

# **Draft Equality Action Plan for DfI 2023 – 2026 Post Consultation Outcome Report**

## 1. Introduction and background

The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) has concluded a public consultation on its draft Equality Action Plan. This plan sets out the actions we propose to take forward over the next three years in response to the consultation responses received.

The Equality Action Plan outlines actions relating to our functions and takes account of our equality scheme commitments relating to Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The consultation ran from 3 April 2023 to 23 June 2023 and this report has been produced to highlight the comments received during the consultation period and the Department's response to them.

The Department would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who participated in the consultation, helping to shape the Equality Action Plan. The Action Plan remains a 'live' document and will be reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis.

## 2. Consultation

A full public consultation was launched on 3 April 2023 and closed on 23 June 2023.

All those recorded in the Department's Section 75 consultation list received an email informing them of the consultation arrangements. The consultation documents were made available on the Department's website and promoted on social media. The documents were also available in hard copy or in different formats, on request.

A full copy of the draft Equality Action Plan which issued for consultation can be found on the Department's website:

<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-section-75-equality-action-plan-2023-2026>

The consultation document contained a response template asking consultees two main questions:

- 1) Do you agree with the actions that have been included in the draft Section 75 Action Plan?
- 2) Are there any actions not included that you feel should be included?

The consultation also sought any additional comments from consultees on the draft Action Plan.

All respondents preferred to provide 'narrative' submissions that identified particular areas of importance to them.

A total of two written responses were received. They were from:

- Equality Commission for Northern Ireland; and
- Translink.

### 3. Equality Action Plan Responses

Following the feedback received during the consultation, the Department has reviewed the draft Action Plan and aims to publish final documents in September 2024.

The Action Plan will continue to be reviewed on an annual basis and may be added to or amended over its lifespan, as more information becomes available or priorities change.

The consultation responses and feedback received have been analysed with the key issues being summarised and presented, together with the Department's response, at Appendix A.

The Equality Action Plan spans the diverse functions of the Department. Respondents welcomed the draft Action Plan. In acknowledging the range of actions contained to promote equality of opportunity and good relations, respondents also welcomed the fact that the Action Plan is a living document that will be monitored on an annual basis and updated as appropriate.

That said, a number of key points emerged within the consultee written submissions:

- it was welcomed that the draft Action Plan was based on a refreshed Audit of Inequalities which included consideration of the impact of Covid on existing inequalities/Section 75 categories;
- concerns were expressed to the proposed funding cuts to Road Safety advertising and community transport services in 2023-24; and
- it was suggested that performance indicators should focus on outcomes rather than outputs, as this makes for more effective monitoring of progress on the delivery of the measures and their impact on S75 categories.

## 4. Monitoring and Review

The Equality Action Plan is a living document and may be added to or amended over the lifespan of the next three years, as more information becomes available or priorities change.

Progress in implementing the measures contained in the

Action Plan will be reported on via the annual Section 75 Progress Report to the Departmental Management Board and the Equality Commission. Copies of the progress report will be made available on the Department's website.

Department for Infrastructure consultation Equality Action Plan (EAP) 2023 Consultation Responses and Department Comments		
Issue Raised	Comment / Recommendation	Action Taken / Comments
<b>Equality Commission for Northern Ireland</b>		
<b>4.1 Ensure best practice in our public appointment procedures to remove barriers to participation in public life for all s75 groups.</b>	Consider existing under-representations of Section 75 groups and set specific and measurable targets / goals for increasing applicants and ultimately appointees from e.g. women, disabled people, younger people, people from minority ethnic backgrounds etc.	<p>The Department is committed to improving diversity on its Departmental Boards and the Boards of its arms length bodies (ALBs) where we have the responsibility to appoint Chairs and Members. The Department has taken steps to promote and welcome applicants from certain under-represented groups, in particular women and people with a disability. The Department takes part in the Boardroom Apprentice programme and has appointed a member to its Departmental Board since September 2021.</p> <p>In respect of public appointments to ALBs, we adhere to the process laid down by the Commissioner for Public Appointments which includes operating a Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS). The GIS is aimed at applicants with disabilities, or those with a long-term impairment or health conditions, and provided a person has demonstrated on the application form the criteria for the post, the applicant will be offered an interview.</p> <p>The Department has developed a comprehensive distribution list to ensure public appointment opportunities reach a wider pool of potential applicants including women, younger people, people with disabilities and people from ethnic minorities. To attract as many female applicants as possible, details of the appointment are sent to a wide range of women's groups. Advance notifications of competitions issue to a wide selection of underrepresented S75 groups. Launch material in the local</p>

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		<p>press and departmental website also highlights under-represented S75 groups where applications would be particularly welcome.</p> <p>The Department will engage with the Commissioner for Public Appointments to explore any further actions to improve diversity.</p>
<b>5.Equality monitoring and data co ordination</b>	Recommend working closely with NISRA to commission annually the Section 75 research and data it requires to comply with its Section 75 equality scheme commitments.	<p>The Department notes the additional ECNI data sources provided that included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">ECNI Programme for Government Paper</a>;</li> <li>• <a href="#">Equality and work 2023 briefing paper</a>;</li> <li>• <a href="https://www.equalityni.org/SexualOrientation">https://www.equalityni.org/SexualOrientation</a> including 2013 position paper; and</li> <li>• <a href="https://www.equalityni.org/Disability">https://www.equalityni.org/Disability</a>.</li> </ul> <p>The Department will continue to liaise with NISRA Statisticians, seconded to DfI, with regards Section 75 data within commissioned surveys and research.</p> <p>The Department is also represented on the TEO lead Ethnic Equality Monitoring Cross Department Working Group which also incorporates the Equality Data Accessibility Project.</p>
<b>9. Access to rural transport services</b>	Recommend that the Action Plan is reviewed to take account of the final 2023-24 budget decisions and the results of DfI's 2023-24 EQIA on its budget proposals, including consideration of mitigations of community transport services.	The Action Plan has been reviewed to reflect decisions on the final budget allocation for 2023-24. Given the importance of community transport services, and to ensure the service continued thereby not disadvantaging in particular people in rural communities who rely on the service, the Department did not stop funding. However, a small

**Department for Infrastructure consultation Equality Action Plan (EAP) 2023**  
**Consultation Responses and Department Comments**

Issue Raised	Comment / Recommendation	Action Taken / Comments
		reduction was applied. The Action Plan will be reviewed annually and will be reflective of future years' budget settlements.
<b>10. Road safety measures</b>	Recommend that the Action Plan is reviewed to take account of the final 2023-24 budget decisions and the results of DfI's 2023-24 EQIA on its budget proposals, including consideration of mitigations.	<p>The Action Plan has been reviewed to reflect decisions on the final budget allocation for 2023-24. Road Safety advertising and programmes has been affected by the 2023-24 budget outcome. However, the Department has a number of mitigations in place to continue this work, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being a member of the Road Safety Partnership and continued work with road safety partners to raise awareness of our shared societal responsibility for road safety;</li> <li>• continued work with a range of organisations to promote the 'Share the Road to Zero' ethos. This includes encouraging as many people as possible to take the accompanying Road Safety pledge to help positively influence human behaviour and reduce the number of deaths on our roads;</li> <li>• advertising campaigns being shared across social media platforms and the promotion of messaging through the 'Share the Road to Zero' website. Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) accounts have also been enhanced.</li> <li>• securing funding from the Road Safety Partnership to run a Winter campaign on distraction whilst driving and impact of excess speed for the roads or conditions;</li> </ul>



**Department for Infrastructure consultation Equality Action Plan (EAP) 2023**  
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Issue Raised	Comment / Recommendation	Action Taken / Comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• publication of a draft Road Safety Strategy to 2030, supported by a 52-point Action Plan for 2023-24. A progress report for the 2023-24 actions will be published in Summer 2024;</li> <li>• given the impact of reductions to the Cycling Proficiency Scheme, especially on children and young people, the Department continues to provide some free resources and training for teachers to allow over 200 schools to continue to deliver the scheme; and</li> <li>• funding allocated for an annual road safety advertising bus rear package which cover both rural and urban areas.</li> </ul> <p>The Action Plan will be reviewed annually and will be reflective of future years' budget settlements.</p>
<b>All</b>	We note that as the Action Plan was drafted prior to the Secretary of State's announcement of departmental budget allocations for 2023-24, that many of the actions proposed will be impacted by cuts to programmes and services. We would therefore recommend that a review of the action plan is undertaken which takes account of the final budget decisions and the results of DfI's EQIA on its budget proposals.	The Department's Equality Action Plan is subject to annual review and has been reviewed to reflect decisions on the final budget allocation for 2023-24. Business areas continue to consider any adverse impacts on S75 groups as a result of the Department's constrained 2023-24 Budget settlement. The Action Plan will continue to be reviewed annually and will be reflective of future years' budget settlements.

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# **Draft Equality Action Plan for DfI 2023 – 2026**



# Action Plan for DfI Audit of Inequalities 2023 – 2026

1. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations across the nine equality categories outlined in the Act.

aligned to our current Business Plan objectives. The audit gathers and analyses information across the Section 75 categories to identify the inequalities that exist for service users and are listed under the “Issues to Address” column in the Plan.
2. As part of this approach, in line with its Equality Scheme commitments, and based on its functions, the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) has developed an action plan to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.
3. To develop this action plan, DfI has:
  - undertaken an audit of inequalities;
  - developed action measures based on functions and key inequalities identified;
  - developed performance indicators for delivery of action measures;
  - developed timescales for implementation of action measures; and
  - developed an action plan.
4. In its guidance, ‘Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998: A Guide for Public Authorities’, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) recommends that public authorities should review and update action plans over the lifetime of their equality scheme to ensure that they remain effective and relevant to their functions and work and to report of progress on their delivery. This is reflected in Department’s Equality Scheme. A copy of this Plan and our annual progress report to the Equality Commission will be made available on our [website](#).
5. This document sets out the Department’s response to our Audit of Inequalities,
6. The point of contact in relation to the consultation, implementation, review and evaluation of this Equality Action Plan is the DfI Equality Unit – email [equality@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk](mailto:equality@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk)

## Accessibility statement

7. Any request for the document in another format or language will be considered. Please contact [equality@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk](mailto:equality@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk)

## Equality Action Plan for Dfl 2023-2026

Issue to Address	Action Needed	Intended Outcomes	By when
1.Integration of Section 75 duties into all planning and decision making processes	1.1 Departmental Board (DB) and senior managers committed to incorporating equality and good relations targets across all aspects of Departmental business, both externally and internally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equality and good relations considered as part of all future corporate and strategic plans, staffing and financial planning processes.</li> </ul>	2023
	1.2 Staff trained in S75 and equality screening.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completion of timely and thorough Equality Screenings and EQIA assessments.</li> </ul>	2023
2.Tackle persistent inequalities	2.1 DB commitment to tackling persistent inequalities and to monitoring progress to achieving equality outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achievement of all actions in this Action Plan by the appropriate target dates.</li> </ul>	2026
	2.2 DB to be provided with progress reports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inequalities and under-representation levels eliminated.</li> </ul>	2026
	2.3 This Action Plan to be monitored during each reporting year.		
3.Engagement with customers across Section 75 groups	3.1 Establishment of Dfl S75 Equality Forum with key representatives from S75 groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve engagement with S75 groups that will better inform, raise awareness and where possible address equality issues related to Dfl.</li> </ul>	2023
	3.2 Business areas to actively engage with customers and consultees across S75 categories early in the policy development process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policymakers have a better understanding of the issues impacting the different S75 groups.</li> </ul>	2023
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customers actively contributing to decision making processes.</li> </ul>	2023

Issue to Address	Action Needed	Intended Outcomes	By when
4.Diversity within DfI Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs)	4.1 Ensure best practice in our public appointment procedures to remove barriers to participation in public life for all S75 groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In partnership with others introduce a coordinated annual programme of interest raising measures.</li> </ul>	2023
	4.2 Review existing ALB equality monitoring to standardise with S75 requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To increase the number of applications received by S75 groups currently under represented across all NDPBs by 2023.</li> </ul>	2023
	4.3 Continue to take outreach measures to raise interest levels amongst S75 candidates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To increase the number of expressions of interest by S75 groups in DfI public appointments by 2026.</li> </ul>	2023 - 2026
5.Equality monitoring and data co-ordination	5.1 Establish a methodology for the collection and co-ordination of Section 75 equality monitoring data across all business functions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A localized equality database for each business area and a standardised approach to Section 75 monitoring across all business functions.</li> </ul>	2023
	5.2 Develop new methods to record and analyse data on the equality categories.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreed programme or equality monitoring undertaken by business area.</li> </ul>	2023
	5.3 Develop staff to be able to use information to inform policy and decision making processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equality monitoring outcomes reviewed and published on an annual basis.</li> </ul>	2023
	5.4 Outcomes from equality monitoring to inform future screening and decision making processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved data will better inform policy development by understanding equality issues related to DfI.</li> </ul>	2023
6. Accessibility of our communication services	6.1 In partnerships with others, improve the accessibility of our communication channels to suit the specific needs of different customer groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customers can communicate with us using a range of accessible communication methods.</li> </ul>	2023
			2023

Issue to Address	Action Needed	Intended Outcomes	By when
	<p>6.2 Our information both written and web-based will be developed in accessible formats to suit the needs of all equality groups.</p> <p>6.3 Conduct an annual review of our minorities language policy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customers are made aware of the availability of accessible services and how to access them.</li> <li>More accessible information services for customers.</li> <li>Website accessibility and technology enhanced to suit needs of different groups of customers.</li> <li>On request will provide translation of documents into other languages.</li> </ul>	<p>2023</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
7. Access to public transport	<p>7.1 Through the Public Service Agreement with Translink :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with Translink and our stakeholders through the Accessibility Advisory Group to consider the needs of older passengers and passengers with disabilities when using public transport services.</li> <li>Work with Translink to increase the proportion of services operated by low-floor access vehicles.</li> <li>Work with Translink to increase the percentage of the fleet with audio-visual announcements, etc.</li> <li>Work with Translink to ensure the sustainability of services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving the travel experience and access to public transport services for older people and those with a disability.</li> <li>Increase in the proportion of services operated by low floor access vehicles.</li> <li>Improving accessibility to audio/visual announcements and accessible information on journey planning.</li> <li>Continued free travel provision for those fleeing domestic abuse.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p>



Issue to Address	Action Needed	Intended Outcomes	By when
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce Changing Places facilities through a programme of accessibility improvements in new/refurbished stations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introducing Changing Places facilities into new or redeveloped stations or hubs, where possible, to improve the customer experience for those with dependents, older people and people with a disability, subject to the required funding being made available.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
8.Support to Concessionary travel	8.1 Provide funding to support discounted travel for accessible public transport for older people and people with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote social inclusion by providing access to public transport for older people and people with disabilities.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
9. Access to rural transport services	9.1 Working in partnership with DAERA and our other partners to maximise available accessible rural transport services within resource available to benefit rural people including women, younger and older people or those who have a disability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through joint funding arrangement facilitate the provision of services for S75 groups in rural areas to access local amenities, public transport and reducing social exclusion.</li> <li>Enabling those who hold a SmartPass to avail of a discounted fares on rural community transport.</li> </ul>	2024
10. Road safety measures	<p>10.1 Develop a new Road Safety Strategy to continue our effort in addressing important road safety issues.</p> <p>10.2 Engage with disability organisations to explore options to resolve the issue of inconsiderate parking on pavements that forces pavement users onto oncoming traffic.</p> <p>10.3 Develop advice for using parking bays.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reducing the number of children and young people killed or seriously injured (KSI) on our roads.</li> <li>Reduce the number of people aged over 70 killed or seriously injured in road collisions.</li> <li>Ensure safe and accessible footways for S75 groups in particular people with a disability and dependent carers.</li> </ul>	<p>Annually</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

Issue to Address	Action Needed	Intended Outcomes	By when
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To assist people with disabilities, particularly wheelchair users to park and access their rear loading wheelchair accessible vehicles when parked.</li> </ul>	
11. Hate crime	11.1 Continue to work with our strategic partners to remove hate expression from our street furniture where it presents a risk to road safety or it is offensive, racist, or sectarian in nature.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removing offensive material to promote a neutral environment for all S75 groups.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
12. Specific S75 training for staff	12.1 Develop a S75 training plan for all DfI staff. 12.2 Increase awareness of gender budgeting. 12.3 Ensure provision of disability awareness training for front line staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff can effectively carry out equality screening, equality consultations and EQIA.</li> <li>Frontline staff better able to assist customers who may need additional assistance.</li> </ul>	2023  2024
13. NICS Diversity and Inclusion	13.1 Support and promote the NICS Disability Staff Network within DfI. 13.2 Support and promote the NICS LGBTQ+ Staff Network within DfI.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a DfI Diversity Action Plan.</li> <li>Take forward and support any DfI related objectives from both the Disability and LGBTQ+ Staff Networks.</li> </ul>	Annually  Ongoing
14. Disability Equality	14.1 Review current DfI Disability Action Plan (DAP) progress to inform the development of a new DfI DAP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successfully complete all actions of current DfI DAP.</li> <li>Develop a new DfI DAP.</li> </ul>	2023  2023

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Available in alternative formats.