

Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland



Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report

Contact:

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Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:
www.nicscommissioners.org

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J Wray', enclosed within a rectangular box.

This report has been prepared using a template circulated by the Equality Commission.

It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties, and implementing Equality Scheme commitments and Disability Action Plans.

This report reflects progress made between April 2022 and March 2023

PART A – Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Scheme

Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice

- 1 In 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.

Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland (CSCNI) are responsible for ensuring appointments to the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) are made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition. Commissioners also have a role in hearing appeals made by existing civil servants under the NICS Code of Ethics.

Commissioners' responsibilities derive from prerogative Orders in Council made by the Secretary of State. Our authority derives from the Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999. The current Regulations for the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland referred to as our general regulations came into operation on 1st February 2007.

Commissioners discharge their statutory responsibilities by:

- maintaining the principle of selection on merit on the basis of fair and open competition in relation to selection for appointment;
- making General Regulations which prescribe the circumstances in which the Merit Principle shall not apply;
- publishing and maintaining a Recruitment Code on the interpretation and application of the Merit Principle
- auditing recruitment policies and practices followed in making appointments to the Civil Service to establish whether the Recruitment Code is being observed;
- chairing Senior Civil Service Recruitment Competitions; and
- requiring the NICS to publish such information as they may specify relating to recruitment and to the use of permitted exceptions to the Merit principle.

Commissioners are supported by a small Secretariat team funded by the Northern Ireland Office, headed by the Secretary to the Civil Service Commissioners, and known as the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners (OCSC).

PART A

The Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland are fully committed to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations in all their areas of work in line with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The Commissioners' primary role is to perform regulatory functions in relation to open recruitment to the NICS, at all levels, to ensure that the Merit Principle is adhered to.

The Commissioners' Recruitment Code provides advice and guidance on the application of the Merit Principle and is mandatory for everyone involved in open recruitment to the NICS. Commissioners firmly believe that adhering to the Recruitment Code will ensure appointments to the NICS are made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition and will help promote an effective Civil Service which reflects the diversity of Northern Ireland society and promotes equality and good relations.

Appointments to the NICS must be made in line with the expectations set out in the Commissioners' Recruitment Code. Commissioners have a duty to audit NICS Recruitment policies and practices followed in making appointments to the NICS to establish whether the Recruitment Code is being observed. Commissioners are committed to continuing to work in close partnership with all key stakeholders to uphold the Merit principle and promote public confidence in NICS recruitment.

The Commissioners' Strategic Business Plan 2020 - 2025 includes the following vision:-

"A Civil Service for Northern Ireland which recruits and promotes the best and most diverse talent available in accordance with merit and free from personal and political patronage or partiality."

Its standards serve to *"safeguard an impartial and independent Northern Ireland Civil Service by providing assurance that Civil Servants are recruited on the basis of fair and open competition"*.

One of its targets, under Governance and Accountability, was the Discharge of all statutory obligations as a public authority which elicited actions to "put in place the necessary systems and procedures to ensure compliance with...Equality, Disability and Diversity...duties and requirements".

Job descriptions and performance plans for the Commissioners' staff reflect their contributions to the discharge of the Section 75 statutory duties and implementation of the Equality Scheme, where relevant. Targets relating to

equality and disability duties and responsibilities are included in forward job plans which are reviewed bi-annually. Staff also attend training aimed at raising awareness of their statutory duties and keeping them informed about any developments in relation to Section 75 Groups. Some of this is provided by ECNI.

The principles of diversity, inclusivity and equality of opportunity are central to the Merit Principle and are indeed embedded within the Commissioners' Recruitment Principles. Commissioners believe that these principles should be embraced fully during recruitment processes in order to achieve an effective civil service that reflects the diversity of Northern Ireland society. While Commissioners do not appoint to the NICS, they seek to encourage the NICS to engage in outreach activities and to promote the NICS as an employer of choice.

During the year, Commissioners sought advice from the Equality Commission in preparation for conducting a 5-year review of their Disability Action Plan and Equality Scheme and Action Plan. In April 2022, Commissioners consulted on their draft disability Action Plan for 2022 – 2027 with their consultees, as detailed in appendix 3 of their Equality Scheme. Consultation documents were issued to these consultees and placed on Commissioners' website. Consultees were invited to participate in the process and share their views to help inform and shape the Action Plan. Following the consultation period, the Disability Action Plan 2022 – 2027 was published, ready for implementation. Both the revised Disability Action Plan and Equality Scheme and Action plan are available to view on Commissioners' website www.nicscommissioners.org. Commissioners will continue to engage with Disability Action and other organisations to learn about best practice and receive updates on Case Law.

Commissioners have a particular interest in ensuring that, where possible, barriers to recruitment are identified and strategies are developed to address such barriers. To this end, Commissioners engage with the NICS in relation to diversity and inclusion and have regular focused meetings on this matter. Commissioners and representatives of NICS HR established the Recruitment and Selection Transformation Group in December 2021, primarily in response to recommendation 3.4 of the NIAO's Report on Capacity and Capability in the NICS. Throughout the 2022-23 reporting period, the Commissioners have continued to collaborate, on a quarterly basis, with representatives of the NICS to facilitate formalised discussions on how best Commissioners can support the NICS renewal agenda. These have included making amendments to their Recruitment Code to allow the creation of new pathways to employment in the NICS for people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups.

In July 2022, in response to requirements from the NICS, Commissioners further amended their Recruitment Code by adding a paragraph (2.12) to reinforce their commitment to Diversity and Inclusion in recruitment to the NICS.

“Commissioners support the application of positive actions to promote equality of opportunity for people with disabilities who may otherwise have difficulty gaining access to employment in the NICS. They welcome the fact that the effect of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 is to ensure that the appointment of persons with a disability to situations in the NICS is in accordance with the merit principle.”

Additionally, to facilitate the introduction of new pathways to employment into the NICS, while maintaining the Merit Principle, Commissioners revised their Exception to Merit Principle 3(e) – *Where the person has been selected for appointment under Government Programmes or Initiatives*. This revision allowed for permanent or temporary appointments to be made to the NICS through government programmes or initiatives designed to assist, for instance, people who are unemployed, or people with disabilities who would often have difficulty gaining employment through the normal competition process.

The Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999 and the Commissioners’ Recruitment Code require NICS Departments and Agencies to publish a wide range of information and statistical summaries regarding recruitment to the NICS. Amongst other things, Commissioners require the following information to be published:

- statistical summaries, in a format which the Commissioners may specify, of all recruitment activity during the publication period, including analyses by all categories covered by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998;
- any actions or initiatives undertaken in the reporting year to attract candidates, and advance a recruitment-related agenda for diversity, inclusivity and equality of opportunity and which specifically target areas of under representation; and
- a report on the outcomes as a result of any such actions or initiatives.

Commissioners are fully committed to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations and have demonstrated this commitment this year through engagement, outreach and training.

During the 2022-23 reporting period Commissioners engaged with the Chief Commissioner and Chief Executive of the Equality Commission for Northern

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Ireland on two separate occasions which provided Commissioners with updates on legislation and recent tribunal cases with regard to disability and employment. The meetings also provided the Commissioners with an opportunity to hear more about the ongoing work of the Equality Commission and provided a forum to discuss the challenges facing those with disabilities living in Northern Ireland, reasonable adjustments and positive actions in relation to recruitment.

In June 2022, Commissioners attended the Harkin Summit, a globally significant international disability employment event, which brought together key champions and implementers from around the world to increase the profile and awareness of disability employment issues. Commissioners gained a number of valuable insights through the presentations, panel discussions and workshops and took advantage of the opportunity to network with peers to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by people with a disability.

In Nov 2022, both the Chairperson and Secretary attended a conference on Making Equality a Priority – Equality Law Reform in NI. This conference focused on the need for a single Equality Act and the implications of Brexit and the NI Protocol on equality law.

Both Commissioners and Secretariat staff attended virtual workshops based on equality, diversity and disability throughout the year. This provided a useful update on important issues, the current legislative position and case law.

During the course of the year, the Secretariat completed three screening exercises on:

- Recruitment Code (version 14)
- Data Protection Policy (version 2)
- Disability Action Plan 2022 – 2027

All three were “screened out” as they were not considered to adversely impact on any of the Section 75 groups. The screening decisions were approved by the Commissioner Chairperson and published on the Civil Service Commissioners’ website.

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- 2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2022-23 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

Attached to this Progress Report as **Annex A**.

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3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2022-23 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes No (go to Q.4) Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

Commissioners amended their Recruitment Code in July 2022 to:

- include a new paragraph to reinforce their commitment to Diversity and Inclusion in recruitment to the NICS;
- facilitate the introduction of new pathways to employment into the NICS to enhance accessibility to employment into the NICS.

3a With regard to the change(s) made to policies, practices or procedures and/or service delivery areas, what **difference was made, or will be made, for individuals**, i.e. the impact on those according to Section 75 category?

Please provide any details and examples:

The changes serve to emphasise the Commissioners' and the NICS' commitment to the application of positive actions to promote equality of opportunity for people with disabilities who may otherwise have difficulty gaining access to employment in the NICS. The changes will also benefit a wide section of society in Northern Ireland by facilitating pathways to employment in the NICS for those furthest from the employment market.

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3b What aspect of the Equality Scheme prompted or led to the change(s)? *(tick all that apply)*

- As a result of the organisation's screening of a policy *(please give details):*

- As a result of what was identified through the EQIA and consultation exercise *(please give details):*

- As a result of analysis from monitoring the impact *(please give details):*

- As a result of changes to access to information and services *(please specify and give details):*

- Other *(please specify and give details):*

Fulfilling the action plan by collaborating with the NICS to promote equality of opportunity in relation to recruitment and selection.

Section 2: Progress on Equality Scheme commitments and action plans/measures

Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)

4 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2022-23 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

All job descriptions for staff reference the requirement to comply with Section 75 statutory duties. Training is provided to all staff and Commissioners.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2022-23 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done

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Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Section 75 statutory duties were integrated into the personal performance agreements of relevant staff.

6 In the 2022-23 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? *(tick all that apply)*

- Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
- Yes, in some departments/jobs
- No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's ongoing corporate plan
- No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2022-23 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Commissioners' 2022/23 Business Plan has a Strategic Objective to discharge all statutory obligations as a public authority and a related target to ensure Commissioners have in place the necessary systems and procedures to ensure compliance with Equality and disability duties and requirements.

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Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2022-23 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:	<input type="text" value="8"/>	Actions ongoing:	<input type="text"/>	Actions to commence:	<input type="text"/>
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Please provide any details and examples (*in addition to question 2*):

Commissioners have developed an Equality Scheme and Action Plan which underwent a 5 year review during the reporting period. An annual progress report is submitted each year and training needs are assessed at least annually.

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2022-23 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

The plan has been reviewed and updated to reflect minor changes to the organisation's address and to remove duplication and unnecessary words/phrases which had been taken from the Equality Commissions' model scheme. An amendment was made to the Action Plan to change the name of the theme 'Influence' to 'Collaboration' which reflects a more pro-active approach to working with colleagues within the NICS to advance an agenda for diversity and inclusion.

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9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2022-23 reporting period, the following have been identified: *(tick all that apply)*

- Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the known inequality
- Action(s) to address the known inequality in a different way
- Action(s) to address newly identified inequalities/recently prioritised inequalities
- Measures to address a prioritised inequality have been completed

Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)

10 Following the initial notification of consultations, a targeted approach was taken – and consultation with those for whom the issue was of particular relevance: *(tick one box only)*

- All the time Sometimes Never

11 Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 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:

A consultation on the draft Disability Action Plan for 2022 – 2027 was launched in April 2022 and consultation documents were issued to our list of consultees by email and also published on Commissioners’ website. Consultees were invited to participate in the process and share views to help inform and shape the Action Plan. No responses were received within the consultation timeframe.

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12 In the 2022-23 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: (*tick all that apply*)

- Face to face meetings
- Focus groups
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- Questionnaires
- Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
- Internet discussions
- Telephone consultations
- Other (*please specify*): [There was no response to the Consultation process.](#)

Please provide any details or examples of the uptake of these methods of consultation in relation to the consultees' membership of particular Section 75 categories:

[There was no response to the Consultation process.](#)

13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2022-23 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

- Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples: [N/A](#)

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14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2022-23 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes No Not applicable – no commitment to review

Arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

Link to Screening exercises: <https://www.nicscommissioners.org/equality-and-human-rights-screening-forms.htm>

15 Please provide the **number** of policies screened during the year *(as recorded in screening reports)*:

3

16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2022-23:

0	Policy consultations conducted with screening assessment presented.
0	Policy consultations conducted with an equality impact assessment (EQIA) presented.
0	Consultations for an EQIA alone.

17 Please provide details of the **main consultations** conducted on an assessment (as described above) or other matters relevant to the Section 75 duties: N/A

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18 Were any screening decisions (or equivalent initial assessments of relevance) reviewed following concerns raised by consultees? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes No concerns were raised No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples: [N/A](#)

Arrangements for publishing the results of assessments (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

19 Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2022-23 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples: [N/A](#)

Arrangements for monitoring and publishing the results of monitoring (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

20 From the Equality Scheme monitoring arrangements, was there an audit of existing information systems during the 2022-23 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes No, already taken place
 No, scheduled to take place at a later date Not applicable

Please provide any details:

[N/A](#)

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21 In analysing monitoring information gathered, was any action taken to change/review any policies? *(tick one box only)*

Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

N/A

22 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

23 Please provide any details or examples of monitoring that has contributed to the availability of equality and good relations information/data for service delivery planning or policy development:

N/A

Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)

24 Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2022-23, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

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Commissioners updated their Learning and Development Plan for 2022-23 including the following key actions for the year ahead, whereby Commissioners and the Secretariat would:-

1. Attend events and ensure awareness of all statutory requirements particularly in relation to Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights, to be up-to-date with developments and emerging case law, virtually or in person; and
2. Engage with NICS HR to understand better how available data might help inform diversity considerations during recruitment.

During the reporting period, Commissioners took advantage of the opportunity to attend virtual training sessions and face to face workshops and conferences, most of which were made available by the Equality Commission, the NICS and the NIO via the UK Civil Service.

Commissioners also engaged with the NICS to gain a better understanding of the reporting of monitoring information and attended a meeting in November 2022 to discuss the new format of equality monitoring. Commissioners were encouraged by how the information was presented and remain interested in how work progresses to ensure that the information is effectively analysed and used to inform the new Outreach Strategy. Commissioners were encouraged to see so much activity taking place to increase diversity and inclusion within the NICS.

- 25** Please provide **any examples** of relevant training shown to have worked well, in that participants have achieved the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve the stated objectives:

Feedback from staff and Commissioners in relation to the training and awareness sessions delivered during the reporting period indicated that the participants achieved an increased awareness of equality and diversity issues and the importance of the role of the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners in promoting the principles of equality of

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opportunity and equality of treatment for safeguarding the Merit Principle in relation to recruitment to the NICS.

Commissioners used the opportunity, during the Harkin Summit, to network with their peers and to gain a deeper understanding for the challenges faced by people with a disability.

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

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2022-23, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

There has been no change to how we make information, including information in relation to the role and work of the Commissioners, available to the public. On request, information will continue to be made available in alternative formats. We will aim to do this within 10 working days of receipt of a request. If we envisage any delay in meeting the request within this timescale, we will advise the member of the public/organisation of the reason and the timescale for delivery.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

- 27** How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2022-23?

Insert number here:

0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

N/A

Section 3: Looking Forward

28 Please indicate when the Equality Scheme is due for review:

June 2027

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

Commissioners are very interested in learning more about the challenges experienced by different groups within Northern Ireland Society and plan to meet with experts and umbrella organisations representing : Disability, Autism, Racial Equality, Age, LGBTQ

30 In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

- Employment
- Goods, facilities and services
- Legislative changes
- Organisational changes/ new functions
- Nothing specific, more of the same
- Other (please state):

PART B - Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Disability Action Plans

1. Number of action measures for this reporting period that have been:

10

Fully achieved

Partially achieved

Not achieved

2. Please outline below details on all actions that have been fully achieved in the reporting period.

2 (a) Please highlight what **public life measures** have been achieved to encourage disabled people to participate in public life at National, Regional and Local levels:

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs ⁱ	Outcomes / Impact ⁱⁱ
National ⁱⁱⁱ			
Regional ^{iv}	Publish the Commissioners' Disability Action Plan.	Commissioners' Disability Action Plan was submitted to the Equality Commission and published on the OCSC website.	The general public and key stakeholders are more aware of Commissioners' commitment to the disability duties and implementation of their Disability Action Plan.
	Commissioners' Recruitment Code outlines the principles to be followed to ensure appointments to the NICS	All NICS Departments and Agencies are required to adhere to the Code.	The NICS and the general public are aware of the Commissioners' expectation in relation to the

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	<p>are made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition. The Code promotes equality of opportunity for all groups of people including people with disabilities.</p> <p>Ensure the Commissioners' Recruitment Code remains fit for purpose.</p>	<p>Commissioners reviewed their Recruitment Code in July 2022 to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.</p> <p>The subsequent revisions to the Commissioners' Recruitment Code were appropriately equality screened.</p> <p>Monitoring of the NICS adherence to the Code was carried out through the Commissioners' audit process and assurance was provided from the NICS by way of their statement of compliance submitted to Commissioners.</p>	<p>principles to be followed to ensure that appointments to the NICS are made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition.</p>
	<p>Produce an annual report in line with statutory requirements.</p>	<p>The Disability Action Plan was monitored and reviewed and progress was reported to the ECNI in the Section 75 Annual Progress Report submitted in August 2022.</p>	<p>Key stakeholders were made aware of Commissioners' commitment to the disability duties and progress against implementation of their Disability Action Plan.</p>
	<p>Commissioners require NICS to provide statistical summaries and analysis for all categories covered by Section 75, including people with</p>	<p>The NICS published the NISRA analysis of Recruitment Competitions 2022 and</p>	<p>NICS, Commissioners and the general public are informed by a strong evidence base in relation to</p>

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	disabilities in line with the requirements of Appendix C of the Recruitment Code.	Recruitment to the NICS Annual Report 2022. Commissioners published a commentary on the NICS annual statistical summaries and analysis in their annual report.	monitoring data for all Section 75 groups including disabled people.
Local ^v			

2(b) What **training action measures** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Ensure equality and disability awareness training is provided to Commissioners, and Secretariat staff.	<p>All Commissioners and staff received training to improve disability awareness.</p> <p>Training was provided to a new Commissioner and a new member of the Secretariat as part of the induction for new Commissioners and staff when they took up their appointments.</p> <p>Commissioners and staff sought opportunities to engage with a range of Disability organisations including attending the Harkin Summit in June 2022.</p>	Commissioners and the Secretariat enhanced their knowledge and understanding of disability duties and obligations under equality and disability legislation. This better informs their policy and decision making.

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		Commissioners and staff also availed of ongoing training provided by ECNI and others on disability related duties. They also completed mandatory training as required by their NIO Sponsor.	
2	Ensure specialist training is provided for Commissioners and Secretariat staff involved in recruitment and selection panels.	All Commissioners and staff attend regular training on recruitment processes and practices within the NICS.	Commissioners and staff enhanced their knowledge and understanding of various strands and elements of the recruitment and selection processes and, in particular, emerging legislative changes and relevant case law.

2(c) What Positive attitudes **action measures** in the area of **Communications** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Engagement with the NICS to support diversity and inclusion in recruitment-related matters.	Commissioners engaged regularly with the NICS through quarterly meetings of the Recruitment and Selection Transformation Group to collaborate and support employment of people with disabilities and seek regular feedback on new initiatives within the NICS.	Through the Recruitment Code Commissioners supported the NICS in driving forward its agenda for diversity and inclusion and to address under representation of people with disabilities within the NICS workforce. Commissioners amended their Recruitment Code to include a positive statement: <i>“Commissioners support the application of positive actions to promote equality of opportunity for people with disabilities who may otherwise have difficulty gaining access to</i>

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			<i>employment in the NICS. They welcome the fact that the effect of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 is to ensure that the appointment of persons with a disability to situations in the NICS is in accordance with the merit principle.”</i>
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2 (d) What action measures were achieved to ‘**encourage others**’ to promote the two duties:

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Engagement with the NICS to support diversity and inclusion in recruitment-related matters.	Commissioners used their influence with the NICS to ensure that diversity considerations, including the needs of disabled people, were properly considered by recruitment panels.	Through the Recruitment Code Commissioners supported the NICS in driving forward its agenda for diversity and inclusion and to address under representation of people with disabilities within the NICS workforce.

2 (e) Please outline **any additional action measures** that were fully achieved other than those listed in the tables above:

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1	Ensure Commissioners and Secretariat recruitment and selection procedures are inclusive to those with disabilities.	NIO sponsor unit considered this as part of their arrangements for the competition to appoint a new Commissioner in June 2022. All recruitment to the Office of the Civil Service Commission was carried out in	The Office of the Civil Service Commissioners promoted equality of opportunity in its selection process and successfully appointed a new member of staff.

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		accordance with equality legislation and best practice.	The NIO also appointed a new Commissioner.
2	Ensure compliance with the statutory disability duties is embedded in the Commissioners' strategic and annual business planning process.	Commissioners Strategic Priorities 2020 - 2025, Annual Business Plan 2022/23 and Risk Register 2022/23 were updated to specifically include compliance with the statutory disability requirements.	Commissioners, staff, key stakeholders and the general public were made aware of Commissioners' commitment to the disability duties.

3. Please outline what action measures have been **partly achieved** as follows:

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	N/A			
2				

4. Please outline what action measures **have not been achieved** and the reasons why.

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	N/A	
2		

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5. What **monitoring tools** have been put in place to evaluate the degree to which actions have been effective / develop new opportunities for action?

(a) Qualitative

The Secretariat, on behalf of Commissioners, monitors the Disability Action Plan and reviews and reports on progress at least annually. Any issues arising are presented to Commissioners for discussion at their business meetings, as appropriate.

(b) Quantitative

The Secretariat, on behalf of Commissioners, monitors the number of disabled people employed by the NICS by reviewing the published NICS Equality Statistics.

6. As a result of monitoring progress against actions has your organisation either:

- made any **revisions** to your plan during the reporting period or
- taken any **additional steps** to meet the disability duties which were **not outlined in your original** disability action plan / any other changes?

Yes, during the reporting period Commissioners conducted a 5-year review of their Disability Action Plan and undertook a consultation exercise which was completed in June 2022. The new Disability Action Plan was subsequently published on Commissioners' website. The changes to the plan have been detailed in italics below. All other parts of the plan remained the same.

If yes please outline below:

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	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator /Target	Timescale
2	<p>Commissioners’ Recruitment Code outlines the principles to be followed to ensure appointments to the NICS are made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition. The Code promotes equality of opportunity for all groups of people including people with disabilities.</p>	<p>All NICS Departments and Agencies are required to adhere to the Code.</p> <p><i>Commissioners periodically review their Recruitment Code to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.</i></p> <p>Any revisions to the Commissioners’ Recruitment Code are subject to equality screening.</p>	Ongoing
4	<p>Engagement with the NICS to support <i>the importance</i> of diversity and inclusion in recruitment-related matters.</p>	<p>Commissioners will have regular engagement with <i>NICS through quarterly meetings of the Recruitment and Selection Transformation Group and annual meetings with the NICS Board to collaborate and support employment of people with disabilities and seek regular feedback on new initiatives within the NICS.</i></p> <p><i>Commissioners will take advantage of the opportunity to discuss diversity and</i></p>	<p><i>Quarterly/Annually</i></p> <p>Annually</p>

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		<p><i>inclusion in the NICS at their annual meeting with the NICS Board.</i></p> <p>Commissioners will use their influence with the NICS to ensure that diversity considerations, including the needs of disabled people, are properly considered by recruitment panels.</p>	
5	<p><i>Ensure the Commissioners' Recruitment Code remains fit for purpose.</i></p>	<p><i>Monitor the continued effectiveness of the Recruitment Code and make amendments, as considered appropriate, in support of the introduction of new initiatives creating pathways to employment and improving access to the NICS for people with disabilities.</i></p>	<p><i>Ongoing</i></p>
6	<p>Ensure equality and disability awareness training is provided to Commissioners, and Secretariat staff.</p>	<p>All Commissioners and staff <i>will receive</i> training to improve disability awareness. <i>Training will be provided as part of the induction for new Commissioners and staff as they take up appointment.</i></p> <p>Commissioners and staff will seek opportunities to engage with a range of</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

PART B

		<i>Disability organisations. Commissioners and staff will avail of ongoing training provided by ECNI and others on disability related duties.</i>	
8	Ensure Commissioners and Secretariat recruitment and selection procedures are inclusive to those with disabilities.	<i>All recruitment to the Office of the Civil Service Commission is carried out in accordance with equality legislation and best practice.</i>	Ongoing

7. Do you intend to make any further **revisions to your plan** in light of your organisation’s annual review of the plan? If so, please outline proposed changes?

No

ⁱ **Outputs** – defined as act of producing, amount of something produced over a period, processes undertaken to implement the action measure e.g. Undertook 10 training sessions with 100 people at customer service level.

ⁱⁱ **Outcome / Impact** – what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action? Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training.

ⁱⁱⁱ **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments

^{iv} **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level

^v **Local** : Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.