

## Newry, Mourne and Down District Council



### Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report 2019-2020

#### Contact:

➤ Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme	Name: Suzanne Rice Telephone: 0330 137 4887 Email: suzanne.rice@nmandd.org
➤ Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan	As above <input type="checkbox"/> (double click to open) Name: Telephone: Email:

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

[www.newrymouredown.org](http://www.newrymouredown.org)

#### Signature:

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

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

**This report reflects progress made between April 2019 and March 2020**

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

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

- 1 In 2019-20, please provide examples of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.**

*Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.*

As a public authority, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council continues to strive to ensure that programmes, initiatives and activities undertaken by Council promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

To fulfil its Section 75 statutory duties, the Council has developed an Equality Scheme which has been approved by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. It outlines corporate responsibilities, legal commitments and specific actions.

Below is a summary of some of the outcomes and improvements achieved in the 2019-2020 financial year:

#### **Financial Assistance Programme 2019-2020**

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has a number of financial assistance programmes which promote Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations. The following outlines the specific examples of funding allocated in the 2019 -2020 financial year:

- **Good Relations Financial Assistance Scheme** - £27,722 allocated to support 38 initiatives which promoted children and young people, shared space, celebrating cultural expression and promoting Good Relations at a local level.
- **Irish Language Financial Assistance Scheme** – £50,240 allocated to 14 Initiatives aimed at promoting the Irish Language.
- **Irish Language Bursary Scheme** – With a budget allocation of £40,000 the purpose of the scheme is to assist individuals to improve Irish Language skills through bursaries for Irish Language courses, including Gaeltacht colleges, intensive courses and third level courses.
- **Minority Communities Fund** – £7,130 allocated to 15 applications applied under the two distinct themes of the funding stream:
  - **Theme 1: Cultural Expression**  
This theme is for projects/initiatives that positively promotes minority community culture, tradition and identity.
  - **Theme 2: Positively engaging minority communities**

This theme is for projects/initiatives to build positive relations, raise awareness and understanding, address perceptions and promote respect for minority communities.

### **Five Year Review of Equality Scheme and Equality Action Plan 2020-2023**

As required, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council undertook a Five-year review of the Council's Equality Scheme in the period December 2019-January 2020. The Review which details minor changes was approved by Council in March 2020.

The review was undertaken in line with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's "*Guidance on conducting a 5-year review of an equality scheme (July 2016)*" and evaluated the effectiveness of our scheme in relation to the implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties relevant to our functions.

Following the review, the Council's Equality Scheme was revised as follows:

- The names of the Chief Executive and Council Chairperson have been updated in the Foreword.
- Council Officer names, job titles, email addresses and phone numbers have been updated.
- Chapter 8, regarding Council's complaints procedure has been amended to reflect advice outlined in the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Procedures for Complaints and Investigations (December 2019). Accordingly, the deadlines for responding to complaints contained within paragraph 8.5 have been amended from one (1) month and two (2) months to 20 working days and 40 working days respectively.
- Appendix 1 has been amended to reflect the current list of Councillors.
- Appendix 2 has been amended to reflect the proposed change to the Council's Management Structure.
- Appendix 5 reflects an updated list of consultees.
- The timetable for proposed measures has been updated (Appendix 6).

The Council acknowledges the continuing nature of the Section 75 statutory duties and believe the commitments set out within the revised Equality Scheme will ensure our effective compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties and assist us to monitor and review our progress.

As set out within section 2 of Council's Equality Scheme, Council is required to develop an action plan to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. This will enable Council to identify potential functional areas for further or better discharge of its Section 75 duties and inform its key strategic actions.

In Autumn 2019, Council began the process to develop the Council's Equality Action Plan for the 2020-2023 period. The draft Equality Action Plan 2020-2023 was developed through consultation with internal and external stakeholders,

and further to being approved by Council in December 2019, Council initiated a 12-week public consultation on the draft plan on 17 January 2020.

The draft Equality Action Plan 2020-2023 recommends key areas of activity and details positive actions relevant to our Council's functions. The positive action measures have been set out under the five principles of the Local Government Staff Commission's Equality and Diversity in Local Councils Framework.

### **Good Relations Programme & Council's District Electoral Area Forums**

Council continues with the implementation of the Council's Good Relations Programme through the Good Relations Strategy. The Council's Good Relations Strategy complements the themes outlined in the Together Building and United Community Strategy and the policy context both locally and regionally. Many of the actions detailed with the action plan are addressed at a local level through the Council's seven DEA forums.

In the 2019-2020 financial year each DEA forum was allocated a budget of £18,000 from the action plan to deliver good relations activities within their specific area.

Examples of initiatives supported included:

- cross community school's projects,
- cultural diversity events,
- crime prevention events for older people within the community,
- youth recognition awards and
- health and well-being events.

The Good Relations action plan also supports several initiatives directly such as those related to the Traveller Community and the management of bonfires.

Support for Travelling Community programmes is delivered through the Newry, Mourne and Down District Traveller Forum. The Traveller Forum aims to promote an inclusive and civil society in the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area by championing Traveller rights and addressing current provisions for the Traveller community within the district. Four meetings were held in the 2019-2020 financial year and issues discussed included Traveller accommodation provision, youth initiatives and Traveller support.

The Bonfire Management subgroup was supported through the action plan and managed by the PCSP held three meetings during this period. The group which consists of Elected Members and representatives from statutory agencies are collaborating to develop, with the assistance of the PEACE IV programme, protocol arrangements for bonfire management across the district.

### **Councillors' Equality and Good Relations Reference Group**

The Councillors' Equality and Good Relations Reference Group is a facilitated discussion space. The reference group is the Council's vehicle for considering and discussing politically sensitive and contentious issues, including those

relating to events, policy and procedure, single issues requiring specific consideration for advice, and guidance on the establishment of wider good relations fora etc with a view of reaching a common understanding, agreement and actions. Three meetings of the Equality and Good Relations Reference Group took place in the 2019-2020 period.

The Meetings were held on the 11 October 2019, 15 November 2019 and 30 January 2020. With purdah restrictions in place prior to the local Government elections in May 2019, the appointment of the newly elected representatives to Council alongside a review of the Terms of Reference for the Reference Group, the first meeting of this term of Councils meeting did not take place until the second quarter of the year.

A summary of issues discussed and addressed included:

- **Notice of Motion re Commemorating WW2 Veterans living in the district** – A notice of motion to formally acknowledge surviving World War II veterans living in the district.

Members also discussed correspondence received regarding VE Day 75 Celebrations on 8 May 2020 encouraging Council to take a lead in 'Nation's Toast to the Heroes of WW2' at 3.00pm on Friday 8 May 2020, and it was noted that a short ceremony scheduled to take place the top of the four highest peaks in the United Kingdom, which included Slieve Donard. Following the agreement of criteria, the type of recognition to be undertaken and a social media campaign to identify veterans, it was also agreed that Silver Poppies be presented to the four identified surviving veterans by Chairperson of Council in May 2020. *(Due to Covid 19 restrictions, the award of silver poppies was postponed)*

- **Notice of motion re Planting trees of remembrance** - *'The Council undertakes a review of the policy that refuses to allow the planting of trees in our parks to remember deceased relatives and friends. There should be a flexible policy to allow families and friends to plant a tree in council owned parks, to honour loved ones who have passed away'*

During discussion at the Reference Group meetings, Members were reminded that the Naming of Council Facilities Policy and the Guidelines and associated procedure were developed in relation to the recommendations arising from an Equality Commission investigation, and that creating more flexibility could be problematic in terms of consistency of consideration and decision-making by an assessment panel.

Following wider discussion consideration was given to a draft Policy for Memorial Trees and that Officers prepare a draft policy on memorials which would be considered at a future meeting of the Reference Group in 2020/2021.

➤ **Council support for a National Emergency Services Memorial**

The correspondence from Ards and North Down Borough Council asked Council to formally place on record support for the creation of national monument to act as a symbol of eternal gratitude for all emergency service personnel who have served or been killed during their duties. At the Councillors' Equality and Good Relations Reference Group meeting on 11 October 2019, members were advised that information on the National Emergency Services Memorial website advises:

*"The 999 Memorial will feature five figures to represent the emergency services (**police, fire, ambulance and NHS, maritime, mountain, lowland, cave and mine rescue**, and a spaniel service dog to represent all service animals). The paramedic figure will be female as an estimated 20% of the emergency services are female, and all figures will wear the uniform they would wear when responding to a 999 call."*

Further to this clarification, the correspondence was re-tabled at the November 2019 Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee for consideration and Council agreed to support the initiative.

➤ **Town and Village Signage**

This has been an ongoing item of discussion. Council has also received media queries and Councillors have enquired as to if and when Council would be rolling out replacement of town and village nameplates.

However, Council has not taken a decision with regard to approaches of erecting, or financially supporting the erection / upgrading of, town and village signage. Officers undertook a review of the current signage in place and it was agreed to invite representatives from the Department for Infrastructure to a future meeting to discuss this issue.

**The Ethnic Minority Support Centre**

In acknowledgement of the ongoing growth of migrant workers and ethnic minority community within the Newry and Mourne District Council area, the Council has continued to take forward projects aimed at addressing the needs of Black and Minority Ethnic residents.

The key initiative was to maintain and further develop the Ethnic Minority Support Centre based in Newry, and advice clinics in Newry Housing Executive, Newry Citizens Advice Bureau and Downpatrick. This has encompassed a number of projects aimed at addressing the needs of Black and Minority Ethnic residents, providing advice and support, signposting of services, and examining the barriers to services and cultural awareness. Advice and information is available in English, Bulgarian, Polish, Lithuanian, Russian and Romanian.

In 2019-2020 almost 2400 people availed of the service. The nationality of the clients requiring assistance were as follows:

- 55% Roma from Romania and Bulgaria

- 25% Polish Nationals
- 15% Lithuanians, Latvians as well as Moldavian Nationals
- 5% Syrian Nationals

A number of initiatives were held in the 2019-2020. Approximately 400 people attended seven Information sessions on the EU Settlement Scheme at venues across the district in Newry, Newtownhamilton, Kilkeel and Newcastle. The purpose was to make migrant communities aware of mandatory EU Settlement Scheme registration.

The centre has opened registration clinics and more than 200 individuals availed of guidance and support to secure pre-settled or settled status during the reporting period.

With regards to work undertaken with the clients from the Roma community, language and literacy are the main issues being addressed with advice and guidance offered on support services available.

In addition, 15 -20 people attend the weekly Arabic Clinic.

### **Engagement with Disability Organisations**

Officers continue to meet with representatives from the Cedar Foundation working in partnership on a number of objectives agreed through Solace. This includes the delivery of training programmes and offering opportunities for short term work placements.

Other examples of engagement include:

- The Council's Activity Officer (formerly Disability Liaison Officer) continued to work with local disability organisations to identify opportunities for people with a disability to play an active role in society be it through sporting or social activities.
- Engagement with the Department of Communities on the potential of rolling out a sign language partnership group in the Slieve Gullion DEA.
- Attendance at the Department of Communities stakeholder group meetings of the Access and Inclusion Programme 2019.
- Ongoing Member Accreditation from Employers for Disability Northern Ireland.
- 'Working with children and young people with special needs level 3 course delivered in Slieve Gullion DEA between January – March 2020.
- Continue to Implement the Shopmobility Scheme at Newcastle Centre, Newcastle. The Equality Action plan details this positive action and recommends investigating the expansion of the scheme to other towns within the district.
- The continued implementation of the Just a Minute, JAM Card initiative which includes training for all front-line services staff. JAM Card allows people with a learning difficulty, autism or communication barrier tell others they need 'Just A Minute' discreetly and easily.

- Working with organisations to deliver in house events for Council employees. Example of events include Men's Health Week events in June 2019 and World Mental Health day in October 2019.
- Council continues to implement the disability leisure membership scheme (Buddy Card Scheme and concessionary rates).
- Ongoing commitment and participation in the Local Government Staff Commission's Equality and Diversity in Local Council's initiative and appointment of Diversity Champions (3 Elected Members and 1 Officer).

### Sexual Orientation

Following the submission of a successful bid by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, Newry BID and Newry Rainbow to host the 2019 UK and Ireland Pride, Council committed significant financial and logistical support to Newry Rainbow Community to assist them with the hosting of the events in August 2019. Numerous events took place including comedy nights, 'Trad in Newry' and the annual pride parade and a concert on Pride day.

### Age

The Newry, Mourne and Down Age Friendly Alliance began preparing a new draft strategy for 2020-2031 in this reporting period.

While concentrating on the development of new strategy the Age Friendly Alliance achieved their committed objectives in the 2019-2020 period. These include the Silverscreening Project which saw 272 residents in attendance. Attendees were provided with information of support services available focusing on personal safety and safety in the home. Other events included:

- **Keep Warm Packs** - 173 packs were delivered to older people in need across the legacy Newry and Mourne area.
- **Positive Ageing 2019** - Five events took place to mark the celebration of Positive Ageing Month. The showcase event took place on 2 October 2019, with 271 members of the public and approximately 60 stand holders which provided valuable information on their service attended the event. Three further events also took place across the District in October 2019. Their purpose was to identify gaps in current services, promotion of current services, reducing isolation, generating connections and building stronger working relationships and a greater sense of belonging and giving back to the community.
- **Dementia Cinema** - Council has worked in partnership with Alzheimer's Society in conducting a needs assessment, identifying the needs of people with dementia and building a programme reflective of these needs. Council teamed with Newry Arts Centre to provide a cinema experience and identified appropriate funding streams. 60 people from across the legacy district of Newry and Mourne (31 from south Armagh, 22 from the Mournes area and 7 from Newry), diagnosed with dementia and their carer attended the initiative which mirrored the experienced from an actual



PART A

cinema. Participants felt at ease attending the event and have asked for the event to be available on a 6-monthly basis.

The examples detailed above provides a snapshot of examples of how Council is meeting its Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations obligations and details on the outcomes achieved.

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

As noted in our response to Section 1, Council's Equality Action Plan recommends key areas of activity and details positive actions relevant to our Council's functions.

The positive action measures have been set out under the five principles of the Local Government Staff Commission's Equality and Diversity in Local Councils Framework. The following are examples of specific objectives and the impact of the Equality Action Plan measures in the 2019-2020 financial year:

**Principle 1: ensuring we work in a non – discriminatory environment, promote equality of opportunity and model of best practise in equality and good relations**

**Objective – To continue to develop an understanding of the Council's duty to promote Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations**

**Outcome and Impact**

- Council continues to deliver Equality and Good Relations Training to Staff and elected members to embed an Equality and Good Relations ethos across the organisation.
- Council continued to utilise the Councillors' Equality and Good Relations Reference Group during 2019-2020 to address issues of a sensitive and contentious nature. Three meetings were held in the reporting period.
- Information on Equality and Good Relations continued to be provided to all new staff joining the organisation. Code of Conduct training is provided to Elected Members. Further training provided to all Elected Members following the May 2019 local government elections.
- The Council's Good Relations Action Plan has been implemented with the seven District Electoral Area Forums being the delivery mechanism for Council. Initiatives undertaken during the reporting period include the young people's RESPECT project in the Crotlieve DEA, cross community women's history project in the Mourne and the 'Young drivers' project in the Rowallane DEA.
- Continued the provision of a Good Relations and Minority Communities funding programmes for community groups and organisations to avail of for good relations initiatives in their local area. Over £7000 was allocated to 15 applicants under the themes of cultural expression and positively engaging with minority communities.

- Continue to offer and expand on support services available through the Council's Ethnic Minority Support Centre. In 2019-2020 almost 2400 people availed of the service.
- Continue to utilise the Council's Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Traveller Forum whose objective is to champion the rights of the traveller community living in the district. Four meetings were held in the reporting period.

## **Principle 2: Ensuring all our decisions are based on evidence to assess the likely impact of a policy on the promotion of equality and good relations**

### **Objective – To ensure that all policies and procedures are equality screened**

#### **Outcome and Impact**

- 23 policies were equality screened in the reporting period.
- The quarterly policy screening reports were tabled at the Council's Strategy, Policy and Resource Committee and made available on the Council's website.
- A review of the Council's Corporate Reporting Template and the responses detailed in the Equality and Good Relations implications section of the reports provided by officers was also undertaken during the reporting period. The review highlighted that in some cases this section of the report was not completed or the wording 'non-applicable' was included.

To further improve evidence-based decision-making and monitor ongoing compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties, Council's Senior Management Team agreed that this section of the report be amended to include a number of statements for officers to select indicating the level of regard given to the proposal's equality and good relations implications.

- The Equality consultee list was reviewed and updated in this reporting period. There are now over 70 email contacts on the Council's Equality database. This consultation tool is an excellent engagement resource for Council.

## **Principle 3: Providing access to services, facilities and information**

### **Objective - To have relevant section 75 data**

#### **Outcome and Impact**

- The Evidence and Research section in Council continued to provide relevant data to officers to assist them with Equality Screenings and supporting decision making.
- Monitoring data is also compiled for all users on council facilities. This data identifies those availing of Council facilities and highlighting gaps in provision.

**Objective – Services and facilities are accessible to all parts of the community**

**Outcome and Impact**

- The Shop mobility scheme continued to be utilised in the Mournes DEA during the reporting period. Due to the success of this scheme, officers are investigating the potential of the scheme being available in other towns in the district.
- Autism Initiatives facilitated the delivery of Autism specific training programmes for 30 businesses in Newcastle and 25 businesses in Kilkeel.

**Principle 4: Recruiting and employing people fairly**

**Objective – Integration of Section 75 statutory duties within job description**

**Outcome and Impact**

Examples of specific relevant duties and responsibilities listed in new job descriptions include the following:

- Promote diversity across the organisation and in the Department by adhering to the Council's Equal Opportunity policies and procedures and avoiding all forms of discrimination both as an employer and a service provider.
- Promote Equality and Diversity across the organisation by demonstrating an open commitment to and actively promoting and celebrating diversity, promoting social inclusion and community cohesion.
- Work towards improving equality and diversity by ensuring that allocated targets to reduce inequalities and promote good relations are achieved.

PART A

**3** Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2019-2020 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

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

Please provide any details and examples:

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

Please provide any details and examples:

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

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

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

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

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

Other *(please specify and give details):*

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

### Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)

- 4 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 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:

Recruitment processes continued during the 2019-2020 financial year. Examples of specifically relevant duties and responsibilities listed in new job descriptions include the following:

- Promote diversity across the organisation and in the Department by adhering to the Council's Equal Opportunity policies and procedures and avoiding all forms of discrimination both as an employer and a service provider.
- Promote Equality and Diversity across the organisation by demonstrating an open commitment to and actively promoting and celebrating diversity, promoting social inclusion and community cohesion.
- Work towards improving equality and diversity by ensuring that allocated targets to reduce inequalities and promote good relations are achieved.

- 5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2019-20 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

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

Please provide any details and examples:

- The **Council's Corporate Plan** outlines a commitment to core values to being citizen focused, accountable, collaborative, sustainable and fair. We are also committed to delivering on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations in accordance with our statutory duties as laid out in Section 75 of the

Northern Ireland Act 1998. In January 2019, Council appointed an independent consultant to undertake all engagement and development of the new Corporate Plan. The new objectives of the draft Corporate Plan 2020-2023 are underpinned by the principles of equality of opportunity and good relations.

- The **Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2019-2020** made direct reference to the Section 75 statutory duties and actions relating to the implementation of the Council's Equality Scheme.
- The **Council's Performance Improvement Plan 2019-2020** makes direct reference to its statutory duties and the performance improvement objectives will deliver positive outcomes for all citizens of the district in terms of Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations.

In the 2019-20 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? *(tick all that apply)*

- 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 2017-18 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

During the reporting period the Council's equality and policy functions were located under the Corporate Services Directorate, within the Corporate Planning and Policy Department's Corporate Policy Section.

The Corporate Services' Directorate Business Plan 2019-2020 makes direct reference to the Section 75 statutory duties and actions relating to the implementation of the Council's Equality Scheme. This outlined key directorate actions, and a timetable / measure of success, related directly to Council's agreed Corporate Plan Objective of transformed & modernised the Council, providing accessible as well as value for money services.

In addition, as stated previously, all employees of the predecessor organisations have transferred to Newry, Mourne and Down District Council under TUPE

arrangements. Examples of specifically relevant duties and responsibilities listed in new job descriptions include the following:

- Promote diversity across the organisation and in the Department by adhering to the Council’s Equal Opportunity policies and procedures and avoiding all forms of discrimination both as an employer and a service provider.
- Promote Equality and Diversity across the organisation by demonstrating an open commitment to and actively promoting and celebrating diversity, promoting social inclusion and community cohesion.
- Work towards improving equality and diversity by ensuring that allocated targets to reduce inequalities and promote good relations are achieved.

**Equality action plans/measures**

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

Actions completed:	20	Actions ongoing:	4	Actions to commence:	0
--------------------	----	------------------	---	----------------------	---

Please provide any details and examples (*in addition to question 2*)

In the final year of implementation of the Councils Equality Action Plan

Examples of actions completed to date are:

- The utilisation of the Equality and Good Relations Reference Group during 2019 -2020. Three meetings were held in this reporting period.
- Implementation of the Good Relations Action Plan which is delivered through the District Electoral Area Forum. The allocated budgets have been spent and projects detailed in the DEA action plans have been delivered.
- Induction sessions delivered to new staff.
- Council has produced a corporate consultation and engagement toolkit which aims to ensure effective consultation is undertaken.
- A corporate consultation mechanism has been put in place and this ensures that all consultation received is considered and processed to the relevant department for action.
- The Equality consultee list was reviewed and updated.
- Delivery of Equality and Good Relations Training to all new seasonal staff appointments in June 2019.
- Collaborative working with disability organisations.
- Continued the screening of all new and current policies.
- Continuing to ensure that council facilities are accessible to all.
- Continuing to facilitate reasonable for adjustments within the workplace.

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

There are no changes to the equality action plan in the 2019-2020 reporting period.



9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2019-20 reporting period, the following have been identified: *(tick all that apply)*

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

**Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)**

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

- All the time                       Sometimes                       Never

11 Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2019-20 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

The Councils Head of Corporate Policy and the Corporate Policy and Equality Officer were members of a working group of designated officers responsible for the development of the Council's new Corporate Plan 2020-2023. Extensive consultation was undertaken with various groups between April and June 2019 and officers ensured that access and the availability of information was paramount for this consultation. Information was available both online and in hard copy and 'drop in clinics' were held in several locations across the district to give those who could not access the information online the opportunity to provide comments on the draft plan and in particular the proposed council objectives. Advertisements were also placed in all local newspapers which outlined the dates, times and locations of the events and how people would respond to consultation. Corporate databases were also used to promote the consultation.

12 In the 2019-20 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: *(tick all that apply)*

- Face to face meetings
- Focus groups
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing

PART A

- Questionnaires
- Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
- Internet discussions
- Telephone consultations
- Other (*please specify*): DEA public engagement events.

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:

As stated above, various consultation and engagement methods were used during the consultation stage of the new corporate plan developed. The majority of the respondents forwarded their comments via the online survey. A total of 82 responses were received. Approximately 20 people also attended the 'drop in clinics'.

The feedback from the 12-week consultation period for the draft Equality and draft Disability action plans will be reported upon in next year's annual report.

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

Yes       No       Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The Corporate Policy and Equality Officer continued to utilise the dedicated equality database of contacts to engage with and to inform on all aspects of the Council's Equality functions throughout the reporting period.

- 14** Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2019-20 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes       No       Not applicable – no commitment to review

Yes. When undertaking the five-year review of the Equality Scheme, the consultation list was again reviewed in December 2019. Those on the current list were contacted to confirm if they wished to continue to be on the listing. New contact organisations were also added to the email listing with their approval.

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

Equality screening templates and reports associated with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Equality Scheme commitments can be accessed on Council's website at: <https://www.newrymournedown.org/equality>

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

23
----

**16** Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2019-20:

0	Policy consultations conducted with <b>screening</b> assessment presented.
0	Policy consultations conducted <b>with an equality impact assessment (EQIA)</b> presented.
0	Consultations for an <b>EQIA</b> 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:

Not-applicable.

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

Yes       No concerns were raised       No       Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

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

**19** Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2019-20 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes       No       Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

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

**20** From the Equality Scheme monitoring arrangements, was there an audit of existing information systems during the 2019-20 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes  | <input type="checkbox"/> No, already taken place |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, scheduled to take place at a later date | <input type="checkbox"/> 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)*

- |                              |  |   |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable |
|------------------------------|--|---|

Please provide any details and examples:

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

Non-applicable.

**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:

- Monitoring data of users of the Ethnic Minority Support Centre provides the evidence required for Council to determine the types of service provision that needs to be offered.
- In line with council policy, all participants of training programmes complete monitoring forms which evaluates the delivery and content of the programme and helps identify potential training programmes going forward.

- All Good Relations activity is evaluated and monitored. Those participating in programmes and activities must complete information at which they outline the impact of the programme for them, their understanding of Good Relations and this data assists in identifying need and programmes going forward.
- During the reporting period the Corporate Policy and Equality Officer undertook a review of the Council's Corporate Reporting Template and monitored the responses detailed in the Equality and Good Relations implications section of the reports provided by officers. The review highlighted that in some cases this section of the report was not completed or the wording 'non-applicable' was included.
- To further improve evidence-based decision-making and monitor ongoing compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties, Council's Senior Management Team agreed that this section of the reporting template be amended to include a number of statements for officers to select to indicate the level of regard given to the proposal's equality and good relations implications. Within the template officers can also provide additional information to support their response and proposal.

#### Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)

- 24 Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2019-20, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

<b>Training</b>	<b>Number of sessions</b>
Promoting Dignity at Work	13
Corporate Induction – includes presentation on anti-discrimination legislation, diversity and Council's statutory duties (Section 75, Disability Duties and Rural Needs)	15
Dealing with difficult people	3
Safeguarding training	4
Trade Unions – Performance management engagement	1
Introduction to mindfulness	1
Investigating Officer training	6

Competency based interview skills	3
Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees	9
Personal effectiveness training	1
Professional Communication Skills	1
Workplace Health & Wellbeing	2
Procurement training	5
Recruitment and selection	8
Emotional Intelligence Training	1
E-learning roadshows	4
Active retirement workshop	1

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

The delivery of Code of Conduct training embedded the need to ensure that Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations is at the core of local government. Following the election in May 2019, all newly elected and re-elected councillors undertook this training.

Corporate Induction training also ensures new staff are equipped with the knowledge in relation to what is required from them in their post.

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

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

The monitoring data from clients availing of services from the Ethnic Minority Support Centre identifies the formats of information required and the translation services being made available.

### Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

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

Insert number here:

0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

### Section 3: Looking Forward

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

The five-year review of the Equality Scheme was undertaken during the 2019-2020 reporting period. The revised scheme was considered approved by Council in March 2020 and has been forwarded to Kevin Oakes, Equality Officer, Advice and Compliance, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

- 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 relevant officers are engaging with officials from the Council's Human Resources Department to develop training modules for an E-Learning Training programme. It is envisaged that this training tool will be a useful asset considering the current social distancing arrangements which are now in place in the office and workspaces and the increase of employees working from home.

The 12- week consultation is now closed for the draft Equality and draft Disability Action Plans. All responses and comments will be considered within the next reporting period. In light of COVID-19 restrictions Officers will also review the plans and actions, in particular the time frame for a number of the actions.

In relation to screening, officers must continue to ensure that they meet section 75 obligations, including that related to changes of service delivery due to the current restrictions in place. Officers will continue to avail of advice and guidance from the Equality Commission and Section 75 guidance from the Equality Commission and a link to a webinar delivered by Paul Oakes, Manager of Advice & Compliance, ECNI has been circulated to the Council's Senior and Corporate Management Teams.

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

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

To ensure that Council continues to comply with its statutory obligations, we will continue to avail of advice, guidance and expertise from the Commission in relation to the delivery of our functions.

As stated above, to assist with this process Section 75 guidance from the Equality Commission for developing Covid-19 related policies and a link to a webinar delivered by Paul Oakes, Manager of Advice & Compliance, ECNI has been circulated to the Council's Senior and Corporate Management Teams.



**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:**

8

Fully achieved

Partially achieved

Not achieved

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

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

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs <sup>i</sup>	Outcomes / Impact <sup>ii</sup>
National <sup>iii</sup>			
Regional <sup>iv</sup>			
Local <sup>v</sup>	Newry, Mourne and Down District Council directly promotes positive attitudes towards disabled people through service delivery and programming which includes a disability programme under Active and Healthy Communities Sports Development. This is delivered by Council's Activity Officer (formerly Disability Liaison Officer) which	Continue the implementation of a disability leisure membership scheme (Buddy Card and concessionary rates).  As a member of Council Leisure Centres, people with	Enables those living with a disability or restricted mobility to enjoy access to swimming pools / leisure facilities.  Increased access to leisure facilities and a broad, appropriate and relevant programme of activities.

PART B

	<p>includes a disability leisure membership scheme, core classes and development of a disability sports hub.</p> <p>Raise awareness of the services and facilities for disabled people provided by the Council.</p> <p>Engage with forums in the district.</p> <p>Providing work experience and job opportunities for people with disabilities.</p>	<p>disability can enjoy all the facilities on offer as these are totally accessible and striving to achieve excellence in accessibility. We have core groups led by our EBA 2020 Coaches that include Sofa to Saddle, Aqua chat, Strength and Balance classes, yoga, tai chi, pilates, cycling, rugby, athletics, and danderball.</p> <p>Autism Friendly swim sessions introduced in the Council's Leisure Centre.</p> <p>The continued implementation of the 'Just a Minute', JAM Card initiative which includes training for all front-line services staff.</p> <p>In June 2019, Officers along met with representatives from Department for</p>	<p>JAM Card allows people with a learning difficulty, autism or communication barrier tell others they need 'Just A Minute' discreetly and easily. Those with a communication barrier are often reluctant or unable to tell others about their condition, and the JAM Card allows this to happen in a simple, effective non-verbal manner.</p> <p>Improved access to facilities and services.</p> <p>Development and promotion of programmes of activity involving people with a disability.</p> <p>Awareness raising and support initiatives in the community.</p> <p>Awareness raising and support initiatives in the community.</p>
--	---	--	--

PART B

		<p>Communities to investigate developing a pilot sign language initiative in the Slieve Gullion DEA.</p> <p>The Council's Activity Officer continued to work with local disability organisations to identify opportunities for people with a disability to play an active role in society be it through sporting or social activities.</p> <p>Officers continued to meet with representatives from the Cedar Foundation to develop training programmes for Council employees and also investigate the possibility of short-term work placements for Cedar clients. The Cedar Foundation is a support organisation that assists people with a disability, Autism or Brain Injury to live the life they choose.</p>	<p>Reduce rural isolation and increase social inclusion for both carers and people living with Alzheimers.</p> <p>Support service for young people who are 'carers' for family.</p> <p>Support services and awareness raising within the community and within Council.</p> <p>Availability of support services in the community.</p> <p>Ensuring people with disabilities have access to Council facilities and other venues.</p> <p>Ensuring people with disabilities have access to local services. Provide support services for local businesses.</p>
--	--	---	--

PART B

		<p>People with disabilities provided with work experience and job opportunities.</p> <p>In January 2020 the delivery of Level 3 'Working with Children and young people with disabilities' course.</p> <p>Delivery of Alzheimer's support event in the Rowallane District Electoral Area (DEA).</p> <p>In November 2019, the delivery of the 'Young Carers' event in Downpatrick and Rowallane DEAs.</p> <p>Delivery of 'Dementia Cinema' community support initiative and delivery of 'Virtual Dementia Tour Bus'</p>	<p>Disabled people encouraged to directly participate in public life as valued employees.</p>
--	--	--	---

PART B

		<p>training programme for council employees.</p> <p>Delivery of mental health and well-being events for council employees.</p> <p>Council representation of the Newry Locality Planning Group. Initiatives include the 'Supporting inclusion of children and young people with a disability' consultation report.</p> <p>Council representation on the DfC stakeholder group on Access and Inclusion programme. Assisting the refurbishment works to the St Patricks Visitor Centre in Downpatrick and the installation of an inclined platform lift in Warrenpoint Town Hall.</p>	
--	--	--	--

PART B

		<p>Collaboration with Kilkeel Chamber of Commerce to deliver Autism friendly training to 25 local businesses.</p> <p>Continued collaboration with the Cedar Foundation.</p>	
--	--	---	--

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Provide appropriate training to concerning the disability duties	<p>Promoting Dignity at Work – 13 training sessions for employees.</p> <p>Local Government Code of Conduct for Employees - 9 training sessions for employees.</p>	Greater awareness and understanding of disability issues, the standards of behaviour required of employees and principle of equality of opportunity.
2	Recruitment and selection panels to be trained in the disability duties	Recruitment and Selection - 8 training sessions delivered to employees throughout the 2019-2020 financial year.	Interviewers participating in the Council’s recruitment and selection process are aware of the Disability Duties and other employment related matters.
3	Include the new disability duties in staff training.	General Equality Awareness training delivered at 15 induction training sessions for new and seasonal staff.	This training provided participants with an overall appreciation of the employment equality legislation in Northern Ireland,

PART B

			raising awareness of key terms relating to equality legislation (including the disability duties), equality areas covered by employment equality legislation in Northern Ireland, examples of how discrimination can occur in relation to equality areas, and Council responsibilities and employee responsibilities under that legislation.
--	--	--	--

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	Engage with the disability forums in the district.	Officers continued met with representatives from the Cedar Foundation to discuss the development of training programmes for Council employees and also investigate the possibility of short term work placements for Cedar clients. The Cedar Foundation is a support organisation that assists people with a disability, Autism or Brain Injury to live the life they choose.	Development and promotion of programmes of activity involving people with a disability and reviewing and improving access to information and services.

PART B

<p>2</p>	<p>Raise awareness of the services and facilities for disabled people provided by the Council</p>	<p>Continued the Implementation of the Disability leisure membership scheme. (eg Buddy Card and concessionary rates)</p> <p>Continue the implementation of the 'Just a Minute', JAM Card initiative which includes training for all front-line services staff.</p> <p>Promotion of services available on council social media platforms.</p> <p>Continued implementation of a Shopmobility Scheme from Newcastle Centre, Newcastle and also Delamont Park</p>	<p>Increased awareness of accessibility and access to Council services and facilities.</p> <p>JAM Card allows people with a learning difficulty, autism or communication barrier tell others they need 'Just A Minute' discreetly and easily. Those with a communication barrier are often reluctant or unable to tell others about their condition, and the JAM Card allows this to happen in a simple, effective non-verbal manner.</p> <p>Positive impact and encouragement for people with mobility issues to participate in public life through increasing access to services and enhance tourism experience for people with disability.</p>
	<p>Embed the disability duties into the Council's corporate consultation process.</p>	<p>Relevant employees aware of the requirement to mainstream equality and disability principles and considerations when undertaking consultation processes.</p>	<p>Arrangements for consulting reflect the importance of consultation in all aspects of the implementation of our statutory duties.</p>



PART B

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	<p>Council became a signatory of the Equality Commission’s ‘Every Customer Counts’ initiative in May 2018 and is working directly with Autism Initiatives Northern Ireland in relation to designation of Newcastle as an Autism Friendly town.</p>	<p>Working with Autism Initiatives and the Equality Commission, Council has continued to recruit businesses to sign up to the ‘Every Customer Counts’ initiative. 40 businesses have signed up to the charter.</p> <p>To date, 30 Newcastle shop owners/staff have attended Autism Friendly training.</p> <p>In collaboration with Kilkeel Chamber of Commerce, 25 businesses have participated in Autism Friendly training.</p>	<p>Improved access to and delivery of services.</p>

PART B

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	Provide work experience for people with disabilities.	People with disabilities provided with work experience and Job opportunities.	Disabled people encouraged to directly participate in public life as valued employees.

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

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

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	N/A	

PART B

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

- Evaluation / feedback from training sessions
- Discussion / consultation with disability groups and individuals

(b) Quantitative

- Number of employees who have received training
- Number of Elected Members who have received training
- Number of documents requested in alternative formats
- Number of complaints received

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	N/A		

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?

Council has undertaken a five-year review of the Disability Action Plan and a draft Disability Action Plan 2020-2023 was prepared during the reporting period.

Further to consideration and comment by Council's Senior and Corporate Management Teams, the draft plan was tabled at our December 2019 Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee. Further to ratification at the Council's monthly meeting in January 2020, the draft Disability Action Plan 2020-2023 was subject to a 12-week public consultation during the period 16 January – 10 April 2020.

The finalised Disability Action Plan 2020-2023, taking into consideration consultation responses and comments, will be tabled for consideration and adoption by Council during 2020/2021.

---

<sup>i</sup> **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.

<sup>ii</sup> **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.

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

<sup>iv</sup> **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level

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

<sup>vi</sup> **Milestones** – Please outline what part progress has been made towards the particular measures; even if full output or outcomes/ impact have not been achieved.