**Insert Name of Public Authority Here and Logo in Picture Box Below*****Acme Company***



**Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties**

**Annual Progress Report**

| **Contact:** |
| --- |
| * Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme
 | Name: Elaine Curran Telephone: 028 90828 662Email: elaine.curran@policeombudsman.org |
| * Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan
 | As above [x]  (double click to open)Name:      Telephone:      Email:       |
| Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at: [www.policeombudsman.org/About-Us/Publications/Equality](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Ccurrane%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CTemporary%20Internet%20Files%5CContent.Outlook%5COE8KNCNT%5Cwww.policeombudsman.org%5CAbout-Us%5CPublications%5CEquality) |
| **Signature:** |
|  Elaine Curran |

**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 2020 and March 2021**

| **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 2020-21, 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.* |
|  | It is the policy of the Office to promote equality of opportunity. The Office provides equal opportunity for all job applicants and employees. All recruitment, promotion and training is based on a person’s ability and job performance and excludes any consideration of an applicant’s/employee’s religious beliefs, political opinion, gender, marital status or disability. Recruitment and Selection training is provided to all those involved in recruitment panels within the Office and covers Equality Legislation and best practice advice for Criteria Based Interviewing. In addition, the Office has an established recruitment policy and as part of the Office’s commitment to Equality of Opportunity, it makes provision for accessibility for people with disabilities, by offering a guaranteed interview to disabled candidates who have declared their disability and meet the essential criteria listed in the job specification. We are committed to ensuring that reasonable adjustments are made for staff who may develop a disability in the course of their employment to ensure that they can continue to be effectively employed in the Office. We work with our Occupational Health provider and Workable NI and are committed to making reasonable adjustments for applicants who indicate that they have a disability. We also maintain membership with Employers Forum on Disability to receive and share updates in best practice in supporting employees with disabilities. During the reporting period we have shared advice from the Employers Forum on Disability in relation to issues affecting staff during the Covid 19 Pandemic, including maintaining good mental health and ways to support people with dependents.Our Human Resources staff attended the Legal Island Annual Review of Employment Law training, which was delivered virtually in November 2020 and received updates on best practice in Equality and Diversity issues. This knowledge can be transferred to improve service delivery and policy making in the course of the work of the Human Resources team. The Office also delivered investigative type training to our Trainee Investigation Officers. Part of this training covered Vulnerability and Public Protection and the following topics were included within this training programme. * How people become vulnerable,
* How childhood adversity impacts development and behaviour,
* Identifying how trauma may present itself during an investigation

Our staff were trained to understand the role of the Sexual Assault Referral Centre, Domestic Violence and the management of the associated risks, Child Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Missing Persons. Our employees were trained on methods to support vulnerable victims and witnesses during the investigation process, thus equipping them with the professional knowledge and skills to support vulnerable people under the umbrella of several of the Section 75 groups.With the pandemic placing restrictions on public gatherings and resulting in the cancellation of many events last year, including the Belfast Mela and Pride celebrations across Northern Ireland, the Police Ombudsman’s Section 75 outreach activities were curtailed during the 2020-21 financial year. However, there were a number of important initiatives which demonstrated the office’s ongoing commitment towards equality of opportunity for all. New accessibility legislation for websites came into force on 23 September 2020. In advance of this, the Police Ombudsman’s Office commissioned an accessibility audit of its website, and then acted upon the resulting recommendations with a programme of upgrades implemented by our web developers. The website was subsequently chosen randomly by the Government Digital Service for an accessibility audit to check on compliance with the new legislation. This identified a small number of additional actions, which have since been implemented to ensure that www.policeombudsman.org is fully compliant with the legislation and appropriately accessible. We have also introduced a new accessible format for our Section 63 Public Statements (significant investigation reports), and these and other publications will be checked for accessibility compliance moving forward.  |
|  |  |

| **2** | Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2020-21 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*). |
| --- | --- |
|  | This is the fourth year of the Office’s action plan which was agreed in 2017.The profile of our staff at 1 January 2021 shows that excluding employees from a non-determined background, 51.7% of our employees are Protestant and 48.3 % are Roman Catholic. In relation to the gender composition, the overall profile of our staff at 1 January 2021 shows that 42.4% were male and 57.6% were female.This is monitored alongside statistics from the Equality Commission’s Monitored Workforce Statistics. The most recent Equality Commission Northern Ireland monitored workforce statistics for 2019 (Monitoring Report 30) have found that Protestants make up 50.5% of the monitored workforce and Roman Catholics make up 49.5%. The Equality Commission’s statistics show that females comprise 52.3% of the monitored workforce and males 47.7%.Our FE Monitoring return has shown that the gender balance has now been restored in our Soc Group 1 category (Managers and Senior Officials), we now have 50% males and 50% female composition in this group.We have further work to do on trying to redress under representation of males at lower grades in the Office – Soc group 4. We will include a welcome statement as an affirmative action measure and review our selection criteria when we are next recruiting for jobs in this category.This year we saw our figures change and our percentage of leavers from a Roman Catholic background decrease, an action that we had identified in our Equality Action plan. We have continued to focus on supporting our staff in line with our Disability Action Plan. This year we have continued to work with Workable NI, a partner of Disability Action, to seek their professional advice and engage with them on supporting our employees with disability issues. They have delivered useful advice to our employees and their managers, have facilitated us in making workplace adjustments, have offered awareness training for our staff and have acted in a support role to our employees who used their services. We have continued to engage also with Employers Forum on Disability and have disseminated advice from them to our staff throughout the pandemic on maintaining good mental health and supporting staff with dependents. |
|  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **3** | Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2020-21 reporting period? *(tick one box only)* |
|  | [ ]  | Yes | [x]  | 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 2020-21 reporting period? *(tick one box only)* |
|  | [x]  | 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: |
|  | The Section 75 duties were incorporated into all job descriptions over this reporting period. |
|  |  |
| **5** | Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2020-21 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 |
| [x]  | Not applicable |
|  | Please provide any details and examples: |
|  | Not applicable this year, due to us being unable to advise staff due to restrictions during the pandemic. |
|  |
| **6** | In the 2020-21 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 |
| [x]  | No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation’s ongoing corporate plan |
| [ ]  | No, the organisation’s planning cycle does not coincide with this 2020-21 report |
| [ ]  | Not applicable |
|  | Please provide any details and examples: |
|  |       |
|  |  |
| **Equality action plans/measures**  |
| **7** | Within the 2020-21 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of: |
|  | Actions completed: | 1 | Actions ongoing: | 5 | Actions to commence: | 3 |
|  | Please provide any details and examples (*in addition to question 2*): |
|  | We have achieved our target to redress under-representation of females at Senior Grades (Soc category 1) by achieving a 50/50 split of female/male representation at this level within the Office.We are working on an ongoing basis to address the under-representation of males at lower grades (Soc Category 4) within the Office and will continue to take affirmative action measures through the use of welcome statements in future recruitment competitions for jobs at this level. Our work will continue in monitoring trends of applicants, appointees and leavers. We will take the necessary steps to try to maintain balance in accordance with the Equality Commission’s Monitored Statistics. We will focus on cascading equality objectives through our employee’s performance objectives over the coming year in order to increase awareness and promote a greater sense of responsibility in delivering on the requirement to promote equality and good relations with our colleagues and our customers. We will continue with our training of all staff on matters pertaining to equality and diversity and are developing a presentation on this subject as part of our induction programme to be rolled out to all of our new employees when they join our organisation. Our Information Directorate will continue their outreach work to engage and interact with a broad range of community groups across the Section 75 spectrum and to promote the understanding of the work of the Office.We plan to commission a staff survey in the next year which will address the issues raised by some staff as outlined in our Equality Action Plan We have identified that further qualitative research needs to be undertaken in relation to addressing some of the issues identified in our equality action plan. Until we find out more information in relation to some of the actions, it will be difficult to address these. We will liaise with our research colleagues on these matters. |
|  |  |
| **8** | Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2020-21 reporting period *(points not identified in an appended plan)*: |
|  | N/A |
|  |  |
| **9** | In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2020-21 reporting period, the following have been identified: *(tick all that apply)* |
|  | [x]  | 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 |
| [x]  | 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 | [x]  | Sometimes | [ ]  | Never |
|  |  |
| **11** | Please provide any **details and examples** **of good practice** in consultation during the 2020-21 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: |
|  | During the 2020-21 reporting year, we continued to consult with our local union representatives on steps the organisation was taking to protect the Health and Safety of staff during the Covid 19 pandemic. We also liaised with our union representatives on recruitment activities and important changes to the way our staff were working throughout the pandemic. We updated them on special measures that we had put in place to support staff who were shielding to promote equality of opportunity. The Office attained key worker status and issued letters to our employees who had dependents, who were required to be in regular attendance in the Office. This enabled them to avail of childcare in order that they could come to work throughout periods of lockdown.No new policies were developed during this reporting period. |
|  |  |
| **12** | In the 2020-21 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: *(tick all that apply)* |
|  | [x]  | 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 |
| [x]  | 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: |
|  | Consultation on activities mentioned above were undertaken either via face to face meetings in the Office or via online meetings with staff and management. |
|  |  |
| **13** | Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2020-21 reporting period? *(tick one box only)* |
|  | [ ]  | Yes | [x]  | No  | [ ]  | Not applicable  |
|  | Please provide any details and examples: |
|  | Due to the restrictions of the pandemic, we were unable to conduct any awareness raising activities this year. |
|  |  |
| **14** | Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2020-21 reporting period? *(tick one box only)* |
|  | [ ]  | Yes | [x]  | 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.policeombudsman.org/About-Us/Publications>]  |
| **15** | Please provide the **number** of policies screened during the year (*as recorded in screening reports*):  |
|  | 0 |  |
|  |  |
| **16** | Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2020-21:**N/A – We did not develop any new policies this year.** |
|  |       | Policy consultations conducted with **screening** assessment presented.  |
|       | Policy consultations conducted **with an** **equality impact assessment** (EQIA) presented. |
|       | 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: |
|  | As outlined earlier, no new policies were developed during this reporting period due to restrictions placed on us by the Covid pandemic, however we did consult with our local union representatives on a number of changes which affected staff, including support provided to staff with disabilities in work, workplace adjustments made to accommodate staff who were shielding, adjustments made to help staff with dependents come to work during lockdown periods, consultation with staff reps on recruitment activities and general health and safety interventions which were put in place to support the physical and mental health and wellbeing of all the workforce. We also worked with our Occupational Health provider to support our staff on an individual basis throughout the pandemic. |
| **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  | [x]  | 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 2020-21 reporting period? *(tick one box only)* |
|  | [ ]  | Yes | [ ]  | No | [x]  | 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 2020-21 reporting period? *(tick one box only)* |
|  | [ ]  | Yes | [ ]  | No, already taken place  |
| [ ]  | No, scheduled to take place at a later date | [x]  | 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  | [x]  | Not applicable  |
|  | Please provide any details and examples: |
|  |       |
|  |  |
| **22** | Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2020-21 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed: |
|  | N/A |
|  |  |
| **23** | Please provide any details or examples of monitoring that has contributed to the availability of equality and good relations information/data for service delivery planning or policy development: |
|  | Our annual Fair Employment Monitoring return provides us with the monitoring data of our workforce, applicants and leavers. It helps us analyse changes in uptake in any of these groups and we can compare this to the Equality Commission’s Monitored Workforce statistics. This helps us identify at present that our workforce is largely representative of the monitored community background of workers in employment throughout Northern Ireland. It also helps us to identify any areas of imbalance throughout the different SOC categories and allows us to work towards using affirmative action measures to try to resolve these. |
|  |  |
| **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 2020-21, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme. |
|  | As part of our corporate induction process, we train our staff on our responsibilities to ensure that we promote Equality and Good relations among all of our workforce and our customer base. We advise staff of the requirements of Section 75 and make them aware of our Equality Scheme, Disability Action plan and the measures we have in place within the organisation to support and promote these subject areas. This includes our Equality Working Group and our policies on Dignity and Respect and Equal Opportunities.Some of our staff have undergone e-learning this year on maintaining good mental health as delivered by Legal Island, some have attended webinars hosted by the Equality Commission and we have continued to ensure that Recruitment and Selection Training has been provided to our employees who will be sitting on recruitment panels. Part of this training covers Equal Opportunities and equality legislation in Northern Ireland. Our HR staff have attended the Legal Island Annual review of Employment Law which always provides up to date guidance and best practice advice on managing equality and diversity matters. As mentioned in question 1 of this report, our Office also delivered targeted training on matters pertaining to vulnerable members of the Section 75 groups as part of our Trainee Investigation Officers training programme. The main focus of this part of the Investigative Training was on Vulnerability and Public Protection. The training focused on the reasons why some groups can become vulnerable, how to identify trauma in an investigation and raised awareness of the support mechanisms in place for vulnerable people. This training will help our Investigators be better equipped to help and support vulnerable members of our society in their service delivery, under the Section 75 group spectrum.  |
|  |  |
| **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: |
|  | Our Recruitment and Selection Training works well in equipping our staff with the required knowledge and understanding to effectively sit on recruitment panels and have an awareness of equality legislation. Also attendance at the Legal Island Annual Review of Employment Law training helps the HR team develop policies and initiatives in line with current legislation and best practice recommendations. We also availed of awareness training from Workable NI, in support of some of our employees who had disabilities. This training served well to increase knowledge and understanding of some of the issues that employees face with their disability and was useful to the affected employees in their job roles.Our investigative training in relation to Section 75 matters helps our Investigators have a better understanding of how to support venerable members of society, under many of the section 75 groups. |
|  |  |
| **Public Access to Information and Services (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 6)** |
| **26** | Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2020-21, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:New accessibility legislation for websites came into force on 23 September 2020. In advance of this, the Police Ombudsman’s Office commissioned an accessibility audit of its website, and then acted upon the resulting recommendations with a programme of upgrades implemented by our web developers. The website was subsequently chosen randomly by the Government Digital Service for an accessibility audit to check on compliance with the new legislation. This identified a small number of additional actions, which have since been implemented to ensure that [www.policeombudsman.org](http://www.policeombudsman.org) is fully compliant with the legislation and appropriately accessible. We have also introduced a new accessible format for our Section 63 Public Statements (significant investigation reports), and these and other publications will be checked for accessibility compliance moving forward.    |
| **Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)** |
| **27** | How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2020-21? |
|  | Insert number here:  | 0 |  |
|  | Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome: |

In June 2020, the Police Ombudsman reacted to concerns about how the PSNI enforced the Coronavirus Public Health Regulations at large public gatherings by initiating an investigation into relevant police policy and practice. This followed complaints from members of the public who attended ‘Black Lives Matter’ protests at Customs House Square, Belfast, and Guildhall Square, Derry/Londonderry, on Saturday 6 June 2020.

The resulting report was published in December 2020. It found that claims the police handling of ‘Black Lives Matter’ protests and a counter demonstration earlier this year amounted to unfairness and discrimination were justified. Although Mrs Anderson believed this was not intentional and not based on race or ethnicity, she said confidence in policing among some within the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities in Northern Ireland had been severely damaged.

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| **Section 3: Looking Forward** |
| **28** | Please indicate when the Equality Scheme is due for review: |
|  | June 2022 |
|  |  |
| **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)* |
|  | The Office will continue to screen ins policies in line with scheduled review dates. The Office hopes to continue to work towards signing up to the Mental Health Charter. |
|  |  |
| **30** | In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)* |
|  | [x]  | Employment |
| [x]  | Goods, facilities and services |
| [x]  | Legislative changes |
| [ ]  | Organisational changes/ new functions |
| [ ]  | Nothing specific, more of the same |
| [ ]  | Other (please state): We have identified that proposed legislative changes by Westminster on the remit of the Office to carry out investigations into historical legacy cases could have a significant impact on members of our community from both community backgrounds. We will continue to carry out investigations, serving all sections of the community under the remit of the Office until any changes are implemented. |

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

| **1. Number of action measures** for this **reporting period** that have been: |
| --- |
| **6** |  |  |  | **11** |  |  |  | **2** |  |  |  |
| Fully achieved | Partially achieved | Not achieved |

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

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

N/A

| Level | Public Life Action Measures | Outputs[[1]](#endnote-1) | Outcomes / Impact[[2]](#endnote-2) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| National[[3]](#endnote-3) |       |       |       |
| Regional[[4]](#endnote-4) |       |       |       |
| Local[[5]](#endnote-5) |       |       |       |

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

|  | Training Action Measures | Outputs | Outcome / Impact |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Provide relevant training to OPONI staff on disability issues(Action Listed on our Disability Action Plan. Partially achieved, but here we are reporting on aspects of this objective which were fully achieved) | We worked with Disability Action’s Workable NI programme to provide awareness training and support to staff on various individual topics of disability Information from Employers Forum on Disability shared with staff throughout the year. | Increased awareness among staff of these issues and promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people. |
| 2 | Provide appropriate Equal Opportunities training to staff on recruitment and selection panels. ( Not Listed on our original Disability Action Plan under training, listed under the heading of recruitment, this has been an additional measure which has been achieved) | Recruitment and Selection Training and refresher training provided to all panel members, focusing on equality of opportunity for all people including those with disabilities | Increased awareness of Equality Legislation and the requirement to recruit and select candidates lawfully and fairly. |
| 3. | Awareness Raising (Action Listed on our Disability Action Plan under Training and Awareness Raising - provision of information for line managers when a member of staff declares a disability) Partially achieved, here we are reporting on aspects of this objective which were fully achieved | We have provided line managers with support and information from Occupational Health to support employees with disabilities and to make reasonable adjustments in the workplace. We have also worked closely with our staff who were shielding through the pandemic. We made reasonable adjustments for them to work from home and to work on suitable projects to meet both their needs and those of the organisation.  | Line managers have a better understanding of the issues faced by staff with disabilities. They are better equipped to support them in their role and to be aware of workplace adjustments that can be made to help employees in their role. |

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

|  | Communications Action Measures | Outputs | Outcome / Impact  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Raising awareness of specific barriers faced by people with disabilities (Action Listed on our Disability Action Plan. Partially achieved, but here we are reporting on aspects of this objective which were fully achieved) | Workable NI worked closely with our organisation to raise awareness of several specific areas of disability and the barriers that staff face in having certain conditions. | This promoted better understanding of these issues amongst the colleagues and management of the employees affected. |
| 2 | Promoting positive mental health ( Not Listed on our original Disability Action Plan, this has been an additional measure) | Communications were issued to staff on maintaining good mental health throughout the pandemic. Support organisations were also made known to staff. | Staff understood that they were supported by the organisation and were provided with signposting, if they required further assistance. |
| 3. | Publication and Promotion of the Disability Action Plan (Action Listed on our Disability Action Plan.) | The Disability Action Plan is published and available to view on our website. | The document is available for any member of staff or the public to view. The document demonstrates our commitment and accountability in working towards our agreed objectives. |

2 (d) What action measures were achieved to ‘**encourage others’** to promote the two duties:

|  | Encourage others Action Measures – This is not one of the named sections within our Disability Action Plan | Outputs | Outcome / Impact  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. | Recruitment and Selection Training (Action Listed under Recruitment heading on our Disability Action Plan) | This action was completed, training was provided to staff who were sitting on Recruitment and Selection Panels | The training encouraged others to promote equality of opportunity and positive attitudes towards disabled people through the Recruitment and Selection process to encourage participation by disabled people in public life. |
| 2 | Inclusion of Section 75 duties within our Job Descriptions. ( Not Listed on our original Disability Action Plan, this has been an additional measure) | We included Section 75 duties within all of our recruitment material over the past reporting period and communicate with staff at induction about the importance of the Office’s responsibilities under Section 75 and the responsibilities of the staff within it. | The impact of this is that staff will have a greater awareness of their responsibilities under Section 75. They will apply the principles of Equality of Opportunity and promoting good relations with their colleagues and customers and they will be held accountable for complying with these requirements. |
| 3. | Guaranteed Interview Scheme (Action Listed under Recruitment heading on our Disability Action Plan) | We continued to use the Guaranteed Interview Scheme this year in our Recruitment Competitions. | The guaranteed interview scheme allows applicants with a disability to be shortlisted for a position on the basis that they meet the essential criteria for a post. |
| 4. | The Office has registered as a member of Employers for Disability NI - (Action Listed under Leadership and Corporate Measures heading on our Disability Action Plan) | The Office now receives updates on issues affecting people with disabilities. | Increased knowledge and understanding of issues and methods of support to affected staff. |

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

|  | Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures) | Outputs | Outcomes / Impact  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Engagement with our staff who were shielding throughout the pandemic Not Listed on our original Disability Action Plan, this has been an additional measure) | We worked with our staff who were unable to attend the office due to having to shield. We ensured that their needs were met and that they were supported by the organisation. | We were able to provide these employees with the appropriate level of support. We liaised with our occupational health provider to seek advice on reasonable adjustments and we communicated these to our employees throughout the pandemic. We provided our staff with the materials required to enable them to work effectively from home. We kept them included in all corporate communications, so that they were informed of developments as they arose. |
| 2 | Reviewing of disability access to OPONI offices(Action Listed under Involving Disabled People heading on our Disability Action Plan) | This work has been undertaken by our Premises/ Health and Safety Officer | The building has been assessed for accessibility for disabled people, therefore allowing ease of access. |
| 3 | Development of Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans for relevant staff(Action Listed under Involving Disabled People heading on our Disability Action Plan) | This work has been undertaken by our Premises/ Health and Safety Officer | These assessments allow for support and inclusion to be provided for staff or visitors to the building who may have a disability and require additional measures of support when evacuating the building in an emergency situation.  |

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

|  | Action Measures partly achieved | Milestones/ Outputs  | Outcomes/Impacts | Reasons not fully achieved |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Identifying and promoting opportunities for more engagement with people who have a disability in key work areas | We support our staff who currently do have a disability and engage with them to try to support them in the workplace as best as possible. | This helps staff feel supported in the workplace and better equipped to participate fully in all aspects of their role. | Ongoing work, we will review this each year. |
| 2 | Reviewing internal and external communications to ensure that disabled people are portrayed in a positive way | This is something that the Office will continue to focus on.  | The Office published the Black Lives matter report in December 2020, as well as our annual report and new complaints and historical investigations leaflets. None of these dealt with issues relating to the positive portrayal of disabled people. | Due to the change in working patterns, and our reduced access to IT infrastructure arising from the pandemic, communications on developing these publications were not considered in line with the targets of the Disability Action Plan. |
| 3.4.5.6. | Raising awareness of specific barriers faced by people with disabilities through linking in with awareness days and weeks.Provide relevant training to staff on disability issuesFocus training activities on a specific aspect of disability each year to focus staff on relevant issues.Promote the use of the employment support programmes such as Workable (NI) | This has been partly achieved by specific work having been done with a few individual member of staff. | Targeted awareness training was offered and provided to increase understanding of the issues faced by some of our colleagues with a disability. | No further work was done on offering this service out to all staff due to absences from work due to the pandemic. |
| 7. | Joining instructions for all courses provided by OPONI to be ask for adjustments to be identified to enable attendees to be able participate fully in training. | We continue to include a statement offering adjustments for any staff with disabilities. | It is envisaged that this will allow all staff to fully participate in Organisational training events, promoting equality of opportunity. | This is an ongoing task. |
| 8. | Providing information for line managers when a member of staff declares their disability. | We continue to work to assist line managers with such issues by making referrals to Occupational Health and then having a follow up meeting with the employee and their line manager. | This helps employees feel better supported in the workplace and gives the manager an understanding of the key issues to consider. It provides both parties with an understanding of reasonable adjustments and provides details of further support. | This is an ongoing piece of work.  |
| 9. | Review of monitoring procedures to ensure that information about disabled people is captured accurately and in sufficient detail. | To record information on disability on our HR system. | To ensure that we are aware of any disabilities that our employees may have, so that we can support them and take appropriate action. | We currently record disabilities from our applicants through our recruitment process. We also have a record of our existing staff if anyone has declared to us that they have a disability. We are aware however, that staff can over time develop a disability and we do not have an accurate record of this information. We have not had the chance to focus on this over the reporting period due to restrictions throughout the pandemic. |
| 10. | To monitor and assess complaints from service users with a disability | To ensure that we have an understanding of the nature of such complaints. | To be able to address these concerns through further qualitative research. | We need further information, qualitative research on the exact nature of the complaints so that we can investigate these further in a meaningful way. |
| 11. | To seek the views of all OPONI staff and recognised Unions on the implementation of the Disability Action Plan and disability equality generally. | To gather feedback from staff that can be used to improve our practices in working with disabled colleagues and customers. | To receive useful feedback on the issues relating to disabled people and act on these recommendations. | Our staff have not been easily contactable to work on these issues throughout the pandemic. |

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

|  | Action Measures not met | Reasons |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Including a specific disability related question in the Equality section of the staff survey | We were unable to commission a staff survey this year due to the restrictions of Covid. |
| 2 | To provide opportunities for disability equality speakers to address staff via coffee and learn sessions. | Again due to restrictions of the pandemic, we were unable to carry out any face to face coffee and learn sessions. Because our staff were not fully equipped with IT access, we were unable to deliver this remotely either. |
|  |       |       |

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

(a) Qualitative

Normally this would be the role of the Equality Working group, but we have been unable to meet as we normally would have in previous years, due to restrictions placed upon us in the pandemic.

(b) Quantitative

The Research and Statistics department within our organisation continue to monitor satisfaction levels throughout the section 75 groups.

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

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

 No

If yes please outline below:

|  | Revised/Additional Action Measures | Performance Indicator | Timescale |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 |       |       |       |
| 2 |       |       |       |
| 3 |       |       |       |
| 4 |       |       |       |
| 5 |       |       |       |

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

No

1. **Outputs** – defined as act of producing, amount of something produced over a period, processes undertaken to implement the action measure e.g. Undertook 10 training sessions with 100 people at customer service level. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. **Outcome / Impact** – what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action? Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. **Local :** Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)