

# **Gender Action Plan 2016-18**

## **Closure Report**

### **Purpose of the Report**

The aim of this report is to review the implementation of the Gender Action Plan 2016-18, which was intended to place a strategic and long-term focus on addressing gender issues within the Northern Ireland Assembly Secretariat. The plan also supported the Assembly Commission in complying with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

### **Background**

The Gender Action Plan 2016-18 (GAP) was approved by the Assembly Commission at its meeting on 3 March 2016 following an eight-week consultation with staff. The plan was a culmination of a process initiated in 2013 to explore gender issues in respect of the Secretariat which had included: the examination of gender action plans of other organisations; an informal guest speaker session to learn about how gender issues are addressed in other organisations; a wide-ranging literature review; and a survey on perceptions of barriers to gender equality amongst Secretariat staff<sup>1</sup>.

The aims of the GAP were:

- To develop and implement policies/strategies/actions to remove barriers, actual and perceived, to gender equality within the organisation;
- To increase women's participation at decision-making level in the Secretariat, particularly at senior level;
- To foster a culture of awareness and understanding of gender issues and gender equality within the organisation;
- To have in place a suite of policies which:
  - are gender-sensitive
  - promote gender equality

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<sup>1</sup> Further information on these activities is provided in the [Gender Action Plan 2016-18](#)

- reflect good practice
- comply with legislation

The actions were grouped into three broad themes to cover ongoing and future work:

- Leadership and Development
- Communication and Engagement
- Life Balance/Health and Well-being

An oversight group was responsible for co-ordinating and monitoring implementation of the GAP<sup>2</sup>. The Secretariat Management Group (SMG) and the Assembly Commission were provided with updates on progress on a six-monthly basis throughout the lifetime of the GAP.

The GAP was a 'living document' to which actions could be added or existing actions amended as circumstances required throughout the reporting period. Eight additional actions were identified and added to the plan in October 2017 as a result of findings of the Business in the Community (BITC) Gender Project Audit. A ninth additional action was included in October 2018 relating to the Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme. All additions or amendments were made with the agreement of SMG.

Although the GAP was intended to run for three years from 2016-18, this report covers the period up to 31 March 2019 to retain alignment with the established six-monthly reporting cycle.

### **Performance Against Actions**

The GAP 2016-18 is attached at Annex 1 and provides the final status of each of the individual actions; Table 1 overleaf summarises the number of actions completed or otherwise. 92% of individual actions were completed within the period; more detailed information on the achievement of a number of these actions and their related outcomes is set out in the 'Achievements' section of this report.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://assist.assemblyni.gov.uk/business-areas/equality-and-good-relations-unit/gender-action-plan-2016-18/gender-action-plan-implementation-group/>

**Table 1: Overall status of actions**

	<b>Status Key</b>	<b>No of actions</b>
	Completed	36
	Not completed	2
	Action Suspended	1
	<b>Total actions</b>	<b>39</b>

Two actions – actions 27 and 28 – were not completed within the period. These relate to the development of a Transgender Policy to address managing/supporting staff and visitors to Parliament Buildings; and associated policy training to staff. While a formal policy is not yet in place, the Human Resources Office will, in the meantime, refer to the LGB&T Toolkit developed by NIPSA<sup>3</sup> when necessary. An initial workshop on transgender issues, which was open to all staff, took place on 7 February 2019. In addition, following agreement by the Assembly Commission in December 2018, the process of joining Stonewall’s Diversity Champion’s Programme was initiated in January 2019.

One action – action 19 – was suspended. This aimed to utilise existing Assembly Networks to create an Assembly Trainers Network, in order to provide greater capacity for the Assembly to provide information to a wider audience, including hard to reach groups, across Northern Ireland. The Assembly Trainers Network was agreed by SMG in August 2017; however, it was agreed that the network rollout would be put on hold while the Assembly is not carrying out its full range of functions. This action remains suspended at the time of this report.

## **Achievements**

Of the 36 actions completed, the following are of particular note:

- *Participation in Mentoring Schemes*

Actions 1 and 2 aimed to afford opportunities for Commission staff to participate in the NICS Mentoring programme (across all grades) and the CO3 Programme (AG4 and above). Since 2015, nine staff have participated in the NICS Programme and

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<sup>3</sup> [https://nipso.org.uk/attachments/article/149/Ref-A4\\_0332\\_4.pdf](https://nipso.org.uk/attachments/article/149/Ref-A4_0332_4.pdf)

fourteen staff participated in the CO3 Programme. Involvement in the Programmes has provided opportunities for staff in the role of mentee, to learn from the experience and knowledge of their mentor. For those involved as mentors, staff developed their mentoring skills which will benefit them in their role within the Assembly, particularly as line managers.

- *BITC – Gender Project*

Action 3 was to join BITC’s Gender Project, which aimed to support organisations to increase their gender diversity, shift workplace behaviours and create enabling workspaces for men and women. The Gender Project commenced in October 2015 for a duration of 3 years. Twelve organisations participated – from both the private and public sectors – along with BITC (see Annex 2). The Assembly Commission, represented by the Deputy Head of Human Resources and the Equality Manager, participated fully in all stages of the project.

As part of the Gender Project, the Assembly Commission was subject to an audit (designed by PwC) to measure performance against BITC’s CORE<sup>4</sup> Standard for Equality, covering nine areas: workplace culture; recruitment and selection; monitoring, evaluation and response; policy and strategy; flexibility and life balance initiatives; career paths, training and development; working environment; and company brand and reputation.

The Assembly Commission’s audit results were considered amongst the top performing organisations participating in the Gender Project, scoring 86 out of a total “best practice” score of 100. The average score across all of the participants was 69.34. However, potential areas for further improvement were identified and the Gender Action Plan was revised in September 2017 to include additional actions to address these, including measures to encourage employment from under-represented groups and those with caring responsibilities; unconscious bias training; and a focus on increasing awareness of HR policies that promote equality and diversity

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.bitcni.org.uk/programmes/core-standard-responsible-business/>

Participation in the Gender Project has also provided opportunities to learn from the experience of other participants, supporting important areas such as policy review and development, and learning and development.

- *Decision making and attendance at SMG and Assembly Commission Meetings*

Actions 5 – 8 focused on the process of decision making in the Assembly Secretariat and attendance at SMG and the Assembly Commission meetings. Figures are now routinely retained on the number and gender breakdown of those presenting to SMG and the Assembly Commission and included in end-year reporting. Guidance was revised with a focus on providing greater advice and support for those attending meetings to present papers or deputise for Directors. Directors were encouraged to give greater consideration to those attending and an increased range of officials have presented papers.

The actions included in the GAP in 2016 in relation to SMG and the Assembly Commission were in the context of the senior management team of the Clerk/ Chief Executive and Directors of the Assembly Secretariat having been exclusively male. Following staff departures and appointments, and a reduction in the number of Directors, SMG now has an even gender balance with a female Clerk/Chief Executive and a female Director of Legal, Governance and Research Services.

In addition, the compilation of figures since 2016 demonstrated a gender balance in those attending meetings in addition to the SMG members. The table below includes figures for 2018-19 period up to 7 February 2019 to highlight that there continues to be a strong representation from female members of staff presenting to the SMG.

**Table 2: Gender Balance of Presenters at SMG Meetings**

<b>Secretariat Management Group Meetings: Gender Balance Among Those Presenting Papers (members of SMG not included)</b>			
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19 (as at 7/2/19)
Total number of meetings	11	11	9
Total number of presentations of papers	61	72	62
% female presenters	52.5% (32)	48.6% (35)	66.1% (41)
% male presenters	47.5% (29)	51.4% (37)	33.9% (21)

There are fewer opportunities to present to the Assembly Commission as the majority of papers are led by the relevant member of SMG. Therefore, the change in gender balance in the senior management team significantly impacts on the gender balance of officials attending every Commission meeting. However, figures have been maintained on those officials who attended in addition to SMG to present to the Commission.

**Table 3: Gender Balance of Presenters at Assembly Commission Meetings**

<b>Assembly Commission Meetings: Gender Balance Among Those Presenting Papers</b> <i>(Those attending every Commission meeting ie SMG members and Head of Corporate Support not included)</i>			
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Total number of meetings	5	6	6
Total number of additional presentations	5	7	18
% female presenters	20% (1)	28.6% (2)	61.1% (11)
% male presenters	80% (4)	71.4% (5)	38.9% (7)

The GAP also included an action for provision to be made for Heads of Business (HoBs) to attend SMG at least once a year. While no formal mechanism was introduced, there has been a focus on ensuring HoBs have the opportunity to present at SMG and good progress has been made. The table below demonstrates that the attendance of HoBs to present at SMG is now much more commonplace with HoBs having made over 40 individual appearances at SMG and almost every Head of Business in post having attended an SMG at least once during each year.

**Table 4: Attendance at SMG meetings by HoBs**

<b>Secretariat Management Group Meetings: Attendance by HoBs during each year</b>			
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Total number of meetings	11	11	11
Total number of Heads of Business attending SMG at least once	14	12	12
Total number of HoBs in post for full year (see note below)	15	14	13
Total number of HoB attendances	42	47	51

*Note: There are 15 heads of business but one Clerk Assistant has been redeployed since October 2017 and the Head of Communications post was not filled from April 2018 to January 2019.*

Although not a specific requirement of the GAP, the number of staff at all grades who attend SMG is also monitored. This is included at Annex 3 for information. Guidance on presenting papers has also been developed for staff and the author is now included on SMG and Commission papers so they are aware of staff responsible for drafting the papers.

- *Learning and Development*

Actions 10 - 13 focused on ensuring that a range of opportunities to attend learning events are provided to staff in order to accommodate all work patterns, and to minimise potential barriers for staff to attend learning events. All of these actions have been fully implemented and are ongoing. A wide range of training events and masterclasses continues to be made available to all staff. Where possible, more than one session is offered to facilitate different work patterns. An increasing number of training courses are now available on-line, enabling staff to complete these at a time suitable to their work pattern. In addition, training materials are made available for staff who have been unable to attend a training event or masterclass.

- *Equal Pay Review*

Action 15 committed the Assembly Commission to conduct an equal pay review every two years. This action is complete and reviews were carried out in 2015 and 2017, with the next review scheduled in late 2019. The statistical analysis of pay data and commentary on any issues arising are considered by SMG, who decide on any appropriate further action as necessary. Conducting an equal pay review every two years will help to identify any gender related statistically significant differences in pay (as determined by NISRA) for consideration and further action as appropriate.

- *Life Balance, Health and Wellbeing*

Actions 21, 22 and 23 related to the development of policies and guidance to support the life balance, health and wellbeing of our staff. These actions were the implementation of a Job Share Register and supporting guidance; development of guidance for managers and staff in relation to caring responsibilities; and implementation of a Job Share Policy. All three actions have been completed.

The Job Share Register has enabled staff to place their name on the Register so that the HR Office can proactively match them with a potential job share partner. While it is difficult to assess accurately the impact of the guidance in relation to caring responsibilities, a number of staff continue to apply for (and have been granted) flexible working for this reason. Following issue of the Job Shadowing Policy, a small number of staff availed of the opportunity to “shadow” in a different part of the business. However, the current situation in which a number of staff are on temporary outward redeployment has impacted on this.

- *Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy*

Action 26 – development of a Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy – was not completed on time. A draft policy was provided to Trade Union Side in 2017 and this was followed by a significant period of consultation. The Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy was approved by SMG in February 2019. The Policy will provide managers and staff with guidance on how matters should be managed within the workplace; and provide information on the external sources of advice and support available to those affected by domestic violence and abuse.

- *Recruitment*

Actions 33 and 34 were intended to encourage applications for employment from under-represented groups and those with caring responsibilities. During the current period when the Assembly is not sitting, recruitment has not occurred. However, both actions are reflected in recruitment policy/procedure and will be encompassed in future recruitment schemes.

### **Related costs**

The majority of actions in the GAP 2016-18 were delivered within Directorates' existing resources and had no significant cost implications for the Assembly Commission. For example, the Assembly Commission already pays the NICS Centre for Applied Learning (CAL) £15 per employee per annum for access to a wide range of courses via an online training facility, which was used to provide refresher training on various HR policies (Action 35) and training on unconscious bias (Action 37).

Details of additional costs related to the GAP 2016-18 are set out below:



- Statistical analysis of pay data is carried out by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) on behalf of the Assembly Commission. The approximate cost of this is £2,500 for each equal pay review.
- Staff participating in the NICS Mentoring Programme were provided with online mentoring training at a total cost of £160. Participation in the CO3 Programme is £150 per person – the total cost to the Assembly Commission to date is £2,100.
- Participation in the BITC Gender Project was £5,000 over the three-year period covered by the project.

### **Challenges and Lessons Learnt**

The political uncertainty during the period that the Assembly has not been carrying out its full range of functions has only had a minor impact on the ability to realise all of the actions in full, with one action being suspended until the situation is clearer or has been resolved.

Though the majority of actions were completed there is a need to ensure that focus in these areas continues. For example, with the BITC Gender Project now completed the key challenge is to maintain the networks and contacts that have been established, to allow the Commission to continue to benefit from the experience and knowledge of other organisations. There is also a need to ensure that opportunities to participate in mentoring programmes continue to be offered to staff as they arise.




There is a danger that setting a target for the gender representation at SMG and Commission meetings is somewhat arbitrary, given that attendance at SMG or the Commission will be primarily determined by the nature of the business to be discussed and the decisions required. However, it is important not to conclude that the fact that there is now an even gender split in SMG means that the issue of attendance at SMG and the Commission is now irrelevant. Having the opportunity to present on issues within their responsibilities is a good development opportunity for all staff and upcoming leaders in the organisation. While the guidance for SMG and the Commission is currently under review and will focus on this occasion on supporting officials in the drafting of SMG and Commission papers, the guidance will continue to include advice to those attending for the first time.

## **Next Steps**

Much has been achieved in terms of addressing gender issues within the Assembly Secretariat through the implementation of the actions in the GAP 2016-18. To maintain focus and momentum and to build on the achievements to date, a continuation action plan will be put in place for 2019 - 2023 – a draft of the continuation plan is attached at Annex 4. Those actions that were not completed within the timeframe of the 2016-18 plan will be carried forward to the new plan and a small number of additional actions have been included, such as applying for a Diversity NI Charter Mark and participating in the Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme as agreed by SMG and the Assembly Commission. A new action has also been included to continue work on a gender leadership network.

## Gender Action Plan 2016-18 – Final Status Update

### Status Key:

-  Complete
-  Not completed
-  Action suspended

## Theme 1 – Leadership and Development

Issue Identified	Action	Planned outcome/measurement	Progress update
<b>Mentoring and Coaching</b>	1) Seek access to NICS Mentoring Programme aimed at all NIA grades.	Assembly Commission staff are afforded opportunity to participate in the NICS Mentoring Programme. Target uptake five staff.	<b>Lead:</b> Human Resources Office <b>Timeline:</b> Launch October 2015 – programme duration 9 months. <b>Status: Complete</b>
	2) Seek access to CO3 (Chief Executive Office Third Generation) mentoring project.	Assembly Commission staff are afforded opportunity to participate in the CO3 Mentoring Programme. Target uptake of five staff.	<b>Lead:</b> Human Resources Office <b>Timeline:</b> Launch May 2015 – programme duration 12 months. <b>Status: Complete</b>
	3) Join Business in the Community's Gender Project, which supports organisations to increase gender diversity, shift workplace behaviours and create enabling workplaces for men and women.	Full participation in the BiTC Gender Project over its three-year duration, leading to the development of a bespoke action plan as part of a collaborative approach to address unconscious bias and create a truly inclusive workplace.	<b>Lead:</b> Human Resources Office and Equality and Good Relations Unit <b>Timeline:</b> Project commences October 2015, for 3 years. <b>Status: Complete</b>
	4) Commission staff participation in Women in Public Life (WiPL) Programme.	Assembly Commission staff are afforded the opportunity to participate in programme (five places available).	<b>Lead:</b> Politics Plus <b>Timeline:</b> October 15-June 16 <b>Status: Complete</b>

## Theme 1 – Leadership and Development

Issue Identified	Action	Planned outcome/measurement	Progress update
<b>Gender balance in presenting to SMG and Commission</b>	<b>5)</b> Collect data at SMG and Commission level and produce yearly report on findings.	One year of complete data available at reporting year end detailing gender balancing.	<b>Lead:</b> Commission and Clerk/Chief Executive's Office (CCEO) <b>Timeline:</b> 31 March 2017 <b>Status:</b> Complete
<b>SMG and Commission Deputising Guides</b>	<b>6)</b> Develop briefing guides/procedures for deputising at SMG and Commission to ensure that deputies have a full understanding of how SMG works.	Revised submission guide along with revised templates to be published on AsslSt.	<b>Lead:</b> CCEO <b>Timeline:</b> 1 April 2016 <b>Status:</b> Complete
<b>Tabling of Papers at SMG and Commission</b>	<b>7)</b> Introduce process to enable authors of SMG/Commission papers to present them at meetings.	Revised SMG guidance and communication to include note to Directors on increasing number and range of staff attending and presenting to SMG/Commission	<b>Lead:</b> CCEO <b>Timeline:</b> 1 April 2016 <b>Status:</b> Complete
	<b>8)</b> Make provision for HoBs to attend SMG at least once a year.	Revised SMG guidance and communication to include note to Directors on increasing number and range of staff attending and presenting to SMG/Commission	<b>Lead:</b> CCEO <b>Timeline:</b> 1 April 2016 <b>Status:</b> Complete
<b>Gender Balancing on Groups</b>	<b>9)</b> Develop guidance for HoBs and Directors on staff volunteering and representation on groups/panels.	Guidance presented to SMG following liaison with directors and feedback from Gender Action Implementation Group.	<b>Lead:</b> Equality and Good Relations Unit <b>Timeline:</b> December 2016 <b>Status:</b> Complete

## Theme 1 – Leadership and Development

Issue Identified	Action	Planned outcome/measurement	Progress update
<b>Training</b>	<b>10)</b> Explore opportunities to partner with organisations where the potential uptake of courses is low.	HR Office will continue to liaise with partner organisations as appropriate.	<b>Lead:</b> Human Resources Office <b>Timeline:</b> Ongoing <b>Status:</b> Complete
	<b>11)</b> Continue practice of offering, as far as possible, a range of dates/times for learning events and ensure that this is reflected in learning and development written procedures.	Learning and development written procedures reviewed to reflect practice, which will be applied consistently.	<b>Lead:</b> Human Resources Office <b>Timeline:</b> Review of procedures by November 2015 – monitor over lifetime of action plan. <b>Status:</b> Complete
	<b>12)</b> Ensure as far as possible that training events are arranged in Northern Ireland	Learning and development written procedures reviewed to reflect practice, which will be applied consistently. 95% of training events will be offered within Northern Ireland.	<b>Lead:</b> Human Resources Office <b>Timeline:</b> Review of procedures by November 2015. <b>Status:</b> Complete
	<b>13)</b> Explore option, where possible, of sharing training materials with all Secretariat staff so that staff who are unable to attend training courses can access materials.	Procurement process for learning activities will be developed to include clause consenting to sharing of training materials internally via Moodle (Virtual Learning Environment)	<b>Lead:</b> Human Resources Office <b>Timeline:</b> March 2016 <b>Status:</b> Complete
	<b>14)</b> Dignity at Work Policy and Equal Opportunities Policy will continue to be kept under review to ensure compliance with legislation and that the interests of all categories, including gender, are addressed.	Policies will be kept under review on an ongoing basis in light of developments in legislation. Policies will be subject to full review by 31 March 2018, if not required before that date.	<b>Lead:</b> Human Resources Office <b>Timeline:</b> Ongoing and full review by 31 March 2018 <b>Status:</b> Complete

## Theme 1 – Leadership and Development

Issue Identified	Action	Planned outcome/measurement	Progress update
<b>Continued focus on equal pay</b>	<b>15)</b> The Assembly Commission will continue to conduct an equal pay review every two years and address issues arising.	Equal pay reviews will be conducted every two years and gender-related statistically significant differences in pay (as determined by NISRA) will be considered by SMG.	<b>Lead:</b> Human Resources Office <b>Timeline:</b> By December 2015 and 2017 <b>Status:</b> Complete
<b>Implementation of relevant AERC Review Recommendations</b>	<b>16)</b> Bring AERC recommendations to Women in Politics Working Group and advise Gender Action Implementation Group of any potential impact on Secretariat.	Relevant impact from AERC recommendations is planned for and managed within Assembly Secretariat.	<b>Lead:</b> Clerking/Gender Action Implementation Group <b>Timeline:</b> March 2016 <b>Status:</b> Complete

## Theme 2 – Communication and Engagement

Issue Identified	Action	Planned outcome/measurement	Progress Update
<p><b>Gender Leadership Network</b></p> <p><i>Action amended in October 18 update to allow for further consideration of models for a Gender Leadership Network.</i></p> <p><i>(Previous Lead: Raise Previous Timeline: March 2017)</i></p>	<p>17) Consider models for a Gender Leadership Network, including model of Assembly Leadership Forum (ALF).</p>	<p>Research paper; identify models of good practice to promote the position of women in the workplace</p>	<p><b>Lead:</b> Gender Action Plan Implementation Group/RaISe  <b>Timeline:</b> Update provided to SMG by December 2018  <b>Status: Complete</b></p> <p>RaISe paper, '<a href="#">Supporting Women in the Workplace – Models of Good Practice</a>', completed and presented to SMG and the Commission following consideration by the Gender Action Plan Implementation Group.</p> <p>At the request of SMG, further consideration will be given to leadership models and networks. A meeting was held with senior management in November 18 to discuss options and a possible way forward. An initial meeting with females at AG1-AG4 to discuss future opportunities around networking, leadership and development was held in February 19. A new action to take this work forward has been identified for inclusion in the 2019-22 Gender Action Plan.</p>



## Theme 2 – Communication and Engagement

Issue Identified	Action	Planned outcome/measurement	Progress Update
<b>Awards</b>	<b>18)</b> Explore the area of awards as discussed in the Working Paper from the European Commission’s Network to Promote Women in Decision-Making in Politics and the Economy (copy circulated).	Research paper; identify models of good practice to promote the position of women in the workplace	<b>Lead:</b> RaISe <b>Timeline:</b> March 2017 <b>Status:</b> Complete
<b>Utilise Existing Assembly Networks</b>	<b>19)</b> Explore potential for coaching and mentoring opportunities through Assembly Community Connect and the Business Trust, including potential for gender fellowships, where women from NIA shadow the work of women within the Business Trust/CO3. Members of the Business Trust and ACC could also contribute to a Gender Leadership Network, if created.	Female employees are provided with fellowship/shadowing opportunities through Assembly Community Connect and the Business Trust.	<b>Lead:</b> Engagement with assistance from Human Resources Office <b>Timeline:</b> 2017-18 <b>Status:</b> Action suspended  The Assembly Trainers Network (ATN) paper was agreed by SMG on 25 August 2017 and supersedes this action. The ATN project will be rolled out when the political situation is resolved. However, given that there is no gender-specific focus in the ATN project it is not necessary to carry this action forward to the 2019-22 continuing action plan.

## Theme 2 – Communication and Engagement

Issue Identified	Action	Planned outcome/measurement	Progress Update
<p><b>Transgender – Inclusion in the Workplace</b></p>	<p><b>20)</b> To submit a paper to SMG/Commission recommending that the Assembly Commission becomes a member of the Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme.</p>	<p>If agreed by SMG/Commission, an application will be submitted to join the Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme.</p> <p>Through participation in this programme, the Assembly Commission would have access to a programme which offers organisations tailored one-to-one support to help build workplaces that are inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people.</p>	<p><b>Lead:</b> Equality and Good Relations Unit with assistance from HR</p> <p><b>Timeline:</b> October/November 2018</p> <p><b>Status: Complete</b></p>

### Theme 3 – Life Balance/Health and Well-being

Issue Identified	Action	Planned outcome/measurement	Progress Update
<b>Job Share Register</b>	<b>21)</b> Implement Job Share register	Job Share register and associated guidance issued to staff enabling them to register interest in job sharing arrangements.	<b>Lead:</b> Human Resources Office <b>Timeline:</b> March 2016 <b>Status: Complete</b>
<b>Caring Responsibilities Guidance</b>	<b>22)</b> Develop caring responsibilities guidance for managers and staff (subject to formal consultation) and include in staff handbook. Guidance should promote holding of meetings between 10am-4pm as far as possible	Caring responsibilities guidance is developed and issued to staff.	<b>Lead:</b> Human Resources Office <b>Timeline:</b> October 2017 <b>Status: Complete</b>
<b>Job sampling</b>	<b>23)</b> Address job sampling through implementation of Job Shadowing Policy	Job Shadowing Policy is developed and issued to staff.	<b>Lead:</b> Human Resources Office <b>Timeline:</b> Introduced October 2015 and will be kept under review throughout lifetime of plan <b>Status: Complete</b>
<b>Childcare Scheme</b>	<b>24)</b> Consider issues arising from review of childcare scheme	Issues identified and information provided to SMG and Commission as appropriate.	<b>Lead:</b> Human Resources Office <b>Timeline:</b> June 2016 <b>Status: Complete</b>
<b>Gather staff views on life balance</b>	<b>25)</b> Continue to conduct staff surveys and review questions to ensure that gender aspects are included	Continued measurement of staff opinion and survey outcomes published on AsslSt.	<b>Lead:</b> SMG/Internal Communications Group (ICG) <b>Timeline:</b> March 2017 <b>Status: Complete</b>

### Theme 3 – Life Balance/Health and Well-being

Issue Identified	Action	Planned outcome/measurement	Progress Update
<b>Domestic violence policy</b>	<b>26)</b> Development of policy for Secretariat staff	Domestic Violence Policy is developed and issued to staff.	<b>Lead:</b> Human Resources Office <b>Timeline:</b> March 2017 <b>Status: Complete</b>  Policy approved by SMG on 26 February 2019 for issue to all staff.
<b>Development of a Transgender Policy</b>	<b>27)</b> Develop a Transgender Policy to address both managing and supporting staff and dealing with visitors to Parliament Buildings	Transgender Policy is developed and issued to staff.	<b>Lead:</b> Human Resources Office <b>Timeline:</b> March 2018 <b>Status: Overdue</b>  To be carried over into 2019 -22 continuing action plan.
<b>Raise awareness around transgender issues</b>	<b>28)</b> Provide training to staff on transgender issues once policy developed.	Staff are trained and equipped with knowledge to manage transgender issues in the workplace in accordance with Commission Policy.	<b>Lead:</b> Human Resources Office <b>Timeline:</b> September 2017 <b>Status: Overdue</b>  To be carried over into 2019-22 continuing action plan.

<b>Reporting and Monitoring</b>			
<b>Issue Identified</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Planned outcome/measurement</b>	<b>Progress Update</b>
<b>Regular monitoring of progress against identified actions</b>	<b>29)</b> Provide progress update to SMG and the Assembly Commission every six months	Every six months, following liaison with business areas, provide summary of directorate activity to SMG/Commission, charting progress against targets and including any additional actions.	<b>Lead:</b> Equality and Good Relations Unit <b>Timeline:</b> Every six months from Commission approval of final plan <b>Status: Complete</b>
	<b>30)</b> Report to the Equality Commission annually on progress	As part of annual report to the Equality Commission, provide full update of directorate activity against action plan targets.	<b>Lead:</b> Equality and Good Relations Unit <b>Timeline:</b> 31 August every year <b>Status: Complete</b>
<b>Central administration and co-ordination of work of Gender Action Implementation Group</b>	<b>31)</b> Co-ordinate and oversee the roll-out of implementation of the action plan	Co-ordination of meetings and work of the Implementation Group once established;  Support provided to business areas where necessary;  Progress of business areas tracked against targets;  and written updates to SMG/Commission on progress against specific actions every six months.	<b>Lead:</b> Equality and Good Relations Unit <b>Timeline:</b> Ongoing until 2018 <b>Status: Complete</b>

### Additional Actions Identified Through Business in the Community (BiTC) Gender Project Audit

Issue Identified	Action	Planned outcome/measurement	Progress Update
<b>Capture gender information on staff experience of working in the Assembly</b>	<b>32)</b> Monitor future staff survey results on the basis of gender	Evidence will exist which will show staff experience of working in the Assembly, broken down by gender. This evidence will be captured through the bi-annual staff survey.	<b>Lead:</b> RaISe <b>Timeline:</b> Implementation September 2017, ongoing over lifetime of plan <b>Status:</b> Complete
<b>Encourage employment applications from under-represented groups</b>	<b>33)</b> Continue to use welcome statements as part of external recruitment, as appropriate	Increase in the number of applications by under-represented groups where a welcome statement has been used. Monitoring will be undertaken by the Human Resources Office.	<b>Lead:</b> Human Resources Office <b>Timeline:</b> Ongoing over lifetime of action plan <b>Status:</b> Complete
<b>Encourage employment applications from those with caring responsibilities</b>	<b>34)</b> Proactively discuss flexible working options with panels as part of the recruitment planning process	Where post has been identified as suitable, an increase in the number of applicants expressing an interest in flexible working. Monitoring will be undertaken by the Human Resources Office.	<b>Lead:</b> Human Resources Office <b>Timeline:</b> Implementation September 2017, ongoing over lifetime of plan <b>Status:</b> Complete
<b>Increased awareness of HR policies that promote equality and diversity</b>	<b>35)</b> To increase awareness of HR policies and the links across equality policies through: promotion of relevant policies to staff; learning activities and regular policy reminders; and refresher training at least every two years	Increased awareness of policies will be monitored by Human Resources Office through the evaluation of learning activities.	<b>Lead:</b> Human Resources Office <b>Timeline:</b> Ongoing over lifetime of action plan <b>Status:</b> Complete
<b>Exchange of information and ideas</b>	<b>36)</b> To use networking to facilitate exchange of information and ideas (eg KESS seminars, subject-specific	Positive impact of networking activities to be monitored by individual business areas.	<b>Lead:</b> All business areas <b>Timeline:</b> Ongoing over lifetime of

### Additional Actions Identified Through Business in the Community (BiTC) Gender Project Audit

Issue Identified	Action	Planned outcome/measurement	Progress Update
	working groups and focus groups for policy development)		action plan <b>Status: Complete</b>  <i>Development of networking opportunities and activities to feature in 2019 Gender Action Plan</i>
<b>Increased awareness of corporate issues</b>	<b>37)</b> Through publication of articles on AsslSt and interaction with senior managers, to provide information to staff on corporate matters	Increased awareness of staff on the work of SMG to be measured in future staff surveys	<b>Lead:</b> ICG <b>Timeline:</b> December 2017 <b>Status: Complete</b>
<b>Unconscious bias training</b>	<b>38)</b> To provide training to staff on unconscious bias	Improved understanding of unconscious bias will be monitored by Human Resources Office through evaluation of training activity	<b>Lead:</b> Human Resources Office <b>Timeline:</b> March 2018 <b>Status: Complete</b>
<b>Promotion of Women in the Workplace</b>	<b>39)</b> To consider the research papers on models for a Gender Leadership Network and Awards for promoting women in the workplace	Actions agreed to progress issues identified in research papers	<b>Lead:</b> Gender Action Plan Implementation Group <b>Timeline:</b> June 2018 <b>Status: Complete</b>

**Participants in the Business in the Community Gender Project**

Harbour Commissioners Office

Translink

NI Assembly Commission

Baker McKenzie

PSNI

NI Fire and Rescue Service

Business in the Community

Belfast City Council

Belfast Trust

Citi Group



## Annex 3

### Gender balance of Secretariat staff presenting at SMG meetings, 2016/17

Assembly grade	Female		Male	
	No.	% within females	No.	% within males
3	10	31	15	52
4	8	25	6	21
5	14	44	2	7
6	0	0	4	14
7	0	0	2	7
All grades	32	100	29	100*

*\*Figures may not sum due to rounding*

*Caution - percentages based on small numbers*

### Gender balance of Secretariat staff presenting at SMG meetings, 2017/18

Assembly grade	Female		Male	
	No.	% within female presenters	No.	% within male presenters
3	9	25.7	16	43.2
4	18	51.4	10	27.0
5	8	22.9	4	10.8
6	-		6	16.2
7	-		1	2.7
All grades	35	100	37	100

*\*Figures may not sum due to rounding*

*Caution - percentages based on small numbers*

### Gender balance of Secretariat staff presenting at SMG meetings, 2018/19

Assembly grade	Female		Male	
	No.	% within female presenters	No.	% within male presenters
3	6	11.8	14	51.9
4	22	43.1	8	29.6
5	18	35.3	1	3.7
6	5	9.8	3	11.1
7	-	-	1	3.7
All grades	51	100	27	100

*\*Figures may not sum due to rounding*

*Caution - percentages based on small numbers*

**DRAFT Continuing Gender Action Plan 2019-23**

<b>Theme 1 – Leadership and Development</b>				
<b>Issue Identified</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Planned outcome/measurement</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<b>Gender balance in presenting to SMG and Commission</b>	<b>1)</b> Continue to collect data at SMG and Commission level until April 2019 and produce reports on findings. (Figures for Assembly Community Connect to be included on resumption of full business.)	One further year of complete data collected and analysed for 2018-19. The 2016-17 and 2017-18 reports are available on <a href="#">AsslSt</a> .  Final overview analysis report of all three years of data.	Commission and Clerk/Chief Executive's Office (CCEO)/RalSe	RalSe report for 18-19 to be prepared by July 2019  Final overview analysis report to be prepared by end of Oct 2019.
<b>Gender Balancing on Groups</b>	<b>2)</b> Monitoring of checklist returns on staff volunteering and representation on groups/panels.  To be completed by HoBs and Directors utilising guidance issued by the Equality Unit	Monitoring data to be collected for two further years: 2018-19 and 2019-20. (Two returns were received for the first reporting period, January 2017 to March 2018).  RalSe to analyse three years of data, including any findings in the final analysis report on gender balance in presenting to SMG and Commission.	Equality and Good Relations Unit/RalSe and relevant Directors/HoBs	Final overview analysis of data to be prepared by end of Oct 2020.

### Theme 1 – Leadership and Development

Issue Identified	Action	Planned outcome/measurement	Lead	Timeline
<b>Continued focus on equal pay</b>	<b>3)</b> The Assembly Commission will continue to conduct an equal pay review every two years and address issues arising	Equal pay reviews will be conducted every two years and gender-related statistically significant differences in pay (as determined by NISRA) will be considered by SMG	Human Resources Office	By end 2019

## Theme 2 – Communication and Engagement

Issue Identified	Action	Planned outcome/measurement	Lead	Timeline
<b>Senior Women’s Network</b>	<b>4)</b> Implement Senior Women’s Network (AG4 and above) to meet at least twice a year.	To have in place a network that enables issues to be identified, discussed and – if appropriate – solutions proposed or raised at the appropriate platform; and where good practice can be shared and highlighted.	Gender Action Plan Implementation Group	Every six months
<b>Awards</b>	<b>5)</b> Consider third party recognition awards and apply for awards as appropriate.	Application process completed and submission made.	Gender Action Plan Implementation Group	Issue of awards to be considered on resumption of full Assembly business.
	<b>6)</b> Apply for Bronze Diversity NI Charter Mark	Bronze Diversity NI Charter Mark achieved.  Actions identified to progress to Silver Diversity NI Charter Mark within two years		September 2019  By end of 2021
<b>Transgender – Inclusion in the Workplace</b>	<b>7)</b> Participate in the Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme.	Through participation in this programme, the Assembly Commission would have access to a programme which offers organisations tailored one-to-one support to help build workplaces that are inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people.	Equality and Good Relations Unit with assistance from HR	<b><i>Ongoing for lifetime of the plan</i></b>

## Theme 2 – Communication and Engagement

Issue Identified	Action	Planned outcome/measurement	Lead	Timeline
<b>Development of a Transgender Policy</b>	<b>8)</b> Develop a Transgender Policy to address both managing and supporting staff and dealing with visitors to Parliament Buildings	Transgender Policy is developed and issued to staff	Human Resources Office	March 2020
<b>Raise awareness around transgender issues</b>	<b>9)</b> Provide training to staff on transgender issues once policy developed.	Staff are trained and equipped with knowledge to manage transgender issues in the workplace in accordance with Commission Policy	Human Resources Office	March 2020

## Theme 2 – Communication and Engagement

Issue Identified	Action	Planned outcome/measurement	Lead	Timeline
<b>Research</b>	<b>10)</b> Participate in QUB PhD Project 'Gender equality in the UK and Germany: HR Management in light of conflicting constitutional logics'	Through participation in the project, the Assembly Commission will have feedback via anonymised employees' insights on gender equality in the organisation and relevant HR policies, which could be used to inform any further actions that may be required.	Equality and Good Relations Unit with assistance from HR	<b>TBC</b>

## Reporting and Monitoring

Issue Identified	Action	Planned outcome/measurement	Lead	Timeline
<b>Regular monitoring of progress against identified actions</b>	<b>11)</b> Provide progress update to SMG every six months	Every six months, following liaison with business areas, provide summary of directorate activity to SMG/, charting progress against targets and including any additional actions.	Equality and Good Relations Unit	Every six months, generally March and October of every year
	<b>12)</b> Report to the Equality Commission annually on progress	As part of annual report to the Equality Commission, provide full update of directorate activity against action plan targets.	Equality and Good Relations Unit	31 August each year
<b>Central administration and co-ordination of work of Gender Action Implementation Group</b>	<b>13)</b> Co-ordinate and oversee the roll-out of implementation of the action plan	Co-ordination of meetings and work of the Implementation Group;  Support provided to business areas where necessary;  Progress of business areas tracked against targets; and  written updates to SMG on progress against specific actions every six months.	Equality and Good Relations Unit	Ongoing for lifetime of plan