

Public Authority Statutory Equality, Good Relations and Disability Duties - Annual Progress Report 2023-24

Contact:

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan 	<p>As above <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>

Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:
(ECNI Q28)

www.rqia.org.uk/what-we-do/equality-and-disability/equality-and-disability/

The report on our most recent Five Year Review of Equality Scheme can be found here:

www.rqia.org.uk/RQIA/media/RQIA/Resources/RQIA-Five-Year-Review-of-Equality-Scheme-Approved-by-RQIA-Authority-Sept-21.pdf

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



Briega Donaghy
RQIA Chief Executive

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 2023 and March 2024

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Chapter 1 Summary Quantitative Report

Screening, EQIAs and Consultation (ECNI Q15,16,19)

1. Number of policies screened (as recorded in screening reports). (see also Chapter 4)	Screened in	Screened out with mitigation	Screened out without mitigation	Screening decision reviewed following concerns raised by consultees
3	0	2	1	No concerns were raised by consultees on screening published in 2023-24
2. Number of policies subjected to Equality Impact Assessment.	0			
3. Indicate the stage of progress of each EQIA.	Title and Stage N/A			

4. Number of policy consultations conducted	1
5. Number of policy consultations conducted with screening presented. (See also Chapter 2, Table 2)	1

Training (ECNI Q24)

6. Staff training undertaken during 2023-24. (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	51
Part 2 – Line Managers	2

Complaints (ECNI Q27)

7. Number of complaints in relation to the Equality Scheme received during 2023-24

0

Please provide detail of any complaints:

N/A

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

8. Within the 2023-24 reporting period, please indicate the number of:

Actions completed:

2

Actions ongoing:

2

Actions to commence:

0

Disability Action Plan (see also Chapter 3)
(ECNI Part B Q1)

9. Within the 2023-24 reporting period, please indicate the number of:

Actions completed:	<div>3</div>	Actions ongoing:	<div>1</div>	Actions to commence:	<div>1</div>
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Chapter 2 Section 75 Progress Report

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

1. In 2023-24, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved. Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.

The following paragraphs outline progress to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations¹.

Age – Older people; Disability

Our Inspection Support Volunteer Policy and Procedure alongside implementation of the Inspection Support Volunteer initiative commenced during 2023-24. The Inspection Support Volunteer initiative has commenced with three volunteers engaging in Care Homes inspection work to seek out the qualitative service user feedback on the quality of care received.

What difference will this make: People living in care homes will have a more meaningful way to engage and offer their feedback in a qualitative manner through the Inspection Support Volunteers.

¹ 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.

Age – Older people; Disability

Ongoing work in establishing more meaningful ways to engage with service user groups to ensure a user-friendly approach to engagement during regulation and inspection of Adult Care Services. User friendly questionnaires and letters have been developed and reviewed in respect of people with learning disabilities, dementia and end of life care.

What difference will this make: Development of easy read approaches including questionnaires, surveys and letters will provide a more meaningful approach for service users to provide their feedback in respect of regulated and inspected services.

Age – Children and Young People

During the reporting year, RQIA conducted an initial pilot for publishing reports for children's services which has subsequently been extended. All reports of inspections completed from 1 April 2024 onwards, relating to children's services, will be published on the RQIA website, to inform the public (including children) regarding the quality of care in children's services that are inspected by RQIA.

What difference will this make: The publication of reports will improve transparency around the safety and quality of services in children's homes, while not compromising the locations of those homes and respecting the privacy of individuals cared for in them.

Age – Children and Young People

As part of our Children and Young Peoples Services inspections of inpatient mental health facilities, RQIA have deployed nursing colleagues into inspection team to identify and support better health outcomes for children in these settings.

What difference will this make: This will enable children, young people, their carers, advocates and professionals to be informed about the quality and safety of care provided to children and young people in these services.

Gender or gender identity

We reviewed our inspection methodology for prison health care to ensure it included a focus on the healthcare needs of female prisoners. The methodology included access to gender specific Regional health care screening programs.

What difference will this make: Improve access to gender specific regional health screening programs for women prisoners. To ensure women in prison have the same access to health care as the rest of the population in Northern Ireland.

Ethnicity or racial group

During recruitment for inspector positions, we engaged with BAME representative groups to highlight opportunity in order to ensure RQIA attracts staff more representative of wider society. We also highlighted opportunities to wider society on social media.

What difference will this make: RQIA aims to ensure its staff are representative of the wider community in Northern Ireland, and will embed this approach for future recruitment exercises. We will also monitor and review the impact of this approach.

Where changes resulted from screenings, these will be listed in Chapter 5, Mitigation Report.

No changes resulted from EQIAs.

(ECNI Q4,5,6)

2. During the 2023-24 reporting period

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

	Yes/No	Details
Job descriptions	Yes	For all new posts, the Job Description includes the following: “Assist the organisation in fulfilling its statutory duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to promote equality of opportunity and good relations and under the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. Staff are also required to support the organisation in complying with its obligations under Human Rights Legislation.”
Performance objectives for staff	Yes	Section 75 statutory duties are integral to the Chief Executive’s objectives for the year. These are 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	Our Strategic Plan 2022-28 defines an objective under our first priority: Excellence in collective leadership and effective governance, as “That our behaviours (organisational and individual) are underpinned by human rights principles including dignity, respect and equality.”

		A further equality objective is defined under our second priority: Develop a confident, competent, supported and enabled workforce, as “To seek to ensure our staff profile is reflective of the communities served, valuing equality and diversity.”
Annual business plans	Yes	<p>A number of Actions in RQIA’s Management Plan 2023-24 aim to improve outcomes for Section 75 groupings. These include:</p> <p>We will work with people to develop our tools and skills so that we can engage better with people living with dementia and other communication challenges. We will engage with people to review our Inspection methodology, encouraging a culture of openness that improves patient and service user safety.</p>

(ECNI Q11,12,17)

3. Please provide any details and examples of good practice in consultation during the 2023-24 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:

Table 2

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?	Please tell us about anything you feel worked particularly well / not so well in this consultation.
Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-28	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Screening template <input type="checkbox"/> EQIA report <input type="checkbox"/> none	Full Section 75 consultation list	Online questionnaire (greatest number of responses received) Free written comments Online events One-to-one meeting	Most of those who responded were either from professional organisations (such as the Royal Colleges) or staff members. Only very few Section 75 voluntary sector organisations engaged with us, possibly reflecting their significantly reduced capacity to do so.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Screening template <input type="checkbox"/> EQIA report <input type="checkbox"/> none			

(ECNI Q21, 26)

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

No

(ECNI Q22)

5. Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2023-24 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

No monitoring data collected for policies previously screened.

(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:

The organisation avails of the joint Section 75 training programme that is coordinated and delivered by the BSO Equality Unit for staff across all 11 partner organisations. No staff in RQIA participated in screening training delivered by the Equality Unit this 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 2024-25 we will focus on:

- Undertaking equality screenings, particularly of policies relating to our inspection functions, as supported by new governance arrangements facilitated by the development of a comprehensive digital policy library.

Appendix – Further Explanatory Notes

1 Consultation and Engagement

(ECNI Q10)

targeting –

During the year, where relevant, we took a targeted approach to consultation in addition to issuing an initial notification of consultation.

(ECNI Q13)

awareness raising for consultees on Equality Scheme commitments –

During the year, at the consultation events on our Equality and Disability Action Plans, we raised awareness of our commitments in relation to the Plans. In any EQIA reports we explained our commitments relating to Equality Impact Assessments.

(ECNI Q14)

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

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.

Chapter 3: Equality and Disability Action Plans Report 2023-24

This chapter summarises progress made during 2023-24 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.

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

EAP06: Adult Care Services, by 31/3/2025

What we will do: RQIA Inspections of Adult Services

Evidence within RQIA inspection reports, what steps have been taken to ensure wide range of service users, families and advocates have been actively listened to as part of our regulation of services.

The actions will include the adoption of Inspection Support Volunteers to accompany RQIA professionally qualified inspectors and the use of tools that enable people with disability to express their views and experience.

What we are trying to achieve and who for: Age and Disability

By active listening to a broad range of lived experience we aim to ensure that lived experience is reflected back in our regulatory reports and improvement plans, to ensure service users have the same opportunity to access the service to meet their particular needs.

Performance Indicators and Targets:

Publication of inspection reports demonstrating lived experience.

Evaluation of the Inspection Support Volunteer initiative and its publication.

Evaluation of the tools used to enable people living with a disability to express views and its publication.

Progress 2023-24: Review of report completed 2022-23 regarding the lived experience of service users and how RQIA articulated their qualitative findings.

Further review 2024-25 to reduce and refine RQIA reports to show how service user outcomes and experiences are front and central in the inspection process and the report.

Evaluation in collaboration with University of Ulster in respect of the Inspection Support Volunteer induction and training completed March/April 2024.

University of Ulster review of the early implementation of the Inspection Support Volunteer initiative through engagement and the qualitative discussions with service users, families and home managers regarding outcomes (if any) which have been demonstrated through Inspection Support Volunteer engagement.

User friendly questionnaires developed and welcomed by providers and service users through survey and inspection face to face verbal feedback. Continued work to develop this initiative includes Inspection Support Volunteer engagement programme, user friendly approaches such as surveys, face to face and post receipt of service feedback via letter. Ongoing evaluation in late 2024/early 2025.

Whilst early interventions regarding publication of reports, Inspection Support Volunteer induction evaluation and evaluation of tools for engagement have been evaluated during 2022-23 and 2023-24 continued ongoing evaluation is taking place during 2024-25 to inform final outcomes in accordance with specified timeframe of 31 March 2025.

Action Status: More work needs to be done

EAP07: Mental Health, Learning Disability, Children's Services & Prison Health Care, by 31/3/2024

What we will do: RQIA Inspections of Children's Services

RQIA will publish reports of its inspections of Children's services on RQIA's website in formats that are accessible to a range of equality groups developed in collaboration and with involvement of children, young people and their advocates.

What we are trying to achieve and who for: Age

To enable children, young people, their carers, advocates and professionals to be informed about the quality and safety of care provided to children and young people across a range of services - including care homes with lived experience evidenced in our reports.

Performance Indicators and Targets:

Reports formats will be developed to meet a wide range of reader's needs.

We will publicly report when the reports are published and evaluate usage and views on same.

Progress 2023-24: The initial pilot was completed Nov 23- Jan 24 with positive outcomes. The pilot will now be extended to all types of children's services and and types of inspections, including specialist inspections.

The policy has been written and equality screened.

The next phase will be to evaluate the pilot, include young people in creating a new cover page for the report, and explore how enforcement actions can be published.

Further work is required in future to assess format and accessibility of reports for all equality groups.

Action Status: More work needs to be done

EAP08: Mental Health, Learning Disability, Children's Services & Prison Health Care, by 31/3/2026

What we will do: Children in Care: Health Outcomes

As part of our Children and Young Peoples Services inspections RQIA will begin to deploy nursing colleagues into inspection team to identify and support better health outcomes for children in these settings (depending on /limited to RQIA capacity).

What we are trying to achieve and who for:

Through this approach we intend to improve health outcomes for children and young people in these settings

Performance Indicators and Targets:

We will report on identified good practice and report on health inequalities that we identify in individual service reports and where we carry out themed reviews.

Progress 2023-24: RQIA routinely include nursing colleagues to support inpatient inspections of children's MHL services, Children's nursing home and Children's hospice. Staff work collaboratively to ensure that the inspection process is robust and supportive of better health outcomes for young people.

Action Status: Action complete - keep action in Plan since this is an annual action

EAP09: Mental Health, Learning Disability, Children's Services & Prison Health Care, by 31/3/2026**What we will do:** Prison Health Care

RQIA will ensure that methodology used during the inspections of prison services takes account of the ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender of people who are detained in prison.

What we are trying to achieve and who for:

RQIA will, through its inspection methodology, identify and highlight any potential or actual inequalities relating to equality groups of people who are detained.

Performance Indicators and Targets:

We will report on good practice and health inequalities in individual inspection reports and in themed Reviews we carry out.

Progress 2023-24: The methodology used for prison inspections takes account of the ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender of people who are detained in prison. During the most recent inspection of a prison, our KLOE considered healthcare inequalities for those detained

Action Status: Action complete - keep action in Plan since this is an annual action

Equality Action Plan – Conclusions

- We completed 2 actions (EAP08 & EAP09).
- We did some work on but did not complete 2 actions (EAP06 & EAP07).
- 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.

Disability Action Plan 2023-2028: What we will do to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in public life

DAP01: Office of the Chair and Chief Executive, by 31/3/2028

What we will do: Awareness Days

Raise awareness of the lived experience of people with specific disabilities and conditions.

What we are trying to achieve and who for: Promoting positive attitudes:

Increased staff awareness of a range of disabilities and conditions.

Performance Indicators and Targets: 2 awareness days profiled every year.

>50% of staff taking part in the evaluation indicate they know more about people living with disabilities and conditions as a result of the awareness days.

Progress 2023-24: For our Stroke Awareness Day, we had two speakers (an Advanced Practitioner Occupational Therapist, and a Speech and Language Therapist) from the Community Stroke Team in the South Eastern HSC Trust. They explained what a stroke is, signs and symptoms, as well as hidden effects. They also presented information on stroke and work and on caring for someone with a stroke, and signposted to further advice and information. Nearly 50 staff and Board/Authority members joined the call, some of whom also engaged in the Question and Answer session.

We held a survey on the 2 Awareness Days which suggested the following:

Strokes (out of 14 staff who attended a session on the day or accessed any of the materials and took part in the evaluation)

- 14 felt they knew more about Strokes as a result;
- 8 indicated they knew more about supporting a friend or family member;
- 8 indicated they knew more about supporting a colleague.

Schizophrenia (out of 13 staff who attended a session on the day or accessed any of the materials and took part in the evaluation)

- 10 felt they knew more about Schizophrenia;
- 11 indicated they knew more about supporting a friend or family member;
- 5 indicated they knew more about supporting a colleague.

Action Status: Action complete - keep action in Plan since this is an annual action

DAP02: Office of the Chair and Chief Executive, by 31/3/2028

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 priorities.

What we are trying to achieve and who for:

Encouraging participation in public life:

Staff with a disability feel more confident that their voice is heard in decision-making.

Staff with a disability feel better supported.

Performance Indicators and Targets:

Tapestry staff survey.

Increase in Tapestry membership or in participation at meetings.

Progress 2023-24: During 2023-24, we made a conscious effort to raise the profile of the Network across all organisations. Over the month of November the network was on site in various locations across the region raising awareness and promoting the benefits of the Network. As well as corporate communications and posters, information and merchandise stands were set up and information shared over 6 half days in November. Over 200 staff engaged with the promotion and shared their experiences. In terms of the growth of the Network, as a result of the recent promotion, membership has grown by 60% and attendance at meetings has increased significantly in the last year.

As a result of this growth, it was decided that a formal Business Plan was needed. A Business Planning meeting was held with Tapestry members on 14 February 2024. A new vision, objectives, and actions were developed as a result of the input on the day and these were shared and agreed with the wider network at the March 2024 meeting.

As a result of the recent promotion, membership has grown by 60% and attendance at meetings has increased significantly in the last year.

Action Status: Action complete - keep action in Plan since this is an annual action

DAP03: Office of the Chair and Chief Executive, by 31/3/2028

What we will do: Placement Scheme

Create and promote meaningful placement opportunities for people with disabilities.

What we are trying to achieve and who for:

Promoting positive attitudes and Encouraging participation in public life:

People with a disability gain meaningful work experience.

People with a disability are successful in applying for paid employment after they have completed a placement.

Performance Indicators and Targets:

At least one placement offered every year.

Feedback through annual evaluation of scheme indicates that placement meets expectations.

At least one placement participant is successful in applying for paid employment within 12 months of completing their placement.

Progress 2023-24: During 2023-24, we took time to review the Disability Placement Scheme that we have been running for nearly 10 years. We also spoke to a number of voluntary sector organisations who run or are involved in running programmes for people with a disability that include work placements. We wanted to find out how other programmes work.

We have decided that we want to move away from running a cohort scheme where all participants start and finish at the same time. We think that giving greater flexibility as to when people start and how long placements last will allow more people to undertake placements with us.

Action Status: No progress made

DAP06: Office of the Chair and Chief Executive, by 31/3/2025

What we will do: RQIA Website

Update RQIA website, in collaboration with stakeholders, so that it enables people living with a disability to access information about RQIA, and its work to meet their particular needs.

What we are trying to achieve and who for:

Organisations' websites are a key resource for all communities to access information to meet their needs. The RQIA website should enable and support people living with a disability to more effectively access the information suitable to their particular needs.

Performance Indicators and Targets:

Website accessibility complies with Accessibility Regulations (2018).

Service user surveys – published.

Progress 2023-24: RQIA's Communication and Engagement Working Group has been appointed to lead on this matter and will progress during 2024-25.

Action Status: More work needs to be done.

DAP06: Office of the Chair and Chief Executive, by 31/3/2024

What we will do: Disability Champion

RQIA will ensure an Authority member is appointed as a Disability Champion in order to promote and lead RQIA on issues affecting people with a disability.

What we are trying to achieve and who for:

We want to demonstrate that the RQIA is committed to positively supporting people with a disability and that this is part of RQIA's Authority's programme of work.

Performance Indicators and Targets:

We will appoint an Authority member as a Disability Champion and arrange suitable training. We will also ensure that all staff are aware of the appointment to this role in supporting and promoting disability awareness.

Progress 2023-24: In early 2024 RQIA appointed an Authority member as Equality and Disability Champion. This individual is also a member of RQIA's Equality and Disability Forum, and reports progress in this area to RQIA's Authority via the Business, Appointments and Remuneration Committee.

RQIA has also identified an Assistant Director from each directorate to represent RQIA (on a rotational basis) on the regional BSO-led Equality Forum. To ensure that learning from this forum is shared with colleagues at RQIA, these representatives are also members of RQIA's Equality and Disability Forum.

Action Status: Action complete

Disability Action Plan 2023-28 - Conclusions

- We completed 3 actions (DAP01, DAP02, DAP06).
- We did some work on but didn't complete 1 action DAP06).
- We did not do any work on 1 action (DAP03).
- 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.

Review of outstanding actions in our Action Plans 2018-23

The last 6 months of our previous Equality and Disability Action Plans Apr 2018 -Sept 2023 falls within the reporting year, i.e. April – Sept 23. Many of the actions were completed, and reported on in previous progress reports, however a number of actions in our Equality Action Plan were not. These relate to our Inspection Policies:

5. Review and equality screen guidance relating to inspection to of domiciliary care agencies.
6. Review and equality screen guidance relating to inspection of nursing and adult residential care homes.
7. Review and equality screen guidance relating to inspection of independent health care.
8. Review and equality screen guidance relating to inspection of day care settings and adult placement agencies.
9. Review and equality screen guidance relating to inspection of children's services
10. Review and equality screen guidance relating to inspection of mental health and learning disability wards.
11. Review and equality screen the audit tool relating to inspection of acute hospitals.
12. As actions 5 - 11 are completed, roll out training on revised guidance/audit tools to inspectors.

As a result of the continued reprioritisation of work during and following the Covid-19 pandemic, work to review and develop RQIA's inspection guidance was delayed.

We recognise the importance of equality screening, with governance arrangements in place to ensure screening of all policies and procedures. When work to update RQIA's inspection approach commences, all relevant documentation will be subject to equality screening.

During 2023-24, RQIA commenced the development of a new system for the management and control of all its policies and procedures. This will mean that all policies and procedures will be held on a new digital policy library. Importantly, equality measures, oversight, and refresh will have a new controls assurance process and system which will address any deficits and ensure improvement is made. This will ensure all people within the S75 groups will be better recognised and appropriate considerations made across the entire suite of RQIA policies and procedures in future.

Chapter 4: Equality and Human Rights Screening Report

Screenings published previously can be viewed at:

[Equality Screening - Business Services Organisation \(BSO\) Website \(hscni.net\)](http://hscni.net)

Policy / Procedure	Policy Aims	Date	Screening Decision
External Experts: Remuneration, Travel and Subsistence Policy	The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) will ensure this policy supports the delivery of the highest possible standards of probity, regularity and value for money in the execution of its duties. Furthermore, RQIA will adhere to the basic principle of public sector organisations to execute the proper use of public funds and to be open and accountable in the management and reporting of the same. It is RQIA policy to ensure External Experts are reimbursed promptly and appropriately for any services provided and are paid for any prior agreed expenses incurred whilst undertaking work related to RQIA Activity. RQIA will remunerate External Experts for the time spent undertaking RQIA activity along with permitted travel and subsistence costs which will allow Expert External Experts to attend RQIA or other venues as required. These payments will be balanced with the duty of RQIA to ensure best use of public monies.	Dec 2023	Screened out without mitigation

Policy for Inspection Support Volunteers (ISVs)	The purpose of this policy is to set out RQIA's arrangements for recruitment, induction and support to the ISV programme. To be an effective regulator it is essential that RQIA collects data, information, and regulatory intelligence to effectively support engagement with relevant stakeholder groups during inspection. Inspection Support Volunteers (ISV's) play a vital role as members of our inspection teams, bringing with them public insight and helping teams to consider an independent lay perspective.	Dec 2023	Screened out with mitigation
Policy On Management Unreasonable, Persistent And Vexatious Contacts	The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) is the independent body that regulates and inspects the quality and availability of Northern Ireland's Health and Social Care (HSC) services. RQIA was established under The Health and Personal Social Services (Quality, Improvement and Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 (the 2003 Order) to drive improvements for everyone using health and social care services.	Dec 2023	Screened out with mitigation

No concerns were raised by consultees on any of the screenings published in 2023-24.

Chapter 5: Mitigation Report

Policy for Inspection Support Volunteers (ISVs)

In developing the policy or decision what did you do or change to address the equality issues you identified?	What do you intend to do in future to address the equality issues you identified?
<p>For all categories of people who may be impacted by this policy, RQIA worked in collaboration with Volunteer Now and University of Ulster to ensure the ISV initiative was accessible through recruitment to the range of potential applicants from ethnically diverse groups. RQIA will ensure that appropriate training and support are available for ISVs dealing with inspection feedback. ISVs will also be supported through regular supervision with their ISV coordinator and team meetings with colleagues.</p>	<p>RQIA will review the first cohort of ISV's to obtain a baseline on equality and diversity data and consider further mechanisms to ensure ethnically diverse groups are aware of and can engage in future ISV initiatives through various media mediums and engagement events. RQIA will continue to support ISV colleagues with training, supervision, team meetings and external support when appropriate. If ISV's find that seeking inspection feedback is difficult due to their individual circumstances, appropriate supportive or alternative arrangements will be implemented.</p> <p>While RQIA recognise that impacts have been identified in sections 2.2 and 2.3 above relating to a range of impacted groups (including gender, age, religion, political opinion, marital status, dependent status, disability, ethnicity and sexual orientation) RQIA will work with Volunteer Now to actively encourage applications from these groups (by sending the recruitment advert to representative groups, and adding a welcoming statement to the advert).</p>

Policy On Management of Unreasonable, Persistent and Vexatious Contacts

In developing the policy or decision what did you do or change to address the equality issues you identified?	What do you intend to do in future to address the equality issues you identified?
<p>RQIA considered the potential of managing contacts from external stakeholders who may be suffering from mental / psychological / emotional ill-health and how that might adversely affect their behaviours towards RQIA staff.</p>	<p>RQIA will continue to monitor the working of this Policy to make sure those within any category or with multiple identities will not be disadvantaged. The Policy has been updated to include the need for RQIA staff to remain cognisant that some callers may be living with mental ill-health which is contributing to/causing challenging behaviours.</p> <p>RQIA will also continue to monitor the application of the Policy to ensure staff can identify that some behaviours may be caused by, or linked to, a mental health condition and that they bear this in mind in any communication with the individual.</p> <p>RQIA staff also have access to mental health professionals in the Mental Health and Learning Disability Directorate and are able to seek advice when dealing with individuals where a mental health condition is identified or suspected or where challenging behaviours are encountered.</p>