

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council



Fermanagh & Omagh
District Council

Comhairle Ceantair
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí

Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report

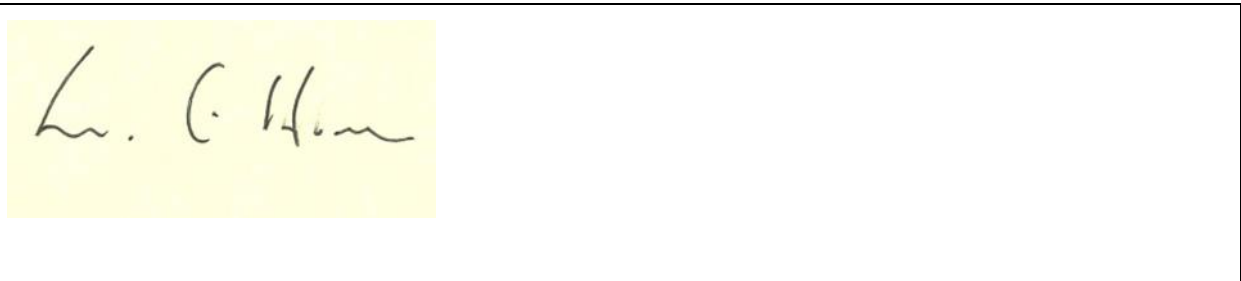
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Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:

www.fermanaghomagh.com

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 2024 and March 2025

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 2024-25, 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.

• Background & Statistics

The Council continually promotes equality of opportunity and good relations throughout all its services. The Council also delivered on its responsibilities to ensure that statutory and regulatory functions are delivered to a high standard.

The most recent Census statistics from NISRA state that the District is home to an estimated 116,812 people. The statistics provide a snapshot of the various Section 75 groupings across the district:

- 2001 individuals identify as other than white
- 9,590 residents have no religious background and 963 identify as a religion other than Christian
- 26,569 identify as British, 47,879 as Irish and 26,062 as Northern Irish
- 21,440 people are aged 65 years old or older
- 45,218 people are married
- 523 people identify as gay or lesbian and 392 as bisexual
- 15,746 households have at least 1 resident living with a limiting long term health problem or disability
- 14,059 households have dependent children
- 58,482 people identify as female and 58,330 identify as male.

The District is Northern Ireland's largest in terms of land mass (3,000km²) and the smallest in terms of population density (approximately 39 people per km²).

During the 2024/2025 reporting period, the Council continued to implement actions to achieve its statutory duties, as well as regularly reviewing progress. These were discussed by the Corporate Leadership Team (as required), as well as being included within reports made to the Council's Committee meetings.

During the 2024/2025 reporting period, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council developed several policies and services aimed at better promoting equality of opportunity and good relations. The Council views a number of these developments as 'in progress' and 'ongoing'.

Some examples of the key policies and services are outlined below.

• Equality Scheme and Equality Action Plan

The Council continued to fulfil its commitments outlined within the Equality Scheme (2022-2027) which was presented to the Policy and Resources

Committee in December 2021 and subsequently ratified by the Council in January 2022.

The Council's Equality Action Plan contributes to the Council's compliance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, and it provides a framework guidance to Council actions - setting out how the Council plans to address inequalities as it strives to create a District where people choose to live, work and visit.

During the 2021/2022 reporting period, the Council undertook a 12-week consultation process on the 2022-2024 Equality Action Plan.

Further information on the Council's current 2022-2024 Equality Action Plan and its actions, will be referenced in detail later within this report. More information on the Equality Action Plan can be found online here:

<https://www.fermanaghmagh.com/your-Council/policies/equality/equality-action-plan-2020-2022/>

During the 2024-2025 reporting period the Council undertook an 8-week consultation process for the 2025-2028 Equality Action Plan, will be approved by Committee and Council meetings in the next reporting period.

- **Disability Action Plan**

The Council's Disability Action Plan outlines how the Council will fulfil its statutory obligations to comply with Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006).

Further information on the Council's Disability Action Plan will also be referenced later within this Progress Report.

During the 2021/2022 reporting period, the Council undertook a 12-week consultation process on the 2022-2024 Disability Action Plan.

More information on the Disability Action Plan can be found online here:

<https://www.fermanaghmagh.com/your-Council/policies/equality/disability-action-plan-2020-2022/>

During the 2024-2025 reporting period the Council undertook an 8-week consultation process for the 2025-2028 Disability Action Plan, will be approved by Committee and Council meetings in the next reporting period.

- **Equality Screening**

There were several key Council policies screened for potential impacts on Equality of Opportunity. These included:

- Corporate Health and Safety Policy
- Funding Allocation Model for Festive Lighting
- Corporate Plan 2020-24: Delivering Sustainable Change Together
- Data Protection Policy and Procedural Framework
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Managing Attendance Policy

- Fermanagh Lakeland Forum Redevelopment
- Outreach/Interim Service During Fermanagh Lakeland Forum (FLF) Redevelopment
- Well Being Risk Assessment Policy
- Assisted Bin Lift Policy
- Asset Acquisition and Disposal Policy

- **Lobbying and Consultation**

The Council continued to lobby on a cross-Council, cross-border basis in relation to many strategic issues. In total, over the 2024/2025 period, the Council responded to 37 public consultation processes.

Some examples of responses submitted by Fermanagh and Omagh District Council which, in particular, emphasised equality issues or implications of consultation proposals on section 75 groups over the past 12 months include:

- DE School Uniform Policy
- DfE Domestic Abuse Leave
- TEO Truth Recovery – Mother and Baby Homes
- DE Review of Free School Meals and Uniform Grant Eligibility
- Equality Commission Corporate Plan
- DoH Help with Health Costs
- DfC Draft Fuel Poverty Strategy
- DfC Employment Support Scheme Cessation of Funding

- **Elected Members and Civic Receptions**

The Chair and Vice Chair hosted a range of Civic Receptions from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. Throughout the year they also represented the Council at many events and took part in photos to launch a range of events and programmes.

Examples of these include:

- Host Tutors from SWC Confucius Hub
- Huangshi Delegation Visit - Townhall
- Attending China UK/NI Education Forum Creative partnerships
- Chair's Reception - Young Achievers
- Fermanagh BrightStarz Show
- Connecting Communities through our Culture - Dun Uladh, Omagh
- ERANO Film 'The Old Oak' at SAC
- Meeting Honorary Consul for the Ukraine
- Attended Omagh Pride event
- Attended Fermanagh Pride event
- Launched Dementia NI's Wristband Initiative
- Launched Positive Ageing Month
- Attended Culture Nights events
- Attended the Fermanagh Indian's Association Christmas and New Year Event
- Attended the Erne District Chinese Family and Friends Association New Year Celebration

- Attended ERANO's Roundtable discussion
- Attended Onam Festival - Fermanagh Indian Association
- Hosted Democracy Week - Positive Aging Month event
- Attended Purple Tuesday Photo launch
- Met with Consul General Mr Li Nan
- Attended Good Relations events
- Attended Aman Association - Iftar event

- **Access and Inclusion Advisory Group**

In 2023 a review was undertaken to examine the format of Council working groups. This led to the Disability Advisory Group being renamed the 'Access and Inclusion Advisory Group' and its remit widened to look at issues affecting all section 75 groupings.

The purpose of the Access and Inclusion Advisory Group, which consists of eight members from Access Advisory Groups, six FODC Councillors and a number of Council officers, is to provide support, guidance and direction to Elected Members and officers of the Council on matters related to equality and disability and how they impact upon service delivery and design across the Council.

During the 2024/2025 reporting period, the group met four times.

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Access and Inclusion Advisory Group for the period were as follows:

- Chair: Councillor Victor Warrington
- Vice Chair: Dermot Devlin (Volunteer Member).

Due to the geographical spread of members and problems with accessible transport for meetings a combination of in-person and virtual meetings took place. This allowed members to engage and participate fully in meetings.

During the 2024/2025 reporting period, the Access and Inclusion Advisory Group undertook some key pieces of work. Examples of this work includes the following:

- Planning, preparing and roll out of Blue Badge Campaign
 - Members worked together to develop a creative, thought-provoking campaign to stop the misuse of blue badge parking spaces. Surveys, hashtags, videos, social media content and press releases were developed and produced.
- New Disability and Equality Action Plans – Council consulted with members throughout the development, public consultation and finalising process of the plans.
- Public Health Agency 'Access Inclusion' funded projects
- Capital Projects – Foundry Lane
- Accessible toilets, Changing Places legislation and picnic facilities
- Issues with local footpaths, infrastructure and public transport
- Alt Text on online communication
- Responsibilities of Council and other organisations, and contact details for each organisation

- Age and Access Charter
- Inputs to FODC consultation responses and the groups own responses to consultations, including: DfC Employment Support Scheme Cessation of Funding

- **Inclusive Programmes & Projects**

The following programmes and projects have been delivered during the reporting period to support Section 75 groups to participate in Council services or be involved in the planning or roll out:

- **Access Inclusion (targeting people with disabilities and PHA funded)**
- JAM Card Training - staff and local businesses/community groups have taken part in the e-training to familiarise themselves with how to support someone who presents a JAM Card.
- AIM Model Toolkit – this toolkit helped to raise awareness of various disabilities and provided some top tips on how to support them to use services.
- Reaching Rural Programme – a range of interactive workshops for people with disabilities were delivered in rural areas.
- GIVE Volunteer Programme – adults with disabilities were provided with a supportive process to gain volunteering experience.
- Fine Motor Skills Programme - a range of interactive workshops for people with disabilities were delivered with a focus of developing fine motor skills.
- International Day of Persons with Disabilities – a range of information talks were arranged to raise awareness of disability, accessibility and available support.
- WeCan Trail – artwork by participants with disabilities displayed across charity shops and Council facilities in Enniskillen and Omagh.
- Western Health and Social Care Trust team building exercise – promoting health and wellbeing.
- Inclusive Youth Forum – this project provided an opportunity for young people with disabilities to engage with the Council to help inform decision making and new projects.
- Poetry Project – pupils from the two local SEN schools engaged with officers to create their own poems which was then in a local exhibition at the Strule Arts Centre.
- Volunteering initiative – events connecting with nature, helping communities and providing purpose.
- Planning, preparing and roll out of Blue Badge Campaign - members worked together to develop a creative, thought-provoking campaign to stop the misuse of blue badge parking spaces. Surveys, hashtags, videos, social media content and press releases were developed and produced.
- Review of Council website – all facility guides are up to date.
- Roll out of Access and Age Friendly Charter
- Intergenerational Singing Programme – singing programme with participants ranging in ages

- Promoting Play – programme showcasing different types of play.

ii) Community & Wellbeing (including Leisure, Heritage, Tourism & Age Friendly)

Community Wellbeing and Leisure Centres:

- Range of community activity programmes delivered including boccia, walks and chair-based exercise.
- MacMillan Move More Programme - physical activity initiative delivered in partnership between Macmillan and Fermanagh and Omagh District Council which is available to anyone who has had a cancer diagnosis, at any stage of their life.
- Physical Activity Referral Scheme (PARS) - is a free 12-week exercise referral programme facilitated by fully qualified staff for individuals with specific health conditions who have no absolute contraindications to exercise.
- Children and Young People Summer Programme – the inclusive programme provides opportunities for children and young people over the summer period.
- Sensory Room – two of the Council-run Leisure Centres now offer Sensory Rooms. Castle Park Leisure Centre is due to have their sensory room installed in 2025.
- Accessible Changing – Omagh Leisure Centre, Castle Park Leisure Centre and the Bawnacre Centre, as well as two Cultural Venues, offer a range of changing including accessible changing and Changing Places Facilities.

Age Friendly:

- Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan - This has been developed to place our older people at the centre of an Age Friendly society, ensuring local voices are heard and supported to remain healthy, active and connected in their District and community. Due to proceed to 12 week consultation in summer 2025.
- FODC Grant Aid - South West Age Partnership manages this on behalf of FODC and awarded 96 older peoples' group with grant aid in April 24 - March 25 financial period.
- Age Friendly Officer (AFO) facilitated two sessions by NI Assembly Outreach Officers in Gortin and Lisnaskea.
- Directory of Services for Older People – this document was updated and printed in hard copy as well as online version. It provides older people with useful information and support.
- Positive Aging Month – a range of activities and information sessions were provided in October to help older people stay active and remain engaged with others.
- Dementia Awareness Training was delivered by WHSCT Dementia Navigator.
- Remembering and Reflections Programme - The six-week project, run in conjunction with FODC Heritage Officer, was well received and offered

participants an opportunity to immerse themselves in interactive discussions and hands-on activities that brought the past to life.

- Age Friendly Publications - Range produced in collaboration with partners including:
 - Age Friendly Calendar promoting health messages
 - Positive Ageing Month booklet
 - Pension Credit Leaflet
- Dementia Friendly Film Screenings - The Age Friendly Officer continues to work in collaboration with Strule Arts Centre to host dementia film screenings.
- Positive Ageing Month Grants - 30 older people's groups were successful in being awarded grant aid.
- Age Friendly Belleek - Community Support Officer, Access and Inclusion Officer and Manager of SWAP worked together to pilot Belleek as an Age Friendly Village. Age Friendly Stickers were issued to businesses in Belleek on completion of JAM training and completion of age friendly checklist.
- Thrive and Flourish Programme - On behalf of FODC, SWAP managed and co-ordinated the delivery of the 'Thrive and Flourish' programme based on Take 5 steps to wellbeing. The six-week programme was piloted in the following areas: Carrickmore, Fintona, Belleek and Maguiresbridge, ensuring widespread rural engagement.
- Age and Access Friendly Charter - Age and Access Friendly is a term created to describe the commitment by public sector, business and community venues to make changes to help support older people and people with disabilities to access services. The Age and Access Friendly charter was compiled using a co-design approach with older people and those with disabilities.

Heritage:

- A range of reminiscence-style workshops were delivered across key settings, including sessions in the Oak Unit at Tyrone & Fermanagh Hospital, as well as with the Memory Lane Group at a local library. The workshops were designed to engage participants through shared memories and themed discussions, supporting wellbeing and social connection.
- A collection of themed memory boxes were developed and made available for loan at no cost. These resources have been utilised by a care home in Lisnaskea and by Libraries NI to support various community group activities.
- To mark National Tree Week, a range of outreach activities across local schools, colleges, and community groups were carried out. These included reminiscence sessions focused on exploring personal memories related to trees and nature. The week-long programme highlighted the deep connections individuals have with the natural environment, and participants shared a range of heartfelt stories and poems that celebrated natural heritage.
- In December, an intergenerational workshop was held in partnership with an art class from South West College and a local historical society. The session focused on archaeology and provided a valuable opportunity for

shared learning and dialogue between generations. Participants engaged in creative and educational activities, fostering mutual understanding and appreciation of both artistic expression and local history. The workshop highlighted the mutual benefits of intergenerational collaboration, promoting community connection and lifelong learning.

- Supported a local school with a heritage project funded by the Integrated Education Fund, centred on the theme of *Crime and Punishment*. The project offered pupils the opportunity to explore historical perspectives and engage in critical thinking around justice and societal change.
- Contributed to the Shared Schools Campus Shared Day, where pupils from multiple schools came together to explore themes of local heritage. This event provided another valuable platform for shared learning, fostering cross-community engagement and collaborative exploration of history and culture.

Tourism:

- In recognition of World Autism Awareness Day, the Marble Arch Caves ran "Quiet Tours" throughout the month of April. "Quiet Tours" made the show cave and visitor centre more accessible for those with sensory needs.
- The Marble Arch Caves team had a showcase set up at Enniskillen Castle to welcome visitors to Fermanagh's first Pride celebration.
- For Halloween, the Marble Arch Caves offered sensory-friendly sessions with reduced scare levels and gentler sounds—ideal for children with sensory sensitivities. This ensured everyone could enjoy the magic in a relaxed and supportive environment.
- In December, the Marble Arch Caves offered a Christmas Elf Escape Sensory Room. Specially created for visitors with access and sensory needs, this peaceful environment featured soothing blue lighting and interactive sensory stations, ideal for a calm and enjoyable experience. Up to 8 guests could explore a self-guided mini-trail, participate in gentle Elf-themed activities, and embark on a fun elf hunt with a dedicated activity sheet. This event was suitable for families.
- Divergently Together is a shared island community engagement project that uses STEM technologies to facilitate the participation of disabled and neurodivergent communities in climate action. Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark Regenerative Tourism Business Network are collaborating with lead partner Alan James Burns to support the delivery of the project across the Geopark with the aim to improve access & inclusion, education and outreach and visitor experience across the Geopark.

Community Support:

The Council supported a range of events which recognised a range of section 75 categories and promoted equality, such as Culture Night 2024.

Enniskillen Castle and Strule Arts Centre were lit up on various occasions to recognise various international, regional and local awareness days and events specific to section 75 categories including:

- HSC Northern Ireland Foster Care - Foster Care Fortnight 2024
- FODC - Omagh Pride & Pride Month
- Fermanagh Pride - Fermanagh's first ever Pride
- FODC - International Day of Older Persons/ Positive Ageing Month
- North West Migrants Forum - Black History Month
- Just Us - Purple Tuesday 2024
- International Men's Day
- International Women's Day
- International Day of Disabled People
- Omagh Women's Aid - 16 Days of Action - Human Rights Day

iii) Good Relations

- Holocaust Memorial workshops for post primary schools were delivered by Generation 2 Generation. This year the theme was "Learn for a Better Future" an opportunity for people to come together, learn both from and about the past, and take actions to make a better future for all. Maralyn Turgal from Generation 2 Generation who told the story of her father Sam Gardener and his family and how they survived the Holocaust.
- Officers provided support to Fermanagh and Omagh Youth Voice working with the Education Authority to engage young people in democracy and decision making. Activities undertaken included an educational visit to Belfast Islamic Centre and participation in consultations such as the EA Local Assessment of Need and FODC Corporate Plan.
- Continued work with Omagh Churches Forum and Fermanagh Churches Forum to organise seminars and workshops on different topics.
- Membership of Omagh Traveller Interagency Forum to advocate for Traveller issues and support the development of a Traveller Support Group.
- Membership of Traveller Action Group (TAG) West and the Northern Ireland Local Government Partnership on Traveller Issues.
- Engagement with asylum seekers and refugees arriving in the district to make them aware of the range of supports available. Support was provided to ERANO (Empowering Refugees and Newcomers Organisation) to act as a one stop shop for newcomers to the district. Practical supports such as ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes, advice clinics as well as coffee mornings and other social activities were also delivered.
- Production of a New Residents Guide detailing key information on how to access services e.g. GP, schools and Council services.
- Delivered a Good Relations Small Grants Programme to community organisations, and a Good Relations Schools Shared History Programme, a Good Relations Ulster Scots in the Community Programme, providing a wide range good relations activities and benefits across the district.
- Ongoing support to encourage groups to engage in future FODC Peace Plus Programmes, CRC and TEO Central Good Relations Fund and other funding opportunities.

- Supported and attended a range of International Day Events including International Women's Day, Refugee Week etc.
- Range of cultural events celebrating cultural identity reaching out to new audiences.

iv) Environmental Health

- 'Stay Warm Stay Safe' campaign, local Councils produced and distributed a leaflet focusing on key areas: electrical blankets/heated throws; hot-water bottles; overloaded electrical sockets; electrical chargers; portable heaters. The leaflet brings together a list of safety tips and checks to help eliminate risks in the home environment, as well as outlining some of the incorrect uses of products which pose a danger.
- Home Safety Checks – were delivered to households with children under five years old and older people aged 65 years old and above. These checks helped to identify hazards in peoples' homes and provides them with advice and equipment.
- Awareness campaigns via social media included:–
 - Safety Alert to warn of the risks that water beads can pose to children and vulnerable adults.
 - Halloween Safety Campaign - dangers surrounding Halloween costumes and fireworks.
 - Christmas Toy Safety - safety tips on how to buy Christmas toys safely online e.g. button batteries.
 - Child safety week - sharing the really practical, simple things we can all do to keep children safe e.g. Blind Cord Safety, Baby bling, Baltic amber beads and product safety.

v) Climate Change and Sustainable Development

- Nature Makes Sense – a highly successful programme providing nature themed sensory workshops in an outdoor park setting for children and young adults with disabilities.
- School education programmes for children and young people – The FODC Climate Team has actively engaged with and delivered environmental education workshops and events to children and young people throughout the 7 DEAs.
- Outdoor activities – providing activities such as tree/ bulb planting and litter picking helped encourage people from various backgrounds and communities to take action together against climate change.

vi) Human Resources

- Completed 3-year annual monitoring review - Article 55.
- Reviewed Menopause Policy.
- Added Skillgate module on Menopause.
- Health and wellbeing initiatives for women and men - 1:1 appointments with women's aid.

- International Women's Day Event 2024 - Navigating Perimenopause & Menopause.
- Gaming and Gambling Webinar for parents and guardians.
- Signed up for the Age Friendly Employer Pledge initiative.
- Hearing Assessments and 1:1 advice was provided to employees by the Royal National Institute for Deaf People with over 100 attendees across Omagh and Fermanagh.
- A number of training courses on recruitment and selection (R&S) (four R&S refresher sessions with 37 employees attending and two full R&S courses with 18 employees attending).
- Continued to screen Section 75 information of employees and job applicants.
- Continued to liaise with the triage i.e. employee, line manager and Occupational Health in relation to any reasonable adjustments required for employees.
- Officers continued to work on LGBTQ+ support throughout the year, including ensuring staff representation at local Pride Events in Omagh and Enniskillen in 2024.
- Health and Wellbeing Committee – The internal committee continues to roll out a range of support that help staff with mental, financial, women and men's health, as well as parenting support. For example, in the reporting period a range of Menopause awareness events were greatly received by employees.

vii) Waste & Recycling

- Assisted Bin Lift Scheme - The Assisted Bin Lift service aims to give assistance to people who have no other person locally who can give assistance in placing their bins out for collection. The Assisted Bin Lift service permits Council employees to enter external areas of the property to collect and return the bin from an approved location on the resident's premises, following a successful application.
- Additional Bin Collection Service - The Council recognises that some households may require the collection of a second Black/Green bin. This Additional Bin Collection service can be provided for several reasons including: to dispose of material due to the medical condition of a household member, if the number of occupants permanently within a household is eight or more, or if the household has a secondary rated apartment attached, which has permanent occupants.

viii) Anti-Poverty

- Cost of Living Support - The Council's cost of living support programme included support for households impacted by the ongoing cost of living crisis. There were a range of initiatives including a fuel support programme, food support for older people, discretionary support for essential items for families, and support to foodbanks in the district.
- Fermanagh and Omagh Poverty Support Programme (WRAP Programme) - This programme, funded by DfC and PHA, targeted

households in the district experiencing, or at risk of, poverty, and provided both financial and wraparound support.

ix) Interpreting & Translation

In the reporting period 24/25, the Council has extended procured supplier contracts to provide both verbal and written interpreting and translation services. This will allow people who use languages other than English to have improved access to services.

The above contract is complemented with the continued provision of sign video and sign language interpreters at meetings, events, etc., on request.

X) Economic Development and Investment

- The Council delivers the Rural Economic Accelerator Programme (REAP), through a partnership approach with South West College, who are Lead Partners; First Step Women's Centre; and South Tyrone Empowerment Programme. The programme is funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The programme provides opportunities to support local people through training, mentoring and skills development, benefitting personal and job/career development. It also aims to bridge the gap between education and employment, providing innovative programs and resources that directly address the economic challenges faced by our community.
- The Council delivers the Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnership (F&O LMP). Funded through the Department for Communities, LMP focuses on improving employability outcomes and labour market conditions locally by working with partners from across the public, private and community/voluntary sectors.

- 2** Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/measures** in 2024-25 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

a) Background

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council opened a consultation exercise on a draft Equality Action Plan for 2022-2024 between January and April 2022.

The Equality Action Plan was approved and ratified by Council in May 2022 and forms the basis for this Progress Report.

The Report and Plan can be found:

Link to Committee Report: <https://fermanaghomagh.public-minutes.com/#2256027f1846b797b7bb4249f78310f5>

Link to the Equality Action Plan 2022-2024 - [Equality Action Plan 2022 - 2024 – Fermanagh & Omagh District Council \(fermanaghomagh.com\)](https://fermanaghomagh.com/equality-action-plan-2022-2024)

The actions within the Equality Action Plan are identified and split into five strategic themes and these are:

- A. Equality of Opportunity.
- B. Accessible Services.
- C. Spoken, written and signed language forms.
- D. Equality Monitoring and Data Collection.
- E. Employees and Elected Members

b) Strategic Theme One: Equality of Opportunity

In relation to this theme, there are 10 actions. These include:

- A1:** Undertake a consultation process on the 2022-2024 Equality Action Plan
- A2:** Report on the progress of the Equality Action Plan for 2022-2024
- A3:** Ensure that Equality and Good Relations are embedded in all key Council documents e.g. Corporate Plan, Community Plan.
- A4:** Undertake a consultation process to develop a new Disability Action Plan for the Council, for the period 2022-2024.
- A5:** Implement a Disability Action Plan for the Council which meets the objectives of the Disability Discrimination Act
- A6:** Review current consultation processes in relation to individuals/groups with an interest in Equality and Disability issues.
- A7:** Review and develop a new Equality Scheme for the Council (2022 – 2027)
- A8:** All new and revised policies will be approved, subject to screening outcomes, for Equality of Opportunity.
- A9:** Deliver an approved Good Relations Action Plan.
- A10:** Raise the profile of underrepresented Section 75 Groups (and other

protected groups) within the District.

Action **A1** has been completed - the new Equality Action Plan was adopted in 2022 following a 12-week consultation period.

Action **A2** was completed for 23/24 and this Annual Equality Progress Report will lead to it being completed for 24/25.

Action **A3** is ongoing. The Council continues to embed Equality and Good Relations in all key Council documents e.g. Corporate Plan, Community Plan.

Action **A4** relates to the development and consultation for the Council's Disability Action Plan, and this has also been completed.

Action **A5** is ongoing. The Council is continuing to implement actions that help to achieve the objectives outlined in the Disability Action Plan.

Action **A6** relates to reviewing the consultation processes in relation to groups/individuals with disabilities. Consultation processes were regularly reviewed throughout the year as the Council was consulting on various issues/policies. During this reporting period, the Council continued to monitor the use of physical and online consultation methods. As a result, the Council continued to use a mix of online consultation events, targeted sessions with relevant groups and physical drop-in sessions in different locations. Consultees who would usually provide feedback on a one-to-one basis, were encouraged to give their feedback by telephone and by virtual meetings.

Action **A7** has been completed. A review of the Equality Scheme took place in 2021 and a new scheme for 2022 – 2027 was adopted by Council in January 2022.

Action **A8** is ongoing. The Council continues to screen all new and revised policies for Equality of Opportunity.

Action **A9** is ongoing. Good Relations continue to deliver actions relating to an agreed plan. Examples of this work is contained in section 1(h).

Action **A10** is ongoing. A programme of events, activities and projects have been completed and new ones started with the aim of raising the profile of underrepresented Section 75 groups. Examples of these events, activities and projects can be viewed in Section 1 Question 1.

c) Strategic Theme 2: Accessible Services

In relation to this there are 4 actions. These include:

B1: Improve the Council's Community Engagement processes

B2: Scope the development of inclusive communication channels to meet the needs of individuals

B3: Develop guidance for Council employees who may work or interact with LGBTQ+ customers

B4: Provision of support to employees who are LGBTQ+

Action **B1**, follows on from action **A6** in terms of consultation processes and making sure that they are open and accessible to everyone – including those with disabilities. This action has been completed, and the Council has produced a Consultation and Engagement Strategy, inclusive of all Section 75 categories.

The changes outlined in response to action **A6** have also had a positive impact on people with disabilities – allowing more participation in consultation processes. Online consultation events have worked very well for people with disabilities and will be considered for all consultations going forward.

Another development in terms of action **B1** is developing the capacity of the Access and Inclusion Advisory Group. Its members have played key roles in the shaping of Council projects and strategies. Council officers are now more aware of the group and its importance, with many actively seeking opportunities to consult with the group, for example in relation to the Fermanagh Lakeland Forum redevelopment, PHA funded projects and Foundry Lane project. This has been an important development in ensuring that the needs of people with disabilities are taken into consideration at the early stages of policy development or project design stage.

The members of the group have also liaised with other external organisations so they can raise the concerns that other people they represent have. Most recently the group met with representatives from the Department for Infrastructure to highlight issues with footpaths and crossings.

Action **B2** relates to scoping the need for an inclusive communication channel. Council has continued with the services of Sign Video into this reporting period, ensuring that the service is available for people with hearing impairments. In this reporting period the Council has also extended procured supplier contracts to provide both verbal and written interpreting and translation services. This will allow people who use languages other than English to have quicker access to services.

The Council's website also has online chat and ReachDeck functions to help provide alternative communication methods.

Action **B3** remains ongoing and will continue into the next reporting period with further guidance provided to staff in terms of improving employee knowledge and confidence for those who may work or interact with LGBTQIA+ customers.

Action **B4** remains ongoing. FODC continues to support Pride Omagh and Fermanagh in celebration of our LGBTQIA+ colleagues and residents. The Museum & Heritage Service hosted part of Fermanagh Pride at Enniskillen Castle on 7 September 2024, supporting local LGBTQIA+ communities. The Enniskillen Castle and Strule Arts Centre were lit up in recognition of Pride. Human Resources officers continued to work on LGBTQIA+ support throughout the year, including ensuring staff representation at local Pride Events in Omagh and Enniskillen in 2024.

d) Strategic Theme Three: Spoken, Written and Signed Language Forms

This theme consists of two ongoing actions (which will be ongoing for the duration of this plan):

C1: Ensure a consistent approach to the provision of translation and interpretation services to help people with limited, or no, English.

C2: Ensure that meetings and events have appropriate interpreters and/or other assistance in attendance as required.

Action **C1** is ongoing. Suppliers for written and verbal translation and interpreting services have been appointed. The services have been highlighted with staff and guidance on how to book them is available on the internal staff hub.

Action **C2** is ongoing. Throughout the year, staff continued to book interpreters for meetings and corporate events. Sign language interpreters are also provided when members request them for meetings, such as the Access Advisory Group, and for events such as the Christmas Lights Switch On.

The Council has also developed Access Guides and Social Stories for the majority of its venues, including Leisure and Art Centres. These guides help provide written and pictorial information to people on what access is provided at the venue and different sensory information.

Members of staff have also been provided with JAM Card E-learning training so that they are better informed of how to communicate with someone who may present them with a card.

e) Strategic Theme Four: Monitoring and Data Collection

There are two actions within this theme.

D1: Establish the Section 75 breakdown of the Council's Elected Members.

D2: Review the monitoring information being collected by Council, to identify any potential gaps or opportunities to capture additional monitoring data.

In terms of action **D1**, Equality Monitoring was collected from the newly elected Councillors following the Council elections in June 2024.

Action **D2** is ongoing and is undertaken by all Council services when they are collecting monitoring information.

f) Strategic Theme Five: Employees and Elected Members

This theme revolves mainly around awareness raising for both our employees and Elected Members. As a result, the four actions are ongoing.

The actions are:

E1: Increase the awareness of Elected Members in relation to the promotion of Equality of Opportunity, Good Relations and the Disability duties.

E2: Increase the awareness of Council employees in relation to the promotion of Equality of Opportunity, Good Relations and the Disability duties.

E3: Increase the awareness of developments in good practice and concerns/issues raised with Council services.

E4: Diversity Champion will participate in training and networking events, as required.

In terms of actions **E1** and **E2**, both Elected Members and employees have participated in a significant number of awareness raising and information sessions throughout the 2024-25 reporting period.

The following sessions were delivered in this reporting period:

- JAM Card Training (PHA funded)
- Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity Awareness training
- Dementia Awareness Training
- Women's and Men's Health Awareness Workshops

Actions to achieve **E3** are ongoing and take various forms. To raise awareness of good practice with Elected Members, presentations are provided at the Access and Inclusion Advisory Group. This helps to inform Elected Members of various initiatives such as International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Since members of the group have connections with Mencap, Deafblind, IMTAC, etc., updates on external projects are also discussed with the Elected Members. This information is also shared with officers through awareness sessions and the internal StaffHub.

E4 actions are ongoing. The FODC's Diversity Champions (Elected Member and officer) attended quarterly meetings of the NI Diversity Ambassador Network organised by the Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland. FODC's Elected Member Diversity Champion was also elected to Chair the NI Diversity Ambassador Network in this reporting period.

The FODC Diversity Champion also attended a range of events promoting equality of opportunity such as Pride, local events at SEN Schools, Refugee Week 2024 screening, Onam festival and events supporting women.

- 3** Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2024-25 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

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

Please provide any details and examples:

Examples, and further details, of the changes to policies, practices and procedures are contained within the Council's response to question 1 (sections g, h and i) in this document.

- 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?

The Council has demonstrated in question 2 the various practices and procedures that target a range of Section 75 categories, with many targeting more than one category at a time.

The table below demonstrates some of the Council's practices and procedures targeting Section 75 categories specifically:

Section 75 Category	What difference was made, or will be made
Religious Belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture Night 2024 – an event celebrating the richness and diversity of culture in the District held at numerous venues in towns and villages across the district. • 24 Community Groups successfully completed their Good Relations Small Grant project activities, 2976 people directly benefited from participation on the programme. 15 Community Groups successfully completed their Good Relations Ulster Scots in the Community project activities, 1127 people directly benefited from participation on the programme. • Omagh Churches Forum, Fermanagh Churches Forum and the Fermanagh & Omagh Interfaith Group - Ten events were organised with 150+ participants.
Political Opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture Night 2024 – an event celebrating the richness and diversity of culture in the District held at numerous venues in towns and villages across the district.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural events targeting Irish and Ulster Scot communities - 16 workshops delivered to 16 primary schools with 576 pupils in attendance. • Fermanagh and Omagh Youth Voice - 29 young people engaged in democracy and decision making. Ten activities were undertaken including an educational visit to Belfast Islamic Centre and participation in consultations such as the EA Local Assessment of Need and FODC Consultation on the Draft Improvement Objectives. • 28 Schools successfully completed their Good Relations Schools Shared History project activities; 1437 children directly benefited from participation on the programme. • Good Relations Grant Aid supported 67 Community Groups/Schools and directly benefited 5,540 people. • The Age Friendly Officer facilitated two sessions by NI Assembly Outreach Officers in Gortin and Lisnaskea. The Engage Now presentation gave a short overview of what the Northern Ireland Assembly is, how it works and how individuals and groups can have their voices heard.
Race	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to ERANO to develop a website to act as a one stop shop for newcomers to the district and a range of practical supports were also provided such as ESOL classes, advice clinics as well as coffee mornings and other social activities. • Membership of Omagh Traveller Interagency Forum to advocate for Traveller issues and support the development of a Traveller Support Group. • Membership of Traveller Action Group (TAG) West and the Northern Ireland Local Government Partnership on Traveller Issues. • Holocaust Memorial workshops for post primary schools was delivered under the theme of "Learn for a Better Future". Community memorial holocaust event at the Workhouse Museum in Enniskillen on the 23 January 2025 delivered by host Maralyn Turgal attended by 30+ participants. Total beneficiaries both direct and indirect 520+.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REAP assisted 29 individuals of various ethnicities gain employment or qualifications.
Disability	<p>Access Inclusion (targeting people with disabilities and PHA funded)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JAM Card Training - total 701 individuals received training. • AIM Model Toolkit – engaged with 235 individuals at 11 events. • Reaching Rural Programme – engaged 93 individuals and 19 events. • GIVE Volunteer Programme – adults with disabilities were provided with a supportive process to gain volunteering experience. • Fine Motor Skills Programme - engaged with 53 individuals at 16 events. • Nature Makes Sense: two events, welcoming 434 participants with additional needs. Held at Grange Park, Omagh on 19 March and Smith's Strand, Lisnaskea on 26 March 2025, the events were designed to be inclusive and accessible, providing meaningful opportunities for groups supporting individuals with disabilities to connect with nature and take part in wellbeing activities. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with 100% of surveyed participants reporting they learned something new, and 96% saying they enjoyed the event. • International Day of Persons with Disabilities. <p>Activities through Community & Wellbeing Team: Boccia, football, pickleball, archery, canoeing and walking with 49 people in attendance.</p> <p>Showcase Events (delivered in partnership with Leisure Centre Managers):</p> <p>Boccia, Inclusive Cycling, Fitness Suite Tour, Bowls, Pickleball, Arts & Crafts, Chair Based Exercises, Pilates, Stretch & Core, and Spin with 81 people in attendance.</p> <p>11 exhibitors: Omagh Healthy Living, PCSP, Leonard Cheshire, Centre for Independent Living, WHSCT Teams, NOW Group, Angel Eyes NI, Cedar Foundation, Disability Action, RNIB.</p>

	<p>A professional exhibition of work by people with disabilities took place at the Strule Arts Centre from 5 December to 4 January. Over 60 items were exhibited by a range of children, young people and adults with a disability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Activity Referral Scheme (PARS) - is a free 12-week exercise referral programme facilitated by fully qualified staff for individuals with specific health conditions who have no absolute contraindications to exercise. • WeCan Trail - the artwork by 100 individuals was displayed within Charity Shops and Council buildings, promoting the art skills. • Western Health and Social Care Trust team building exercise – the team building event for adults with learning disabilities. Six activities with a total of 34 participants. • Inclusive Youth Forum – engaged with 7 individuals. • Poetry Project – pupils from the two local SEN schools engaged with officers to create their own poems which was then in a local exhibition at the Strule Arts Centre. • Volunteering initiative – 20 participants connected with nature while volunteering. • Blue Badge Campaign – 8 social media posts reaching 28,308 social media profiles, one video with 4,856 video views and one survey with 270 replies. The campaign tagline throughout was 'Be Kind Park with Disability in Mind' and it was a finalist in the Marketing Campaign category of the Northern Ireland Hummingbird Awards. • Review of Council website – all facility guides are up to date. • Roll out of Access and Age Friendly Charter – first village in the district, Belleek, achieved the charter. • Intergenerational Singing Programme – engaged with 55 individuals at 11 workshops. • Promoting Play – engaged with 9 individuals. • Sensory Rooms – allows families to experience play together.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible Changing – has helped people with changing needs to stay active and experience various activities. • Assisted Bin Lift Scheme - resultantly, people with mobility issues do not have to worry about bringing their bin to and from the kerbside collection point. Their bin is collected and returned for them from an approved location, and their waste does not accumulate. • In recognition of World Autism Awareness Day the Marble Arch Caves ran "Quiet Tours" to make the show cave and visitor centre more accessible for those with sensory needs. • For Halloween, the Marble Arch Caves offered sensory-friendly sessions with reduced scare levels and gentler sounds. This ensured everyone could enjoy the magic in a relaxed and supportive environment. • In December, the Marble Arch Caves offered a Christmas Elf Escape Sensory Room. Specially created for visitors with access and sensory needs, this peaceful environment featured soothing blue lighting and interactive sensory stations, ideal for a calm and enjoyable experience. • REAP assisted 83 individuals with a health condition gain employment or qualifications. • Through the Employer-led Disability Programme, LMP assisted 8 participants with a disability / long term health condition gain employment. • Hearing Assessments and 1:1 advice was provided to employees by the Royal National Institute for Deaf People with over 100 attendees across Omagh and Fermanagh.
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FODC Grant Aid - South West Age Partnership manages this on behalf of FODC and awarded 96 older peoples' group with grant aid in April 24 - March 25 financial period. The grant aid is very important in enabling older people groups to apply for activities/programmes that are important to them, helping to build on their capacity and sense of ownership. • Creation of a Reminiscence Trail – the creation of a reminiscence trail has provided a pathway for all sections of the community to exercise and learn

	<p>about days gone past. It has also been used for intergenerational projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive Aging Month – a total of 300 people attended events. • Dementia Awareness Training attended by approximately 35 members of staff. • Positive Ageing Month Grants - 30 older people's groups were successful in being awarded grant aid. • Age Friendly Belleek - Community Support Officer, Access and Inclusion Officer and Manager of SWAP worked together to pilot Belleek as an Age Friendly Village. Age Friendly Stickers were issued to businesses in Belleek on completion of JAM training and completion of age friendly checklist. • REAP assisted 121 individuals over 50 gain employment or qualifications. • Range of community activity programmes delivered including boccia, walks and chair - based exercise benefiting adults in a range of ages. • Children and Young People Summer Programme – the inclusive programme provides opportunities for children and young people over the summer period. • School education programmes for children and young people – The FODC Climate Team has actively engaged with and delivered environmental education workshops and events to a total of 7,379 children and young people throughout the 7 DEAs. These sessions have provided valuable learning opportunities on key environmental topics, fostering awareness and encouraging sustainable practices within the community.
Marital Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many examples of the support and services provided in Question 2 allow people with various marital statuses to take part in activities. For example, free events for children may allow some single parents to attend more activities. Additionally, the various Advisory Groups that the Council facilitate have a mix of people who are married, cohabiting, single and widowed.

Sexual Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported Pride Omagh and Fermanagh in celebration of our LGBTQIA+ colleagues and residents. • The Enniskillen Castle and Strule Arts Centre were lit up in recognition of Pride. • The Museum & Heritage Service hosted part of Fermanagh Pride at Enniskillen Castle on 7 September 2024, supporting local LGBTQ+ communities. 2,500 visitors came to the Castle on the day as part of the event.
Dependency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of Living Support - The Council's cost of living support programme included support for households impacted by the ongoing cost of living crisis. The initiatives were targeted at those most in need and beneficiaries included people from all Section 75 groups. • Fermanagh and Omagh Poverty Support Programme (WRAP Programme) - This programme benefitted people from many of the Section 75 groups especially individuals with dependents and people with disabilities. 204 households benefitted from the support, comprising 676 individuals. • Through the Childminding Academy, 13 participants completed training to become a Registered Childminder or Home Approved Childcare provider. Additional childminders will create more childcare spaces, to enable parents return to the employment. • Awareness campaigns – a range of campaigns, for example the Blind Cord Toddler Choke Hazard Campaign, helped to prevent injury to children. • Home Safety Checks – were delivered to households with children under 5 years old and older people aged 65 years old and above. This helps identify hazards in peoples' homes and provides them with advice and equipment. • Nappy Scheme - using reusable nappies can dramatically reduce the amount of waste we send to landfill and minimise our impact on the environment. To help encourage more parents to make the switch, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council has a reusable nappy incentive scheme where you can claim back £30 when you spend £50 or more on cloth nappies. • Additional Bin Collection Service - the Council recognises that some households may require the

	collection of a second Black/Green bin. Therefore, people with health conditions or dependents are assisted with their excess waste and their waste does not accumulate.
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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):*

N/A

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

N/A

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

Putting in place appropriate systems to improve equality monitoring and data collection.

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

Through more consultation and engagements with Section 75 groupings. The various Advisory groups and consultation events have helped the Council access more feedback which in turn has resulted in changes to services.

- ☒ Other *(please specify and give details):*

Establishing an appropriate system to include and mainstream equality of opportunity at a strategic level of the Council.

Raising levels of awareness and understanding among staff of the Council's responsibility to promote equality and meeting the needs of a diverse population.

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 2024-25 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:

Since the formation of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council (April 2015), the Section 75 duties have been integrated within job descriptions and personnel specifications across the Council. This continued for the 2024/2025 reporting period.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2024-25 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 Section 75 statutory duties were integrated across the Council within several Performance Plans, and Service Delivery and Improvement Plans, during the year.

Some examples of services achieving this include:

- Services/Directorates collecting, and collating, monitoring information for programmes, projects, etc. This helps to ensure that the needs of all Section 75 categories are being met.
- The Council's Policy and Strategic Services section has the Section 75 Statutory Duties embedded throughout a number of performance processes e.g. equality screening, equality consultation database, public consultations,

equality monitoring, implementation and monitoring of the Council's Equality Action Plan.

- All committee reports, before being presented to Elected Members, must consider the Section 75 impacts and include details of this on the report being presented.

Performance measures relating to the Section 75 statutory duties have been integrated into the Corporate Plan, as well as playing a key part within strategic planning.

For example, the Corporate Plan 2024-2028 states that the vision for Fermanagh and Omagh is 'a welcoming, shared and inclusive district, where people and places are healthy, safe, connected and prosperous...'. Ultimately, this is the shared vision which will influence the work of the Council.

Furthermore, within the Community Plan 2030, 'Equality, Inclusivity and Diversity' is noted as one of the shared values and key principles. It states, 'Equality, inclusivity and diversity are placed at the core of all of our services and actions, as we work towards achieving a shared future for all'.

- 6 In the 2024-25 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 2024-25 report
- ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Objectives, targets and performance measures relating to the Section 75 statutory duties have been integrated throughout the organisation. This has been done via the Corporate Plan update as well as through other key pieces of work including the Performance Improvement Plan and strategic planning. The Corporate Plan 2024-2028 document states that the vision for Fermanagh and Omagh is 'a welcoming, shared and inclusive district, where people and places are healthy, safe, connected and prosperous...'

The Council's updated Equality Scheme, Equality Action Plan, Disability Action Plan, as well as the responsibility for their implementation lies within the Corporate Service and Governance Directorate. These documents set out how all Council

Directorates and Services should comply with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998).

All Directorates and Services have responsibilities for various aspects of equality and the Equality Scheme. Section 75 is of particular importance to the Council and particularly in relation to the Council's Strategic Management and Planning. For example, equality screening is mandatory for all new/revised Council policies, strategies and plans.

Equality action plans/measures

- 7** Within the 2024-25 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions
completed:

11

Actions
ongoing:

11

Actions to
commence:

0

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

Please refer to question 2 for detail on ongoing and completed actions.

- 8** Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2024-25 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

No changes or amendments have been made to the 2022-2024 Equality Action Plan during the 2024-25 reporting period.

- 9** In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2024-25 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 2024-25 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 Council has undertaken several public consultations over the course of the 2024-25 reporting period. These include:

- Draft Improvement Objectives 2024 – 2025
- Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028
- Fermanagh and Omagh Anti-Poverty Strategy
- Equality Action Plan 2025-2028
- Disability Action Plan 2025-2028
- FODC Draft Heritage Plan 2025 – 2030

Some examples of the good practice undertaken by the Council include:

- Public advertisement in the local newspapers.
- Publishing articles on the 'Latest News' section of the Council's website.
- Making documents available in alternative formats/languages upon request.
- Arranging focus groups for specific consultations (e.g. Community Planning).
- Presenting relevant policies to appropriate Council Committees/subgroups (e.g. Access and Inclusion Advisory Group).
- All consultations are communicated via the Council's Social Media channels (Facebook and Twitter). Reminder messages in relation to consultations are also communicated via social media in addition to the Council website.
- Online consultation arrangements (i.e. zoom meetings, and Webex Meetings).
- Facility to provide feedback via telephone – again due to the restrictions on face-to-face meetings.

- 12 In the 2024-25 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*): Online meetings i.e. through Zoom, Microsoft Teams etc

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:

In relation to targeting groups of people, or individuals, from specific Section 75 categories, the Council has found that varying the method of consultation is most effective. For example, when a service/directorate would like to interact with individuals who may have a disability (or groups that work with people who have a disability) then focus groups may be most effective. This can be facilitated by meeting with the Access and Inclusion Advisory Group. This ensures that services/directorates have sought the views of people from a range of disability perspectives or those who represent them.

Good Relations supported Fermanagh and Omagh Youth Voice. The service area worked with the Education Authority to engage young people in democracy and decision making. Activities included participation in consultations. Delivering on climate change also featured heavily to raise awareness of the impact at a local level.

The Council's Corporate and Strategic Services section manages the Equality Consultation Database and aims to have representation from each of the Section 75 Categories. This Consultation Database is updated regularly to ensure it is up-to-date and compliant with the General Data Protection Regulations.

- 13** Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2024-25 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

- 14** Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2024-25 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not applicable – no commitment to review

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

14

- 16** Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2024-25:

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

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

N/A

- 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 2024-25 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 2024-25 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

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

Please provide any details:

An Equality Monitoring process was undertaken in relation to employees, applicants, appointees, promotes and leavers. This information has been collated and was reported to Policy & Resources Committee in May 2025.

- 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 2024-25 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 2024-25, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

As mentioned in the response to question 2, there were several training sessions and awareness raising sessions for Elected Members and employees.

Furthermore, throughout the period there were internal sessions arranged for Council employees and Elected Members including;

- JAM Card Training (PHA funded)
- Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity Awareness training
- Dementia Awareness Training
- Women's and Men's Health Awareness Workshops.

- 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:

LGBTQIA+ Training

A training session on LGBTQIA+ awareness took place on 15 August. This helped provide information to staff on the issues that the community may face and how to provide better support.

JAM Card Training

To date over 701 people have started/completed the training. The training has been rolled out to, staff, Elected Members, community groups and small businesses. This has resulted in people being more aware of the JAM Card and how to offer support to those who use it.

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

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2024-25, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

During the reporting period, there were a number of improvements in relation to access to information and services. These have included recommendations considered following consultation with the Access and Inclusion Advisory Group in relation to:

- Foundry Lane – planning stage
- Fermanagh Lakeland Forum Redevelopment – planning stage

Access and Inclusion Officer

- Members of the Access and Inclusion Advisory Group also helped to promote a range of projects for social media and local press, including the Blue Badge Campaign and JAM Card Training.
- The Council has also continued to create Easy-read versions of key documents following feedback.
- In this reporting period the Council has also extended contracts of procured suppliers to provide both verbal and written interpreting and translation services. This has allowed people who use languages other than English to have better access to services. The Council also has online chat and ReachDeck functions available on its website.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

- 27** How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2024-25?

Insert number here:

0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

N/A

Section 3: Looking Forward

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

2027 – The five-year review was completed during the previous reporting period and forwarded to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in 2022.

29 Are there areas of the Equality Scheme arrangements (screening/consultation/training) your organisation anticipates will be focused upon in the next reporting period? *(please provide details)*

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council will remain focused on all of the above.

There will be a particular focus on training, learning and development opportunities for both employees and Elected Members in areas such as Equality and Disability as well as in the awareness raising for the new Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan.

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

- ☒ 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

Access and Inclusion Officer

1. Number of action measures for this reporting period that have been:

7

Fully achieved

18

Partially achieved

0

Not achieved

* Actions outlined as 'partially achieved' are identified as ongoing actions that will be carried forward each year / reporting period.

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	DfC Employment Support Scheme Cessation of Funding	Access and Advisory Group submitted a response to this consultation.	Lobbied for equality for people with disabilities.
Regional ^{iv}	Officers have encouraged members of the Access Advisory Group to take up membership of other advisory groups, for example IMTAC.	A number of individuals sit on these lobbying groups – for example three members are part of IMTAC.	Individuals with disabilities are part of lobbying/ consultative groups. This allows them to impact decision making and ensuring the district is represented.

PART B

Local ^v	<p>The number of voluntary members on the Access and Inclusion Advisory Group remained as eight members - two more than Elected Members. This ensures that the group have representation from a range of disabilities and geographical spread.</p> <p>During the reporting period, efforts were also made to increase the membership of the Access and Inclusion Advisory Group – increasing participation from different geographical areas and disability categories.</p>	<p>During this reporting period there were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 meetings of the Access and Inclusion Advisory Group • 2 meeting of the Access Advisory Group. • Continued in both virtual and face-to-face meetings, ensuring that barriers to travel were overcome. 	<p>Improved participation by people with disabilities in public life.</p> <p>People with disabilities are consulted with on important issues that affect them – for example public footpaths, consultations, and strategies.</p>
Local	<p>Organisation and delivery of a series of Accessibility Information Sessions and Inclusive Community and Wellbeing activities to coincide with International Day of Persons with Disabilities</p>	<p>International Day of Persons with Disabilities – Through partnership working with Community & Wellbeing and the Leisure Centres the following activities and showcase exhibitions were arranged to recognise International Day of Persons with Disabilities:</p> <p>Activities through Community & Wellbeing Team:</p>	<p>Raised awareness of disability, accessibility and available support.</p> <p>The workshops encouraged people with disabilities to participate in physical activities. They also introduced people with disabilities to the Council's leisure facilities.</p> <p>People with disabilities were better informed of available support.</p> <p>The community were more aware of disability and their right to be included within society.</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boccia, football, pickleball, archery, canoeing and walking with 49 people in attendance. <p>Showcase Events (delivered in partnership with Leisure Centre Managers):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boccia, Inclusive Cycling, Fitness Suite Tour, Bowls, Pickleball, Arts & Crafts, Chair Based Exercises, Pilates, Stretch & Core, and Spin with 81 people in attendance. <p>11 exhibitors: Omagh Healthy Living, PCSP, Leonard Cheshire, Centre for Independent Living, WHSCT Teams, NOW Group, Angel Eyes NI, Cedar Foundation, Disability Action, RNIB.</p>	
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		A professional exhibition of work by people with disabilities took place at the Strule Arts Centre from 5 December to 4 January. Over 60 items were exhibited by a range of children, young people and adults with a disability.	
Local	People with disabilities were involved in carrying out Mystery Shopper surveys on Council property.	A total of 4 mystery shopper audits were conducted across venues and parks within the district	<p>Issues with accessibility were highlighted and addressed.</p> <p>Council venues/ facilities are more accessible.</p> <p>Improved participation in public life.</p> <p>Increased public involvement to ensure continued service improvement.</p>
Local	People with disabilities were encouraged to take part in volunteering with the Council.	Over 20 people with disabilities took part in a range of volunteering opportunities.	<p>Encourage civic responsibility among people with disabilities.</p> <p>More representative volunteers.</p> <p>Better awareness among the community of the benefit that people with disabilities can bring to various roles.</p>

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	JAM Card Training	To date 700+ staff/ members of the public have received access to the JAM (Just-A-Minute) Card E-learning training.	Participants are more equipped to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interact with people who have a hidden disability or communication barrier. Recognise the JAM Card and how to support someone who presents them with one.
2	'5 Steps' ALD Project	'5 Steps' ALD Project – 34 participants attended	The workshops helped educate adults with learning disabilities on how to take 5 steps to wellbeing and improve their physical/mental health and wellbeing.
	Dementia Awareness Training	Delivered by the Western Health and Social Care Trust Dementia Navigator and attended by approximately 35 members of staff.	Staff are more competent in dealing with members of the public who have dementia.

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

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
	Provision of responsive and accessible services	Through the 6 meetings of the various advisory groups, people with disabilities were able to highlight	Improved access to information and advice. Improved participation in public life.

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1		issues with Council officers and Elected Members.	Issues with access are rectified quickly and service delivery improved. Stronger communication between people with disabilities and the Council/ other statutory organisations.
2	Provision of responsive and accessible services.	The procurement of translation and interpretation supplies – for both written and verbal. The procurement of Easy-Read symbol software – development of an easy-read version of the Complaints Procedure.	Improved access to information on Council services for people with disabilities. Improved participation in civic life. Stronger communication links for people with disabilities with the Council and other statutory organisations.

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Organisation and delivery of a series of Accessibility Information Sessions to coincide with International Day of Persons with Disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Day of Persons with Disabilities – Through partnership working with Community & Wellbeing and the Leisure Centres the following activities and showcase exhibitions were arranged to recognise 	<p>Improved understanding of the needs of people with hidden disabilities within the community.</p> <p>Raised awareness of various disabilities and the support available to them.</p> <p>Helped celebrate the abilities of people with disabilities.</p>

		<p>International Day of Persons with Disabilities:</p> <p>Activities through Community & Wellbeing Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boccia, football, pickleball, archery, canoeing and walking with 49 people in attendance. <p>Showcase Events (delivered in partnership with Leisure Centre Managers):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boccia, Inclusive Cycling, Fitness Suite Tour, Bowls, Pickleball, Arts & Crafts, Chair Based Exercises, Pilates, Stretch & Core, and Spin with 81 people in attendance. <p>11 exhibitors: Omagh Healthy Living, PCSP, Leonard Cheshire, Centre for Independent Living, WHSCT Teams, NOW Group, Angel Eyes NI, Cedar Foundation, Disability Action, RNIB.</p> <p>A professional exhibition of work by people with disabilities took place at</p>	<p>Encouraged people with disabilities to participate in physical activity.</p> <p>Encouraged other community groups and organisations to make changes to become more accessible.</p>
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		the Strule Arts Centre from 5 December to 4 January. Over 60 items were exhibited by a range of children, young people and adults with a disability.	
2	Employment and Training – Managers and employees were informed of reasonable adjustments, when required.	<p>Human Resources continue to liaise with the triage, i.e., Employee, Line Manager and Occupational Health in relation to any reasonable adjustments required for employees. These adjustments are put in place to help support and assist employees in their roles. The adjustments can range from physical workstation adaptations to hours off work.</p> <p>In terms of accessibility of opportunities, Human Resources continue to provide reasonable adjustments to applicants where these have been requested.</p>	<p>All employees who required additional assistance to carry out their duties were provided with adequate support.</p> <p>Job applicants were better assisted during the application/ interview process.</p> <p>Managers were more aware of their legal responsibilities.</p> <p>Continued liaison with external stakeholders in relation to our disability duties.</p>
3	Screen all new/revised policies to assess the significance of the policy on the disability duties.	100% of new and revised policies screened for impact on disability duties.	Council's proactive approach ensures that all policies and services are accessible and inclusive to people with a disability.
4.	Civic Leadership	Throughout the year there were many civic receptions held by the Chair of FODC, as well as photo launches for various initiatives.	<p>Greater awareness of people with disabilities in the community.</p> <p>Improved recognition of the contribution people with disabilities make to communities.</p>

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		<p>These events help raise the profile of residents/ groups and projects.</p> <p>A few examples include the NOW Group, launching Disability and Equality Action plans, and attending events at SEN Schools.</p>	<p>Encourage others to respect disabilities and encourage their participation in their projects etc.</p>
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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	Undertake a consultation process to develop a new Disability Action Plan for the Council, for the period 2022-2024.	A 2022-2024 Disability Action Plan has been consulted on and approved.	The Council has targets to aim for regarding 'disability' and 'access'.
2	Ensure a consistent approach to the provision of translation and interpretation services to help people with limited, or no, English.	A procurement exercise has been completed and suppliers are in place to provide translation and interpreting services.	<p>Improved access to services for people who speak languages other than English.</p> <p>Improved levels of inclusivity in the district.</p>
3	Continue to deliver inclusive fitness/leisure programmes for everyone, including people with disabilities.	During the 2024/2025 reporting period, the Council continued to promote activities that are inclusive for all, including people with	<p>Encourage people with disabilities to participate in fitness activities.</p> <p>Improved health and wellbeing.</p>

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		disabilities and/or access requirements.	
4	Relaunch of the Disability Advisory Group.	The Disability Advisory Group was relaunched as the Access and Inclusion Advisory Group in 2024.	<p>Empowerment of people with disabilities.</p> <p>Improved levels of consultation and communication with people with disabilities.</p> <p>Improved standard of services provided by the Council.</p>
5	Review the effectiveness of the Access Advisory Groups	<p>The Fermanagh Access Advisory Group and Omagh Access Advisory Group have been amalgamated into one.</p> <p>This has resulted in a larger group representing more geographical areas and disability types.</p>	<p>Empowerment of people with disabilities.</p> <p>Officers more knowledgeable on what levels of access are required for different services.</p> <p>Better partnership working with people with disabilities/ support organisations.</p>
6	Implement the Play Park Strategy	<p>The Play Park Strategy has been published.</p> <p>Officers have made changes which have provided higher levels of access in some play parks.</p> <p>For example, the redevelopment of Grange Play Park has provided inclusive play park equipment and sensory areas.</p> <p>The strategy has been complemented by some DfC funding</p>	<p>Better promotion of inclusive play between children with and without a disability.</p> <p>More opportunities for people with disabilities to experience outdoor play.</p> <p>More inclusive communities, including better disability awareness.</p>

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		to install accessible picnic benches in areas close to playparks.	
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3. Please outline what action measures have been **partly achieved** as follows:

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	Report on the progress of the Disability Action Plan annually through the submission of an Annual Progress Report.	Annual Progress Report sent to the Equality Commission for NI in 2024.	Evaluation of how the Council is performing against the Action Plan.	Due to the nature of this action, it will always carry forward into the next year.
2	Increase the awareness of Elected Members in relation to their responsibilities for the provision of services for people with disabilities.	Elected members who sit on the Access and Inclusion Advisory Group have regular updates on issues affecting people at the meetings. Officers had planned equality training for all Elected Members in June 2024 and an 'Awareness Session' with members of the Access Advisory Group in 2024/25.	Improved awareness of people with disabilities and their needs. Increased communication between people with disabilities and Elected Members. Increased levels of accountability for decisions taken by the Council.	Due to the nature of the action, the work to achieve it will be ongoing throughout the 5-year Council term.
3	Develop an Action Plan for the Council's Mental Health Champions	Officers have started to draft an Action Plan for the Mental Health	Improved understanding of Mental Health among	Due to the nature of the action, the work to achieve it will be

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		Champions and plan to launch it during Mental Health Week in 2024.	Elected Members, staff and the public. Raise awareness of the role of Mental Health Champions.	ongoing throughout the 5-year Council term.
4	Increase awareness of the Diversity Champions and their roles/ responsibilities.	Diversity Champion has attended and promoted a range of events.	Demonstrates the Council's commitment to Equality and Diversity.	Due to the nature of the action, the work to achieve it will be ongoing throughout the 5-year Council term.
5	Improve the accessibility of the Council website in line with the new Website Accessibility Regulations.	Officers have reviewed webpages on the Council's website and highlighted areas for improvement. Work has started to make the website more accessible. The website provides Chat Box and Reachdesk functions.	Greater access to information on services and projects. Easier to communicate with the Council.	Due to the nature of the action, the work to achieve it will be ongoing throughout the 5-year Council term.

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	N/A	N/A
2		

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

Annual Progress Reports

Updates provided to the Council's Access and Inclusion Advisory Group

Reports presented to the Council's Policy and Resources Committee

(b) Quantitative

Participation figures for workshops

Attendance figures at events/training

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

- made any **revisions** to your plan during the reporting period or

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- taken any **additional steps** to meet the disability duties which were **not outlined in your original** disability action plan / any other changes?

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council consulted upon an updated Disability Action plan for 2022-2024 between January and April 2022. This Disability Action Plan was approved and ratified by Council in May 2022.

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1	N/A	N/A	N/A
2			

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?

N/A

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} **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level

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