



**Belfast
City Council**

**Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties
Annual Progress Report 2020-2021**

Contact:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme	Name: Lorraine Dennis/Lisa McKee Telephone: 90320202 Email: equality@belfastcity.gov.uk
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan	Name: Michael Johnston Telephone: Email: equality@belfastcity.gov.uk

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

<https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/council/equality/annual-reports.aspx>

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 2020 and March 2021

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 2020-21, 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.

Please see Appendix 1 to the Annual Progress Report 2020-2021 entitled “Equality and Diversity Framework April 2017 – March 2021 - Update 2020/2021”.

The actions included in the Equality and Diversity Framework 2017-2021 were approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 22nd September 2017. A number of strategic actions have been developed and are currently being delivered including:

Covid 19 Recovery Plan

A Cultural Strategy for Belfast

Local Development Plan

City Deal

Belfast Open Spaces Strategy

Capital Projects

City and Neighbourhood Transition and Improvement Plan

Social Value Procurement Framework

Urban Villages Programme

Recovery Revitalisation

PART A

2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2020-21 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

Please see Appendix 2 attached, which provides an update on all actions and gives insight into outcomes.

3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2020-21 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:

As the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic became clear, Belfast City Council's response required an agile approach in terms of decision-making. Such decisions affected service provision and staff flexibility in protecting public health and were often dictated by legislation.

A screening was carried out in line with commitments made in our Equality Scheme where 'policy' is broadly defined and covers all the ways we intend to carry out our functions. As such, it covers the decision-making framework for temporary changes made since 11 March 2020 when the World Health Organisation officially declared Covid-19 a pandemic due to the speed and scale of transmission.

Our priority in the initial stages of the pandemic - the response phase - was to continue safe delivery of critical council services to our residents and businesses in the city, including bereavement services, waste collection and street cleansing.

When restrictions were first introduced, we implemented our emergency planning format of governance - Silver and Gold Command. When in place, this format of governance was responsible for reviewing and granting approval for services to re-open or close / partially or fully recover.

Senior level support was agreed on an outline plan for Section 75 compliance, including identification of potential high risk areas for adverse impact on section 75 groups including:

- Reductions in services
- Funding allocations
- Issues relating to staff, for example, the furloughing process or changes to the implementation of HR policies
- Development of the public realm where there are missed opportunities for enhanced access for disabled people

Following the initial period of response, the council deployed a controlled approach to re-opening and recovering services. Not all council services and

facilities were able to be restored at once and the easing of lockdown restrictions through the NI Executive five-stage roadmap was the main driver for enabling this to happen.

The purpose of our screening was to ensure due regard to the promotion of equality of opportunity and regard to the promotion of good relations was integrated into the response phase, which covered the first six months of the pandemic, from March until September 2020.

The driver to screen the decision making process of the response phase through the identification of potential risk areas was to demonstrate our commitment to utilise the mechanisms of S75 compliance to help us make fairer and more inclusive decisions, which, ultimately, are better decisions.

As well as embedding consideration of S75 into the decision-making process, sources of information were also analysed to evaluate the decision made through a more focussed equality lens.

The list below shows the decisions made by Gold Command throughout the period of its operation:

- Political governance arrangements
 - Remote meetings protocol
 - Recommencement of meetings of standing committees and working groups
 - Cheque payments issued once a fortnight
- Enforcement
 - Non-enforcement of business licensing regulations for the duration of the Covid-19 pandemic
 - BCC as enforcement authority for Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations
- Procurement
 - Support for suppliers in distress (Relief Assistance for At-Risk Suppliers questionnaire on the BCC website)
- Services which were reduced / stopped
 - Household recycling centres
 - Bin collection/purple box collections
 - BDM&CP – stopped births and marriages, burials changed
 - Reduction in planning decisions/building control & site visits
 - Closure of car parks in parks
 - Closure of BCC buildings and facilities, including markets & car parks
 - Closure of community centres
- Community funding

PART A

- Distribution of BCC funds and DfC funds
 - Funding of festivals and events
- Community Provision
 - Summer schemes/third party parks events
- Distribution of Thematic Funding
 - Foodbanks/IT provision for children
- Summer Diversionary Funding
- Reopening the City
 - Pedestrianisation of streets
 - Pavement café licences
 - Visible social distancing measures including stencilling and signage
 - Reopening of city centre public toilets
 - Method for booking tickets for the zoo
 - Method for reopening leisure centres
- Operational Recovery Plan
 - Homeworking
 - Furloughing staff
 - Annual leave
 - Redeployment of staff
- Community support hubs/community helpline
 - food distribution programme – issues with data sharing with DfC & Belfast Trust
 - translation of community response hub leaflets
 - access to the community support hubs
- NI Protocol for Port Health Function
- Recommendation for staff to wear face coverings

The Equality and Diversity Unit continues to work with Officers throughout the Departments to bring together different skill sets in identifying potential risk areas where mitigations may be required and/or screenings may be required. It is emphasised that this strategic approach to screening does not negate the need for all individual screenings and the understanding of temporary changes to policies will continue to be assessed.

Consequently, screenings were undertaken on several specific actions within the context of the pandemic:

- Covid – 19 Household Waste and Recycling Centre Recovery Plan
- Covid – 19 Scheme for Licensing of Café Pavements

PART A

- Covid – 19 Community Support Fund
- Covid – 19 Micro funding Support for Grassroots Organisations

During this period, we remained cognisant of our duty to identify and lessen any adverse impact on our service users and staff. The process for approval of a change to a current service or staff protocol paid due regard to the equality duty. The Equality and Diversity Unit have worked alongside Council Officers developing responses to the pandemic at city level, and organisationally, both in terms of staff and services.

Specifically, in relation to services, a collated list providing the status of each is provided to decision makers. Services included are:

Belfast Zoo
Belfast Castle/Malone House/ Commercial Buildings
City Protection Service
Resources & Fleet
Open Spaces and Street scene
Community Provision
GLL (Leisure Centres)
Bereavement Services
Planning & Building Control
City Regeneration & Development
Economic Initiatives & International Development
City Events
Civic HQ
Functions & Exhibitions
Facilities Management

PART A

As with the process put in place for the identification of risk areas for differential impact, in decisions made in the initial response phase, similar measures are in place.

Given the context of a global pandemic there has been a significant impact across all society and the impact on particular section 75 groups are being evidenced currently at a policy level. Therefore, the level of adverse impact has been considered as minor and screening referred to temporary arrangements. Evidence gathered on the impact of the decisions would be considered if a more permanent change in the service or policy were to be implemented.

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:

For examples and details, please see 3 above.

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*):

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

X Other (*please specify and give details*):

On 11th March 2020 Health Organisation officially declared Covid 19 a Pandemic due to the speed and scale of its transmission. The Council's priority was to continue safe delivery of critical services to our residents and businesses in Belfast including bereavement services, waste collection and street cleansing. Following the initial period of response a controlled approach to reopening and recovering services was adopted. Not all

Council services and facilities were restored but once lockdown restrictions were eased, the Northern Ireland Executive’s five stage roadmap was used to enable some services to be restored. During this period, we remained cognisant of our duty to lessen any adverse impact on our service users and staff. The process of approval to change a current service or staff protocol paid due regard to the Equality duty and regard to Good Relations

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 2020-21 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Section 75 responsibilities for staff, managers and senior managers are outlined in our Achieving Through People Framework which sets out our organisational values and the behaviours that we expect our staff to demonstrate. Specific section 75 responsibilities are considered when a job description is revised or a new job description is written.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2020-21 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:

Equality of opportunity is mainstreamed throughout the Council and integrated within performance plans as applicable. We have ensured that equality and diversity was included

PART A

in committee and departmental planning templates. The corporate values of the organisation include consideration of equality to ensure this is fully embedded across the organisation. The Equality & Diversity Framework sits alongside the corporate plan and Belfast Agenda.

6 In the 2020-21 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 2020-21 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Within the Council's corporate plan 2020-2024, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion were agreed as corporate priorities and committee to the following:

"We will develop a new five-year Equality Scheme for the Council, implement a city-wide approach to linguistic diversity and develop a four-year Disability Strategy". Implementation of the Corporate Plan, including this priority is overseen by the Corporate Management Team and reported to Committee on a six-monthly basis.

A five-year review of the Equality Scheme was completed in December 2020 in addition to the Audit of Inequalities and Equality Action Plan. The key actions identified will be incorporated into corporate and departmental plans as appropriate.

The current Equality Action Plan, the Equality & Diversity Framework, outlines the key actions planned to address inequalities during this reporting period. Updates on outcomes are provided in the attached Appendix entitled "Equality and Diversity Framework April 2017 – March 2021 - Update 2020/2021". These actions were integrated into planning at the appropriate level.

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2020-21 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

PART A

Actions completed: Actions ongoing: Actions to commence:

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

Appendix entitled “Equality and Diversity Framework April 2017 – March 2021 - Update 2020/2021” provides an update on all the actions included in our Equality and Diversity Framework 2017-2021. 36 of these actions are on-going and will be reviewed as necessary. A number of strategic actions have been developed and are also being delivered including:

Covid 19 Recovery Plan

A Cultural Strategy for Belfast

Local Development Plan

City Deal

Belfast Open Spaces Strategy

Capital Projects

City and Neighbourhood Transition and Improvement Plan

Social Value Procurement Framework

Urban Villages Programme

Recovery Revitalisation

- 8** Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2020-21 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

An annual review of the Equality and Diversity Framework 2017-2021 took place with additional actions added as set out in the appendix entitled “Equality and Diversity Framework April 2017 – March 2021 - Update 2020/2021”.

- 9** In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2020-21 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)*

X All the time Sometimes Never

11 Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2020-21 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:

Covid 19 Revitalisation Programme

This is a new programme of work and one element of a bigger project to aid the City Recovery and re-opening. The project forms part of the City Recovery Programme and endorsed by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 19th June 2020. Officers from across the Council have been working to develop a city recovery plan underpinned by a set of guiding principles. The Council aimed to create an imaginative use of open and civic spaces particularly those is public ownership to support retail and hospitality sectors and give consideration to a temporary use of public open spaces in the short-term for cafes, restaurants and outdoor spaces to facilitate social distancing measures.

Given the circumstances that COVID presents, there is a need for measures to be developed and delivered quickly. We acknowledge that this project is evolving together with government guidance and the project is being implemented as a temporary pilot and thus subject to ongoing monitoring and review. The council has adapted consultation and communication to meet guidelines set out by the government in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. Council officers continue to engage with the public through online discussions and Q&As, meetings, emails, phone calls where face to face is communication is not possible. Experience and learning from the Primark fire response enabled the council to respond and deliver projects swiftly.

During early planning, we recognised that this project may affect people with disabilities, older people and/or their carers and those with dependents (eg people using a child’s buggy). Not all disabilities are visible – some are not immediately obvious, such as learning difficulties or mental health, as well as mobility, speech, visual or hearing impairments.

The council has consulted via the City Stakeholder group: This comprises of the following groups:

- **Public Sector:** DfI, PSNI, HSNI, DfC, Invest NI, Tourism NI, Translink N

PART A

- **Community/Voluntary Sector:** Visit Belfast, Greater Shankill Partnership, Failte Fierste Thiar, Markets Development Association, Greater Shankill Council, Belfast Community Circus School, Belfast South Community Resource
- **Business Representative Groups:** BCCM, Belfast One BID, Linen Quarter BID, Destination CQ BID, Victoria Square, Castlecourt Shopping Centre Hospitality Ulster, Retail NI
- **Trade Unions:** USDAW, UNITE

Political: This project continues to receive political oversight and endorsement of measures proposed by senior officers. Regular reports are provided to the CG&R and SP&R Committee on progress. Feedback received at CG&R and SP&R Committee meetings acted as part of the consultation process:

- June's SP&R Committee
- June CG&R Committee
- July's SP&R Committee
- September's SP&R Committee
-

Planned consultation work

- The council has invited Carer's NI to engage in the consultation.
- Ongoing engagement with IMTAC
- Future engagement with Guide Dogs Association (pending on their availability)
- Ongoing engagement with the City Stakeholders Group

12 In the 2020-21 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees:** *(tick all that apply)*

- Face to face meetings
- Focus groups
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- Questionnaires
- Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
- Internet discussions
- Telephone consultations
- Other *(please specify):* remote as opposed to face-to-face meetings due to pandemic

PART A

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:

The Council's Equality Consultative Forum which is made up of a range of representatives from Section 75 groups has been consulted on various policies including:

Initial and Updated Response to Covid-19 Pandemic

Belfast Regional City Deal

Forth Meadow Community Greenway

Place and Economy Upcoming Projects

Review of the Equality Consultative Forum

Equality Scheme

Consultation on Audit of Inequalities and Audit Action Plan 2021-2024

In addition, the Disability Advisory Panel, which comprises members with a range of disabilities, was consulted on a range of policies including accessing Council Services During Covid-19 Pandemic, Disability Action Plan, 5 Cs Public Realm and Belfast Entries Projects, Inclusive Growth and Audit of Inequalities and Action Plan 2021-2024.

- 13** Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2020-21 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

X Yes

No

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

In addition to engagement set out in Question 12, screenings have accompanied the public consultation of policies and strategies on the Council's consultation platform, an article was published in City Matters in relation to our new Equality Scheme which was approved in March 2021.

- 14** Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2020-21 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

X 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>

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

13

16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2020-21:

1	Policy consultations conducted with screening assessment presented.
	Policy consultations conducted with an equality impact assessment (EQIA) presented.
	Consultations for an EQIA alone.

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

A range of consultation methods are employed including, focus groups, stakeholder groups and information circulated in City Matters. In relation to screening assessments each report highlights the consultation methodology and these are available on request. During 2020-2021 we have replaced our consultation platform Citizen Space with YoursayBelfast.

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
 X
 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 2020-21 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes
 No
 X
 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 2020-21 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:

As reported in previous years, there are some gaps in relation to the collection and availability of data regarding section 75 groups at both a regional and organisational level. This has been highlighted with the Equality Commission and will continue to be addressed.

21 In analysing monitoring information gathered, was any action taken to change/review any policies? (*tick one box only*)

- Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

22 Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2020-21 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

None during this reporting period.

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

None during this reporting period.

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 2020-21, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

Due to the the Pandemic, advice and guidance have been provided on a priority basis. Formal training was provided to the temporary Community Support Hub staff on how to use the Big Word to be able to deal with calls in other languages.

- 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:

Restrictions have prevented normal face to face training and technical issues with the e-learning platform prevented online delivery of our general equality and diversity training. These technical issues are now being addressed

Staff took the opportunity to review and update the training content e.g. additional information on autism; Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT+) staff network; good relations

We delivered the following training as part of our Health and Wellbeing Strategy:

Mental Health First Aid- 19 participants

Stress Awareness for Managers- 51 participants

Webinars on various disability and health and wellbeing topics

As part of Mental Health Awareness Week, a number of articles were shared on the staff intranet to help encourage staff to look after their mental health e.g. mindfulness walk podcasts; meditation and mindfulness session, personal story on recovery from depression; signposting to support services

Continued signposting/ awareness raising relating to mental health during the Covid-19 crisis, via management updates and the health and wellbeing section on staff intranet

We have engaged with a wide variety of partner organisations to avail of their virtual programmes e.g.

- Stonewall delivered four awareness raising sessions to staff
 - Steps to Trans Inclusion
 - Introduction to Allyship
 - First Steps to Bi Inclusion
 - First Steps to LGBT Inclusion

A Championing LGBT Inclusion awareness session was delivered to Corporate Management Team

- WRDA delivered a number of awareness raising sessions relating to sexual harassment and consent;
- Mindfulness walk podcasts shared as part of Mental Health Awareness week
- Arab culture awareness session delivered

Place & Economy Department staff continue to attend equality and diversity training, so that we can meet the needs of those who tend to be under-represented. In addition, to assist in service delivery staff have also attended specific sessions such as:

- Our Employability & Skills team attend all Migrant Forum meetings to better understand the needs of black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) people and ensure our employability programmes are accessible.
- We have maintained strong relationships through bespoke workshops across the year with a range of disability specialist organisations (Disability Action, Orchardville, AMH, Action on Hearing Loss, NOW Group, USEL etc. through NIUSE as the umbrella body) to ensure that employment academies and other interventions are accessible to people with disabilities. This includes providing match-funding to two disability projects within the city: Specialisterne and USEL.

Planning and delivery of a pilot Transport Upskilling Academy for Belfast City Council staff in City & Neighbourhood Services to be provided with the opportunity to gain a Category C (lorry) licence that will enable them to have the qualification and skills needed to access a better job.

Other training course attended by staff include:

LGBT+ Training

First Steps to Bi Inclusion

First Steps to LGBT Inclusion

First Steps to Trans Inclusion

Introduction to Allyship

Mental Health Awareness for Managers

Mental Health First Aid

Stonewall Inclusive Leadership

NI Housing Conference (would have equality and diversity aspects)

NI Planning Conference (would have equality and diversity aspects)

NI Infrastructure Conference (would have equality and diversity aspects)

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

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2020-21, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, there was an increase in the SignVideo usage especially during the period from May - August 2020. During this time the council established the Community Response Hub to deal with queries and deliver food parcels. Training was provided to staff working in the Community Response Hub on how to deal with calls via thebigword.

Overall, the improvements included:

PART A

1. Training and support provided by EDU for Community Response Hub staff
2. Customers receiving support and responses in their preferred language
3. Measures adopted to meet the diverse needs of Belfast residents

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

27 How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2020-21?

Insert number here:

None

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

PART A **Section 3: Looking Forward**

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

Following the completion of the five-year review, the Equality Scheme is next due for review in 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)*

In line with the guidance received from the Equality Commission, the implementation of section 75 will continue to be an area of focus for 21/22 with all areas to continue to be of focus.

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):

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:

7

Fully achieved

20

Partially achieved

4

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			

All our work is at Belfast level. However, we impact at many levels by promoting excellence in equality, sharing good practice and promoting leadership. Belfast City Council has a range of activities across all departments, which promote the two duties. Any action measures which were completed during reporting period 19-20 are not included below.

PART B

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Pilot training for Making Communications Accessible Guide to Customer Hub managers and Good Relations team.	One session delivered 18 people attended	Develop the capacity of staff to understand required steps in addressing communication requests. This included how to complete requests for documents in alternative formats and how to book a Sign Language interpreter.
2			

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

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	A new council accessible website in place	The Marketing and Communications team launched a new Council website which meets the WCAG 2.1 requirements	Council increases the level of inclusive/accessible communications so that disabled people can access information as independently as possible and make informed choices
2			

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 met 4 times online – on a quarterly basis.	<p>Improved opportunities for disabled people to engage with and influence policy makers</p> <p>The following topics were discussed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Council’s Inclusive Growth Charter 2. Equality Scheme, Audit of Inequalities and Equality Action Plan Consultation 2021-24 3. Council’s Lighting Strategy 4. Belfast Entries Project (Physical Programmes
2	Facilitate a Sign Language Users Forum	A Sign Language Users Forum met 2 times online during 2020/21	Improved opportunities for Sign Language Users to engage with and influence policy makers and to educate employees
3	The Disability Staff Network to provide support on future action planning	4 staff network meetings arranged.	Disabled people are provided with appropriate support to enhance employability and obtain employment

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

PART B

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1	Changing Place toilet facilities in place	New Changing Place toilet facility in place at Belfast Zoo	Belfast Zoo has opened a new Changing Places facility, a specialist accessible toilet with changing facilities, providing people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, their carers, assistants and families the confidence to enjoy a day out at Belfast Zoo. The accessible facility is designed with enough space and equipment for people who are not able to use the toilet independently. Located in the zoo's Visitor Centre, the space offers a height-adjustable adult-sized changing bench, a ceiling mounted hoist, a centrally placed toilet with space either side, non-slip floor, privacy screen, adjustable washbasin and emergency alarm.
2	Provide ongoing advice and support to employees in relation to reasonable adjustment requirements	Number of reasonable adjustments requested completed	Develop the capacity of the organisation to support people with disabilities in the workplace
3	Facilitate an Equality Consultative Forum	The Forum met 3 times during 2020/21 on the following dates: 18 November 2020 31 March 2021 & 17 June 2021.	Feedback encouraged from council departments in how we can encourage greater participation by disabled people and how we can improve our services

PART B

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	Review membership of Equality Consultative Forum (ECF) and increase representation of disabled people and representing organisations	<p>New ECF Terms of Reference established</p> <p>% attendance at each meeting from cross section of disability organisations/individuals</p> <p>% of staff/members who understand purpose of the ECF and find it useful</p> <p>Effective feedback mechanism established, and used by members</p>	<p>Feedback encouraged from disabled people and their representative groups in how we can encourage greater participation by disabled people in public life and we can prove that we act on this feedback</p>	<p>The Equality Consultative Forum has been taking place virtually since the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the attendance at meetings has been low.</p> <p>A review of the forum and commitment to group will be taking place and it is anticipated that frequency of meetings would increase.</p>
2	To promote and review disabled toilet access and engage with disability groups to encourage wider use	<p>Effective review of existing process for disabled toilets and effective feedback from disability groups</p>	<p>Improve awareness of disabled toilet facilities for people with disabilities</p>	<p>Some initial high-level work was carried out pre-Covid-19, to look at a Toilet Strategy refresh. This work however was impacted by Covid-19 and it is envisaged that given the cross-departmental nature of toilet provision across the Council that this work should be framed within a Corporate context and in particular the inclusive, city regeneration plans</p>

PART B

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
3	Review recruitment process in respect of adjustments provided to applicants with autism and learning difficulties	% of changes implemented	Disabled people are provided with appropriate support to enhance employability and obtain employment	Guidance on role of support at interviews worker has been drafted and still needs to be finalised/ approved.
4	Consider all requests for reasonable adjustments as part of the selection process	% of reasonable adjustments requested and provided	Disabled people are provided with appropriate support to enhance employability and obtain employment	There were no requests for reasonable adjustments at any stage of the selection process. The Guaranteed Interview Scheme was not applied mainly due to the majority of posts being internally trawled (and therefore the shortlisting criteria not being applied) with limited external recruitment as a result of ongoing corporate change process to mitigate potential staff redundancies Monitoring form was revised to include question relating to reasonable adjustments requirements as part of the R&S process
5	Facilitate at least 30 work experience placements for people with disabilities Participate in annual job shadowing initiative promoted by NIUSE (internal)	30 placement opportunities facilitated, including three via the job shadowing initiative	Disabled people have the opportunity to participate in work experience	Placements were put on hold due to Covid-19. The annual job shadowing initiative was postponed by NIUSE

PART B

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
				We have recently been able to offer a few virtual project- based placement opportunities- no disabilities declared
6	<p>Provide ongoing advice and support to employees in relation to reasonable adjustment requirements</p> <p>Investigate options around how staff could be encouraged and feel confident in declaring a disability via internal HR system</p> <p>Conduct a voluntary monitoring exercise</p>	<p>Monitor number of reasonable adjustments requests and those subsequently provided</p> <p>Create database of types of reasonable adjustments made</p> <p>Publish results from investigation /voluntary monitoring and make recommendations as appropriate</p>	<p>Develop the capacity of the organisation to support staff with disabilities</p>	<p>Database of reasonable adjustments created. 209 reasonable adjustments, both permanent and temporary were made, 131 of which were DDA related. Examples include purchase of equipment, phased return to work; redeployment, support for medical appointments, light duties, change in shift pattern, homeworking, no working at heights</p> <p>The planned voluntary monitoring survey, which was due to be carried out in 2020, was delayed due to Covid-19</p> <p>A significant number of staff do not have access to PC's. These employees would be required to complete a paper-based survey which was not viable due to the restrictions / furloughing of staff etc.</p> <p>Personal story included on Interlink</p>

PART B

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
				<p>Monitoring form was revised to include question relating reasonable adjustments requirements as part of the R&S process</p> <p>Continue to raise awareness of benefits of disclosure during diversity and disability awareness training- no training delivered during 2020/2021 due to Covid-19</p> <p>Held meeting with Education Authority's Disability and Carers Network- various suggestions on improving communications around disability. These will be considered/ progressed over the coming months, as appropriate</p>
7	Deliver targeted outreach to encourage and support disabled people to consider enterprise and start a business	Increase in % participants with disability on enterprise awareness initiatives	Disabled people who are considering starting a business are supported	For many disabled people, starting a business provides greater flexibility and choice around working hours, working conditions and for many, provides greater independence than working for someone else. Data collated from the Go for It Programme indicated 4% of participants declared a disability. (Note, information is provided on a voluntary basis, as it is not compulsory for clients to disclose;

PART B

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
				<p>however, it does provide an indication of statistical evidence for monitoring purposes). Through our enterprise awareness initiatives we have a responsibility to engage individuals from underrepresented groups to support them to start a business, with support moving online this year as a result of Covid 19 we appreciate that this will have created additional barriers and will work to better engage them as we move into recovery from Covid 19.</p>
8	<p>Review and consider opportunities to engage disabled people in the Belfast Employability Pathway (Belfast Workplace)</p> <p>Provide specific adaptations/support to enable participants to take part in council employability initiatives</p>	<p>6 monthly retrospective measurement of participant numbers on disability focused employment initiatives</p>	<p>Disabled people are supported to access employability initiatives</p>	<p>As part of section 75 monitoring, disability information is collated from participants on each academy prior to starting to take account of adjustments needed to ensure opportunities are available to all.</p> <p>Given the impact of Covid-19, the Skills and Employability team aims to ensure that employability academies reach the correct target audience and shorten referral pathway to organisations who work with disadvantaged groups.</p>

PART B

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Employability and Skills team hosted a series of meetings and presentations throughout 2020. This helped shape our provision as part of economic recovery arising from the Covid pandemic. • To inform best practice on access to the Council’s Employment Academies, Employability and Skills staff met with DfE, NI Union of Supported Employment and the Equality Commission. This advice helped shape disability accessibility in preparation for resumption of full academy provision.
9	Engage with under-represented groups via umbrella organisation representation on the Enterprise and Business Growth Working Group Put in place reasonable adjustments to support disabled people access support programmes designed to help them start a business	Hold 2 meetings per year minimum with representative bodies/stakeholder groups	Programmes and activities are promoted to persons with a disability through suitable mediums	In this year much of the unit’s engagement has been impacted by Covid 19 and resource implications because of officers supporting the delivery of Covid 19 recovery support. Disability Action have been engaged through our stakeholder lists this year which we have used to share details of our ongoing start up and business support.

PART B

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
				<p>The Enterprise and Business Growth Team regularly engage with disability specialist organisations such as USEL, NOW Group and the Orchardville Society to develop interventions to support the development of their businesses. Each of these organisations have participated in our business support programmes in previous years.</p>
10	<p>Address licensing of Pavement Cafes when the council receives guidance from the Department for Infrastructure</p>	<p>Monitor implementation of licensing Pavement Cafes</p>	<p>Disabled people have appropriate support so that they can participate in the cultural life of the city on an equal basis</p>	<p>Following the first lockdown last year the Council responded to requests from the Assembly and industry to assist recovery of the hospitality sector and introduced a temporary pavement café licensing scheme as the DfI official guidance, which we were awaiting to enable us to implement the licensing scheme, is still being screened and has not been released to Councils.</p> <p>The intention was to facilitate the controlled expansion of suitable premises such as cafes, restaurants and pubs, providing small businesses with an</p>

PART B

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
				<p>opportunity to boost their income at a time of economic crisis.</p> <p>Authority was granted by SP&R Committee not to apply the licence fee given the prevailing circumstances, but it was also made clear that we are looking at these licences in the context of the pandemic and that renewal should not be taken for granted.</p> <p>The Council consults with DfI Roads on all licensing applications received and the impact on pedestrians and particularly for disabled people has been taken into account. Consultation when the legislation was enacted included regular engagement with groups representing people with disabilities and relevant issues were captured in our “Pavement Cafes: Guidance for Applicants during the Covid19 Pandemic” document which was equality screened in June 2020.</p>

PART B

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
				Pavement Cafe licences and the associated guidance have been implemented as a temporary pilot and they will be subject to ongoing monitoring and review. Complaints about pavement cafes and the licensing process are being monitored and any recurring themes will be used in inform future reviews of the licensing scheme. Complaints about individual pavement café premises are investigated and followed up with licensees to address issues raised.
11	Engage with city centre retailers to consider how to support disabled people as part of customer focus support programmes	Number of businesses that participate	City centre retailers are encouraged to support accessibility for disabled people	As a result of the impact of Covid 19 Shop Mobility has been closed for much of 2020/21. The Enterprise and Business Growth Team will work with city centre organisations/stakeholders to support them to engage city retailers to better support accessibility for disabled people in the city centre
12	Scope and research the accessibility of Belfast City Centre to identify gaps and	Conclusion of research and determine next steps	Persons with a disability are able to attend and	Scoping and research into the accessibility of the city centre to support the

PART B

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
	<p>opportunities, to enable disabled people to participate fully in city centre life. This will include initiatives to promote accessibility in the city centre from an economic development perspective.</p>	<p>in delivery to target hard to reach groups</p>	<p>fully engage in events and programmes delivered by council</p>	<p>development of a diverse and vibrant city centre has been undertaken from a number of angles.</p> <p>City Centre Connectivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase 1 of the City Centre Connectivity Study has produced a Bolder Vision which sets the ambition to transform the city centre to be a healthy, shared, vibrant and sustainable space. Key outputs of Phase 2 are the scenario planning and development of interventions, including the development of a multi-criteria assessment framework to assess the scenarios and the initial identification of short, medium and long term interventions for our streets and places. The scenario planning will look at provision for access and service requirements, for public transportation, improved connections to communities, and developing a more sustainable streetscape for pedestrians, cycles, residents and visitors while addressing issues related to the dominance of road space.

PART B

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
				<p>Cultural Strategy & Sundays in the City As per 2019/20 as some projects such as Sundays in the City have been delayed due to Covid, this will be reinvigorated in 2021/22 subject to restrictions following the pandemic. The cultural strategy has a priority to support high quality cultural events and venues that are accessible, diverse and inclusive. This will ensure that any pilot projects that are developed to maximise use of city centre and reimagine sites, will be carried out mindful of accessibility needs. Meetings have also been held with Sign Language Users Forum and Disability Advisory Panel by TCHA officer to scope issues or barriers and to inform work.</p> <p>To maximise the impact, these workstrands will be taken forward in an integrated way under the Future City Centre programme.</p>
13	Deliver the Inspiring Communities theme which identifies disabled people as a priority area and removing barriers to participation to ensure all sections of	Deliver small capital enhancement projects that will increase access for disabled people to	Disabled people have appropriate support so that they can participate	We continued to remove participation barriers and ensure disabled people are fully engaged with high quality culture, arts and heritage experiences. The Tourism, Culture, Heritage and Arts Unit

PART B

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
	the community engage with high quality culture, arts and heritage	quality cultural product and experiences	in the cultural life of the city on an equal basis	delivered the Access and Inclusion Programme which has facilitated 11 capital enhancement projects with investment of £185,443 during 2020/21.
14	Identify opportunities to ring-fence certain posts to long-term unemployed, including those with a disability and ensure any pre-recruitment and training programme caters for any reasonable adjustments	Ring-fence 20% of places available on pre-recruitment and training programmes to people with disabilities	Disabled people are provided with appropriate support to enhance employability and obtain employment	No pre recruitment and training programmes delivered in 2020/2021 due to the pandemic. Work is ongoing to identify suitable opportunities to ring-fence as part of the Open Space and Streetscene review
15	Effective partnership working with the British Deaf Association	Develop and implement a 3-year BSL and ISL Charter Action Plan in partnership with the British Deaf Association	Public attitudes to disabled people are more positive and negative attitudes are challenged	Implementation of BSL and ISL Charter is work in progress. Areas of work still to be completed including Video Relay Service at all leisure centres in Belfast. This has been delayed due to closure of leisure facilities during Covid-19
16	Consult with internal staff and Mencap to explore the introduction of appropriate communication tools for people with learning disabilities at customer centres e.g. City Hall, Belfast Zoo	A number of communication tools for people with learning disabilities at customer centres	Disabled people have appropriate support so that they can participate in the cultural life of the city on an equal basis	Covid-19 has put this action point on hold.

PART B

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
17	Create a translation protocol document for Sign Language Users and disabled people accessing council's online material and electronic documents	Staff to be able to complete requests for documents in alternative formats and arrange required communication support BCC online material and electronic documents to be produced in accessible formats	Building staff capacity in providing accessible formats for people with disabilities	The completion of the 'Making Communications Accessible' Guide has been delayed due to Covid-19. The Guide is to be finalised by October 2021.
18	Roll-out Diversity Awareness training programmes for council employees: - continue delivery of disability equality awareness training - continue to seek nominations from staff with disabilities to provide specific awareness raising session around disability - continue providing access to diversity e-learning programme; - continue delivery of classroom-based diversity training;	Deliver 12 disability awareness training sessions to managers and employees Deliver 12 diversity awareness training sessions to managers and employees All new staff to attend training within 6 months	Develop the capacity of staff to ensure awareness of the legal obligations in relation to employment and service delivery	Restrictions have prevented normal face to face training and technical issues with the e-learning platform prevented online delivery of our general equality and diversity training. These technical issues are now being addressed. We weren't able to achieve the required total in the listed outputs Staff took the opportunity to review and update the training content e.g. additional information on autism

PART B

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify and target awareness raising sessions on specific areas of disability - incorporate equality and diversity module into Tier 3 Training 	<p>of commencing employment</p>		<p>We delivered the following training as part of our Health and Wellbeing Strategy:</p> <p>Mental Health First Aid- 19 participants</p> <p>Stress Awareness for Managers- 51 participants</p> <p>Webinars on various disability and health and wellbeing topics</p> <p>As part of Mental Health Awareness Week, a number of articles were shared on the staff intranet to help encourage staff to look after their mental health e.g. mindfulness walk podcasts; meditation and mindfulness session, personal story on recovery from depression; signposting to support services</p> <p>Continued signposting/ awareness raising relating to mental health during the Covid crisis, via management updates and the health and wellbeing section on staff intranet</p>

PART B

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
19	Research the possibility of including disability awareness sessions for Members in the Members Training Programme and include Disability Action Plan in the members Induction Programme. Upload the Disability Action Plan to the Members Portal	Communicate outcomes of research and plan next steps if applicable	Develop the capacity of Members to ensure awareness of the legal obligations in relation to employment and service delivery	Disability Awareness training for members is still under consideration. Disability Action Plan has been uploaded to the Members' Portal
20	Promote the range of alternative formats that are available	Evaluation of accessibility of council information via various formats	Persons with a disability are able to easily access relevant council information	This is work in progress. We want as many people as possible to be able to use the website and involved people with disabilities in our User Experience stage of our new website development. Website accessibility scores are rates as 'Excellent' by Silktide. We have committed to annual manual testing of our site, by users with a range of disabilities to ensure we see how others access our information. We've also made the website text as simple as possible to understand and it is approved by Plain English Campaign on an annual basis.

PART B

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
				Recently introduced customer service standards actively promotes staff training in the use of Plain English

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	Language Officer to represent council at the Coalition on Deafness	No invitation to a Coalition meeting during 2020/21.
2	Continue to promote/communicate our options for access to information/forms/ people/services in relation to council buildings	Due to the Covid -19 this action has been delayed.
3	Conduct a voluntary monitoring exercise to investigate options around how staff could be encouraged and feel confident in declaring a disability via internal HR system	Due to the Covid -19 this action has been delayed.
4	Organise specialist training/workshop for Project Sponsors/Project Managers/APMs regarding the relevant DDA issues on capital build scheme	Due to the Covid -19 this training has been delayed.

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 2019-2022 was monitored during this reporting period. Quarterly operational Equality and Diversity Network meetings are held internally at the Council and at these meetings, we are able to monitor progress from feedback provided by departmental representatives.

PART B

(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?

No, we have not made any revisions or taken any additional steps which were not outlined in the original disability action plan

Please select

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

PART B

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?

This report relates to the second year of our Disability Action Plan (2020/2021) and we do intend to review the current plan in this final year (2021-22). We will be preparing for a new Disability Action Plan for 2022-2025.

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.