



**Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties
Annual Progress Report 2015-16**

Contact:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme	Name: Patricia O’Kane Telephone: 028 9031 6550 Email: patricia.okane@nigala.hscni.net
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan	As above <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Name: Telephone: Email:

Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:
<http://www.nigala.hscni.net>

Signature:

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patricia O'Kane".

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 2015 and March 2016

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 2015-16, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.

Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.

The Agency is committed to integrating equality considerations within mainstream engagement linked with delivering on the Public and Personal Involvement (PPI) Strategy and the Social Care Governance Plan in order to achieve more efficient and meaningful engagement. While specific initiatives linked to the relevant S.75 groupings are cited in Table 1 the Agency has a dedicated work stream within the Children's Participation Workgroup addressing equality, diversity and cultural competence.

Table 1:

	Outline new developments or changes in policies, practices, service planning or delivery and the difference they have made
Religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRPTS facility to capture data to inform staff profile.
Political Opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIGALA initiated “An evaluation of Social Work Practice in the Agency in working with Children and Families from Black Minority (BME) Community”. A number of objectives have informed the study including considering the volume of cases referred to NIGALA from ethnic minority and foreign national populations, to generate knowledge from cases about cultural competence and its development in Guardian practice: to disseminate the findings of the study to the wider family justice system to inform learning for social work practitioners, solicitors and the judiciary. • Development and implementation of an Accessible Formats Policy.
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guardian’s represent children from birth to 18 years. The Children’s Participation workgroup has undertaken work in devising tools and materials for engaging with and eliciting children’s wishes and feelings. This is aligned to ages and stages of development and decision making in the child’s timeframe. • Focus groups were facilitated with the support of VOYPIC (Voice of Young People in Care Voluntary Organisation) to engage with young people to inform the materials for the NIGALA Solicitor Panel reconstitution interviews in 2015.

PART A

Marital Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• None
Sexual Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• None
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• None
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NIGALA has undertaken a desktop review of data capture in respect of disability to identify revisions to information collated within the Guardian Case Information System (GCIS) which will inform staff training and development. The Children's Participation workgroup has a work stream dedicated to reviewing skills, tools and resources for working with children with a disability.• NIGALA is undertaking a review of social work practice in working with children with a disability. The review will consider the number of cases referred to the Agency, the range of disabilities and the outcomes. National and International Research will be sourced to inform the review findings.• Some staff have undertaken training in using Makaton and Talking Mats to support engagement and communication with children and adults with a learning disability.
Dependants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• None

Equality monitoring

During the year, the Equality Unit, on behalf of NIGALA and the consortium partners, co-ordinated a six week staff monitoring initiative which targeted messages to staff through direct e-mail, screen pop ups and posters, to encourage them to fill out their staff data on our Human Resources IT system (HRPTS). This produced marginal improvements in data capture across some of the Section 75 categories, however we acknowledge the need for ongoing work to engage with staff in order to obtain up to date and accurate equality data.

Prompts to staff on completing equality information on the new Human Resources system are issued throughout the year.

Good Relations Statement

Following engagement with Trade Union Colleagues we agreed and launched a Good Relations Statement in partnership with the 10 other regional HSC Organisations –

“The NIGALA is committed to the promotion of good relations between people of differing religious belief, political opinion and/or racial group. As a health and social care organisation we are committed to promoting respect for diversity and to challenge sectarianism and racism in both employment and services”.

The statement was launched on 3 March 2016 in the Islamic Centre, Belfast, with input by the Community Relations Council.

Work will be undertaken with our partners in 2016-2017 to develop some actions that give meaning and practical application to the statement.

Gender Identity Employment Policy

As a joint initiative with our colleagues from the Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts we progressed the development of a Gender Identity Employment Policy. Equality and Human Resources staff engaged with groups and individuals from the gender identity sector alongside the LGB&T staff forum in Health and Social Care. Staff from the Regional Gender Identity Service were also involved in devising the policy.

Bulletins, newsletter, senior briefings, intranet and email

The Agency disseminated a wide range of equality information to staff in the form of e-mails, features on our intranet and staff newsletters. These focused on the following:

- Disability Staff Network information and Staff Survey.
- Disability Work Placements Awareness Article
- Hearing Loss Awareness Day Information and Feature
- Learning Disabilities Awareness Day Information and Feature
- Launch of Disability Staff Forum and Promotional Article

In addition, a number of briefings were provided for the Senior Management Team in relation to the following areas:

- Equality Screening Pitfalls
- Disability Awareness Days proposals and updates
- Accessible Formats Support Materials and Review
- Training Plan 2015-16
- Disability Placements - Request for placement offers
- Five Year Review of Equality Scheme
- Disability Staff Forum updates
- OFMDFM age legislation proposals
- Disability Duties Information Leaflet for staff
- Website Accessibility
- Good Relations Statement and its launch
- Equality Monitoring Staff Data information
- Standards and Guidance on the Involvement of People with a Disability.

Website Accessibility

We gave consideration to a number of ways of assessing and improving accessibility of our website, including self-assessment, automated testing tools, website accessibility evaluation services and user-based accessibility testing. Work on updating the NIGALA website is ongoing.

Standards and Guidance for the Involvement of Disabled People

There are many reasons why it is important to consult and involve service users, carers and the wider community to ensure effective engagement and consider the diverse needs of the nine Section 75 groups.

People with disabilities tend to be excluded from public services and when health and social care outcomes are agreed with communities needs are better identified and people can be supported to manage their own care. There is a growing body of literature which evidences that effective and meaningful involvement can lead to improved health and social care outcomes, enhanced quality of life for service users, their families and carers, community and the whole of Health and Social Care. This is critical to balancing effectiveness and efficiency in the existing climate of financial austerity.

In partnership with the BSO Equality Unit and our HSC regional colleagues, we developed standards and guidance for the involvement of disabled people in our work. This was supplemented by a checklist for staff to ensure that people with a disability can be fully involved when we are arranging meetings/running events.

The standards and associated guidance were developed in consultation with disabled people and organisations representing disabled people such as; ARC NI, Autism NI, British Deaf Association NI, Omnibus Partnership, Patients Group of Royal College of GPs, Positive Futures, SHSCT, Telling it like it is group.

Disability Staff Forum

We finalised the establishment of a HSC Disability Staff Forum for staff members in our organisation. This Forum, which is named "Tapestry" is open to staff working in all 11 HSC Regional Organisations who have an interest in disability. The Forum is being sponsored in 2016-2017 by the Health and Social Care Board.

We worked with HSC colleagues in the Business Services Organisation Equality Unit to develop and agree a workable and effective structure for the Forum.

The Forum was launched at the end of 2015-2016 and will begin formal meetings, draft terms of reference and establish and promote itself throughout 2016-2017.

We will work with partners during 2016-2017 to determine the long term sponsorship of the Forum.

Disability Work Placements

NIGALA participated in the unpaid work placement scheme for people with a disability. The Supported Employment Solutions organisation secured a match for the Agency placement which focused on reviewing the NIGALA intranet to provide child friendly, accessible information. The twenty six week placement commenced on 1 December 2015 and ended on 31 May 2016. The website design graduate who availed of the placement was enabled to obtain work experience and utilise her knowledge and skills in a work environment. The Agency benefitted greatly from the placement and staff were enabled to have an appreciation of the talent and skills that the young person had and look beyond the label of her hidden disability.

Disability Awareness Days

We featuring two very successful staff awareness days on disabilities during the year. In September, we focused on Hearing Loss and in February, we hosted an interactive event involving an adult with Learning Disabilities.

On both days, we offered staff the opportunity to attend a talk by Action on Hearing Loss and VOCAL an independent advocacy network which works in partnership with a dedicated team of adults with learning difficulties on a range of projects. Both events were very informative and effectively represented the lived experience of adults with diverse disabilities and challenged stereotypical perspectives by evidencing the empowerment of the adults involved. The events were supplemented with the provision of information/materials and signposting information on how to access relevant supports and services.

2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/measures** in 2015-16 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

Please see Appendix 1: Equality Action Plan Progress Report 2015-2016

3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2015-16 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

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

Please provide any details and examples:

Please see Table 1 under Question 1 for further information. Please also see Appendix 2 and 3: Screening Report 2015-16 and Mitigation Report 2015-16.

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:

Please see Table 1 under Question 1 for further information. Please also see Appendix 2 and 3: Screening Report 2015-16 and Mitigation.

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*):

For further details please see Table 1

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 2015-16 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:

Section 75 statutory duties were integrated in the revised job description for Assistant Directors.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2015-16 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:

Senior Management and Corporate Services staff, with responsibility for service and policy development and review, who undertake screening. An Assistant Director has lead responsibility for supporting NIGALA Senior Management Team fulfil the equality obligations. They represent the Agency on the BSO led equality consortium, participate in discussions and joint actions and provide feedback to the SMT and Board.

6 In the 2015-16 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 2015-16 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The Section 75 statutory duties are integrated within the Public and Personal Involvement (PPI) strategy and Social Care Governance action plan. The NIGALA Corporate and Business Plan is screened to inform equality considerations and identify the screening schedule.

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2015-16 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:	<input type="text" value="9"/>	Actions ongoing:	<input type="text" value="2"/>	Actions to commence:	<input type="text" value="1"/>
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Please provide any details and examples (in addition to question 2):

Please see Appendix 1: Equality Action Plan Progress Report 2015-16.

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2015-16 reporting period *(points not identified in an appended plan)*:

There were no changes to the Equality Action Plan during the 2015-16 reporting period.

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2015-16 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

Where relevant we tend to engage with targeted groups as part of our work preceding formal consultation. This is to inform our consultation documents.

11 Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2015-16 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:

None

12 In the 2015-16 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:

13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2015-16 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes** No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

In our quarterly screening reports we raise awareness as to our commitments relating to equality screenings and their publication.

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2015-16 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)

The Business Services Organisation Equality Unit collate and publish equality screening templates and other reports associated with Equality Scheme commitments on our behalf, please see:

<http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/2644.htm>

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

7

16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2015-16:

7	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:

Refer to Appendix 2 Equality Screening.

A 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:

NIGALA received feedback from Disability Action on the screening of the Leadership and Management framework in the Equality Unit screening report for October – December 2014. Based on this feedback, NIGALA’s policy and screening has been amended to include the need to make reasonable adjustments, and these have been republished following the revision. The screening decision, however, was not changed.

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

19 Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2015-16 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes No **Not applicable**

Please provide any details and examples:

The Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency did not carry out any Equality Impact Assessments in 2015-2016.

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 2015-16 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:

Please see information in last year’s Annual Progress Report.

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 2015-16 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

None

- 23** Please provide any details or examples of monitoring that has contributed to the availability of equality and good relations information/data for service delivery planning or policy development:

None

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 2015-16, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

Face-to-face training:

Course	No of Staff Trained
Equality Screening Training	1
Placement Training	1
Total	2

E-Learning: Discovering Diversity

Module 1 – 4	59
Module 5 – Disability	54
Module 6 – Cultural Competencies	53

- 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:

The Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency avails of the joint Section 75 training programme that is co-ordinated and delivered by the BSO Equality Unit for staff across all 11 partner organisations. The following statistics relate to the evaluations undertaken by all participants for the Equality Screening Training.

[The figures in bold represent the percentage of participants who selected 'Very Well' or 'Well' when asked the questions below.] Participants were asked: "Overall how well do you think the course met its aims":

- To develop an understanding of the statutory requirements for screening: **99.0%**
- To develop an understanding of the benefits of screening: **99.0%**
- To develop an understanding of the screening process: **97.0%**
- To develop skills in practically carrying out screening: **97.0%**

[The figure in bold represents the percentage of participants who selected 'Extremely Valuable' or 'Valuable' when asked the question below.] Participants were asked: "How valuable was the course to you personally? **97.0%**

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

26 Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2015-16, 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 2015-16?

Insert number here:

0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

Not applicable

Section 3: Looking Forward

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

The Equality Scheme was reviewed and the report submitted to the Equality Commission in April 2016. The five year review reflected how staff engagement and buy in to equality considerations is largely in the context of the Human Rights legislation and the governing principles of the Children (NI) Order 1995 specifically Article 3 (3), the welfare checklist, which replicates considerations relating to the Section 75 profile of the child/ren that the Guardian is appointed to represent in Court proceedings in tandem with a Solicitor.

Ownership of the equality agenda has improved over the last five years as demonstrated by a year on year increase in the number of screenings being undertaken. All senior managers and corporate services staff have availed of screening training as an integral component of policy development and review. Emphasis has been placed on integrating equality considerations within the Agency's Social Care Governance, Personal and Public Involvement and Quality 2020 agendas.

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)*

- equality screenings and the timely publication of completed screening templates
- where relevant EQIAs
- engagement with Section 75 groups (alongside other voluntary sector groups) as part of pre-consultation exercises and collection of equality information by this means
- attaching equality screening documents to policy documents in any policy consultations.

30 In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2016-17) reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

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

PART B - Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Disability Action Plans

When we produced our Disability Action Plan we decided that it is important to do so in a language and format that is easy to understand. A copy of our Plan for 2013-2018 is available on our website.

In the same way, we want to make sure that people can easily follow what we do from year to year as we carry out our plan. We have produced a report for 2015-2016. It is attached as Appendix 4. This report contains the information required for the statutory reporting in what we hope is an accessible language and format.

1. Number of action measures for this reporting period that have been:

6

Fully achieved

3

Partially achieved

1

Not achieved

2. Please outline below details on all actions that have been fully achieved in the reporting period.

2 (a) Please highlight what **public life measures** have been achieved to encourage disabled people to participate in public life at National, Regional and Local levels:

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs ¹	Outcomes / Impact ²
National ³			
Regional ⁴			
Local ⁵			

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1			
2			

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

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.

PART B

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			
2			

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1			
2			

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			
2			

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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				
2				

4. Please outline what action measures **have not been achieved** and the reasons why.

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1		
2		

5. What **monitoring tools** have been put in place to evaluate the degree to which actions have been effective / develop new opportunities for action?

(a) Qualitative

(b) Quantitative

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

6. As a result of monitoring progress against actions has your organisation either:

- ♣ made any **revisions** to your plan during the reporting period or
- ♣ taken any **additional steps** to meet the disability duties which were **not outlined in your original** disability action plan / any other changes?

Please select
 If yes please outline below:

	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?

Appendix 1: Progress Report on Equality Action Plan – August 2016

Equality scheme commitments

Our action plan outlined actions related to our functions and took account of our equality scheme commitments relating to Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Our equality scheme is available on our website www.nigala.hscni.net.

The law requires us when we carry out work to promote equality of opportunity across nine equality categories: age, gender, disability, marital status, political opinion, caring responsibilities, sexual orientation, religion and ethnicity. It also requires us to consider good relations in relation to political opinion, religion and ethnicity.

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

During the last three years we have kept our equality action plan under review and reported annually, to the Equality Commission, on what we have done.

Function 1: (a) To ensure the independent representation of the wishes and feeling of the children and ensure the safeguarding of the children's wishes and best interests in Court proceedings.

(b) Appoint Solicitors to work in tandem with Guardians in Public Law cases under the Children (NI) Order 1995 and relevant proceedings under the Adoption (NI) Order 1987.

- During 2015/2016 NIGALA extended the case allocation Pilot informed by staff feedback emanating from the lean methodology project commissioned with the HSC Leadership Centre.
- The Children's Participation workgroup has identified a number of work streams to develop tools and materials to assist Guardians engage with and effectively represent the interests of children, taking account of ages and stages of

development, cultural competence and a resource pack to facilitate work with children with a disability.

- Refined data capture on the Guardian Case Information System in respect of ethnicity was integrated within the enhanced functionality and became operational in 2015/2016.
- A review of the initial recruitment process in respect of the NIGALA Solicitor Panel, which was established in 2011, has informed the work of the Solicitor Panel Reconstitution Working Group. A focus group was facilitated with young people from the Voice of Young People in Care (VOYPIC) to inform the materials that was utilised in the interviews.
- Solicitor appointments are monitored on a monthly basis by the Senior Management Team to ensure compliance with the guidance on the appointment of Solicitors designed to achieve equity and transparency in the appointments process. A Guardian/Solicitor Reference Group will be re-established at the conclusion of the reconstitution of the Solicitor Panel process to oversee the operation of the Panel.

Function 2: To improve service provision by providing the opportunity for continuous professional development and the enhancement of knowledge and skills for all staff members.

- A baseline audit of Guardian's knowledge and skills was completed to inform training and development needs and peer support initiatives.
- A Swap Shop event to disseminate existing practice will be facilitated alongside the establishment of an Interest Inventory which will facilitate staff with particular interests or experience to act as mentors or resource for colleagues. This will also be utilised in support of promoting practice relating to Section 75.
- NIGALA engaged with a range of organisations (VOYPIC, CAFCASS and TIGALA) to benchmark practice in respect of models for children's participation, risk assessment, assessment of contact/attachment and promote culturally reflective practice.

Function 3: To regularly seek the views of users of the services and key stakeholders in order to improve standards of practice and inform service developments.

- NIGALA, through the Social Care Governance Forum and Personal and Public Involvement Strategy, routinely seeks the views of users of the service and key stakeholders in order to improve standards of practice and inform service developments.
- NIGALA engaged with a range of voluntary sector organisations to benchmark practice in respect of models for children's participation.
- The Children's Participation workgroup has established a number of work streams to progress work in support of children's engagement and participation incorporating cultural diversity and learning disability.

Function 4: Corporate Governance (Information Governance, ICT, Finance, Procurement, Risk Management, Health and Safety, Controls Assurance).

- Equality objectives are integrated within the NIGALA Corporate and Business Plan and reported on in the Annual Report.

PART B

Appendix 2

Equality and Human Rights Screening Report

April 2015 – March 2016



Table 1

*1	'screened in' for equality impact assessment- <u>including date</u> of (EQIA)
2	'screened out' with mitigation
3	'screened out' without mitigation

Policy / Procedure and Screening Documentation	Policy Aims	Date	*Screening Decision
Reconstitution of the NIGALA Solicitor Panel	Reconstitution of the NIGALA Solicitor Panel of accredited Solicitors for appointment by Guardians to represent children in proceedings under the Children (NI) Order 1995 and in relevant proceedings within the Adoption (NI) Order 1987.	May-15	2
Asset Register Policy	NIGALA is committed to managing its assets in a transparent manner and ensure a register is maintained to accurately reflect any 'assets' owned by the Agency and thus help to monitor any associated costs.	Jul-15	3
Purchasing and Finance Authorisation Policy	This policy has been updated to reflect the changes as a result of the implementation of E-Procurement and FPL. It includes the new procedures to be followed during the authorisation process of stock/non-stock invoices.	Jul-15	3

Policy / Procedure and Screening Documentation	Policy Aims	Date	*Screening Decision
Leadership and Management Framework	The NIGALA Leadership and Management Framework is designed to support the Agency in the delivery of a high quality service underpinned by demonstrable behaviours and attributes, skills and knowledge that reflect NIGALA's values and principles and which motivate staff to achieve the Agency's mission. The policy and screening were first published in Q4 2014-15 and have been revised to take into account feedback from Disability Action.	Jul-15	2
Transferring of Cases between Guardians	The purpose of the Policy is to detail how NIGALA will transfer a Guardian from a live case when required to do so in the context of a Guardian's absence due to illness.	Jan-15	2
Storage and Retention of Case Documentation	The purpose of this policy is to outline the arrangements in place for assuring compliance of all NIGALA information and practices with the Data Protection Act.	Jan-15	3
Health & Safety Policy Statement 1-Risk Assessment 2-Display Screen Equipment 3-Adverse Incidents 4-Eye Tests Lenses Support	The Health & Safety Policy Statement and associated bulletins outline the measures NIGALA will take in order to provide safe working arrangements for all staff.	Nov-15	2

Policy / Procedure and Screening Documentation	Policy Aims	Date	*Screening Decision
5-Manual Handling 6-Health & Wellbeing 7-COSHH 8-Health & Safety Training 9-First Aid 10-Occupational Health Services 11-Fire Safety & Emergency 12-Remote Working 13-Personal Protection			

Appendix 3

Equality and Human Rights Mitigation Report

April 2015 – March 2016



Reconstitution of the NIGALA Solicitor Panel

<i>In developing the policy or decision what did you do or change to address the equality issues you identified?</i>	<i>What do you intend to do in future to address the equality issues you identified?</i>
<p>Introduce equality monitoring.</p> <p>Amended essential criteria for selection to 5 years post qualifying in the last 7 years to ensure that Solicitors on maternity leave or long term sickness absence were eligible to apply.</p> <p>Review Solicitor appointments at the NIGALA Senior Management Team to ensure compliance with the procedure for the appointment of Solicitors.</p> <p>Seek feedback from Solicitors and Guardians as to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • options to maximise Solicitor capacity in view of limited numbers of Solicitors in the Northern and Western HSCT areas • the frequency and type of information that they would like to receive in respect of Solicitor appointments. 	<p>Review appointments against Section 75 monitoring.</p> <p>Review Guardian’s Solicitor usage annually as a component of the Guardian’s appraisal process to address equality of opportunity.</p> <p>Monitor Solicitor appointments by Guardians in line with the procedure for the appointment of Solicitors</p> <p>Identify in the information pack that the NIGALA reserves the right to appoint to the Solicitor Panel whenever it deems necessary and may retain a waiting list of appointable Solicitors up to 12 months after the selection process is concluded.</p> <p>Solicitors who are successful will receive information in respect of NIGALA’s equality obligations.</p>

Leadership and Management Framework

<i>In developing the policy or decision what did you do or change to address the equality issues you identified?</i>	<i>What do you intend to do in future to address the equality issues you identified?</i>
<p>The Leadership and Management Framework identified expectations of the behaviours values skills and knowledge of NIGALA staff relevant to their respective roles to evidence and support the delivery of a high quality child focused, evidence based service.</p> <p>Equality issues identified will be addressed through screening of the policies listed in 1.4.</p> <p>NIGALA received feedback from Disability Action on the screening of this policy in the Equality Unit screening report for October – December 2014. Based on this feedback, NIGALA’s policy and screening has been amended to include the need to make reasonable adjustments, and these have been republished following the revision.</p>	<p>Enhanced data capture through a self-assessment approach and NIGALA supervision and appraisal processes will inform and support training and development initiatives to assist staff meet expectations contained within the Leadership and Management Framework and evidence a quality service.</p> <p>Equality issues identified will be addressed through screening of the policies listed in 1.4.</p>

Transferring of Cases between Guardians

<i>In developing the policy or decision what did you do or change to address the equality issues you identified?</i>	<i>What do you intend to do in future to address the equality issues you identified?</i>
<p>The policy reflects that a child's age, gender religion, ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation may need to be taken into account when taking decisions on whether to transfer a case.</p> <p>Ensure awareness of changes but also to increase overall awareness of the service.</p>	

Health and Safety Policy Statement

<i>In developing the policy or decision what did you do or change to address the equality issues you identified?</i>	<i>What do you intend to do in future to address the equality issues you identified?</i>
<p>Consideration will be given to the provision of all documentation relating to the Health & Safety Policy Statement and Bulletins in other formats on request e.g. large print, audio format, other languages.</p> <p>Support will be provided on request for anyone requiring assistance to complete forms related to this policy, in particular those with a disability or those whose first language is not English.</p> <p>Arrangements for developing Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP) for people with disabilities and women who are pregnant.</p>	

Appendix 4: NIGALA Disability Action Plan 2013-2018



Disability Action Plan 2013-2018

Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency (NIGALA)
What we did between April 2015 and March 2016

If you need this document in another format please get in touch with us. Our contact details are at the back of this document.

(1) Communication

Action Measure	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	Timescale and Ownership
<p>1.1 Work with disabled people to consider the diversity of images used and potential for portraying wider range of individuals when developing information materials including websites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake audit of information and materials (leaflets, website). 	<p>Disabled people are portrayed in a positive manner.</p>	<p>Guidance for authors developed and in use.</p> <p>Audit of information materials including website undertaken Annual Review of progress to ECNI</p>	<p>Business Services Organisation's (BSO) Equality Unit 2014-15 onwards</p>
<p>Relevant Duty: Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.</p>			
<p>What we did over the last year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last year we produced guidance and a checklist for our staff. We wanted to support staff in thinking about the images they use in leaflets, booklets and on the website. • One of our partners, the Public Health Agency, is represented on a regional group that looks at issues for people with a disability in relation to information. This year people who sit on this group talked to colleagues from across Health and Social Care organisations about working together on images. The group agreed that together they will develop an image library that all staff can use. The group to do this is called the Information Work stream of the Physical and Sensory Disability Strategy. • We undertook a review of information and materials and engaged with a range of stakeholders to inform requisite updates to reflect S.75 groups. Work is ongoing on making necessary changes in line with the feedback received. 			

Action Measure	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	Timescale and Ownership
<p>1.2 Review NIGALA Communication Policy</p> <p>Consult with staff and key stakeholders including Disability sector to inform the review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate Agency commitments in support of promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people and cross reference the NIGALA Accessible Formats Policy 	<p>Revised Policy will be ratified and introduced with appropriate awareness raising/training.</p>	<p>Revised Communication Strategy will be in place and kept under review.</p>	<p>NIGALA 2015-16</p>
<p>Relevant Duty: Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people AND Encourage participation of disabled people in public life.</p>			
<p>What we did over the last year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We facilitated a 26 work placement which enabled a young person with a disability to gain work experience and avail of support in preparing for interviews. 			

Action Measure	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	Timescale and Ownership
1.3 Put in place contractual arrangements for the production of materials in alternative formats.	Accessible formats are more readily available	Arrangements are in place to support staff in procuring materials in alternative formats. Contracts are in place where appropriate	BSO Equality Unit 2015-16
Relevant Duty: Encourage participation of disabled people in public life.			
What we did over the last year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our BSO procurement colleagues looked at contracts that health organisations in Great Britain have for other formats. Next year, we will discuss with colleagues from other health and social care organisations what we should do. Our procurement colleagues help us with this. 			

(2) Awareness Raising and Training

Action Measure	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	Timescale and Ownership
<p>2.1 Encourage staff to declare that they have a disability or care for a person with a disability by updating their personal information on HRPTS.</p> <p>Provide guidance to staff on the importance of monitoring.</p>	<p>Greater numbers of staff feel comfortable declaring they have a disability.</p> <p>More accurate data in place to inform policy development and staff support needs.</p>	<p>Awareness raising via email to all staff.</p>	<p>NIGALA 2014-15</p>
<p>Relevant Duty: Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.</p>			
<p>What we did over the last year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This year for six weeks we ran a campaign to encourage our staff to tell us whether or not they have a disability. We sent emails and put up posters. In our organisation staff can keep their equality data up to date within the staff profile section on the HRPTS database. We cannot compel staff to routinely review and amend their profile. We can only encourage them to do so and explain why it is good for them to let the organisation know if they have a disability. • When we reviewed the data afterwards we saw that only a few more people who have a disability provided this information on the database. We also found that still a number of staff haven't declared whether or not they have a disability. So we need to keep working on this. • When we asked staff across organisations what inhibits them from declaring if they have a disability they cited anxiety that they will be treated unfairly if they say that they have a disability. Others said they don't think that the organisation needs to know that they have a disability. We want to engage with our disability staff forum next year to consider what we else we could do to improve our staff profile data. 			

Action Measure	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	Timescale and Ownership
2.2. 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.	2 annual Awareness Days profiled Equality event hosted Staff evaluations of the Awareness raising events indicate increased understanding of the issues faced by people living with the disability profiled.	NIGALA annually

Relevant Duty: Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.

What we did over the last year

- We featured two disability awareness days again this year. These were Hearing Loss and Deafness in September 2015 and Learning Disabilities in January 2016.
- Staff and volunteers from Action on Hearing Loss came to our office in Belfast and spoke about the experience of living with hearing loss. They also offered doing hearing tests.
- In January, a volunteer and staff from VOCAL helped us raise awareness of learning disabilities. They facilitated an interactive seminar reflecting the experience of life as a learning disabled adult advocate accessing health care, employment and availing of services and supports. They shared information and identified resources and services that staff could access. We teamed up with our colleagues in NIPEC again on both awareness days.
- On both days we also compiled a leaflet for staff. These were part of our series called ‘Disability Insight’ with key information. We also provided links to videos with testimonials from people who live with hearing impairments and learning disabilities conditions. We wanted to facilitate staff to listen to people with a disability first hand.

Action Measure	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	Timescale and Ownership
2.3. In collaboration with our staff who have advised of their disability review current guidance and produce revised guidance on support for staff with a disability.	Staff with a disability are supported and staff are empowered to provide support.	Guidance in place for staff with a disability on what support is available. Guidance promoted	NIGALA 2015-16
Relevant Duty: Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.			
<p>What we did over the last year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We reviewed websites to see what other organisations have done. Next year we want to engage with our disability staff forum to consider what information they think would be helpful for staff with a disability to receive. We will also liaise with disability organisations to elicit their views to inform initiatives in support of promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people. 			

Action Measure	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	Timescale and Ownership
2.4. In collaboration with disabled people design, deliver and evaluate training for staff, Board Members and the NIGALA solicitor panel on disability equality and disability legislation.	Increased staff, Board Member and Solicitor Panel awareness of the range of disabilities and needs.	A number of staff trained (general and bespoke) and staff awareness initiatives delivered. 80% of staff and Board Members have successfully completed the disability module of the e-learning Discovering Diversity.	NIGALA 2015-16
Relevant Duty: Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.			
<p>What we did over the last year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By end March, we found that 75% of our staff, Board Members had completed the Discovering Diversity e-Learning training module on disabilities. During the year we started producing a new e-Learning module on equality awareness. We work with colleagues in the BSO and Health and Social Care Trusts on this. The module includes awareness of the law regarding people with a disability. Next year, we want to do a short campaign to raise awareness of the modules and get more staff to complete them. • We hosted a swap shop event on 2nd February 2016 on tools and techniques for engaging with and representing children's wishes and feelings. Guardians who have availed on Makaton training and 'Talking Mats' provided a demonstration in support of techniques utilised to support engagement with adult and children with a learning disability. 			

(2) Getting people involved in our work, Participation and Engagement

Relevant Duty: Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people AND Encourage participation by disabled people in public life.			
Action Measure	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	Timescale and Ownership
3.1 Promote and encourage staff to participate in “Tapestry” the regional disability network and support the network in the delivery of its action plan.	Promote involvement of staff with a disability in decision-making. Improve support for staff with a disability.	Features on Agency intranet and staff newsletter.	NIGALA Senior Management Team 2016-17
Relevant Duty: Encourage participation by disabled people in public life.			
What we did over the last year			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We undertook a survey with our staff to find out about their ideas for a staff forum. Across all our organisations together 852 staff completed the survey. After it, we invited staff to meetings to tell us more. We talked about establishing the forum, who should be able to join it and consider the potential barriers to staff involvement. • We then ran a competition to choose a name for the forum. “Tapestry” was the identified name. • In March 2016, we launched the forum. We invited all our staff to come. • This work is now completed. 			

Action Measure	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	Timescale and Ownership
3.2 Nominate a champion at Senior level	Evidence of leadership at Senior level	Champion identified	NIGALA 2015-16
Relevant Duty: Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people			
What we did over the last year			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This has been completed. An action identified from the staff forum is to arrange a meeting with the Disability Champions to co-ordinate activities and share good practice initiatives during 2016-17. 			
Action Measure	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	Timescale and Ownership
3.3 Undertake a desktop review of the disability data captured in respect of children represented by Guardians within the Guardian Case Information System (GCIS)	Data will inform staff training and development needs.	Facilitate a targeted training event annually on disability informed by the GCIS data review.	NIGALA 2015-16

Relevant Duty: Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people			
What we did			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The enhanced data capture was completed during 2015/16. Work is underway in respect of a “Review of social work practice in NIGALA in working with disabled children”. 			
Action Measure	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	Timescale and Ownership
3.4 Explore the scope for identifying opportunities for the involvement of young adults with a disability in NIGALA’s volunteer/work experience scheme.	Young people with a disability gain meaningful work experience.	Evaluation report of pilot scheme	NIGALA and BSO Human Resources 2015-16
Relevant Duty: Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people			
What we did over the last year			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We learned from the health and social care organisations who had people on the disability work placement scheme placed with them last year. They told us what went well. They were also able to tell us what we need to do differently. A web design graduate with a disability availed of a 26 week work placement in NIGALA which commenced on 1st December 2015. At the mid-point of their placement we offered training on how to apply for jobs in Health and Social Care. 			

(4) Recruitment and Retention

Action Measure	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	Timescale and Ownership
4.1 Explore the scope for identifying and promoting an advocate or specialist with role to support and advise staff on disability issues. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review best practice • Engage with staff • Identify advocate or specialist 	Improved support for staff.	Scoping completed. Annual Review of Progress ECNI Staff Feedback	BSO Equality Unit 2016-17
Relevant Duty: Encourage participation by disabled people in public life.			
What we did over the last year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The newly establish Disability Staff Network will offer support and advice to staff on disability issues. This has been written into the terms of reference of the Staff Network. All members will be advocates. The network has set a work plan for the year and is keen to establish the forum as a place where staff with disabilities can turn to for advice. • This work has now been completed. 			

(3) Additional Measures

- We always include Disability on our list of things to talk about at our quarterly Equality Forum with our partner organisations.
- We report on progress against our Disability Action Plan to our Board and Senior Management Team

(6) Encourage Others

- As this report shows, we work closely with solicitors who are on our panel to promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability.

(7) Monitoring

- We evaluated what difference our campaign made to encourage staff to complete their disability information on the Human Resources IT system.
- In March we set up a meeting with those who are on a work placement with us under the Disability Scheme and with their Employment Support Officers. This will help us to evaluate how the scheme went this year. We will also invite all their placement managers to a meeting when placements finish in June.

(8) Revisions

- We updated our plan during 2015-16.

(9) Conclusions

We completed six actions (2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4,).

We have not yet done what we said we would do under actions 2.3, as we think that staff who have a disability should be actively involved. We therefore want to bring this suggestion to the “Tapestry” staff forum once it is operational. We will do this before the end of June 2016. We also haven’t done 4.1 yet. We will do so in 2016-17.

We still have some work to do to complete actions 1.1, 1.3, 2.1,3,1....

All of the actions in our action plan are at regional and at local level.

Our action plan is a live document. If we make any big changes to our plan we will involve people with a disability. We will tell the Equality Commission about any changes.

NIGALA

NI Guardian Ad Litem Agency

a voice for children

4th Floor, Centre House

79 Chichester Street

Belfast

BT1 4JE

<http://www.nigala.hscni.net/>

June 2016