

HIA Redress Board



Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report 2022-23

Contact:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme	Name: Ciaran Purvis Telephone: 02890569139 Email: ciaran.purvis@hiaredressni.uk
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan	As above <input type="checkbox"/> (double click to open) Name: Telephone: Email:

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

<https://www.hiaredressni.uk/publications/equality-scheme>

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 2022 and March 2023

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 2022-23, 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 Redress Board Equality Scheme underwent a period of public consultation in July 2021 and was approved by the Equality Commission on 24 November 2021. The Redress Board is grateful for the advice and guidance provided by the Equality Commission during the challenging period of the Covid-19 Pandemic in late 2020 & early 2021.

The Redress Board Equality Action Plan was endorsed by the Redress Board Management Board who continue to support the Redress Board's commitment to the effective fulfilment of Section 75 Duties, ensuring that all people, regardless of gender, race, sexuality, or ability are treated fairly and equally. The published Redress Board Equality Action Plan covers the period 2022-2026. An encompassing commitment to equality is also set out in the HIA Redress Board Business Plan for 2022-23.

It is important to note that majority of legislative, policy and funding responsibilities for the Redress Board resides with the Executive Office. However, the Redress Board is responsible for the discharge of its' statutory functions, within the wider end to end redress scheme, which are limited to the receipt and processing of applications, determining applications, issuing instructions to make payments of compensation to victims and survivors of historical institutional abuse, and the compelling of evidence where it is considered necessary in the interests of justice to do so.

This is the second Redress Board Annual Progress Report to the Equality Commission and is submitted and published under the guidance of the Honourable Mr Justice Fowler President of the Redress Board.

- 2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2022-23 (or append the plan with progress/examples identified).

The Redress Board Equality Action Plan covers the period 2022-2026. Commitments to equality plan are set out in the HIA Redress Board Business Plan for 2022-26 (see theme 3). The Redress Board continued the emphasis on enhancing our staff knowledge and capacity around equality, diversity and inclusion. The Redress Board also encourages staff to participate the wider NI Civil Service (NICS) and Department of Justice (DoJ) programmes and events, which promote the above.

Introduction to Section 75 – this is included in staff induction packages which take place within 2 weeks of joining. This is mandatory training and is also undertaken by **all 32 staff** annually to maintain an awareness of section 75 groups and of our responsibilities within it and our disability action plan.

Unconscious Bias – this is included in staff induction packages and was completed by **all 32 staff**. See below.

Personal Resilience & Trauma Awareness Training – **all 32 staff** have also attended the above courses to promote good personal mental health and to better understand the challenges that some applicant's may be facing in relation to mental health and other wellbeing and social inclusion challenges.

Disability Awareness for Frontline staff - was undertaken by **all 32 staff** annually to maintain an awareness.

Positive Mental Health Toolkit for All Staff (e-Learning) (nical.gov.uk)

Just a Minute (JAM) Training - The JAM Card allows people including staff with a communication difficulty to inform others that they need Just A Minute of patience and understanding. The JAM Card is a simple and discreet way of letting someone you want to talk to, or who wants to talk to you, know that you need a little more time. **24 staff** have undertaken this training in the reporting period.

Supporting people who are deaf or have hearing loss – Our Equality Officer attended the above training event and disseminated the training material to all staff

Compliance with the above training is undertaken by our Corporate Governance team and reported to the Redress Board Senior Management Team.

Accessibility of Information – An Accessibility Audit was completed by an external body in 2022-2023 business year and a series of recommendations were made in January 2023. We will report on progress on implementation of agreed recommendations in the annual report for 2023-2024.

Communication and Engagement –

- A member of the Senior Management team served as a member of the NICS LGBTQ+ Network during this reporting period and provided important insight to colleagues.
- The Redress Board has worked closely with **Victim & Survivors Service (VSS) HIA**

Health and Wellbeing Case Manager since June 2021 to promote the services available from VSS to assist applicants to the Redress Board. These support services include access to dedicated health and wellbeing caseworkers, counselling, complementary therapies, disability aids, persistent pain and a range of other social and welfare support. Applicants are sign-posted to these services in almost all of our correspondence and literature. In September 2022 the Redress Board further promoted these available services to solicitors through a dedicated mail drop and in a published notice in the Law Society Quarterly Bulletin.

- *Redress Board officials continued to meet with the Executive Officer Director of Good Relations & Inclusion on a quarterly basis.*
- *Law Society Redress Process Information Event – The President participated in this event and highlighted the challenges and vulnerabilities faced by vulnerable applicants and encouraged solicitors to direct applicants, especially those with vulnerabilities, to the expert support services provided by VSS and their partners. It also referenced the use of recorded audio or visual evidence, which some applicants may find easier to communicate via, in addition to the required written statement.*
- *A Critical Friend Group comprising key stakeholders involved in the end to end redress scheme was established in June 2022, which organised a series of co-design workshops including the communications of the role of all stakeholders involved in the Redress Process. The Critical Friend Group included representatives from the Executive Office (TEO), the Commissioner for Survivors of institutional child abuse and Victim Support Services and contributes to the maintenance and improvement of good relations with all victims and survivors who wish to apply to avail a redress support service and/or for compensation for abuse suffered while a child in an institution in Northern Ireland between 1922 and 1995. Any statutory compliant recommendations within the remit of the Redress Board were discussed in detail by the Critical Friend Group and all were fully implemented by March 2023. These included:*
 - *amendment to the presentation and content of the Redress Board website*
 - *a review of the presentation of key documents for applicants and the language used and the amendments to the application form to improve accessibility to legislative obligations impacting on all applicants.*
 - *Communications in relation to Belfast Pride and Mela have been circulated via DoJ and the Redress Board with the Redress Board represented at the DOJ public service station at Belfast Pride in 2022.*

PART A

3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2022-23 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

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

Please provide any details and examples:

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:

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):*

Other *(please specify and give details):*

Section 2: Progress on Equality Scheme commitments and action plans/measures

Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)

4 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2022-23 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 commitment to Section 75 statutory duties was included in the HIARB Business Plan for 2022/23 and within relevant job descriptions. The out workings of this commitment forms part of the staff discussion on their annual PDPs and PPAs.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2022-23 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:

Relevant job descriptions had statutory duties integrated within them for this reporting year and for 2023/24.

6 In the 2022-23 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

PART A

- 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 2022-23 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Key objectives were included in the 2022/23 Business Plan and individual job descriptions were updated to include operational delivery objectives.

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2022-23 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed: Actions ongoing: Actions to commence:

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

n/a

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2022-23 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

none

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2022-23 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

PART A

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 2022-23 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:

12 In the 2022-23 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)*:

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:

13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2022-23 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

See above

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2022-23 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

PART A

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)

[n/a]

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

0

16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2022-23:

0	Policy consultations conducted with screening assessment presented.
0	Policy consultations conducted with an equality impact assessment (EQIA) presented.
0	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:

As part of a holistic review of the role of all stakeholders in the Redress Process relating to historical institutional abuse in Northern Ireland, the Redress Board has consulted with key stakeholders (via the Critical Friend Group) on the presentation /content of the Redress Board website and application form in terms of accessibility to all groups. This took place from April 2022 to January 2023.

Outside of the Critical Friend Group the Redress Board also meets regularly with the VSS HIA Health and Wellbeing Case Manager for informed feedback from victims & survivors.

To date we have received no complaints about the accessibility of material from a member of the public on the content of our website. An independent accessibility audit of the website was also conducted in January 2023 by an external body and the outcome recommendations are scheduled for consideration and action in 2023/24 reporting year.

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 No Not

- 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:

Using feedback from the aforementioned consultation on the Redress Board website and application form the Redress Board amended the application forms both online and hard copy to ensure legislative requirements were more clearly presented with the intention to ensure that all applicants could better understand the processes and the implications for them going forward.

The Redress Board also re-enforced the message that it will also accept audio or video recorded evidence from applicants in addition to the written statement from those applicants who wish to do so. This has been communicated to the Critical Friend Group, and highlighted on the application form, the website and at Solicitor CPD information events.

However, to date no applicant has decided to enhance their application in this manner.

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 2022-23, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

*Objectives met: **All 32 staff** within the Redress Board undertook mandatory training packages on the equality scheme by the Department of Justice NICAL training portal. This included the following:*

[Course: Disability Awareness for Frontline Staff \(e-Learning\) \(nical.gov.uk\)](https://www.nical.gov.uk/courses/disability-awareness-for-frontline-staff)

[Course: Introduction to Section 75 \(e-Learning\) \(nical.gov.uk\)](https://www.nical.gov.uk/courses/introduction-to-section-75)

[Course: Unconscious Bias \(e-Learning\) \(nical.gov.uk\)](https://www.nical.gov.uk/courses/unconscious-bias)

[Course: Disability Awareness for Frontline Staff \(e-Learning\) \(nical.gov.uk\)](https://www.nical.gov.uk/courses/disability-awareness-for-frontline-staff)

[Course: Positive Mental Health Toolkit for All Staff \(e-Learning\) \(nical.gov.uk\)](https://www.nical.gov.uk/courses/positive-mental-health-toolkit-for-all-staff)

New staff members are provided with Induction Training within the first week of employment which includes their and the Redress Board's responsibilities under the Equality Scheme and Section 75 groups.

***Personal Resilience & Trauma Awareness Training – all 32 staff** have also attended the above courses to promote good personal mental health and to better understand the challenges that applicant's may be facing in relation to mental health and other wellbeing and social inclusion challenges.*

***Personal Resilience & Trauma Awareness Training – 7 panel members** have also attended the above courses to promote good personal mental health and to better understand the challenges that some applicant's may be facing in relation to mental health and other wellbeing and social inclusion challenges.*

Just a Minute (JAM) Training - The JAM Card allows people including staff with a communication difficulty to inform others that they need Just A Minute of patience and understanding. The JAM Card is a simple and discreet way of letting someone you want to talk to, or who wants to talk to you, know that you need a little more time. **24 members of staff** have undertaken this training in the reporting period.

Supporting people who are deaf or have hearing loss – Our Equality Officer attended the above training event and disseminated the training material to all staff

Panel members were also provided with relevant training which will be refreshed in the 2023/24 reporting year.

- 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:

As above. Training has been tailored to the specific objectives and statutory commitments of the Redress Board. There is also an awareness that applicants must be communicated with in a sensitive way to reduce the risk of re-trauma but also to communicate at the appropriate level. As such staff are more sensitive to the language and style used to ensure all applicants can access our services and understand the process better and the legislative obligations on them.

Guidance on the importance of language in preparation of a Summary of Reasons was also issued to all panel members in January 2023 following an earlier Information Session in December 2022.

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

- 26 Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2022-23, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

Using feedback from the aforementioned Critical Friend Group on the Redress Board website and application form the Redress Board amended the application forms both online and hard copy to ensure legislative requirements were more clearly presented with the intention to ensure that all applicants could better understand the processes and the implications for them going forward.

An accessibility audit was also conducted by an external provider within the reporting period and a number of recommendations for improvements were made. Those accepted recommendations are currently being assessed and will be implemented during the 2023/24 reporting period.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

- 27 How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2022-23?

Insert number here:

0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

Section 3: Looking Forward

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

November 2026

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)*

- Responding to any recommendations to improve accessibility of the website
- Ongoing staff training.
- A review of the procedures that support Oral Hearings focusing on the specific duty of care to applicants during an oral hearing and the legislative obligations on the panel and legal representatives.

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:

3

Fully achieved

1

Partially achieved

n/a

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	n/a	n/a	n/a
Regional ^{iv}	As an ALB the recruitment to the Redress Board of non-judicial panel members Board is a matter for TEO, administrative staff a matter for DoJ and judicial members a matter for NI Judicial Appointments Commission and the Office of the Lady Chief Justice. The Redress Board has met with the above representatives and agreed that the values of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are stipulated	Suitably informed Candidate Information Booklets. In this document it was recognised women, people with a disability, young people and those from ethnic minorities, are currently under-represented on public bodies in NI. We also sought assurance that are recruitments and	Judicial, non-judicial members and staff members who meet the reported under representation groups have been recruited during this period.

PART B

	in the relevant Candidate Information Booklets for each of the roles.	appointment bodies operated the Guaranteed Interview Scheme for applicants with a disability.	
Local ^v	<p>Staff and panel members with disabilities are deployed in the HIA Redress Board.</p> <p>The Disability Action Plan is in place and will be reviewed in the 2023/24 reporting period.</p>	Using remote access technology, staff with disabilities have been fully deployed in the production of key documents, which support the daily function of Redress Board panels.	This action has positively contributed to the achievement of objectives and statutory obligations of the Redress Board throughout the reporting year.

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Mandatory training is in place for all staff and opportunities to attend specific NICS DoJ awareness sessions are promoted and provided.	<p>Training delivered on :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness of unconscious bias Disability Awareness Section 75 groups Promoting Positive Mental Health JAM training Deaf awareness training 	Wider appreciation of the barriers to applicants and staff members of the HIA Redress Board who are from a very diverse range of communities and backgrounds across Northern Ireland.

PART B

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	n/a	n/a	n/a

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	As an ALB the recruitment of non-judicial panel members is a matter for TEO, administrative staff a matter for DOJ and judicial members a matter for NI Judicial Appointments Commission and the Office of the Lady Chief Justice. However, the Redress Board has requested that the values of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are stipulated in the Candidate Information Booklets for each of the roles.	Reference to the Guaranteed Interview Scheme for those with a disability included in appropriate recruitment literature. The Redress Board have advised our recruitment and appointment bodies of the specific requirements of the Redress Board and have collaborated on adapting work processes though the use of specialist enabling technologies and administrative adjustments to accommodate disabilities we are made aware of.	Staff and panel members positively contributed towards the achievement of the Redress Board objectives set out in the business plan for the reporting period.
2	To raise awareness with staff regarding the Disability	Highlighted at Senior Management Team Meetings and staff directed to	Two areas highlighted to staff to assist in undertaking their administrative functions.

PART B

	Discrimination Act and Disability Action Plan, through internal communications channels.	relevant articles.	
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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	n/a	n/a	n/a

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	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	The Redress Board has not participated in the work placement scheme	An opportunity has not yet been provided by the DOJ

PART B

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

Bi annual reviews of current working arrangements with staff members to ensure they remain supportive or need further adaptations.

(b) Quantitative

- Bi annual reviews of performance standards against agreed objectives to ensure working arrangements are proving effective.
- Performance Indicators relating to staff training - the numbers of staff who have completed the relevant training.
- Performance Indicators relating to public appointments

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?

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1	n/a	n/a	n/a

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?

Following approval of the Redress Board Equality Scheme in November 2021, the Disability Action Plan was issued for public consultation, which closed in March 2022 with no comments. The Redress Board has published its' approved Disability Action 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.

PART B

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.