

Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report April 2019 – March 2020

This Report presents the NIO's progress in fulfilling statutory equality and good relations duties, and implementing Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plans commitments with reference to Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

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

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

[Publication of the reviewed Equality Scheme for the Northern Ireland Office - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Signature:



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.

The Northern Ireland Office is dedicated to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations in Northern Ireland as it works towards its strategic priority of **supporting greater inclusion, tolerance, and openness in Northern Ireland**. The NIO as an employer also puts equality at the heart of its core values of inclusiveness, empowerment and flexibility.

Key delivery actions for 2019/20 that contribute to our statutory responsibilities and commitments include:

- Expansion of the NIO Diversity and Inclusion Network and specifically on D&I we have:
 - linked up colleagues in the NIO with the MOJ diversity networks including; PROUD (Black and Ethnic Minority); The Disability Network; and SPIRIT (representing Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender staff).
 - Maintained dedicated Diversity Champions at Board Level and have appointed Diversity & Inclusion Advocates in business areas which are all supported by a D&I steering group.
 - Maintained a Women's Network within the Department with events held throughout the reporting period.

- Expansion of the Staff Engagement Group and regular rotation of membership to ensure equal opportunity to all colleagues.

- Proactively ensured that the perspectives and contributions from the Diversity & Inclusion networks and Staff Engagement Group are considered by senior membership through regular attendance at senior leadership meetings and the Executive Committee. These groups and their standing within the leadership structures help create and promote a workplace that embraces difference.

- Developed, implemented and promoted new policies and initiatives on Menopause and Staff Mental Health & Wellbeing. The Staff Engagement Group were involved in this work.

- Developed and implemented a new five stranded Diversity and Inclusion plan covering: *culture and behaviours; improving representation; talent management; improving capability and leadership; and accountability and governance*. As part of this plan the Department has refreshed it's "Staff Welcome & Induction Pack" to ensure "Diversity within the NIO" is a core part of that.
- Maintained our enrolment in the Disability Confident Scheme with continued accreditation as a Disability Confident Leader.
- Continued to promote our Departmental Equality Scheme with a quick guide easily available to all staff on the Intranet.
- Encouraged staff to undertake online diversity training in both the London and Belfast office and actively promoted diversity events such as Black History month.
- Worked with key partners, such as the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and the Northern Ireland Civil Service to ensure that all staff had access to the appropriate personnel policies and procedures to support equality of opportunity in the workplace.
- Advertised single points of contact in the MoJ and NICS to provide staff with impartial, confidential advice if they have any concerns in relation to bullying, harassment or discrimination. In addition, a Non-Executive Director was appointed as an independent point of contact for staff who have any concerns on these issues.
- Sponsored a number of Arm's Length Bodies, including the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland, and the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland. Each of which, in its own way, plays a key part in ensuring equality of opportunity across a variety of fields, and which report on Section 75 compliance separately to the Equality Commission.
- Throughout the reporting period, NIO Ministers and officials have continued to engage with key political, community and civil society representatives on those aspects of the Stormont House, Fresh Start and New Decade New Approach Agreements, all of which impact on, and are driven by, community cohesion and equality.

*Further detail about the functions and operation of the Northern Ireland Office can be found in the **Annual Report and Accounts 2019-20** published on www.nio.gov.uk*

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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).

NIO Update on Equality Action Plan 2019/20			
Action	Expected result	Responsibility	Status Update
1. Work with wider Government and the Northern Ireland Executive Departments to promote good relations by visiting all sections of the community and engaging with the broader political and civic society when organising Secretary of State, Ministerial and VIP visits.	Any opportunities to promote the interests of Section 75 groups will be identified and acted upon. Promotion of good relations.	Deputy Director Engagement Group	Completed for 2019/20 and will continue in future reporting periods. The NIO Engagement Group continues to support Ministers and all teams in NIO to engage and meet with all sections of the community in Northern Ireland to promote good relations on a range of issues. This includes promoting good relations through a number of Royal visits. Further information on the programme of visits and engagement can be found on the NIO website.
2. The Department will take a fully human rights compliant approach, and give meaningful consideration to implications of activities on Section 75 groups in exercising the Secretary of State's powers under the Justice and Security Act 2007 in relation to the implementation of security measures, including conducting annual reviews.	Assurance that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SofS is fully compliant with all S75 obligations in his operation of powers under the Justice and Security Act 2007. All NIO decisions are proportionate and due consideration is given to any potential impacts on Section 75 groups. 	Deputy Director Security & Protection Group	Completed for 2019/20 and will continue in future reporting periods. All relevant NIO policy decisions and changes have undergone an appropriate screening process. The Department also continues to sponsor the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and supports the Commission in their role to promote human rights in Northern Ireland and beyond.

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<p>3. Conduct annual analysis of the outcomes of the Staff Survey to determine whether or not any issues / trends have emerged which would provide opportunities to better meet the Department's Section 75 responsibilities</p>	<p>Any opportunities to further promote the interests of Section 75 groups within and across NIO staff will be identified and acted upon</p>	<p>Deputy Director Corporate Operations Group</p>	<p>Completed for 2019/20 and will continue in future reporting periods.</p> <p>The results of the 2019 People Survey were encouraging with an 89% participation rate. A specific "Inclusion and Fair Treatment" section was included within the Survey, which had an approval rating score of 82%. 87% of staff indicated that they are treated with respect by the people they work with and 80% responded that they think that the Office respects individual differences (e.g. cultures, working styles, backgrounds, ideas, etc.)". The Department maintains a focus on our zero tolerance approach to bullying, harassment and discrimination and has agreed to develop a network of Anti Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination champions to support colleagues with training arranged for September 2020.</p>
<p>4. Monitor staff grievance procedures to ensure that any action, which might be taken to improve Section 75 outcomes for staff, is acted upon.</p>	<p>Any opportunities to further promote the interests of Section 75 groups within and across NIO staff will be identified and acted upon.</p>	<p>Deputy Director Corporate Operations Group</p>	<p>Completed for 2019/20 and will continue in future reporting periods.</p> <p>No formal grievances were raised during the reporting period. The HR team continues to promote best practice in this area.</p>
<p>5. In developing HR policies, the Department will give particular consideration to the extent to which these support and promote the interests of Section 75 groups</p>	<p>NIO HR policies will, as appropriate, take account of the needs of Section 75 groups.</p>	<p>Deputy Director Corporate Operations Group</p>	<p>Completed for 2019/20 and will continue in future reporting periods.</p> <p>All NIO policies including HR policies were equality screened during the reporting period.</p> <p>Some of the NIO HR policies are aligned to MOJ. However all MOJ policies are screened & assessed against the requirements of the Equality Act 2020, in line with other Whitehall Government Departments.</p>

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

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

Please provide any details and examples:

The Department has taken forward reform to Northern Ireland's abortion law, consistent with section 9 of the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc) Act 2019. To ensure full compliance with all statutory equality requirements and to enable an open and inclusive debate on these issues the Department ran a shortened six-week public consultation, consistent with the NIO's Equality Scheme, which received over 21,000 responses.

As well as written responses, the Department facilitated extensive engagement with key interested groups, including the Northern Ireland political parties, women's groups, medical practitioners, service providers, civil society, and religious organisations, with all responses and views considered and taken into account when determining the final policy position on these issues and the subsequent legislation. The NIO fully applied its Departmental Equality Scheme throughout the process and engaged with the Equality Commission to ensure robust screening and a better consultation on these policies.

The Department has also delivered the legalisation of same-sex marriage and opposite-sex civil partnerships, and conversion entitlements, in Northern Ireland consistent with section 8 of the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc) Act 2019. To ensure full compliance with all statutory equality requirements and to enable an open and inclusive debate on these issues the Department ran two shortened, six-week public consultations, consistent with the NIO's Equality Scheme, on two key issues:

- Same sex religious marriage, which received 4,322 responses
- conversion entitlements which received 2,284 responses

As well as written responses, the Department engaged with relevant stakeholders in Northern Ireland, including LGBT organisations, civil society and religious organisations. The NIO fully applied its Departmental Equality Scheme throughout the process and engaged with the Equality Commission to ensure robust screening and a better consultation on these policies.

- 1) ***The Department has consulted publicly on a scheme to make payments to victims who have been injured in Troubles related incidents.*** To ensure full compliance with all statutory equality requirements and to enable an open and inclusive debate on this issue the Department ran a public consultation which received over 300 responses. The NIO also worked closely with the Victims Commissioner and facilitated extensive engagement with key interested groups to ensure all views were taken into account when determining the final policy position and the subsequent legislation. The NIO fully applied its Departmental Equality Scheme throughout the process and worked closely with the Equality Commission to ensure robust screening and a better consultation process.
- 2) ***The Department has also*** delivered structured external engagement on the issue of Exiting the EU. This engagement has been at both Ministerial and official level, with political, business, civil society and community representatives,

including in 'hard to reach' communities. This engagement has helped the UK Government on understanding the impact of EU Exit on those living and working in Northern Ireland, particularly in border areas.

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:

For all issues set out in section 3 - the responses to the consultations and insight from engagement has been analysed to identify and address any direct impacts on section 75 categories.

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):

The views presented during the consultation on the Victims Payment Scheme helped inform final policy decisions that were taken. A Government response, summarising the views from the consultation, was published on the same day that regulations were published (31st Jan 2020).

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

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

Other (please specify and give details):

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

Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)

4 *Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2019-20 reporting period? (tick one box only)*

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

Please provide any details and examples:

All members of staff continue to have a specific "Diversity & Inclusion" objective incorporated within their personal objectives. In addition, members of the Corporate Governance and HR Teams within the Corporate Operations Group are responsible for ensuring that Section 75 duties and responsibilities are promoted across the Department. Policy teams are also all made aware of their section 75 screening obligations when considering new policy or legislation, or significant changes to existing policies and legislation and work cross-department and with legal colleagues to ensure these obligations are reflected in their everyday work. As such, specific reference to equality duties is included in job descriptions.

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:

As highlighted above all staff, including the senior team, now have a specific "Diversity & Inclusion" objective incorporated within their personal objectives which is monitored as part of the performance management scheme. Work was also taken forward during 2019-20 to refresh NIO's values and, as a result, one of our three values now is to be "inclusive", which is focussed on promoting and prizing diversity of all kinds for the strength it brings to our team; as well as being respectful of differences.

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

- Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning**
- Yes, in some departments/jobs
- No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's ongoing corporate plan
- No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2019-2019 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Although the overarching NIO strategic business plan does not contain a specific reference to Section 75 statutory duties the annual business plans for both the Corporate Governance Team and the wider Corporate Operations Group contain references to embedding and implementing statutory equality duties across the Department as a whole.

Equality action plans/measures

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

Actions completed: Actions ongoing: Actions commence: to

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

All details provided at question 2.

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

N/A

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**

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- 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)

X **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:

Consulting on ‘same-sex religious marriage and conversion entitlements in Northern Ireland’ enabled the department to make informed balanced policy choices and promote good relations across several groups in parallel to promoting equality of opportunity between persons of different sexual orientation in advance of the legislation being brought forward. We received over 6000 responses across the two consultations.

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

- Face to face meetings**
- Focus groups**
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing**
- Questionnaires**
- Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation**
- Internet discussions
- Telephone consultations
- Other (please specify): **Roundtable meetings.**

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:

The range of issues the NIO has consulted on this year is broad with suitably adapted approaches taken depending on the issue. All methods of consultation have been valuable

so the Department would not identify any preferred consultation method. For example, the consultation on abortion services saw a significant response rate using a blended approach of written responses and more targeted formal consultation sessions with key stakeholders such as medical bodies, women’s groups, civil society and service provider stakeholders. It did not offer formal consultations sessions to all individual responders but rather given the nature of the subject, some specific groups (e.g. church leaders) were met at their request. This approach was appropriate and in way reduced the level of engagement and assessment of s.75 issues.

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:

Yes – a targeted engagement plan took place with stakeholders and interested parties in the run up to the launch of the consultation on a scheme for payments to victims, to raise awareness and take views before the formal launch of the consultation.

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

Yes No Not applicable – no commitment to review

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

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

4

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

3	Policy consultations conducted with screening assessment presented.
0	Policy consultations conducted with an equality impact assessment (EQIA) presented.
0	Consultations for an EQIA alone.

17 Please provide details of the main consultations conducted on an assessment (as described above) or other matters relevant to the Section 75 duties:

- (i) The consultation on “**A new legal framework for abortion services in Northern Ireland**” opened on 4 November 2019 and closed on 16 December 2019 and we carefully analysed all of the over 21,000 submissions received. The consultation document was designed in a modular way, to allow respondents to focus on the areas of most interest or relevance to them. A questionnaire was included for respondents to consider when making their submissions, allowing them to answer ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to different legislative proposals as well as respondents being able to submit full written submissions.
- (ii) A consultation on **same-sex religious marriage and conversion entitlements in Northern Ireland** ran from 20 January 2020 to 23 February 2020 and drew 4,322 consultation responses for same-sex religious marriage and 2,284 for the conversion entitlements consultation. The consultation was designed as questions to answer ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to different legislative proposals, as well as free text options.
- (iii) A consultation with screening document relating to the **Victims Payments Regulations** was published on 22 October 2019. The consultation sought views on a scheme of payments to those living with injuries sustained in Troubles-related incidents. An updated screening document was then published in Jan 2020, alongside the Government response and the regulations being made.

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)

- Yes No, already taken place
- No, scheduled to take place at a later date Not applicable

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Please provide any details:

- 21 In analysing monitoring information gathered, was any action taken to change/review any policies? *(tick one box only)*

Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

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

N/A

- 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:

N/A

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.

Key activity this year delivering against training objectives relating to the Equality Scheme include:

- All staff were encouraged to undertake the online “Diversity, Equality & Disability Awareness” training. As a result, a significant number of staff have completed the training, becoming more aware of their responsibilities in relation to diversity, equality and disability.
- All staff were encouraged to attend a training session on unconscious bias as part of the roll-out of a new performance management scheme and this was mandatory for line managers. This has embedded an equality and disability awareness culture within the Department. This face-to-face training session is delivered to new staff on a 6-monthly basis in London and Belfast.
- The NIO became members of Employers for Disability NI and shared staff blogs on International Day of Persons with Disabilities, autism, Purple Tuesday and promoting REACH (a mentoring scheme for more senior staff members with disabling conditions).

- The NIO actively took part in Inclusion Week in September 2019 and used the opportunity to focus on disability with speakers, quizzes and blogs on diabetes, neurodiversity, and mental health. One of our staff who has dyslexia ran a well-attended learning event on neurodiversity during summer 2019.
- The NIO has also joined Stonewall's Diversity Champions' Programme to support LGBT+ inclusion in the workplace; blogged on LGBT History month; marked International Women's Day; marked Holocaust Memorial Day and used the 'all staff event' in December to promote the D&I work.
- As previously highlighted all staff now have a specific "Diversity & Inclusion" objective incorporated within their personal objectives.

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:

Since the establishment of a dedicated online comms area on the staff Intranet detailing equality matters and the publication of the 'Quick Guide' for staff, the number of equality-related queries received by the Corporate Governance Team have reduced.

Staff feedback indicates that the dedicated intranet pages have allowed them to better understand their equality requirements and obligations, as well as generally raising awareness about equality across the Department.

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:

N/A

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:

1

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

A complaint was received in March 2020 alleging a failure to comply with Equality Scheme commitments made under Paragraph 10 of Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 in relation to "the proposed powers for the Equality and Human Rights Commissions to ensure the non-diminution of rights under the 1998 Belfast Agreement as a result of Brexit". The Commission's Statutory Duty Investigations Committee (SDIC) considered this matter at its meeting on 18 November 2020 and decided not to authorise an investigation.

Section 3: Looking Forward

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

The Scheme will be reviewed again in 2024.

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 Department is exploring options for delivering staff training on the full range of Section 75 duties to boost staff understanding and expertise.

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):

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

2

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 ⁱ	Outcomes / Impact ⁱⁱ
National ⁱⁱⁱ	The NIO has engaged with the Commissioner for Public Appointments and Cabinet Office’s reporting mechanisms to monitor the diversity of public appointments and recruitment processes, providing transparent reporting data on the number of public appointments held by persons with a disability.	<p>Accurate reporting data on number of public appointments and recruitment processes of people with disabilities.</p> <p>Within the reporting period two public appointment campaigns (total of 9</p>	<p>The Department contributes to Government wide public appointments processes and policy formation.</p> <p>This public advertising method ensured that a wide audience was captured including persons with disabilities.</p> <p>By accepting applications in accessible format and operating the Guaranteed Interview Scheme, the Department continues to encourage people</p>

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	<p>The NIO advertises and promotes public appointments on numerous public authority websites.</p> <p>The NIO accepts applications from disabled people in accessible formats and has incorporated the “Guaranteed Interview” scheme for all vacancies and public appointments.</p>	<p>positions) were advertised on the Cabinet Office public appointment website. In addition, campaigns were shared with a number of relevant public authorities including the Chief Electoral Office and NI Human Rights Commission.</p>	<p>with disabilities to apply for such public life roles.</p>
Local	<p>Maintain a focus on our capability to ensure we continue to encourage people with disabilities to participate in public life.</p>	<p>Maintained dedicated Diversity Champions at Director level in relation to various protected characteristics including Disability.</p> <p>Appointed Diversity & Inclusion Advocates in business areas supported by a D&I network steering group led by a member of the Senior Civil Service</p> <p>Were highly commended for our work in relation to menopause in the Legal-Island best gender initiative category in 2019.</p> <p>Successfully applied for a Diversity & Inclusion Charter Mark from Legal-Island in the summer of 2019.</p>	<p>Increased awareness of issues that people with disabilities may face in participating in public life and a measurable increase in blogs, intranet articles and colleagues volunteering.</p>

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	A disability section will be included in the staff induction checklist to ensure a proactive approach for any new employees to declare a disability and/or request for any reasonable adjustments.	The Department has maintained a “Staff Welcome Pack” which is signed by the Permanent Secretary and has a specific section within it titled “Diversity within the NIO”. This section reaffirms the Department’s commitment to embedding diversity in everything we do – the principle of valuing individuals for who they are, being respectful of difference and removing barriers where these are identified.	New staff fully understand the commitment the Department has made embed diversity in everything we do. This has ensured persons with a disability feel more included and reaffirmed the importance of equality and diversity to business delivery.
2	All staff at management level and above will complete the online “Diversity, Equality & Disability Awareness” training on the Civil Service Learning site.	Uptake of required training	Increased staff awareness of disability issues, and this has complemented our other learning activities and management actions.

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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	A dedicated Disability section has been created on the Department's Intranet site to provide guidance and signposting to staff in relation to disability duties.	A dedicated Disability intranet page which includes the Disability Action Plan has been maintained since April 2016.	This has ensured guidance and signposting has been communicated to staff in relation to disability duties.
2	The Equality Officer will provide an annual progress report to the NIO Board in respect of disability & equality; this will be reported in tandem with the Section 75 annual progress report.	The 2017/18 Annual Progress report was signed off by the Permanent Secretary in October 2019. This report was issued in tandem to the NIO Board to enable them provide comments prior to final sign off.	The presentation of this report to the NIO Board has ensured equality and diversity discussions take place at senior level.
3.	Explore options for improving access to information using social media.	Developed a twitter account to improve access to information using social media and are exploring options to use Facebook to engage with stakeholders.	Ensured that our external website is fully accessible and in a suitable format for access by those with a disability.

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	News stories and blog posts will be published on the intranet site to promote diversity seminars and specific areas of focus in line with the annual diversity calendar.	Staff blogs and news stories were published regularly throughout the reporting period. In addition staff were made aware of and encouraged to attend diversity seminars in line with the annual diversity calendar.	Staff were encouraged to engage in diversity networks and attend seminars including staff specific areas of focus in line with the annual diversity calendar.
2	The Equality Officer will register as a member of the MOJ Disability Network. Membership will be renewed on an annual basis.	The Equality Officer and members of the HR team are registered members of the MOJ disability network.	This ensures that equality leads are kept informed of diversity developments and can cascade and update staff in the Department accordingly.

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

N/A

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

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestonesiv / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	All staff at management level and above will complete the online “Diversity, Equality & Disability Awareness” training on the Civil Service Learning site.	The equality officer and HR team continue to encourage staff to undertake this online training. As a result a significant number of staff have completed the training.	A significant number of staff have become more aware of their responsibilities in relation to diversity, equality and disability. This has embedded an equality and disability awareness culture within the Department.	Although progress has been made, the course was not mandatory within the Department. However a specific mandatory diversity objective has been included in all staff objectives to ensure staff undergo this training. All staff were invited to unconscious bias face to face training which was mandatory for all line managers and this training is offered to new staff every 6 months
2	The Department will explore options for improving access to information using social media.	The Communications team continue to explore options for improving access to departmental information. This has included the creation of an NIO twitter and Flickr accounts.	Access to departmental information has significantly improved and ensured persons with a disability can access up to date information.	Significant progress has been made to date however the NIO Communications team continue to develop further social media programmes including exploring options for the creation of an NIO Facebook account.

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

N/A

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

The results of the most recent 2019 People Survey, which maintained our high completion rate of 89%, showed an “Inclusion and Fair Treatment” score of 82%, 2% higher than the average for the Territorial Offices. This is an annual survey that we supplement with a mid year health check, giving us regular data on how staff feel we are performing in this important area.

(b) Quantitative

The Department has also encouraged staff to declare your diversity data when requested as this helps us to understand the make-up of the office and provide a benchmark for monitoring diversity impacts.

We also monitor the diversity of recruitment processes and public appointments. This data is submitted to oversight bodies to provide transparent reporting data on the number of public appointments and HCS posts held by persons with a disability.

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. The Department has however launched a revised Disability Action Plan in March 2020, so the period covered in this report came at the end of our previous 5 year report.

PART B

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. It is too early to assess any areas for improvement in the new Disability Action Plan. However, in light of increased working from home we will monitor the impact in general for all colleagues but particularly with regard to colleagues with disabilities.

ⁱ **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.

ⁱⁱ **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.

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

^{iv} **Milestones** – Please outline what part progress has been made towards the particular measures; even if full output or outcomes/ impact have not been achieved.