

Department of Finance



Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report 2019-20

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Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/dof-departmental-equality-scheme>

Signature:

Jonathan R McNaught

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 2019 and March 2020

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 2019-20, 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.

NICSHR

NICSHR, Directorate within the Department of Finance (DoF), provides Human Resources services to all Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Departments and related bodies whose staff are employed on NICS terms and conditions.

People Strategy

The NICS People Strategy continues to provide the framework for an improved model and culture of people management across the NICS. It sets out the NICS people priorities under the following outcome themes:

- A well-led NICS;
- A high performing NICS;
- An outcomes-focused NICS; and
- An inclusive NICS in which diversity is truly valued – a great place to work

Diversity and Inclusion is at the centre of the NICS People Strategy, with a vision to develop a truly inclusive workplace culture and a public service that reflects the society we serve. NICSHR established a new Diversity and Inclusion Branch in August 2018 to support the delivery of the People Strategy. This has led to a year on year increase in diversity and inclusion activities.

DoF, in common with each NICS Department, has its own Diversity Champion who represents DoF in a central Diversity Champions Network (DCN) co-chaired by Jill Minne (Director of NICSHR). In addition to Departmental Diversity Champions, the NICS has appointed Diversity Champions for each of the 4 key themes: Gender, LGBT, Race/minority ethnic, and Disability. The DCN and NICSHR have worked collaboratively to produce a NICS Diversity Action Plan for progressing diversity and inclusion work across the NICS.

NICS Diversity Action Plan

The NICS Diversity Action Plan identifies key activities to be undertaken across the NICS to improve diversity and inclusion within and across the above four key themes. Delivery to date has included participation in International Job Shadow Day, as an employer in events such as Belfast Mela and Pride, and the NICS first submission to the Stonewall UK workplace equality index. There are plans for communication and outreach, and the programme of work will be overseen and delivered through the leadership of the NICS Board, the DCN, Departmental Diversity Champions, Thematic Diversity Champions, NICS colleague networks and NICSHR, as well as through partnership working with stakeholder organisations.

NICS Outreach Plan

An outreach plan was developed in 2019 to capture the outreach activities of the many stakeholders contributing to the delivery of the NICS diversity and inclusion agenda. The plan details activities intended to reach external audiences to promote the NICS as an employer of choice, and to support specific recruitment campaigns. The plan will be monitored by the DCN who will have a particular focus on outreach to those groups currently under-represented in the organisation.

During 2019, NICSHR and the Racial Equality Unit in TEO collaborated on outreach activity to encourage minority ethnic groups to apply for the Administrative Officer (AO) recruitment competition. NICSHR also, in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Union of Supported Employment (NIUSE), held information sessions to encourage

disabled people to apply for that competition. The external recruitment competitions for Staff Officer (SO)/Deputy Principal (DP) and AO were advertised on both the Stonewall Proud Employers website and the Employers for Disability NI Jobs Bulletin Board. NIUSE also e-mailed members to promote the SO/DP competition.

As appointments from the AO competition have not been completed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, data on impact of applicant pools is not yet available. There is however some data available with regard to the SO/DP competitions. At 30th July 2019, the data indicated that 1.5% of applicants for the SO competition and 1.6% of applicants for the DP competition were from a minority ethnic background.

DISABILITY

NICS Disability Champion/Disability Working Group

Staff from the NICSHR Diversity and Inclusion team provide support to the NICS Disability Champion in the role of Chair of the Disability Working Group. This group identified a range of evidence-based interventions and targeted actions to drive balance and inclusion of disabled persons within the NICS, as outlined in the NICS Diversity Action Plan ending March 2020, such as the development of a guaranteed interview scheme and the review of the NICS Disability Work Placement Scheme.

During the period of this annual report, a number of positive action measures were delivered, including ongoing training for all staff as part of our aim to be a JAM card friendly organisation (see below), a pilot programme to provide support to colleagues living with cancer via the establishment of a Cancer Support Network, and a number of outreach and positive action activities aimed at increasing the representation of people with a disability in our workforce. The NICS Autism Working Group (AWG) held a number of events and published articles to provide practical advice and support to colleagues. The Disability Working Group also supported and participated in a celebratory event in December 2019 to mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2019, hosted by DfC's Disability Policy Branch and Disability Action.

JAM Card

The JAM Card was created by participants of The NOW Group. It allows users with autism or a communication difficulty/disability, if they chose to do so, to discreetly inform a colleague or service provider that they need Just A Minute of patience. The NICS Board agreed a recommendation from the NICS Disability Working Group that the NICS should become JAM Card friendly, with implementation planning beginning in early 2019.

All NICS colleagues were provided with access to a short on-line awareness training session provided by the NOW Group. At the time of writing, 65% of DoF colleagues had completed JAM training. DoF and the NICS are engaging with the NOW Group on post Covid-19 communications to announce that we are JAM Card friendly and expect to do so in the near future

International Job Shadow Day

International Job Shadow Day (IJSD), led by the NI Union of Supported Employment (NIUSE), took place in NI for the second time on 16th May 2019. Staff from NICS HR attended an information session hosted by NIUSE and promoted the range of potential placements within the NICS to the disability sector, with a view to increasing the numbers of job seekers. NICS HR collaborated with NIUSE to identify optimum placements in terms of the type of work job seekers were interested in and the locations that were suitable.

The NICS was proud to participate again in the initiative and were the largest contributor, hosting a higher number of placements (34) than the previous year (16). Placements were offered across a greater geographical spread and a number of Departments. Three of these placements were within DoF.

The 2019 initiative was promoted by the Head of the Civil Service on social media to celebrate the Day and to reinforce the valuable contribution that disabled people make to the workforce, as well as the NICS' commitment to having a diverse and

inclusive workplace. A range of articles were published on NICS Departmental intranets to highlight the success of the event and the positive experiences had by both the participants and the business areas taking part.

An evaluation of IJSD was completed, with feedback positive from both job seeker participants and NICS colleagues who hosted a job seeker for the day.

The NICS announced at an event celebrating International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3rd December 2019 that it would again be participating in the next International Job Shadow Day, scheduled for 14th May 2020.

Employers for Disability Northern Ireland – Corporate Membership

Employers for Disability NI (EFDNI) is a network of employers from the public, private and voluntary sectors working together to promote training and employment opportunities, and accessibility for disabled people as employees and customers. The NICS continues to be a Lead Partner of EFDNI and enjoys access to the range of services EFDNI provides, including independent and professional advice, guidance and support on disability issues for all NICS staff and managers, a conciliation service to help resolve disability-related issues and training to increase disability knowledge and awareness across the NICS.

EFDNI continues to deliver tailored disability awareness training to staff, provide support and guidance to NICS staff and managers on a range of complex disability issues, and has delivered information sessions to the NICS Disability Working Group, NICS Welfare Officers and the Disability Employment Stakeholders Forum.

As part of the NICS' commitment to diversity and inclusion and in order to attract a more diverse applicant pool for recruitment opportunities in the NICS, it continues to promote job and career opportunities on the EFDNI Jobs Bulletin Board, which is an online service circulated to disability organisations.

NICS Work Experience Scheme for People with Disabilities

The NICS Work Experience Scheme for People with Disabilities launched in April 2016. We continue to accept applications from disability organisations seeking structured work placements for their clients. Information on the scheme, including a process map and application form, is available on the [NICS Recruitment website](#).

Work placements provide opportunities for the person to gain valuable experience which will increase their employability skills.

Feedback is requested annually for all participants of the scheme in the form of questionnaires. Feedback received from branches, Disability Organisations and participants of the scheme continues to be positive. Commentary on the feedback received and statistics for the scheme are published annually in the Recruitment to the NICS Annual report, available via the [NICS Recruitment website](#).

Work commenced in the last quarter of 2019 with DfC to expand the scheme further in terms of numbers of participants, types of roles and geographic spread.

LGBT

Pride

Participation at Pride provided a valuable opportunity for NICS Outreach in 2019. NICS HR had a presence at the Pride Village for Belfast Pride, Newry Pride and also at Trans Pride to promote the NICS as a fully inclusive employer. The NICS LGBT Staff Network and allies participated in the Belfast and Newry Pride Parades and also at Trans Pride.

Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme/Workplace Equality Index

As a clear demonstration of our commitment to have a fully inclusive workforce, in July 2018 on behalf of the NICS, NICS HR signed up to the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index. Stonewall is the largest LGBT charity in Europe and their diversity programme

provides a framework for creating a workplace that enables LGBT colleagues to reach their full potential.

The NICS made a submission to the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index for the first time in September 2019. The Equality Index is the definitive benchmarking tool for employers to measure their progress on LGBT inclusion in the workplace. Feedback from Stonewall indicated that the NICS performed well for a first time submission and for a Northern Ireland employer. In addition, both HOCS and a colleague from the NICS LGBT Staff Network received individual awards from Stonewall for their contribution to diversity and inclusion and in particular to LGBT inclusion.

The project team established to oversee the first NICS' Stonewall submission is now working towards continuous improvements for future submissions.

As a Stonewall Diversity Champion programme employer, the NICS use the Stonewall 'Proud Employers' website to advertise NICS recruitment opportunities as part of our LGBT outreach activities. The NICS also enjoys access to a wide variety of best practice seminars and training via the Stonewall Diversity Champions programme on a range of relevant diversity and inclusion subjects.

NICS LGBT Staff Network

During 2019/20 the NICS LGBT Network established formalised roles and responsibilities, and adopted an agreed Terms of Reference and Communication Strategy. The Network is currently revisiting its' Communication Strategy in the context of Covid-19 and engaging with DoF communication colleagues to agree a series of activities for 2020/21. NICS HR has provided funding to support the development of the network, including funding for a member of the LGBT staff Network to attend Stonewall's LGBT Leadership training programme.

GENDER

The Gender Action Plan

Since its launch in 2018, a number of diversity and inclusion interventions to implement the NICS Gender Action Plan have been made under the auspices of the NICS People Strategy that now incorporates it. For example, activities have included the introduction of a programme of events and resources to International Women's Day (IWD) across the NICS, the expansion of mentoring support to reach more colleagues and to include mixed gender groups. Work has also started on flexible working guidance and to establish a network approach to job share. A review of the NICS workplace policy on domestic and sexual violence and abuse is underway and the NICS has committed to obtain the Women's Aid Domestic Violence Policy Charter Status.

Gender Champion/Women's Network

The NICS Gender Champion also co-chairs the NICS Women's Network. The Network aims to promote a diverse and inclusive NICS with equal representation of women at every level of the organisation. It operates over four geographical hub locations: Belfast, Stormont, Craigavon and the North West. During 2019, the Women's Network continued to work on a range of interventions to assist women in their career development. NICSHR and the Women's Network work closely on the implementation of the NICS Gender Action Plan.

To celebrate International Women's Day March 2020, the NICS Women's Network and NICS WELL held events across Northern Ireland. The Women's Network held events at their four geographical HUB locations and NICS WELL held 10 health and wellbeing events across Northern Ireland.

Mentoring circles were introduced into the NICS following the successful pilot of a concept designed by the NICS Women's Network as a mechanism for targeting a development programme for women to help address gender issues at the senior levels within the NICS. The use of mentoring circles continues to evolve under the NICS

PART A

People Strategy and the mentoring circle programme is now operated by the NICSHR Learning and Development team on behalf of the NICS. Mentoring circles have now been established for both Grade 7 and DP grade women. These circles consist of a small group of people who meet regularly to learn and grow through their collective experiences and insights. Several programmes have operated and more are planned. The Mentoring circles have been very successful. The programme is designed to combine the benefits of mentoring while delivering this in a small group setting, aimed at encouraging the development of a support network through the sharing of collective experiences and insights. The two completed programmes have reached approximately 40% of the Grade 6/7 female cadre within the NICS, around 225 women, of which 46 were from within DoF. The launch of the third cohort of G6/7 circles which was to include the development of mixed gender groups in Spring 2020 was postponed due to the COVID 19 pandemic. However, NICSHR are investigating using video/Web based conferencing tools to roll-out this cohort in Autumn 2020. In terms of statistics 140 NICS staff self-nominated for this cohort of which 29% are from DoF with a gender split of 63% female and 37% male.

NICSHR are now also supporting other NICS Departments such as DAERA, DfE, DfC and DoJ who are developing Mentoring Circles at Staff Officer and other grades. This support includes helping develop Mentor and Mentee guidance, training Mentors, access to resources/documentation and programme evaluation.

The NICS is a founding member of Diversity Mark NI. The Diversity Mark enables organisations to apply for a charter mark which recognises their commitment to diversity and inclusion, initially focussing on gender diversity. The NICS submitted an application for assessment and attained the Diversity NI Charter Mark in October 2019. The Diversity Charter Mark involves an ongoing annual independent assessment and action plan with targets focusing on initiatives around diversity, outreach and ensuring women are represented at senior levels.

In late 2019 NICS HR began work on the development of draft job sharing guidance for managers and potential job sharers. Work also began to establish an online portal to help enable potential job sharers to find a job share partner.

RACE AND ETHNICITY

In 2019 NICS attended Belfast Mela for the first time as an employer to promote the NICS as a great place to work and to outreach to the minority ethnic community. NICS HR and TEO also collaborated on outreach activity to encourage underrepresented groups in the NICS to apply for the recent AO recruitment competition. As data from the AO competition has not been published it is not clear what impact this outreach activity has had on the applicant pool. Data as of 30th July 2019 shows that 1.5% of applicants for the SO recruitment competition were from a minority ethnic background. Data shows that 1.6% of applicants for the DP recruitment competition were from a minority ethnic background.

The NICS has identified a number of interventions to support diversity and inclusion in this area, including targeted outreach and the development of a NICS Race and Ethnicity staff network. The feasibility and implementation of the staff network is being explored by the NICS Race and Minority Ethnic Diversity Champion.

We recognise we have more to do to improve representation of people from minority ethnic backgrounds

DoF RACIAL EQUALITY CHAMPION UPDATE

2019/20 activities have included:

Internal Outreach

- The Departmental Racial Equality Network, chaired quarterly by the Racial Equality Champion, is still going well. It was set up to improve internal communication to DoF Directorates, promote awareness and understanding of racial equality issues and to build upon and share existing areas of good practice.

- Quarterly DoF Racial Equality Champion updates are provided to staff on the DoF Intranet (also accessible by other NICS Departments), communicating about engagements to date outside NICS and personal reflections. This highlights to staff the important work of organisations in the minority ethnic sector. Hyperlinks are used within articles to support staff wanting to click and learn more about the organisations outside NICS.
- Regular updates provided to the DoF Departmental Board on progress of actions towards the Racial Equality Strategy 2015-2025.
- Acted as the Race and Ethnicity representative on NICS Live Diversity & Inclusion panel discussion (May 2019).
- Speaker at NICS Women's Belfast Hub to support International Women's Day (March 2020).

External Outreach

To raise awareness and promote collaboration with non-NICS organisations:

- Since March 2018, DoF REC twitter account (@alfiecbwong) set up to continue outreach and engagement with both DoF/NICS staff and outside NICS.
- Belfast Friendship Club – with interested stakeholders delivered two (June 2019 and February 2020) interactive Small Worlds café-style workshops to DoF staff, promoted as a safe space for participants to encounter people from different backgrounds and parts of the world.
- Craigavon Travellers Support Committee – scheduled cultural awareness staff training event for March 2020 (postponed due to current COVID-19 situation) as important opportunity to hear directly from the community and to increase understanding of Traveller culture, enabling participants to gain greater knowledge of the issues which affect the health and wellbeing of Travellers.
- African Women Organisation NI – planning for Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking Workshop Training Event for DoF staff (has been postponed due to current COVID-19 situation).
- Speaker in November 2019 at closing conference and launch of the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council BME and Cultural Awareness Forum, to raise awareness

PART A

of issues faced by minority ethnic communities and in support of The Institute for Conflict Research on their delivery of community relations programme funded by PEACE IV.

- In addition to DoF representative at Belfast Migrant Forum (chaired by Belfast City Council), Intercommunity Interest Forum (chaired by Bryson Intercultural) and Consultative Forum on Equality (chaired by NI Housing Executive), now also actively engaging with:
 - East Belfast Race Relations Forum (chaired by East Belfast Community Development Agency); and
 - Stronger Together Network

Following the Roundtable event at Girdwood Community Hub (October 2018) between NICS Racial Equality Champions and Racial Equality Subgroup to discuss a range of issues with community and voluntary groups working with or representing minority ethnic people and migrants and collating feedback for DoF action, key outputs include:

- DoF (NISRA, Census2021, LPS, Go ON NI, NI Direct, MyNI and NICSHR) took part for the first time at the Belfast Mela Festival (August 2019), to communicate and share about our outward facing services and to promote and ensure increased participation by under-represented groups. We wanted to reach out to our diverse communities, helping with signposting, advice and support, while always ready to listen to feedback; to contribute to Equality of Service Provision outcome of Racial Equality Strategy 2015-2025.
- A public DoF Services for Our Diverse Society survey was commissioned and launched at Belfast Mela (August 2019), seeking views from our communities on our services, on the day itself and also subsequently (September 2019) through DoF Racial Equality Champion networks and social media. This DoF survey was used as a checkpoint on progress in responding to feedback from Girdwood Community Hub Roundtable and to identify any further actions.

PART A

- Review of NI Direct website to raise awareness and improving accessibility to online government services, contributing to Equality of Service Provision outcome of Racial Equality Strategy 2015-2025. This included work on Online Accessibility Translation Services involving engagement with ArtsEkta and plans for further outreach with wider minority ethnic sector.
- NICSHR led marketing strategy in respect of recruitment, including for DP/SO and AO external recruitment competitions, promoting 'If you can see it, you can be it' with profile of Racial Equality Champion (DP) and outreach AO awareness session with wider minority sector organisations including North West Migrants Forum.
- DoF Racial Equality Champion working with DoF colleagues to address feedback and continually review involving the minority ethnic sector, including regarding Census 2021 and NI Direct.

SistersIN Leadership Programme – Assumption Grammar School

NICSHR has affiliated with Assumption Grammar School SistersIN Leadership Programme, which aims to foster leadership capacity and build confidence amongst its Sixth Form female students.

In building this partnership, NICSHR developed and hosted a NICS As An Employer Workshop for 11 students from Assumption Grammar school in Goodwood House on Thursday 13th February 2020. This workshop was designed to provide these students with an opportunity to learn about the diverse job opportunities the Northern Ireland Civil Service has to offer, how its female leadership is evolving and how it is supporting the next generation of female leaders. The workshop included a series of motivational talks by two Permanent Secretaries and an Assistant Secretary followed by a question and answer session.

A chance for students to talk to NICS staff working in diverse roles such as engineers, statisticians, agriculturalists, solicitors and HR professionals. Feedback from both

students and tutors has been extremely positive and NICSHR will continue to be involved in this programme.

Economist Profession Diversity and Outreach

The Economist Profession follows the key principles of the NICS Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. We recognise and are committed to the benefits of having a cohort of Economists which comprises diverse characteristics and different experiences, needs and aspirations. Understanding, valuing and effectively managing these differences can result in greater participation, and help bring about success at an individual, branch, Departmental and Profession level. The Economist Profession's Diversity and Outreach Champion has been implementing actions from the 'Diversity and Outreach Action Plan' and the wider Profession has been engaging in activities to raise the Profession's profile.

In April 2019 the Diversity and Outreach Champion presented to students at a Schools Conference hosted by Ulster University at St. Louise's Comprehensive College, Belfast. Building on the success of this event, the Profession hosted its own Schools Conference for A-Level Economics students in February 2020 at Crumlin Road Gaol. There were around 150 students and teachers in attendance from 9 schools across Northern Ireland. At the event there were presentations from Economists in the Profession as well as Ulster University Economic Policy Centre and Queen's University Belfast. The Profession also engaged with students at University level, including participating in the QUB Internship Programme and presenting to students currently in their final year of study.

The Profession's Diversity and Outreach Champion also attended the 2019 Belfast Pride event with NICSHR.

Land and Property Service (LPS) Outreach activity

Opportunities to develop and enhance outreach activity continues to be undertaken by LPS Revenues & Benefits (R&B) directorate in 2019/20. The online 'digital first' approach for Rate Rebate claimant's remains in place. Supporting this approach, LPS has developed a suite of options to assist citizens with a new online application form, and issued bite size videos to all NI District Councils promoting the Rate Rebate Scheme and other rate reliefs.

LPS has established relationships between the LPS Outreach Manager, the NIHE Patch Managers network and DfC Make the Call Outreach Officers to provide advice, help and assistance with the Rate Rebate Scheme. R&B has also collaborated with the DoF Communications Team in developing online literature on rate reliefs and a Get Help with Rates booklet that has been further updated to include signposting to DfC Make the Call. This booklet has been distributed to DfC Jobs & Benefits Offices, DfC Make the Call Outreach Officers, NIHE Offices and Patch Managers, District Councils, Libraries and all Outreach events throughout Northern Ireland, to raise awareness of various rate reliefs available to citizens. LPS Outreach Team has created a tailored version of this document for the RNIB (people with sight loss) Service User Group for use at Outreach discussion groups.

The Outreach Team has expanded its Stakeholder List to include Health & Social Care Trusts Community Navigators, Senior Citizens Forums and Men's Shed Groups for distribution of rate relief information. R&B staff continue to participate in wider outreach activities, promoting rate reliefs to a diverse range of citizens such as NICS Disability Champions Autism NI Event, NICS LIVE Events, Balmoral Show, Belfast Mela, University of the 3rd Age, RNIB (people with sight loss) Service User Group, Moira Friendship Group, The Ballymoney Open Door Community Group, AGE NI, Young at Heart, CARERS NI and Autism NI. LPS initiated walkthrough training of the Rate Rebate Online Application Portal for Extern and Barnardos Support Workers due to take place in 2020.

DoF Diversity Network

The DoF Diversity Network has continued to promote diversity and inclusion across the Department and supporting specific location or topic related groups. This year DoF was represented at MELA which again had a large representation from the various DoF business areas. The network continues to consider where it can fill gaps in the work being undertaken by others such as NICSHR or specific DoF groups such as the Goodwood House Mental Health Group.

Goodwood House Mental Health Group

Goodwood House Mental Health Group are continuing to promote mental health by issuing information and support emails etc., placing leaflets on all floors and having regular posters displayed in the lifts promoting various mental health initiatives. The Group also organised tea and chat sessions, line dancing classes, maintained a Quiet Room for staff and continually promoted positive mental health messages to staff throughout the year, including attendance and participation in NICS Live events across Northern Ireland.

Other notable events organised by the Group for staff were:

- Money and mental health, in collaboration with the Consumer Council, the Credit Union and Christians Against Poverty;
- Walking tours, with a subsequent charitable donation made to Action Mental Health;
- Big Listen, supporting the work of the Samaritans; and
- Participation in the filming of a video for “This is Me”, part of Inspire’s campaign on body image and self-esteem (during mental health awareness week)

Digital Inclusion

A number of programmes and events were held through the Go ON NI Digital Inclusion Programme. Events included:

- Spring Online Week & Digital Learning Day April 2019;

PART A

- Get Online Week October 2019;
- Connect-ability Programme;
- Training sessions in Google Garage Belfast;
- Belfast City Council Be Prepared, Be Safe & Be More Connected Programmes;
- Internet Safety Day in Partnership with Google Garage Belfast– February 2020;
- Young@Heart events in Belfast, Newcastle, Omagh & Ballycastle;
- Belfast Mela August 2019;
- Ards & North Down and Lisburn & Castlereagh Councils’ Age Friendly/ Positive Ageing Programmes; and
- Digital Assisted EA Roadshows in Libraries for School Registrations

The aim of all these events is to provide digital assistance, whether it be getting online for the first time or providing advice and upskilling to interact with the benefits that the internet has to offer. Information and assistance is also provided regarding online services, including government services and transactions which would link into the [“Making Lives Better” NI government strategy for digital transformation.](#)

Some of these events provide access to the hardest to reach within the community.

NISRA Outreach and Engagement

Following on from the involvement of Agency staff in the Business In the Community (BITCNI) Time 2 Code and Time 2 Count scheme, 28 P6 children from Cranmore Integrated Primary School paid a visit to Colby House in December 2019 to find out more about the important part statistics plays in our society. BITCNI are keen that employers let some of the children their volunteers work with experience something of the working environment, as this is increasingly an aspect of life to which many children have little exposure due to generational unemployment.

December 2019 also saw the appointment of a new chair and new members to the Statistical Advisory Committee (SAC). The appointment opportunities were widely publicised in line with a comprehensive competition Appointment Plan that sought to

engage and attract an increase in applications from females. A total of 16 applications were received, of these 11 reported as male (69%) and 5 as female (31%). However, following the panel sift, 4 female and 3 male candidates were invited for interview and after interview, 3 female and 1 male candidate were found suitable for appointment. The outreach for this competition was successful in achieving a greater degree of gender balance in Committee membership overall, which now comprises 4 females and 6 males, twice as many females as previously.

Section 75 data

In conjunction with the Equality Commission, NISRA developed a data signposting guide detailing how NISRA Section 75 Data can be accessed. This has been published on the NISRA website at <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/accessing-nisra-population-level-section-75-data>. NISRA has also been involved in training events for new elected members through NILGA in terms of where to find population Section 75 data.

2021 Census

During the year, detailed work was taken forward developing plans for the 2021 Census. NISRA continued to consult widely with census users. A Proposals document was published in April 2019 and a series of public events were held explaining how a predominantly online Census would be run. Engagement also took place with a wide variety of interest groups covering a wider variety of parts of society.

In the Autumn a large scale Census Rehearsal was run across three areas in Northern Ireland (Belfast, Craigavon and West Fermanagh). This allowed a full scale test of all the proposed Census questions and the Census processes.

PART A

- 2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2019-20 (or append the plan with progress/examples identified).

Please see appended S75 action plan with progress/examples identified.

- 3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2019-20 reporting period? (tick one box only)

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

Please provide any details and examples:

- 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:

- 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):

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 2019-20 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:

Job descriptions contain Section 75 statutory duties relative to the official's responsibility. For example, Central Support Team staff job descriptions contain objectives relative to their role in providing advice and guidance and promoting equality across the Department.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2019-20 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:

Plans, flowing out of the Department's business plan, were created for each business area, including relevant obligations for managers and staff in relation to Section 75 duties. Under the NICS Performance Management Framework, Personal Performance Agreements contain targets and objectives which include statutory obligations relative to the official's responsibility. For example, Central Support Team staff PPAs contain objectives relative to their role in providing advice and guidance and promoting equality across the department.

6 In the 2019-20 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)*

PART A

- 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 2019-20 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The Department's Business Plan 2019-20 can be accessed at <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/dof-corporate-and-business-plans>.

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2019-20 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:	9	Actions ongoing:	6	Actions to commence:	
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Please provide any details and examples (*in addition to question 2*):

Note that some actions which were completed for 2018/19 will also be completed during the remaining years of the action plan.

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2019-20 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

N/A. The Section 75 Action Plan 2018-23 was published in October 2018 following consultation.

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2019-20 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 2019-20 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:

12 In the 2019-20 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)*:

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:

13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2019-20 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

PART A

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2019-20 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)

[\[https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/type/impactassessments\]](https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/type/impactassessments)

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 2019-20:

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:

None.

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:

All feedback received from our equality consultees, including the Commission, is considered and appropriate amendments to the screening form completed. No decisions though were affected by those considerations.

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 2019-20 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

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 2019-20 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:

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:

22 Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2019-20 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

N/A – ongoing monitoring of policies has not revealed any adverse impacts.

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:

NISRA Equality Statistics for the NICS: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/equality-statistics-northern-ireland-civil-service-2019>

NISRA produced the 2020 Fair Employment Monitoring Return on behalf of NICSHR.

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 2019-20, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

Equality awareness sessions were delivered by the Equality Officer to all DoF Business Areas with staff positively feeding back they are more aware of their responsibilities. The Equality Commission NI participated in the delivery of a number of these sessions. In response to feedback, and as a result of the Department's commitment to improving practices, screening guidance has been developed and placed on our Intranet. This incorporates good practice guidance from the Equality Commission and their leadership guidance.

Staff in the Department undertook the following training provided by NICSHR Learning and Development during 2019-20:

Course	Numbers of staff completed
Autism Spectrum Disorder Awareness (e-learning)	45
Buy Social (e-learning)	5
Buy Social	9
Disability Awareness for Frontline Staff (e-learning)	17
Diversity Now (classroom-based)	3
Diversity Now (e-learning)	0
Introduction to Human Rights (e-learning)	6
Introduction to Section 75 (e-learning)	19
Mental Health Awareness for Line Managers	22
*Positive Mental Health Toolkit for Line Managers (e-learning)	14
*Positive Mental Health Toolkit for Staff (e-learning)	41
Recruitment and Selection – Legislation & interview standards	107
Supporting Vulnerable People (e-learning)	14

PART A

Unconscious Bias (e-learning)	113
Section 75 Duties – A focus on Screening	6
Policy Making and Human Rights	1

- 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:

Staff in NICSHR Welfare Support Service and Occupational Health Service received training from Autism NI. The feedback from this event was very positive with one Welfare officer commenting that the advice she had received had helped her to better support a client with autism.

NICSHR organised training for staff from the Rainbow Project, which focused on the issues which affect LGBT people in the workplace. Feedback very positive with attendees commenting on their improved understanding and awareness.

NICS staff who attended the Mental Health Awareness for Line Managers classroom intervention, delivered by NICSHR Learning and Development (L&D), stated that the course increased their awareness of mental health and how to deal with it; it was very informative and provided great information to take back to the workplace.

The Positive Mental Health Toolkit for all Staff (e-learning package) has received great feedback. Some participants did not realise how many different useful services were available for help. They also stated that the course layout was excellent, easy to follow and provided help and useful websites.

Six Corporate Familiarisation Sessions were held in 2019/20 as part of a corporate induction programme for newly appointed Staff Officers and Deputy Principals. 228 staff attended this programme which included a full briefing on NICS diversity and inclusion agenda and the importance of inclusion and equality in the NICS.

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

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2019-20, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

Following the appointment of a dedicated Outreach Manager in 2018, there was an increase in both the Disabled Person’s Allowance (DPA) (14%) and Lone Pensioner Allowance (LPA) (43%) applications received. Figures for 2019-20 indicate an increase of 9% DPA and 14% LPA in comparison to 2017-18 figures (see Action Plan Table below for more detail). Evaluation of the success of outreach activities continues going forward.

As disabled people and those from minority ethnic communities are under-represented in the NICS, two information sessions were held to encourage applications for the AO recruitment competition launched in November 2019.

As part of our outreach activities, to encourage applications from underrepresented groups, the Staff Officer/Deputy Principal and Administrative Officer competitions were advertised on

PART A

both the Stonewall Proud Employers website and the Employers for Disability NI Jobs Bulletin Board.

In order to promote the Staff Officer/Deputy Principal competition, NIUSE sent an email to their members on behalf of the NICS.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

27 How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2019-20?

Insert number here:

0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

Section 3: Looking Forward

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

A consultation on a revised scheme was held from January – April 2017. A revised scheme should be submitted to the Equality Commission NI for approval when a Minister is in post.

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)*

We will continue to focus on improvements to screening assessments and the consideration and inclusion of relevant data.

30 In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2020-21) reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

- Employment
- Goods, facilities and services
- Legislative changes
- Organisational changes/ new functions
- Nothing specific, more of the same

PART A

Other (please state):

DoF Section 75 Action Plan 2018-23: Update on Progress during 2019/20

Policy Area: Human Resource Management

Strategic Objectives:

- Develop and implement policies and procedures to support NICS departments in meeting their business objectives
- Effectively manage and develop our people and resource DoF effectively to support the delivery of business objectives

Inequality	Action	Performance Outcome	Timescale	2019/20 Update
Under-representation of Protestants in General Service administrative and junior management grades and of Protestants and Catholics in some grades in the Professional and Specialist groups in the NICS compared to the	Use of positive action advertising statements to encourage applications from under-represented groups. Other actions will be considered as part of an outreach/marketing strategy which will be developed in consultation with	Representation of both communities in line with what would be expected through the Review of Fair Participation in the NICS (the “Article 55 Review”).	Continuous until the next review in 2019.	<p>COMPLETE</p> <p>Ongoing use of positive action advertising. Outreach Strategy under development.</p> <p>Continue to analyse recruitment competitions to monitor the profile of applications and the progress of all equality groups through the recruitment process.</p> <p>The Article 55 Review was conducted during 2019/20. Analysis was completed in May 2020.</p>

PART A

Inequality	Action	Performance Outcome	Timescale	2019/20 Update
NI labour market (Religious belief).	organisations representing under-represented groups.			Goals and timetables for action to be confirmed.
Under-representation of males/females in some occupational groups/grade levels in the NICS compared to the NI labour market (Men and women generally).	Use of positive action advertising statements to encourage applications from under-represented group. Other actions will be considered as part of an outreach/marketing strategy which will be developed in consultation with organisations	Representation of each gender in line with what would be expected through the Review of Gender in the NICS.	Continuous until the next review in 2019	COMPLETE Ongoing use of positive action advertising. Continue to analyse recruitment competitions to monitor the profile of applications and the progress of all equality groups through the recruitment process. The Gender Review was conducted in 2019/20. Analysis was completed in May 2020. Goals and timetables for action to be confirmed. The NICS attained the Diversity NI Charter Mark in October 2019 and has committed to an

PART A

Inequality	Action	Performance Outcome	Timescale	2019/20 Update
	representing under-represented groups.			<p>annual independent assessment and action plan with targets focusing on initiatives around diversity, outreach and ensuring women are represented at senior levels.</p> <p>Mentoring Circles were introduced into the NICS following the successful pilot of a concept designed by the NICS Women’s network as a mechanism for targeting a development programme for women to help address gender issues at the senior levels within the NICS.</p>
Under-representation of staff from ethnic minorities.	Actions required will be identified as part of a new Marketing & Outreach Strategy which will be developed during 2018/19 in consultation with organisations	Representation in line with what would be expected through the Review of the NICS workforce.	According to timescale set out in Marketing & Outreach Strategy.	<p>COMPLETE</p> <p>Continue to analyse recruitment competitions to monitor the profile of applications and the progress of all equality groups through the recruitment process.</p>

PART A

Inequality	Action	Performance Outcome	Timescale	2019/20 Update
	<p>representing under-represented groups. Actions will be taken according to the timetable set out in the strategy.</p> <p>The DoF Racial Equality Champion (REC) will engage with business areas to ensure that all policies and operational practices of the Department and its agency take account of the aims and principles of the Racial Equality Strategy 2015-25. REC</p>		Ongoing.	<p>NICSHR and the Racial Equality Unit in TEO collaborated on outreach activity to encourage minority ethnic groups to apply for the recent AO recruitment competition.</p> <p>COMPLETE</p> <p>REC established a Departmental Racial Equality Network to promote awareness/share good practice. Feedback from the Racial Equality round-table event shared with Network and Departmental Board to progress (including feedback shared with NICSHR for consideration and incorporation into current and planned work programme).</p>

PART A

Inequality	Action	Performance Outcome	Timescale	2019/20 Update
	will also continue to engage externally, outside DoF, with Racial Equality Subgroup (chaired by TEO), Belfast Migrant Forum (chaired by Belfast City Council) and Intercultural Interest Forum (chaired by Bryson Intercultural), to assist with any consultation.			
Support for transitioning staff (Men and women generally).	Develop transgender guidance for managers and staff.	Transgender guidance in place to ensure managers are aware of how to appropriately support transitioning staff and	By 31 st March 2019.	COMPLETE NICS Trans Policy and Transitioning at Work Guide launched in March 2019. HOCS, together with a colleague from NICS LGBT Staff Network and a Stonewall representative took part in a video to launch the Policy and Guide.

PART A

Inequality	Action	Performance Outcome	Timescale	2019/20 Update
		that staff are aware of the support they can expect.		
Data Gaps on Section 75 profile of NICS workforce (Racial group; Persons with a disability; Persons with dependents; Sexual orientation).	Obtain data from staff on ethnicity, disability, dependents and sexual orientation.	Increase in data held on HRConnect for existing staff in relation to ethnicity, disability, dependents and sexual orientation.	By 31 st March 2020.	<p>ONGOING</p> <p>Work ongoing to consider how to address this issue.</p> <p>2019/20 Update</p> <p>In July 2019 a NICS wide intranet article from a NICS Disability Working Group colleague was issued to encourage all NICS colleagues to complete their disability data on HRConnect. During the UN International Day of Persons With Disabilities joint NICS / Disability Action event in December 2019 David Sterling, Head of Civil Service encouraged all NICS colleagues present to complete their equality data on HRConnect.</p>

PART A

Inequality	Action	Performance Outcome	Timescale	2019/20 Update
Job opportunities for the long-term unemployed and those leaving education (All S75 categories).	Lot 1 Contractors (General Job Roles) under the Framework Agreement for the provision of Agency workers to recruit a minimum of 15% of AA and AO job roles from the long-term unemployed and those leaving education, as per contract specification.	15% of AA and AO job roles recruited from the long-term unemployed and those leaving education.	By 31 st March each year.	ONGOING 19426 AA's and AO's from the long-term unemployed and those leaving education were placed during 2019/20 which equates to 12.5% of all workers posted in this category, an increase of 2.5% on the previous year's figures. Work will continue to increase this figure although it should be noted the current Framework Agreement is due to end in December 2020. Arrangements for a replacement are underway.
Under-representation of Protestants in General Service administrative and junior management	Use of positive action advertising statements to encourage applications from under-represented groups.	Representation of both communities in line with what would be expected through the Review of Fair	Continuous until the next review in 2019.	COMPLETE Ongoing use of positive action advertising. Outreach Strategy under development.

PART A

Inequality	Action	Performance Outcome	Timescale	2019/20 Update
<p>grades and of Protestants and Catholics in some grades in the Professional and Specialist groups in the NICS compared to the NI labour market (Religious belief).</p>	<p>Other actions will be considered as part of an outreach/marketing strategy which will be developed in consultation with organisations representing under-represented groups.</p>	<p>Participation in the NICS (the “Article 55 Review”).</p>		<p>Continue to analyse recruitment competitions to monitor the profile of applications and the progress of all equality groups through the recruitment process.</p>
<p>Under-representation of males/females in some occupational groups/grade levels in the NICS compared to the NI labour market</p>	<p>Use of positive action advertising statements to encourage applications from under-represented group.</p>	<p>Representation of each gender in line with what would be expected through the Review of Gender in the NICS.</p>	<p>Continuous until the next review in 2019</p>	<p>COMPLETE Ongoing use of positive action advertising. Continue to analyse recruitment competitions to monitor the profile of applications and the</p>

PART A

Inequality	Action	Performance Outcome	Timescale	2019/20 Update
(Men and women generally).	Other actions will be considered as part of an outreach/marketing strategy which will be developed in consultation with organisations representing under-represented groups.			progress of all equality groups through the recruitment process.
Under-representation of staff from ethnic minorities.	Actions required will be identified as part of a new Marketing & Outreach Strategy which will be developed during 2018/19 in consultation with organisations representing under-represented groups.	Representation in line with what would be expected through the Review of the NICS workforce.	According to timescale set out in Marketing & Outreach Strategy.	COMPLETE Continue to analyse recruitment competitions to monitor the profile of applications and the progress of all equality groups through the recruitment process.

PART A

Inequality	Action	Performance Outcome	Timescale	2019/20 Update
	<p>Actions will be taken according to the timetable set out in the strategy.</p> <p>The DoF Racial Equality Champion (REC) will engage with business areas to ensure that all policies and operational practices of the Department and its agency take account of the aims and principles of the Racial Equality Strategy 2015-25. REC will also continue to engage externally,</p>		Ongoing.	<p>COMPLETE</p> <p>REC established a Departmental Racial Equality Network to promote awareness/share good practice. Feedback from the Racial Equality round-table event shared with Network and Departmental Board to progress (including feedback shared with NICSHR for consideration and incorporation into current and planned work programme).</p>

PART A

Inequality	Action	Performance Outcome	Timescale	2019/20 Update
	outside DoF, with Racial Equality Subgroup (chaired by TEO), Belfast Migrant Forum (chaired by Belfast City Council) and Intercultural Interest Forum (chaired by Bryson Intercultural), to assist with any consultation.			
Support for transitioning staff (Men and women generally).	Develop transgender guidance for managers and staff.	Transgender guidance in place to ensure managers are aware of how to appropriately support transitioning staff and	By 31 st March 2019.	COMPLETE NICS Trans Policy and Transitioning at Work Guide launched in March 2019. HOCS, together with a colleague from NICS LGBT Staff Network and a Stonewall representative took part in a video to launch the Policy and Guide.

PART A

Inequality	Action	Performance Outcome	Timescale	2019/20 Update
		that staff are aware of the support they can expect.		
Data Gaps on Section 75 profile of NICS workforce (Racial group; Persons with a disability; Persons with dependents; Sexual orientation).	Obtain data from staff on ethnicity, disability, dependents and sexual orientation.	Increase in data held on HRConnect for existing staff in relation to ethnicity, disability, dependents and sexual orientation.	By 31 st March 2020.	ONGOING Work ongoing to consider how to address this issue.
Job opportunities for the long-term unemployed and those leaving education (All S75 categories).	Lot 1 Contractors (General Job Roles) under the Framework Agreement for the provision of Agency workers to recruit a	15% of AA and AO job roles recruited from the long-term unemployed and those leaving education.	By 31 st March each year.	ONGOING 126 AA's and AO's from the long-term unemployed and those leaving education were placed during 2018/19 which equates to just under 10% of all workers posted in this

PART A

Inequality	Action	Performance Outcome	Timescale	2019/20 Update
	<p>minimum of 15% of AA and AO job roles from the long-term unemployed and those leaving education, as per contract specification.</p>			<p>category. Work will continue to increase this figure by next March, 2020.</p>

PART A

Policy Area: Services to the Citizen

Strategic Objective:

- Deliver high quality, efficient and effective services to the citizen, NICS departments and the wider public sector

Inequality	Action	Performance Outcome	Timescale	2019/20 Update
Access to Government Services (Age; Persons with a disability).	Digital Inclusion Programme activities, including Digital Learning Day, Get Online Week and Spring Online Week, and similar initiatives with organisations to encourage digital participation. The Go ON NI programme highlights the benefits of being online, and brings together all the initiatives, places and	Increase in Digital skills and internet usage for those aged 50-64 and 65+.	By 31 st March each year.	<p>COMPLETE</p> <p>Survey information shows that internet Use has increased for those age 50-64 and aged 65+:</p> <p>Age 50-64</p> <p>2015/16 – 72%</p> <p>2016/17 – 84%</p> <p>2017/18 – 75%</p> <p>2018/19 – 87%</p> <p>2019/20 – No NI stats available, however, Lloyds Consumer Digital Index indicates that the UK as a whole has shown an increase of 11% in number of over 60’s going online especially in the 60- 65 age group.</p>

PART A

	<p>tools to help and encourage off-liners to become internet beginners. How-to guides, internet access points, schedules of tuition and training – are all available at www.nidirect.gov.uk/go-on</p>			<p>Age 65+</p> <p>2015/16 – 45%</p> <p>2016/17 – 43%</p> <p>2017/18 – 48%</p> <p>2018/19 – 56%</p> <p>2019/20 – No NI stats available, however, Lloyds Consumer Digital Index indicates that the UK as a whole - 33% of 70-79 year olds remain off line.</p> <p>A total of circa 10,000 citizens reached through all Go ON NI Programmes in liaison with the Libraries NI Network, Supporting Communities and BITC, and including the Digital Assist Steering Group partners. All sessions and information were provided to those over age 50 or with a disability excepting approx. Over 2000 citizens were trained through the Go On programme in Libraries 2019-2020.</p>
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PART A

	<p>Increased working relationships and working in partnership with organisations represented on the Digital Assist Steering Group, to deliver bespoke training, awareness and information sessions. Continuing working relationships with Age Friendly, Belfast City Council and inroads into other organisations.</p>	<p>Quarterly DASG and ScamwiseNI meetings.</p> <p>A fifth of overall Go ON NI target remit (i.e. 2000 citizens) to be specifically reached through this group.</p>	<p>By 31st March 2020.</p>	<p>ONGOING</p> <p>Through partnership with Belfast City Council, Age Friendly Belfast, Ards & North Down Age Friendly, Newry & Mourne Age Friendly, Lisburn & Castlereagh Age Friendly - over 1800 citizens aged over 50 were provided with digital skills in the year 2019- 2020.</p>
	<p>Connectability Programme to continue as part of the DoF Go ON NI programme: specific IT sessions to be</p>	<p>Evaluation of IT sessions whereby increased Digital Skills enable engagement with government</p>	<p>By 31st March 2020.</p>	<p>Delivered 2019 & ONGOING</p> <p>Bespoke training programmed delivered during Get Online Week 2019 (14-18 October).</p>

PART A

	delivered for those with a mental or physical disability or to those caring for a disabled person. Provided across ten groups initially on a programme plan.	services and financial capability online as required.		
	Engage with Autism NI on further training/awareness and review signage and communications. Share good practice with other public facing areas of the department. Introduce the JAM (Just a Minute) card to the NICS.	People with a learning difficulty, Autism or a communication barrier supported in accessing government services.	By 30th June 2019. By 31 st March 2019.	COMPLETE Autism NI delivered be-spoke training to NICS HR OHS and Welfare Staff. Further training arranged for Land and Property Services and General Registry Office staff. COMPLETE Implementation planning began in early 2019. DoF and the NICS are engaging with the NOW Group on post Covid-19 communications

PART A

				to announce that we are JAM Card friendly and expect to do so in the near future.
Accessibility of Stormont Estate Play Park (Persons with a disability).	A new inclusive play park to be built at Stormont Estate.	A play park that is suitable for children of all abilities.	By 31 st March 2019.	ONGOING Work is well advanced and the play park is expected to be finished by 30th June 2019.
Take-up of housing benefit, low income rate relief, rate rebate disabled person's allowance and lone pensioner allowance (Marital Status, Age, Persons with a disability, Persons with dependents).	Outreach activity and updating of literature. The introduction of a 'digital first' approach for use by claimants to the new Rate Rebate scheme remains in place, alongside a suite of support options for those who may have difficulty interacting with	Uptake in benefit each year from those vulnerable groups entitled to financial assistance.	By 31 st March each year.	COMPLETE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional staff resource added to the Outreach Team to support the LPS Outreach Manager. • 'Get Help with Rates' booklet has been further updated to include signposting to DfC Make the Call. This booklet has been distributed to DfC Jobs & Benefits Offices, DfC Make the Call Outreach Officers, NIHE Offices and Patch Managers, District Councils, Libraries

PART A

	<p>a digital interface, including help and assistance being available at www.nidirect.gov.uk/go-on-ni. This should benefit to customers who have faced difficulties in the past, including those who have found it difficult to access services during normal office opening hours. LPS has issued bite size videos to all NI District Councils promoting the Rate Rebate Scheme and other rate reliefs.</p>			<p>and at all Outreach events throughout Northern Ireland to raise awareness of various rate reliefs available to citizens.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 Outreach events attended during 2019/20. • Through 2019/20 networking activities engagement has taken place with AGE NI, Young at Heart, NICS Disability Champions Autism NI Event, NICS LIVE Events, Balmoral Show, Belfast Mela, University of the 3rd Age, RNIB (people with sight loss) Service User Group, Moira Friendship Group, The Ballymoney Open Door Community Group, Health & Social Care Trusts Community Navigators, Senior Citizens Forums, Men’s Shed Groups, CARERS NI and Autism NI. • The number of applications for Disabled Persons Allowance (DPA) and
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PART A

				<p>Lone Pensioner Allowance (LPA) increased considerably since the appointment of a dedicated LPS Outreach Manager in 2018, with an increase in both the DPA (14%), and LPA (43%) applications received. Figures for 2019-20 indicate an increase of 9% DPA and 14% LPA when compared to the 2017-18 figures.</p>
<p>Law in NI treats unmarried fathers differently from married and unmarried mothers (Marital Status).</p>	<p>Consider amendments to current laws.</p>	<p>Take forward recommendations on parent/child contact emerging from The Lord Chief Justice Review which was published in September 2017.</p>	<p>TBC</p>	<p>ONGOING</p> <p>Further work will be considered in the context of the work of the shadow Family Justice Board, and taking account of existing legislative and other resource priorities.</p>

DoF Disability Action Plan 2018-23: Update on Progress during 2018/19

Measure	Performance Indicators/Target	Timescale	Intended Outcome	Responsibility	2018/19 Update
Awareness Raising and Training					
DoF Diversity Network to work with people with disabilities to raise awareness of disability e.g. showcase and promote the positive contribution of DoF staff with disabilities to the department.	Promotion articles/activities. Staff survey results.	31 st March each year.	Promotion of positive attitudes towards people with a disability within the department.	DoF Diversity Network.	Ongoing outreach via multiple channels.
NICS Diversity Training Unconscious bias (e-learning) training to be completed by all staff but is mandatory for all new	Number of new staff trained.	Priority 1 training – within 0-4 months of appointment.	All new staff to know about the NICS Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy and their responsibilities,	Line managers and NICS HR	ONGOING The DoF Induction process includes Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. New staff and their Line Managers are expected to record when the

PART B

managers (EO2 and analogous and above).			including the disability duties.		induction process is undertaken.
Revise Form and Guidance on Reasonable Adjustments	New Form and Guidance available to staff.	By 31 st March 2019.	Clearer process and guidance for staff on the reasonable adjustments process.	NICS HR	COMPLETE Guidance issued to staff in September 2018 by NICS Disability Champion on passporting of reasonable adjustments.
Front-line staff to be trained to deal with customers with a disability through completion of the following e-learning courses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability Awareness for front-line staff; 	Number of staff trained. Customer surveys/feedback.	Priority 1 training (0-4 months) Complaints dealt with within customer service standards timescales.	Improved service for customers with disabilities.	Line managers and customer service teams.	ONGOING NICS agreed to become JAM Card friendly and implementation planning began early 2019 with staff beginning training April 2019. 2019/20 update - JAM Card friendly training was rolled out across NICS in 2019.

PART B

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) awareness; • Supporting Vulnerable People <p>Induction for front-line staff to include 'Every Customer Counts'.</p>		<p>Customer surveys carried out every year.</p>		<p>Implementation planning began in early 2019. DoF and the NICS are engaging with the NOW Group on post Covid-19 communications to announce that we are JAM Card friendly and expect to do so in the near future.</p> <p>Training rolled out to support Every Customer Counts. Numbers trained are detailed at Question 25.</p> <p>Mandatory e-learning courses for disability awareness, autism awareness and</p>
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PART B

					<p>supporting vulnerable people were rolled out to all LPS Revenue & Benefits staff in November 2018.</p> <p>Local inductions updated to include 'Every Customer Counts'.</p>
<p>Provision of advice and support to staff on health related matters, including promoting positive mental health, through NICS Well and in line with the NICS Mental Health Strategy (strategy under development).</p>	<p>Publication of the NICS Well Newsletter 'Well Times'.</p> <p>Well Champions Conference</p>	<p>Quarterly.</p> <p>Annually</p>	<p>Increase awareness of health conditions and how to manage them.</p>	<p>NICS HR.</p>	<p>COMPLETE</p> <p>This year, greater emphasis has been placed on support for mental wellbeing and raising awareness of mental health issues for NICS staff. This has been achieved working with WELL and other delivery partners to raise awareness, highlight campaigns and signpost to sources of information at</p>

PART B

					<p>various times throughout the year and using a range of communications methods: social media, intranet sites, WELL sites, articles in e-zines, information sessions, videos etc.</p> <p>Other initiatives in 2019/20 will include the provision of support and guidance for NICS staff and managers in relation to carers, breastfeeding and menopause.</p>
Recruitment and Development					
Promote and develop the work experience programme, providing meaningful placements for	Number of participants by work area.	Annually.	Encourage more disabled people to apply for NICS jobs and promote	NICS HR.	<p>COMPLETE</p> <p>From 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019, 52 applications were received</p>

PART B

<p>people with disabilities with a wide range of disability organisations.</p>	<p>Number of participating disability organisations.</p> <p>Feedback from participants and hosting managers.</p>		<p>positive attitudes towards people with a disability within the Department.</p>	<p>from 14 organisations, 37 of these were agreed with Departments.</p> <p>Of the remaining 15 applications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 remain under consideration by Departments. • 3 individuals withdrew prior to a placement being agreed. • 3 applications could not be facilitated due to limited location options. <p>Feedback is requested for all participants of the scheme in the form of questionnaires.</p> <p>By the end of the year, positive feedback was</p>
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PART B

					received from branches and participants of the scheme.
Review and implement the NICS Policy on reasonable adjustments in the recruitment and selection process in collaboration with people with a disability.	Monitoring information on applications from people with a disability and feedback on the reasonable adjustment process.	31 st March 2019.	NICS' recruitment and selection procedures to provide equality of opportunity to people with disabilities so that they are encouraged to apply and compete for employment opportunities.	NICSHR.	COMPLETE This review of this policy is now complete and the new version was uploaded onto the NICS Recruitment website on 19/3/19.
Participation and Engagement					
Development of a NICS-wide Mental Health Strategy.	1. Establish Mental Health forum (internal partners)	31 st March 2023.	NICS has a cohesive approach to the delivery of mental	NICS HR.	1. ONGOING – linked to the development and

PART B

	<p>to connect all NICS mental health activities.</p> <p>2. Connected links developed with external partners (Inspire/Charity for Civil Service Servants)</p> <p>3. Mental Health Strategy developed and implemented.</p>		<p>health initiatives, and support services, from both internal and external partners.</p>		<p>outworkings of the Mental Health Strategy.</p> <p>2. COMPLETE</p> <p>Collaboration partners meetings throughout the year, leading to working together on a range of issues/events including International Men’s Day, Women’s Day, World MH Day, BBC’s Christmas campaign. These all had inputs from OHS, Welfare, Inspire, Charity for C.S and others and were delivered using a range of channels – social media, intranet, internet, group sessions etc.</p> <p>3. ONGOING - Strategy drafted for agreement by</p>
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PART B

					March 2020. Implementation to follow. Timelines dependent on objectives/actions identified under Strategy.
Complete appointment plan for each new public appointment competition, focusing on diversity and steps to encourage applications from disabled people, and taking on board any recommendations or actions emanating from the TEO strategic diversity plan for public appointments.	Numbers of people with a disability applying for and being appointed to public life positions.	Plan to be completed at the time draft competition is being developed.	Encourage more disabled people to apply for public appointments.	Sponsor Branch (monitored by Central Support Team).	COMPLETE During 2018/19 DoF ran two public appointment competitions. Appointment plans focused on diversity, including reviewing criteria, consideration of the Guaranteed Interview Scheme (not used as neither competition had short-listing criteria) and targeted contact with disability representative organisations to promote the vacancies. Of the applications

PART B

					received, 2.9% identified that they had a disability.
Digital Inclusion Programme activities specifically targeted at disabled people and their carers and developed in conjunction with disability organisations.	Number of activities and evaluation results.	Annually	Encourage people with disabilities to make use more online services.	Digital Transformation Service.	ONGOING In progress through Connectability programme.