

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

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Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at: www.rqia.org.uk/what-we-do/equality-and-disability/equality-and-disability/ and <https://hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/3226.htm>

(ECNI Q28):

The report on our most recent Five Year Review of Equality Scheme can be found at: https://www.rqia.org.uk/RQIA/media/RQIA/Resources/WhatWeDo/RQIA-Equality-and-Disability-Action-Plans-2023-28_Web-29-Sept-23.docx

Our Equality Scheme is due to be reviewed again by 31st March 2026.

Signature:

Briege Donaghy

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 2022 and March 2023

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Please note:

(ECNI Q8,9) We are currently consulting on our new Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-2028.

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	Some feedback was provided by consultees on screening published in 2022-23
1	0	0	1	
2. Number of policies subjected to Equality Impact Assessment.	0			
3. Indicate the stage of progress of each EQIA.	n/a			

4. Number of policy consultations conducted	2 (RQIA's Draft Strategic Plan 2022-27 and the Proposal to Publish Children's Services Inspection Reports)
5. Number of policy consultations conducted with screening presented. (See also Chapter 2, Table 2)	1 (Proposal to Publish Children's Services Inspection Reports)

(ECNI Q24)
Training

6. Staff training undertaken during 2022-23. (See also Chapter 2, Q6)

Course	No of Staff Trained	No of Board Members Trained
Equality Screening Training	0	0
Equality Impact Assessment Training	0	0
Total	0	0

eLearning: Making a Difference

Part 1 – All Staff	26
Part 2 – Line Managers	2

(ECNI Q27)
Complaints

7. Number of complaints in relation to the Equality Scheme received during 2022-23

0

Please provide detail of any complaints:

n/a

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

8. Within the 2022-23 reporting period, please indicate the number of:

Actions completed:

5

Actions ongoing:

0

Actions to commence:

10

(ECNI Part B Q1)

Disability Action Plan (see also Chapter 4)

9. Within the 2022-23 reporting period, please indicate the number of:

Actions completed:	<input type="text" value="5"/>	Actions ongoing:	<input type="text" value="0"/>	Actions to commence:	<input type="text" value="1"/>
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Chapter 2 Section 75 Progress Report

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

1. In 2022-23, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved. Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.

Table 1 below outlines progress to better promote equality of opportunity and good relationsⁱ.

All Section 75 groups:

Table 1:

	Outline new developments or changes in policies or practices and the difference they have made for specific equality groupings.
Persons of different religious belief	
Persons of different political opinion	RQIA has developed regular engagement with political party representatives (health spokespeople). Chair and Chief Executive met with each of the parties to take views on the RQIA Strategic Plan and to answer queries and questions about RQIA role and scope as regional health and social care regulator. This is now developed into a calendar of engagement with each of the Parties for a year ahead. We have also established more regular communications with Party health spokespersons and local representation when there are key announcements being made by RQIA, particularly where local services are

	involved. We also welcome contact from the Parties to look at important issues being raised with them through their constituents.
Persons of different racial groups	During our Public Consultation on the RQIA Strategic Plan 2022-28 we launched the Consultation documentation digitally (via website and accessible through social media coverage) with the information being selectable in four languages identified from most recent census data – this is recognising that demographics in NI have changed and this meant the individuals did not have to request a document in their preferred language, rather it was available as an embedded part of the Consultation process.
Persons of different age	<p>During 2022-23 RQIA undertook a Public Consultation on plans to publish children's services inspection reports. This was based on a history of not publishing these due to need to protect children and young people from exploitation. The consultation was co-produced with engagement of young people facilitated by VOYPIC (this was new development, and signals a change in policy).</p> <p>In relation to unaccompanied minors, RQIA ensures that they are treated fairly, not restricted and in receipt of the care and services they require and are entitled to at the right time and in the right place.</p> <p>Dementia work – including engagement with older people. Work commenced during 2022-23 to engage with stakeholder groups including Age NI and Alzheimer's Society alongside service providers to create a dementia user friendly questionnaire which will be piloted within Agencies Team from August</p>

	<p>2023. Work will also commence toward adapting the questionnaire for the Care Homes Team.</p> <p>End of life care. Work has commenced during 2023 to engage with bespoke services in the delivery of end of life care. Whilst this work is at an early stage, the engagement process will follow learning from previous work undertaken by the Agencies Team alongside the Service Improvement Officer for RQIA to ensure the inspection engagement approach is meaningful and includes service users and their families using suitable communication mediums.</p> <p>RQIA funded and supported a QI project titled “Rapid Exome Sequencing for Unwell Neonates”. The aim of this QI project was to provide a number of unwell neonates and their families with the opportunity to benefit from this recent, powerful advancement in genetic testing (rapid exome sequencing). The QI project also acts as a ‘pilot’ for the eventual mainstreaming of this type of testing into routine practice in Northern Ireland, by prompting the development of an ‘infrastructure’ around rapid neonatal exomes. This will include refining the referral pathway, the development of materials to streamline the testing process (e.g. a consent form, patient information leaflets), educational resources for staff and obtaining raw exome data, which will assist our local bioinformaticians in developing an ‘in-house’ exome service.</p>
Persons with different marital status	<p>RQIA has relaunched the flexible working policy, post the pandemic. During the pandemic we operated a largely work from home policy with minimal time spent in an office environment and with appropriate infection control policies in place. During 2022-23 we issued a staff survey to begin to develop an adopt a hybrid</p>

	working approach on a normalised basis. This also saw the reintroduction of flexible working, where it suits business needs. It offers flexibility for people of different marital status and with caring commitments.
Persons of different sexual orientation	
Persons of different genders and gender identities	<p>Review of the governance arrangements in place to support safety within Maternity Services in Northern Ireland. As part of this review RQIA conducted semi-structured focus groups with a range of service user groups, advocacy groups and voluntary agencies with targeted approaches to organisations who support ethnically diverse women and women experiencing social deprivation and other vulnerability factors such: history of adverse childhood experience, asylum seeker status, ethnic minority background, mental ill-health, substance use, domestic abuse, and learning disability.</p> <p>Targeted Organisations represented the views of young women, women from rural communities, women from the travelling community, transgender people, asylum seekers, refugees and women from the Roma community; they highlighted that not all women experience services to be accessible or person centred, and that women from vulnerable groups can find it difficult to attend appointments and are more likely to experience discrimination within maternity settings. The advocacy groups we met with also highlighted the need for enhanced support in the postnatal period for women with social complexity. In</p>

	<p>particular, it was felt that a coordinated multiagency approach would be beneficial to improve outcomes for vulnerable women and babies.</p> <p>The Expert Review Team considered that maternity services should be accessible to all who need them and barriers which impact on patient experience and safety should be examined and addressed and made two specific recommendations in this regard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to ensure that there are person-centred maternity pathways for women with social complexity; supported by training for maternity staff on how to reduce inequalities and provide support to ethnically diverse women and women with vulnerability factors. • HSC should work together to enhance and extend the provision of postnatal support provided to women and babies with social complexity.
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 2022-23. This comprises, for example, our Disability Awareness Days for staff.]</p> <p>RQIA re-introduced a short information leaflet to accompany a full review reports; this leaflet provides a summary of what the review explored and a brief overview of the findings and recommendations. It encourages the reader to access the full report and provides a link to direct them to the full report on the</p>

	<p>RQIA website. This will raise the profile and accessibility of RQIA reviews across the population of Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Work undertaken during 2021-22 in respect of learning disability service user questionnaires was implemented during 2022-23 and an audit of the work is currently underway and will aim to demonstrate the tangible outcomes for service users and their families, this audit/review will inform further refinement and development of the questionnaire and easy read report across regulated services.</p> <p>The prevalence of dysphagia, and the incidence of associated choking episodes, is higher across a number of common conditions that affect the general adult population; these include stroke, mental ill-health, learning disability and dementia. In a small proportion of adults, dysphagia can be present since childhood, where prematurity, congenital structural or neurological conditions account for the vast majority of cases.</p> <p>In the Review of the implementation of recommendations to prevent choking incidents across Northern Ireland RQIA conducted semi-structured focus groups with a range of service user groups, advocacy groups and voluntary agencies with targeted approaches to organisations who provide support to people who have dysphagia and difficulties with eating, drinking and swallowing. Through this targeted engagement we gained an insight into people's experiences of care and treatment, and the challenges facing people with eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties when accessing the relevant services and support.</p>
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Persons with and without dependants	Hybrid Working Scheme, in particular to meet the needs of staff with caring responsibility, was introduced in March 2023 following engagement with staff and trade unions, providing increased flexibility in working arrangements.
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(ECNI Q4,5,6)

2. During the 2022-23 reporting period

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

	Yes/No	Details
Job descriptions	Yes	The requirement to assist the organisation with fulfilling the duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the disability duties has not been included to date.
Performance objectives for staff	Yes	Section 75 statutory duties were integral to the Chief Executive's objectives for the year. These were cascaded to all staff within the organisation for inclusion in all objectives for the appraisal process.

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

	Yes/No	Details
Corporate/strategic plans	Yes	RQIA's duties include protecting the interests of those with mental health conditions and learning disabilities. RQIA is committed to the Northern

		Ireland Executive's Programme for Government of an equal and inclusive society where everyone is valued and treated with respect, and their human rights upheld. RQIA's behaviours (organisational and individual) are underpinned by human rights principles including dignity, respect and equality.
Annual business plans	Yes	RQIA's duties include protecting the interests of those with mental health conditions and learning disabilities. Actions to achieve RQIA's strategic objective "Scrutiny: Register, Inspect, Report and Enforce" includes actions to recruit inspection support volunteers to allow patients and service users to more easily share their experiences with us, and the development of tools to engage better with people living with

		dementia and other communication challenges.
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(ECNI Q11,12,17)

3. Please provide any details and examples of good practice in consultation during the 2022-23 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

Policy publicly consulted on	What equality document did you issue alongside the policy consultation document?	Which Section 75 groups did you consult with?	What consultation methods did you use? AND Which of these drew the greatest number of responses from consultees?	Do you have any comments on your experience of this consultation?
Strategic Plan Consultation	Screening template	The consultation was open to all Section 75 groups and we particularly made contact, through correspondence, with the Section 75 groups that are included in our	In developing our Consultation documents for the Strategic Plan 2023 – 2028, we presented the consultation documents on line via our web site. The Consultation could be viewed in four languages, by selecting your preferred	The Consultation was well attended and comments / views expressed challenging and informative. The digital approach, direct approaches through

		<p>Stakeholder Consultation group</p> <p>Further contact was made with Trusts in relation to any disability groups or fora or networks, offering physical or online engagement sessions.</p> <p>Engagement with political parties was also undertaken to ensure diverse range of views heard.</p>	<p>language at the start of the online consultation. The document was also presented in an easy read format, and could be downloaded for printing and viewed on a wide range of devices. 170 people took part, the vast majority at online events that were held at different days / times and promoted on social media. Physical events were offered – only one was taken up through contact with a local Trust and their Disability forum.</p> <p>When we publish our final Strategic Plan in 2023/24 it will also be available in easy read format. We will aim to embed language options for all key corporate documents as we move forward.</p>	<p>correspondence (and repeating that) offering opportunities for engagement were well received.</p> <p>Direct contact with political parties again was well received and attended.</p> <p>These approaches will be embedded in future consultations.</p>
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Proposed Publication of RQIA Inspection Reports of Services for Children and Young People	Screening template	<p>The consultation was open to all section 75 groups and we particularly made contact, through correspondence, with the section 75 groups that are included in our Stakeholder Consultation group.</p> <p>We also consulted with children and those with a disability, including Sensory processing disorder.</p>	<p>As part of the Consultation on the Proposed Publication of RQIA Inspection Reports of Services for Children and Young People, we published the consultation documents online via our website.</p> <p>To raise awareness of the consultation process we contacted a wide range of stakeholder groups including politicians, local councils, organisations listed under Section 75 of the Equality Act, and local/regional media outlets. We also shared the consultation with all registered providers of children's services and 16+ services and 47 representative and advocacy groups (including regulators and partner organisations). The Consultation documents, along with the Equality Screening</p>	<p>A total of 12 written responses were received, from a range of organisations, political representatives and individual respondents. This included a report from VOYPIC from discussions with 17 children and young people currently living in children's homes and those with previous experience of living in a children's home.</p>
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			<p>Form, were made available on the RQIA website along with Easy Read versions. Social media (Twitter) was used to raise awareness.</p> <p>We received support from VOYPIC (Voice of Young People in Care) to engage with a range of children and young people who were using children's services during the consultation period.</p> <p>Additionally, our inspectors raised awareness of the consultation during the inspections of children's services undertaken during the consultation period. Consultees had the opportunity to respond by a variety of means including in writing, by email, by telephoning or by participating in one of the consultation events.</p>	
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(ECNI Q21, 26)

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

No

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 2022-23 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

N/A

(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:

No members of RQIA staff undertook equality screening or EQIA training during the year.

(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:

- Consulting on new Equality and Disability Action Plans, jointly with our partner organisations, and considering what changes we need to make to our draft Plans as a result.

Appendix – Further Explanatory Notes

1 Consultation and Engagement

(ECNI Q10)

targeting –

We did not undertake any public consultations or pre-consultation exercises during the year.

(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.

(ECNI Q14)

consultation list – During the year, we reviewed our consultation list every quarter.

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.

ⁱ 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 2022-23

What we did between April 2022 and March 2023

This document summarises progress made during 2022-23 against the actions in our Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan. The plans are available on our website

[www.rqia.org.uk/who-we-are/corporate-documents-\(1\)/corporate-documents/](http://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 2022-23

Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2022-23

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

Action 2: BSO Human Resources (by end of March 2023)

What we will do: Roll-out of the Gender Identity and Expression Employment Policy - 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.

What we are trying to achieve: Staff who identify as transgender and non-binary feel more supported in the workplace.

Performance Indicator and Target: Arrangements are in place. Feedback from staff who have drawn support through the policy indicates a positive experience.

What we did over the last year: During the year, BSO commissioned The Rainbow Project to deliver training on Gender Identity Awareness to a team for whom this specific training need was identified. The training was well received by the team, with members reporting they found it really useful. This positive feedback means that The Rainbow Project's details can be held as a provider of Gender Identity Awareness Training, to ensure timely access to training when the need arises in future.

We completed this action.

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Action 3: BSO HR with support by Equality Unit, EMT, Annually

What we will do: Equality and human rights training - Roll out of 'Making a Difference' e-learning. Deliver on training targets for all staff.

What we are trying to achieve: Increased staff awareness of equality and human rights.

Performance Indicator and Target: Making a Difference e-learning included in mandatory training for staff. All staff have completed the training.

What we did over the last year: During 2022-23, 38 RQIA staff completed the Making A Difference Training.

We completed this action.

Action 4: BSO Human Resources (by end of March 2023)

What we will do: Develop support mechanisms for staff experiencing domestic violence.

- Scope best practice across the HSC and beyond.
- Develop measures to support staff with experience of domestic violence.
- Undertake awareness raising relating to new mechanisms

What we are trying to achieve: Staff with experience of domestic violence feel better supported.

Performance Indicator and Target: Feedback from staff who have drawn support through the mechanisms indicates a positive experience.

What we did over the last year: We did not progress this action.

Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2022-23

Action 5: RQIA, March 2023

What we will do: Review and equality screen guidance relating to Inspection of Domiciliary Care Agencies.

What we are trying to achieve: S75 has been considered in the Inspection process, resulting in improved outcomes for service users.

Performance Indicator and Target: Screening Templates and Revised Guidance published.

What we did over the last year: As a result of the continued reprioritisation of work during and following the Covid-19 Pandemic, work to review RQIA's inspection guidance was delayed. However, during 2022-23, this was overtaken by the development of an all encompassing Regulation Framework, which will include a review of RQIA's Inspection Guidance. This Framework will set out an intelligence-led approach, assessing the information we receive about services from a wide range of sources; assessing that information and aligning it to identified risk indicators; and as a result, judging the appropriate and proportionate regulatory response, based on that level of risk. At times this will mean carrying out a physical inspection for example. In other cases the information and decision making will demonstrate why a physical inspection was not undertaken. While this work has commenced in Care Home team, we have shared the approach across RQIA's Directorates. There is involvement of the Information services in the analysis required and the presentation of the risk indicators. This work will continue into 2023-24 when we begin to engage with service providers, service users and wider stakeholders to coproduce its development and ensure openness and transparency, taking into consideration our Section 75 obligations.

Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2022-23

Action 6: RQIA, March 2023

What we will do: Review and equality screen guidance relating to Inspection to of Nursing and Adult Residential Care Homes.

What we are trying to achieve: S75 has been considered in the Inspection process, resulting in improved outcomes for service users.

Performance Indicator and Target: Screening Templates and Revised Guidance published.

What we did over the last year: As a result of the continued reprioritisation of work during and following the Covid-19 Pandemic, work to review RQIA's inspection guidance was delayed. However, during 2022-23, this was overtaken by the development of an all encompassing Regulation Framework, which will include a review of RQIA's Inspection Guidance. This Framework will set out an intelligence-led approach, assessing the information we receive about services from a wide range of sources; assessing that information and aligning it to identified risk indicators; and as a result, judging the appropriate and proportionate regulatory response, based on that level of risk. At times this will mean carrying out a physical inspection for example. In other cases the information and decision making will demonstrate why a physical inspection was not undertaken. This work has commenced in Care Home team, responsible for inspecting nursing and residential care homes, and we have shared the approach across RQIA's Directorates. There is involvement of the Information services in the analysis required and the presentation of the risk indicators. This work will continue into 2023-24 when we begin to engage with service providers, service users and wider stakeholders to coproduce its development and ensure openness and transparency, taking into consideration our Section 75 obligations.

Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2022-23

Action 7: RQIA, March 2023

What we will do: Review and equality screen guidance relating to Inspection to Inspection of Independent Health Care.

What we are trying to achieve: S75 has been considered in the Inspection process, resulting in improved outcomes for service users.

Performance Indicator and Target: Screening Templates and Revised Guidance published.

What we did over the last year: The Independent Health Care team (IHC) annually update the provider guidance document for each service type which is available on our website. In relation to promoting equality and disability awareness with each service type the provider guidance advises:

- that there are opportunities to raise staff awareness through training and education regarding equality legislation to recognise and respond to patients' diverse needs.
- there is a culture/ethos that supports the values of dignity and respect, independence, rights, equality and diversity, choice and consent of service users.
- That management have systems in place to consider equality for patient.

During our inspection process we review the above areas and engage with management to highlight their responsibility to have suitable arrangements in place to record equality data. We also review the arrangements that are in place for the service to engage with their patients/clients to seek their views and opinions on how services are provided and of the actions taken by the service in response, as appropriate.

Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2022-23

We review the *Statement of Purpose* document to ensure this sets out how and where the service is delivered. This includes the construct of the building where the service is not located on the ground floor, thus ensuring prospective clients/patients can decide if the service will meet their needs.

We liaise with our colleagues during pre-registration inspections to ensure the design and construct of the building and grounds comply with disabled access guidance.

The Independent Health Care team review inspection reports on an ongoing basis to understand how best to share findings which demonstrate that services actively promote equality and disability; and keep associated policies and procedures under constant review. Similarly, we review inspection reports where we have had to provide advice and guidance in this area.

When we are approached by potential Responsible Officers who are seeking to register as an independent hospital, we consider some of the challenges faced by people who were born in other countries, or who for political/infrastructure reasons cannot access their birth certificates. In this regard, we are currently considering accepting alternative proof of identity that will satisfy the regulations. This will be raised with the Policy Committee for potential adoption within our internal process.

Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2022-23

Action 8: RQIA, March 2023

What we will do: Review and equality screen guidance relating to Inspection to Inspection of Day Care Settings and Adult Placement Agencies.

What we are trying to achieve: S75 has been considered in the Inspection process, resulting in improved outcomes for service users.

Performance Indicator and Target: Screening Templates and Revised Guidance published.

What we did over the last year: As a result of the continued reprioritisation of work during and following the Covid-19 Pandemic, work to review RQIA's inspection guidance was delayed. However, during 2022-23, this was overtaken by the development of an all encompassing Regulation Framework, which will include a review of RQIA's Inspection Guidance. This Framework will set out an intelligence-led approach, assessing the information we receive about services from a wide range of sources; assessing that information and aligning it to identified risk indicators; and as a result, judging the appropriate and proportionate regulatory response, based on that level of risk. At times this will mean carrying out a physical inspection for example. In other cases the information and decision making will demonstrate why a physical inspection was not undertaken. While this work has commenced in Care Home team, we have shared the approach across RQIA's Directorates. There is involvement of the Information services in the analysis required and the presentation of the risk indicators. This work will continue into 2023-24 when we begin to engage with service providers, service users and wider stakeholders to coproduce its development and ensure openness and transparency, taking into consideration our Section 75 obligations.

Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2022-23

Action 9: RQIA (by end of March 2023)

What we will do: Review and equality screen Guidance relating to Inspection of Children's Services

What we are trying to achieve: S75 has been considered in the Inspection process, resulting in improved outcomes for service users.

Performance Indicator and Target: Screening Templates and Revised Guidance published

What we did over the last year: As a result of the continued reprioritisation of work during and following the Covid-19 Pandemic, work to review RQIA's inspection guidance was delayed. However, during 2022-23, this was overtaken by the development of an all encompassing Regulation Framework, which will include a review of RQIA's Inspection Guidance. This Framework will set out an intelligence-led approach, assessing the information we receive about services from a wide range of sources; assessing that information and aligning it to identified risk indicators; and as a result, judging the appropriate and proportionate regulatory response, based on that level of risk. At times this will mean carrying out a physical inspection for example. In other cases the information and decision making will demonstrate why a physical inspection was not undertaken. While this work has commenced in Care Home team, we have shared the approach across RQIA's Directorates. There is involvement of the Information services in the analysis required and the presentation of the risk indicators. This work will continue into 2023-24 when we begin to engage with service providers, service users and wider stakeholders to coproduce its development and ensure openness and transparency, taking into consideration our Section 75 obligations.

Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2022-23

Action 10: RQIA, March 2023

What we will do: Review and equality screen guidance relating to Inspection to Inspection of Mental Health and Learning Disability Wards.

What we are trying to achieve: S75 has been considered in the Inspection process, resulting in improved outcomes for service users.

Performance Indicator and Target: Screening Templates and Revised Guidance published.

What we did over the last year: As a result of the continued reprioritisation of work during and following the Covid-19 Pandemic, work to review RQIA's inspection guidance was delayed. However, during 2022-23, this was overtaken by the development of an all encompassing Regulation Framework, which will include a review of RQIA's Inspection Guidance. This Framework will set out an intelligence-led approach, assessing the information we receive about services from a wide range of sources; assessing that information and aligning it to identified risk indicators; and as a result, judging the appropriate and proportionate regulatory response, based on that level of risk. At times this will mean carrying out a physical inspection for example. In other cases the information and decision making will demonstrate why a physical inspection was not undertaken. While this work has commenced in Care Home team, we have shared the approach across RQIA's Directorates. There is involvement of the Information services in the analysis required and the presentation of the risk indicators. This work will continue into 2023-24 when we begin to engage with service providers, service users and wider stakeholders to coproduce its development and ensure openness and transparency, taking into consideration our Section 75 obligations.

Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2022-23

Action 11: RQIA, March 2023

What we will do: Review and equality screen the Audit Tool relating to Inspection of Acute Hospitals.

What we are trying to achieve: S75 has been considered in the Inspection process, resulting in improved outcomes for service users.

Performance Indicator and Target: Screening Templates and Revised Guidance published.

What we did over the last year: We reviewed our patient and relative questionnaires in preparation for commencing the third phase of the Acute Hospital Inspection Programme (June 2022) in an effort to make them more user friendly and easily understood. Following this inspection, we reviewed the questionnaires and agreed they could be further refined and plan to review. During our recent inspection to HSC Trust the core inspection team was supported by staff with excellent communication skills - their role was to engage directly with service users and relatives from all walks of life who were prepared and keen to talk to us, and where required we supported them to complete the patient and relative questionnaires. We also identified areas of good practice from Trust colleagues during this inspection, supporting patients and service users to check into clinics - which will be added to our report prior to publication.

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Action 12: RQIA,Ongoing

What we will do: As actions 5 - 11 are completed, roll out training on revised guidance/audit tools to inspectors.

What we are trying to achieve: Improved outcomes for health and social care service users.

Performance Indicator and Target: Training reports and evaluations.

What we did over the last year: As a result of the continued reprioritisation of work during and following the Covid-19 Pandemic, work to review RQIA's inspection guidance was delayed. However, during 2022-23, this was overtaken by the development of an all encompassing Regulation Framework, which will include a review of RQIA's Inspection Guidance. This Framework will set out an intelligence-led approach, assessing the information we receive about services from a wide range of sources; assessing that information and aligning it to identified risk indicators; and as a result, judging the appropriate and proportionate regulatory response, based on that level of risk. At times this will mean carrying out a physical inspection for example. In other cases the information and decision making will demonstrate why a physical inspection was not undertaken. While this work has commenced in Care Home team, we have shared the approach across RQIA's Directorates. There is involvement of the Information services in the analysis required and the presentation of the risk indicators. This work will continue into 2023-24 when we begin to engage with service providers , service users and wider stakeholders to coproduce its development and ensure openness and transparency, taking into consideration our Section 75 obligations.

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Action 13: RQIA,Ongoing

What we will do: 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

What we are trying to achieve: Better access to information for service users.

Performance Indicator and Target: Evidence of checks in inspection reports through the process of audit.

What we did over the last year: 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. 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. In developing our Consultation on RQIA's draft Strategic Plan 2022-28, we presented the consultation documents on line via our web site. The Consultation could be accessed in four languages, by selecting the preferred language at the start of the online consultation. The document was also presented in a easy read format , and could be downloaded for printing and viewed on a wide range of devices. When we publish our final Strategic Plan in 2023/24 it will also be available in easy read format. We will aim to embed language options for all key corporate documents as we move forward.

This action is complete.

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Action 14: RQIA,Ongoing

What we will do: RQIA will collaborate with advocacy organisations, such as Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY), The Voice of Young People in Care (VOYPIC), Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency (NIGALA) and the Patient and Client Council (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.

What we are trying to achieve: Improved engagement with children and young people.

Performance Indicator and Target: Website operational and collation of feedback from children and young people about the quality of services they receive.

What we did over the last year: Facilitated by VOYPIC, we consulted with children and young people about the plans for publishing RQIA inspection reports for childrens services. This coproduction will continue into 2023-24 with the establishment of a Working Group that will continue the engagement of young people as we take this work forward, safely, and also those with Human Rights knowledge and Information Governance.

This action is complete.

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Action 15: RQIA,Ongoing

What we will do: 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.

What we are trying to achieve: Engagement events are more inclusive.

Performance Indicator and Target: Evaluation of events indicates that needs have been met.

What we did over the last year: Most of our public engagement events in 2022-23 were held online using through electronic meeting platforms such as Zoom and MS Teams. These were well attended. An analysis of involvement in the Strategic Plan engagement events showed that 170 people took part, either online and / or submitting written views. A number of physical sessions were also held to meet the needs of particular communities – for example we worked with a local HSC Trust to organise a physical accessible event in Belfast for their Disability Forum members. The PCC also hosted some online events to enable RQIA to engage with members of their 'Platforms', in particular Care Homes and older people.

We held a public event at Belfast Castle in late November 2022, to engage with a range of stakeholders with a common theme relating to listening and improvement through our inspection programmes. Over 40 people participated including service users and advocates , and representtives from other organisations including care Opinion, the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland (COPNI) and Ulster University (UU). The outcome lead to the re-establishment of 'Inspection Support Volunteers' (formerly known as 'Lay Assessors').

This action is complete.

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Action 16: RQIA,Ongoing

What we will do: In the appointment of new lay assessors, include a welcoming statement for people with disabilities and send advertisement to disability organisations

What we are trying to achieve: People with disabilities are more involved in public life.

Performance Indicator and Target: Numbers of additional lay assessors with a disability.

What we did over the last year: In late November 2022 we held a engagement event to reflect on the benefits of the former 'Lay Assessor' roles and consider how we take this forward , now post pandemic, and embedding the learning.

In order to progress work during 2022-23 RQIA engaged with Volunteer Now and UU in developing a recruitment and induction programme for lay assessors (now termed Inspection Support Volunteers (ISVs). Development of a handbook to support ISVs in volunteering with RQIA has been completed and the development of a learning programme for introducing ISVs to volunteering with RQIA has been progressed.

The 'Inspection Support Volunteers' initiative was relaunched March 2023 in partnership with 'Volunteer Now' seeking individuals with lived experience of health and social care services, including those with a disability, to work along side our professionally qualified Inspectors, people with the interest, character and skills to expand capacity for listening and engaging with people during our inspections. This will start initially in care homes and on evaluation, we plan to extend to other services. Ulster University will support us in helping prepare and equip volunteers for this programme and in evalutaing the programme to consider its benefits and plan for the future.

Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2022-23

Equality Action Plan - Conclusions

- We fully completed 5 actions (Action number 2, 3, 13, 14, 15).
- While we progressed 10 actions (Action number 4 – 12, 16), further work will be required to fully deliver these actions.
- All of the actions in our action plan are at regional and at local level.
- Our action plan is a live document. If we make any big changes to our plan we will involve people in the Section 75 categories. We will tell the Equality Commission about any changes.

Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2022-23

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 1 RQIA supported by BSO Equality Unit (Annually)

What we will do: Staff Awareness Days - Raise awareness of specific barriers faced by people with disabilities including through linking in with National Awareness Days or Weeks.

What we are trying to achieve: Increased staff awareness of a range of disabilities and needs.

Performance Indicator and Target: 2 awareness days profiled every year. >50% of staff taking part in the evaluation indicate they know more about people living with disabilities as a result of the awareness days.

What we did over the last year: We ran a survey in which we asked staff which conditions we should feature. Based on its outcome, we held two days during the year, one on Autism (in February 2023) and one on Bowel Conditions (in March 2023). On both days we organised a live session with an expert in the field (from Autism NI for the first Awareness Day and a dietitian from the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust for the second one). Following their presentation, staff had the opportunity to ask them questions during a Question and Answer session. The presentations were uploaded to the website of Tapestry (our disability staff network) for the benefit of staff and board members who were unable to attend on the day. As a result, 38% of staff who attended a session on the day or accessed any of the materials felt they knew more about Autism. 42% thought they knew more about 42% Bowel Conditions. It is unclear why the other survey participants did not record an increase in knowledge. This could be either a reflection on the session or rooted in the fact that they already had substantive specialist knowledge beforehand. One comment suggested that the focus of the session on Bowel Conditions (on Inflammatory Bowel Disease to the exclusion of Irritable Bowel Syndrome) may have played a role. In other words, the title of the Day may have been too broad and created expectations that then remained unmet.

We completed this action.

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Action 2 RQIA supported by BSO Equality Unit (annually)

What we will do: Placement Scheme - Create and promote meaningful placement opportunities for people with disabilities. 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.

What we are trying to achieve: People with a disability gain meaningful work experience.

Performance Indicator and Target: 1 placement offered per year. Feedback through annual evaluation of scheme indicates that placement meets expectations

What we did over the last year:

During this year, we offered one placement. The individual completed their 26-week placement.

Positive feedback was received from managers, employment support officers and participants alike for the scheme as a whole. This included, for example, one Employment Support Officer referring to the confidence of her client having improved considerably as a result of their placement.

We completed this action.

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Action 3 RQIA supported by Equality Unit (Annually)

What we will do: Tapestry - Promote and encourage staff to participate in the disability staff network and support the network in the delivery of its action plan.

What we are trying to achieve: Staff with a disability feel more confident that their voice is heard in decision-making. Staff with a disability feel better supported.

Performance Indicator and Target: Increases in Tapestry membership or in participation at meeting.

What we did over the last year:

For each Tapestry meeting, we issued advance notices to all staff and reiterated the commitment by Chief Executives of the participating organisations that staff can attend in their worktime. On key issues we also encouraged those members who were unable or not interested in attending the meetings to share their views and experiences by emailing them to our dedicated Tapestry email address.

There are currently 50 members on the mailing list for the Network. In comparison to the previous year, the number has remained the same. Over the year, a few members left the HSC and were removed from the list, however there have likewise been new members who joined.

During the year, the network elected Karen Hunter, BSO Director of Strategic Planning and Customer Engagement, as its new Chairperson. Four Tapestry members provided an input at one of the senior HSC Leadership Programmes during the year. They felt that their presentation was a great success and presenters

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received very positive feedback. Presentations included comments on recruitment and selection as well as a discussion on reasonable adjustments. Throughout the year, Tapestry members identified key issues and barriers for people with a disability and carers in relation to recruitment, employment, and training. These include a lack of accessibility of recruitment processes, training, and IT systems as well as particular aspects of Hybrid Working. They likewise reported barriers for career progression of staff with a disability and those who are carers.

We completed this action.

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Action 4 BSO HR supported by Equality Unit (Annually)

What we will do: Monitoring: 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)

What we are trying to achieve: More accurate data in place. Greater number of staff feel comfortable declaring they have a disability.

Performance Indicator and Target: Increase in completion of disability monitoring information by staff to 90%.

What we did over the last year:

Staff were reminded at the 2 Disability Awareness Days, and at Tapestry meetings of the importance of completing monitoring information. In November 2022, a corporate communication was shared with staff explaining why staff equality data matters, including to deliver good evidence-based policy making. It further set out guidance for staff on how to update their equality data on the HRPTS Portal.

We completed this action.

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Action 5: RQIA supported by Equality Unit (March 2023)

What we will do: Work with Aurion Learning and regional partners to explore potential for upgrade of existing Discovering Diversity module 5 / explore other options for disability training.

What we are trying to achieve: Availability of disability elearning module to bring about increased staff and Board Member awareness of the range of disabilities and needs.

Performance Indicator and Target: Disability elearning module available to staff and Board members.

What we did over the last year: Aurion Learning undertook a review to identify the scope and volume of work required in order to upgrade the existing Discovering Diversity module 5. The Equality Unit then engaged with HSC partners to find out whether an upgrade and content review of the overall package could be progressed jointly. This showed that other HSC organisations have shifted their focus to raising awareness and strengthening staff skills through means other than eLearning, including through the development of videos and face-to-face training.

We completed this action.

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Action 6 BSO HR with support from Equality Unit (by end of March 2023)

What we will do: Sign up to Mental Health Charter.

What we are trying to achieve: Staff with mental health conditions feel better supported in the workplace.

Performance Indicator and Target: The organisation has signed up and communication has been issued to all staff.

What we did over the last year:

We did not progress this action.

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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.

(5) Additional Measures

- We always include Disability on our list of things to talk about at our quarterly Equality Forum with our partner organisations.
- We report on progress against our Disability Action Plan to our Board and Senior Management Team (the people at the top of our organisation) every year.

(6) Encourage Others

- We did not undertake any activities to encourage others.

(7) Monitoring

- We did not undertake any monitoring activities in addition to what is listed above.

(8) Revisions

- During the year we reviewed our Equality and Disability Action Plans 2018-23. We are currently consulting on our new Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-28.

Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report 2022-23

Disability Action Plan - Conclusions

- We fully completed 5 actions (# 1-5).
- Further work will be required to fully deliver 1 action (# 6).
- All of the actions in our action plan are at regional and at local level.
- Our action plan is a live document. If we make any big changes to our plan we will involve people with a disability. We will tell the Equality Commission about any changes.

Chapter 4: Equality and Human Rights Screening Report



Equality and Human Rights Screening Report

April 2022 – March 2023

Screenings published previously can be viewed at:

www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/3086.htm

Policy / Procedure	Policy Aims	Date	Screening Decision
Proposal to Publish Children's Inspection Reports	In order to provide greater transparency around the regulation of children's services, RQIA proposes to publish these inspection reports in an anonymised format, protecting the identity of the location of the service and the privacy of the children and young people who access these services.	June 2022	2
Draft RQIA Strategic Plan 2022-28	Draft consultation document setting out RQIA's priorities for quality improvement and regulation for the period 2022-28.	August 2022	2

Some feedback was provided by consultees on the above screening.

Chapter 5: Mitigation Report



Equality and Human Rights Mitigation Report

April 2022 – March 2023

Screening: Proposal to Publish Children's Inspection Reports

<i>In developing the policy or decision what did you do or change to address the equality issues you identified?</i>	<i>What do you intend to do in future to address the equality issues you identified?</i>
<p>RQIA's Accessible Formats Policy outlines how those developing information and children's services inspection reports should consider alternative formats, and how information and publications can be requested in alternative formats.</p> <p>RQIA will consider provision of alternative formats, upon 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 this consultation documentation and the published children's services inspection reports, and/or signpost them to advocacy services, such as the Voice of Young People in Care (VOYPIC) or the Northern Ireland's Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY), who could assist them in their understanding and provide a mechanism to have their voice heard.</p> <p>RQIA is also able to avail of the regional (HSCNI) interpreting contract.</p>	<p>Consideration will be given to converting this consultation documentation and subsequent children's services inspection reports, upon request, into a variety of formats to include; easy read; audio; braille, accessible PDF and a variety of languages.</p> <p>Links have already been forged with some children and young people's advocacy services, such as VOYPIC and NICCY, who can help assist children and young people in their understanding of the inspections to children's services and in responding to this and any future consultations.</p>