



**Northern Ireland Practice and Education  
Council for Nursing and Midwifery**

# **Equality and Disability Action Plans 2018-2023**

**March 2018**

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We will consider any request for this document in another format or language.

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## Introduction

As Chair and Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery (NIPEC), Professor Carol Curran and Angela McLernon, we are committed to promoting equality and good relations.

For people with a disability, we recognise that we have to do more to promote positive attitudes and to encourage their participation in public life.

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 these plans 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 Janet Hall. If you have any questions you can contact Janet at:

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## Who we are and what we do

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
  - Provide advice and information on matters relating to nursing and midwifery.

## 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
- 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 of Health's website – [www.health-ni.gov.uk](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk)

Through the work of the HSC Equality, Human Rights and Diversity Forum, we are seeking ways of encouraging the participation of disabled people in the work of our Council.

NIPEC staff are also members of a wide range of partnerships across the health and social care sector, and use these opportunities to raise awareness and encourage the participation of people with disabilities in public life.

## **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.

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; autism; learning disabilities; mental health conditions; or conditions that are long-term. 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.

## **How we reviewed our last plans and developed these new plans**

In starting off to develop these plans 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.

We asked our Business Team to think 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 also asked them to consider two questions:

- In your area of work, what are the key issues for people in the equality groupings?
- What can you do to address these issues?

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

- 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 also learned from what we heard when we:

- held coffee mornings to talk with staff about issues important to those who have a disability and those who care for somebody who has a disability
- ran a survey with staff to find out what they think an Employer of Choice for people who have a disability or those who care for somebody with a disability looks like
- spoke with the members of our staff disability network to find out what we should do to promote equality for those who have a disability and those who care for somebody who has a disability
- together with our colleagues in the Health and Social Care Trusts ran an engagement event with people from different equality groupings to find out what they think we could do to better promote equality.

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.

We then consulted publicly on our draft plans. When we started the consultation we informed all consultees on our consultation list of the details of the consultation and how people could engage with us directly or respond in writing. We invited consultees to attend one of two consultation events, one in Belfast and one in Derry/Londonderry. In addition, we offered to meet in person with anyone preferring to do so.

We engaged closely with Tapestry, our Disability Staff Network, in the development of our Disability Action Plans. We likewise drew on our learning from a survey that we carried out with staff who have a disability or who care for somebody who has a disability. The survey focused on what would make an organisation an Employer of Choice for them.

## **What we have done so far**

This is some of what we have done to promote equality:

- We produced a signposting resource for our staff. It provides information on support networks in the community for people from each of the nine equality groups. We update this resource every year.
- We put in place an Accessible Formats Policy; this policy relates to all of the nine equality groups including age, gender, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, political opinion, dependants, religion and marital

status. It addresses specific needs in relation to sensory impairment, learning disability, sexual orientation, older people, younger people, translation and interpreting for minority ethnic groups and more general literacy levels that are of particular importance.

- We conducted a survey of our Council members to collect Section 75 data and identify any inequalities. We also spent time encouraging our staff to complete, maintain and update their equality and diversity information on our new electronic systems to ensure we have the most up-to-date Section 75 data from our workforce.

This is some of what we have done to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in public life:

### **Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people:**

- To date, we have held seven disability awareness days for our staff. Each looked at different disabilities: Epilepsy, sight loss and blindness, depression, hearing loss and deafness, learning disabilities, Cancer, and Arthritis and Musculoskeletal conditions. Information of these disabilities was emailed to our staff and displayed within the organisation. With our colleagues in the NI Guardian Ad Litem Agency, we also organised a number of information sessions for our staff involving speakers and volunteers from local voluntary groups.

As part of our health and social wellbeing activities with staff, we have supported local charities, including Chest, Heart and Stroke Association and the Royal National Institute for the Blind, through fund raising events and raising awareness of their organisation.

- We developed an e-learning resource on disability as part of the Discovering Diversity e-learning resource covering equality and disability issues. It is mandatory for all our staff to complete this programme.
- We include the disability duties in all Equality Awareness and Equality Screening Training that the BSO Equality Unit delivers. We have also produced a leaflet on disability duties as a quick reference point for our staff.
- 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.
- We developed a resource for staff on disability etiquette with a checklist on how they can positively portray people with a disability in their work.



- We have in place reimbursement guidelines and procedures for service users, carers and other people in the community involved in our work.
- We have checked our website to make sure it is accessible.

### **Encourage the participation of disabled people in public life:**

- We participate in a disability work placement scheme together with our Health and Social Care partner organisations. So far, the Scheme has provided between 5 and 15 placements for people with a disability in our organisations every year.
- We have developed standards and guidance for the involvement of people with a disability and a checklist for organising to ensure meetings and information are fully accessible.
- We have put in place a process for publishing screening templates as soon as they are completed. A disability organisation had suggested that we do so. We do the same for publishing the quarterly screening reports.
- We developed a resource for line managers on reasonable adjustments for staff with a disability.
- We set up a disability network for our staff called 'Tapestry'. Part of the role of this network is to raise disability issues with decision makers in our organisation.

## **What we have learned so far**

### **Monitoring:**

Even with proactive encouragement, our staff seem reluctant to declare their disability, so we need to keep working on this, including trying to find out why staff do not declare their disability. We will continue to work closely with our staff disability network on this.

### **Placements:**

The placement scheme was evaluated each year and changes made in the following year's scheme to improve the experience for participants. We will carry this learning into our new plan. Managers and staff who have been involved in the scheme to date have told us that they have gained a better understanding of disabilities through working side by side a person who has a disability. Many have been impressed by the attitude and performance of the individual on placement.

## **Awareness Days:**

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.

## **Training:**

We have found that our e-learning training on Disability is a really useful resource to train our staff. We have also found that sometimes we need to run specific training courses, for example on autism awareness or deaf awareness when the need is identified. We will continue to take this approach of a combination of e-learning and classroom based training. From the feedback of those attending the training, we have been told that they take away a lot from sessions that are delivered by people with a disability themselves.

## **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.

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.

## **How we will monitor**

Every year we write up what we have done and we also explain when we haven't been able to fully complete a planned action. We send this report to the Equality Commission. We also publish this report on our website - <https://nipec.hscni.net/>

We have a look at the plans every year to see whether we need to make any changes to them. If we need to, we 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 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 assist us.

The plans are also available on our website – <https://nipec.hscni.net/>

We 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 and what they may do differently as a result of what they have learned.
- We do a survey with people from a particular equality group after we have delivered an action targeted at them to ask whether they feel better supported as a result.
- We check summary figures to see whether, for example, more people from a particular under-represented group are availing of a service after promoting it to them specifically.

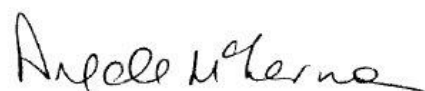
You can find further information on how we will monitor each action in the plans themselves.

Signed by:



**Professor Carol Curran  
Chair**

**Date: 14 March 2018**



**Angela McLernon  
Chief Executive**

**Date: 14 March 2018**

## Equality Action Plan 2018-2023:

### What we will do to promote equality and good relations

Action Point	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	By Whom/ When
<b>Carers</b>			
<p>Review the caring responsibilities of staff with/without dependents.</p> <p>Promote information for staff who are carers on available policies and measures that might meet their needs, including sign-posting to relevant support organisations.</p> <p>Identify any gaps in available support for staff and explore how/if these could be met within existing policy and resources.</p> <p>Ensure carers involved in our work are aware of and avail of reimbursement guidelines</p>	<p>Staff who are carers feel more supported in the workplace</p>	<p>Baseline staff survey and after 3 years (quantifiable targets to be determined following baseline survey)</p>	<p>NIPEC / BSO HR with support from Equality Unit</p> <p>2018/19</p>

Action Point	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	By Whom/ When
<b>Gender Identity</b>			
Deliver awareness and training initiatives to relevant staff as part of the roll-out of the Gender Identity and Expression Employment Policy	Staff who identify as transgender and non-binary feel more supported in the workplace	Feedback from staff who have drawn support through the policy indicates a positive experience.	BSO HR with support from Equality Unit 2020/21
<b>Training</b>			
<p>‘Making a Difference’ e-learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add module to suite of mandatory training for all staff</li> <li>• Deliver on training targets</li> </ul>	Increased staff awareness of equality and human rights	<p>‘Making a Difference’ e-learning included in mandatory training for staff</p> <p>75% in first year and 100% thereafter of staff complete the e-learning module</p>	<p>NIPEC</p> <p>2018/19 – 2019/20</p> <p>Annually</p>
<b>Domestic Violence</b>			
Undertake awareness raising relating to new support mechanisms (developed by BSO) to support staff with experience of domestic violence	Staff with experience of domestic violence are feel better supported	Feedback from staff who have drawn support through the mechanisms indicates a positive experience.	BSO HR 2019/20

<b>Action Point</b>	<b>Intended Outcome</b>	<b>Performance Indicator and Target</b>	<b>By Whom/ When</b>
<b>Stakeholder engagement</b>			
Seek feedback from those attending annual stakeholder and engagement events aimed at improving communication with the organisation and access to our resources.	Improved communication and engagement with those involved in our work	Feedback surveys issued at all stakeholder and engagement events	NIPEC 2018/19 onwards

## Disability Action Plan 2018-2023:

### What we will do to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in public life

Action Point	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	By Whom/ When
<b>Awareness Days</b>			
Raise awareness of specific barriers faced by people with disabilities including through linking in with National Awareness Days or Weeks (such as Mind your Health Day)	Increased staff awareness of the range of disabilities and needs	Two annual awareness days profiled >50% of staff participating in the evaluation indicate that they know more about people living with disabilities as a result of the awareness days	NIPEC with support from Equality Unit Annually
<b>Placement Scheme</b>			
Consider how the organisation can create and promote a meaningful placement opportunity for people with disabilities in line with good practice and making use of voluntary expertise in this area	People with a disability gain meaningful work experience	Placement considered and where possible offered each year  Feedback through annual evaluation of scheme indicates that placement meets expectations	NIPEC Annually

Action Point	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	By Whom/ When
<b>Tapestry</b>			
Promote and encourage staff to participate in the disability staff network and support the network in the delivery of its action plan	Staff with a disability feel more confident that their voice is heard in decision-making Staff with a disability feel better supported	Tapestry staff survey in 2022-23	NIPEC with support from Equality Unit Annually
<b>Monitoring</b>			
Encourage staff to declare that they have a disability or care for a person with a disability through awareness raising and providing guidance to staff on the importance of monitoring  Prompt staff to complete, maintain and update their personal equality monitoring records (via self-service on new Human Resources IT system)	More accurate data in place Greater number of staff feel comfortable declaring they have a disability	Increase in completion of disability monitoring information by staff to 90%	NIPEC with support from Equality Unit Annually



Action Point	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	By Whom/ When
<b>Training</b>			
In collaboration with disabled people design, deliver and evaluate training for staff and Council Members on disability equality and disability legislation	Increased staff and Council Member awareness of the range of disabilities and needs	All staff and Council members trained within 2 years through e-learning or interactive sessions and staff awareness initiatives	NIPEC with support from Equality Unit Annually
<b>Communication</b>			
Monitor and assess accessibility of our website: Undertaken a self-assessment exercise against a recognised standard and where required develop an action plan to address any issues identified	Continue to meet best practice and guidance	Website accessibility to a current, recognised standard Assessment exercise outcome report Action Plan to address any accessibility issues	NIPEC 2018/19 onwards
Review our corporate standards and branding for internal and external publications - consider if these support principles for inclusion and access by people with a disability	NIPEC publications fully accessible by people with a disability	Revised standards and branding published Action taken to ensure these support inclusion and access by people with a disability	NIPEC 2018/19 onwards

Action Point	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	By Whom/ When
<b>Mental Health in the Workplace</b>			
Sign up to the Mental Health Charter	<p>Staff with mental health conditions feel better supported in the workplace</p> <p>Supports and complements the work of NIPEC's Health and Social Wellbeing Committee</p>	Tapestry staff survey in 2022-23	NIPEC with support from Equality Unit March 2023

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