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Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties

Annual Progress Report

• Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme	Name: Gillian McClearn Telephone: 028 90 412287 Email: gillian.mcclearn@hiaredressni.uk
• Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan	As above ☒ Name: Click or tap here to enter text. Telephone: Click or tap here to enter text. Email: Click or tap here to enter text.
Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:	Please insert link or details here Click or tap here to enter text.
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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 2025 and March 2026

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 2025-26, 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 Equality Action Plan was endorsed by the Redress Board Management Board who continued thereafter 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 2025-26. 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 fifth 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.

The HIA Redress Scheme closed on 2 April 2025 after which no new applications could be accepted or processed. This was therefore the final operational year for the Redress Board , and the focus was the timely determination of all outstanding applications, removing unnecessary delay for all applicants and retaining consistency across existing procedures and delivery standards.

2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2025-26 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

The Redress Board Equality Action Plan covers the period 2022-2026. Commitments to equality plan were set out in the HIA Redress Board Business Plan for 2022-26 (see theme 3). From the outset the Redress Board ensured appropriate emphasis was placed on enhancing staff knowledge and capacity around equality, diversity and inclusion. The role of the Redress Board Well Being Champion is to ensure staff continue to have new opportunities to participate in the wider NI Civil Service (NICS) and Department of Justice (DoJ) programmes and events, which promote the above. In this reporting year the Redress Board Well Being Champion represented the Redress Board at the Justice Equality Network (JEN) meetings through which staff have continued access to the latest NICS guidance.

An introduction to Section 75 training is included in staff induction packages which take place within 2 weeks of joining the HIA Redress Board Administration Team. Although the Board did not receive new staff in this reporting year, this is mandatory training and undertaken by all staff to maintain an awareness of section 75 groups and of our responsibilities and within our Disability Action Plan. In accordance with NICS Policy, staff are required to complete training on Disability Awareness for Frontline staff, Positive Mental Health Toolkit for All Staff (e-Learning) (nical.gov.uk), and Just a Minute (JAM) Training. The Unconscious Bias training course is included in staff induction packages. Staff and 7 panel members have already completed the Personal Resilience and Trauma Awareness Training 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. Feedback from the training was very positive. This year,training has also been completed on the Introduction to Diversity and Equality and Diversity Essentials. Monitoring of mandatory training is undertaken by our Departmental Corporate Governance Team and compliance standards are reported to the Redress Board Senior Management Team. In relation to Communication and Engagement, The Redress Board remained available to work collaboratively when required with Victim & Survivors Service (VSS) HIA Health and Wellbeing Case Manager, in order to promote the services available from VSS and WAVE to assist applicants to the Redress Board. These support services include access for all applicants to dedicated health and wellbeing caseworkers, counselling, complementary therapies, disability aids, persistent pain and a range of other social and welfare support. In this reporting year Applicants continued to be sign-posted to these services in almost all of our correspondence and literature and through one-to-one contact. The Redress Board is proactive in managing requests for assistance, advice from VSS and encourages ongoing feedback from its client base to ensure equality and accessibility to our services at all times. Redress Board officials met with The Executive Office Director of Good Relations & Inclusion on a quarterly basis as a minimum to discuss the application of same across

all aspects of HIA Redress Board practices which has helped the Board maintain its focus on providing equality across the services we offer to all applicants. The Best Practice Guide for Solicitors on the Historical Institutional Abuse Redress Process continues to be available on the website of the Law Society of Northern Ireland. Its purpose being to assist their members in making applications on behalf of clients to the HIA Redress Board, ensuring they remain trauma-informed throughout the whole application process, and that all victims/survivors remain at the centre of the process. The Guide encourages solicitors to direct applicants, especially those with vulnerabilities, to the expert support services provided by VSS and their partners.

Communications and invitations from DoJ to raise awareness of to support LGBTQ+ events continued to be circulated to all staff within the Redress Board where made available.

3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2025-26 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes

☒ No (go to Q.4)

☐ Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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):*

Click or tap here to enter text.

☐ 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 2025-26 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:

Click or tap here to enter text.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2025-26 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:

Click or tap here to enter text.

6 In the 2025-26 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 2025-26 report

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2025-26 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed: 0

Click or tap here to enter text.

Actions ongoing: 0

Click or tap here to enter text.

PART A

Actions to commence: 0

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2025-26 reporting period *(points not identified in an appended plan)*:

none

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2025-26 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 2025-26 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 Redress Board implemented an advance notification plan in this reporting year regarding the closing date of the Redress Board. This applied to all applicants, both represented by a solicitor and those with no representation, who had failed to provide mandatory evidence to the Redress Board and/or any additional evidence they chose to provide to further support their application. The ongoing notifications were intended to provide all applicants with an equal opportunity to submit their evidence before the application was determined by a panel and in advance of closure of the Board and also to release payment of an award as determined by a panel, without further unnecessary delay. It was also to help reduce the risk of re- traumatisation for any applicant by reducing the time they must continue to engage with the redress process.

12 In the 2025-26 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently <u>used</u> 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:

Click or tap here to enter text.

13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2025-26 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes

☒ No

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2025-26 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)

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 2025-26:

Policy consultations conducted with **screening** assessment presented. 0

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.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:

0

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:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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 2025-26 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes

☐ No

☒ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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 2025-26 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:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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:

Click or tap here to enter text.

22 Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2025-26 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

n/a

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:

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 Redress Board implemented an advance notification plan in this reporting year regarding the closing date of the Redress Board. This applied to all applicants, both represented by a solicitor and those with no representation, who had failed to provide mandatory evidence to the Redress Board or any additional evidence they chose to provide to further support their application. The ongoing notifications were intended to provide all applicants with an equal opportunity to submit their evidence before the application was determined by a panel, before closure of the Board and also to release any award payment to applicants without further unnecessary delay. It was also to help reduce the risk of re- traumatisation for any applicant by reducing the time they must continue to engage with the redress process.

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 2025-26, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

Objectives met: Staff within the Redress Board have undertaken refresher mandatory training on the Equality and Diversity and Diversity and Inclusion in line with Department of Justice training policy via NICAL training portal. Namely;

Introduction to Diversity and Inclusion

Equality and Diversity Essentials

This is the final year of operation as all applications have been determined. The Redress Board commenced implementation of its Staff Redeployment Plan as we move towards formal closure and staff numbers have reduced considerably and will continue to do so. No new staff members have been deployed.

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 always been tailored to the specific objectives and statutory

commitments of the Redress Board. There is also a high level of awareness that applicants must be communicated with in a sensitive manner to reduce the risk of re-trauma but also to communicate in the most appropriate way, tailored to every applicant. This has been regularly enforced throughout this financial year in both direct telephone contact and in correspondence from the Redress Board to ensure it remains accessible to all applicants particularly those not represented by the legal profession. 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.

The Training and Insight Committee continued to monitor the effectiveness and the operation of its panels including the diversity of the constitution of the panel, the equality of the determination process and the structure of the Summary of Reasons that supports every determination. This included the consistent use of sensitive and accessible language in a Summary of Reasons, which is used to convey the decision of the panel in each case to the applicant. This aims to reduce the risk of re-traumatisation for applicants engaging with the Redress Board.

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

26 Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2025-26, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

n/a

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

27 How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2025-26?

Insert number here: 0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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)*

n/a The Redress Board anticipates formal closure in the coming months.

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):

Click or tap here to enter text.

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	**0**	**0**
Fully achieved	Partially achieved	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]	Click or tap here to enter text.		Click or tap here to enter text.
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 had agreed that the values of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are stipulated in the relevant Candidate Information	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 recruitments and appointment bodies	Judicial, non-judicial members and staff members who meet the reported under representation groups were provided with equal opportunity to have been recruited during this period. No new staff have been recruited this year.

	Booklets for each of the roles.	operated the Guaranteed Interview Scheme for applicants with a disability.	
Local[v]	Staff and panel members with disabilities are deployed in the HIA Redress Board	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 where	Training previously delivered on :- Awareness of unconscious bias Disability Awareness for frontline staff Section 75 groups JAM 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.

	available and are promoted.	Deaf awareness training	
2	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

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	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact

PART B

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 Discrimination Act and Disability Action Plan, through internal communications channels.	Highlighted at Senior Management Team Meetings and staff directed to relevant articles and training modules.	Raising awareness at team brief and staff having already previously completed training module on the DoJ Disability Awareness for Front line staff, will have assisted staff in undertaking their daily administrative functions.
	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

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

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1	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
2	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

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	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
2	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

4. Please outline what action measures **have <u>not</u> 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 during this reporting year.

2	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

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?

Please select

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale

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1	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
2	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
3	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
4	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
5	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

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.

[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.