



The Regulation and
Quality Improvement
Authority

Equality and Disability Action Plans 2018-2023

**FINAL VERSION
MARCH 2018**

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

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

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Introduction

As Professor Mary McColgan, Acting Chair and Olive Macleod, Chief Executive of RQIA we are committed to promoting equality and good relations. For people with a disability, we recognise that we have to do more to promote positive attitudes and to encourage their participation in public life.

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

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

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

The person in our organisation who is responsible for making sure that we do what we have promised to do is Maurice Atkinson, Director of Corporate Services. If you have any questions you can contact him at:

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Who we are and what we do

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

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

We do things like:

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

Registration and Inspection:

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

Mental Health and Learning Disability:

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

Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations :

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

Reviews:

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

Public Participation:

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

Corporate Services:

- Supporting the business of RQIA.

How people can be involved in our work

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

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

What the law says

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

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

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

There are three good relations groups we need to consider:

- Religion
- Political opinion
- Ethnicity.

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

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

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

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

How we reviewed our last plans and developed our new plans

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

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

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

For the new plans, we considered two questions:

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

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

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

We also learned from what we heard when we:

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

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

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

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

What we have done so far

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

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

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

Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people:

- held seven disability awareness days for our staff. Each looked at different disabilities: Epilepsy, Sight loss and blindness, Depression, Hearing loss and deafness, Learning disabilities, Cancer, and Arthritis and Musculoskeletal conditions
- developed an elearning resource on disability. It is available to all Health and Social Care staff. All our staff have been asked to complete the programme at induction
- included the disability duties in all Equality Awareness and Equality Screening Training that the BSO Equality Unit delivers
- delivered training sessions on mental health awareness to our staff, including on mental health first aid, mindfulness and managing stress; and courses for staff who are carers
- developed a staff resource on disability etiquette, a resource and checklist on how to positively portray people with a disability in their work
- ensured accessibility standards W3C AA were met in the development of our new website. Users can use Browsealoud to access our website. We made every effort to ensure that our new website was more user friendly.

Encourage the participation of disabled people in public life:

- participated in a disability work placement scheme together with our Health and Social Care partner organisations. We provided a placement in 2016-17 and will do so again in future
- developed standards and guidance for the involvement of people with a disability and a checklist for organising inclusive meetings

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

What we have learned so far

Monitoring

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

Placements

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

disability. Many have been impressed by the attitude and performance of the individual we had on placement.

Awareness Days

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

Training

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

What is in the new plans

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

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

How we will monitor

Every year we write up what we have done. We also explain when we haven't done something. We send this report to the Equality Commission. We also publish this report on our website:

<https://www.rqia.org.uk/>

We have a look at the plans every year to see whether we need to make any changes to them. If we need to, we write those changes

into the plans. Before we make any big changes we talk to people in the equality groupings to see what they think.

When we finish an action, we take it off the plans for the next year to keep our plans up to date. They will show what we still have to do.

After five years we will look at our plans again to see how we have done. We will also see what else we could do.

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

The plans are also available on our website:

<https://www.rqia.org.uk/>

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

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

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

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

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

Action Point	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	By Whom/ When
<p>Carers</p> <p>1. Promote information for staff who are carers on available policies and measures that might meet their needs; including sign-posting to relevant support organisations.</p>	<p>Staff who are carers feel more supported in the workplace and aware of options available to them</p>	<p>Baseline staff survey and after 3 years (quantifiable targets to be determined following baseline survey)</p>	<p>BSO HR with support by Equality Unit 2018/19</p>
<p>Gender Identity</p> <p>2. Deliver awareness and training initiatives to relevant staff as part of the roll-out of the Gender Identity and Expression Employment Policy</p>	<p>Staff who identify as transgender and non-binary feel more supported in the workplace</p>	<p>Baseline staff survey and after 3 years (quantifiable targets to be determined following baseline survey)</p>	<p>BSO HR with support by Equality Unit March 2021</p>

Action Point	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	By Whom/ When
<p>Training</p> <p>3. Making a Difference – e-learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add module to suite of mandatory training for all staff • Deliver on training targets 	<p>Increased staff awareness of equality and human rights.</p>	<p>Making a Difference e-learning included in mandatory training for staff</p> <p>X staff have completed the e-learning module</p>	<p>BSO HR with support by Equality Unit</p> <p>EMT Annually</p>
<p>Domestic Violence</p> <p>4. Undertake awareness raising relating to new support mechanisms (developed by BSO) to support staff with experience of domestic violence</p>	<p>Staff with experience of domestic violence feel better supported</p>	<p>Feedback from staff who have drawn support through the mechanisms indicates a positive experience.</p>	<p>BSO HR with support by Equality Unit</p> <p>March 2020</p>
Inspection			
<p>5. Review and equality screen Guidance relating to Inspection of Domiciliary</p>	<p>S75 has been considered in the Inspection process, resulting in improved outcomes for service users.</p>	<p>Screening Templates and Revised Guidance published</p>	<p>2018-19</p>

Action Point	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	By Whom/ When
Care Agencies.			
6. Review and equality screen Guidance relating to Inspection of Nursing and Adult Residential Care Homes	S75 has been considered in the Inspection process, resulting in improved outcomes for service users.	Screening Templates and Revised Guidance published	2019-20
7. Review and equality screen Guidance relating to Inspection of Independent Health Care.	S75 has been considered in the Inspection process, resulting in improved outcomes for service users.	Screening Templates and Revised Guidance published	2020-21
8. Review and equality screen Guidance relating to Inspection of Day Care Settings and Adult Placement Agencies.	S75 has been considered in the Inspection process, resulting in improved outcomes for service users.	Screening Templates and Revised Guidance published	2020-21
9. Review and equality screen Guidance relating to Inspection of Children's Services.	S75 has been considered in the Inspection process, resulting in improved outcomes for service users.	Screening Templates and Revised Guidance published	2019-20

Action Point	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	By Whom/ When
10. Review and equality screen Guidance relating to Inspection of Mental Health and Learning Disability Wards.	S75 has been considered in the Inspection process, resulting in improved outcomes for service users.	Screening Templates and Revised Guidance published	2018-19
11. Review and equality screen the Audit Tool relating to Inspection of Acute Hospitals.	S75 has been considered in the Inspection process, resulting in improved outcomes for service users.	Screening Templates and Revised Guidance published	2019-20
12. As actions 5 - 11 are completed, roll out training on revised guidance/audit tools to inspectors.	Improved outcomes for health and social care service users.	Training reports and evaluations.	2018-19 and ongoing
13. Accessible Information and Communications - ensure checks for accessibility of information are built into all inspection procedures/provider guidance/audit tools in	Better access to information for service users	Evidence of checks in inspection reports through the process of audit	2018-19 and ongoing

Action Point	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	By Whom/ When
accordance with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BHSCT Making Communication Accessible (Disability) • Accessible Formats Policy (Language and Disability accessibility) • Corporate Style Guide 			
Engagement			
14. RQIA will collaborate with NIGALA and PCC to explore ways to improve feedback from children and young people about the quality of services they receive. NIGALA will develop a website to facilitate this with links to PCC and RQIA information.	Improved engagement with children and young people.	Website operational and collation of feedback from children and young people about the quality of services they receive.	2018-19 and ongoing

Action Point	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	By Whom/ When
<p>15. Ensure that all our public engagement events include consideration of S75 in the organising of the events and in the information/questions asked at the events as appropriate.</p>	<p>Engagement events are more inclusive.</p>	<p>Evaluation of events indicates that needs have been met.</p>	<p>2018-19 and ongoing</p>
<p>Lay Assessors Appointment</p> <p>16. In the appointment of new lay assessors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include a welcoming statement for people with disabilities • send advertisement to disability organisations 	<p>People with disabilities are more involved in public life.</p>	<p>Numbers of additional lay assessors with a disability.</p>	<p>2018-19 and ongoing</p>

Disability Action Plan 2018-2023:

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

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

Action Point	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	By Whom/ When
area.			
<p>Tapestry</p> <p>3. Promote and encourage staff to participate in the disability staff network and support the network in the delivery of its action plan.</p>	<p>Staff with a disability feel more confident that their voice is heard in decision-making.</p> <p>Staff with a disability feel better supported.</p>	<p>Tapestry staff survey in 2022-23</p>	<p>RQIA Annually</p>
<p>Monitoring</p> <p>4. Encourage staff to declare that they have a disability or care for a person with a disability through awareness raising and providing guidance to staff on the importance of monitoring.</p>	<p>More accurate data in place. Greater number of staff feel comfortable declaring they have a disability.</p>	<p>Increase in completion of disability monitoring information by staff to 90%</p>	<p>BSO HR with support by Equality Unit Annually</p>

Action Point	Intended Outcome	Performance Indicator and Target	By Whom/ When
<p>Prompt staff to keep up to date their personal equality monitoring records (via self-service on new Human Resources IT system)</p>			
<p>Training</p> <p>5. In collaboration with disabled people design, deliver and evaluate training for staff and Board Members on disability equality and disability legislation.</p>	<p>Increased staff and Board Member awareness of the range of disabilities and needs.</p>	<p>All staff trained (general and bespoke) within 2 years through eLearning or interactive sessions and staff awareness initiatives delivered</p>	<p>RQIA</p> <p>annually</p>
<p>6. Sign up to Mental Health Charter and Every Customer Counts</p>	<p>Staff with mental health conditions feel better supported in the workplace</p>	<p>Tapestry staff survey in 2022-23</p>	<p>BSO HR with support by Equality Unit</p> <p>End Mar 2023</p>

Signed by:

Chair

Date:

Chief Executive

Date:



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