

Public Authority Statutory Equality, Good Relations and Disability Duties - Annual Progress Report 2025-26

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

[Equality and Disability | Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority](#)

The report on our most recent Five Year Review of Equality Scheme (June 2026) can be found at the above link.

Our Equality Scheme is due to be reviewed again by 30th June 2031.

Signature:



This report has been prepared adapting a template circulated by the Equality Commission. It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and disability duties. This report reflects progress made between April 2025 and March 2026

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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 5)	Screened in	Screened out with mitigation	Screened out without mitigation	Screening decision reviewed following concerns raised by consultees
3	0	1	2	No concerns were raised by consultees on screening published in 2025-26
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	0
5. Number of policy consultations conducted with screening presented.	0

**(ECNI Q24)
Training**

6. Staff training undertaken during 2025-26. (See also Chapter 2, Q6)

Course	No of Staff Trained	No of Board Members Trained
Equality Screening Training	1	0
Total	1	0

eLearning: Making a Difference

Part 1 – All Staff	72	97% overall compliance
Part 2 – Line Managers	8	

**(ECNI Q27)
Complaints**

7. Number of complaints in relation to the Equality Scheme received during 2025-26

0

Please provide detail of any complaints:

N/A

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

8. Within the 2025-26 reporting period, please indicate the number of:

Actions completed:	<table border="1"><tr><td>4</td></tr></table>	4	Actions ongoing:	<table border="1"><tr><td>3</td></tr></table>	3	Actions to commence:	<table border="1"><tr><td>0</td></tr></table>	0
4								
3								
0								

**(ECNI Part B Q1)
Disability Action Plan (see also Chapter 4)**

9. Within the 2025-26 reporting period, please indicate the number of:

Actions completed:	3	Actions ongoing:	0	Actions to commence:	1
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Chapter 2 Section 75 Progress Report

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

1. In 2025-26, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved. Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.

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

Inspection Support Volunteers

Equality Groups: Men and Women generally; Age; Disability; Racial group; Sexual orientation

Expansion of the Inspection Support Volunteers (volunteers who join inspectors on inspection and meet with service users and their relatives to hear their lived experience). The original cohort were involved in the care home programme but we have now recruited and inducted a further tranche of volunteers which will enable RQIA to begin to extend to agencies and Mental Health and Learning Disability programmes from September 2026.

What difference will this make: This will enable service users and relatives' voices to be heard and they may feel more comfortable to speak with someone independent from the inspector. The Inspection Support

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 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.

Volunteers will report any concerns regarding section 75 categories and inspectors will address these as part of the inspection process.

Guidance for Social Care Employers on Responding to Racism and Promoting Inclusion

Equality Group: Racial group

RQIA were partners with Department of Health (including the Office of Social Services and Strategic Planning and Performance Group), NI Social Care Council, Unison and others to develop guidance for social care employers on responding to racism and promoting inclusion in response to the number of racially motivated attacks during 24/25.

What difference will this make: These attacks served as a stark reminder of the importance of the duty of care towards all staff, including ensuring the promotion of an anti-racist culture that strongly rejects all forms of racism and discrimination. The guidance has equipped social care employers with the knowledge, tools and practical strategies necessary to create and maintain anti-racist workplaces as they supported their staff during the summer of 2026 when there were outbreaks of civil unrest. It provided a framework for identifying, preventing and responding to racism in all its forms to help all staff feel safe. It is recognised that sustained commitment, cultural change and the active participation of leaders at all levels will help build anti-racist workplaces. By implementing the strategies outlined in this guidance, employers can create safe, respectful and inclusive environments that not only aim to protect staff from harm but also enhance the quality of care provided to people who use services. This will make a difference for racial groups when employers work in partnership with others to challenge racism and discrimination and support their staff, including trade unions representing their staff, the Labour Relations Agency and civic organisations supporting racial minority communities, emphasising that the responsibility for combating racism lies with everyone in the organisation, from senior leadership to frontline staff.

Publication of Children's Inspection Reports

Equality Group: Age

The pilot for publication of children's inspection reports was evaluated and concluded. The policy and procedure were further reviewed and will be presented to the RQIA policy group in autumn/winter 2026. The equality screening was reviewed in light of the updated policy. Inspection methodology and report formats were kept under review during the year, with consideration given to any potential Section 75 impacts.

What difference will this make: There will be information available regarding the regulatory performance of services for children.

Interim Policy for Reviewing the Care and Treatment of Patients

Equality Group: Disability

We have further updated and developed the Interim Policy for Reviewing the Care and Treatment of Patients under Article 86 of The Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 (Incorporating 'Make Inquiry'). An initial equality screening of the policy identified gaps in our knowledge of the potential impact of this policy; further stakeholder engagement is planned.

What difference will this make: It will identify and address potential deficiencies in care and treatment for patients with mental disorder.

RQIA Equality and Disability Champion

Equality Groups: Men and Women generally; Age; Religious belief; Political opinion; Disability; Racial group; People with dependents; Marital status; Sexual orientation;

The role of the RQIA Equality and Disability Champion has been developed and awareness raised of the role. Dr Nazia Latif is the Authority Member undertaking this role.

Specific steps taken include:

a) Drawing up the role of the Equality and Disability Champion at Authority level and identifying the primary areas of focus:

1. Providing Authority (Board) Level Leadership

- Ensuring equality, disability rights and human rights remain visible and prioritised in Authority decision-making.
- Advocating for and strengthening accessibility within and access to RQIA.
- Supporting RQIA's compliance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act and other statutory equality duties.

2. Promoting an Inclusive Culture for Staff

- Encouraging fair, respectful and supportive working environments.
- Helping all in RQIA understand their obligations and rights under equality and disability law.
- Championing initiatives that promote diversity, accessibility and inclusion across RQIA.

3. Developing/ Reviewing RQIA Policy and Practice

- Ensuring that equality and human rights are embedded in RQIA policy development, so that the operational practices put in place identify and promote equality and disability in the delivery of our regulatory and improvement duties and functions.

b) Raising awareness of the role at Authority meetings and at the whole Staff Development Event with the Equality and Disability Champion hosting a session at the event on the role, key issues and raising awareness of the Human Rights Guidance recently issued, the FREDA (**F**airness, **R**espect, **E**quality, **D**ignity, and **A**utonomy) video and the Guidance issued on addressing Racism in the workplace

c) The Equality and Disability Champion held a workshop on 'Inclusivity' with RQIA staff - this has given an opportunity to develop our actions for creating an inclusive workplace and for ensuring inclusivity is embedded in our regulatory work.

What difference will this make: Having an Authority member focussed on Equality and Disability will ensure that there is rigor and scrutiny applied to the development of RQIA Policies; policies will be equality screened and also reviewed against both the equality and human rights legislation. This will mean that equality and disability will be further embedded into RQIA's work and delivery programme, as well as its employment arrangements.

Human Rights Guidance for RQIA staff

Equality Groups: All

Human Rights Guidance has been developed and shared across the organisation. It has been accompanied by the FREDA video. RQIA's Professional Social Work Advisor has shared and discussed the Guidance at the whole Staff Monthly meeting, described the content and required staff and managers to discuss the Equality Guidance at their appraisal conversations, recording this in their appraisal documentation. RQIA are building on this by developing bespoke elearning modules for RQIA staff level 1 for all staff. Level 2 for Inspectors and senior staff. This will improve knowledge and confidence in workforce wide human rights considerations.

What difference will this make: Ensuring that staff employed by RQIA operating at all levels in the organisation are aware of and confident in understanding their responsibilities in the context of human rights FREDA principles (**F**airness, **R**espect, **E**quality, **D**ignity, and **A**utonomy). Building conversations around human rights in undertaking our review, investigation and inspection work will ensure that people utilising health and social care services are assured that the undertaking of Regulatory functions includes a foundation of human rights.

This knowledge will help ensure service users receive a person-centred service and are empowered to make their own decisions and choices, feel involved, valued and respected and any human rights violations are reported.

Records of deceased patients eLearning

Equality Groups: Gender or gender identity; Age; Racial group; Disability;

RQIA has developed an eLearning Programme, initially targeted at Doctors working in HSC services in Northern Ireland, with learning coming from the Review of the Records of Deceased Patients (Neurology Public Inquiry - Michael Watt). While this eLearning programme is focussed around the lessons from poor clinical practice and points those undertaking it to positive and best practice in clinical terms, it also focusses on the culture of an organisation and the personal practices of individuals. It is now open to all HSC staff who have access to the HSC eLearning platform. Over 400 people have undertaken it so far, with very positive feedback. It promotes listening to patients and their families; inclusivity, respect and taking care with language and communication.

What difference will this make: The evaluation of those who have undertaken the programme indicates it has lasting impact on the understanding and practices in their work. Taking time to understand the communication needs of people, where there may be difficulties due to disability, language barriers or perceptions - taking time to consider this and to take steps to ensure there is effective listening and engagement and understanding is important to people in understanding their diagnosis or care and treatment pathways; help assure where there is anxiety; and offer empathy in situations where there are difficult decisions to be made.

Equality Portal

Over the past year, development has continued on the SharePoint Equality Portal. New content includes a range of screening guidance documents for example guidance for screening the procurement of a service. Screening evidence has been added, such as up-to-date data on regional interpreting service statistics and signposting to the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership interactive map-based data on Children and Young People in NI.

In addition, staff can now access clear information on how to book foreign language and sign language interpreting services.

Quarterly Equality Forum meeting papers are also now hosted on the Equality Portal. This supports version control and good governance, and ensures members can quickly access the most up-to-date papers.

Five Year Reviews

During the year, supported by the BSO Equality Unit, the RQIA commenced the Five-Year Review of its Equality Scheme. Partner organisations adopted an approach and methodology developed by the Equality Unit that is closely aligned with the Commission's guidance and that is based on the principles of collaboration, proportionality, and making maximum use of limited resources.

Much emphasis herein was placed in identifying and discussing learning and good practice across partner organisations at quarterly Equality Forum meetings. This involved presentations from individual partner organisations and Forum discussions.

Where changes resulted from screenings, these will be listed in Chapter 6, the mitigation report. No changes resulted from EQIAs.

Table 1:**(ECNI Q4,5,6)**

2. During the 2025-26 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 Directors, their Assistant Directors and all teams and staff throughout 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	A number of actions in RQIA’s Management Plan 2025-26 aim to improve outcomes for Section 75 groupings. These include: <u>Regulation of Fostering Agencies:</u> Develop organisational readiness for the regulation of fostering agencies (services new to regulation). <u>Mental Health and Learning Disability: Community Settings:</u> We will develop how we use our role in inspecting in community-based facilities and services, particularly as people formerly living in hospitals resettlement into community settings. <u>Mental Health and Learning Disability: Make Inquiry:</u> We will continue to develop how we undertake structured inquiries into individual cases that meet the threshold for potential detriment in care and treatment. <u>Adult Safeguarding:</u> We will publish, promote and encourage adoption/use of the

		Adult Safeguarding Protocol Audit Tool (developed and tested by RQIA in 2024-25) across HSC Trusts; and other RQIA tools/ guidance - to enable service providers to self-assess compliance with adult safeguarding policy to drive improvement, secure consistency and effective engagement with services users and families.
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(ECNI Q11,12,17)

3. Please provide any details and examples of good practice in consultation during the 2025-26 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

No consultations undertaken during 2025-26.

(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 2025-26 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 co-ordinated and delivered by the BSO Equality Unit for staff across all 11 partner organisations. The following statistics therefore relate to the evaluations undertaken by all participants for the training:

Screening Training Evaluations

The figures in bold below represent the percentage of participants who selected 'Very Well' or 'Well'. Participants were asked: "Overall how well do you think the course met its aims":

- To develop an understanding of the statutory requirements for screening: **100%**
- To develop an understanding of the benefits of screening: **100%**
- To develop an understanding of the screening process: **94%**
- To develop skills in practically carrying out screening: **94%**

(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)

The Five Year Review of RQIA's Equality Scheme commenced during 2025-26, and was submitted to ECNI by 30th June 26.

Equality Screening anticipated during 2026-27:

- safeguarding policy for RQIA
- Interim Policy for Reviewing the Care and Treatment of Patients under Article 86 of The Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 (Incorporating 'Make Inquiry')

- Policy for RQIA Involvement in The National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Safety in Mental Health (NCISH)
- Publications Scheme
- Patient Safety Culture Assessment Framework ('Being Human')
- HSC Improvement Alliance and associated Operating Policy
- Appraisal Policy & Procedure
- Post Inspection Evaluation Process
- Staff Exit Interview Guidance

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.

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.



Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-28 Report on progress made during 2025- 26

This document summarises progress made during 2025-26 against the actions in our Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan. The plans are available on our website:

[Equality and Disability | Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority](#)

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

Equality Action Plan 2023-28

EAP01: Business Services, by 31 March 2028

What we will do: Workforce

In developing the staff recruitment programme, over the five-year period, we will give consideration to ways to attract and retain staff reflective of the communities we serve in respect of the following section 75 groupings in particular: age, sexual orientation, disability, and ethnicity. When staff leave the organisation we will conduct exit interviews to better understand why staff are leaving us.

What we are trying to achieve and who for: All Section 75 Groups

We wish to increase the profile of the organisation workforce to reflect the population of our communities, bringing diversity to the lived experience of our workforce so that our regulatory work is enhanced as a result.

We will ensure that managers are supported through appropriate training, to manage a diverse workforce and to ensure that communication is inclusive.

Performance Indicators and Targets:

Encourage staff to complete the annual staff profile survey to both establish baseline information and provide a means to monitor workforce profile.

Progress 2025-26: RQIA will continue to encourage all employees to complete their profiles on the HR System. Staff have also been reminded at the Staff Monthly Meeting, which is consistently attended by the majority of staff. As part of our refreshed Induction Policy and Procedure, employees are asked to ensure that their Section 75 details are correct and up-to-date on the HR System.

Action Status: More work needs to be done.

Future changes to action: Recommitment to actions as set out in the plan for 2026/2027.

Chapter 3: RQIA Equality and Disability Action Plans Report 25-26

EAP02: Business Services, by 31 March 2028

What we will do: RQIA Knowledge and Experience

Promoting and developing RQIA's Equality Forum to ensure it is representative of all equality groups, drawn from staff within the organisation and outside, to add depth of knowledge and experience.

What we are trying to achieve and who for: All Section 75 Equality Groups

To ensure meaningful involvement of staff across RQIA, representative of different Equality Groups and to ensure the work of the Equality Group is informed by lived experience and knowledge, so that our planning and actions are effectively informed and evaluated.

Performance Indicators and Targets:

The membership of the Equality Group to be benchmarked and report on progress in broadening inclusively.

Progress 2025-26: A review of the membership of the RQIA Equality, Disability, Human Rights and National Preventive Forum was undertaken in August 2025. This was a recommendation from the RQIA Culture Review to ensure membership of this Forum had a focus on diversity and inclusivity. The Review has resulted in an enhanced membership, demonstrating wider representation from some Section 75 groups, such as gender, age, ethnicity and political belief.

Action Status: More work needs to be done.

Future changes to action: Recommitment to actions as set out in the plan for 2026/2027.

Chapter 3: RQIA Equality and Disability Action Plans Report 25-26

EAP04: Business Services, by 31 March 2028

What we will do: Stakeholder Engagement

To improve RQIA engagement with Section 75 groups, on a voluntary basis both in planning our work and in undertaking our regulatory role particularly through Inspection and Reviews.

What we are trying to achieve and who for: All Section 75 Equality Groups

Improved communication and engagement with communities relating to section 75 groups so our work as the regional service regulator reflect those views and lived experience.

We will aim to support this through improved analysis and use of equality data collected.

Performance Indicators and Targets:

Collect Equality information from those attending events with us or engaged in surveys, and public consultations - on a voluntary basis.

Seek to reflect the actions taken to secure wide range of people involved in Inspections and Reviews – appropriate to the service - through the Service Reports.

Progress 2025-26: RQIA held an event on 17 September 2025 (World Patient Safety Day). The invite included an accessibility and requirements form.

In order to promote equality of opportunity and good relations at our events, we asked participants to complete a survey outlining information on the Section 75 groupings. Over 100 participants attended. We plan to use this method for future events attended by stakeholders from service users, the general public and HSC colleagues.

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

Future changes to action: No changes.

Chapter 3: RQIA Equality and Disability Action Plans Report 25-26

EAP05: Office of the Chair and Chief Executive, by 31 March 2025

What we will do: RQIA Website

Update RQIA website so that it enables people from equality groups to effectively access information about RQIA and its work to meet their particular needs.

What we are trying to achieve and who for: All Section 75 Equality Groups

Organisations websites are a key resource for all communities to access information to meet their needs. The RQIA website should enable and support Section 75 groups to more effectively access the information suitable to their needs.

Performance Indicators and Targets:

We will conduct online surveys about use of our website and publish results.

We will also undertake an audit of our website to:

- (i) identify key information to be made available in signed video format;
- (ii) ensure relevant contact details are available and up to date.

Progress 2025-26: During 2025/2026, RQIA secured agreement to conduct an Engagement Involvement Exercise, which commenced in Quarter 4. Part of this Exercise will discover what information our stakeholders wish to access from our Website. We have already engaged with our own staff across the organisation to determine what information should be made available on the website, which will be fed into the Exercise. We will continue the Exercise into 2026/2027 with facilitated sessions for a wide range of our stakeholders representing the Section 75 groups.

Action Status: More work needs to be done.

Future changes to action: Recommitment to actions as set out in the plan for 2026/2027.

Chapter 3: RQIA Equality and Disability Action Plans Report 25-26

EAP07: Mental Health, Learning Disability, Children's Services & Prison Health Care, by 31 March 2026

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 publically report when the reports are published and evaluate usage and views on same.

Progress 2025-26: Policies and procedures for publishing reports for children's services were developed and will be brought to the next policy group in April 2026. All staff and admin trained on new procedures for publication.

Report format kept under review. The pilot was completed which included all inspection reports for all types of children's services. Reports for all inspections are/will be routinely published for 25/26 inspection year onwards.

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

Future changes to action: RQIA plans to scope publication of enforcement actions related to children's services in the coming year.

Chapter 3: RQIA Equality and Disability Action Plans Report 25-26

EAP08: Mental Health, Learning Disability, Children's Services & Prison Health Care, by 31 March 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 2025-26: Inspection of children's services have continued to include nursing staff to review health outcomes.

Any new staff that have joined the team have been informed in relation to this area of work and have supported bank nursing colleagues during inspections. Good practice and areas for improvement been identified and reported on. The report template and record of inspection are kept under review in relation to health outcomes.

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

Future changes to action: No changes

Chapter 3: RQIA Equality and Disability Action Plans Report 25-26

EAP09: Mental Health, Learning Disability, Children's Services & Prison Health Care, by 31 March 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 2025-26: RQIA have reviewed these metrics during all prison inspections. Inequalities were not identified.

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

Future changes to action: Our inspection methodology will be further reviewed and we will ensure that Section 75 groups are considered during all inspections.

Equality Action Plan - Conclusions

- We completed 4 actions (EAP04, EAP07, EAP08, EAP09).
- We have more work to do on 3 actions (EAP01, EAP02, EAP05), and these are set out in 2026/2027 plan.
- In considering the development of this plan, we have taken cognisance of the actions from the RQIA Organisational Culture Review and Investors in People Reaccreditation, specifically around Theme 1: Equality, Disability, Diversity and Inclusion, and the HSC values.

Chapter 3: RQIA Equality and Disability Action Plans Report 25-26

- All of the actions in our action plan are at regional and at local level, and our underpinned by the Being Human: A Framework for Safety Culture within Health and Social Care.
- 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 2023-28

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

What we will do: Disability 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 2025-26: Our first Awareness Day covered Autism and ADHD. It was held on 3 December 2025, facilitated by Specialisterne. The second Awareness Day, held on 24 March 2026, focused on Chest, Heart and Stroke Conditions. Northern Ireland Chest, Heart and Stroke staff provided presentations on the day. Materials have been made available for staff and board members unable to attend on the day.

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

Future changes to action: No changes

Chapter 3: RQIA Equality and Disability Action Plans Report 25-26

DAP02: Office of the Chair and Chief Executive, by 31 March 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 2025-26: Tapestry, the staff disability network, met in July 2025. Subsequently, the chair resigned due to competing work commitments and a number of active members have now moved on to new employers. In the absence of a chair, secretary and treasurer, face-to-face meetings were paused. Tapestry has continued as a network via email and staff queries, advice and support requests continue to be responded to.

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

Future changes to action: Reword Action: Advise staff of the existence and contact details of the Tapestry staff network.

Chapter 3: RQIA Equality and Disability Action Plans Report 25-26

DAP03: Office of the Chair and Chief Executive, by 31 March 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 2025-26: During this year, the Framework for Disability Placements was finalised and signed off in the BSO, who led on this joint initiative for BSO and partner organisations. Further consideration was given to safeguarding issues and it was agreed that having in place Adult Safeguarding Arrangements will be a prerequisite for hosting placements. This has pushed back timelines for commencing placements into 2026-27, until participating organisations have a policy, champion and reporting arrangements in place and staff have been trained at the appropriate level.

Action Status: No progress made.

Future changes to action: RQIA will be supported by the BSO Human Resources team, who have taken the lead on this work.

Chapter 3: RQIA Equality and Disability Action Plans Report 25-26

DAP09: Business Services, by 31 May 2025

What we will do: Training

Ensure RQIA Authority members have opportunities to understand the needs of those with a disability in the community and how RQIA responds to these – through access training materials and accompany inspectors in their work.

What we are trying to achieve and who for:

Increased Authority Member awareness of the range of disabilities and needs to influence RQIA strategic plans and our culture

Performance Indicators and Targets:

All Authority members trained within 2 years of appointment through e-learning or interactive sessions.

Programme of awareness initiatives for Authority Members.

Progress 2025-26: All Authority Members are requested to complete training via eLearning sessions on a regular basis. An Inclusivity Workshop was also held on 27 March 2026, with Authority Member representation. Our Equality and Disability Champion at Authority Member level facilitated this Workshop.

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

Future changes to action: No changes.

Disability Action Plan - Conclusions

- We completed 3 actions (DAP01, DAP02, DAP09).
- We didn't do any work on 1 action (DAP03) and this is set out in 2026/2027 plan.
- In considering the development of this plan, we have taken cognisance of the actions from the RQIA Organisational Culture Review and Investors in People Reaccreditation, specifically around Theme 1: Equality, Disability, Diversity and Inclusion, and the HSC values.

Chapter 3: RQIA Equality and Disability Action Plans Report 25-26

- All of the actions in our action plan are at regional and at local level, and our underpinned by the Being Human: A Framework for Safety Culture within Health and Social Care.
- 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.



The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-28

Updated June 2026

Chapter 4: RQIA Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-28

1. Equality Action Plan 2023-28: What we will do to promote equality and good relations

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve and who for (i.e. which Section 75 category specifically)	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
EAP 01: Workforce In developing the staff recruitment programme, over the five-year period, we will give consideration to ways to attract and retain staff reflective of the communities we serve in respect of the following section 75 groupings in particular: age, sexual orientation, disability, and ethnicity. When staff leave the organisation we will conduct exit interviews to better understand why staff are leaving us.	All Section 75 Equality Groups We wish to increase the profile of the organisation workforce to reflect the population of our communities, bringing diversity to the lived experience of our workforce so that our regulatory work is enhanced as a result. We will ensure that managers are supported through appropriate training, to manage a diverse workforce and to ensure that communication is inclusive.	Encourage staff to complete the annual staff profile survey to both establish baseline information and provide a means to monitor workforce profile.	RQIA Head of Business Services, with the support of BSO HR services. annually.

Chapter 4: RQIA Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-28

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve and who for (i.e. which Section 75 category specifically)	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
EAP02: RQIA Knowledge and Experience Promoting and developing RQIA's Equality Forum to ensure it is representative of all equality groups, drawn from staff within the organisation and outside, to add depth of knowledge and experience.	All Section 75 Equality Groups To ensure meaningful involvement of staff across RQIA, representative of different Equality Groups and to ensure the work of the Equality Group is informed by lived experience and knowledge, so that our planning and actions are effectively informed and evaluated.	The membership of the Equality Group to be benchmarked and report on progress in broadening inclusively.	RQIA Office of Chair and Chief Executive. annually.
EAP04: Stakeholder engagement To improve RQIA engagement with Section 75 groups, on a voluntary basis both in planning our work and in undertaking our regulatory role particularly through Inspection and Reviews.	All Section 75 Equality Groups Improved communication and engagement with communities relating to section 75 groups so our work as the regional service regulator reflect those views and lived experience.	Collect Equality information from those attending events with us or engaged in surveys, and public consultations - on a voluntary basis. Seek to reflect the actions taken to	RQIA Head of Business Services/ and the Office of Chair and Chief Executive. annually.

Chapter 4: RQIA Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-28

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve and who for (i.e. which Section 75 category specifically)	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
	We will aim to support this through improved analysis and use of equality data collected.	secure wide range of people involved in Inspections and Reviews – appropriate to the service - through the Service Reports.	
EAP05: RQIA Website Update RQIA website so that it enables people from equality groups to effectively access information about RQIA and its work to meet their particular needs.	All Section 75 Equality Groups Organisations websites are a key resource for all communities to access information to meet their needs. The RQIA website should enable and support Section 75 groups to more effectively access the information suitable to their needs.	We will conduct online surveys about use of our website and publish results. We will also undertake an audit of our website to: (i) identify key information to be	Head of Corporate Affairs. March 2027

Chapter 4: RQIA Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-28

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve and who for (i.e. which Section 75 category specifically)	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
		made available in signed video format; and (ii) ensure relevant contact details are available and up to date.	
EAP07: 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. RQIA will scope publication of enforcement actions related to	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.	Reports formats will be developed to meet a wide range of reader's needs. We will publically report when the reports are published and evaluate usage and views on same.	Director of Mental Health and Learning Disability, Children's Services and Prison Healthcare. March 2027.

Chapter 4: RQIA Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-28

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve and who for (i.e. which Section 75 category specifically)	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
children's services in the coming year.			
EAP08: 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).	Age Through this approach we intend to improve health outcomes for children and young people in these settings.	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.	Director of Mental Health and Learning Disability, Children's Services and Prison Healthcare. annually.
EAP09: Prison health care RQIA will ensure that methodology used during the inspections of prison services will be further reviewed and	RQIA will, through its inspection methodology, identify and highlight any potential or actual inequalities	We will report on good practice and health inequalities in	Director of Mental Health and Learning Disability, Children's

Chapter 4: RQIA Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-28

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve and who for (i.e. which Section 75 category specifically)	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
we will ensure that Section 75 groups are considered during all inspections.	relating to equality groups of people who are detained.	individual inspection reports and in themed Reviews we carry out.	Services and Prison Healthcare. annually.

2. Disability Action Plan 2023-28: What we will do to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in public life

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
DAP01: Awareness Days Raise awareness of the lived experience of people with specific disabilities and conditions.	Promoting positive attitudes: Increased staff awareness of a range of disabilities and conditions.	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	Senior Management with support from BSO Equality Unit. End Mar 2028.

Chapter 4: RQIA Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-28

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
		as a result of the awareness days.	
DAP02: Tapestry Advise staff of the existence and contact details of the Tapestry staff network.	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.	Tapestry staff survey. Increase in Tapestry membership or in participation at meetings.	Senior Management with support from BSO Equality Unit. End Mar 2028.
DAP03: Placement Scheme Create and promote meaningful placement opportunities for people with disabilities.	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	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	Senior Management with support from BSO Human Resources. End Mar 2028.

Chapter 4: RQIA Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-28

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
	employment after they have completed a placement.	applying for paid employment within 12 months of completing their placement.	
DAP09: Training Ensure RQIA Authority members have opportunities to the understand needs of those with a disability in the community and how RQIA responds to these – through access training materials and accompany inspectors in their work.	Increased Authority Member awareness of the range of disabilities and needs to influence RQIA strategic plans and our culture.	All Authority members trained within 2 years of appointment through e-learning or interactive sessions. Programme of awareness initiatives for Authority Members.	RQIA Chair. annually.



Equality and Human Rights Screening Report

April 2025 – March 2026

Screenings published previously can be viewed at:

<https://bso.hscni.net/directorates/people-and-place/equality-and-human-rights/equality-screening/>

Policy / Procedure	Policy Aims	Date	Screening Decision
Complaints Policy	This policy has been updated to reflect The Health and Social Care Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP) published on 1 July 2025. This updated policy also reflects learning from previous complaints. RQIA recognises the importance of having an accessible and impartial process for dealing efficiently and effectively with complaints about our performance. RQIA are committed to listening to people and learning from their experiences of interacting with us. The purpose of this policy is to set out how we will address complaints in a timely and effective way. We will ensure that relevant staff receive appropriate training in complaints management.	Jan-26	Screened out with mitigation
Information Governance Policies	RQIA's suite of Information Governance policies set out how RQIA should manage and secure its information in line with the requirements of data protection legislation, and in line with the	Oct-25	Screened out without mitigation

	requirements set out in freedom of information / environmental information regulations.		
Principal Policy Document	The aim of this policy is to establish a consistent and transparent framework for the development, approval, adoption, implementation, and review of policies within RQIA. It ensures that all policies are created and maintained in a way that supports effective governance, complies with relevant legislation and standards, and reflects best practice.	Nov-25	Screened out without mitigation

No concerns were raised by consultees on any of the screenings published in 2025-26.



Equality and Human Rights Mitigation Report

April 2025 – March 2026

Complaints Policy

<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>
RQIA's Accessible Formats Policy outlines how those developing information should consider alternative formats, and how information and publications can be requested in alternative formats. RQIA will consider provision of alternative formats on request to meet the needs of people with a disability who may need information in an accessible format RQIA will also consider the need to provide some support to those wishing to avail of this policy, and/or signpost them to an advocacy services such as the Patient Client Council, who could assist them through the complaint process. RQIA is also able to avail of the regional (HSCNI) interpreting contract.	Consideration will be given to converting this policy into a variety of formats to include; easy read; audio; brail, accessible PDF and a variety of languages.