


Belfast City Council



Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties

Annual Progress Report

Contact details:

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<p>Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:</p>	<p>https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/council/equality-and-diversity/equality-screening-reports</p>
<p>Signatures:</p>	

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 2023 and March 2024

PART A – Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Scheme

- 1** In 2023-24, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.

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

The Equality Action Plan is developed from some of the information in the Audit of Inequalities, which is a systematic approach to identify inequalities, across the nine Section 75 categories (religious belief, political opinion, race, age, gender, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, people with dependants or without), which are relevant to a public authority's functions. The Equality Action Plan contains some of the key priorities from our Corporate Plan, which will have the biggest impact on inequalities. Our Corporate Plan is a reflection of what people in Belfast have told us they want and the type of leadership they feel the city needs. It takes the priorities of the Belfast Agenda, the Community Plan, and sets out the ways in which the council will deliver these to grow a sustainable, inclusive economy and equitable society. To fulfil our responsibilities, our Corporate Plan not only ensures we deliver the day-to-day services which the people of Belfast rely upon; we stretch ourselves through a series of strategic priorities to ensure we positively affect the lives of everyone in Belfast.

Actions throughout the reporting year have been delivered in the following areas:

1. Growing an inclusive economy

We will work to create an inclusive, resilient economy through creating good, sustainable jobs. A thriving urban economy is a key foundation to achieving many of the outcomes in the Belfast Agenda. Not only can a successful economy generate the wealth required to grow local businesses, generate jobs and offer routes out of poverty for struggling families, it is also the main source of revenue for the city's public services, programmes and interventions.

Example of action delivered:

Since April 2023, 594 people participated in Employment Academies (with an into-employment rate of 76% for those successfully completing) in sectors ranging from logistics, business support, public sector driving, construction, classroom assistants (Irish Medium), social care, health care, leisure, fibre optics and childcare/ play work.

Of the 594 who started an Employment only 8 dropped out. 329 have fully completed and of these 249 have gained job/better job (76% of those completing). 266 are still participating.

In addition to this, 222 started an Upskilling Academy so are in work and are receiving support, qualifications or licences needed to access a better job. So far 11 have completed their training and all have moved onto a better job.

52% of participants were male and 48% were female.

84% of participants stated their sexual orientation as being towards someone of a different sex. 16% were orientated towards the same or both.

All participants were under 64 years of age with the 35-44 years age group being the most represented (21%).

18% of our participants declared a disability.

2. Working and learning

BCC will work to ensure people are appropriately skilled for the jobs created in the city. Education is the foundation for a better life, not only in facilitating future employment and providing access to a fulfilling adult life, but also as a major contributor to a person's wellbeing and to shaping lifelong health. Working with our partners, we will bring forward a work programme which supports the inclusive growth ambitions of the Council with a focus on addressing barriers to progression

Example of action delivered:

The Youth Support Programme targeting young people between 14- 24 years at risk or disengaged from formal education or training/employment has concluded, given the

new developments with DE under Fairstart (and within this the 'Reducing Educational Disadvantages' or RED programme). We continue to deliver the GCSE support programme on an interim basis with the aim of transferring into the mainstream 'Reducing Educational Disadvantages' programme.

3. Living here

Our city and neighbourhoods are vibrant, resilient, and safe places where people choose to live, work, and spend time being healthier and more active.

In our recent residents' survey, 86% of respondents were satisfied with Belfast as a place to live. We want everyone to be satisfied. We want to deliver a high quality of life for everyone. In doing so, we must deliver and plan effective public spaces and conserve our natural environment so it can be accessed and enjoyed.

Example of action delivered:

In April 2023 Council secured 3 year funding from PHA for the post of an Age Friendly Coordinator (AFC). The AFC has supported the Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership (HASP) in the delivery of the first year of the Age Friendly Plan and the progression of the following actions in line with the 4 themes:

The establishment of a city centre connection hub in 2 Royal Avenue called the Grapevine. This pilot project has been led by older people to ensure that the Grapevine is a safe place where older people can drop in for a chat and find out about events etc happening across the city on a weekly basis. In the long term it is hoped that the hub will help combat feelings of isolation and loneliness amongst older people and also help increase greater social connections, both to the volunteers and those dropping in. It is also hoped that issues affecting older people will be reported through the weekly drop ins, creating greater awareness, and allowing signposting to specific support.

Tea dances held every 6 weeks in 2 Royal Avenue have provided older people the opportunity to connect with others and improve or learn new dance skills- it also contributes to an increase in levels of physical activity and wellbeing. Many attending have reported how they look forward to the tea dances, putting the date in the diary

for months ahead and also how they have created long lasting friendships. There are up to 200 people attending.

Positive Ageing Month- a number of events and activities were organised during the month of October, as a result older people were able to try new activities/events whether that be a guided historical walk or a movie afternoon, and these enabled people to meet up with others whilst learning a new skill or developing a new interest. At the Age Friendly Convention speakers from several organisations were able to provide attendees with information on the services and support they could offer. There was also an information stand event in 2 Royal Avenue, so that people could find out about health initiatives and financial security on a one-to-one basis- to ensure they were accessing what they are entitled to and also providing tips on how to stay healthy.

Seasonal planning, dementia Friendly neighbourhood and citywide isolation meetings have ensured that all partners are more aware of services and support for older people across Belfast and therefore better able to promote key messages, signpost more accurately and target their services according to need. It has also created good partnership working among the different organisations.

Age Friendly Design Principles- working in partnership with the Age Friendly Officer in Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council there have been meetings with Age Friendly Ireland and also planners/ building control within BCC and ABC Council areas to get a better understanding of the existing housing standards and how these ensure the needs of older people are included in the design processes of lifetime homes.

4. Cross-cutting

Our cross-cutting priorities will have a multitude of social, economic, and environmental benefits for the city.

These priorities include once in a lifetime opportunities to fundamentally change the city, culturally, physically and economically and help achieve the big ambitions of the Belfast Agenda.

Example of action delivered:

Funding cuts impacted on actions to help address issues of demarcation and division including flags, murals and other symbols, with a reduction of 43% of the contribution from The Executive Office. As such, several projects within the Good Relations Action Plan had to be reduced in scope. However, within the overall Action Plan 33,436 participants were recorded as having participated in Council support Good Relations Programmes. These ranged from the provision of small grants, events, direct delivered programmed and programmes that were tendered out for.

The Good Relations Unit was also allocated responsibility for the allocation of £475,000 of “Asylum Dispersal” funding from the Home Office. This was allocated towards projects to support those people who are living in hotels, awaiting decisions on asylum claims.

5. Our organisational priorities

As our city becomes more ambitious so must we. To do this, we can only succeed with the wholehearted support and enthusiastic contribution of our staff. To harness this energy, they need to feel valued and understand how they contribute. As an organisation, if we want to perform these capabilities to the best of our abilities, we must continuously look to improve how we do things. We have therefore agreed priorities that will help us improve our capability. For example, in order to provide the best customer experience possible, we have developed a customer focus programme that will enhance the experience felt by all our customers.

Example of action delivered:

Between November 2023 and April 2024, we implemented the recommendations of the Web Usability August 2023 audit report on manual accessibility to improve Belfast

City Council, Belfast Castle, Belfast Zoo and Malone House websites. This was carried out after a procurement process to select a supplier, which would employ a range of people with various disabilities to test our site.

To ensure we maintain best practice in accessibility we use the Silktide Index <https://index.silktide.com>, which measures accessibility levels for all public sector sites in the UK, evaluates Belfast City Council website at 97% - an 'excellent' score. To achieve a higher score, we would need to tag all PDFs (WCAG 2.0.A 1.3.1) and ensure pages don't require zooming and scrolling in two dimensions on small screens (WCAG 2.1 AA 1.4.10). The website (<https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/>) includes the ReachDeck digital inclusion toolbar. ReachDeck provides speech, reading and translation support tools to help ensure information is easier and more accessible for people. The website is assessed and approved annually by the Plain English Campaign (<http://www.plainenglish.co.uk>). Our content is written to Plain English Campaign standards, so it can be widely and easily understood.

- 2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2023-24 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

See Appendix 2 for updates of all actions delivered in the year 2023-2024.

3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes

No (go to Q.4)

Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

The Belfast Business Promise is a business commitment to support the city's inclusive growth ambition. It aims to work with all organisations to create more high-quality jobs, lower levels of poverty, build stronger communities, reduce inequality in the workplace and work towards a more sustainable local economy and environment.

As a free membership and accreditation scheme, it will create a community of businesses and organisations committed to investing in the people and the city, embedding more inclusivity in their business practices and working together to create a better city for everyone.

Through the Belfast Business Promise, businesses will get recognition for demonstrating how they are having a positive social impact through their core business activities by signing up to a number of Belfast Business Promise Pledges; and support will be provided to businesses to assist them on their improvement journey to meet the pledges.

To continue the collaborative approach to the development and delivery of the Belfast Business Promise, a 6 month pilot phase was agreed to go live on 24th April to test and refine the Belfast Business Promise and delivery model. Further information on the Belfast Business Promise and those signing up during the pilot phase to help shape the future model and roll-out of the Belfast Business Promise is available on the Council's website (<https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/businesspromise>)

Organisations will use the Belfast Business promise to benchmark against eight pledges and gain support from the Belfast Business Promise community and network to continually improve their inclusive practice and performance.

The Belfast Business Promise has eight pledges:

1. Provide fair wages and contracts – Ensuring your employees are paid the Real Living Wage and they have security around the hours they work.
2. Offer opportunities into work – creating pathways into work by providing job and development opportunities and removing barriers to employment.
3. Support the local and social economy – using purchasing power to support the local economy, increase competitiveness and add social value.
4. Recruit inclusively – ensuring job accessibility for all Belfast residents and hiring across diverse communities.
5. Improve training, engagement and well-being – creating a workplace where employees feel valued and can thrive.
6. Pay promptly – paying supplier invoices on time.
7. Work in partnership with our communities – working in collaboration with local communities through meaningful engagement to bring about positive impact.
8. Protect our Environment – Working together to tackle the global challenge of climate change and protect our environment for future generations.

Those signing up to the Belfast Business Promise commit to working towards 3 core pledges and choose to work towards 3 optional pledges from the remaining five. The core pledges for the pilot phase are:

1. Provide fair wages and contracts
7. Work in partnership with our communities – working in collaboration with local communities through meaningful engagement to bring about positive impact.
8. Protect our Environment – Working together to tackle the global challenge of climate change and protect our environment for future generations.

The Belfast Business Promise is a key tool to deliver on the Inclusive Growth Strategy and has therefore been designed to be inherently inclusive and is not expected to have any adverse impacts on the Section 75 categories, with the equality screening indicating minor positive impacts. However, as a new programme, it is acknowledged that the BBP will be subject to ongoing review and continue to be informed by practice as a result of the learning from the initial pilot and delivery phase during 2023/24. The application of the Equality Scheme commitments resulted in identifying mitigations for the policy.

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:

As the Belfast Business Promise delivery continues and undergoes further development, modifications and mitigations can be put in place to meet the needs of programme participants as delivery matures. This should have a positive difference for individuals and Section 75 groups. Examples include:

- Information on the strengths and areas for improvement for Belfast Business Promise supporters against the pledge criteria will be collated during 2023/24 and 2024/25 to inform the future programming and delivery arrangements.
- Development of an annual programme for BBP events to tie in and promote specific issues/events such as Disability Awareness Day, Mental Health Awareness Week etc.
- Development of standard language on forms/documentation to raise awareness of the commitment to meet accessibility needs, including language translations. This will be adopted in line with the Council's business, employability & skills programme.
- Ongoing assessment and engagement with the Member Network to inform the content of programme delivery and support needs. The Belfast Business Promise programme will therefore continue to be developed on a rolling 3–6-month

basis to ensure it remains relevant and flexible to meet the needs of an increasing and diverse membership base.

- Application of the monitoring and evaluation framework will identify trends and good practice to inform programme content relating to Section 75 issues, with a particular focus on gender, disability and race.

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):*

Belfast Business Promise - An Inclusive Growth City Charter was included in our Screening Outcome Report for Quarter 3 of 23-24.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

Other *(please specify and give details):*

Click or tap here to enter text.

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 2023-24 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:

A general statement is included in all job description regarding the promotion of equal opportunities and any pertinent legislation. For example, the role of Senior Information Governance Officer (Data Protection). A more focused statement regarding the implementation of the Equality Scheme is included in some roles.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2023-24 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 Equality Action Plan was developed in conjunction with the Corporate Plan and contains some of its key priorities. All departments were involved with the Audit of Inequalities, which is a systematic approach to identify inequalities, across the nine Section 75 categories (religious belief, political opinion, race, age, gender, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, people with dependants or without), as relevant to a public authority's functions. The Audit of Inequalities underpins the Equality Action Plan and the actions included therein are monitored annually.

- 6 In the 2023-24 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 corporate plan
- No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2023-24 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

These are already mainstreamed through the organisation's corporate plan.

Equality action plans/measures

- 7 Within the 2023-24 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:

15

Actions ongoing:

49

Actions to commence:

1

Please provide any details and examples (*in addition to question 2*):

Development of a toilet strategy has not yet commenced.

- 8** Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2023-24 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

The Equality Action Plan included a plan to support five training and skills development projects via the European Social Fund (in partnership with TEO), targeting those who are long-term unemployed, younger people not in education, employment or training and people with disabilities. However, the European Social Fund (ESF) Programme ceased to exist in March 2023 and the successor programme – UK Shared Prosperity Fund – did not required match-funding. This action was therefore not delivered

- 9** In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2023-24 reporting period, the following have been identified: (*tick all that apply*)

- Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the known inequality
- Action(s) to address the known inequality in a different way
- Action(s) to address newly identified inequalities/recently prioritised inequalities

- Measures to address a prioritised inequality have been completed

Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)

- 10** Following the initial notification of consultations, a targeted approach was taken – and consultation with those for whom the issue was of particular relevance: *(tick one box only)*

All the time

Sometimes

Never

- 11** Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2023-24 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

The Belfast Tree Strategy is a new strategy it will have a 10-year lifespan from its anticipated launch date and will set out a commitment to delivering key priorities and actions in a fully resourced action plan which will be reviewed at approximately three yearly intervals starting from October 2023. The public service ombudsman commended Belfast City Council on the public consultation for this strategy in Nov 2023 <https://www.itv.com/news/utv/2023-11-02/report-finds-one-enforcement-action-taken-on-tree-breaches>

Inclusion was at the core of this consultation with a range of tools used to gather information including online workshops and public surveys. A focused approach was also taken with relevant Council Officers attending the Council's Disability Advisory panel, and linking in with other S75 groups, to receive their views on the strategy and how best it could be delivered by Council. Following careful consideration of the consultation findings the

Belfast Tree Strategy should become a citywide strategy for the benefit of all people in the city.

12 In the 2023-24 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: (*tick all that apply*)

- Face to face meetings
- Focus groups
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- Questionnaires
- Information by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
- Internet discussions
- Telephone consultations
- Other (*please specify*): Click or tap here to enter text.

Please provide any details or examples of the uptake of these methods of consultation in relation to the consultees' membership of particular Section 75 categories:

Each consultation develops its own engagement programme, which may or may not include the options above. Information and engagement sessions or workshops, are organised as relevant, with inclusive event plans completed, ensuring all access requirements are addressed. The traditional survey / questionnaire is the most popular, with over 10,000 responses. Engagement on the delivery of all policies continues as it is rolled out, with adaptability to diverse needs, increasingly viewed as part of mainstream activity.

13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes

No

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

All consultations are emailed out to our consultees.

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2023-24 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]

<https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/council/equality-and-diversity/equality-screening-reports>

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

21

16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2023-24:

Policy consultations conducted with **screening** assessment presented. 10

Policy consultations conducted **with an equality impact assessment (EQIA)** presented. 1

Consultations for an **EQIA** alone. 0

17 Please provide details of the **main consultations** conducted on an assessment (as described above) or other matters relevant to the Section 75 duties:

Policy consultations conducted with **screening** assessment presented were:

Safeguarding All Ages Policy
Disability Action Plan 2022-25
Music Strategy - A Roadmap for Belfast
Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service (NI ESS)
Cherryvale Playing Fields (works to pitch 1)
Black Mountain/ Upper Whiterock Greenway
Belfast Business Promise - An Inclusive Growth City Charter
Belfast Tree Strategy
Installation Of Gates At Crescent Park
Vacancy Grant Programme

Policy consultations for the Belfast Agenda refresh was conducted with an equality impact assessment (EQIA) presented.

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

Yes

No concerns were raised

No

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Prior to formal public consultation there are engagement activities with relevant groups to ensure policies are relevant. Draft screenings are issued as part of a formal consultation and changes made as appropriate following closure of the consultation period. This approach allows for effective policy making, with no concerns raised on published screenings for 23/24.

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 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes

No

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

An EQIA was carried out on the refreshed Belfast Agenda. The five themes are:

Our People and Communities

Our Economy

Our Place

Our Environment and

A Compassionate City

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 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

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

Please provide any details:

Knowledge on inequalities and how these are monitored, both across domains and how S75 groups are impacted across these has developed considerably. The challenges of exploring inequalities across both domains and characteristics remain and we will continue to explore all information systems, with strategic actions taken where possible.

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:

The Labour Market Partnership (LMP) strategic assessment was refreshed in 2023/4 and again identified key groups that were under-represented in the labour market or that

faced significant barriers to finding work. These groups include (among others) those with a disability, those living with health issues (including mental health), and ethnic minorities. Likewise, the research identified that there are specific parts of the city where levels of Long-term Unemployment and economic inactivity are more than twice the city average. We have implemented new approaches as a result of this scoping work, beginning with migrants and this has included:

- ESOL 12-week English language programme for 24 young people aged 16-24yrs in partnership with Participation and Practice of Rights.
- Training on rights to work for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers delivered for 32 training and skills providers in Feb 2024.
- Health & Social Care Academy underway for migrant workers (with a right to work) and wrap around support including support.
- Development of Migrant Employment Academy: IELTS/OET, Statements of Comparability and wraparound support starting with medical professionals.

Through LMP we have also:

- Designed and implemented a Gateway to Choices programme, offering triage and support for people to access the provision in the city most suited to their needs and aspirations. In 2023/24, Gateway engaged with 867 people and supported 88 into training/education and 170 into work.
- Working with Skills for Life & Work providers to deliver a 'Bridges to Progression' programme that adds value by supporting their participants in staying to continue with their participating.

Delivered the Belfast Jobsfair where 850 residents were able to access live vacancies across 65 employers.

- 22** Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2023-24 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

Since April 2023, we have been working with partners to develop and deliver interventions that address the City's challenges in relation to low levels of business start-

up, innovation, competitiveness, and productivity. The monitoring of policies in economic and skills development is integral to delivery, as we continue to extend our reach to engage those individuals who are under-represented. This includes an increased focus on support for people with disabilities, individuals who are economically inactive, females and young people providing them with tools to overcome barriers to take positive steps to starting a business. Key activities for 23-24 include:

- Enterprise awareness activity: engaged 755 individuals, supporting them to progress to start a business. 40 students and graduates also accessed support, 12 of whom are currently accessing salary support through Invest NI's Student to First Sale intervention. We also enabled test trading opportunities for 18 new businesses through our dedicated start up space at St George's Market and many of those are seeking to trade at the market on a more regular basis or are exploring alternative retail outlets for their products.
- Start a business activity: Since the launch of Go Succeed in November 2023, we have received 573 enquiries from individuals wishing to start a business in Belfast. This has progressed through to 278 completed diagnostics directly leading to business plan development and 1-1 mentoring.
- Support for Social Enterprises and Co-operatives: 57 organisations were supported with one-to-one mentoring, advice, and guidance. Four of these organisations were new co-operatives. The Social Enterprise and Co-operative Support programme has facilitated 28 events/workshops with over 350 attendees including a regional networking event, virtual global best practice visit and workshops. Our focused engagement with co-operative organisations has continued, and we organised 10 events, attracting 42 attendees. The Social Economy Incentive Fund launched again in September 2023, with an available pot of almost £50,000 to support social economy businesses to bring forward their business growth plans. 30 applications for support were received, 14 of which were shortlisted to pitch with 11 winners selected. We have been developing our outreach and engagement to increase awareness of the sector, including targeted engagement activity with more than 50 young people in community settings. In recognition of these efforts, Belfast City Council won 'Council

of the Year’ at the Social Enterprise Northern Ireland Awards in October 2023 for the second consecutive year. Most recently we applied to Social Enterprise Northern Ireland to become recognised as an official Social Enterprise Place, part of a SENI & SEUK initiative and are awaiting the outcome of this. In March 2024 we launched the public ‘Social Economy Directory’ on the Belfast City Council website and have 40 organisations registered on this across the city.

- 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:

The development of a GIS (Geographic Information System) monitoring approach to systematically assist programme development to continue to tackle inequalities in access to the labour market has continued throughout 23-24. A regional Labour Market Observatory (LMO) is being developed through our work with UU EPIC Futures (Economic and Social Partnering for Inclusive Innovation and Collaboration) and to inform what this needs to look like, we are working with IPPO to ensure that we have an agreed vision, purpose and shape of – as well a roadmap for – what is needed for Belfast within a Labour Market Observatory which will bring together information, intelligence and analysis of the labour market within city in terms of demand (job demand, skills gaps etc.), supply (insights into section 75 groups, geospatial deprivation etc.), provision (including ‘what works well’) and policy. This ‘mapping’ monitors the Employability and Skills ecosystem in the city of Belfast and provides vital insights for policy development, addressing inequalities for various S75 groups.

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 2023-24, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

- Four diversity sessions for managers were delivered to 34 attendees. With 5 sessions for employees, to a total of 58 attendees. The diversity sessions have a broad remit exploring equality legislation.
- Four sessions focused on Screening Training and was delivered to 43 attendees. Context was provided by raising awareness of the provisions of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, our equality scheme commitments and the particular issues likely to affect people across the range of Section 75 categories. Staff were recruited based on their involvement in the assessment of policies with the necessary skills and knowledge to implement the Scheme commitments.

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:

In relation to the sessions focused on Screening Training, evaluation comments demonstrated effectiveness

- Helped develop knowledge
- Enjoyable session with well-informed trainers.
- Very interesting, look forward to sharing in teams meeting
- Facilitators were very knowledgeable and made more enjoyable
- Very good quality training and appreciated offer of future support of required

Suggestions on improvements received from attendees are reviewed and incorporated into future training sessions where appropriate.

For training on diversity and disability comprehensive evaluations are carried out with each training group to monitor how well training is received and how it can then be incorporated into activities. Comments received reflect how the interactive training, where case studies are used to allow discussion in a group setting, bring to life legislation, which previously had seemed remote. Comments include:

- The legislation, I knew about some but not others. The case study - didn't realise about what you have think about when planning until it is broken down.
- All the information is very useful, especially disability awareness information guide. Use of video was useful.
- Very enjoyable, well delivered. Content very relevant.
- Possibly deliver over a longer day for more in-depth discussions and information.

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

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2023-24, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:
- a. With previous engagement programmes demonstrating lower numbers for young people, when it came to the pilot Participatory Budget process, we deliberately ensured that the voting events were family-friendly, e.g. each event included fun activity games that children, young people and adults would enjoy. We also used fun and visible ways to collect data e.g. a token counter to monitor age ranges and happy / sad face poster with sticky dots to collect satisfaction data. Unlike many of our formal consultations, the in-person PB process enabled younger people to have a voice. 43% of those submitting a ballot paper were aged 24 and under, with a third (34%) aged 4 – 13 years of age, reflecting the family friendly nature of the events. In contrast, only 9% of voters were aged 24 and under for the online voting.

- b. We facilitate an Employability and Skills Provider Network which provides local organisations - who work with those further from the labour market – with information on upcoming opportunities to enable them to prepare and match their participants (who are underrepresented in the labour market) with the upcoming opportunities. Over the last year this has grown to 358 are members of this network across 115 organisations who represent a wide range of Section 75 groups: disability organisations, women’s centres, youth-based projects, migrants’ groups etc.

This has resulted in participation rates on Employment Academies of:

- 14% coming from an ethnic minority.
- 18% with a disability.
- 48% are women.
- 15% identifying as LGB.
- 12% young people (under 25yrs)
- 23% older people (45yrs+)

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

- 27** How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2023-24?

Insert number here: 1

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

Having previously requested a copy of the Fuel Poverty Hardship Fund screening the complainant was advised the Council did not hold the information requested. The response had been issued as the equality screening has not yet been finalised. A complaint in relation to the Equality Scheme was then received regarding non-compliance. Following investigation, a response was issued to the complainant detailing

the processes, in line with the Equality Scheme, in which a screening is made available at the earliest opportunity possible. Therefore, there was no basis for the complaint.

Section 3: Looking Forward

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

March 2025

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)*

All areas of the Equality Scheme will be reviewed in 2024-25.

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

- Employment
- Goods, facilities and services
- Legislative changes
- Organisational changes/ new functions
- Nothing specific, more of the same

Other (please state):

The Equality and Diversity Unit is under review, which should be complete in the year 2024-25.

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:

19

Fully achieved

17

Partially achieved

16

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 ⁱ	Outcomes / Impact ⁱⁱ
National ⁱⁱⁱ			
Regional ^{iv}			
Local ^v			

PART B

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Provision of specific targeted courses to employees	Deliver 2 tailor made disability courses to employees	<p>Autism Impact Award training delivered by Autism NI - 12 employees attended.</p> <p>Managing and Supporting Colleagues with Mental Health issues. Training delivered by EFDNI - 31 employees attended.</p> <p>Managing disability related absence - training delivered by EFDNI - 22 managers attended.</p> <p>Positive Mental Health- 6 sessions delivered. 96.8% of attendees completed an evaluation form- 100% of them found the course useful.</p> <p>Stress awareness for managers- 5 sessions delivered. 98.1% of attendees completed an evaluation form- 100% of them found the course useful.</p>
2	Explore opportunities to improve autism awareness and become an autism friendly employer.		<p>Autism Impact Award</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We now have 3 sites working on their Autism Impact Award - Belfast Zoo, Belfast Castle and Malone House which last for 3 years.

PART B

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belfast Zoo already have achieved the accreditation. An additional 12 employees from the 2 new sites attended training. • Sites have developed their own action plans to make them more accessible and inclusive for autistic employees and customers. • They receive help and support internally, from each other and Autism NI to develop their plans and make any adjustments needed to build an inclusive and welcoming environment for autistic individuals within Belfast City Council. • Belfast Castle and Malone House continue to work towards completing the programmes. <p>Jam Card</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have created our own team of JAM Card Champions • 49 Staff across the council have been trained on the Jam Card. • Our champions will ensure the JAM Card is continually embedded into the organisation by training our staff that have enthusiasm and passion around inclusion. • Staff are empowered to provide continual promotion of JAM Card, support colleagues with their understanding and address

PART B

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
			any barriers for people with disabilities or communication barriers.
3	Provision of Sign Language courses for employees	Deliver a BSL course.	A BSL course was delivered.
4	Provision of Communication Tools training at customer centres	Deliver a SignVideo training workshop for the Customer Hub team.	Frontline staff training delivered by SignVideo in Q1 2024 to staff in Customer Hub, City Hall and leisure centre staff on sign language interpretation services available at all venues.
5	Provide emotional health and wellbeing awareness training for staff (internal)	Positive mental health- 6 sessions delivered. 96.3% of attendees completed an evaluation form- 100% of them found the course useful.	Positive mental health- 6 sessions delivered. 96.3% of attendees completed an evaluation form- 100% of them found the course useful.

2(c) What Positive attitudes **action measures** in the area of **Communications** were achieved in this reporting period?

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	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	To ensure that digital platforms benefit all customers with a disability and disability stakeholders, including through assisting user with webform training and provision of computer facilities for public use where possible	People with a disability will have access to a point –of- service supported on-line resource within the Hub.	Service is provided ongoing at the reception within Cecil Ward building. Digital assist also offered for telephone contact with staff offer to submit online forms on behalf of customers. E.g., order a bin form. Frontline staff training delivered by SignVideo, a Video Relay Service communication platform for Sign Language users.
2	To include disability related information in staff e-briefings, staff newsletters/ magazines, staff meetings, email, intranet, internet (internal) Develop an annual disability awareness calendar and deliver associated awareness raising/ communication	% of internal communications documents which featured disability related information	Several articles relating to health and wellbeing/ disability featured on staff intranet and Staywell. Regular ‘newsletter’ and workshops are held for the E&S Provider Network on upcoming academies – and provision of ‘the year ahead’ with key details on employers, jobs, eligibility, pre-requisites, programme content, duration, additional support offered (childcare, sign-language interpreters, travel, subsistence etc.).

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

PART B

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	The Disability Advisory Panel (DAP) to attend and participate in consultation processes and to provide advice and guidance on various capital projects.	The Disability Advisory Panel to meet 4 times– on a quarterly basis.	<p>The Disability Advisory Panel met on 4 occasions</p> <p>Improved opportunities for people with disabilities to engage with and influence policy makers and to educate employees.</p> <p>Property Maintenance attended on 27th September to provide information on the role of the Unit and to discuss a ‘wish-list’ of maintenance items.</p> <p>Reconnecting Belfast – Waterworks & Alexandra Park presented to Disability Advisory Panel on 13th September on proposals for this park improvement development.</p>
2	The Disability Advisory Panel (DAP) to attend and participate in consultation processes	<p>4 projects per year to receive advice and guidance from DAP</p> <p>Number of changes to be made to policies/services as a result of their input</p>	<p>The Disability Advisory Panel participated in the following consultations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accessible Tourism 2. Employability and Skills Intervention 3. Pavement Cafes 4. Language Strategy Action Plan 5. Parks – Waterworks and Alexandra Park 6. Changing Places Policy 7. City Centre Bye Laws <p>The DAP has provided vital input in the above consultations to ensure accessibility and inclusion of disabled people is considered</p>

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2 (e) Please outline **any additional action measures** that were fully achieved other than those listed in the tables above:

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1	Facilitate biennial event on a current theme linked to council priorities e.g., International Day for People with Disabilities and Sign Language Week	<p>1 event to be held with external press and communications</p> <p>Attendance by a wide range of relevant organisations and disabled people</p>	<p>1 event was held.</p> <p>International Day for People with Disabilities on 4th December 2023. The theme for this event was 'Celebrating Deaf and Disabled People.' This was a partnership with Disability Action.</p> <p>This event was attended by disability organisations, disabled activists, and disabled people.</p> <p>Press releases were issued. Articles featured on the BCC website and on social media.</p>
2	Liaise with AccessAble to monitor provision of App for people with disabilities accessing facilities and services in the City of Belfast	Increased satisfaction accessing facilities and services in the City of Belfast	<p>40 access guides were re-surveyed.</p> <p>We provide external links to AccessAble's audits of our venues and facilities. This information lists access and other services that accommodate disabled people.</p>
3	Engage with under-represented groups via umbrella organisations to raise awareness of enterprise supports and put in place mechanisms to support disabled people access support programmes designed to help them start a business	Hold 2 meetings per year minimum with representatives' bodies	Since April 2023, the team has been working with partners to develop and deliver interventions that address the City's challenges in relation to low levels of business start-up, innovation, competitiveness, and productivity. Some of the key achievements in 2023/24 include:

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	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprise awareness activity: engaged 755 individuals, supporting them to progress to start a business. We continue to extend our reach to engage those individuals who are under-represented. This includes an increased focus on support for people with disabilities, individuals who are economically inactive, females and young people providing them with tools to overcome barriers to take positive steps to starting a business. 40 students and graduates also accessed support, 12 of whom are currently accessing salary support through Invest NI’s Student to First Sale intervention. We also enabled test trading opportunities for 18 new businesses through our dedicated start up space at St George’s Market and many of those are seeking to trade at the market on a more regular basis or are exploring alternative retail outlets for their products. • Start a business activity: Since the launch of Go Succeed in November 2023, we have received 573 enquiries from individuals wishing to start a business in Belfast. This has progressed through to 278 completed diagnostics directly leading to business plan development and 1-1 mentoring. • Support for Social Enterprises and Co-operatives: 57 organisations were supported with one-to-one mentoring, advice, and guidance. Four of these organisations were new co-operatives. The Social Enterprise and Co-operative Support programme has facilitated 28 events/workshops with over 350

PART B

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
			<p>attendees including a regional networking event, virtual global best practice visit and workshops. Our focused engagement with co-operative organisations has continued, and we organised 10 events, attracting 42 attendees. The Social Economy Incentive Fund launched again in September 2023, with an available pot of almost £50,000 to support social economy businesses to bring forward their business growth plans. 30 applications for support were received, 14 of which were shortlisted to pitch with 11 winners selected. We have been developing our outreach and engagement to increase awareness of the sector, including targeted engagement activity with more than 50 young people in community settings. In recognition of these efforts, Belfast City Council won 'Council of the Year' at the Social Enterprise Northern Ireland Awards in October 2023 for the second consecutive year. Most recently we applied to Social Enterprise Northern Ireland to become recognised as an official Social Enterprise Place, part of a SENI & SEUK initiative and are awaiting the outcome of this. In March 2024 we launched the public 'Social Economy Directory' on the Belfast City Council website and have 40 organisations registered on this across the city.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to the above-mentioned initiatives and support intervention, members of the EBG team sit on various panels/advisory groups including but not limited to, SENI Champions Group, Belfast Business

PART B

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
			<p>Promise Technical Panel, Social Value Procurement Policy Task & Review Group, and Social Value Working Group, as part of our efforts to support the sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business growth support: as ERDF funded programmes came to an end in March 2023 a 6-month interim growth service was shaped using data from previous programmes and client feedback. This interim service was delivered until the launch of the NI Enterprise Support Service/Go Succeed in November 2023. This ensured support was not paused and Belfast businesses could continue to reach out and receive the support they needed to grow. Through our business growth support, we assigned mentors to 166 businesses availing of 3,367 mentoring hours and delivered 11 workshops with over 140 attendees. Included in the positive outcomes were businesses committing to using their best endeavours to create 196 new jobs within 12 months of completing their mentoring assignments.
4	Work with disability support organisations to address barriers to access to council interventions and increase engagement by those with disabilities	Number of yearly engagements held with disability organisations to promote new employment initiatives, mentoring support and work placements	The E&S Provider Network has grown to 358 are members of this network across 115 organisations who represent a wide range of Section 75 groups including disability organisations. Regular 'newsletter' and workshops are held for the E&S Provider Network on upcoming academies – and provision of 'the year ahead' with key details on employers, jobs, eligibility, pre-requisites, programme content, duration, additional

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	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
			<p>support offered (childcare, sign-language interpreters, travel, subsistence etc.).</p> <p>E&S host on average 10 events and roadshows across the city to engage under-represented groups for Employment Academies and directly link organisations such as, NIUSE, Action Mental Health, JBOs, NOW Group, USEL, Orchardville, Specialisterne etc.</p> <p>We strive to ensure that we offer Employment Academies in jobs and sectors suitable and attractive to the range of those under-represented in the labour market and have found that the newest Employment Academies in Tech and Professional Service (e.g. admin) is naturally attracting average participants with a disability.</p> <p>This has resulted in participation rates on Employment Academies of 18% from those with a disability.</p> <p>Through our membership of RSA Cities of Learning, we have also designed digital badges for all those completing Employment Academies that recognise the skills being developed through a digital award. We also offer this to 25 organisations in the city, including those supporting those with disabilities (such as Triangle, Orchardville and Specialisterne) who have created a suite of digital badges for their participants.</p>

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	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
5	Provide specific adaptations/support to enable participants to take part in council employability initiatives	<p>Number of engagements with disabled people.</p> <p>6 monthly retrospective measurement of participant numbers on disability focused employment initiatives</p>	<p>The E&S Provider Network has grown to 358 are members of this network across 115 organisations who represent a wide range of Section 75 groups including disability organisations.</p>
6	Deliver the Inspiring Communities theme which identifies disabled people as a priority area and removing barriers to participation to ensure all sections of the community engage with high quality culture, arts, and heritage	<p>Deliver small capital enhancement projects that will increase access for disabled people to quality cultural product and experiences</p> <p>Deliver partnership programme with University of Atypical.</p>	<p>Access and Inclusion 23/24 reopened in August 2023 and awarded two projects funding. These include installation of a hardwired induction loop system in a large theatre venue and improving access requirements in a city centre venue.</p> <p>Partnership with University of Atypical produced social narrative videos for audiences accessing the following venues: The Lyric Theatre, Duncairn Arts and Cultural Centre, Belfast Exposed, The Crescent Arts Centre, The Grand Opera House, The Mac and Artsekta. University of Atypical delivered training for 20 disability champions.</p>
7	Seek approval to appoint a senior Disability Champion	Senior Disability Champion nominated/appointed	<p>Two elected members who sit on the Council's Disability Working Group were nominated as Diversity Ambassadors. Two officers including the City Solicitor were also nominated as Diversity Ambassadors.</p>

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	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
8	Review the temporary pavement café licensing scheme and associated guidance with a particular focus on its impact on disabled people and considering opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity	Level of complaints related to access uses at licensed Pavement Cafés	In September 2023, Council agreed that the temporary scheme would expire on 31 December 2023 and a permanent scheme was to be introduced. Following this agreement a public consultation was carried out including various targeted engagement sessions with S75 groups in the last quarter of 2023. The permanent scheme commenced on 1 st January 2024 with a transition period of 4 months. We have heard the issues raised through consultations/engagement from people with disabilities and recognise there is a balance to be reached in terms of meeting the needs of people with varying disabilities. Mitigations will include close monitoring of the implementation of the scheme in terms of impacts, managing the numbers of complaints received and ongoing engagement with sector 75 groups. From 1st April 2023 to 31 st December 2023, there were 5 complaints received under the temporary scheme around access. Since the introduction of the new permanent scheme on 1 st January 2024 to 31 st March 2024 (the transition period), there were no complaints in relation to this issue.
9	To include articles related to disability and ensure photography of disabled people is included in the City Matters magazine	Images in the City Matters magazine featuring positive images of disabled people.	Images and continued promotion of disabled people included in the City Matters magazine bi-annually.
10	Printed documents and brand campaigns to feature positive images of disabled people	Images in printed documents featuring positive images of disabled people.	Images are provided in the current Disability Action Plan 2022-25.

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

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	Identify opportunities to ring-fence certain BCC job to long-term unemployed, including those with a disability and ensure any pre-recruitment and training programme caters for any reasonable adjustments	<p>Consider suitability of campaigns for pre-recruitment and training programmes</p> <p>Ring-fence 20% of places and training programmes to people with disabilities</p>	<p>Worked with employability partners across the city including disability organisations to deliver pre-employment training academies to support ring fenced opportunities for the long term employed, for General Operative posts and made 5 permanent appointments from this exercise.</p> <p>Of the 5 participants on the programme who declared a disability, 3</p>	This is still work in progress.

PART B

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
			<p>applied for the role and 2 were recommended for appointment.</p> <p>Worked with employability partners across the city to deliver an information session as part of the Combined HGV/LGV Driver loader recruitment campaign which offered guidance on completing the recruitment process and gave a practical insight into the role. Mock interviews were also offered as part of this opportunity. 7 people who attended the information session and applied for the posts were offered permanent driving roles.</p> <p>Supported the DfC Job start Programme with eight placements.</p>	

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	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
2	Disabled people to participate in careers/employability activity targeted towards disabled people i.e. career fairs, mock interviews, site visits, employability talks	Attend 4 events a year. This will be dependent on a full lifting of restrictions	<p>Delivered one employability talk to students from disability organisations.</p> <p>Attended Belfast Special Schools Business Education Partnership careers fair.</p> <p>Attended one meeting of the Belfast Special Schools Business Education Partnership meeting. Offered support for mock interviews and employability talks to students- no contact from schools made.</p>	This is still work in progress.
3	Work with disability organisations to develop targeted outreach to encourage and support disabled people to consider enterprise and start a business	Number of events, attendees at events and referrals to business support	There were 20 separate events/workshops completed in 23/24 that included significant outreach and engagement with several organisations working with people currently underrepresented in	This is still work in progress

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	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
			<p>Enterprise including people with disabilities.</p> <p>Work continues to ensure all business start activities are accessible and promotion of activities are visible to all with all events being promoted through organisations that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USEL • NI Union of Supported Employment • GEMSNI • The Association for Inclusive Entrepreneurship NI • Disability Action • Adapt NI • Cedar Foundation • Autism NI • ArtsEkta • Prince’s Trust NI • Orchardville • Centre for Health & Wellbeing 	

PART B

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning to C.H.A.N.G.E 	
4	Engage with city stakeholders to put in place mechanisms to encourage businesses to support accessibility for disabled people.	Number of stakeholders engaged/activities delivered	We are currently undertaking some targeted outreach to engage businesses in the retail sector to build on their on their disability awareness, plans and address any queries. The Enterprise and Business Growth Team have recently delivered 2 retail bootcamps with a view to not only support retailers but build long term relationships that will enable us to form focus groups with this sector when needed. We will build our knowledge on the BCC action plan so businesses can be signposted to the relevant person/organisation for advice and guidance.	This is still work in progress.

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	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
			<p>We are focused more than ever on making our business mentoring support more accessible as well as our workshop venues to people with disabilities. At our last team meeting we invited a colleague from our Governance and Compliance team to present details of the draft 'Making Communications Accessible guide' so we comply with the correct guidelines and procedures. This guidance can also be shared with retailers at future workshops that we plan to shape</p> <p>We have also been engaging directly through the BIDs to put in place a series of activities to support their members, this also includes understanding their needs in relation to</p>	

PART B

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
			accessibility and disability awareness.	
5	Raise awareness of council's Disability Event Plan	Number of completed event action plans received	We have developed a Making Communications Accessible guide which includes guidance on how to make events inclusive. The next steps are to share the Making Communication Accessible Guide online on the Council internet website. A Disability page will be developed to ensure staff are supported in completing event actions plans.	This is still work in progress and this work will be completed in 2024/25.
6	To provide a clear description on website and City Matters of what services are available in Sign Languages to members of the public. This includes how to request documents/forms in Sign Language, how to request an interpreter/translator and how to call the council using the SignVideo relay service	Accessible material in Sign Language.	SignVideo signage is in place at Cecil Ward reception and within the Accessibility section on website. Accessibility section on website also details how to request forms etc in alternative formats.	<p>This is still work in progress. Accessible material in Sign Language is to be developed for the website.</p> <p>Sign Video information is published on contact us web page: https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/contact/main-council-offices#176-5</p> <p>Accessibility statement is reviewed and updated regularly highlighting online content that is non-compliant with accessibility regulations., https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/accessibility</p>

PART B

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
7	Provide information to disabled people on aspects of council services which specifically affect them through a minimum of 4 articles per year in the City Matters; a minimum of 2 targeted information leaflets per year; accessible information on the website	<p>Images in printed documents featuring positive images of disabled people.</p> <p>Number of documents provided in alternative formats.</p> <p>People who found information relevant and useful assessed by appropriate evaluation tool.</p>	<p>Images printed in new Disability Action Plan 22-25 documents.</p> <p>Several documents are provided in alternative formats.</p> <p>Accessible information can be found on the Accessible section on the website.</p>	<p>An appropriate evaluation tool to be carried out to assess whether accessible information provided is relevant and useful. However we published information on our services and facilities that are available to disabled people, https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/council/equality-and-diversity/supporting-people-with-disabilities</p> <p>We also continued promotion via City Matters bi-annually.</p>
8	Develop an annual disability awareness calendar and deliver associated awareness raising/communication	Calendar in place and awareness delivered.	A calendar continues to be developed. Several awareness articles have been introduced on the staff intranet. For example, promoting International Day for People with Disabilities and Sign Language Week	This is work in progress.
9	Roll-out Diversity Awareness training programme for council employees	<p>Deliver 12 disability awareness training sessions to managers and employees.</p> <p>Deliver 12 diversity awareness sessions to</p>	11 disability awareness sessions delivered- 5 for managers (35 attendees) and 6 for employees (78 attendees).	Equality and Diversity Module training for Tier 3 manager still to be progressed.

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	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
		<p>managers and employees.</p> <p>All new staff to attend training within 6 months of commencing employment.</p> <p>All Tier 3 managers to attend Equality and Diversity Module training.</p>	<p>10 diversity sessions delivered- 4 for managers (34 attendees) and 5 for employees (58 attendees).</p> <p>17.6% of new staff in 2023/2024 attended diversity awareness training within 6 months of commencing employment.</p> <p>21.0% of new staff attended disability awareness training within 6 months of commencing employment.</p>	
10	<p>To promote and review disabled toilet access and engage with disability groups to encourage wider use. To promote the Changing Places facilities across the city and review the existing process</p>	<p>Report on the review of existing process and</p> <p>Continue to increase choice of available Changing Places facilities across the city, now available in 5 leisure centres.</p>	<p>A draft Changing Places Policy was developed in 2023/24.</p> <p>Waste management support changing places facilities where possible including the distribution of RADAR keys.</p>	<p>This is still work in progress. The draft Changing Places Policy is expected to be ratified by Council in 2024/25.</p> <p>The Council continues to promote the expansion of Changing Places facilities within its premises and disability access to standard toilets. The Council is developing a Changing Places Toilet Policy via the Disability Working Group. Further information available via https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/publictoilets</p>

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	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
11	To provide information and training (where necessary) to front-line staff about RADAR key, including its use and how to apply for it	Ensuring a continuing presence of Changing Places facilities are available on BCC and Changing Places website. We work with age friendly Belfast/community services, to promote the distribution of Radar Keys, with details all on the website. Also, with regards to the training of front-line staff, it will be part of the Hub knowledge base	Waste Management continues to oversee the distribution of RADAR keys. A list of Changing Places facilities is listed in the Accessibility section of the website.	To train front-line staff regarding the Radar key is still to be implemented.
12	To provide more accessible and inclusive play facilities across the city.	Ensure the annual Playground Improvement Programme (PIP) provides more accessible and inclusive play facilities across the city. Existing sites are refurbished under the programme and will include a greater range of	All improvements works under PIP 2023-24 are now complete. Loughside playground, North Link playground and New Lodge playground were refurbished under the programme. All facilities now contain a greater range of accessible	This is work in progress. Recommendations from the audit will inform PIP 2024-25 site selections and subsequent programmes. The audit template is derived from Play England / Play Scotland guidance and further input from our Play Development Officer, the Mae Murray Foundation and Playboard NI. Findings will also act as a design tool to help ensure improved accessibility and inclusive play opportunities are delivered at selected sites going forward.

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	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
		<p>inclusive equipment. We are now planning for PIP 2022-23 which will deliver similar outcomes in terms of inclusive playground design</p>	<p>equipment, including items for sensory play and children’s communication boards.</p> <p>A new audit of all council playgrounds, focused on play value and accessibility, was undertaken in Spring 2024.</p>	
13	<p>Improve accessibility within shared spaces programmes</p>	<p>To deliver a physical programme under the PIV Shared Spaces and Services Theme.</p>	<p>The PEACE IV Shared Spaces Project, Forth Meadow Community Greenway, was completed and open to the public in September 2023.</p> <p>This 12km stretch of pathways links parks and communities along key sites from Glencairn to Springfield Dam, Falls Park, Bog Meadows to the new Transport Hub.</p>	<p>Work on Forth Meadow Community Greenway completed in 23/24 except for signage which is underway.</p> <p>Work on Phase 1 of Black Mountain Shared Spaces project has progressed well and will be launched at the end of June 2024. The facility is accessible throughout and includes a lift and a changing places facility. Bi-lingual signage has also been installed. Work on Phase 2 will commence in 2024/25.</p> <p>Work on Shankill Shared Women’s Centre has progressed well. The centre is accessible throughout and has a changing places facility, lift access to all floors, and disabled toilets. Completion and launch of the Centre is expected in June 2024.</p>

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	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
			<p>The paths are well used by local communities.</p> <p>Council's OSS and Parks units are maintaining and delivering activity along the Greenway.</p>	
14	Persons with a disability are able to attend and fully engage in events and programmes delivered by council.	Ensure that the Inclusive Events Checklist is completed for all events that are being held in council facilities.	Large events held with an inclusive events checklist completed.	<p>The parks events team have undertaken an accessibility audit for the events delivered as part of the annual departmental programme.</p> <p>The provision of a changing places unit is now made available at directly managed C&NS events unless not available for hire due to demand. 3rd party organisers are encouraged to use the Council's inclusive events guide.</p>
15	The Disability Staff Network to input into future planning.	Disability employees are supported to input into action planning.	2 staff network meetings held.	The Disability Staff Network is expected to meet at least 3 times a year.
16	Facilitate at least 30 work experience placements for people with disabilities including participation in annual job shadowing initiative promoted by NIUSE (internal)	Disabled people have the opportunity to participate in work experience	Placement opportunities were resumed on a gradual basis. One person with a disability was placed	This is work in progress.
17	Develop a Reasonable Adjustment Passport to record an employees agreed workplace adjustments	Reasonable Adjustments Passport developed	Progress is being made.	This is work in progress.

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	Review membership of Equality Consultative Forum and increase representation of disabled people and representing organisations	The Equality Consultative Forum is under review with actions planned for October 2024.
2	Arrange a minimum of 3 Equality Consultative Forum meetings per year and additional meetings as required	This action has been delayed due to internal re-structuring.
3	Carrying out a targeted consultation to identify the potential impact of living in a rural area for those with a disability within the Council area	This action has been delayed due to internal re-structuring.
4	Discussion on the proposed development of a corporate disability communications policy based on advice from the Disability Advisory Forum and relevant stakeholders	This action has been delayed due to the Language Action Plan not being finalised
5	The Sign Language Users Forum to provide advice and guidance on various capital projects	Sign Language Users Forum only met once in 2023/24. There will be an increased number of meetings in 2024/25.
6	Discussion on the proposed development of a corporate disability communications policy based on advice from the Sign Language Users Forum and relevant stakeholders	This action will be looked at during 2024/25. This is also an action in our new Language Action Plan.
7	Appropriate accessible measures will be in place for those wishing to attend VCSE (Voluntary Community Social Enterprise Groups) Panel meetings	This action will be progressed in 2024/25.
8	The VCSE Panel to be refreshed. We will ensure that the recruitment process is accessible to sector representatives with a disability and in addition, consideration will be given to engaging the sector as part of the	This action will be progressed by 2024/25.

PART B

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
	VCSE Citywide network to ensure that the views of people with a disability are included as part of the community planning process	
9	Review recruitment process in respect of adjustments provided to applicants with autism and learning difficulties	Not progressed to date.
10	Conduct a voluntary monitoring exercise and investigate how disclosure in declaring a disability can be encouraged	The planned voluntary monitoring survey has not been progressed yet for operational reasons.
11	Develop an approach to translated Sign Language “welcome” information at identified council venues	This is an action for 2024/25 therefore it does not apply to this annual report. We continued promotion via media and social media channels.
12	To expand the provision of Sign Language translation on popular pages on the website	This is an action for 2024/25 therefore it does not apply to this annual report.
13	To promote Disability Communication tools on social media and the Council internal and external websites	This is an action for 2024/25. This action will be implemented once we have introduced appropriate communication tools.
14	Develop an approach to signage across the Council facilities liaising with relevant departments on the installation and procurement of new Disability signages e.g., braille, tactile maps	This action has been placed in the Council’s new Language Action Plan. This is an action for 2024-28.
15	Include disability awareness sessions for Members in the Members Training Programme and include Disability Action Plan in the members induction programme. The Disability Action Plan to be uploaded to the Members Portal	This has not progressed. This is an action for 2024/25.
16	Organise specialist training/workshop for Project Sponsors/Project Managers/APMs regarding the relevant DDA issues on capital build scheme	Options are being researched and will be scheduled on a later date if suitable.

PART B

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
		Officers are aware of the important relevance of DDA issues on capital build schemes and consideration of accessibility needs is an important aspect of all our projects.

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

The Disability Action Plan 2022-25 was monitored during this reporting period. We are able to monitor progress from feedback provided by departmental representatives.

(b) Quantitative

Monitoring milestones in action plans and reporting to ECNI in annual report.

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

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

Please select

If yes, please outline below:

PART B

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1			
2			
3			

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, we do not intend to make any further revisions to our plan.

ⁱ **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.

ⁱⁱ **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.

ⁱⁱⁱ **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments

^{iv} **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level

^v **Local** : Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.