

## Public Authority Statutory Equality, Good Relations and Disability Duties - Annual Progress Report 2021-22

### Contact:


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Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:  
[https://www.rqia.org.uk/who-we-are/corporate-documents-\(1\)/corporate-documents/](https://www.rqia.org.uk/who-we-are/corporate-documents-(1)/corporate-documents/)  
and  
<https://hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/3226.htm>

### (ECNI Q28):

During 2021-22, we completed the Five Year Review of Equality Scheme. The report can be found at: [https://rqia.org.uk/who-we-are/corporate-documents-\(1\)/corporate-documents/](https://rqia.org.uk/who-we-are/corporate-documents-(1)/corporate-documents/). Our Equality Scheme is due to be reviewed again by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.

### Signature:



This report has been prepared adapting a template circulated by the Equality Commission. It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and disability duties. This report reflects progress made between April 2021 and March 2022

## Contents

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. Summary Quantitative Report	<b>3</b>
2. Section 75 Progress Report	<b>6</b>
3. Equality Action Plan Progress Report <b>(ECNI Q2)</b>	<b>18</b>
Disability Action Plan Progress Report	<b>34</b>
4. Equality and Disability Action Plans 2022-23 <b>(ECNI Q8,9)</b>	<b>42</b>
5. Screening Report <b>(ECNI Q18)</b>	<b>62</b>
6. Mitigation Report <b>(ECNI Q1,3,3a,3b)</b>	<b>66</b>

## Chapter 1 Summary Quantitative Report

(ECNI Q15,16,19)

### Screening, EQIAs and Consultation

1. Number of policies screened (as recorded in screening reports). (see also Chapter 6)	Screened in	Screened out with mitigation	Screened out without mitigation	No concerns were raised by consultees on screening published in 2021-22
<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	
2. Number of policies subjected to Equality Impact Assessment.	<b>0</b>			
3. Indicate the stage of progress of each EQIA.	<b>n/a</b>			

4. Number of policy consultations conducted	0
5. Number of policy consultations conducted with screening presented. (See also Chapter 2, Table 2)	0

**(ECNI Q24)**  
**Training**

6. Staff training undertaken during 2021-22. (See also Chapter 2, Q6)

<b>Course</b>	<b>No of Staff Trained</b>	<b>No of Board Members Trained</b>
Equality Screening Training	0	0
Equality Impact Assessment Training	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

eLearning: Making a Difference

Part 1 – All Staff	47
Part 2 – Line Managers	47

**(ECNI Q27)**  
**Complaints**

7. Number of complaints in relation to the Equality Scheme received during 2021-22

0

Please provide detail of any complaints:

n/a

**(ECNI Q7)**  
**Equality Action Plan (see also Chapter 3)**

8. Within the 2021-22 reporting period, please indicate the number of:

Actions completed:

3

Actions ongoing:

2

Actions to commence:

9

**(ECNI Part B Q1)**

**Disability Action Plan (see also Chapter 4)**

9. Within the 2021-22 reporting period, please indicate the number of:

Actions completed:	<input type="text" value="3"/>	Actions ongoing:	<input type="text" value="2"/>	Actions to commence:	<input type="text" value="0"/>
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## Chapter 2 Section 75 Progress Report

### (ECNI Q1,2,3,3a,3b,23)

1. In 2021-22, 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.

Table 1 below outlines progress to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations<sup>1</sup>.

#### **All Section 75 groups:**

**Return to the Office / Hybrid working and Agile working** was added as a standing item at all quarterly meetings of the equality forum which brings together representatives from each of the 11 regional HSC organisations. The aim was to facilitate the identification and consideration of the needs of staff in decision-making, in particular for staff with a disability and those who are carers; to share good practice; and to ensure engagement with staff members from various section 75 groups.

This included a presentation on the initial findings relating to staff with disabilities and caring responsibilities from the BSO Human Resources Working from Home Survey 2021.

Members gave updates on what work was being done or decisions being made within their organisations in relation to agile and flexible working.

The need for further in-depth analysis of equality findings in the survey and for assurance that New Ways of Working take account of these findings was recognised.

**Table 1:**

	<b>Outline new developments or changes in policies or practices and the difference they have made for specific equality groupings.</b>
Persons of different religious belief	
Persons of different political opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• RQIA presented evidence to the Health Committee on the Expert Review of Records of Deceased Patients of Dr Watt; this was attended by MLAs from different political parties. In addition RQIA provided three written updates to the Committee on progress with this review. RQIA also responded to three Health Committee consultations/calls for evidence: the Health and Social Care Bill; the Severe Fetal Impairment Abortion (Amendment) Bill; and the Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) Bill</li></ul>
Persons of different racial groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In June 2021, to support the Consular Chancellery and Secretary Office, Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Belfast, RQIA issued correspondence in Polish to every Nursing and Residential Care home in Northern Ireland, advising that the Polish Consulate was offering support to Polish nationals resident (or working) in care homes to obtain the relevant documentation in support of an application for an EU Settled Status in advance of the deadline of 30 June 2021</li></ul>
Persons of different age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In June 2021, in advance of The Electoral Office for Northern Ireland opening Canvass on 1 July 2021 (requiring everyone in Northern Ireland to register or re-register on the electoral roll in order to be able to vote by 1 December 2021), the Chief Electoral Officer requested that RQIA assist it in reaching those in Children's Homes to support all those aged over 17 to join the register.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On behalf of the Electoral Office, RQIA shared relevant materials with every Children's Home in Northern Ireland. Addition we also shared relevant information on registration with all nursing and residential care homes.</li> <li>• Throughout the year, as part of the regional response to the Covid-19 pandemic, RQIA continued to distribute the latest guidance and direction to care homes across Northern Ireland on behalf of the Department of Health, PHA and other organisations, including the HSC Board and trusts.</li> <li>• Identified significant issues relating to timely access to the regional child and adolescent mental health inpatient service (CAMHS). RQIA alerted DoH via Article 4(2) of the 2003 Order to the concerns.</li> <li>• Identified significant issues relating to the quality of care provided to a young person in the regional secure children's centre. RQIA wrote formally to the DoH to express concerns and have supported the relevant Trusts to identify a more appropriate placement for the young person.</li> <li>• Initiated a project in 2021 which will result in the publication of the reports of inspections of children's homes. This work will take full account of the need to preserve the confidentiality of children and young people using care home services while ensuring that the public have access to inspection findings.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Review of implementation of recommendations to prevent choking incidents</u></a>. This RQIA review which was undertaken during the reporting year and published in May 2022, examined the implementation of recommendations to prevent choking incidents across clinical areas looking after populations at increased risk of choking: stroke care, care of the elderly, mental health and learning disability and day care centres in all five HSC Trusts.</li> <li>• Expert Review of Deceased Patients of Dr Watt. Phase 2 of this RQIA review examined the care and treatment provided to 45 people who are sadly deceased. Many of these patients had a disability due to a neurological condition. As part of this work, RQIA engaged an Ethical Advisory Group to develop an Ethical Framework taking into consideration principles of Respect for Persons, Transparency and candour, Fairness and Responsibility. This sought to treat people equally and without prejudice or discrimination. Family liaison, psychology and counselling support was made available to families who engaged with RQIA.</li> </ul>
Persons with different marital status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Midwives- Birth partner / introduction of inclusive terminology (to address different status) – RQIA created an information booklet.</li> </ul>
Persons of different sexual orientation	.
Persons of different genders and gender identities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• QI postpartum contraception. During 2020-2021, RQIA funded a cross-trust QI initiative on the implementation of postpartum contraception services in Belfast and South-Eastern Trust.</li> </ul>

	<p>This service provides women with contraception before they go home with their babies, removing barriers to accessing contraception within the community and reducing complications associated with having babies too close together. It also improves access to contraception for women with high-risk medical conditions and social vulnerability factors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• QI Cervical Screening. During 2019 -2021, RQIA funded a QI initiative to pilot self-sampling for follow-up for cervical abnormalities in the Western Trust. This report was published in 2021 and outlines how self-sampling utilising a home testing kit can reduce barriers for women who do not attend for follow-up appointments. The use of self-sampling kits may lead to reduced rates of cervical cancer.</li> <li>• Severe Fetal Impairment (Amendment) Bill. In 2021, RQIA submitted a written response to the health committee in relation to the Severe Fetal Impairment (amendment) Bill. The proposals in this Bill would remove legal provision to local access of abortion for women who have received a diagnosis of Severe Fetal Impairment in pregnancy. RQIA outlined in its response how services would be assessed for compliance with best practice and human rights standards.</li> <li>• Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) Bill: RQIA responded to the Health Committee's request for evidence in respect of this Bill. RQIA supported its introduction as it has the potential to ensure that women accessing these healthcare services can do so without experiencing abuse or harassment. Furthermore, the Bill will protect those members of staff and others providing a service within these healthcare settings.</li> <li>• The Information team consulted with inspectors on updating the portal for notifiable events from Providers.</li> </ul>
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	<p>It was noted that there is a section to record the gender of the service user with no facility for those identifying as non binary or other. RQIA consulted with the equality unit in BSO and another option of 'other' is to be introduced as soon as practicable.</p>
Persons with and without a disability	<p>[Please note: Our work on promoting equality for people with a disability in the workplace is reported on in detail in the Disability Action Plan – Progress Report 2021-22. This comprises, for example, our Disability Awareness Days for staff.]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p><b>Awareness raising of Tapestry, the Disability Staff Network</b> The June 2021 meeting had to be cancelled due to low attendance at the meeting. As a result of this, a conscious effort was made to raise awareness of the network and its meetings. Meeting notices were issued to all staff before each meeting, articles were included in staff newsletters and corporate communications sent to all staff outlining the purpose and work of the network as well as encouraging attendance. As a result of this, network membership has grown and attendance at meetings has increased significantly. This has meant an increase in the numbers of our staff who have disabilities, or who care for someone with a disability accessing support or making their voice heard through the network. Several Tapestry members attended and gave an input at a systems leadership conference attended by senior leaders across Health and Social Care. The members felt that the senior leaders seemed to learn a lot and Tapestry was also promoted as a good practice example of supporting staff. A lot of questions were asked about all three presenters' experiences and they all contributed their differing experiences.</p> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertook a programme of inspections of adult acute inpatient mental health settings to examine the impact of over occupancy on timely access to services, human rights and the patient's experience. The findings of each inspection were shared with senior Trust staff following each visit and RQIA has kept the Department of Health informed of the findings.</li> <li>• Worked in partnership with CJI to complete and publish the Review of Services for Vulnerable Persons Detained in Northern Ireland. This identified a range of areas for improvement to the care of vulnerable people in custody, including those with significant mental illness.</li> <li>• RQIA have provided professional advice and guidance on a range of potential alternatives to the current inpatient provision on the Muckamore Abbey Hospital site including the planning and development of bespoke, small scale arrangements for current and prospective patients.</li> <li>• RQIA has been supporting the work of the Muckamore Abbey Hospital Public Inquiry and as a Core Participant in the Inquiry, has provided some initial information and engaged with the Inquiry team.</li> <li>• RQIA has worked closely with the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust to secure improvements for patients using Ward 27 on the Downshire Hospital site. The plans for necessary improvements to the ward environment (including a newly constructed Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) are progressing in a satisfactory manner. RQIA have also been advised of the successful resettlement plans in place for a significant number of patients who had been living on the hospital site for many years.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Review of Services for Vulnerable Prisoners</a>: This RQIA review of services for vulnerable prisoners makes recommendations for reducing mental ill-health, suicide and self-harm within the prisons in NI. As part of this, the provision for people with specific vulnerabilities such as learning disability and dementia was assessed. The review team also engaged specifically with female prisoners in Hydebank Wood, in addition to their male counterparts on the other sites.</li> <li>• The care homes team liaised closely with the PHA, COPNI and PCC to engage with a group of service user representatives in relation to visiting in care homes during the COVID pandemic. With the restrictions on visiting there was evidence that residents in care homes were becoming withdrawn and physically deteriorating as they lost contact with loved ones. This was particularly acute in those with dementia. We worked collaboratively to design the visiting with care pathway which set out guidance for visiting and how to achieve more contact safely. This work began in December 2021 and is continuing.</li> </ul>
Persons with and without dependants	

Where changes resulted from screenings, these will be listed in Chapter 6, the mitigation report.

**(ECNI Q4,5,6)**

**2. During the 2021-22 reporting period**

**(a) were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within...?**

	Yes/No	Details
Job descriptions	Yes	While the requirement to assist the organisation with fulfilling the duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the disability duties had not been included previously, during the year we have updated the our job description templates and this now includes Section 75 responsibilities.
Performance objectives for staff	Yes	In line with the updated job descriptions, section 75 objectives are now part of staff performance objectives

**(b) were objectives and targets relating to Section 75 integrated into...?**

	Yes/No	Details
Corporate/strategic plans Annual business plans	Yes	During 2021-22 RQIA's Authority members and senior management team commenced the development of our draft Strategic Plan for the period 2022-27, which has been subject to equality screening, prior to a formal public consultation which has commenced during 2022-23. We have placed the lived experience of service users and their families at the heart of what we do, fully integrating a human rights approach into our work. RQIA's new assurance framework also requires the organisation to be fully engaged with all stakeholders and the wider community.

**(ECNI Q11,12,17)**

3. Please provide any details and examples of good practice in consultation during the 2021-22 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:

While the RQIA had not carried out formal public consultations during 2021-22, in March 2022, RQIA established a co-production group involving a wide range of stakeholders representing children's and young people's services to develop an agreed approach for the publication of inspection reports for children's and young people's services. This has now been launched for public consultation in early 2022-23

**(ECNI Q21, 26)**

4. In analysing monitoring information gathered, was any action taken to change/review any policies?

Not as yet but the results of the public consultation will inform plans for the publication of Children's Services Inspection Reports as we move forward. The co-production task and finish group shaped the proposed approach to those publications and those will be further informed through a wider public consultation.

Please provide any details and examples: N/A

**(ECNI Q22)**

5. Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2021-22 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

**(ECNI Q25)**

6. 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:

At RQIA all relevant staff have received training in equality screening or EQIA to ensure they have the necessary skills to screen all RQIA policies, and no additional members of staff undertook this training during the year. During 2021-22 all RQIA staff participated in mandatory human rights training to support them in their work.

**(ECNI Q29)**

7. Are there areas of the Equality Scheme arrangements (screening/consultation/training) your organisation anticipates will be focused upon in the next reporting period? (please provide details)

During 2022/23 we will focus on:

- Delivering on the actions in our current Equality and Disability Action Plans
- Developing and consulting on new Equality and Disability Action Plans, jointly with our partner organisations
- Implementing key commitments identified in our 5 Year Review report with a particular focus on equality screening



## **Appendix – Further Explanatory Notes**

### **1 Consultation and Engagement**

#### **(ECNI Q10)**

##### **targeting –**

We undertook a pre-consultation exercise during the year exploring the future publication of Inspection Reports relating to service for Children and Young People. A co-production approach was established and invited individuals and organisations with a particular role in these services to share the publication consultation.

#### **(ECNI Q13)**

##### **awareness raising for consultees on Equality Scheme commitments –**

During the year, in our quarterly screening reports we raised awareness as to our commitments relating to equality screenings and their publication. We have since updated our Consultee database and will utilise the updated database to engage on a number of consultations in the year ahead.

#### **(ECNI Q14)**

**consultation list** – During the year, we reviewed our consultation list every quarter and carried out a full review in advance of formal public consultation

### **2 Audit of Information Systems**

#### **(ECNI Q20)**

We completed an audit of information systems at an early stage of our Equality Scheme implementation, in line with our Scheme commitments.

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<sup>i</sup> This includes as a result of: screening / Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs); monitoring; staff training; engagement and consultation; improvements in access to information and services; implementation of Equality and Disability Action Plans.

In most cases, it is not possible to ascribe developments and changes to one single factor. New initiatives, such as the Gender Identity Employment Policy, for instance are not necessarily an outcome of screenings or Equality and Disability Action Plan implementation.

As mainstreaming progresses and the promotion of equality becomes part of the organisational culture and way of working, the more difficult it becomes to ascribe activities and outcomes to the application of a specific element of Equality Scheme implementation.

# **Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan Report on progress made during 2021-22**

## **What we did between April 2021 and March 2022**

This document summarises progress made during 2021-22 against the actions in our Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan. The plans are available on our website:

[https://www.rqia.org.uk/who-we-are/corporate-documents-\(1\)/corporate-documents/](https://www.rqia.org.uk/who-we-are/corporate-documents-(1)/corporate-documents/)

Any request for this document in another format or language will be considered.

## Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2021-22

### Equality Action Plan 2018-2023: What we will do to promote equality and good relations

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve and who for	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
<b>Gender Identity</b>  2. Deliver awareness and training initiatives to relevant staff as part of the roll-out of the Gender Identity and Expression Employment Policy	Staff who identify as transgender and non binary feel more supported in the workplace	Baseline staff survey and after 3 years (quantifiable targets to be determined following baseline survey)	BSO HR with support by Equality Unit  March 2022
<b>What we did this year</b> The roll-out of the Making a Difference eLearning for all staff, which includes a dedicated scenario in relation to gender identity, continued during 2021-22. We updated the module to reflect changes in same-sex marriage legislation. No additional awareness and training initiatives were delivered to staff during the year.  The BSO, as our provider of Human Resources as well as Equality services, contacted TransgenderNI during the year to explore the possibility of the organisation providing dedicated training to teams where a member of staff comes forward to disclose that they identify as transgender or non-binary. It is the intention to follow up on these efforts in 2022-23.  <b>We have some more work to do to complete this action.</b>			

## Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2021-22

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve and who for	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
<b>Training</b>  3. Making a Difference e-learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver on training targets</li> </ul>	Increased staff awareness of equality and human rights.	100% staff have completed the e-learning module	BSO HR supported by Equality Unit and EMT Annually
<b>What we did this year</b>  During this year, 46 staff undertook the eLearning. To date, 122 RQIA staff have completed mandatory Making a Difference eLearning, which is 100% of all our staff.  In addition, RQIA also provided training for all RQIA staff on Human Rights and its application in our work, provided by the Human Rights Implementation Centre (HRIC), University of Bristol Law School.  <b>This action has been completed.</b>			

## Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2021-22

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve and who for	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
<b>Domestic Violence</b> 4. Undertake awareness raising relating to new support mechanisms (developed by BSO) to support staff with experience of domestic violence	Staff with experience of domestic violence feel better supported	Feedback from staff who have drawn support through the mechanisms indicates a positive experience.  Awareness raising undertaken with 100% of staff	BSO HR support by Equality Unit March 2022
<b>What we did this year</b>  HR developed and launched a Workplace Policy on Domestic Abuse. This was supported by the Domestic Abuse eLearning course developed by the Department of Justice in partnership with subject matter experts to assist staff in understanding more about Domestic Abuse, different forms of abuse and what support they can avail of should they or anyone they know who is experiencing any form of domestic abuse.  Looking ahead during 2022/23, BSO are looking to have a number of staff trained by a relevant provider, in order that any staff can contact them directly and confidentially should they be experiencing any form of domestic abuse.  <b>We have some more work to do to complete this action.</b>			

### Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2021-22

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve and who for	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
<b>Inspection</b> 5. Review and equality screen guidance relating to Inspection of Domiciliary Care Agencies.	S75 has been considered in the Inspection process, resulting in improved outcomes for service users.	Screening Templates and Revised Guidance published	RQIA  March 2022
<b>What we did this year</b>  As a result of reprioritisation of work due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, work to review RQIA's inspection guidance has not taken place. However, during the year RQIA has commenced the development of a new Framework for Regulation, which aims to ensure transparency on how we go about regulation consistently, proportionately and underpinned by human rights - and ensure through clear guidance that providers can effectively engage with the processes. This Framework will also develop ways for service users and families to share their experience of services and their concerns, and ensure this evidence is firmly rooted in our regulation.			

### Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2021-22

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve and who for	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
6. Review and equality screen Guidance relating to Inspection of Nursing and Adult Residential Care Homes	S75 has been considered in the Inspection process, resulting in improved outcomes for service users.	Screening Templates and Revised Guidance published	RQIA  March 2022
<b>What we did this year</b>  As a result of reprioritisation of work due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, work to review RQIA's inspection guidance has not taken place. However, during the year RQIA has commenced the development of a new Framework for Regulation, which aims to ensure transparency on how we go about regulation consistently, proportionately and underpinned by human rights - and ensure through clear guidance that providers can effectively engage with the processes. This Framework will also develop ways for service users and families to share their experience of services and their concerns, and ensure this evidence is firmly rooted in our regulation.			

## Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2021-22

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve and who for	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
7. Review and equality screen Guidance relating to Inspection of Independent Health Care.	S75 has been considered in the Inspection process resulting in improve outcomes for service users.	Screening Templates an Revised Guidance published	RQIA  March 2022
<p><b>What we did this year</b></p> <p><b><u>Examples from Independent Hospital inspection tools:-</u></b></p> <p>The independent hospital Care Pathway record of inspection has a dedicated section on section “Compassionate Care and Dignity and Respect” where inspectors use a number of different methodologies (QUIS observations; inspection tool) to assess the quality of the care provided.</p> <p>“Discussion with staff and observation of interactions demonstrate patients are treated with dignity and respect”</p> <p>“Patients and visitors are treated and cared for in accordance with legislative requirements for equality and rights”.</p> <p><b>Independent Health Care (IHC) team</b></p> <p>We include ‘Equality data’ in all our reports. We produce a provider guidance document for all service types that is available on our website. This considers the four domains: Is care Safe?; Is care effective?; Is care compassionate?; and Is the service well led?. The provider guidance documents include references to dignity; respect; choice and consent.</p> <p>During inspections we engage with service users who are agreeable to speak with us.</p>			



### Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2021-22

During inspections we discuss with the registered person, if staff understand the importance of capturing and recording equality data concerning any special requests made by service users or any adaptations they make to their routine practice to accommodate service users. To illustrate this we will use examples. These include:

- If a patient/service user had a hearing impairment and requested that all communication is by telephone - this is with an identified individual (spouse/significant other); or if a service user specifically requested to see a professional of a particular gender; how would they record this to ensure all staff who required this information have access to it. We find that most establishments use an electronic records management system that had pop up fields where this information can be recorded.

On inspection we have identified good practice by providers to ensure they are adhering to section 75; for example:

- Dental practices that have accommodated a service dog (for visually impaired patients; or patients who have a support dog for mental health reasons)
- A cosmetic laser provider that engaged with LGBTQ+ organisations to offer services to male to female transgender individuals that were transitioning (laser hair removal).

As a result of reprioritisation of work due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, work to review RQIA's inspection guidance has not taken place. However, during the year RQIA has commenced the development of a new Framework for Regulation, which aims to ensure transparency on how we go about regulation consistently, proportionately and underpinned by human rights - and ensure through clear guidance that providers can effectively engage with the processes. This Framework will also develop ways for service users and families to share their experience of services and their concerns, and ensure this evidence is firmly rooted in our regulation.

### Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2021-22

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve and who for	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
8. Review and equality screen Guidance relating to Inspection of Day Care Settings and Adult Placement Agencies.	S75 has been considered in the Inspection process, resulting in improved outcomes for service users.	Screening Templates and Revised Guidance published	RQIA  March 2022
<b>What we did this year</b>  As a result of reprioritisation of work due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, work to review RQIA's inspection guidance has not taken place. However, during the year RQIA has commenced the development of a new Framework for Regulation, which aims to ensure transparency on how we go about regulation consistently, proportionately and underpinned by human rights - and ensure through clear guidance that providers can effectively engage with the processes. This Framework will also develop ways for service users and families to share their experience of services and their concerns, and ensure this evidence is firmly rooted in our regulation.			

### Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2021-22

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve and who for	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
10. Review and equality screen Guidance relating to Inspection of Mental Health and Learning Disability Wards.	S75 has been considered in the Inspection process, resulting in improved outcomes for service users.	Screening Templates and Revised Guidance published	RQIA  March 2022
<b>What we did this year</b>  As a result of reprioritisation of work due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, work to review RQIA's inspection guidance has not taken place. However, during the year RQIA has commenced the development of a new Framework for Regulation, which aims to ensure transparency on how we go about regulation consistently, proportionately and underpinned by human rights - and ensure through clear guidance that providers can effectively engage with the processes. This Framework will also develop ways for service users and families to share their experience of services and their concerns, and ensure this evidence is firmly rooted in our regulation.			

## Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2021-22

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve and who for	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
11. Review and equality screen the Audit Tool relating to Inspection of Acute Hospitals.	S75 has been considered in the Inspection process, resulting in Improved outcomes for service users.	Screening Templates and Revised Guidance published	RQIA  March 2022
<p><b>What we did this year</b></p> <p>We engage with individuals of all genders and backgrounds during our inspections, actively seeking the views of service users, patients and relatives. We generally have these discussions with whoever is available and wishes to engage with us during the inspection process, where possible taking into consideration due regard to promote equality of opportunity. Throughout all of our inspection work, in relation to communication and resources for patients and our engagement with service users and staff; we seek evidence of individualised care plans for patients.</p> <p><b><u>Examples from Acute Hospital Inspection (HIP) tools:-</u></b></p> <p>Examples of consideration of equality are embedded in our acute hospital inspection tools relating to the core indicator of “Is care compassionate?” For example, an extract from published Outpatient Inspection to Musgrave Park Hospital, BHSCT October 2018: “We found staff had access to the interpreting services and staff described how they supported patients with a hearing impairment by providing a quiet environment and encouraging relatives/carers accompany the patient during their consultation. Information relating to mobility aids and orthopaedic conditions was readily available. There was a dedicated room available for staff to discuss sensitive information with patients and relatives.”</p>			

## Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2021-22

A core question in the communication section of the acute hospital inspection tool guides inspectors to confirm that “information is available in various formats (Braille, sign language, different languages etc.) including access to interpreting services as and when required.”

As a result of reprioritisation of work due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, work to review RQIA’s inspection audit tools has not taken place. However, during the year RQIA has commenced the development of a new Framework for Regulation, which aims to ensure transparency on how we go about regulation and inspection consistently, proportionately and underpinned by human rights - and ensure through clear guidance that providers can effectively engage with the processes. This Framework will also develop ways for service users and families to share their experience of services and their concerns, and ensure this evidence is firmly rooted in our regulation and inspection

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve and who for	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
12. As actions 5 - 11 are completed, roll out training on revised guidance/audit tools to inspectors.	Improved outcomes for health and social care service users.	Training reports and evaluations.	RQIA Ongoing

### What we did this year

As a result of reprioritisation of work due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, work to review RQIA’s inspection guidance and inspection audit tools has not taken place. However, during the year RQIA has commenced the development of a new Framework for Regulation, which aims to ensure transparency on how we go about regulation and inspection consistently, proportionately and underpinned by human rights - and ensure through clear guidance that providers can effectively engage with the processes. This Framework will also develop ways for service users and families to share their experience of services and their concerns, and ensure this evidence is firmly rooted in our regulation and inspection.

## Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2021-22

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve and who for	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
13. Accessible Information and Communications - ensure checks for accessibility of information are built into all inspection procedures/provider guidance/audit tools in accordance with: BHSCT Making Communication Accessible (Disability); Accessible Formats Policy (Language and Disability accessibility); Corporate Style Guide	Better access to information for service users	Evidence of checks in inspection reports through the process of audit	RQIA  Ongoing
<p><b>What we did this year</b></p> <p>In September 2022, we developed an 'engagement flyer' for the Review of the implementation of recommendations to prevent choking incidents in Northern Ireland. This was circulated to a targeted group of service users who may be at risk or care from someone who is at risk from choking, particularly those with Dysphagia or difficulties swallowing. The review focused on high risk areas in hospital wards and daycare settings. (Stroke; Care of the Elderly; Mental Health and Learning Disability; Physical Disability services). We plan to adopt this model for other reviews.</p> <p>In addition to this we also engaged with the Big Word telephone interpreting service to ensure that we were able to offer opportunities for those service users, where English is not their first language, to engage effectively with us. However, we do note in this case there was no uptake for this service. <b>This action is complete.</b></p>			

## Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2021-22

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve and who for	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
14. RQIA will collaborate with advocacy organisations, such as NICCY, VOYPIC, NIGALA and PCC to explore ways to improve feedback from children and young people about the quality of services they receive. NIGALA will develop a website to facilitate this with link to PCC and RQIA information.	Improved engagement with children and young people.	Website operational and collation of feedback from children and young people about the quality of services they receive.	RQIA  Ongoing
<p><b>What we did this year</b></p> <p>RQIA's children's team met with NICCY representatives on several occasions during the year and discussed the impact of Covid-19 on children's services inspections, regional services for children and young people and unregistered services. RQIA also discussed the admission of under 18's to adult and general paediatric wards for mental health care. RQIA are engaged in supporting the implementation of the NICCY's 'Still Waiting' report and are a member of the NICCY Interdepartmental Project Board.</p> <p><b>This action is complete.</b></p>			

### Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2021-22

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve and who for	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
15. Ensure that all our public engagement events include consideration of S75 in the organising of the events and in the information/questions asked at the events as appropriate.	Engagement events are more inclusive.	Evaluation of events indicates that needs have been met.	RQIA  Ongoing
<b>What we did this year</b>  Due to Covid-19 restrictions there were no public engagement events held during 2021-22. However, we have taken account of these considerations at previous public engagement events and in plans for events during the year ahead.			



## Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2021-22

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve and who for	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
<b>Lay Assessors Appointment</b>  16. In the appointment of new lay assessors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• include a welcoming statement for people with disabilities</li> <li>• send advertisement to disability organisations</li> </ul>	People with disabilities are more involved in public life.	Numbers of additional lay assessors with a disability.	RQIA  Ongoing
<b>What we did this year</b>  Actions to recruit a new cohort of lay assessors were delayed due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. However, significant progress was made to revise the role and recruitment arrangements for lay assessors, taking into account of best practice from peer organisations across the UK and Ireland. This included a look back exercise involving previous and current lay assessors on what worked/didn't work; and development of a handbook to support new lay assessors. Plans are in place to commence recruitment of lay assessors during 2022-23, and to pilot the approach within an identified work area.			

## Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2021-22

### Disability Action Plan 2018-2023: What we will do to promote equality and good relations

Action Point	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and	By Whom/ When
<b>Awareness Days</b>  1. Raise awareness of specific barriers faced by people with disabilities including through linking in with National Awareness Days or Weeks (such as Mind your Health Day)	Increased staff awareness of the range of disabilities and needs	Two annual awareness days profiled >50% of staff participating in the evaluation indicate that they know more about people living with disabilities as a result of the awareness days	RQIA Supported by BSO Equality Unit Annually
<b>What we did this year</b>  During 2021-22 we held 2 Awareness Days. We asked staff which disabilities they wanted to know more about. They told us they wanted to know more about Dementia and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Both sessions were held using Zoom.			

### Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2021-22

We emailed staff to let them know about the Awareness Days. We also added information to the Tapestry website <http://tapestry.hscni.net/> .

On the Dementia awareness day, Dr Duffy who is the Consultant Lead Clinical Psychologist for Older People in the Northern Trust gave a presentation about Dementia, with a particular focus on caring for a loved one who has dementia.

The other Awareness Day was about ADHD. Siobhan McErlane, a Specialist Health Visitor from the ADHD/ Behaviour Assessment Service in the Northern Trust gave a presentation. Siobhan talked about ADHD, from assessment and diagnosis to management of the condition.

Videos of both of the days have been published on the Tapestry website. This way, staff who couldn't be part of the live sessions on the day, are able to watch the presentations whenever it suits them.

We held a survey asking staff what they thought of the Awareness Days. 68% of those who responded reported knowing more about ADHD, including supporting a friend or family member or work colleague with ADHD. This figure was 61% in relation to Dementia.

**This action has been completed.**

## Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2021-22

Action Point	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and	By Whom/ When
<p><b>Placement Scheme</b></p> <p><b>2.</b> Create and promote meaningful placement opportunities for people with disabilities in line with good practice and making use of voluntary expertise in this area.</p> <p>Examine the scope for offering placements to participants working from home and accessing flexible working options for those with disabilities which may prevent them from travelling to office locations.</p>	<p>People with a disability gain meaningful work experience</p>	<p>1 placement offered per year.</p> <p>Feedback through annual evaluation of scheme indicates that placement meets expectations</p>	<p>RQIA supported by BSO Equality Unit</p> <p>Annually</p>
<p><b>What we did this year</b></p> <p>Due to Covid-related government guidelines the Placement Scheme did not go ahead in 21-22. Throughout the year, supported by the Equality Unit and together with our HSC partners, we worked to prepare for a new</p>			

## Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2021-22

intake of participants. In particular, we gave consideration to where placements would be located. As a result we agreed with our HSC partners to offer the option to work from home where possible. We held an Induction Event on 21st February 2022 online. Placements started on 1st March. One person is placed with us in RQIA.

**We still need to do some work to complete this action.**

Action Point	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and	By Whom/ When
<b>Tapestry</b> <b>3.</b> Promote and encourage staff to participate in the disability staff network and support the network in the delivery of its action plan.	<p>Staff with a disability feel more confident that their voice is heard in decision making.</p> <p>Staff with a disability feel better supported.</p>	<p>Tapestry staff survey in 2022- 23</p> <p>Host Tapestry Meetings</p>	<p>RQIA supported by Equality Unit</p> <p>Annually</p>

### What we did this year

During 2021-22, we tried to promote Tapestry in a lot of different ways and to encourage staff to get involved. We wrote articles in staff newsletters and sent emails to all staff to raise awareness. Tapestry gained a few new members who attended meetings and joined the Tapestry mailing list.

### Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2021-22

Tapestry were approached by BSO HR to give input into many projects including user testing of the new HR portal and input into a new line manager resource which will now have a section on managing staff with disabilities due to suggestions put forward by members.

Three Tapestry members presented at a system leadership conference which was attended by senior leaders across HSC. The members presented on the barriers they have faced in work and the things that have been put in place to address these. Tapestry was also promoted as a good practice example of supporting staff. A lot of questions were asked about all three presenters' experiences and they all contributed their differing experiences.

**This action has been completed.**

## Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2021-22

Action Point	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and	By Whom/ When
<p><b>Monitoring</b></p> <p><b>4.</b> Encourage staff to declare that they have a disability or care for a person with a disability through awareness raising and providing guidance to staff on the importance of monitoring.</p> <p>Prompt staff to keep up to date their personal equality monitoring records (via self-service on new Human Resources IT system)</p>	<p>More accurate data in place. Greater number of staff feel comfortable declaring they have a disability.</p>	<p>Increase in completion of disability monitoring information by staff to 90%</p>	<p>BSO HR supported by Equality Unit</p> <p>Annually</p>
<p><b>What we did this year</b></p> <p>Due to low staff resources staff monitoring data has been unavailable, the most recent data received was in June 2021 and showed that 45% of RQIA staff told us whether they had a disability or not. In total, none of our staff declared that they have a disability. This figure is almost the same as last year. This means that we have to keep encouraging staff to complete the information.</p>			

## Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2021-22

<b>We still have work to do to complete this action.</b>			
<b>Action Point</b>	<b>Intended Outcome</b>	<b>Performance Indicator and Target</b>	<b>By Whom/ When</b>
<b>Training</b>  <b>5.</b> In collaboration with disabled people design, deliver and evaluate training for staff and Board Members on disability equality and disability legislation.	Increased staff and Board Member awareness of the range of disabilities and needs.	All staff trained (general and bespoke) within 2 years through eLearning or interactive sessions and staff awareness initiatives delivered.	RQIA supported by Equality Unit  Annually
<b>What we did this year</b>  The Making A Difference e-learning programme includes a number of scenarios that involve people with a disability and asks staff to think through how best to support individuals, as well as giving information on disability legislation. All our staff have to complete the programme. During 21/22, 46 RQIA staff completed the Making A Difference Training.			



### Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2021-22

Disability Awareness eLearning (module 5 of Discovering Diversity). Since much of the content of Discovering Diversity is based on Flash Player, which is no longer supported, registration requests for this eLearning package can no longer be processed. We are working on a fix for this issue.

**This action has been completed.**

All of the actions in our action plan are at regional and at local level. Our action plan is a live document. We will tell the Equality Commission about any changes.

# **Chapter 4**

## **Updated Equality and Disability Action Plans 2018-2023**

**Updated August 2022**

**Regulation and Quality  
Improvement Authority (RQIA)**

<b>What is in this document?</b>	<b>Page</b>
Introduction	44
Who we are and what we do	45
How people can be involved in our work	46
What the law says	46
How we reviewed our last plans and developed these new plans	47
What have we done so far	49
What we have learned so far	51
What is in the new plans	51
How we will monitor	52
Action Plans	53

We will consider any request for this document in another format or language.  
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## Introduction

As Acting Chair and Chief Executive of RQIA we are committed to promoting equality and good relations, both as an employer and as service regulator across health and social care in Northern Ireland. For people with a disability, we recognise that we have to do more to promote positive attitudes and to encourage their participation in public life.

We want to make sure we do this in a way that makes a difference to people. We will put in place what is necessary to do so. This includes people, time and money. Where it is right to do so, we will include actions from these plans in the annual business plans we develop for the organisation as a whole.

We will also put everything in place in RQIA to make sure we comply with legislation. This includes making one person responsible overall for making sure we do what we say we are going to do in our Equality and Disability Action Plans.

We let our staff know about what is in our plans and we will also train our staff to help them understand what they need to do.

The person in our organisation who is responsible for making sure that we do what we have promised to do is Malachy Finnegan, Senior Communications Manager. If you have any questions you can contact him at:

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15-27 Gloucester Street  
Belfast  
BT1 4LS

Telephone: 028 9536 1111 for text relay prefix with 18001  
[malachy.finnegan@rqia.org.uk](mailto:malachy.finnegan@rqia.org.uk)

## **Who we are and what we do**

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) is part of health and social care in Northern Ireland.

RQIA is the independent body responsible for monitoring and inspecting the availability and quality of health and social care services in Northern Ireland, and encouraging improvements in the quality of those services.

We do things like:

- Register and inspect a range of health and social care services in both statutory and independent sectors
- Encourage improvements in how services are delivered through our inspections
- Deliver a programme of scrutiny and review in services provided to people with a mental illness or a learning disability
- Via the Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 we monitor, inspect and enforce these regulations to protect people against dangers of ionising radiation in relation to medical exposure
- Assure the quality of health and social care through a programme of reviews and hygiene inspections
- Listen to service users and act on these views
- Employ staff and manage our budgets to effectively conduct our duties.

### **Registration and Inspection:**

- Register services
- Inspect services in statutory and independent sectors
- Assist in improvement in the access and delivery of services.

### **Mental Health and Learning Disability:**

- Inspect the quality and safety of Mental Health and Learning Disability services delivered in the province and that people are detained in line with the requirements of Mental health legislation
- Provide safeguards for users of these services.

### **Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations:**

- Conduct a programme of inspections to ensure compliance with legislative requirements.

### **Reviews:**

- Undertake hygiene inspections, to assure the quality of health and encourage improvement in this area
- Carry out RQIA's review programme and commissioned reviews into a range of health and social care issues, and make recommendations for improvement.

### **Public Participation:**

- Responding to existing and emerging issues within health and social care (HSC) through listening to and acting on the views and opinions of the public.

### **Corporate Services:**

- Supporting the business of RQIA.

## **How people can be involved in our work**

There are a number of ways in which people can be involved in the work of the RQIA, including:

- Applying to be a lay assessor or a peer reviewer
- Engagement with service users and carers as an integral part of RQIA's inspections and reviews of health and social care services
- Making available opportunities for co-production.

## **What the law says**

RQIA has to follow the law under **Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998**. It says that in our work we have to promote equality and good relations. We have to treat people fairly and based on their needs and to make things better for staff and people who use our services. It also says that we have to build better relationships between different groups of people.

There are nine different equality groups that the law requires us to look at:

- Gender (and gender identities)
- Age
- Religion
- Political opinion
- Ethnicity
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Marital status
- Having dependants or not.

There are three good relations groups we need to consider:

- Religion
- Political opinion
- Ethnicity.

We also have to follow the law under the **Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006**, which says that we have to:

- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

This includes people with any type of disability, whether for example, physical disabilities; sensory disabilities; autism; learning disabilities; mental health conditions; or conditions that are long-term. Some of these disabilities may be hidden, others may be visible.

Both pieces of legislation require us to develop an action plan: an Equality Action Plan and a Disability Action Plan. We have to send our plans to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and then report every year on what we have achieved.

## **How we reviewed our last plans and developed our new plans**

We reviewed what we have done so far to promote equality and good relations, to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and to encourage their participation in public life.

The Equality Forum in our organisation, with representation from each Directorate, thought through the following questions:

- What has worked well?
- What hasn't worked well?
- What lessons have we learned?
- Did we do what we said we would do?
- Has this made a difference for people in the way we thought it would?

For the new plans, we considered two questions:

- In your area of work, what are the key issues for people in the equality groupings?
- What can you do to address these issues?

We looked at a range of sources of information such as:

- new research or data
- equality screening exercises that have been completed
- their professional experience and knowledge
- issues raised in consultations or through other engagement with staff and service users.

We also learned from what we heard when we:

- held coffee mornings to talk with staff about important issues to consider for those who have a disability and those who care for somebody who has a disability
- ran a survey with staff to find out what they think an Employer of Choice for people who have a disability or those who care for somebody with a disability looks like
- spoke with the members of our staff disability network to find out what we should do to promote equality for those who have a disability and those who care for somebody who has a disability
- together with our colleagues in the Health and Social Care Trusts ran an engagement event with people from different equality groupings to find out what they think we could do to better promote equality.

We also read up on what the Equality Commission says would be good to do. All this helped us think about what else we could do to make a difference.

We then consulted publicly on our draft plans. When we started the consultation we informed all consultees on our consultation list of the details of the consultation and how people could engage with us directly or respond in writing. We invited consultees to attend one of two consultation events, one in Belfast and one in Derry/Londonderry. In addition, we offered to meet in person with anyone preferring to do so.

We engaged closely with Tapestry, our Disability Staff Network, in the development of our Disability Action Plans. We likewise drew on our learning from a survey that we carried out with staff who have a disability or who care for somebody who has a disability. The survey focused on what would make an organisation an Employer of Choice for them.



## **What we have done so far**

This is some of what we have done to promote equality:

- We produced a signposting resource for our staff. It provides information on support networks in the community for people from each of the nine equality groups. We update this resource every year
- We put in place an Accessible Formats Policy; this policy relates to all of the nine equality groups including age, gender, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, political opinion, dependants, religion and marital status. It addresses specific needs in relation to sensory impairment, learning disability, sexual orientation, older people, younger people, translation and interpreting for minority ethnic groups and more general literacy levels that are of particular importance.
- In partnership with the Association for Real Change (ARC), we produce easy read reports for people living in supported living services with learning disability
- We established an internal Equality Forum with representation from each directorate, to drive mainstreaming of equality and human rights within the organisation
- We added a prompt on equality screening to the template for all Authority papers, and ensured that equality is considered in everything we do by screening our plans and policies.

This is some of what we have done to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in public life:

### **Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people:**

- held seven disability awareness days for our staff. Each looked at different disabilities: Epilepsy, Sight loss and blindness, Depression, Hearing loss and deafness, Learning disabilities, Cancer, and Arthritis and Musculoskeletal conditions
- developed an elearning resource on disability. It is available to all Health and Social Care staff. All our staff have been asked to complete the programme at induction
- included the disability duties in all Equality Awareness and Equality Screening Training that the BSO Equality Unit delivers
- delivered training sessions on mental health awareness to our staff, including on mental health first aid, mindfulness and managing stress; and courses for staff who are carers

- developed a staff resource on disability etiquette, a resource and checklist on how to positively portray people with a disability in their work
- ensured accessibility standards W3C AA were met in the development of our website. Users can use Browsealoud to access our website. We make every effort to ensure that our website is user friendly and accessible.

### **Encourage the participation of disabled people in public life:**

- participated in a disability work placement scheme together with our Health and Social Care partner organisations. We provided a placement in 2016-17 and will do so again in future
- developed standards and guidance for the involvement of people with a disability and a checklist for organising inclusive meetings
- put in place a process for publishing screening templates as soon as they are completed, as suggested by a disability organisation. We do the same for publishing our quarterly screening reports
- developed a resource for line managers on reasonable adjustments for staff with a disability
- set up a disability network for our staff. Part of the role of this network is to raise disability issues with decision makers in our organisation.
- introduced a 'Your Care, Your View' card to seek the views of service users on their experience of mental health and learning disability services
- Mental Health and Learning Disability inspectors developed a direct observation tool for use on wards for patients who have no capacity to answer or understand a structured questionnaire. The quality of interaction audit was a tool designed to help evaluate the type and quality of communication that takes place on a ward
- recruited a number of lay assessors with a disability, both learning disability and physical disability, to work alongside our inspection and review staff. Our recruitment materials are provided in an easy to understand format and people with disabilities were encouraged to apply.

## **What we have learned so far**

### **Monitoring**

Even with proactive encouragement, our staff seem reluctant to declare their disability. We will need to keep working on this, including trying to find out why staff do not declare their disability. We will work closely with our disability staff network on this.

### **Placements**

We evaluated our placement scheme each year and made changes for next year's scheme to improve the experience for participants. We will carry this learning into our new plan. Managers and staff who have been involved in the scheme to date have told us that they have gained a better understanding of disabilities through working side by side a person who has a disability. Many have been impressed by the attitude and performance of the individual we had on placement.

### **Awareness Days**

We have found that attendance at awareness events is greatest when the subject is most relevant to staff. This can be because they have the condition themselves or they know or work with someone who has the condition. We will continue to ask staff which areas relating to disability they would like more information on.

### **Training**

We have found that our e-learning training on Disability is a really useful resource to train our large numbers of staff. Sometimes we need to run specific training courses, for example on autism awareness or deaf awareness if a need is identified. We will continue to take a combination of e-learning and classroom based training approach. People have told us that they take away a lot from sessions that are delivered by people with a disability themselves.

## **What is in the new plans**

There are two separate tables below. The first table lists all the actions that we will do to promote equality and good relations. This is our Equality Action Plan.

The second table describes what we will do to promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability and to encourage their participation in public life. This is our Disability Action Plan. In both plans we also say what difference we intend to make and when we will do these actions.

## **How we will monitor**

Every year we write up what we have done. We also explain when we haven't done something. We send this report to the Equality Commission. We also publish this report on our website: [www.rqia.org.uk](http://www.rqia.org.uk)

We have a look at the plans every year to see whether we need to make any changes to them. If we need to, we write those changes into the plans. Before we make any big changes we talk to people in the equality groupings to see what they think.

When we finish an action, we take it off the plans for the next year to keep our plans up to date. They will show what we still have to do. After five years we will look at our plans again to see how we have done. We will also see what else we could do.

When we develop or look at our plans we will invite people who have a disability to help us.

The plans are also available on our website: [www.rqia.org.uk](http://www.rqia.org.uk)

We send our plans to all organisations and individuals on our consultation list when we have finalised them and also when we have made major changes to them.

To find out whether what we do makes a difference, we will do a number of things, for example:

- For training and awareness events, we ask our staff about what learning they are taking away with them and what they may do differently as a result of what they have learned
- We do a survey with people from a particular equality group after we have delivered an action targeted at them to ask whether they feel better supported as a result
- We check summary figures to see whether, for example, more people from a particular under-represented group are availing of a service after promoting it to them specifically.

You can find further information on how we will monitor each action in the plans themselves.

## Equality Action Plan 2018-2023: What we will do to promote equality and good relations

Action Point	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	By Whom/ When
<b>Gender Identity</b>  2. Identify and pilot training available from organisations in the gender identity sector and put arrangements in place to access such training for teams where a member of staff comes forward to disclose that they identify as transgender or non-binary. Deliver awareness and training initiatives to relevant staff as part of the roll-out of the Gender Identity and Expression Employment Policy	Staff who identify as transgender and non-binary feel more supported in the workplace	Arrangements are in place	BSO HR  March 2023
<b>Training</b>  3. Making a Difference e-learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver on training targets</li> </ul>	Increased staff awareness of equality and human rights.	100% staff have completed the e-learning module	BSO HR with support by Equality Unit  EMT Annually

Action Point	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	By Whom/ When
<b>Domestic Violence</b>			
4. Undertake awareness raising relating to new support mechanisms (developed by BSO) to support staff with experience of domestic violence	Staff with experience of domestic violence feel better supported	Feedback from staff who have drawn support through the mechanisms indicates a positive experience.  Awareness raising undertaken with 100% of staff	BSO HR  March 2023
<b>Inspection</b>			
5. Review and equality screen guidance relating to Inspection to of Domiciliary Care Agencies.	S75 has been considered in the Inspection process, resulting in improved outcomes for service users.	Screening Templates and Revised Guidance published	RQIA  March 2023
6. Review and equality screen Guidance relating to Inspection of Nursing and Adult Residential Care Homes	S75 has been considered in the Inspection process, resulting in improved outcomes for service users.	Screening Templates and Revised Guidance published	RQIA  March 2023

Action Point	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	By Whom/ When
7. Review and equality screen Guidance relating to Inspection of Independent Health Care.	S75 has been considered in the Inspection process, resulting in improved outcomes for service users.	Screening Templates and Revised Guidance published	RQIA March 2023
8. Review and equality screen Guidance relating to Inspection of Day Care Settings and Adult Placement Agencies.	S75 has been considered in the Inspection process, resulting in improved outcomes for service users.	Screening Templates and Revised Guidance published	RQIA March 2023
9. Review and equality screen Guidance relating to Inspection of Children's Services	S75 has been considered in the Inspection process, resulting in improved outcomes for service users	Screening Templates and Revised Guidance published	RQIA March 2023
10. Review and equality screen Guidance relating to Inspection of Mental Health and Learning Disability Wards.	S75 has been considered in the Inspection process, resulting in improved outcomes for service users.	Screening Templates and Revised Guidance published	RQIA March 2023

Action Point	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	By Whom/ When
11. Review and equality screen the Audit Tool relating to Inspection of Acute Hospitals.	S75 has been considered in the Inspection process, resulting in improved outcomes for service users.	Screening Templates and Revised Guidance published	RQIA March 2023
12. As actions 5 - 11 are completed, roll out training on revised guidance/audit tools to inspectors.	Improved outcomes for health and social care service users.	Training reports and evaluations.	RQIA Ongoing
<p>13. Accessible Information and Communications - ensure checks for accessibility of information are built into all inspection procedures/provider guidance/audit tools in accordance with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BHSCT Making Communication Accessible (Disability)</li> <li>• Accessible Formats Policy (Language and Disability accessibility)</li> <li>• Corporate Style Guide</li> </ul>	Better access to information for service users	Evidence of checks in inspection reports through the process of audit	RQIA Ongoing



Action Point	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	By Whom/ When
14. RQIA will collaborate with advocacy organisations, such as NICCY, VOYPIC ,NIGALA and PCC to explore ways to improve feedback from children and young people about the quality of services they receive. NIGALA will develop a website to facilitate this with links to PCC and RQIA information.	Improved engagement with children and young people.	Website operational and collation of feedback from children and young people about the quality of services they receive.	RQIA Ongoing
15. Ensure that all our public engagement events include consideration of S75 in the organising of the events and in the information/questions asked at the events as appropriate.	Engagement events are more inclusive.	Evaluation of events indicates that needs have been met.	RQIA Ongoing

Action Point	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	By Whom/ When
<b>Lay Assessors Appointment</b>  16. In the appointment of new lay assessors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• include a welcoming statement for people with disabilities</li> <li>• send advertisement to disability organisations</li> </ul>	People with disabilities are more involved in public life.	Numbers of additional lay assessors with a disability.	RQIA  Ongoing

In relation to Actions 5-12 above - As a result of reprioritisation of work due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, work to review RQIA's inspection guidance and audit tools has not yet taken place. However, during the year RQIA has commenced the development of a refreshed Framework for Regulation, which includes these aspects within its terms. This approach aims to ensure transparency on how we go about regulation and inspection in a consistent way across programmes/ services, and that resulting regulatory actions are proportionate and underpinned by human rights, ensuring through clear guidance that providers can effectively engage with the processes. This Framework will also develop ways for service users and families to share their experience of services and their concerns, and ensure this evidence is firmly rooted in our regulation and inspection work. Full consideration will also be given to RQIA's responsibilities under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act.

## Disability Action Plan 2018-2023:

**What we will do to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in public life**

Action Point	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	By Whom/ When
<b>Awareness Days</b>  1. Raise awareness of specific barriers faced by people with disabilities including through linking in with National Awareness Days or Weeks (such as Mind your Health Day)	Increased staff awareness of the range of disabilities and needs	Two annual awareness days profiled >50% of staff participating in the evaluation indicate that they know more about people living with disabilities as a result of the awareness days	RQIA supported by BSO Equality Unit  Annually
<b>Placement Scheme</b>  2. Create and promote meaningful placement opportunities for people with disabilities in line with good practice and making use of voluntary expertise in this area.  Examine the scope for offering placements to participants working from home and accessing flexible working	People with a disability gain meaningful work experience	1 placement offered per year.  Feedback through annual evaluation of scheme indicates that placement meets expectations	RQIA supported by BSO Equality Unit  Annually

Action Point	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	By Whom/ When
options for those with disabilities which may prevent them from travelling to office locations.			
<b>Tapestry</b> <b>3.</b> Promote and encourage staff to participate in the disability staff network and support the network in the delivery of its agreed priorities.	Staff with a disability feel more confident that their voice is heard in decision-making.	Increases in Tapestry membership or in participation at meetings	RQIA supported by Equality Unit
	Staff with a disability feel better supported.		Annually
<b>Monitoring</b> <b>4.</b> Encourage staff to declare that they have a disability or care for a person with a disability through awareness raising and providing guidance to staff on the importance of monitoring. Prompt staff to keep up to date their personal equality monitoring records (via self-service on new Human Resources IT system)	More accurate data in place. Greater number of staff feel comfortable declaring they have a disability.	Increase in completion of disability monitoring information by staff to 90%	BSO HR supported by Equality Unit  Annually

Action Point	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	By Whom/ When
<b>Training</b>  5. Work with Aurion Learning and regional partners to explore potential for upgrade of existing Discovering Diversity module 5 / explore other options for disability training	Availability of disability elearning module to bring about increased staff and Board Member awareness of the range of disabilities and needs.	Disability elearning module available to staff and Board members.	RQIA supported by Equality Unit  March 2023
6. Sign up to Mental Health Charter	Staff with mental health conditions feel better supported in the workplace	The organisation has signed up and communication has been issued to all staff	BSO HR with support by Equality Unit  March 2023

## **Chapter 5: Equality and Human Rights Screening Report**



# **Equality and Human Rights Screening Report**

**April 2021 – March 2022**

Screenings published previously can be viewed at:

<http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/3086.htm>

<b>Policy / Procedure</b>	<b>Policy Aims</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Screening Decision</b>
Fire Safety Policy	RQIA has an obligation to comply with recommendation and requirements contained in Firecode, Statutes and other public guidance. This Policy addresses these in such a manner as set out within these documents.	May-21	Screened out with mitigation
Health and Safety Policy	The purpose of this Health and Safety Policy is to ensure that RQIA complies with its statutory duties and common law duty of care in relation to health, safety and welfare at work.	Nov-21	Screened out with mitigation

Policy / Procedure	Policy Aims	Date	Screening Decision
<p>Policy and Procedure for the RQIA</p> <p>COVID-19 Precautionary Response Policy</p>	<p>To describe service response areas to be undertaken in order to keep RQIA staff, service users and the public (particularly those who are elderly, extremely vulnerable and immunosuppressed) as protected as possible, to give confidence to registered providers that the risk of an inspector being a vector of the pathogen is kept to a minimum and to ensure that RQIA staff are both well informed and confident about their conduct.</p>	04/01/2022	06/01/2022



Policy / Procedure	Policy Aims	Date	Screening Decision
Information Governance suite of policies  Data Protection Policy  Freedom of Information Policy  Information Asset Register Procedure  Information Governance Policy	<p>The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority's (RQIA) suite of Information Governance (IG) policies set out how RQIA should manage and secure its information in line with the requirements of data protection legislation, and in line with the requirements set out in freedom of information / environmental information regulations.</p> <p>These policies outline for staff a consistent procedure on how information should be handled.</p>	Feb-22	Screened out with mitigation

No concerns were raised by consultees on any of the screenings published in 2021-22.

## **Chapter 6: Mitigation Report**



# **Equality and Human Rights Mitigation Report**

**April 2021 – March 2022**

## Fire Safety Policy

<i><b>In developing the policy or decision what did you do or change to address the equality issues you identified?</b></i>	<i><b>What do you intend to do in future to address the equality issues you identified?</b></i>
<p>This policy has been drawn up in line with legislation – the purpose of which is to provide every person the relevant information with regards to the BSO Fire Policy.</p> <p>Personal emergency evacuation plans are provided for in the policy for women who are pregnant, disabled people and older people with mobility issues.</p> <p>Requests for the policy in alternative formats will be considered in line with RQIA's Accessible Formats Policy</p>	<p>Contractors will be informed of the policy and associated procedures.</p>

## Health and Safety Policy

<i><b>In developing the policy or decision what did you do or change to address the equality issues you identified?</b></i>	<i><b>What do you intend to do in future to address the equality issues you identified?</b></i>
<p><b>Gender:</b> A risk assessment in respect of pregnant women who may be impacted by the implementation of this policy.</p> <p><b>Disability:</b> A risk assessment will be carried out for all staff who have declared a disability.</p> <p>RQIA will provide braille signage for those with sight loss.</p>	<p>Consideration of reasonable adjustments e.g., activities may need to be relocated; structural changes or repairs may be required, need for additional signage, provision of refuges.</p> <p>Additional training for both the assessed and other members of staff who have volunteered to assist.</p>

## Information Governance suite of policies

<b><i>In developing the policy or decision what did you do or change to address the equality issues you identified?</i></b>	<b><i>What do you intend to do in future to address the equality issues you identified?</i></b>
<p>RQIA's Accessible Formats Policy outlines how those developing information should consider alternative formats, and how information and publications can be requested in alternative formats.</p> <p>RQIA will consider provision of alternative formats on request to meet the needs of people with a disability who may need information in an accessible format</p> <p>RQIA will also consider the need to provide some support to those wishing to avail of these policies, and/or signpost them to an advocacy services such as the Patient Client Council, who could assist them through the complaint process.</p> <p>RQIA is also able to avail of the regional (HSCNI) interpreting contract.</p> <p>The data protection policy provides provision for a parent, guardian or advocate to make the complaint on their behalf</p>	<p>Consideration will be given to converting these policies into a variety of formats to include; easy read; audio; brail, accessible PDF and a variety of languages.</p>