

Department of Finance



**Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties
Annual Progress Report 2018-19**

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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:

Heather Caulfield

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 2018 and March 2019

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 2018-19, 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 provides HR services to all NICS Departments and related bodies whose staff are employed on NICS terms and conditions.

People Strategy

NICSHR co-designed a [People Strategy](#) with over 700 staff all grades across the NICS and was formally launched by the Head of the Civil Service in June 2018. The Strategy provides the framework to enable a fundamentally different and 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
- High performing NICS
- Outcomes-focused NICS
- An inclusive NICS in which diversity is truly valued – a great place to work

The Strategy places diversity and inclusion at its centre and includes a range of actions that will help create a truly inclusive workplace culture and a service that reflects the society we serve. For example: developing an NICS Trans Policy and Transitioning at Work Guide, participating in International Women’s Day and PRIDE celebrations and introducing the JAM Card to NICS. Our Strategic HR Director, Jill Minne, is one of 2 NICS Diversity Champions with each Department, including DoF, having a Diversity Champion who promotes diversity within the Department. NICS also has 4 thematic

leads at SCS level for LGBT, Disability, Gender and Race/Ethnic Minorities. The NICS Diversity Champions Network, comprising Departmental Champions and the thematic leads and jointly chaired by the NICS Diversity Champions, meets quarterly.

DISABILITY

NICS Disability Champion/Disability Working Group

The NICS Disability Working Group, chaired by Ronnie Armour, the NICS Disability Champion, considered the report drafted by the previous Disability Working Group along with the NICS People Strategy in setting targets for a one year action plan ending March 2019. A new action plan will be developed.

Successful actions completed include recommending the NICS becomes JAM card friendly (see below) and raising the awareness and understanding of NICS reasonable adjustment guidance. The Working Group also consulted on a number of NICS HR policies and in the longer term, following early engagement with the NICS Commissioners, will contribute to NICS outreach and positive action activities aimed at increasing the representation of people with a disability in our workforce.

JAM Card

The NICS Board agreed a recommendation from the NICS Disability Working Group that the NICS should become JAM Card friendly. Implementation planning began in early 2019 and it is anticipated that rollout across the NICS will be complete in early summer 2019.

The JAM Card was created by participants of The NOW Group and 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. All NICS colleagues will have access to a short on-line awareness training session provided by the NOW Group and NICS buildings will display JAM Card promotional material in prominent positions so that those entering the buildings will be aware that we are JAM Card friendly. Roll-out is underway within the Department of Finance, for

example staff have been trained and posters are displayed within the General Registry Office and Land and Property Service offices.

Our Departmental Board held its October 2018 meeting at the NOW Group's offices, during which they received a presentation on their work, including the JAM Card. Minutes of the meeting can be accessed on the [DoF website](#).

International Job Shadowing Day

International Job Shadow Day (IJSJ) took place in NI for the first time on 25 April 2018 led by the NI Union of Supported Employers (NIUSE). The NICS was proud to participate in the initiative and was the largest contributor on the day, offering 16 placements in a number of Departments in various locations across NI. 5 of these placements were in the Department of Finance.

NICSHR worked closely with NIUSE in identifying optimum placements in terms of the type of work job seekers were interested in and the locations that were suitable. In addition, the Head of the NICS, David Sterling, met with Edyth Dunlop and Norman Sterritt from NIUSE to discuss the challenges faced by people with disabilities when seeking employment and what the NICS can do to help. An evaluation of IJSJ was completed and it is planned that IJSJ 2019 will be even more successful.

The Department included an Intranet article on Staff News on the success of the event within DoF, and highlighting the positive experience for both the participants and the business areas taking part.

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 people with disabilities as employees and customers. The NICS has signed up as an EFDNI Lead partner and enjoys access to a range of services provided by EFDNI including disability briefings, advice and support,

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an employee support service and a conciliation service. A number of Departments, including DoF, have arranged disability briefings and sought specialist disability advice from EFDNI.

In addition, the NICS will promote job and career opportunities available through a permanent advertisement on the EFDNI Jobs Bulletin Board which is an online service circulated to disability organisations.

NICS Work Experience Scheme for People with Disabilities

NICS HR has operated the NICS Work Experience Scheme for People with Disabilities since April 2016. Applications are received from Disability Organisations seeking structured work placements for their clients. Further 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 from all participants of the scheme and facilitating branches in the form of questionnaires. Every year has seen positive feedback received from branches, Disability Organisations and participants of the scheme. Commentary on feedback received and statistics for the scheme are published annually in the Recruitment to the NICS Annual report, these reports are also available via the [NICS Recruitment website](#).

LGBT

Pride

In August 2018 the NICS participated in Belfast Pride for the first time as an employer, with a NICS HR stall providing information and advice on NICS careers, services and outreach to members of the LGBT community. HOCS and a number of NICS colleagues joined members of the NICS LGBT Staff Network in the Pride march.

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

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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.

NICSHR has also established a project team to take forward the NICS' submission to the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index. The Equality Index is the definitive benchmarking tool for employers to measure their progress on LGBT inclusion in the workplace. The first submission will be made in September 2019.

NICS LGBT Staff Network

The Network holds continues to hold informal meetings on a roughly quarterly basis meetings, chaired by Gareth Johnston, the NICS LGBT Champion. These meetings are open to all who are interested in the Network's aims regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. NICSHR funded a member of the network undergoing Stonewall's LGBT Leadership training programme as well as a social event to help with development of the network.

GENDER

The Gender Action Plan

The NICS is committed to building an organisation in which everyone can play their part fully. We recognise that women in our workplace face particular challenges and in March 2018 NICSHR launched the first NICS Gender Action Plan. The Gender Action Plan focuses on three key themes of Culture, Well-being and Leadership. The Plan recognises that developing a truly diverse and inclusive NICS needs clear action to support women at all levels and, vitally, it needs men and women, working together, to deliver that objective.

The NICS Gender Action Plan has been developed following extensive engagement by NICSHR with a wide range of staff and has been fully endorsed by the NICS Board. The Plan is integrated with our People Strategy and delivered alongside a range of Diversity and Inclusion interventions as part of our People Strategy Implementation Programme.

Gender Champion/Women's Network

Louise Warde-Hunter is the NICS Gender Champion. Louise is a founder member of the NICS Senior Women's Network. In 2018, a NICS Women's Network was established over 4 geographical HUB locations: Belfast, Stormont, Craigavon and the North West. Each hub, through its action plan, will work on agreed work areas and will deliver activities to connect with a wider number of women in all grades.

The NICS Women's Network aims to promote a diverse and inclusive NICS with equal representation of women at every level of the organisation.

The Women's Network, together with NICSHR, led on events for International Women's Day 2019. NICSHR supported a flagship event for NICS staff as well as a programme of associated health and well-being activities. The Women's Network held events over their 4 geographical HUB locations each supported and led at SCS level.

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 People Strategy and the mentoring circle programme is now operated by NICSHR Learning and Development 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 get together 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. NICSHR are preparing to launch a

third cohort of G6/7 circles in June 2019 and will be piloting the use of this programme as a development tool for mixed gender groups as part of this particular cohort. During 2018 the programme was also rolled out to female staff at DP and analogous grades. This programme, which is running through to June 2019, has 117 participants (with 25 of these from within DoF) which equates to around 10% of the DP female staff in the NICS. In addition, 18 of the Senior Civil Servants of mentor both the G6/7 and DP groups are DoF staff, which equates to 25% of the NICS mentors.

The NICS also committed in 2018 to sign up to the Gender Diversity Charter Mark, which NICS HR will lead on. This will recognise NICS commitment to, and progress on, gender diversity. NICS also committed to obtain the Women's Aid Domestic Violence Policy Charter Status. In 2018 Department of Health and Department of Justice launched Guidance for Employers on Developing a Workplace Policy on Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse. Work is underway in NICS HR to review NICS workplace policy in light of this Guidance.

NICS HR also began work in 2018 on guidance for flexible working arrangements and establishing a network approach to job-share, with two pilot competitions launched and completed in 2018/19 encouraging job-sharers to apply for promotion opportunities.

RACE AND ETHNIC MINORITIES

Outreach

A number of outreach events took place with ethnic minority groups in 2018 to obtain feedback on how to improve access to services, including recruitment services. Work is ongoing to develop an NICS Outreach Strategy focused on disability and relevant ethnic minority groups. NICS HR organised and attended a two-day event led by Sue Gray, the DoF Permanent Secretary, in the North West in November 2018. The primary focus was on engagement with representative bodies to discuss the NICS as an employer and identify any barriers to employment. We met with representatives from

the North West Migrants Forum, the Strabane Ethnic Community Association, schools from the Foyle Area Learning Network and disability organisations.

Our Departmental Racial Equality Champion, other Champions and the NICS BME Champion Heather Cousins, held a Roundtable event at Girdwood Community Hub. The focus of this event was to discuss a range of issues with community and voluntary groups working with or representing minority ethnic people and migrants. The feedback received relating to employment in NICS was shared with NICS HR for consideration and incorporation into current work programme.

Feedback from all these events will inform the NICS Outreach Strategy.

Racial Equality Network

A Departmental Racial Equality Network chaired quarterly by the Racial Equality Champion 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.

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

- Bryson Intercultural - DARE to Lead Change project presentation with invitation to Diversity Network, Racial Equality Network and Departmental Board members
- Equality Commission for NI - discussion with Racial Equality Network on ethnic monitoring data
- Barnardo's NI - talk to DoF staff on Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (The DoF Board held its January 2019 meeting at Barnardo's, minutes available in the [DoF website](#))

The DoF Racial Equality Champion has ensured that DoF issues raised at the Racial Equality Sub-group Round-table event (mentioned above) have been taken to Racial Equality Network members, with updates to Departmental Board on progress, e.g. actions taken forward include:

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- LPS Racial Equality Workshop - Racial Equality Sub-Group members were invited to attend a discussion group regarding customer experiences, needs and requirements in relation to LPS service delivery.
- DoF (NISRA, LPS, Go ON NI, NI Direct, MyNI and NICS HR) participating in Belfast Mela to raise awareness and improving access contributing to Equality of Service Provision outcome of Racial Equality Strategy 2015-2025
- Review 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
- Working with SIB partners to deliver BuySocial information session to Belfast City Council's Migrant Forum
- Supported the Executive Office's Urban Villages Initiative within the Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC) Strategy, collaborating to produce racial equality film resources together with Racial Equality Subgroup, schools and other government departments.

CPD Engagement Event

In November 2018, and as part of initiatives under the Institution of Civil Engineers Year of Infrastructure, Construction and Procurement Delivery (CPD) hosted a school engagement event attended by GCSE pupils from 3 local schools: Assumption Grammar Ballynahinch, Friends Lisburn and Dromore High School.

The objectives for the event were to attract the pupils to a career in a construction profession. Through task activities for each discipline, the pupils were given a better understanding of what each profession does. The event also sought to break the stereotypes associated with construction as a male dominated industry – there was a specific emphasis on encouraging the female students to think about a career in construction. The event received excellent feedback from both pupils and their teachers and CPD plans to host further events later this year.

Economist Profession Diversity and Outreach

In December 2018, the Economist Profession appointed a Group Diversity and Outreach Champion. Work has been progressing to develop a Diversity and Outreach Action Plan for the Economist Profession which includes a number of objectives and action points, with a particular focus on helping to increase the representation of females within the Profession. A presentation was made on the draft Action Plan at the NICS Economist Profession Conference in March 2019 and the Action Plan will be finalised early in 2019/20.

Work completed to date includes designing a brand for the Profession as well as engagement with the 2 local universities. The Economist Profession also advertised for a student Internship as part of the QUB Internship Development Weeks programme and appointed a student in March 2019 to undertake an internship opportunity this August (2019).

Land and Property Service (LPS) Outreach activity

Opportunities to develop and enhance outreach activity has been undertaken by LPS Revenues & Benefits (R&B) directorate in 2018/19. This has included an online 'digital first' approach for Rate Rebate claimants. Supporting this approach, LPS has developed a suite of options to assist citizens with a new online application form. R&B has also collaborated with the DoF Communications Team in developing online literature and booklets, distributed to libraries and doctors surgeries throughout Northern Ireland, to raise awareness of various rate reliefs available to citizens. R&B staff have participated in wider outreach activities, promoting rate reliefs to a diverse range of citizens such as AGE NI, Young at Heart, Pensioners Parliament, 'Hands that Talk' (action on hearing loss support group), CARERS NI and Autism NI.

DoF Diversity Network

The DoF Diversity Network has helped to promote diversity and inclusion across the Department in a number of areas:

- A Carers Information Event was held for DoF staff on 11th June 2018 to mark Carers week. Staff received advice on the issues which affect carers and the

support available from the presenters, Carers NI and the For You, By You (the Civil Service charity). In addition, Inspire and Welfare Support Service attended with information stands.

- A Mental Health Awareness session was held on World Suicide Day on 10th September 2018 to tackle stereotypes and to encourage staff to think about what they can do to improve their mental health and to support others.
- Disability Awareness Sessions were provided by the Cedar Foundation in Belfast and Derry/Londonderry to promote International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3rd December 2018 and a follow-up Staff News article was published to publicise the key messages from the event. The network also published a staff news article on one member's experience of living and working with dyspraxia and an article on what reasonable adjustments means and how, often, these can be simple things.
- Members have worked with the NICS Disability Working Group and Disability Champion to develop an Autism Event for staff which will be reported on in the next Annual Review.

Goodwood House Mental Health Group

Goodwood House Mental Health Group continued to issue emails, place leaflets on all floors and have regular posters in the lifts promoting various mental health initiatives. As well as these, specific communications were issued for Christmas and Valentine's Day love yourself focus. The group also ran Belfast City Guided Walking Tours during lunchtimes to encourage people to look after their mental health by getting active and sharing social experiences. The group's activities/services are available to all Goodwood House staff which includes staff from three different DoF business areas and some non-NICS staff.

The group celebrated the Samaritans Big Listen on 24th July 2018 when the Samaritans provided a short talk outlining the work they do and the SHUSH listening tips. This was followed by a sing along of uplifting and well known tunes. A qualified mental health first-aider is now available in Goodwood House for staff and visitors.

Goodwood House Mental Health Group celebrated their first anniversary on World Mental Health Day (10th October 2018) with a week's programme of events, including yoga, relaxation, walking tour, and a tea and chat.

The group received a Highly Commended award for Excellence in the Public Sector Workplace at the Inspire Workplace Wellbeing Awards ceremony in June 2018 and received the Charity for Civil Servants Network Award in December 2018. The group are spreading the word to encourage others to make their workplace Mental Health Friendly and more details on this will be included in the next Annual Review.

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 2018
- Get Online Week October 2018
- Connect-ability Programme
- Google Digital Garage in partnership with Lisburn Castlereagh Council
- Belfast City Council Be Prepared Programme
- Pensioners Parliament – October 2018
- Internet Safety Day – 5 February 2019
- Belfast City Council Festival of Learning Events March 2019
- Young@Heart events in Belfast, Craigavon, Portrush
- Universal Credit Roadshows in 35 Jobs and Benefits Offices

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 Section 75 data

In conjunction with the Equality Commission, NISRA have developed a data signposting guide detailing how NISRA Section 75 Data can be accessed. This has been published on the NISRA website. <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/accessing-nisra-population-level-section-75-data>

2021 Census

In planning for the 2021 Census, NISRA has consulted widely with users. This has included consulting with the Equality Commission on existing questions relating to a range of protected characteristics and on the proposed inclusion of a question on sexual orientation for the 2021 census.

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- 2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2018-19 (*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 2018-19 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

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

Please provide any details and examples:

Production of Trans Policy and Transitioning at Work Guide.

- 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:

Trans Policy and Guide promotes NICS as an LGBT inclusive employer and provides a clear process for individuals who are transitioning. The guide deals specifically with supporting trans colleagues and transitioning in the workplace. This demonstrates NICS is a fully inclusive and welcoming employer with a staff reflective of all people in the society we serve. It contributes to creating an inclusive NICS in which diversity is truly valued – a great place to work.

- 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*):

LGBT Staff Survey

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 2018-19 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 2018-19 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 2018-19 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? *(tick all that apply)*

- Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
- Yes, in some departments/jobs
- No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's ongoing corporate plan
- No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2018-19 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

In the absence of an Executive, the Department does not have a Corporate Plan, nor did it publish a business plan for 2018/19.

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2018-19 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed: Actions ongoing: Actions to commence:

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 2018-19 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 2018-19 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

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- 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 2018-19 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:

[NICS HR People Strategy Consultation - outlined in Section 1](#)

[NICS Gender Action Plan – outlined in Section 1](#)

[Trans Policy and Transitioning at Work Guide - outlined in Section 1](#)

12 In the 2018-19 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:

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13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2018-19 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

- Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2018-19 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/northern-ireland-budget-2019-20\]](https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-budget-2019-20)

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

13

16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2018-19:

4	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*)

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- Yes No concerns were raised No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

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 2018-19 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 2018-19 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 2018-19 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-2018>.

NISRA produced the 2019 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 2018-19, 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 the Centre for Applied Learning (CAL):

Course	Numbers of staff completed
Autism Spectrum Disorder Awareness (e-learning)	908
Buy Social	4
Disability Awareness for Frontline Staff (e-learning)	901
Diversity Now (classroom-based)	15
Diversity Now (e-learning)	1
Introduction to Human Rights (e-learning)	5
Introduction to Section 75 (e-learning)	14
Mental Health Awareness for Line Managers	28
*Positive Mental Health Toolkit for Line Managers (e-learning)	14
*Positive Mental Health Toolkit for Staff (e-learning)	55
Recruitment and Selection – Legislation & interview standards	104
Supporting Vulnerable People (e-learning)	904
Unconscious Bias (e-learning)	62
Unconscious Bias	0

- 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.

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

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2018-19, 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, monitoring of Disabled Person's Allowance (DPA) and Lone Pensioner Allowance (LPA) applications showed a 14% increase for DPA and a 43% increase for LPA against previous year figures (see Action Plan Table below for more detail). Evaluation of the success of outreach activities will continue going forward.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

- 27** How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2018-19?

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*)

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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 (2019-20) reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

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

DoF Section 75 Action Plan 2018-23: Update on Progress during 2018/19

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	2018/19 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>

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Inequality	Action	Performance Outcome	Timescale	2018/19 Update
NI labour market (Religious belief).	organisations representing under-represented groups.			
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.

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Inequality	Action	Performance Outcome	Timescale	2018/19 Update
	representing under-represented groups.			
Under-representation of staff from ethnic minorities.	<p>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. Actions will be taken according to the timetable set out in the strategy.</p> <p>The DoF Racial Equality Champion (REC) will</p>	Representation in line with what would be expected through the Review of the NICS workforce.	<p>According to timescale set out in Marketing & Outreach Strategy.</p> <p>Ongoing.</p>	<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> <p>COMPLETE</p>

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Inequality	Action	Performance Outcome	Timescale	2018/19 Update
	<p>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, outside DoF, with Racial Equality Subgroup (chaired by TEO), Belfast Migrant Forum (chaired by Belfast City Council) and Intercultural Interest Forum (chaired by</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>

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Inequality	Action	Performance Outcome	Timescale	2018/19 Update
	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 that staff are aware of the support they can expect.	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.
Data Gaps on Section 75 profile of NICS workforce (Racial	Obtain data from staff on ethnicity, disability,	Increase in data held on HRConnect for existing staff in	By 31 st March 2020.	ONGOING Work ongoing to consider how to address this issue.

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Inequality	Action	Performance Outcome	Timescale	2018/19 Update
group; Persons with a disability; Persons with dependents; Sexual orientation).	dependents and sexual orientation.	relation to ethnicity, disability, dependents and sexual orientation.		
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 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 category. Work will continue to increase this figure by next March, 2020.

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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	2018/19 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>Age 65+</p> <p>2015/16 – 45%</p> <p>2016/17 – 43%</p> <p>2017/18 – 48%</p> <p>2018/19 – 56%</p>

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	<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>A total of circa 10,000 citizens reached through all Go ON NI Programmes in liaison with the LibrariesNI 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. 600 citizens who received these sessions as part of NICS Assisted Digital programme i.e. Universal Credit, Fire Arms Licensing, and Education Authority.</p>
	<p>Increased working relationships and working in partnership with organisations</p>	<p>Quarterly DASG meetings. A fifth of overall Go ON NI target remit</p>	<p>By 31st March 2019.</p>	<p>ONGOING Through partnership with Belfast City Council, Age Friendly Belfast, Ards & North Down Age Friendly, Newry & Mourne Age Friendly,</p>

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	<p>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>(i.e. 2000 citizens) to be specifically reached through this group.</p>		<p>Lisburn & Castlereagh Age Friendly - 1,113 citizens aged over 50 were provided with digital skills in the year 2018- 2019.</p>
	<p>Connectability Programme to continue as part of the DoF Go ON NI programme: specific IT sessions to be delivered for those with a mental or physical disability or to those caring for a disabled</p>	<p>Evaluation of IT sessions whereby increased Digital Skills enable engagement with government services and financial capability online as required.</p>	<p>By 31st March 2020.</p>	<p>ONGOING</p> <p>It is proposed that Get Online Week 2019 (14-18 October) will deliver bespoke training for the full week in partnership with the groups within the Connect-ability Programme but also including those that Supporting Communities and Belfast City Council would work with. Hourly individual skills sessions, awareness</p>

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	person. Provided across ten groups initially on a programme plan.			overviews and bespoke classroom training, on a range of topics, to be delivered 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 NICS Board agreed for NICS to become JAM Card friendly and implementation planning began early 2019 with staff training beginning April 2019.

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<p>Accessibility of Stormont Estate Play Park (Persons with a disability).</p>	<p>A new inclusive play park to be built at Stormont Estate.</p>	<p>A play park that is suitable for children of all abilities.</p>	<p>By 31st March 2019.</p>	<p>ONGOING</p> <p>Work is well advanced and the play park is expected to be finished by 30th June 2019.</p>
<p>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).</p>	<p>Outreach activity and updating of literature. The introduction of a 'digital first' approach for use by claimants to the new Rate Rebate scheme alongside a suite of support options for those who may have difficulty interacting with a digital interface, including help and assistance being available at www.nidirect.gov.uk/go-on-ni. This should</p>	<p>Uptake in benefit each year from those vulnerable groups entitled to financial assistance.</p>	<p>By 31st March each year.</p>	<p>COMPLETE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LPS Outreach Manager in post since early 2018. • 'Get Help with Rates' booklet produced in July 2018 to promote all domestic rates support available. This is distributed at all Outreach events. • 13 Outreach events attended during 2018/19. • Through 2018/19 networking activities engagement has taken place with AGE NI, Young at Heart, Pensioners Parliament, 'Hands that Talk' (action on hearing loss support group) CARERS NI and Autism NI.

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	<p>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.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A joint initiative was carried out with DfC Make the Call (MtC) Wraparound Service to contact UC recipients who have not yet applied for Rate Rebate (RR), with the intention of increasing applications for RR. Evaluation of the success of this initiative is ongoing. Discussions have taken place with DfC MtC on the promotion of all rates support for eligible customers and joint working arrangements for Outreach activities. • The number of applications for Disabled Persons Allowance (DPA) and Lone Pensioner Allowance (LPA) have increased considerably since the appointment of a dedicated LPS Outreach Manager. DPA applications have increased by 7% from 2016/17 to 2017/18 and by 14% in 2018/19. LPA
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				applications have increased by 15% from 2016/17 to 2017/18 and by 43% in 2018/19.
Law in NI treats unmarried fathers differently from married and unmarried mothers (Marital Status).	Consider amendments to current laws.	Take forward recommendations on parent/child contact emerging from The Lord Chief Justice Review which was published in September 2017.	TBC – legislative amendments in this area are conditional on a Minister/ Executive being in place.	ONGOING In the absence of Ministers, no further work has been undertaken in this policy area.

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 2019 each year.	Promotion of positive attitudes towards people with a disability within the department.	DoF Diversity Network.	COMPLETE The Cedar Foundation delivered Disability Awareness sessions to over 50 staff on International Day of Persons with Disabilities. A member of the Network also published an article that day on her experience of dyspraxia and working in the NICS. The Cedar awareness sessions were followed up with an article on the events and a link to Scope's End the Awkward campaign and video

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					resources. An article on reasonable adjustments was also published to highlight that adjustments needed are often simple and easy to make. As part of the International Women’s Day events, NICS HR used promotional articles/videos from NICS staff with disabilities (Autism/sight impairments). NICS Autism Working Group was established in 2018 and planned an information seminar for staff for April 2019.
NICS Diversity Training (Diversity Now, classroom-	Number of new staff trained.	Priority 1 training – within 0-4	All new staff to know about the NICS Equality,	Line managers and NICS HR	ONGOING The DoF Induction process includes Equality, Diversity

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based) to be completed by all new staff. Unconscious bias (e-learning) training to be completed by all new managers (EO2 and analogous and above).		months of appointment.	Diversity and Inclusion policy and their responsibilities, including the disability duties.		and Inclusion. New staff and their Line Managers are expected to record when the 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:	Number of staff trained. Customer surveys/feedback.	Priority 1 training (0-4 months) Complaints dealt with	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.

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<p>Disability Awareness for front-line staff; Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) awareness; Supporting Vulnerable People Induction for front-line staff to include 'Every Customer Counts'.</p>		<p>within customer service standards timescales. Customer surveys carried out every year.</p>			<p>Training rolled out to support Every Customer Counts. Numbers trained are detailed at Question 25. Mandatory e-learning courses for disability awareness, autism awareness and supporting vulnerable people were rolled out to all LPS Revenue & Benefits staff in November 2018. Local inductions updated to include 'Every Customer Counts'.</p>
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					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.
Recruitment and Development					
Promote and develop the work experience programme, providing meaningful placements for people with disabilities with a wide range of disability organisations.	Number of participants by work area. Number of participating disability organisations.	Annually.	Encourage more disabled people to apply for NICS jobs and promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability within the Department.	NICS HR.	COMPLETE From 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2018, 31 applications were received from 11 organisations, 17 of these were agreed with Departments. Of the remaining 14 applications; •8 are still under consideration by departments;

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	Feedback from participants and hosting managers.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •4 individuals withdrew prior to a placement being agreed; and •2 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. By the end of the year, positive feedback was received from branches and participants of the scheme.</p>
Review and implement the NICS Policy on reasonable adjustments in the recruitment and selection process in collaboration	Monitoring information on applications from people with a disability and feedback on the	31 st March 2019.	NICS' recruitment and selection procedures to provide equality of opportunity to people with	NICSHR.	<p>COMPLETE</p> <p>This review of this policy is now complete and the new version was uploaded onto the NICS Recruitment website on 19/3/19.</p>

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with people with a disability.	reasonable adjustment process.		disabilities so that they are encouraged to apply and compete for employment opportunities.		
Participation and Engagement					
Development of a NICS-wide Mental Health Strategy.	<p>1. Establish Mental Health forum (internal partners) to connect all NICS mental health activities.</p> <p>2. Connected links developed with external partners (Inspire/Charity for Civil Service Servants)</p>	31 st March 2023.	NICS has a cohesive approach to the delivery of mental health initiatives, and support services, from both internal and external partners.	NICS HR.	<p>1. ONGOING – linked to the development and outworkings of the Mental Health Strategy.</p> <p>2. COMPLETE 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</p>

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	3. Mental Health Strategy developed and implemented.				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. 3. ONGOING - Strategy drafted for agreement by 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	Numbers of people with a disability applying for and	Plan to be completed at the time draft competition	Encourage more disabled people to apply for public appointments.	Sponsor Branch (monitored by Central Support Team).	ONGOING COMPLETE During 2018/19 DoF ran two public appointment competitions. Appointment

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