

# Northern Ireland Assembly Commission



## Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report 2018-19

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

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/policies/equality-policies/>

### Signature:



**This report has been prepared using a template circulated by the Equality Commission.**

**It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties, and implementing Equality Scheme commitments and Disability Action Plans.**

**This report reflects progress made between April 2018 and March 2019**

## **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 2018-19, 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.*

**1 (a)  
Corporate  
Strategy**

The current political situation, and the fact that the Assembly is not therefore conducting normal business, has created a difficult environment for a number of Assembly Commission (the “Commission”) activities aimed at planning for the future. A draft Corporate Strategy for 2018-23 was developed following a comprehensive engagement process with staff. While the Corporate Strategy was developed on the basis of a return to normal Assembly business and formal approval will therefore be sought once this Assembly has appointed a successor Commission, the current Commission had no objections to the contents of the draft Corporate Strategy, nor to it being used to guide current business planning.

The draft Corporate Strategy contains two aims of specific relevance to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations:

- Under the aim of “Building excellence and innovation in our services” –  
*“Ensuring high standards in equality, governance and regulatory compliance through effective and efficient processes.”*

- Under the aim of “Strengthening engagement with the public” –  
*“Building connections with target groups including for example, support for greater female participation and the delivery of a Youth Assembly.”*

For 2018-19, an annual Corporate Plan was produced to prioritise actions which contribute to the direction of the draft Corporate Strategy but which could be delivered in the current political circumstances. However, work is currently underway to develop a full Corporate Plan for the remaining four years of the draft Corporate Strategy including actions to deliver the aims and objectives above.

In order to command confidence and facilitate compliance with statutory duties, a number of measures are in place:

- All equality plans and monitoring reports are tabled at Secretariat Management Group (SMG) meetings and/or Commission meetings;
- The Equality Scheme, the Disability Action Plan, the Good Relations Action Plan and the Gender Action Plan are published on the Assembly website;
- Policy screening arrangements are in place, including a protocol for sign off of screening forms;
- The screening template is kept under continuous review and screening guidance was updated in November 2018;
- All policies submitted (new and revised) to SMG and the Commission must include a screening form (this is built in to the SMG/Commission cover paper template);

- Policy screening forms are published on the Assembly website quarterly and stakeholders are sent a notification email: <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/publications/equality-screening-and-equality-impact-assessments-eqias/>;
- Public consultations are held on action plans, equality impact assessments (EQIAs), etc., in order to engage with the public and seek their views; and
- Training on equality issues is incorporated into the staff training schedule.

**1(b)  
Stonewall  
Diversity  
Champions  
Programme**

At its meeting of 19 December 2018, the Commission agreed to become a member of the Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme. The application process commenced in December 2018 and the Commission became a member in January 2019. During the reporting period work commenced on a review of a number of HR policies and completion of the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index as part of this process.

**1 (c)  
Disability  
Action Plan  
2016-2021**

The Disability Action Plan confirms the Commission's commitment to fulfilling the statutory obligations in compliance with Section 49A and 49B of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006). This Act places duties on public authorities, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities; and encourage participation by people with disabilities in public life.

Following a full public consultation, the Disability Action Plan was approved by the Commission in September 2016 for submission to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI). It spans a five-

year period and can be added to during its lifetime. The full plan is available at this link:

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/equality-and-good-relations/disability-action-plan-2016-21/>

**Examples** of work undertaken in this reporting period include:

a. **Accreditations and Access Information**

The Commission has continued to maintain accreditation awards for the 'Louder than Words' and the Access Award (National Autistic Society) Standards. Accreditation standards can be accessed at the following link:

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/accessing-parliament-buildings/louder-than-words.pdf>. Staff received a range of training including autism awareness and "Autism Champions" are in place.

An [accessibility webpage](#) has been developed containing accessibility information for visitors with a visual impairment, visitors who are deaf or hard of hearing, visitors with autism, information on public tours, wheelchair access arrangements, the Assembly's Inclusive Customer Service Policy and other sources of additional help. The web page entitled '[Autism and the Assembly](#)' continues to be maintained to provide information to the public on access arrangements when visiting the Assembly. In addition, a further web based video is available showing how to access Parliament Buildings. This details what is involved in the security check process and what to expect whilst visiting Parliament Buildings. This video was created for visitors on the autism spectrum, but others wishing to plan their visit have also found it useful. A subtitled version of the video is also available as is a printable version to download. The videos and printable version are available at <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/visit-and-learning/autism-and-the-assembly/pb-video/>

### **Inclusive and Accessible Events: Guide and Checklist**

During the reporting period an 'Inclusive and Accessible Events: Guide and Checklist' was developed and implemented for secretariat staff. The guide and checklist have been developed for staff involved in the planning, organising and delivery of events at Parliament Buildings and at external venues. They are designed to help staff to organise events which are accessible and in which all attendees can fully participate. They will also help staff to take account of the different needs of attendees and to identify potential barriers to participation, particularly for those with disabilities.

#### **b. Physical works**

The Commission recently completed a programme of work to further improve access in Parliament Buildings, in particular for the floors that are open to the public. This work involved relocating the existing shop and café, constructing an access ramp from the entrance lobby to the ground floor and the automation of corridor doors in the basement, ground and first floors. In addition, the south lift was upgraded to fire evacuation standard to facilitate the evacuation of persons with a disability in the event of a fire.

The Commission is currently working with the Fire Officer on arrangements to safely evacuate disabled persons from the building, in the event of an emergency.

#### **c. Signage and Maintenance of Access Items used by the public.**

The Commission continues to maintain the quality of access items/facilities used by the public. This has included maintenance of the Assembly Quiet Room, 'Changing Places' facility, tactile 'tour map' of Parliament Buildings, iPad with subtitled version of the Assembly

tour, Braille signage and other signage in Parliament Buildings including pictorial signage images.

For further details on all actions taken, see Part B of the Annual Report at page 40.

**(d) Good Relations Action Plan 2016-2021**

Under section 75(2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Commission is required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group. The Good Relations Action Plan sets out how the Commission proposes to fulfil this duty in relation to the functions for which it is responsible.

Following a public consultation which ended in June 2016, the Good Relations Action Plan for the period 2016-21 was approved by the Commission in October 2016. The full action plan and information on the consultation can found at this link:

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/policies/good-relations-action-plan/>

A progress update on all actions is provided to SMG/Commission every six months. The latest good relations update (March 2019) can be found by accessing the link above.

An example of good relations work during the current period is as follows:

**Assembly Commission Approach to Centenaries**

The “Perspectives On” series of events was established as part of the approach and principles agreed by the Commission in 2012 to govern how centenaries would be marked within Parliament Buildings. Events marked since this time have included the Ulster Covenant, Female Suffrage, the Dublin Lockout, the Outbreak of World War 1, the Easter Rising and the Battle of the Somme.

The Commission agreed in November 2018 to initiate its approach on Historic Anniversaries for the current Assembly mandate despite the current political situation. It agreed that an event would be held in January 2019 to mark the 100th anniversary of Dáil Éireann. The Speaker hosted a lecture by Dr Eamon Phoenix which was attended by the Ceann Comhairle, MLAs, members of the public, school and church representatives.

**1 (e) Gender Action Plan 2016 – 2018**

The Gender Action Plan 2016-18 (GAP) was a cross-directorate plan which set out actions and measures to promote gender equality within the Northern Ireland Assembly Secretariat. The actions fall under three themes: leadership and development; communication and engagement; life balance/health and well-being. The full action plan can be found at this link:

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/policies/equality-policies/gender-action-plan/>

Progress against targets in the action plan was overseen by the Gender Action Plan Implementation Group, which reported on progress to SMG and the Commission every six months. A Closure Report was prepared and tabled at Commission on 11 April 2019 and marked the final update against the 2016-18 plan. The Closure Report detailed the impact and outcomes of a number of the completed actions.

The final status of actions up to 31 March 2019 is provided below.

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



92% of actions were achieved during the timeframe covered by the GAP 2016-18. It was necessary to suspend one action while the Assembly is not carrying out its full range of functions.

### **Examples of GAP actions and activities**

Participation in Business in the Community's (BITC) Gender Project ended in October 2018. All of the actions arising from the BITC audit were completed (audit actions were detailed in the 2017-2018 annual progress equality report). The Gender Project also provided the opportunity to learn from the experience of other participants, supporting areas such as policy review and development, and learning and development. It is hoped that the networks and contacts that have been established will be maintained, to allow the Commission to continue to benefit from the knowledge and experience of other organisations.

Other activities and achievements during this reporting period include: participation in the NICS and CO3 (Chief Executive Third Generation) mentoring schemes; focusing on the gender balance of Assembly Secretariat staff presenting at SMG and Commission meetings; ensuring opportunities to attend learning and development events are provided to accommodate all work patterns; the development of policies and guidance to support the life balance, health and well-being of staff (e.g. the Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy); and measures to encourage applications for employment from under-represented groups.

### **Continuing GAP 2019-23**

Two actions, which relate to the development of a Transgender Policy, were not completed within the period. These will be carried forward to the Continuing GAP 2019-23, as will the programme of work on membership of the Stonewall Diversity Champion's programme (see

1(b) above). The 2019-23 GAP also includes a new action by which the Commission secretariat will participate in a Queen's University Belfast project on gender equality in the UK and Germany.

At its meeting on 11 April 2019, the Commission agreed the Closure Report for the 2016-18 GAP and Continuing GAP for 2019-23. The Closure Report is provided at Annex 1 and the Continuing GAP 2019-23 is provided as Appendix 4 to that report.

**1 (f)  
External  
Lighting  
Policy at  
Parliament  
Buildings**

Under the external lighting policy, the façade of Parliament Buildings is “colour washed” to recognise a set number of days agreed by the Commission. The policy is currently being reviewed and is available on the Assembly website at the link below.

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/policies/northern-ireland-assembly-use-of-external-lighting-policy-at-parliament-buildings-2014/>

During this reporting period, the building was lit on the following days:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Occasion</b>	<b>Colour Parliament Buildings was lit</b>
27 May 2018	Cancer Research UK - Race for Life	Pink
05 July 2018	National Health Service – 70 <sup>th</sup> anniversary	Blue
12 July 2018	Public Holiday	Orange
20 July 2018	Special Olympics Ulster	Red
11 November 2018	Remembrance Day	Red
08 March 2019	International Women's Day	Purple
11 March 2019	European Day for Remembrance of Victims of Terrorism	Red
17 March 2019	St Patrick's Day	Green

**1 (g) Events and Tours**

Events and public tours play an important part in ensuring that Parliament Buildings is a welcoming space and that the Assembly and its work is accessible to all. Tours and events are fully accessible.

Data collection during this reporting period (2018-2019) is available below:

Functions held (circa)	300
Function guests (circa)	22,900
Tours held – sponsored and public (circa)	700
Tour guests (circa)	1,700

**1 (h) Speakers Events**

During this reporting period, the Speaker hosted the following events:

**22 May 2018** – The Speaker hosted a reception for the Cedar Foundation to mark the end of the period as the Assembly’s Charity of the Year.

**11 June 2018** - The Speaker welcomed the Law Enforcement torch run for the Special Olympics to Parliament Buildings at the commencement of their journey across Northern Ireland before the commencement of the games in Dublin.

**25 October 2018** – The Speaker made the welcoming remarks at the launch of the Pensioners’ Parliament at the Europa Hotel, Belfast. The Assembly has an established link with the group organising this event and each year the Speaker invites the Pensioners’ Parliament to hold its final debating session at Parliament Buildings, Stormont.

**28 November 2018** – The Speaker hosted his annual Christmas Reception to recognise the work of the Saint Vincent de Paul and the Salvation Army.

**30 January 2019** – The Speaker, on behalf of the Assembly Commission, hosted a ‘Perspectives on’ lecture to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dáil Éireann. The event which was attended by the Ceann Comhairle, MLAs, members of the public, school and church representatives.

**13 February 2019** – The Speaker welcomed the Shanghai Theatre Academy from China to Parliament Buildings who gave a performance to all buildings users in the Great Hall to mark the Chinese New Year.

**8 March 2019** – The Speaker hosted 74 young women aged between 16 and 18 from schools and youth organisations across Northern Ireland at a debate in the Assembly Chamber to celebrate International Women’s Day. The theme centred on gender balance.

**1 (i)  
Education  
Service**

The role of the Assembly’s Education Service is broadly to support young people’s understanding of the Northern Ireland Assembly and democracy. The Education Service delivered a programme of activities during the reporting period to a wide range of groups, including schools from all sectors (Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 5), universities, general youth groups and teachers (see Annex 2).

All areas of delivery are designed to raise awareness and understanding of the work of the Assembly through the various educational curriculum streams and, hopefully, to encourage young people to participate in the democratic process.

The Education Service promotes its activities widely. It tailors programmes to individual groups, working with teachers, youth leaders etc. to ensure the best possible experience for participants. The service is free.

During this reporting period, the Education Service continued to deliver programmes that have a cross-community aspect. Participating groups included schools collaborating as members of School Learning Communities and Shared Education Partnerships; and groups participating in the T:BUC (Together Building a United Community) and NCS (National Citizen Service) programmes, which bring together young people from a variety of backgrounds in summer-school residential settings. The Education Service also worked with a new cross-community 'Politics in Action' group involving Year 11 students from two schools who explored the issue of gender inequality during an eight-month programme before presenting their findings to their schools, parents and MLAs at a special event in Parliament Buildings.

### **Awareness raising**

The Education Service continued to market its services to all schools via mailshot, email (using Mailchimp), social media (Twitter) and its dedicated website (latest news articles) <http://education.niassembly.gov.uk/>, on which information on issues relevant to young people can be found. The Education Service worked with the school network provider C2K to advertise opportunities for young people. In March 2019, an education officer and two members of staff from Building Services attended the 'Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful Eco-Schools Conference' in W5 to promote a new education programme for Eco-Schools.

The Education Service raises awareness of its programmes and the work of the Assembly through three annual teacher conferences. In addition, a group of 25 trainee teachers from Stranmillis University College participated in a tailored education programme in April 2018.

## **Resources**

During this reporting period, the Education Service's website partner, Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), has continued to convert all web activities/resources to HTML to make them accessible on all platforms. This work is almost complete. Accessibility has also been improved by the subtitling of all video material on the website.

A review/audit of the website was completed during the reporting period and all required amendments will be made by end-June 2019. The Education Service worked with political parties to provide factsheets on different parties for CCEA to support the new GCSE in Government and Politics. The Education Service produced a supplementary glossary.

The Assembly partnership with CCEA is in place until 2022, ensuring that Education Service online resources will continue to be up to date in terms of technology and content which supports the curriculum.

<http://education.niassembly.gov.uk/video-gallery>

The CCEA is currently working on two new 'Introduction to the Assembly' film animations for Primary (Key Stage 2) and Secondary pupils (Key Stages 3 and 4).

## **Engagement**

An education officer participated in a National Children's Bureau course on "Mechanisms for Effective Engagement with Children and Young People" and two education officers completed a five-day "Building Change" training course on deliberative engagement strategies, run by Involve (a public participation charity). Education officers also took part in social media training during this reporting period.

In addition to its inward and outreach visits programmes, the Education Service organised several special events during this reporting period. They included:

- In partnership with the Education Authority, an event was held for approximately 200 young women on Saturday 27 October 2018 to mark the centenary of the Representation of the People Act 1918.
- Working with the Speaker's Office and the Assembly Women's Caucus, the Education Service organised a special debate in the Assembly Chamber, chaired by the Speaker, to mark International Women's Day on 8 March 2019. The theme was gender equality and 74 young women from 29 schools/youth organisations, including a special school, participated in the event. One of the main aims of the event was to maximise the diversity of young women attending. In addition, and to help remove barriers to attendance, the Assembly offered some assistance towards the cost of travel and also provided support in the form of research material posted on the website. On the morning of the event, the young people met with MLAs from the Women's Caucus to discuss the motions for debate. MLAs and the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) also participated in the debate.
- On 11 March 2019, the Education Service worked with the YMCA on a programme for 25 young people from 14 different schools, which included meeting with MLAs and participating in an Assembly-style debate.
- The Annual Science Festival on 12 March 2019, organised in conjunction with Geological Service NI, involved 135 pupils

from 10 primary schools. This was a great opportunity to promote the work of the Education Service.

- The Education Service works with the Office of the Attorney General on a special 'Living Law' programme for students from non-grammar schools. This year's event was held on 6 February 2019.
- A programme was delivered to 40 young people from the Polish Saturday School on 23 March 2019.
- The Education Service worked with a new Shared Education group called Politics in Action. Their 8-month programme culminated in the young people, from 2 schools, presenting their views on gender equality to a group of MLAs on 25 April 2018. This year the group undertook a SWOT analysis of the 'Brexit' issue and presented their findings to MLAs on 21 March 2019.
- During this period, the Education Service and Building Services worked together on a new programme for Eco-Schools in partnership with Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, which runs the Eco-Schools Green Flag Award programme in Northern Ireland. The Education Service's new programme for School Eco-Councils is promoted on the Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful website. An education officer and Building Services staff attended the 2019 Eco-Schools Conference on 21 March 2019. An education officer also attended the previous year's event on 20 April 2018. Three members of Assembly staff are being trained as Green Flag Assessors.

Examples of youth groups and specialist adult groups that participated in the Education Service's programmes during the reporting period are provided at Annex 2.



The Education Service tailors its programmes to meet the needs of groups, e.g. a special legislation focused event for the University of Ulster Transitional Justice Institute/School of Law students on 18 October 2018, with a range of speakers from different business areas of the Assembly and the Office of the Legislative Counsel.

- Three teacher conferences were held during the reporting period, attended by 76 teachers from schools across Northern Ireland.
- The Education Service represents the Assembly Commission at the NICCY Participation Forum, which meets twice-yearly to encourage communication and co-operation on youth participation initiatives. Chaired by the Children's Commissioner, the Forum also includes Departmental Children's Champions and representatives from youth organisations.
- On 14-15 February 2019, an education officer attended the Parliamentary Engagement Conference in Edinburgh to share good practice with colleagues in other legislatures across the UK.
- In January 2019, the Education Service hosted two final-year students from Stranmillis University College for a two-week alternative placement.

### **Focus groups**

- The Education Service, in conjunction with the Assembly's Research and Information Services (RaISe), helps conduct focus groups on behalf of Assembly Committees. RaISe has developed a framework for selecting a broad cross-section of the youth population, thereby ensuring that children from all sectors, including those attending special schools and in Irish-medium education, can take part in these

consultations. However, no consultations took place during this reporting period because Assembly Committees were not meeting.

### **Disability**

- One of the education officers is an autism champion and visitor information for people with autism is available on the Education Service website, which continues to adhere to WC3 usability standards. All new video material posted on the website is subtitled and work is almost complete on subtitling all videos on the site. Our website partner, the CCEA, continues to convert resources to HTML to make it accessible on all platforms.

In addition to the annual mailshot sent out to all schools in early September, a second mailshot was sent out to all special schools in December 2018. The Education Service offers a bespoke service to special schools to ensure that the programme meets the needs of different groups in this sector. The Education Service figures by school type can be found at Annex 2.

### **Irish Language**

- One of the education officers is an Irish language champion who can deliver a tour and presentation in Irish to visiting groups. Groups can also meet with MLAs who speak Irish.
- The Education Service has been working with the CCEA to translate the primary school section of the Education Service's website into Irish.

## **1 (j) Engagement Services**

The Engagement Office is responsible for advancing and encouraging the public's awareness and understanding of the Assembly and the broad political situation in Northern Ireland. It provides the business community, voluntary sector and delegations

from across the world with the opportunity to engage with and learn more about the legislature.

### **Assembly Community Connect (ACC) Programme**

The ACC programme works to enhance connections between the Assembly and the community through education and outreach, and it provides free training, information and support for local community groups.

Due to the political situation during the reporting period, the demand for activity was relatively low with eight ACC events being held. For example, on 3 December 2018, the Assembly hosted a number of tours for people with a range of disabilities. These included tours for those with a learning difficulty; those with a physical and sensory disability; and those with autism. Over 43 members of the public attended, with representatives of Mencap, the Cedar Foundation, the MS Society and the National Autistic Society also present.

On Thursday 21 March 2019, the Assembly hosted 120 women from across the North West during a visit by the Foyle Women's Information Network. The event included a presentation explaining the relationship between the Assembly and the Executive, as well as the work of the Assembly and how it feeds into everyday life. The group also took part in an extensive Q&A session with a former Minister of Justice in the last Executive.

### **Draft Public Engagement Strategy**

The development of a draft public engagement strategy continued during the reporting period, with two internal staff workshops held and an internal consultation exercise. The latest draft of the strategy will be presented to the Commission. A Section 75 equality screening exercise is currently under way.

### **Inward international delegation visits to the Northern Ireland Assembly**

A number of inward international delegation visits to the Northern Ireland Assembly took place during the reporting period. Details are included at Annex 3.

#### **1(k) Research and Information Service (RaISe)**

During this period RaISe carried out research relevant to equality which included:

#### **Analysis of presenters to senior management by gender 2017-18**

This Briefing Note presented statistics on the gender balance of staff attending SMG and Commission meetings for the 2017-18 reporting year. This information informed the work of the Assembly Secretariat's Gender Action Implementation Group.

#### **Northern Ireland Assembly Commission Secretariat Equality and Good Relations Survey 2018**

The purpose of this survey was to gather the views of secretariat staff on how the Commission is performing in fulfilling its statutory equality of opportunity and good relations obligations and to give staff an opportunity to raise any issues. The findings will help to inform the development and monitoring of a number of key equality documents such as the Commission's Audit of Inequalities.

#### **1(l) Audit of Inequalities**

An audit of inequalities is a systematic approach to identify inequalities across the nine Section 75 categories which are relevant to a public authority's functions and which will inform the development of an action plan to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. The audit of inequalities is additional and complementary to the development of an equality scheme.

An audit of inequalities was carried out in 2016 by RaISe with input from directorates. This audit updated a review carried out in 2015 of the 2011 Audit of Inequalities. The 2016 audit is available at this link:

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/policies/equality-policies/>

Information on the 2011 audit of inequalities and the 2015 review can be found here:

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/policies/equality-scheme-2016---2021/equality-scheme-2012-2016/>

The 2016 audit examined a range of areas, including access to Parliament Building, outreach and gender issues. The audit of inequalities action plan is included in the 2016-21 Equality Scheme, and a progress update on actions is included at Annex 4 of this report.

### **Audit of Inequalities 2019**

Work is underway to carry out a review of the current audit of inequalities. This is a strategic look at inequalities relevant to the role and functions of the Commission. The Audit of Inequalities 2019 is being carried out by RaISe with input from Directorates. It will inform the Commission's equality and good relations documents and action plans.

#### **1(m)**

#### **Equality Screening Guidance**

In November 2018 equality screening guidance for staff was updated and issued to all secretariat staff. The update included steps that staff can now take under the 'Consideration of available data/research' section of the screening form and when to seek assistance from RaISe.

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- 2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2018-19 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).
- a) A progress report on the Good Relations Action Plan 2016-21 is prepared every six months. All updates, including the most recent from March 2019, are available on the Assembly website at <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/policies/good-relations-action-plan/>
  - b) An update on the Disability Action Plan 2016-21 is available at Part B of this Annual Progress Report at page 40.
  - c) A progress update on the Audit of Inequalities Action Plan is at Annex 4 of this Annual Progress Report.
  - d) A progress report on the Gender Action Plan is prepared every six months. For reporting purposes, the 2016-18 Gender Action Plan concluded on 31 March 2019. The Gender Action Plan 2016-18 Closure Report at Annex 1 provides an overview of achievements and includes the final status update on action and outcomes as at March 2019. The Continuing Action Plan 2019-23 is also included at Appendix 4 to the Closure Report. All documents relating to the GAP are available on the Assembly website at <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/policies/equality-policies/gender-action-plan/>.

**3** Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2018-19 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

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

Please provide any details and examples:

See section 1 above. The Commission's Equality Scheme sets out our commitments with regard to the screening of policies. During this reporting period, screening guidance was updated and circulated to Assembly staff.

Our Equality Scheme also sets out arrangements for assessing and monitoring the impact of policies. During this reporting period we have continued to monitor policy impact and, where appropriate, revise or add additional measures to action plans. Additional actions are noted on action plans where appropriate and are annexed to this report.

**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:

Further mainstreaming of equality and good relations through a range of activities and through corporate planning processes is discussed at question 1. This mainstreaming will make a difference to individuals through policy provision and service delivery. For example, the continuing Gender Action Plan will consolidate the achievements set out in the Closure Report at Annex 1 and ensure continued focus on providing opportunities for all staff. The review of HR policies that has commenced as part of the Commission's participation in the Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme will ensure the use of gender-neutral language. This, along with the development of a Transgender Policy, will ensure not only that staff are supported but also that the Assembly is seen as a diverse and welcoming organisation for staff and visitors.

The Accessible Events Guide and Checklist will assist with the organisation of events in which all attendees can fully participate by helping staff to identify and



mitigate against potential barriers, particularly for those with disabilities. In addition, detailed work is also being undertaken to enhance evacuation procedures for non-ambulant visitors and staff or those who may have specific evacuation requirements. Draft plans will be drawn up for intercom systems at appropriate refuge areas within the building and Housekeeping and Safety Briefings are also given at the start of each event held in Parliament Buildings.

During the reporting period, to support staff, the Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy has been reviewed and “Support for Carers: Guidance for Managers and Staff” was developed.

**3b** What aspect of the Equality Scheme prompted or led to the change(s)? *(tick all that apply)*

As a result of the organisation’s screening of a policy *(please give details):*

As a result of what was identified through the EQIA and consultation exercise *(please give details):*

As a result of analysis from monitoring the impact *(please give details):*

x As a result of changes to access to information and services *(please specify and give details):*

Following public consultation, the Disability Action Plan was approved by the Commission and published on the Assembly website in October 2016. The Action Plan contains an action to ‘*Provide guidance for visitors and staff on further disability access arrangements in relation to participation in Assembly business and events, e.g., Committees, Plenary Sessions, seminars.*’ This action provides for the development of guidance on disability arrangements for both staff and visitors to Parliament Buildings.

Since the DAP action was devised in 2015, ECNI launched its 'Every Customer Counts' initiative, which the Assembly Commission signed up to in September 2016. Under the ECNI initiative, participating organisations are asked to complete an accessible business checklist as well as an audit of services, and to develop a customer service policy setting out the steps being taken within their organisation to improve accessibility for disabled customers.

The Commission's [Inclusive Customer Service Policy](#) sets out clearly our commitment to customers and the services they can expect while visiting Parliament Buildings across the range of Assembly activities, including Committee meetings, Education Service visits, tours and events. It lists clearly what we will provide to customers covering a range of issues including accessibility arrangements, reasonable adjustments when giving evidence to Committees and arranging a translator. This policy sits alongside the Sign Language Guidance for staff, approved in 2016, and the advice and guidance provided on the [Autism and the Assembly web page](#). In addition, following consultation with business areas and the Commission's Disability Advisory Group, a dedicated [accessibility web page](#) was designed in 2016-17 to provide accessibility information for visitors to Parliament Buildings.

The Inclusive and Accessible Events Guide and Checklist are intended to meet the action set out above and they are also intended to complement the Inclusive Customer Service Policy and to address in greater detail the practical issues to consider when organising events. They were developed in consultation with the following business areas: Clerking; Communications Office; Engagement; Education Service; Events; Building Services; RaiSe (particularly the KESS programme); Speaker's Office; Ushering; and Trade Union Side. We also reviewed best practice and guidance from a range of organisations, both local and international.

Feedback was sought from the Assembly's External Disability Advisory Group, which was established to facilitate discussion on disability issues and which currently comprises 14 external disability organisations. Group members noted the work involved in developing the guidance and how comprehensive the documents are. A number of suggestions were made to improve the documents, and feedback was also received from user forums of the Cedar Foundation.

Both the guide and the checklist are intended to be of use for all business areas across the Secretariat. Some of the entries on the checklist may not be relevant for every event but it can act as an aide memoire for event organisers in planning, delivering and evaluating the success of their events.

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 2018-19 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:

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Job descriptions within the Assembly Secretariat are generic in nature and may not make specific reference to Section 75. However, the list of duties reflects compliance with Commission policies which inherently include Section 75 duties.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2018-19 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:

The Performance Management System assesses performance in relation to the work carried out by staff and also in relation to the Commission's Skills and Behaviours Framework. Within the context of the Framework, staff are required to promote a positive and productive working environment; foster an environment where staff feel respected and valued; and uphold the goals of professionalism, respect, impartiality and integrity as set out in the Draft Corporate Strategy 2018-2023.

In the 2018-19 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 2017-18 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

A new draft Corporate Strategy for 2018-2023 has been developed. The draft Strategy commits staff to demonstrating: **professionalism** in everything we do; **respect** for each other, Members and the public; and **impartiality** and **integrity** in all our work. Within the 'Building Excellence and Innovation in our Services' element of the strategy, the Commission commits to ensuring high standards in equality, governance and regulatory compliance through effective and efficient processes.

### Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2018-19 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of: **(26 Actions in total)**

Actions completed:	<input type="text" value="16"/>	Actions in progress:	<input type="text" value="4"/>	Actions suspended:	<input type="text" value="6"/>
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Please provide any details and examples (*in addition to question 2*):

An update on the Audit of Inequalities Action Plan is attached at Annex 4 of this report which includes status updates for the reporting period.

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2018-19 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

Not applicable.

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2018-19 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



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Please provide any details and examples:

A Section 75 awareness workshop was held on 13 December 2018 and provided an overview of the Section 75 legislation and how it affects the Commission.

An Equality Screening Workshop took place on 24 January 2019 and explained and examined how screening should be undertaken by public authorities in Northern Ireland. It also highlighted requirements for Commission officials. This event was aimed at staff who were most likely to be responsible for the screening of policies and included Heads of Business and the Secretariat Management Group.

As a follow-on from these training events, e-learning packages are currently being finalised, with the intention to release to Secretariat staff in June/July 2019.

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2018-19 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes

No

Not applicable – no commitment to review

**Arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)**

[Insert link to any web pages where screening templates and/or other reports associated with Equality Scheme commitments are published]

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/publications/equality-screening-and-equality-impact-assessments-eqias/>

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/policies/equality-policies/>

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

7
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16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2018-19:

7	Policy consultations conducted with <b>screening</b> assessment presented.
	Policy consultations conducted <b>with an equality impact assessment (EQIA)</b> presented.
	Consultations for an <b>EQIA</b> 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:

Internal consultations carried out during the reporting period took place on the following policies: Mental Health Policy and Line Managers Guide, Managing and Developing Performance in the Assembly and the Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy.

18 Were any screening decisions (or equivalent initial assessments of relevance) reviewed following concerns raised by consultees? *(tick one box only)*

Yes                      x                      No concerns were raised                       No                       Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

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

19 Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2018-19 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes                      x                      No                       Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

**Arrangements for monitoring and publishing the results of monitoring (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)**

20 From the Equality Scheme monitoring arrangements, was there an audit of existing information systems during the 2018-19 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*



PART A

- Yes  No, already taken place  
 No, scheduled to take place at a later date  Not applicable

Please provide any details:

- 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:

Additional actions were added to the Continuing Gender Action Plan (see Annex 1)

- 22** Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2018-19 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

Not applicable

- 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:

Monitoring arrangements are built into our action plans. For example, six-monthly progress updates on both the Gender Action Plan and the Good Relations Action Plan are provided to SMG and the Commission. Monitoring is also carried out informally on an on-going basis. Research carried out during the reporting period (see question 1) has also contributed in helping to analyse monitoring data further, for example, the *'Northern Ireland Assembly Commission Secretariat Equality and Good Relations Survey 2018'* and the *'Analysis of presenters to Senior Management by Gender 2017-2018'*. In addition, an action on the 2016-2018 Gender Action Plan was to "Develop guidance for Heads of Business and Directors on staff volunteering and representation on groups/panels." This will be monitored for three years and therefore the action has been carried over to the 2019-23 Gender Action Plan. The current period reflects year two of the data collection.

Data is analysed by RaISe and any issues arising are raised with the Equality and Good Relations Unit.

Information arising from monitoring is considered when reviewing service delivery and existing action plans, and when developing policies.

#### 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 2018-19, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

The Learning & Development (L&D) team facilitated a range of learning activities which met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme during 2018-19. For example, 4 staff who were supported in obtaining British Sign Language Level 2 during 17-18 progressed to BSL Level 3 in September 2018 and will finalise in June 2019. 29 staff members also enhanced their communication skills by undertaking a workshop on Makaton.

In addition to formal training courses, a range of relevant Masterclasses/short courses for staff were delivered in 2018/19:

Masterclass/ Course Title	Date	Number in attendance
Stroke Awareness Masterclass	18 May 2018	16
British Sign Language Level 2	Completed 18 May 2018	6
Introduction to Makaton training course	21 May 2018	29
Dementia Awareness Masterclass	25 May 2018	16
Senac Information Session	30 May 2018	13
Mental Health First Aiders Information session	9 May 2018	17
The Mindful Manager training course	4 July 2018	9
Family Mediation Masterclass	26 July 2018	12

## PART A

Masterclass on Menopause Awareness	13 Sept 18	19
Harassment Contact Officers refresher training	15 Oct 2018	4
Take 10 Stress Awareness Masterclass	21 Nov 2018	22
Positive Mental Health Masterclass	28 Nov 2018	8
Masterclass on Domestic Violence	10 Dec 2018	6
Section 75 Awareness Workshop	13 Dec 2018	13
Equality Screening Workshop	24 Jan 2019	16
Mood Matters for men	1 Feb 2019	14
Trans inclusion Awareness Masterclass	7 Feb 2019	12
Masterclass on Racial Equality	6 Mar 2019	12
Living Life to the Full (CBT) training course	28 Mar 2019	20

Staff attended the following relevant conferences:

<b>Conference Title</b>	<b>Event Start Date</b>	<b>Number of Staff Attending</b>
Women in Leadership in a Changing World	22 May 18	1
Making Parenting work	22 Oct 18	1

An e-learning platform created by the Centre for Applied Learning (CAL) is used to deliver a range of short e-learning packages to staff. It is intended to release the following e-learning course to all staff members in 2019-20:

- Disability Awareness for Frontline Staff

- 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 majority of feedback received to on-line evaluation forms has been positive in relation to all Masterclasses delivered within Parliament Buildings. It appears that the sessions are of an appropriate length and the topics are of interest to staff. All learning activities delivered both internally and externally are evaluated using the Assembly's e-learning Moodle platform.

Staff members were asked to detail the aspects of the training they had found most beneficial. A selection of qualitative comments is provided below:

**Dementia Awareness Masterclass:**

- Explanation of the term dementia and the fact it is an umbrella term for a number of conditions and the Do's & Don't section.

**Take 10: Stress Management**

- Succinctness of the presentation - and visual aspects to the physical explanation for stress
- The explanation of how our body projects what we are feeling when we don't realise it.

**Section 75 Awareness**

- Overview of the benefits of S75 and equality screening

**Mood Matters for Men**

- Excellent delivery and very interesting examples used.

**Trans Inclusion Awareness Masterclass**

- I really enjoyed this training and would highly recommend it to colleagues as it was both informative and thought provoking. I thought the training was enhanced by the questions asked by some of the other attendees because it made it more relevant to us as an organisation and as individuals. I did however feel a bit intimidated by the trainer's emphasis on how easy it was

to offend trans people by the language we use and although I understand that this was an important point to make, in a training forum I would like to have felt more comfortable about making a mistake. I also thought it might have been useful if the trainer used the relevant language at times instead of using euphemisms. For example, she used the terms 'top' and 'bottom' surgery and I'm not sure how helpful this is to promote frank and honest conversations if you're not prepared to use the correct words. Really small observations and I wouldn't want to take away from the fact that this was a really good session and the trainer was excellent.

- I was starting from a fairly ill-informed base, so I found it all very useful. The stats are always of interest to a researcher. And the information about barriers to service access are necessarily interesting to anyone who has a stake in public service delivery.

Further Masterclasses/short courses have been scheduled for 2019-20 relating to equality matters. The L&D team will continue to support and develop the current support groups including Mental Health First Aiders, Autism Champions and Harassment Officers.

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

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2018-19, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:  
The Commission Complaints Policy has been in place for 2 years making it easier for members of the public to notify the Assembly regarding any complaint relating to the delivery of services by Assembly staff and/or perceived failures in complying with the Assembly's Equality Scheme. There is a dedicated Complaints Officer to deal with issues raised by the public and to log complaints on a Complaints Register.

SMG receive regular reports from the Complaints Officer including data on the nature and volume of complaints received. These reports are published on the Assembly website, in line with our Publication Scheme.

The Commission will also receive an annual summary report detailing the numbers and categories of complaints received in the previous year. The report will include any improvements made to the policy or procedures.

The Complaints Policy and Procedure is published on the Assembly's website at <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/policies/complaints-procedure/>

As discussed at Section 1(c) above, examples are provided which aim to further improve public access to information and services, these include:

1. Maintenance of accreditations and the provision of access information
2. An accessibility webpage
3. 'Autism and the Assembly' webpage
4. Continuation of physical works to Parliament Buildings
5. Maintenance of signage and access items used by the public, for example, the changing places room.

**Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)**

**27** How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2018-19?

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:

March 2021.

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)*

During the next reporting period we will continue to implement the actions in our Equality Scheme, Audit of Inequalities, Disability Action Plan, the Good Relations Action Plan and the Continuing Gender Action Plan. Examples of areas on which we will focus also includes:

- Outcomes of the 2019 Audit of Inequalities review
- Outcome of the Engagement Strategy equality screening form and whether this results in an EQIA being commenced
- Joining the Gender Diversity Charter Mark scheme
- Continued implementation of the Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme including development of a Transgender policy
- Review of evacuation procedures and relevant secretariat systems in relation to access arrangements
- Publication of the results of the 2018 Equality staff survey
- Participation in QUB Gender research

30 In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2019-20) reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

- Employment
- Goods, facilities and services
- Legislative changes
- Organisational changes/ new functions
- x 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**

**1. Number of action measures for this reporting period that have been: 51 action measures in total**

**43**

Fully achieved

**5**

Partially achieved

**3**

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 <sup>i</sup>	Outcomes / Impact <sup>ii</sup>
	National <sup>iii</sup>	N/A		
1	Regional <sup>iv</sup>	<p>Continue to hold meetings twice a year, or as agreed by the group.</p> <p>Review current membership with a view to developing a list of additional representatives to be invited to participate on the group.</p>	<p>Meetings have not taken place in this reporting period due to limited agendas, however the Equality Unit has continued to engage and consult with members during the reporting period, for example, in the development of the 'Inclusive and Accessible</p>	<p><b>Fully Achieved.</b></p>



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			Events Guide and Checklist'.	
2	Local <sup>v</sup>	Erasmus+ Application for future youth engagement project	<p>Apply to Erasmus+ for funding for a second youth engagement project.</p> <p>If successful in securing funding, design recruitment process to promote the opportunity to people with a disability.</p> <p>If successful in securing funding, set target for number of participants with disabilities.</p>	<p><b>Fully Achieved.</b> Unfortunately, due to the limited availability of funds, this application was unsuccessful.</p>

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
3	Ensure staff receive training and guidance on disability equality legislation and disability awareness	Monitoring of records to ensure that each member of staff receives training	<p><b>Fully Achieved.</b> Statistics on successful completion are provided by CAL to the L&amp;D team on a monthly basis.</p>
4		Quality assurance of equality training packages and provision of feedback and any equality training courses	<p><b>Fully Achieved.</b> The Assembly's Equality team and Legal Services 'quality proof' all on-line learning materials in advance of publication. L&amp;D are</p>

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			<p>exploring options to evaluate CAL e-learning packages as this is not currently available. Evaluations are conducted with all other disability related courses as required utilizing the Moodle platform.</p>
5		<p>Provide specific training sessions for staff on mental health issues. Examples of training programmes include: Mental Health 1<sup>st</sup> Aiders</p>	<p><b>Fully Achieved</b></p> <p>During this reporting period, the L&amp;D team continue to support 18 staff who have now trained as Mental Health 1<sup>st</sup> Aiders. This facility will increase awareness of critical intervention when dealing with a colleague's mental health and wellbeing issue.</p> <p>During this reporting period, the L&amp;D team also facilitated the following events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mindful Manager Training Course (4 July 18)</li> <li>• Family Mediation Masterclass (26 July 18)</li> <li>• Take 10 Stress Awareness Masterclass (21 Nov 18)</li> <li>• Positive Mental Attitude Masterclass (28 Nov 18)</li> <li>• Mood Matters for Men Masterclass (1 Feb 19)</li> <li>• Living Life to the Full Training Course (March 19)</li> </ul>

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6		<p>Provide auditory and visual awareness programmes to front-line staff.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for staff to obtain Level 1 sign language training.</p> <p>Consider scope for provision of Level 2 sign language training.</p>	<p><b>Fully Achieved.</b></p> <p>6 staff achieved BSL Level 2 certification. 4 staff are currently undertaking BSL Level 3 to complete June 2019.</p>
7		<p>Deaf awareness training to be provided to all frontline staff as required.</p>	<p><b>Fully Achieved.</b></p> <p>The L&amp;D team delivered 2 x 'Introduction to Makaton' workshops to 29 staff members in May 2018.</p>
8		<p>Autism awareness training to be provided to relevant staff, including refresher training for the Assembly's appointed Autism Champions as required.</p>	<p><b>Fully Achieved.</b></p> <p>An E-Learning course titled 'ASD Awareness' is now available for all staff through the CAL LiNKS site. The L&amp;D team are developing a training support training programme for the Assembly's Autism Champions.</p>
9		<p>Provide relevant Masterclasses to staff to update their understanding of working with individuals with communication difficulties.</p>	<p><b>Fully Achieved.</b></p> <p>The L&amp;D team delivered 'Stroke Awareness' workshop to 16 staff members and a 'Dementia Awareness' workshop to a further 16 staff members in May 2018.</p>
10		<p>Evaluate training to determine of course objectives were met and staff knowledge has increased through the staff iTrent system, through for example completed questionnaires.</p>	<p><b>Fully Achieved.</b></p> <p>Evaluation questionnaires completed on the Moodle platform allow for analysis of increased knowledge of the subject area. Part of the CAL on-line module requires staff</p>

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			members to undertake a quiz to demonstrate required learning and to pass the module.
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2(c) What Positive attitudes **action measures** in the area of **Communications** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
11	Provide guidance for visitors and staff on further disability access arrangements in relation to participation in Assembly business and events, e.g. Committees, Plenary Session, seminars.	<p>Incorporate familiarisation of Parliament Buildings access arrangements</p> <p>Develop Q&amp;A guide for disability arrangements for visitors to Parliament Buildings, covering events, Committee meetings, Plenary sittings, Gallery rules etc.</p> <p>Issue guidance to Disability Advisory Group for feedback</p> <p>Develop guidance for staff organising events, including Committee stakeholder events, seminars, receptions etc.</p> <p>Include checklist of issues to consider, including signage, accessibility, presentation etc.</p> <p>Issue guidance to Disability Advisory Group for feedback</p>	<p><b>Fully Achieved.</b></p> <p>Inclusive Customer Service Policy in place since March 2017.</p> <p>The Inclusive Customer Service Policy, which was developed in consultation with the Equality Commission, was approved by SMG in December 2016. The policy highlights the facilities available at Parliament Buildings for customers with a disability, and includes a Q&amp;A section on how they can engage with the work of the Assembly, including Committees, Plenary sessions, etc.: <a href="http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/policies/inclusive-customer-service-policy/">http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/policies/inclusive-customer-service-policy/</a></p> <p>The Inclusive and Accessible Events guide and checklist were approved by SMG in December 2018. The guide and checklist</p>

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			were issued to all staff in January 2019 and made available on the Assembly's intranet
12	Inclusive and Accessible Events: Guide and Checklist	A guide and checklist have been developed for staff involved in the planning, organising and delivery of events at Parliament Buildings and at external venues.	<b>Fully Achieved</b> The guide and checklist will help staff to organise events which are accessible and in which all attendees can fully participate. They will also aid staff to take account of the different needs of attendees and to identify potential barriers to participation, particularly for those with disabilities.
13	Sign language policy	Develop proposals to progress a sign language policy, and include consideration of DCAL's work on sign language Work with relevant agencies in the development of this policy and stakeholders Present proposals to the Assembly Commission Gather information on practice in other legislatures as regards sign language provision for Plenary debates and Committee meetings Continue to arrange, where appropriate and by prior arrangement, for a sign language interpreter to be in the Public Gallery	<b>Fully Achieved.</b> Sign Language Policy in place, which includes details of how to book a sign language interpreter. (Guidance approved by SMG in December 16).

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		<p>to provide service during a relevant debate</p> <p>Continue to arrange, where appropriate and by prior arrangement, for a sign language interpreter to attend relevant Committee meetings</p> <p>Develop guidance on when it is appropriate to arrange the services of a sign language interpreter for use in the Public Gallery (in line with the scheduled development of a sign language policy)</p>	
14	Provision of Braille business cards	Provide the Speaker and Deputy Speakers with Braille business cards	<p><b>Fully Achieved.</b></p> <p>Braille business cards provided.</p>
15	Committee Gallery Rules	<p>In January 2016, rules for visitors to Committee Galleries were amended to enable building users with a disability to use electrical devices if required</p> <p>Keep rules under review</p>	<p><b>Fully Achieved.</b></p>
16	Continue Assembly Community Connect (ACC) training to people with disabilities.	<p>Deliver bespoke 'How the Assembly Works' sessions to disability groups on request.</p> <p>Deliver training regionally on request.</p>	<p><b>Fully Achieved.</b></p> <p>ACC activities have been curtailed due to the political situation and the fact that the Assembly is not sitting. However, eight ACC events were delivered and were accessible for those with disabilities, for example, an event for Disability Action included four</p>

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			wheelchair users and a delegate with a visual impairment.
17	Continue to use web-based material to promote positive attitudes towards disability	Continue to provide web-based videos showing how to access Parliament Buildings Monitor/respond to any customer complaints/compliments in relation to access to information about services	<b>Fully Achieved.</b> Dedicated accessibility web page available at 'Visit and Learning' section of Assembly website, which includes video showing what to expect when visiting Parliament Buildings.
18	Employer-supported volunteering	Continue to work with Business in the Community to identify and offer volunteering opportunities to staff	<b>Fully Achieved.</b> Opportunities made available to staff.
19	Conduct annual exercise to encourage staff to provide anonymous information to assist with monitoring and reporting on disabilities in the workplace	Annual disability survey issued each year to collect statistical data in order to calculate numbers and percentages of staff who have a disability	<b>Fully Achieved.</b> Completed in April 2018.
20	Increase the level of accessible/inclusive information so that users with a disability can access digital services and information as independently as possible and make informed choices	<u>Outcome:</u> Users with a disability are aware of the availability of accessible information and services and can make use of them Develop and implement an accessible information guidance to improve access to information for users who have a disability. The guidance will accompany the Digital First Strategy	<b>Fully Achieved.</b> Although the Digital First Strategy is likely to be superseded by other developments accessibility guidance has been provided via the website and is reviewed regularly to ensure its relevance and accuracy.  We will continue to take feedback from users via website feedback mechanisms, surveys, and feedback from other partnerships and

		<p><u>Measurement:</u> Feedback from users via website feedback mechanisms, surveys, and feedback from other partnerships and networks</p>	<p>informal networks on all aspects of our information and digital services in the future.</p> <p><u>Measurement:</u> Feedback from users via website feedback mechanisms (complaints and compliments), surveys, and feedback from other partnerships and networks.</p>
21	Digital First EQIA	<p><u>Outcome:</u> Improve our understanding of any issues and needs that may impact Digital First</p> <p><u>Measurement:</u> Regular consultation with and feedback from partnerships, formal and informal networks that will assist us in assessing and monitoring products and services in relation to equality issues and their impact.</p> <p>Compliments and complaints received about services will also be used to help identify the impact of good practices and any adverse impact of existing practices.</p>	<p><b>Fully Achieved.</b></p> <p>However, the Digital First Strategy is likely to be reviewed and superseded by other developments for example the ongoing development of AIMS, ePetitions and other digital services.</p> <p>We will continue to consult and take feedback from partnerships and informal networks on all aspects of our information and digital services as well as compliments and complaints received.</p> <p>As part of the monitoring of the strategy we have talked to and worked with various partners and networks to understand issues and needs that may impact on the introduction of any digital products, services and information. We have conducted a usability report on the Assembly website which will be used when considering any future changes.</p> <p>We also monitor any complaints or compliments that we receive to help identify</p>



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			the impact the good practices and the adverse impact of existing practices. In the period of this report we have not received any complaints and received one compliment.
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2 (d) What action measures were achieved to ‘encourage others’ to promote the two duties:

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
22	Education for Special Needs Schools	<p>The Education Service conducts focus groups on behalf of Assembly Committees. The Research and Information Service (RaISe) has developed a framework for selecting a broad cross-section of the youth population. The framework will continue to ensure that children who attend special schools are invited to participate in every focus group.</p> <p>Continue to engage with special schools through focus groups. (At least one special school will always be included in the focus group sample)</p> <p>The Education Service has a continued engagement with special schools, several of which make repeat bookings to visit the</p>	<p><b>Fully Achieved.</b></p> <p>No Committee consultations/participation took place between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019 because Committees did not sit due to the political situation. However, the Education Service continued to advertise its services to special schools through the annual mailshot to all schools in September 2018 and via email and social media. In December 2018 a targeted mailshot was sent to all special schools offering a bespoke service. At least 2 schools made bookings as a result of this exercise. During the reporting period the education programme was delivered to 11 groups from special schools (135 participants), including 3 outreach visits to schools. One special</p>

		<p>Assembly. Staff from the service also conduct outreach visits to several of these schools. Services are advertised to every special school in Northern Ireland.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to engage with special schools</li> <li>• Continue to advertise Education Service to every special school in Northern Ireland and encourage an increase in the number of special schools participating in the Education programme each year</li> <li>• Monitor the number of outreach and inward visits involving special schools</li> </ul>	<p>school participated in the International Women’s Day debate on gender equality held in the Assembly Chamber on 8 March 2019.</p>
<p>23</p>	<p>Youth Congress</p>	<p>Explore possibility of hosting another Youth Congress at Parliament Buildings (subject to necessary approvals)</p>	<p><b>Fully Achieved.</b></p> <p>Several special events for young people were organised by the Education Service during the reporting period. They included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In partnership with the Education Authority, an event was held for approximately 200 young women on Saturday 27 October 2018 to mark the Centenary of the Representation of the People Act 1918.</li> <li>• Working with the Speaker’s Office and the Assembly Women’s Caucus, the Education Service organised a</li> </ul>

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			<p>special debate in the Assembly Chamber to mark International Women’s Day on 8 March 2019. The theme was gender equality and 74 young women participated in the event from 29 schools/youth organisations. One of the main aims of the event was to maximise the diversity of young women attending. Before the debate, the young people met with MLAs from the Women’s Caucus to discuss the issues for debate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On 11 March 2019, the Education Service worked with the YMCA on a programme for 25 young people from 14 different schools, which included meeting with MLAs and participating in a debate.</li> <li>• The Annual Science Festival on 12 March 2019, organised in conjunction with Geological Service NI, involved 135 pupils from 10 primary schools.</li> </ul>
24	Films	<p>The Education Service has created a number of short films, which aim to explain the work of the Assembly to young people and encourage them to engage with its work. Videos have been subtitled to broaden the appeal of the resources</p>	<p><b>Fully Achieved.</b></p> <p>The Education Service worked with CCEA’s multi-media team to enhance accessibility by subtitling all videos on the Education Service website and began work on two new ‘Introduction to the Assembly’ films for</p>

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		to young people who have hearing impairments.	Primary (Key Stage 2) Secondary pupils (Key Stages 3 and 4).
25	Continue to work with disability organisations through Assembly Community Connect (ACC)	<p>Deliver accessible training within Parliament Buildings and around NI (Monthly '<i>How the Assembly Works</i>' and '<i>Insight into</i>' training during session, and four regional '<i>Get Involved</i>' conferences across NI).</p> <p>Develop bespoke programmes and projects for disability groups by working with disability groups to tailor training and resources to make them more accessible.</p>	<p><b>Fully Achieved.</b></p> <p>ACC activities have been curtailed due to the political situation and the fact that the Assembly is not sitting. However, eight ACC events were delivered and were accessible for those with disabilities, including an event for Disability Action that included wheelchair users and a delegate with a visual impairment .</p>
26	Review of access audits as per standards 4, 5 and 8 of Access Award (NAS) Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review access audits as per standards 4, 5 and 8 of Access Award (NAS) Standards. Continue to follow and review health and safety procedure</li> </ul>	<p><b>Fully Achieved.</b></p> <p>Accreditation retained and actions in place to make Parliament Buildings accessible for users.</p> <p>More information on standards is available at this link:  <a href="http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/visit-and-learning/accessing-parliament-buildings/">http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/visit-and-learning/accessing-parliament-buildings/</a></p>
27	Fire Evacuation – explore potential options to provide or upgrade lifts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial meetings with architect and Fire Officers have taken place to explore options.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Fully Achieved.</b></p>

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		Alternative proposals will be provided for consideration at a future meeting of the Commission.	We have successfully upgraded one of the passenger lifts on the South side of the building.
28	Maintain signage	<p>Maintain quality of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pictorial signage images;</li> <li>• Braille signage and other signage in Parliament Buildings</li> <li>• Tactile 'tour map' of Parliament Buildings</li> </ul> <p>Add additional signage as required (including at reception)</p>	<b>Fully Achieved.</b>
29	Web publishing training for staff – training is provided to Assembly Staff on the use of the content management system used to publish to the Assembly website. Part of this training includes accessibility issues.	<p><u>Outcome:</u> Improved accessibility of information/content on the Assembly website for all users</p> <p><u>Measurement:</u> Monitor and assess accessibility of information/content on the Assembly website.</p> <p>The above will be published in the NI Assembly Commission's annual Section 75 report to the Equality Commission</p>	<p><b>Fully Achieved.</b></p> <p>Due to the ongoing political hiatus, there has been no requirement to provide training to staff but support has been provided by the Web Team (Communications Office) when required.</p> <p>Being in a position to provide training however is an ongoing requirement and all training includes WCAG guidelines and how to ensure these are met using the current authoring tools and/content management systems in use.</p>

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30	Accessibility web publishing guidance for staff	<p><u>Outcome:</u> Improved accessibility of information/content on the Assembly website for all users.</p> <p>Formal guidance will be developed by the Web manager.</p> <p><u>Measurement:</u> monitor and assess accessibility on our website.</p>	<p><b>Fully Achieved.</b></p> <p>Accessibility is always considered when implementing any new content or design.</p> <p>CMS User guides have been distributed to users and are also available on the Communications Office AsslSt page.</p>
31	<p>Monitor and assess accessibility of our website</p> <p>Undertake assessment exercise and address issues of accessibility</p>	<p><u>Outcome:</u> improved accessibility</p> <p><u>Measurement:</u> Website accessibility of recognised standard (level AA of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0)</p> <p>Monitor and assess accessibility on our website.</p> <p>The above will be published in the Assembly Commission's annual Section 75 report to the Equality Commission</p>	<p><b>Fully Achieved.</b></p> <p>Whilst marked as fully achieved for the period of this report this is in fact an ongoing task. The site is regularly monitored and checked against the WCAG Guidelines and success criteria for level AA compliance and where possible level AAA. Any new updates, services or code created internally or by any external support is required to meet at least level AA. Users can notify the Web Team of any issues they find during their use of the site and an accessibility section is also provided on the website.</p>
32	Increase the number of disabled parking bays in upper car parks.	<p>Increase the number of upper car park disabled parking bays above the required minimum under DDA. Extra spaces were provided in December 2015.</p>	<p><b>Fully Achieved.</b></p> <p>Additional car parking to the East of the building.</p>

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33	Consideration of options for provision of automatic opening of corridor doors	Investigate options and clarify the requirements in relation to escape routes, potential for access control, etc. Option study to be provided for consideration by the Assembly Commission	<p><b>Fully Achieved.</b></p> <p>Automatic opening doors in place in basement area, ground and first floors.</p>
34	Consideration of alterations to counter in Members' Bar to provide serving area for wheelchair users	Potential layout with provision for wheelchair users at low level to be provided for the Assembly Commission	<p><b>Fully Achieved.</b></p> <p>Bar has been altered</p>
35	Maintenance of access items for members of the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular checks throughout the year on items, including iPad, Braille tour map and changing places facility.</li> </ul> <p>Continue to promote accessible tours and facilities (including at reception)</p>	<p><b>Fully Achieved.</b></p>
36/37	Continue to participate in Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS), which offers a guaranteed interview to applications with a disability who meet the essential criteria for the post	<p>Continue to offer scheme for internal and external recruitment exercises.</p> <p>Continued provision of disability section in application form whereby an applicant can indicate whether they wish to apply under the GIS scheme for that particular role and</p>	<p><b>Fully Achieved.</b></p> <p>The procedures for internal and external recruitment have been reviewed to ensure compliance with good practice. The policies were used for recruitment exercises carried out in the period 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019.</p>

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		the basis on which they qualify for the scheme (NB the scheme will only apply if there is are shortlisting criteria for the post)	<b>Fully Achieved.</b> The Guaranteed Interview Scheme has been used for internal and external recruitment exercises carried out in the period 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019. (Selection of IS Office Scholarships (2) initiated in March 2019).
38	Maintain Action on Hearing Loss Award	Undergo assessment as required to indicate that standards have been met	<b>Fully Achieved.</b> Accreditation retained and actions in place to make Parliament Buildings accessible for users. Recertification is due to take place in June 2019.
39	Maintain Autism Award	Continue to meet standards	<b>Fully Achieved.</b>
40	Continue to proactively raise the work of the Assembly through the Equality Commission	Continued participation in speaking events, and contribution to any relevant articles/activity by Equality Commission	<b>Fully Achieved.</b> During the reporting period, staff from the Equality and Good Relations Unit attended Equality Commission events, and there was continued engagement and consultation with the Equality Commission during the period.
41	Consideration of access/egress requirements	Investigate potential options to provide ramped access from ground	<b>Fully Achieved.</b>



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	from ground floor to lower ground floor	floor to lower ground floor level and removal of current lift.	Permanent ramped access is provided to improve accessibility
42	Mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3 December)	Host an event at Parliament Buildings to mark International Day of Persons with Disabilities	<p><b>Fully Achieved.</b></p> <p>An event was held in Parliament Buildings on Monday 3 December 2018 to mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Tours were hosted for invited guests with learning difficulties, physical and/or sensory disabilities and for guests with autism. In total, 43 guests and carers attended the event.</p>

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
2			

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

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	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestonesvi / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
43	Ensure staff receive training and guidance on disability equality legislation and disability awareness	Design or acquire online e-disability training for staff through the Assembly's Moodle system	To have staff suitably trained	<p><b>Partly Achieved. In Progress.</b></p> <p>The Assembly has purchased annual membership of the Centre for Applied Learning's (CAL) e-learning platform called Totara, which has several courses of interest in the area of disability awareness. The L&amp;D team launched ASD Awareness in 2017 and to date 33 staff members have completed the course. The Equality Manager and Legal Services have now reviewed the on-line module titled 'Disability Awareness for front line staff' and L&amp;D have requested a substantial number of changes to be made by CAL. L&amp;D intend to release the</p>

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				approved course in 19/20 for staff completion.
44	Ensure staff receive training and guidance on disability equality legislation and disability awareness	All staff made aware of the revised Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan through e-learning training and direct communication to staff via intranet and email. Key awareness messages delivered through a range of information materials, e.g. leaflets, flyers and posters	To have staff suitably trained	<p><b>Partly Achieved. In Progress.</b></p> <p>The Assembly's Equality and Good Relations team issued notification to staff on revised Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan. When completing CAL E-learning packages, L&amp;D will ask that CAL amend the course so that staff are directed to the appropriate policies on the Assembly intranet site. The Equality Unit is currently making amendments to CAL courses.</p>
45	Regular meetings with Section 75 groups to inform reviews of Engagement	Engagement Strategy reviewed with external Disability Advisory Group	Disability Advisory Group will inform the development of the Engagement Strategy through pre-consultation comments	<p><b>Partly Achieved. In progress.</b></p> <p>Work on the development of a new public engagement strategy has continued. The external</p>

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				Disability Advisory Group will be involved at appropriate times.
46	Review existing layout of Assembly Chamber and previous options to improve accessibility	Potential options provided for consideration by the Assembly Commission	Accessibility of Assembly Chamber improved	<p><b>Partly Achieved.</b></p> <p>Minor alterations have been carried out to facilitate an MLA who is a wheelchair-user. Further improvements will require extensive re-modelling of the chamber.</p> <p>If required (and approved), such works will be included in future Business Plans.</p>
47	Ensure staff receive training and guidance on disability equality legislation and disability awareness	Mandatory training provided to all staff following establishment of the e-disability training programme	To have staff suitably trained	<p><b>Partly Achieved.</b></p> <p>The Equality Manager and Legal Services have now reviewed the on-line module on the LiNKS platform titled 'Disability Awareness for front line staff' and L&amp;D have requested a substantial number of changes to be made by CAL. L&amp;D intend to release the approved course in 19/20 for staff completion.</p>

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48	Ensure that customer satisfaction surveys are carried out that allow for a review of findings by disability	<p>Visitor survey to include an additional question on access</p> <p>Survey to be issued once a year</p> <p>Monitor survey responses for compliments/complaints</p> <p>Identify action points as required</p>	Action is taken concerning any issues raised	<p><b>Amended Action.</b> SMG agreed in March 2018 that, until the full resumption of business, the survey would be carried out once a year. The survey will be conducted in November 2019</p>
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4. Please outline what action measures **have not been achieved** and the reasons why.

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
49	Explore concept of Parliament for People with Disabilities.	<p><b>Action Suspended.</b></p> <p>The Northern Ireland Assembly embarked on developing a specific training programme to encourage greater participation of those with a disability. The Northern Ireland Assembly consulted with a number of disability charities in 2017, including Disability Action, MENCAP, Autism NI, Cedar Foundation and also the Equality Commission. The concept of a Disability Parliament was discussed during those meetings. The consensus was that the disability groups themselves should manage the development of a Disability Parliament, which would be hosted by the Assembly (similar to the Pensioners Parliament run by Age</p>

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		Sector Platform). Work on the Parliament has been curtailed due to the current political situation.
50	Provide guidance for visitors and staff on further disability access arrangements in relation to participation in Assembly business and events, e.g. Committees, Plenary Session, seminars.	<p><b>Action Suspended.</b></p> <p>This output was to “Deliver regular Committee Witness Training (4 per year)”.</p> <p>Committee witness sessions are an element of the Assembly Community Connect programme of events. Committee witness training has not taken place, however, due to the political situation and the fact that committees have not been established.</p>
51	Continue to provide support to Assembly Charity of the Year.	<p><b>Action Suspended.</b></p> <p>The term of the previous Assembly charity of the year expired in April 2018. Due to the ongoing political situation and the fact that the Assembly is not sitting, no successor charity of the year has been appointed. However, the Assembly has continued to host events for a variety of charitable purposes.</p>

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

Use of questionnaires, interviews, action plan review and feedback systems.

(b) Quantitative

Screening and EQIA processes.

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

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

No

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?

No

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- <sup>i</sup> **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.
- <sup>ii</sup> **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.
- <sup>iii</sup> **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments
- <sup>iv</sup> **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level
- <sup>v</sup> **Local** : Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.
- <sup>vi</sup> **Milestones** – Please outline what part progress has been made towards the particular measures; even if full output or outcomes/ impact have not been achieved.



- Annex 1** Gender Action Plan 2016-18 Closure Report (includes Gender Action Plan 2019-23)
- Annex 2** Education Service Figures 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019
- Examples of youth groups and specialist adult groups that participated in Education Service programmes 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019
- Annex 3** Inward international delegation visits to the Northern Ireland Assembly 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019
- Annex 4** Annual monitoring update of Audit of Inequalities Action Plan 2016-2021
- Annex 5** NI Assembly Secretariat Organisational Chart

# **GENDER CLOSURE REPORT 2019**

## **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:

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

- are gender-sensitive
- promote gender equality
- 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 Appendix 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

	Status Key	No of actions
	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

<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 Appendix 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. 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.

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

- *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</b> <i>(members of SMG not included)</i>			
	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 Appendix 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 Appendix 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>	<b>1)</b> 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>
	<b>2)</b> 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>
	<b>3)</b> 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>
	<b>4)</b> 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>

<b>Theme 1 – Leadership and Development</b>			
<b>Issue Identified</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Planned outcome/measurement</b>	<b>Progress update</b>
<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
Training	10) 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.	Lead: Human Resources Office Timeline: Ongoing Status: Complete
	11) 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.	Lead: Human Resources Office Timeline: Review of procedures by November 2015 – monitor over lifetime of action plan. Status: Complete
	12) 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.	Lead: Human Resources Office Timeline: Review of procedures by November 2015. Status: Complete
	13) 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)	Lead: Human Resources Office Timeline: March 2016 Status: Complete
	14) 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.	Lead: Human Resources Office Timeline: Ongoing and full review by 31 March 2018 Status: Complete

<b>Theme 1 – Leadership and Development</b>			
<b>Issue Identified</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Planned outcome/measurement</b>	<b>Progress update</b>
<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
<b>Transgender – Inclusion in the Workplace</b>	<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>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>

<b>Theme 3 – Life Balance/Health and Well-being</b>			
<b>Issue Identified</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Planned outcome/measurement</b>	<b>Progress Update</b>
<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:</b> Complete
<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:</b> Complete
<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:</b> Complete
<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:</b> Complete
<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:</b> Complete

<b>Theme 3 – Life Balance/Health and Well-being</b>			
<b>Issue Identified</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Planned outcome/measurement</b>	<b>Progress Update</b>
<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:</b> <b>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:</b> <b>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:</b> <b>Overdue</b>  To be carried over into 2019-22 continuing action plan.

Reporting and Monitoring			
Issue Identified	Action	Planned outcome/measurement	Progress Update
<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>

<b>Additional Actions Identified Through Business in the Community (BiTC) Gender Project Audit</b>			
<b>Issue Identified</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Planned outcome/measurement</b>	<b>Progress Update</b>
<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>Additional Actions Identified Through Business in the Community (BiTC) Gender Project Audit</b>			
<b>Issue Identified</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Planned outcome/measurement</b>	<b>Progress Update</b>
<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 working groups and focus groups for policy development)	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 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>



Appendix 2

**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

## Appendix 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)/RaISe	RaISe 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).  RaISe 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/RaISe and relevant Directors/HoBs	Final overview analysis of data to be prepared by end of Oct 2020.

<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>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

<b>Theme 2 – Communication and Engagement</b>				
<b>Issue Identified</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Planned outcome/measurement</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<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>

<b>Theme 2 – Communication and Engagement</b>				
<b>Issue Identified</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Planned outcome/measurement</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<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

<b>Theme 2 – Communication and Engagement</b>				
<b>Issue Identified</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Planned outcome/measurement</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<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><i>TBC</i></b>

<b>Reporting and Monitoring</b>				
<b>Issue Identified</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Planned outcome/measurement</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<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



## Education Service Figures 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019

School Type	No. of groups	No. of participants
Controlled Grammar	14	557
Controlled Grammar (External Outreach)	2	158
Controlled Primary	53	2322
Controlled Primary (External Outreach)	20	1396
Controlled Secondary	27	1010
Controlled Secondary (External Outreach)	5	536
Further & Higher Education	3	50
Integrated Primary	3	119
Integrated Primary (External Outreach)	1	42
Integrated Secondary	9	375
Integrated Secondary (External Outreach)	3	325
Maintained Primary	26	924
Maintained Primary (External Outreach)	17	1173
Maintained Secondary	12	333
Maintained Secondary (External Outreach)	9	665
Special Secondary	11	165
Special Secondary (External Outreach)	3	42
University	1	14
Voluntary Grammar	27	1084
Voluntary Grammar (External Outreach)	6	995
Voluntary Primary	4	111
<b>Total</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>12396</b>

## Annex 2

<b>Group Type</b>	<b>No. of groups</b>	<b>Percentage of groups</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Percentage of participants</b>
Adult	7	1.91%	141	0.90%
Exchange	29	7.90%	1034	6.56%
FHE	7	1.91%	113	0.72%
School	182	49.59%	6869	43.60%
School (External Outreach)	66	17.98%	5332	33.85%
University	28	7.63%	872	5.54%
Youth Group	46	12.53%	1332	8.46%
Youth Group (External Outreach)	2	0.54%	60	0.38%
<b>Total</b>	<b>367</b>		<b>15753</b>	

**Examples of youth groups and specialist adult groups that participated in the Education Service's programmes 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019**

Rotary International Youth Leadership Programme

Geological Survey of Northern Ireland

YMCA

Miss STEM Europe

Newry and Mourne Youth Council and Armagh and Banbridge Youth Council

T:BUC Summer Camp Programme

Pathways

National Citizen Summer Service Programme

Sea Cadets

Belfast Metropolitan Futures Project

Ulster University Transitional Justice Institute (law students)

Stepping Stones Youth Service

Clanrye Group

Sunlea Education Guidance Centre

National Union of Students & Union of Students Ireland (NUSUSI)

Northern Ireland Regional Colleges – students of Public Services/Social Policy/Health/Journalism

## **Inward international delegation visits to the Northern Ireland Assembly 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019**

### **Inward delegation visits to the Northern Ireland Assembly**

A number of inward delegation visits to the Northern Ireland Assembly were supported by the Engagement Office during the reporting period, including:

19/04/18	Chinese delegation
20/04/18	Australian MP
30/04/18	Thai Ambassador
01/05/18	Rethinking Group
10/05/18	UN Special Rapporteur
16/05/18	Swedish Minister for EU
17/05/18	Croatian Ambassador
23/05/18	Arizona State University
23/05/18	University of Prishtina
24/05/18	Belfast Met/Felician Students
29/05/18	John Smith Trust
14/06/18	Bulgarian Ambassador
18/06/18	DePaul University, USA
19/06/18	Kosovo Ambassador
20/06/18	Emory University, USA
21/06/18	NATO visit
03/07/18	French MPs
06/07/18	EU Counter Terrorism Co-ordinator
16/07/18	Danish Ambassador
16/07/18	NI Affairs Committee
26/07/18	Belfast Met/Chinese Delegation

30/07/18	Barbados High Commissioner
02/08/18	Welsh Assembly Member
06/08/18	Canadian Parliament Staff Member
07/08/18	British Columbian MP
20/08/18	Kenyan Parliamentary Committee
04/09/18	Israeli Delegation
17/09/18	Kosovo Delegation
19/09/18	US Consul General
25/09/18	German Delegation
26/09/18	Austrian Ambassador
08/10/18	Israeli Delegation
13/10/18	Chinese Delegation
16/10/18	Israeli MP
22/10/18	Kenyan Parliamentary Committee
22/10/18	Botswana Parliament
29/10/18	European Economic & Social Committee
01/11/18	Welsh Assembly Member
01/11/18	US Consulate
05/11/18	Iraqi Delegation
05/11/18	Slovak Ambassador
07/11/18	University of Ulster Law Students
08/11/18	Albanian Ambassador
08/11/18	University of Ulster Law Students
14/11/18	University of Ulster Law Students
15/11/18	Polish Ambassador
19/11/18	Chinese Delegation

26/11/18	Netherlands Deputy Head of Mission
29/11/18	Uzbekistan Delegation
06/12/18	Oxford University, Foreign Service Programme Students
10/12/18	South African High Commissioner
11/12/18	Belgian Ambassador
17/12/18	Parliament of Lebanon Delegation
31/01/19	South Korean Delegation
06/02/19	Rethinking Group
07/02/19	Spanish Consul General
20/02/19	Nepalese Ambassador
26/02/19	Forward Thinking/Egyptian Politicians
05/03/19	Norwegian Ambassador
07/03/19	Iraqi Ambassador
13/03/19	Delegation from Carinthia University, Austria
15/03/19	Delegation of Bavarian Teachers
19/03/19	Canadian High Commissioner
20/03/19	Georgian Ambassador
21/03/19	US Senator
22/03/19	Belarus Ambassador

## Annual Monitoring Update on Audit of Inequalities Action Plan 2016-2021

### Status Key:

- Complete for period (1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019)
- In progress/ongoing for period (1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019) OR on schedule to be progressed in line with timeline
- Overdue
- Action suspended
- New action
- Amended action

### Overall status of actions:

	Status Key	No of actions
	Completed	17
	In progress/ongoing for period	3
	Overdue	-
	Action suspended	6
	New action	-
	Amended action	-
<b>Total actions</b>		<b>26</b>

## Annual Monitoring Update on Audit of Inequalities Action Plan 2016-2021

**Function 1:** The acquisition and maintenance of premises and equipment to provide suitable accommodation, facilities and support services in which a fully functioning Assembly can operate.

Action taken to better promote equality of opportunity/ good relations	Inequality Identified and Outcome Area(s)	S75 Category	Intended outcome/impact and how this will be measured	In the current service Business Plan (Yes/No)	Lead	Timescale and Status Update 1 April 2018-31 March 2019
1. Improve accessibility to the Chamber and Official's Boxes within the Chamber	Access to Parliament Buildings (Theme 1a of Audit of Inequalities)	Persons with a disability and persons without	Improved accessibility to Chamber for all Members. Increased capacity for Official's with mobility issues.	No. Minor alterations have been carried out to facilitate a MLA who is a wheelchair-user. Further improvements will require extensive re-modelling of the chamber. If required (and approved), such works will be included in future Business Plans.	Head of Building Services	<b>Complete for reporting period</b>
2. Implementation of access audits completed by RNIB, Disability Action and Action on Hearing	Access to Parliament Buildings (Theme 1a of	Persons with a disability and	Improved accessibility to Parliament Buildings for	No. All work items within our remit relating to the audits have	Head of Building Services	<b>Complete</b>



Action taken to better promote equality of opportunity/ good relations	Inequality Identified and Outcome Area(s)	S75 Category	Intended outcome/impact and how this will be measured	In the current service Business Plan (Yes/No)	Lead	Timescale and Status Update 1 April 2018-31 March 2019
Loss regarding a programme of works	<p>Audit of Inequalities)</p> <p>Access to Services (Theme 1b of Audit of Inequalities)</p>	persons without	persons with a disability. All works projects are designed and constructed in accordance with Building Regulations and other relevant legislation.	been completed. Other wider 'estate' issues have been passed to DFP. Further agreed improvements will be included in relevant Business Plan.		
3. Investigate options to further improve facilities for wheelchair users	<p>Access to Parliament Buildings (Theme 1a of Audit of Inequalities)</p> <p>Access to Services (Theme 1b of Audit of Inequalities)</p>	Persons with a disability and persons without	Improved accessibility to Parliament Buildings for all building users and specifically for wheelchair users. Improvements to means of escape in the event of an emergency for wheelchair users.	No. This work has been completed	Head of Building Services	<p><b>Complete for reporting period</b></p> <p>As approved by the Assembly Commission, the following physical alterations and improvements have been completed in Parliament Buildings in the period of this report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relocation of the retail outlet on the Ground Floor and a ramped access has been installed between the Lower Ground Floor (entrance area) and the Ground Floor;</li> <li>• Alterations have taken place to counters in the Members' Bar, Business Office and Stationery Office</li> </ul>

Action taken to better promote equality of opportunity/ good relations	Inequality Identified and Outcome Area(s)	S75 Category	Intended outcome/impact and how this will be measured	In the current service Business Plan (Yes/No)	Lead	Timescale and Status Update 1 April 2018-31 March 2019
						<p>to facilitate wheelchair access;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refurbishment and upgrade of a passenger lift to fire evacuation standard and creation of refuge areas, meaning that the lift can be used in the event of an emergency evacuation, and;</li> <li>• Automatic-opening of all corridor doors at Basement, Ground Floor and 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Levels in the building.</li> </ul>
4. Maintain Action on Hearing Loss Award	Access to Parliament Buildings (Theme 1a of Audit of Inequalities)	Persons with a disability and persons without	Work towards maintaining Action on Hearing Loss 'Louder than Words' accreditation.	Yes	Environmental Services Manager	<b>Complete for reporting period</b> Award maintained
5. Maintain National Autistic Society Autism Award	Access to Parliament Buildings (Theme 1a of Audit of Inequalities)	Persons with a disability and persons without	Work towards maintaining Autism accreditation.	Yes	Environmental Services Manager	<b>Complete for reporting period</b> Award maintained

Action taken to better promote equality of opportunity/ good relations	Inequality Identified and Outcome Area(s)	S75 Category	Intended outcome/impact and how this will be measured	In the current service Business Plan (Yes/No)	Lead	Timescale and Status Update 1 April 2018-31 March 2019
6. Provision of translation from Irish (and Ulster Scots on request) to English to the Speaker and Clerks at the table	Good Relations (Theme 1c of Audit of Inequalities)	Persons of different religious belief Persons of different political opinion Persons of different racial group	That the Speaker/Clerks at Table receive and understand what is being said. Without such a service there could potentially be a breach of Assembly Standing Orders. Measured by exception i.e. Speaker/Clerks at Table advise that no such service is provided and by recording translation audio channel on SLIQ system.	Yes	Editor of Debates	<b>Action Suspended</b> There were no sittings of the Assembly and thus no requirement for this service.
7. Ensure Parliament Buildings is welcoming to all sections of society and cultures by reviewing art, artefacts and exhibitions	Good Relations (Theme 1c of Audit of Inequalities)	Persons of different religious belief Persons of different political opinion Persons of different	Review of initiatives on how art and exhibitions might be used in Parliament Buildings	Consideration of new art initiatives to allow opportunities to reflect the wider community within	Engagement	<b>Action suspended.</b> Consultation with the Arts Council and the College of Art took place to look at proposals for a series of new art initiatives for mid-2018. However, a decision was made not to progress matters with the commissioning of art given the political situation and the

Action taken to better promote equality of opportunity/ good relations	Inequality Identified and Outcome Area(s)	S75 Category	Intended outcome/impact and how this will be measured	In the current service Business Plan (Yes/No)	Lead	Timescale and Status Update 1 April 2018-31 March 2019
		racial group		Parliament Buildings.		associated potential for reputational risk.
8. Language Policy	Good Relations (Theme 1c of Audit of Inequalities)	Persons of different religious belief Persons of different political opinion Persons of different racial group	The Education Service now provides a programme in Irish to primary and post primary pupils. In 2015, plans were put in place to translate the primary section of the website – this will be available in February 2016. Some video resources are also available in Irish.  Development of Language Policy for the Assembly Commission.	Yes	Education Officer          Equality Manager	<b>In progress</b> Irish-medium schools were made aware in September 2017 that the education programme is available in Irish. No Irish-medium schools requested a visit during this reporting period.  <b>In progress</b> A paper dealing with Irish, Ulster Scots and minority ethnic languages was considered by SMG at its January 2017 and March 2017 meetings. Following consideration, it was agreed that the paper should be ready for consideration by an incoming Commission.

Action taken to better promote equality of opportunity/ good relations	Inequality Identified and Outcome Area(s)	S75 Category	Intended outcome/impact and how this will be measured	In the current service Business Plan (Yes/No)	Lead	Timescale and Status Update 1 April 2018-31 March 2019
9. Monitoring the outcome of the EQIA on the Flying of the Union Flag at Parliament Buildings	Good Relations (Theme 1c of Audit of Inequalities)	Persons of different religious belief Persons of different political opinion Persons of different racial group	Complete	No	Equality Manager	<b>Complete</b>
10. Monitoring of revised Engagement Strategy (Strategy is finished and is replaced by current draft Engagement Strategy 2018-2023)	Participation (Theme 1d of Audit of Inequalities)	All groups	Complete	No	Outreach Manager	<b>Complete.</b> The previous Engagement Strategy has been replaced with the 2018-2023 draft Engagement Strategy, which is at pre-consultation stage. See action 24 below.
11. Engaging with women, people with disabilities and ethnic minorities under-represented in public life through Assembly Community Connect	Participation (Theme 1d of Audit of Inequalities)	Men and women generally Persons with a disability and persons without	Increased engagement with women, people with disabilities and ethnic minorities; inform groups how to utilise resources available through Assembly Community	Yes	Outreach Manager	<b>Complete for period.</b> Due to the political situation activity was reduced and ACC held eight events during the period. The activities included training events targeted at women's groups, a Speaker's event for International Women's Day and an event to mark International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

Action taken to better promote equality of opportunity/ good relations	Inequality Identified and Outcome Area(s)	S75 Category	Intended outcome/impact and how this will be measured	In the current service Business Plan (Yes/No)	Lead	Timescale and Status Update 1 April 2018-31 March 2019
		Persons of different racial group	Connect & partner organisations			
12. Engagement with young people through Education Service visits programme	Participation (Theme 1d of Audit of Inequalities)	Persons of different age	Education Programmes provided for young people from Key Stage 2 (age 8) to Key Stage 5 (Post 16)	Yes	Education Officer	<b>Complete for period.</b> Education Service programmes were delivered to groups with a broad age range. While the majority of groups fall between the P5 and AS-level range, the Education Service also engages with a high number of university groups and a smaller number of Key Stage 1 pupils.
13. Engagement with young people	Access to Services (Theme 1b of the 2011 Audit of	Young people	In 2016, the Education Service will apply for Erasmus+ to fund a youth partnership programme. This project will aim to recruit young people who face social and economic barriers to participation	Yes	Education Manager	<b>Complete for period.</b> The application was unsuccessful in 2016.

Action taken to better promote equality of opportunity/ good relations	Inequality Identified and Outcome Area(s)	S75 Category	Intended outcome/impact and how this will be measured	In the current service Business Plan (Yes/No)	Lead	Timescale and Status Update 1 April 2018-31 March 2019
14. Development of appropriate resources to support learning about the Assembly	Access to Services (Theme 1b of the 2011 Audit of Inequalities)	Young people	Develop and update a variety of educational resources across all Key stages ( all ages) this will include new website activities and video resources	Yes	Education Team	<p><b>Complete for period</b> The Education Service's website partner, CCEA, has been converting web activities/resources to HTML to make them accessible on all platforms. This work is almost complete. A review/audit of the site was completed during the reporting period and all necessary amendments will be made by end June 2019. The Education Service worked with political parties to provide factsheets on different parties to support the new Government and Politics GCSE. A glossary was also provided.</p> <p>The Assembly partnership with CCEA is in place until 2022, ensuring that Education Service online resources will continue to be up to date in terms of technology and content which supports the curriculum.</p>
15. Implementation of Secretariat Gender Action Plan	Recruitment and Selection (Theme 2a of Audit of Inequalities)	Men and women generally	The removal of any actual or perceived barriers to gender equality within the secretariat through	Yes	Equality Manager	<p><b>Complete for period</b> For reporting reasons, the Gender Action Plan 2016-18 (GAP) ran until 31 March 2019. 36 (92%) of the 39 actions were completed within the</p>

Action taken to better promote equality of opportunity/ good relations	Inequality Identified and Outcome Area(s)	S75 Category	Intended outcome/impact and how this will be measured	In the current service Business Plan (Yes/No)	Lead	Timescale and Status Update 1 April 2018-31 March 2019
	Equality issues for existing staff		the implementation of a gender action plan.			<p>timeframe covered by the GAP. These included a range of activities such as participation in mentoring schemes; participation in Business in the Community's Gender Project; focusing on gender balance of staff presenting at SMG and Assembly Commission meetings; ensuring opportunities to attend L&amp;D events accommodate all work patterns; the development of policies and guidance to support the life balance, health and well-being of staff; and measures to encourage applications for employment from under-represented groups.</p> <p>Two actions relating to the development of a transgender policy were not completed within the timeframe. These will be carried forward to a new GAP for 2019-23, which was agreed by the Assembly Commission on 11 April 2019. The third action not completed had been suspended while the Assembly is not carrying out its full range of functions. Although it aimed initially to provide female employees with</p>



Action taken to better promote equality of opportunity/ good relations	Inequality Identified and Outcome Area(s)	S75 Category	Intended outcome/impact and how this will be measured	In the current service Business Plan (Yes/No)	Lead	Timescale and Status Update 1 April 2018-31 March 2019
						<p>fellowships/shadowing opportunities, it was superseded by a proposed Assembly Trainers Network which has no specific gender focus. This action will therefore not be carried forward to the continuing GAP 2019-23.</p> <p>The Closure Report for the 2016-18 GAP and the continuing GAP for 2019-23 are available at:</p> <p><a href="http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/policies/equality-policies/gender-action-plan-2016-2018/">http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/policies/equality-policies/gender-action-plan-2016-2018/</a></p>
16. Provision of an Irish Language champion	Participation (Theme 1d of Audit of Inequalities)	Young People	Translation of the primary section of the Education website will complete in February 2016. Delivery of programmes in Irish continues.	yes	Education Team	<p><b>In progress</b></p> <p>An Irish language champion is in place. Work on translating the primary section of the website is well-progressed, but further action is on hold pending a resolution of the current political situation.</p>

Action taken to better promote equality of opportunity/ good relations	Inequality Identified and Outcome Area(s)	S75 Category	Intended outcome/impact and how this will be measured	In the current service Business Plan (Yes/No)	Lead	Timescale and Status Update 1 April 2018-31 March 2019
17. Continued facilitation of the Pensioners' Parliament	Participation (Theme 1d of Audit of Inequalities)	Persons of different age	To facilitate one Parliament per year	Yes	Outreach Manager	<b>Action suspended.</b> A Pensioners Parliament was not held because, due to the political situation, no Ministers were in place to respond to the debates/questions.
18. Additional Minority Parliaments	Participation (Theme 1d of Audit of Inequalities)  Good Relations (Theme 1c of Audit of Inequalities)	Persons of different racial group/people with a disability	To facilitate one BME Parliament per year	Yes	Outreach Manager	<b>Action suspended.</b>  The partner organisation for black and minority ethnic (BME) parliaments, NICEM, has entered voluntary insolvency. The capacity will need to be re-established within this community to facilitate further BME parliaments. It may be some time before this action can be revisited. This action is therefore suspended, but a new action will be added when the political situation is resolved to deliver an annual 'Get Involved' conference for BME groups.
19. Continued Implementation of the 'Perspective on...' series	Good Relations (Theme 1c of Audit of Inequalities)	Promoting good relations between persons of different	To hold events as agreed by the Assembly Commission	Following the March 2017 election, the Assembly Commission agreed that the	Speaker's Office	<b>Complete for Reporting Period.</b> The Assembly Commission agreed in November 2018 to initiate its approach on Historic Anniversaries for the mandate. It agreed that an event would be held in January

Action taken to better promote equality of opportunity/ good relations	Inequality Identified and Outcome Area(s)	S75 Category	Intended outcome/impact and how this will be measured	In the current service Business Plan (Yes/No)	Lead	Timescale and Status Update 1 April 2018-31 March 2019
		religious belief, political opinion or racial group.		historic anniversaries policy would not be initiated for the 2017-2022 mandate until the Assembly resumes normal business subject, to review by summer 2018. The Commission agreed to initiate the policy in December 2018.		2019 to mark the 100 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dail Eireann. The Speaker hosted the event which was attended by the Ceann Comhairle, MLAs, members of the public, school and church representatives.
20. Continued lighting of the exterior Parliament Buildings	Good Relations (Theme 1c of Audit of Inequalities)	Promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief,	To light the exterior of Parliament Buildings as agreed by the Assembly Commission.  The Commission will schedule up to	Yes	Facilities	<b>Complete for reporting period</b>  <a href="http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/policies/northern-ireland-assembly-use-of-external-lighting-policy-at-parliament-buildings-2014/">http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/policies/northern-ireland-assembly-use-of-external-lighting-policy-at-parliament-buildings-2014/</a>

Action taken to better promote equality of opportunity/ good relations	Inequality Identified and Outcome Area(s)	S75 Category	Intended outcome/impact and how this will be measured	In the current service Business Plan (Yes/No)	Lead	Timescale and Status Update 1 April 2018-31 March 2019
		political opinion or racial group.	<p>4 days (consecutive or not) during a calendar year for event(s) of its choice in line with the policy.</p> <p>b) The Northern Ireland Charity of the year will have access to the system for up to 5 days (consecutive or not) during its 12 months term.</p> <p>c) The Assembly Commission will grant up to another 8 days for events during a calendar year when requests are made (paragraphs g) in</p>			

Action taken to better promote equality of opportunity/ good relations	Inequality Identified and Outcome Area(s)	S75 Category	Intended outcome/impact and how this will be measured	In the current service Business Plan (Yes/No)	Lead	Timescale and Status Update 1 April 2018-31 March 2019
			line with the policy (1 day per event).  Altogether there will be up to 17 days scheduled per year in line with the policy with potential extraordinary ad-hoc requests as specified at paragraphs h) & i).			
21. Continue annual series of 'Let's Talk' events across constituencies	Participation (Theme 1d of Audit of Inequalities)	Young People	Hold events in school venues which will involve all constituencies	Yes	Education Team	<b>Action Suspended.</b> 'Let's Talk' events will be resumed when the Assembly returns to full business. However, young people from all constituencies continue to meet and engage with MLAs during Education Service events in Parliament Buildings and in schools.
22. Speaker to host 'Assembly Women's Week' annually which will focus on encouraging	Participation (Theme 1d of Audit of Inequalities)	Gender	The week will host a range of different events including discussion with female role models, increasing	Yes	Speaker's Office, Communications and Outreach	<b>Complete for reporting period</b> On Friday 8 March 2019, the Speaker supported by the Women's Caucus hosted 80 young women aged between 16 and 18 from schools and youth organisations

Action taken to better promote equality of opportunity/ good relations	Inequality Identified and Outcome Area(s)	S75 Category	Intended outcome/impact and how this will be measured	In the current service Business Plan (Yes/No)	Lead	Timescale and Status Update 1 April 2018-31 March 2019
women to participate and increasing female representation			female representation on public and private boards, increasing female presence in the media.			across Northern Ireland at a debate in the Assembly Chamber to celebrate International Women's Day. The theme centred on gender balance. This followed up on a recommendation of the AERC Committee in 2015 to engage with young women to encourage them to participate in politics.
23. Develop a business outreach plan by delivering targeted training to businesses to raise awareness of the Northern Ireland Assembly Business Trust (NIABT) in the private sector.	Participation (Theme 1d of Audit of Inequalities)	Men and Women generally	Increase NIABT members by 5% year on year and improve wider understanding of how businesses can engage with the Assembly. The NIABT will specifically run events to encourage the involvement of women.	Yes	Outreach	<b>Action suspended.</b> The Northern Ireland Assembly Business Trust (NIABT) Board of Trustees had agreed in 2017 that the NIABT should be dissolved and noted that the Assembly Commission proposed to initiate a new programme of work, once the Assembly resumes normal business, to further strengthen engagement with the business sector. The trustees met again in September 2018 and January 2019 and re-affirmed its position that dissolution should take place once the current political situation was resolved. The NIABT AGM was held on 6 March 2019 and the Board's position agreed by the membership.

Action taken to better promote equality of opportunity/ good relations	Inequality Identified and Outcome Area(s)	S75 Category	Intended outcome/impact and how this will be measured	In the current service Business Plan (Yes/No)	Lead	Timescale and Status Update 1 April 2018-31 March 2019
24. Regular meetings with Section 75 groups to inform reviews of Engagement Strategy.	Participation (Theme 1d of Audit of Inequalities)	All s75 Groups	Annual meetings with appropriate groups to inform reviews of Strategy.	Yes	Outreach	<b>In progress.</b> A new public engagement strategy is under development and s75 groups will be consulted at an appropriate time.

**Function Two:** The recruitment and ongoing development of suitably qualified and experienced staff to support the Assembly.

Action taken to better promote equality of opportunity/ good relations	Inequality Identified and Outcome area(s)	Section 75 Categories	Intended outcome/impact and how this will be measured	In the current service plan (Yes/No)	Lead Responsibility	Timescale
25. Continue to implement fair and inclusive recruitment practices	Recruitment and Selection (Theme 2a of Audit of Inequalities)	All	Ensuring that all recruitment competitions are fully accessible  Apply welcome statements or affirmative action if		Head of HR	<b>Complete for reporting period</b> Completed. The procedures for internal and external recruitment have been reviewed to

Action taken to better promote equality of opportunity/ good relations	Inequality Identified and Outcome area(s)	Section 75 Categories	Intended outcome/impact and how this will be measured	In the current service plan (Yes/No)	Lead Responsibility	Timescale
			appropriate in consultation with the Equality Commission for NI.			<p>ensure compliance with good practice. The policies were used for recruitment exercises carried out in the period 1.4.18 – 31.3.19</p> <p><b>Completed.</b> The Guaranteed Interview Scheme has been used for internal and external recruitment exercises carried out in the period 1.4.18 – 31.3.19</p>
26. Continue to implement staff surveys	Recruitment and Selection (Theme 2b of Audit of Inequalities)	All	<p>Use the results of the staff survey to produce and implement an action plan if required</p> <p>Monitor the progress of the implementation of this action plan</p>	Individual actions being implemented by different business areas.	Corporate Support	<p><b>Complete for reporting period:</b> 2017 Staff Survey launched on 14 June 2017 and closed on 7 July 2017. Key Findings, Recommendations and final Staff</p>



Action taken to better promote equality of opportunity/ good relations	Inequality Identified and Outcome area(s)	Section 75 Categories	Intended outcome/impact and how this will be measured	In the current service plan (Yes/No)	Lead Responsibility	Timescale
						<p>Survey Report published on Assembly's Intranet in October 2017. The Secretariat Management Group developed and issued a Staff Survey Report Action Plan along with a status update to Secretariat staff in December 2017 and the Action Plan is now substantially complete.</p>

# The Northern Ireland Assembly Secretariat

