implementation of the equality and good relations duties under Section 75 of the NI Act 1998.

The Department continues to give priority to promoting equality of opportunity and to good relations, and ensuring fair and inclusive delivery of its programmes and services. The Department delivers real social change by addressing the needs of those who are most disadvantaged in society and fulfilling our equality and good relations commitments. The Department continues to integrate all aspects of equality and other policy proofing considerations, into its policy and decision making processes. The Department has a strong tradition of mainstreaming equality and continues to ensure that equality factors are taken into account as it considers the development of new and existing policies.

The process of screening and the robustness of decisions taken have continued 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 proved of value to screening findings.

The Department's Equality Unit is responsible for co-ordinating all of 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. The Unit reports regularly to the Departmental Board and maintains close links with other public authorities and representatives of the Section 75 categories.

The Department continues to carry out 'Shared Future Policy Proofing', a process which the Minister introduced in April 2012. This is applied to all significant new policies and business cases. The purpose of this process is to determine whether proposals are likely to contribute positively to a shared society or inadvertently reinforce divisions, in which case mitigating measures would need to be considered. Public authorities are already required to carry out good relations proofing under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. This is limited, however, to only three of the Section 75(1) categories, namely between persons of different religious belief, political opinion and racial group. Shared Future Policy Proofing screenings are different and separate from the Equality screening required under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Shared Future Policy Proofing is concerned with promoting sharing or engaging together for all nine of the Section 75(1) categories. Furthermore, the current

requirements are limited in scope in that, while they acknowledge the existence of divisions and/or diversity and the need to encourage respect, they do not explicitly promote sharing or discourage separation in terms of how people access facilities or services. Shared Policy Proofing is in addition to our existing legislative responsibility. To comply, the impact of all major policies and business cases must now be assessed to determine the extent to which they promote sharing or separation in terms of how people live, learn, work, play, or access goods, facilities or services. Shared Future Policy Proofing will provide decision-makers with wider understanding of the impact of potential decisions, and thus ensure better-informed policy.

In November 2012, the Department commenced a two year contract with the Rainbow Project to increase employers' awareness of their responsibility in terms of equality in the workplace, and further encourage them to embrace the importance of having a work environment which is welcoming to those who are lesbian, gay and bisexual. Two thousand employers with at least 10 employees were identified with the support of the Equality Commission. These employers were sent information packs detailing the scope of the project with a target uptake of 400 employers and by the end of the project 398 employers had taken part. Seminars were held in a range of venues including Belfast City Hall. A range of approaches were taken with the seminars including using outside agencies to further promote the need for equality and diversity to underpin workplace policy and practice as well as linking in with key business agencies such as Legal Island to increase the reach of the project. Eighty

employers accepted the offer of additional training and consultancy support on a range of policies and practices regarding LGB people and sexual orientation. The Project has allowed organisations, many for the first time, to educate their staff teams about sexual orientation issues and given staff the language and confidence to speak about sexual orientation issues within the workplace therefore increasing diversity and equality. An end of project report is currently being prepared and this will be published on the Department's website.

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 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 always "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.

Work and Families Bill

In 2014/15, DEL took the necessary steps to ensure that the Work and Families Bill progressed through the relevant Assembly stages. This Bill received Royal Assent on 8th January 2015. The legislation became known as the Work and Families Act (NI) 2015. This Act provides, from 5th April 2015, for the introduction of Shared Parental

Leave and Pay which permits parents to have greater freedom to share leave and pay in the first year of their child's birth or placement for adoption. The Act also introduced other related entitlements, including provisions for time off to attend antenatal appointments and pre-adoption meetings, the extension of adoption leave and pay to prospective adopters and surrogate parents, the extension of unpaid parental leave, as well as the extension of the right to request flexible working to all qualifying employees.

As a consequence, children and parents will benefit from the greater flexibility afforded by the shared parental leave and pay proposals. Women will also benefit in being able to retain a stronger connection to the workplace, enhancing opportunities for career development. The role of men in providing care for children also becomes better established, thus challenging perceptions and prejudices that only women will be absent from the workplace for care related reasons.

The flexible working provisions of the Act mean that, for the first time, all employees with qualifying service will be able to request flexible working. This will permit all section 75 categories to access this right on an equal basis but may in particular provide those with caring responsibilities with greater flexibility to balance competing work and caring responsibilities, as well as enable older employees to reduce hours in order to ease into retirement.

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 continued to implement a risk-based approach to inspection during 2014/15, 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 2014 and March 2015, 15 inspections and investigations were carried out (both routine inspections and complaints investigations) and 15 complaints were received. The EAI also conducted 6 information visits to new or existing agencies to provide advice on the requirements under the Conduct Regulations.

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. During 2014/15, the Department continued to work closely with the NISMP to ensure that Northern Ireland is a welcoming place for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

The Partnership has worked to support their retention and integration, in a way that contributes to economic growth, and to reflect the regionally specific needs of Northern Ireland in the development and implementation of UK immigration policy.

The Partnership has established a migration web-site/portal that deals with migrants' information needs, myth-busting, and best practice in respect of migrant policy.

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.

Over the past year the Department has also sought to build links and enhance DEL's engagement with representative bodies from migrant communities. On 29 January 2015 the Department brought together its key learning and employment business areas, in partnership with the NISMP, to host an interactive workshop with representatives from the Horn of Africa migrant communities (Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan and Djibouti). The business areas provided information, advice and guidance on the range of programmes and services available and listened to the experiences, issues and concerns raised by the migrant representatives in a welcoming and positive environment.

The event provided a model for similar events to be held with other migrant communities and this will be considered as part of an action plan arising from the Horn of Africa Peoples Aid NI (HAPANI) workshop. This workshop has been followed by two further workshops with migrant representative groups (NICEM and the NIC-ICTU

migrant worker project) to discuss enhancing migrant access to the Department's programmes and services.

The Department has engaged with the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) on the INTEGRO project. The INTEGRO project is a Transnational Project "Integration on the Ground" which was funded by the European Union Integration Fund. It examines integration barriers experienced by Third Country Nationals in five European countries. A seminar hosted by NICEM on 19th March 2015 was the culmination of the Northern Ireland programme which engaged the views of stakeholders through an integration mapping report, focus groups and three roadshow events. Officials were involved in some of the workshops and attended the 19th March event.

Relationships continue to be developed between relevant employment inspection and enforcement bodies. Where legislation permits, information sharing has been enhanced, in order to address exploitation of migrant workers and breaches of their employment rights.

The provision of information and signposting services to migrant workers continue to develop.

Training for Success

The Training for Success (TfS) programme is designed to enable participants to progress to higher level training, further education, or employment, by providing training to address personal and social

development needs, develop occupational and employment skills and, where necessary, Essential Skills training.

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).

This programme 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:-

The Training for Success programme 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.

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 should be specified on the Personal Training Plan.

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 describe, such is the range and complexity of the 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 should be 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 level 2 qualifications and have completed the Skills for Work level 2 provision 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 is 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.

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 designed by Sector Skills Councils and Industry Representative Bodies to meet the need of each particular sector.

Apprenticeships 2016

A new Northern Ireland strategy on apprenticeships (Securing Our Success) was published in June 2014. Full implementation of the strategy from next year will deliver a step-change to the system of apprenticeships.

Apprenticeships will therefore commence at level 3 with a major commitment to higher level apprenticeships including at degree level to include a wider range of occupational areas and will be structured to allow progression to higher level qualifications.

The Department is currently testing aspects of the new model and have already introduced a number of higher level apprenticeship pilots covering occupations in the ICT, engineering, life sciences, professional services and accountancy. More than 50 employers are now engaged in these early pilots.

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 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.

In exceptional circumstances, where a Training Supplier identifies the possibility of a disability which had not been previously known, referral for assessment by the Department's Occupational Psychology Service may be made through the Department's Careers Service. The resultant assessment will assist in the determination of any additional support needs within training.

Steps to Work/Employment Service Support/Steps2Success

Steps to Work (StW) was the Department's main adult return to work provision. It was a flexible programme which tailored provision to the individual's needs with the aim of assisting participants who were unemployed or economically inactive to find and sustain employment. StW offered participants the opportunity to undertake work experience, qualifications, training, and assistance for those

interested in self-employment, subsidised employment and intensive help with job search.

As an additional aid to support the delivery of the Department's Youth Employment Scheme (YES) the StW programme was flexed to incorporate two new youth strands, i.e. Work Experience and Skills Development, and delivered by contracted providers.

As part of the package of measures announced by The Northern Ireland Executive's Economy and Jobs Initiative the Department introduced two new additional employment strands, First Start and Step Ahead 50+, to the programme.

First Start was launched in November 2012 and offered waged opportunities, for young people aged 18 to 24 year olds who had been in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance for 6 months or more.

First Start jobs provided employment for a minimum of 26 weeks and it was anticipated that many of these jobs will lead to permanent employment.

It is envisaged that First Start will provide supported employment for a total of 1,700 young people by March 2015. The initiative was funded in 2012/13 through the Youth Employment Scheme and in 2013/14 and 2014/15 through the Northern Ireland Executive's Economy and Jobs Initiative.

Step Ahead 50+ was introduced by the Department in January 2013 as a waged strand of the StW programme. It was available

throughout Northern Ireland to those aged 50 and over who have been out of work and in receipt of a working age benefit for a minimum period of 12 months.

The aim was to improve longer term job prospects for participants by providing them with the opportunity to avail of a fixed-term job for up to 26 weeks within the community and voluntary sector. This period of temporary employment enabled participants to compete more effectively for jobs by providing them with work experience and a recent job history.

It is envisaged that Step Ahead 50+ will provide supported employment for a total of 1,100 people by March 2015. The final figures for this initiative will not be available until Autumn 2015. The initiative was funded through the Northern Ireland Executive's Economy and Jobs Initiative.

Referrals to the Steps to Work (StW) programme finished in May 2014 with the last participants starting the programme by 26 August 2014.

StW was replaced by a new adult return to work programme Steps 2 Success (S2S) in October 2014. S2S was developed to build on the success of the previous StW programme by increasing the number of clients who find and sustain employment.

As part of the transitional arrangements put in place to facilitate the introduction of S2S and the continuity of delivery of Executive funded

initiatives a short term measure, known as Employment Service Support (ESS) was introduced on 2 June 2014. ESS remained in place until March 2015.

Widening Participation

Widening participation in higher education (HE) is a key priority for the Department for Employment and Learning. Widening participation in higher education facilitates and increases the participation of those groups which are currently under represented 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 include:

- an increase in domestic HE provision in the universities and in higher education provision delivered in the Further Education Colleges ;
- 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 on the part of 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. In academic year 2013/14 for example, they spent around £13.9m on widening participation initiatives.

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 almost 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 2013/14 almost 40% of our students came from socio economic groups 4 – 7.

However, despite the above success certain parts of the Northern Ireland community continue to be under-represented in higher education. For example, the 2011 Census indicates that NS SEC groups 5-7 make up 42.5% of the general population however in 2013/14 the percentage of NI students in higher education who were known to come from these NS SEC groups was substantially lower at 28%. The Department recognises that addressing disadvantage and 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 Department's 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.

During academic year 2014/15 the Department has been implementing Access to Success. The strategy has 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 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 it’s 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.

Section 75 screening carried out on Access to Success concluded that the strategy did not need to be subjected to a full EQIA. This was

on the basis that there were no policy proposals which would adversely affect equality of opportunity between any of the Section 75 groups. Also, because many of the proposed activities in the strategy will be cross community they will promote good relations between people of different religious beliefs, political opinions and racial groups.

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

DEL takes the lead on the Executives “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.

The strategy contains an Action Plan which pulls together these tiers and actions across Departments and supports implementation. Implementation is further supported by a delivery infrastructure including the NEET Advisory Group which is further outlined below.

Pathways to Success has a particular focus on helping those young people who face barriers to participation, while also dovetailing with complementary proposals to tackle the wider problem of youth unemployment in the current challenging economic context.

Barriers are characteristics of a young person’s circumstances which 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.

The NEET Advisory Group, chaired by DEL, brings together key decision makers from Government Departments, voluntary and community, education, health, social care and business sectors and local government.

The group meets 3 times a year to monitor the effectiveness of the implementation of the 'Pathways to Success' strategy and provides advice and guidance to the Minister and the Department on a regular basis.

In developing the 'Pathways to Success' strategy, DEL also helped

establish the independent NEET Strategy Forum to engage and help join up those organisations in the voluntary and community sector who deliver services in this area. The Forum consists of some 80 members currently, membership is open and Forum members are also represented on the NEET Advisory Group.

Data on NEETs in Northern Ireland is limited (the latest Labour Force Survey (Q1 2014) estimates the number of young people age 16-24 who are NEET to be 32,000 and of this an estimated 8,000 are aged 16-19 and plans are underway to augment our information. In support of implementation, a research project was undertaken to examine the potential for developing a Young Persons Tracking System for Northern Ireland. The key findings are currently being considered and the Department is investigating the logistics of putting a Tracking System in place.

A formal evaluation of Pathways to Success (PtS) has been undertaken by the Centre for Economic & Social Inclusion, (CESI, a London based not-for-profit company). The outcomes of the evaluation were positive and will be used to inform decisions on the future direction of Pathways to Success, including a refreshed PtS Strategy and Action Plan. The final evaluation report has been published on the DEL website

The strategy also introduced a number of specific new initiatives which build on existing programmes. These include the:

Collaboration and Innovation Fund

In December 2012, contracts for the Collaboration and Innovation Fund were awarded following a competitive tender exercise. Funding

of £9.2 million was allocated to 24 organisations from the community, voluntary and educational sectors to deliver project activity between December 2012 to March 2015. The Fund sought to explore new approaches to address the specific and general employability barriers faced by those young people who are not in education, employment or training. The Fund delivered collaborative and innovative support to help unemployed young people aged 16 – 24 to improve their employability by gaining work related skills. Projects assisted over 6,000 young people in the NEET category through the provision of activity such as individual assessment of need, development of action plans, mentoring, bespoke training and work placements. All project providers complied with relevant equality legislation in the delivery of project activity.

Community Family Support Programme

The Community Family Support Programme (CFSP) is an initiative designed to help families make life changing decisions to enhance their prospects and support them to become full participants in society. It also supports families with a high level of need in developing their capacity to reach their full potential.

During the 26 week programme families receive help to address the health, social, economic, educational, employment and training issues that impact on their daily lives.

The programme also aims to prevent young people falling into the NEET category and help other young people who find themselves in this situation to re-engage with education, training or employment.

Professional support workers will engage and consult with parents of children and young people to promote early intervention and high quality parenting and to identify solutions to address their specific needs.

The programme provides one to one employment advice and mentoring to family members and supports them with job search, CV writing, interview techniques and presentation skills. As part of the confidence building element of the programme family members participate on short accredited training courses, work placements and specialist provision.

The CFSP Providers work closely and in partnership with other stakeholders to ensure families receive the support they need and if appropriate help from specialist organisations.

The programme supported 720 families from November 2014 to March 2015 and will continue to support families under the NI European Social Fund 2014-20 programme (Priority 2 Social Inclusion (9) Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty and any discrimination and (i) Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability.

Community Based Access Programme

The Community Based Access programme pilot commenced in September 2013 to enable 16 to 18 year olds to increase their

essential skills qualifications and progress into further education or government funded training. Following the results of a longitudinal evaluation, the pilot programme was terminated in March 2014 and the Learner Access and Engagement Programme was extended to include the 16-18 group.

Pathways for Young People Training Allowance

The Young People Training Allowance was introduced on 15 October 2012. It is designed to ensure that there are effective incentives in place for eligible young people participating on provision funded by the Department for Employment and Learning.

Local Employment Intermediary Service (LEMIS)

The Local Employment Intermediary Service (LEMIS) was a community employment initiative designed to help the “hardest to reach” in targeted areas. The service which was independent of the statutory service was provided by local community employment organisations in Belfast, Londonderry, Strabane, Newry and Mourne, Moyle and Cookstown; areas identified by the Noble Indices of Multiple Deprivation as having high levels of deprivation and unemployment in Northern Ireland. Non-benefit claimants i.e. those deemed furthest from the Labour Market with the main priority groups were those claiming Incapacity Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support and Carers Allowance. During the past 7 years LEMIS has become embedded in the fabric of some of the most deprived communities in Northern Ireland and has made a significant contribution to reducing levels of social exclusion in these areas.

LEMIS Contracts ended on 31 March 2015 with further funding being

provided by the NI European Social Fund under TO8 IP (ia)

Priority one – Access to employment for job- seekers, including the long-term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility and (ib) Access to employment for inactive people a ‘LEMIS’ type provision is provided.

Youth Employment Scheme

The Youth Employment Scheme (YES) was introduced in July 2012 to provide young people aged between 18 and 24 years with the opportunity to gain skills to help them compete for jobs during the economic downturn.

The scale and scope of YES surpassed the measures put in place in Britain and the Republic of Ireland. This clearly demonstrated the Department’s commitment to provide opportunities and create a future for all young people. However, such a level of investment is no longer sustainable in the context of greatly reduced budgets.

YES was particularly effective in engaging employers. Employers, large and small, were committed and willing delivery partners, offering suitable opportunities for young people. Over 5,500 employers signed an agreement to participate in the scheme, which at the end of March 2015 had helped 3,419 participants move into employment.

A refreshed scheme is proposed. Under the new scheme, young people will have the opportunity to undertake a short period of work experience lasting between three and eight weeks. A subsidy for employers willing to employ 18-24 year olds who have been

unemployed for 13 weeks or more is also proposed. Jobseekers aged 25+ and unemployed for 26 weeks or more would also attract a subsidy. In both cases the subsidy will be available for the first 26 weeks of employment.

Disability Employment Provision

The Department, through the Disability Employment Service (DES) and the Employment Adviser Teams across the Jobs and Benefits Office and Jobcentre network, continue to provide a specialist employment service for people with disabilities to help them progress towards and move into and retain employment.

The Disability Employment Service manages the following range of specialist programmes and services:

Access to Work (NI)

Work Connect

Workable (NI)

Condition Management Programme

Job Introduction Scheme

Occupational Psychology Service

In addition, DES staff work directly with Employment Service Advisers to identify the support needs of people with disabilities to help them to return to work and also in sourcing internal and external provision to meet these needs. The Department is therefore very much aware that people with disabilities require engagement in meaningful work activity to enhance their confidence and learn skills for work. The close partnership working with the Disability Sector is crucial to

ensure that as many people with disabilities as possible reach their employment potential.

DES is currently engaging with representative organizations from the disability sector to review its services, in order that these are effective and appropriate for meeting the needs of its disabled customers in the future. This engagement has been ongoing for nearly two years and the purpose of this engagement is the development of a new Employment and Skills Strategy for People with Disabilities. A draft consultation document is scheduled for issue in September 2015. This will initiate the period of formal public consultation, during which time, people from throughout Northern Ireland will be invited and encouraged to provide an input.

Collaborative Working

In 2014/2015 DEL worked, in collaboration with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI), Employers for Disability NI (EFDNI), Northern Ireland Union for Supported Employment (NIUSE) and Belfast City Council and organised a conference entitled "Making equality work - recruiting disabled people" which was held at Belfast City Hall on 9th April 2014.

The purpose of the conference was to highlight examples of positive action and practical steps taken by a variety of employers including Belfast City Council, Premier Inn and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, to recruit and retain employees with disabilities. The event was attended by almost 90 employers and was well received by all delegates in attendance.

Ring Fenced Vacancies

Building on the valuable work done in 2013/2014 with the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust through which 5 people with mental health disability secured employment, in 2014/2015 the Department's Disability Employment Service, again working in collaboration with Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, local disability sector organisations and Employment Service Advisers in local JBO's/ JC's facilitated the recruitment of a further two employees with mental health disability into Occupational Therapy Assistant and Support Worker posts through the Workable programme.

The Disability Employment Service continued to work in close collaboration with Queens University Belfast to support twelve one year employment placements in a variety of jobs across a range of University campus.

In the recruitment exercises DES worked closely with the disability sector organisations to select job applicants, prepare them for job interview and with employers to arrange and facilitate employment interviews.

These are excellent examples of joint working between employers, the disability sector and the Department.

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 Operational Programme for 2014-2020, which was developed through public consultation, was approved and adopted by the European Commission on 12 December 2014. The Programme has 5 distinct funding streams focusing on support for specific groups of beneficiaries:

individuals facing barriers to employment and economic activity;
young people not in education, employment or training (NEET);
people with a disability;
community-based support for families, aimed at preventing young people becoming NEET; and
apprenticeships and Youth Training

The Programme includes gender equality and equal opportunities as a cross-cutting theme. As part of the application process, applicants were required to demonstrate their commitment to equality and equal opportunities. Failure to achieve the required score in this area resulted in the application not being successful. The Programme may fund specific activities to support women and other disadvantaged groups and will integrate equal opportunities into every stage of the programme as a whole.

The total value of the new ESF Programme is €513.4m – over 20% more than the initial allocation to the previous programme. This amount is made up of €205.4m (40%) from the European Union,

which requires 60% match funding of €308m.

Enabling Success; The Economic Inactivity Strategy

The Department took the lead on the development and implementation of the Executive's major, new strategy to reduce inactivity in Northern Ireland.

Following an extensive consultation and development process over a number of years, the strategy was finally approved by the Executive on 16 April 2015.

Developed in partnership with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, the Department for Social Development, Invest NI and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, the strategy focuses on the forms of economic inactivity which are caused when an individual's particular personal circumstances, often combined with various structural issues, geographical nuances and economic conditions, restrict their access to the labour market. The strategy specifically seeks to help the following target groups:

- individuals with work-limiting health conditions or disabilities;
- lone parents; and
- individuals with caring commitments.

The strategy commits to help people in these target groups to overcome their personal labour market barriers, on a purely voluntary basis, by providing the tailored solutions required to move into employment. In so doing, the strategy also seeks to increase the overall level of employment in Northern Ireland. At a macro level, this will have the potential to increase Northern Ireland's economic competitiveness in the global market.

The strategy will be delivered across a 15 year lifespan through 11 cross departmental projects with a strategic goal by 2030 to contribute towards a stable and competitive employment rate in Northern Ireland which exceeds the United Kingdom average, through a reduction in the proportion of the working age population (16-64) classified as economically inactive.

Implementation of the strategy will commence asap once resources have been secured on a cross departmental basis.

United Youth Programme

The Department is taking the lead on United Youth, a good relations programme that will provide flexible, high-quality, young-person-centred opportunities for 16–24 year olds (with the intention of extending the age group to 14–24 year olds when the programme rolls out), particularly those who are not in education, employment or training. The programme is a key commitment in the Northern Ireland Executive's 'Together: Building a United Community' Strategy.

Initially, OFMDFM took forward United Youth, before handing it over to DEL. The Department undertook stakeholder engagement across Northern Ireland in 2014 and assembled a Design Team to include relevant expertise from a range of organisations with an interest in the various aspects of the programme, and to reflect the breadth of the United Youth vision – a vision encompassing good relations, citizenship, volunteering and employability.

Based on all the information gathered, the Department developed a draft Outcomes and Principles Framework and shared it with stakeholders, revising it in light of their feedback. This framework sets out the outcomes participants should be supported to achieve, in the form of capabilities, and principles for delivery. One of the four outcomes is good relations – addressing community division, sectarianism and racism, and developing respect for diversity and sensitivity towards the values, beliefs, customs and traditions of others.

In the autumn of 2014, the Department used this framework as the basis for inviting concept proposals for United Youth pilots. The Department subsequently received over 150 concept proposals from a wide range of organisations, these were assessed and the most promising proposals selected.

In January 2015, the Department was successful in securing £3 million from the Change Fund, allowing it to deliver a small number of pilots in 2015–16. The Department invited 50 organisations with the most promising concept proposals to move forward into a development phase, during which they would have the opportunity to hone these proposals into full applications for pilots. This was a continuation of the co-design process which the Department had adopted from the start.

The development phase continued throughout February and March 2015. During this time, the Department continued to work with the 50 organisations, prior to the deadline for applications on 24 April.

Public Appointments

The Department has taken a number of steps to enhance diversity

amongst applicants. These include using social media to publicise competitions, engaging with diversity bodies, and clarifying and streamlining the application process. Officials continue to liaise internally and with colleagues across other Departments with a view to increasing diversity and identifying new ways to broaden interest in public appointments.

PART A

- 2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2014-15 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

A copy of the Department's Action Plan is included with this report.

PART A

3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2014-15 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

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

Please provide any details and examples:

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:

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):*

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 2014-15 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:

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2014-15 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:

6 In the 2014-15 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 2013-14 report

PART A

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2014-15 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed: Actions ongoing: Actions to commence:

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

Details of these can be found in the Department's Action plan which is appended.

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2014-15 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2014-15 reporting period, the following have been identified: (*tick all that apply*)

- Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the known inequality
- Action(s) to address the known inequality in a different way
- Action(s) to address newly identified inequalities/recently prioritised inequalities
- Measures to address a prioritised inequality have been completed

Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)

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

- All the time Sometimes Never

11 Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2014-15 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:

Shared Future Policy Proofing

The Department continues to carry out 'Shared Future Policy Proofing', a process which the Minister introduced in April 2012. This is applied to all significant new policies and business cases. The purpose of this process is to determine whether proposals are likely to contribute positively to a shared society or inadvertently reinforce divisions, in which case mitigating measures would need to be considered.

Ring Fenced Vacancies

Building on the valuable work done in 2013/2014 with the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust through which 5 people with mental health disability secured employment, in 2014/2015 the Department's Disability Employment Service, again working in collaboration with Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, local disability sector organisations and Employment Service Advisers in local JBO's/ JC's facilitated the recruitment of a further two employees with mental health disability into Occupational Therapy Assistant and Support Worker posts through the Workable programme.

The Disability Employment Service continued to work in close collaboration with Queens University Belfast to support twelve one year employment placements in a variety of jobs across a range of University campus.

In the recruitment exercises DES worked closely with the disability sector organisations to select job applicants, prepare them for job interview and with employers to arrange and facilitate employment interviews.

- 12** In the 2014-15 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:

PART A

13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2014-15 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2014-15 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]

<http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/equality-and-good-relations/es-equality-impact-assessment.htm>

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

20

16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2014-15:

3	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:

- The Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government includes a commitment for DEL and DETI to develop and implement a strategy to reduce

economic inactivity through skills, training, incentives and job creation. Economic inactivity is a labour market classification referring to those neither in work nor unemployed and Northern Ireland has had persistently high levels of economic inactivity for over 30 years, ranging between 26% and 32% of the working age population (16 - 64 years), irrespective of changes in the economic cycle. The Economic Inactivity Strategic Framework outlines a systematic approach to tackle the key themes associated with economic inactivity in Northern Ireland and the public consultation exercise will inform the development and implementation of the final strategy.

- Securing our success: Northern Ireland Strategy on Apprenticeships provides the future direction of apprenticeships in Northern Ireland, and sets out the new policy commitments and an implementation plan to ensure their delivery. It builds on the interim report of the Review of Apprenticeships, published in January 2014
- The Department published the interim report of the review of youth training for consultation. The review aspires to build a system of youth training that will be recognised both nationally and internationally by employers, further and higher education providers, young people and parents/guardians for its quality, flexibility and transferability. The system will be centered on the career aspirations and needs of young people, and will be a conduit to support their ongoing career development. Young people in training will be sought after by prospective employers, and the system will be respected by young people and parents/guardians as an alternative progression route to the traditional academic pathway. By linking a new baccalaureate-style award to the needs of employers and the wider economy, the youth training system will better match demand and supply, and provide a seamless progression route for young people to a breadth of professional and technical occupations. This vision will be achieved through the implementation of 4 key themes and 26 supporting proposals

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)

PART A

- 19** Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2014-15 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 2014-15 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:

The Department is currently in discussions with universities on how we can improve the collection of S75 data by standardising the way the questions are being asked.

The Department is also working with the FE colleges on the way they collate equality data.

The Department has commissioned work from NISRA that will combine different surveys together in order to get better estimates of things such as youth unemployment and ethnic population estimates. If the project is successful it will improve our understanding of most of the section 75 populations by size, with perhaps some additional information on employment and education. The project will report later this year and the Department will be making a presentation to ECNI on the methodology for the work.

- 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

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2014-15 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

- 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:

See question 20.

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 2014-15, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

The Department continues to emphasise to officials the importance of the application of the statutory duties. This is reinforced with the provision of training to staff and all new entrants to the Department receive an Equality and Good Relations presentation as part of their online induction training. Training in Section 75 and the Equality Scheme was identified as a priority for the Department in 2013/14; a commitment that has continued into 2014/15.

- 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:

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

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2014-15, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

- 27** How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2014-15?

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:

The Equality Scheme is due for review in 2016.

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)*

No

30 In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2015-16) 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: 'Disability Duties'
Annual Report 1 April 2014 / 31 March 2015

1. How many action measures for this reporting period have been

18



1

0

Fully
Achieved?

Partially
Achieved?

Not
Achieved?

2. Please outline the following detail 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 ¹	Outcomes / Impact ²
National ³	<p><i>The Department was represented on the Diversity Working Group chaired by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.</i></p> <p><i>We are considering the recommendations made in</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Appointments Forum meetings attended quarterly and Department has contributed to actions being co-ordinated centrally. DEL procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of alternative processes e.g. new approaches to drafting essential criteria and publicising competitions, encourage individuals to apply who might not otherwise have done so.

¹ **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.

² **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.

³ **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments

	<p><i>the CPA Report and will be reviewing DEL procedures.</i></p> <p><i>We are also working with colleagues in other Departments on a Public Appointments Forum to take forward actions from the Report on a NICS wide basis.”</i></p> <p>Specific actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application forms offered in accessible versions (large print, braille and audio formats) • Option to request application by textphone • Provision made for any special requirements at interview • A list of groups representing disabled people are informed about each competition and 	<p>reviewed internally and range of approaches identified for consideration and use, as appropriate, during each competition, in order to increase the appeal of public appointment opportunities to a wider and more diverse range of people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of social media to publicise competitions, engaging with diversity bodies, clarifying and streamlining the application process. • During the period of this Annual Report DEL ran six Public Appointment Competitions, 	<p>Initiatives to date appear to have had a significant positive effect on applicant numbers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular monitoring of feedback from applicants, including people with disabilities, helps inform policy and procedure.
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	<p>asked to advertise the competition on their website, by an email shot to their members, or by re-tweeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEL public appointment competitions are promoted through the DEL and OFMDFM websites, NI Executive Twitter Account, NI Direct and Linked IN with a view to increasing diversity. • Feedback request is issued to everyone who requests an application form for a Public Appointment to enable us to identify and address any barriers which exist to applying for a public life position. • The DEL website includes a link to benefits information and advice for persons who might be reluctant to apply for or accept a Public 	<p>inclusive of the most recent competition to recruit Further Education College Governors, which were promoted through social media in addition to the adverts placed in local press.</p>	
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	<p>Appointment for fear it might affect their entitlement to disability benefits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We continue to work closely with other Departments on the NICS Public Appointments Forum to take forward the recommendations of the Commissioner's report on diversity. We have already made a number of amendments to DEL processes in an effort to increase the number and diversity of applicants to public appointment positions, such as varying our approach to setting essential criteria for posts. We continue to seek to identify additional measures which might increase the appeal of DEL public appointments to a wider audience.• On the DEL website and in		
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	<p>competition documentation, we affirm our commitment to ensuring as far as possible that the public boards we sponsor reflect the diverse society in which they operate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 		
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application forms offered in accessible versions (large print, braille and audio formats) • Option to request application by textphone • Provision made for any 	Feedback request issued after every competition.	Regular monitoring of feedback from applicants, including people with disabilities, helps inform policy and procedure.

	<p>special requirements at interview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A list of groups representing disabled people are informed about each competition and asked to advertise the competition on their website, by an email shot to their members, or by re-tweeting.• DEL public appointment competitions are promoted through the DEL and OFMDFM websites, NI Executive Twitter Account, NI Direct and Linked IN with a view to increasing diversity.• Feedback request is issued to everyone who requests an application form for a Public Appointment to enable us		
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	<p>to identify and address any barriers which exist to applying for a public life position.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The DEL website includes a link to benefits information and advice for persons who might be reluctant to apply for or accept a Public Appointment for fear it might affect their entitlement to disability benefits.• The Department was represented on the Diversity Working Group chaired by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. We are now working closely with other Departments on the NICS Public Appointments Forum in		
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	<p>response to the Commissioner's resulting report on diversity. In addition, we have made a number of amendments to our processes in an effort to increase the number and diversity of applicants to public appointment positions – such as varying our approach to setting essential criteria for posts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On the DEL website and in competition documentation, we affirm our commitment to ensuring as far as possible that the public boards we sponsor reflecting the diverse society in which they operate.		
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All venues checked to ensure they are accessible for people with disabilities to attend and make their contribution 		
Regional ⁴	All venues for external events checked to ensure they are accessible for people with disabilities to attend and make their contribution.		<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>
Local ⁵	All venues for external events checked to ensure they are accessible for people with disabilities to attend and		Evaluation of and feedback from events helps to inform future management.

⁴ **Regional:** Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level

⁵ **Local :** Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.

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	make their contribution.		The views / contribution from people with disabilities will help inform future policy.
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2(b) What **training action measures** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	<p>As part of their continuous professional development Careers Advisers' take part in training at a local level during their unit meetings. This includes talks from organisations which specialise in supporting those with a disability including autism and mental health.</p> <p>Following the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) day in March 2014 a working group was formed in conjunction with the</p>	<p>Greater awareness of difficulties facing those with a learning disability and how to support them.</p> <p>A resource tool for assisting</p>	<p>Staff are better informed with greater knowledge of disabilities and therefore more able to meet the needs of clients.</p> <p>Initial findings indicate that Careers</p>

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	<p>University of Ulster (UU) to develop a practical resource to support the delivery of careers guidance to clients with a learning disability.</p>	<p>Careers Advisers in the delivery of guidance to clients with a learning disability been developed. Following a pilot of this resource and a very positive evaluation, it is planned that this resource will be rolled out for all Careers staff use by autumn 2015..</p>	<p>Advisers find this resource extremely helpful in the provision of careers guidance to clients with a learning disability. The resource is helpful in developing good communication with clients in the guidance processes that previously may have proved more challenging.</p>
2	<p>Support to frontline Employment Service Advisers delivered by Occupational Psychologists (OP's) and Disability Employment Managers (DEM's)</p>	<p>OP's and DEM's provide Advisers with guidance on client caseload management, disability awareness, advice on client/programme matching.</p>	<p>Increased knowledge of front-line Advisers and increased referrals to specialist disability employment and health programme provision.</p>

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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	<p>In Ballymena, Careers Advisers are currently involved in a pilot in conjunction with the Northern Adult Autism Advice Service to support clients age 16+ with autism.</p> <p>Careers Managers for each Health Trust are networking with the 5</p>	<p>They provide weekly Careers Guidance within a multidisciplinary team co-ordinated (including representatives from the Health and Social care Trust, National Autism Society etc) by the Adult Autism Advice Service in the Northern Area Trust.</p> <p>Stakeholders have a greater knowledge and awareness of the range and availability of</p>	<p>Clients can access a range of support (including Careers Information, Advice and Guidance) in one location at the same time.</p> <p>Stakeholders and clients have a greater knowledge and awareness of</p>

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	<p>Health Trust Autism Co-coordinators to ensure that local relationships are established and that Trusts are aware of how and where to avail of DEL Careers Services.</p>	<p>careers services.</p>	<p>the range and availability of careers services.</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>The Disability Employment Service (DES) and key representatives from the disability sector met as a joint working group on the strategic review of disability employment services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular meetings held • Draft Employment & Skills Strategy for People with Disabilities being developed 	<p>The Department is aiming to go to public consultation on the proposals for the NI Employment & Skills Strategy for People with Disabilities by end October 2015.</p> <p>Subject to feedback and analysis of findings, it is hoped that the Strategy will launch in early 2016.</p> <p>This will have a major positive impact on the employment support offering for people with significant disability related barriers to employment.</p>

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3	DES working with the local disability consortium contracted to deliver the Work Connect programme, Supported Employment Solutions, had a “good news” story of a programme participant published in the “Derry Journal”.	“Good News” story drafted jointly by DES and SES and agreed by Communications Branch.	Raise public awareness of the Work Connect programme, its providers and what it can do to help people with disabilities in receipt of ESA prepare for and move into work.
4	Department to ensure all publicity material is easily accessible to customers with a disability.	All marketing materials and promotional materials made available in other formats upon request.	People with disabilities are kept informed.

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	<p>Financial assistance provided to further education (FE) colleges to help provide additional support to those students with a learning difficulty and / or disability (SLDD) through the Additional Support Fund (ASF). From September 2014 the fund was increased from £4 million to £4.5 million per annum.</p>	<p>Provision of technical and personal support to 3,542 students in 2013/14.</p>	<p>SLDD in mainstream and discrete provision receive appropriate levels of additional support to allow them to successfully complete their studies.</p> <p>The number of students supported through ASF increased from 3,461 in 2012/13 to 3,542 in 2013/14.</p> <p>A potential further increase in numbers of SLDD in FE provision as a result of this increase in funding may be evident at the end of the 2014/15 academic year.</p>

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2	Disability Employment Service attended Employment Service Job Fairs and delivered presentations at events.	Activities included attending events, manning display stands, dealing with specific enquiries from the public on the programmes and services of DES, preparing and delivering Powerpoint presentations and managing question and answer sessions.	Increased awareness by the public and employers of the help available through Disability Employment Service to assist people with disabilities find work and retain work.
3	The Department's Disability Employment Service worked with disability sector organisations to place people with disabilities into employment opportunities ring-fenced by employers BHSCT.	Agreed applicants with disability organisations, designed and delivered pre-employment training, scheduled interviews and put appropriate programme support in place.	Position of employment secured for individual with mental health difficulties.
4	The Department through the Disability Employment Services and Local Jobs and Benefits	The Department's staff are working, together with Regional College staff to canvass on behalf of students leaving RC provision to help them secure	9 students secured employment over the 12 month period to 31 March 2015 period. Departmental staff are currently engaging with the students, their parents, college tutors and

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	<p>Offices/JobCentres Employment Advisers, is continuing to deliver a pilot with the North West Regional College, Northern Regional College and Southern Regional College to help students from their Discrete Learning classes obtain employment.</p>	<p>employment with their work experience placement employers.</p>	<p>employers in an attempt to assist the students find work.</p>
5	<p>Extensive negotiations involving Queen's University, the Disability Employment Service and local disability organisations took place to agree way forward for year-long paid work placements at Queen's.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection procedure agreed <p>Inclusive Employment initiative developed</p>	<p>Twelve people with disabilities started paid placements in June 2014 in a range of posts across the University network. The Disability Employment Service, through its employment programmes, provided support to participants and their Managers throughout their time working at Queen's.</p>

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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	Through a contract delivered by Supported Employment Solutions (SES), Work Connect offers assistance which helps unemployed clients who are in receipt of health related benefits, ESA/IB find and sustain employment.	<p>Good local partnerships established between Employment Service staff and the SES providers.</p> <p>A specialist disability pre-employment support service for people across N. Ireland.</p>	From April 2014 – March 2015 there were 573 referrals to the programme with 356 starting the programme. The total number of clients obtaining employment was 130. The number who sustained after 26 weeks in work was 67.
2	Access to Work tender completion for the delivery of assessments for customers with Physical disabilities.	Successful awarding of contract.	Provision of a professional and necessary assessment service for people who are physically disabled. Supporting people to move into or remain in work.

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3	Occupational Psychology Services –Assessment Strand	Psychology Team delivered employability, retention, training assessments to unemployed clients referred through the network, and to in-work clients referred through OHS, Workable (NI) and Employers	From 01 April, 2014 to 31 March, 2015, 164 assessments were carried out, with reports completed within 20 days. Recommendations taken forward by referral agent to move client situation forward.
4	<p>The DES working in collaboration with Belfast Health and Social Care has worked in partnership to provide a “one stop shop” advice clinic for people with autism on a range of issues from E.g Education through to employment.</p> <p>The multi-agency advisory team is comprised of representatives from BHSCT, the Department of</p> <p>Employment and Learning (DEL), the Disability Employment Service (DES),the ‘Improving Benefit Uptake Team’ from the Social</p>	A member of DES staff attends the weekly clinics which are held on Tuesday afternoons in both Ballymena and Belfast	The clinics are aimed at providing appropriate advice on a range of issues in a timely and supportive way.

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	<p>Security Agency, and two voluntary sector providers, the National Autistic Society (NAS) and the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB).</p> <p>A similar clinic is in operation in Ballymena, the Northern Health and Social Care Trust area.</p>		
5	<p>Through contracts delivered by three local disability organisations who have extensive experience of meeting the vocational needs of people with disabilities: Disability Action; Supported Employment Solutions (SES); and Ulster Supported Employment Ltd (USEL), Workable (NI) provides a flexible range of long term support to assist people with disabilities who have substantial barriers to employment, to find and retain work.</p>	<p>Local partnerships between Employment Service staff and Workable (NI) Providers.</p>	<p>Programme participation at 31 March 2015 was 557. During the year 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 202 people started receiving support through Workable (NI).</p>

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

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones ⁶ / 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. (HE)	<p>Significant milestones in the implementation of the Access to Success strategy during 2014/15 include:</p> <p>Continuation throughout 2014/15 of “Reach Higher” a single, centralised and co-ordinated higher education awareness and</p>	<p>Survey research indicates that after one year of the “Reach Higher” campaign the</p>	<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 the focus for delivery is initially three years at which time the plans will be</p>

⁶ **Milestones** – Please outline what part progress has been made towards the particular measures; even if full output or outcomes/ impact have not been achieved.

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		<p>aspiration raising campaign to better communicate the benefits of higher education to under-represented sections of the community;</p> <p>the introduction during 2014/15 of the “Reach” programme which aims to expand the range of aspiration and educational attainment raising programmes at school, college, community and the workplace;</p>	<p>awareness of the campaign among the target groups, including disabled students, had increased from 48% to 65% while influence of the campaign was at 36%.</p> <p>Specific initiatives to raise the aspirations and educational attainment of students with learning difficulties and disabilities have yet to be developed.</p> <p>In meantime enrolments by NI</p>	<p>reviewed and renewed as required to meet the needs at that time.</p>
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		<p>the approval of institutional Widening Access and Participation Plans (WAPP) in respect of academic year 2015/16 to include a detailed programme of anticipated progress towards the institution's own WP targets.</p>	<p>domiciled students in Northern Ireland HEIs (who declared a disability) were 3,370 in 2012/13 up from 3,025 in 2010/11.</p> <p>In line with the expectations in Access to Success all HE providers have in their 2015/16 WAPPs identified students with disabilities as a target group for interventions to raise aspirations and educational attainment in order to encourage and</p>	
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		<p>the monitoring of each institution's performance against its Access Agreement commitments for 2012/13</p>	<p>support them to apply to and benefit from the HE that is right for them.</p> <p>Production of the first "Annual Statement on Widening Participation in Higher Education" in respect of academic year 2012/13 - including detail on expenditure on bursaries, scholarships and outreach activity as well as progress against WP targets and milestones.</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		
3		

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

The Department is currently in discussions with universities on how we can improve the collection of S75 data by standardising the way the questions are being asked.

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The Department is also working with the FE colleges on the way they collate equality data.

In terms of getting better S75 data from surveys.

The Department has commissioned work from NISRA that will combine different surveys together in order to get better estimates of things such as youth unemployment and ethnic population estimates. If the project is successful it will improve our understanding of most of the section 75 populations by size, with perhaps some additional information on employment and education. The project will report later this year and the Department will be making a presentation to ECNI on the methodology for the work.

(b) Quantitative

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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 delete: Yes / No

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If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

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?
