

Equality Action Plan 2025-2028

Equality

Diversity

Inclusion

Foreword by the Chairperson and Chief Executive

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council is committed to ensuring that all our residents and visitors have access to good quality services that promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations across a range of categories outlined in the Act.

We, the Chair and the Chief Executive of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, are fully committed to effectively fulfilling our Section 75 statutory duties across all our functions (including service provision, employment and procurement) through the effective implementation of our equality scheme and this equality action plan.

With our Equality Scheme we set out how Fermanagh and Omagh District Council proposes to fulfil the Section 75 statutory duties, and we commit to doing this through an equality action plan which is renewed every three years.

Through this plan we aim to ensure that we put 'equality', 'diversity' and 'inclusion' at the centre of employment practice, service delivery and policy development. Implementing this plan will help to achieve the value and principle as outlined within the 'Fermanagh and Omagh 2030' Community Plan:

'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.'

and the Council's cross-cutting Commitment as stated in the Corporate Plan 2024 -2028:

'Beyond a duty of compliance with our equality scheme, we aim to mainstream the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations throughout the organisation, actively seeking out ways in which to enhance those opportunities and to build positive relations between and among the many diverse communities across our region.'

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council is committed to achieving the objectives set out in this Equality Action Plan and will allocate the necessary resources and support, within its control, to effectively implement it.

Chairperson Chief Executive

Cllr McElduff Alison McCullagh





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About Fermanagh and Omagh and Section 75 Profile

Fermanagh and Omagh is the largest geographically of all 11 Council districts in Northern Ireland, covering 3,000km². It has the smallest population (116,926 in 2023), with 70% of people living outside the two main towns of Enniskillen and Omagh and located in a rural border area.

<u>Section 75 – District Profile</u>

The profile of the district in terms of Section 75 Categories compared to the NI average is set out below. Data from NI Census 2021.

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Religious Belief	 61.15% identify as 'Roman Catholic' (NI: 42.31%) 28.75% identify as 'Protestant or other Christian' religion (NI: 37.36%)
	• 10.10% identify as 'No Religion/Other' (NI: 20.34%)
	The most recent Equality Monitoring Process of Council employees demonstrated those responding identified as:
	 58% - 'Roman Catholic'. 35% - 'Protestant'. 7% - 'No Religion/Other'
Political opinion	This breakdown is taken as an approximate representation of the political opinion among people within the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area.
	 35% identify as predominantly Unionist (NI: 32%) 62.5% identify as predominantly Nationalist (NI: 26%) 2.5% identify as predominantly 'Other/None' (NI: 38%)
	The current political opinion of the Council's elected members is as follows:
	Sinn Féin: 21 UUP: 7 DUP: 6 SDLP: 3
	Alliance Party: 2 Independent: 1
Race	98.29% of the local population identifies as 'White'. (NI: 96.55%)
	1.71% of the local population identifies as 'Other' (NI: 3.45%).
	The District is becoming more diverse, with approximately 5.17% of the local population being born outside of the UK and Ireland. There are also approximately 4,427 people whose first language is not English.

	Monitoring statistics for Council employees broadly reflects this, with 99.6% identifying as 'White' and 0.4% identifying as 'Other'.						
Disability	Statistics demonstrate that within the Fermanagh and Omagh District, 23.94% of the population identifies as having a long-term health problem or disability that limits their day-to-day activities, split as follows: • Long-term health problem or disability (Day-to-day activities limited a lot): 12,841 people. • Long-term health problem or disability (Day-to-day activities limited a little): 15,126 people. • Long-term health problem or disability (Day-to-day activities not limited): 88,845						
Age	The Age Profile of follows:	the Fermanagh and Or	nagh District is as				
	Age Band	Number of Individual within each Age Ban	Percentage				
	0-16	24,779	21.23				
	16-29	17,954	15.37				
	30-44	21,892	18.74				
	45-59	23,457	20.08				
	60-74	19,453	16.65				
	75+	9,256	7.92				
-			,				
Marital Status	Marital Status	District Profile (%)	NI Average (%)				
	Divorced	4.92	6.02				
	Single	35.81	38.07				
	Married	49.14	45.59				
	Separated	3.44	3.78				
	Widowed	6.55	6.36				
	Same-sex Civil 0.14 0.18						
Sexual Orientation	Sexual Orientation	District Percentage (%)	NI Average (%)				

	Straight or heterosexual	89.52	90.04		
	Gay or lesbian	0.57	1.17		
	Bisexual	0.43	0.75		
	Other sexual orientation	0.16	0.17		
	Prefer not to say or Not Stated	9.32	7.87		
Gender	Male: 49.93% and Female 50.81%)	emale: 50.07% (NI: N	lale 49.19% and		
Dependency	_	gh and Omagh Distric as providing unpaid o			
	 Families in households with no dependent chi 32,179 families. Families in households with one dependent chi 4,666 families. Families in households with two dependent chi 5,068 families. Families in households with three or more dependent children: 3,880 families. 				

Equality Duties

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires Fermanagh and Omagh District Council to comply with two statutory duties:

Section 75 (1)

In carrying out our functions relating to Northern Ireland we are required to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation
- men and women generally
- persons with a disability and persons without
- persons with dependants and persons without.

Section 75 (2)

In addition, without prejudice to the obligations above, in carrying out our functions in relation to Northern Ireland we are required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group. "Functions" include the "powers and duties" of a public authority. This includes our employment and procurement functions.

Purpose of the Equality Action Plan

This plan has been developed to address some of the equality issues relevant to the Council's functions. The Equality Commission recommended that Equality Schemes are accompanied by an Action Plan in order to improve outcomes for the section 75 groups.

Plan Development

The plan was developed through research, identifying a range of equality issues that exist for each section 75 group and regional and local strategies, programmes, initiatives, statistical baseline data and relevant legislation.

Plan research included:

- Previous action plans were reviewed
- There was consideration of the Council's corporate priorities
- Meetings were held with the Council's Access and Inclusion Advisory Group.
- Correspondence with Officers from the different service areas in order to identify appropriate actions that include an array of Council functions.

Inequalities are addressed for each section 75 group and include associated performance indicators and timescales to address the inequalities identified as well as resources required.

The Council believes that the actions included in the Plan are likely to have the most significant impact on equality of opportunity and good relations. A number of actions have been retained in the Equality Action Plan as they are ongoing requirements. These include actions in relation to ongoing council services.

Annual Report

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council will prepare and submit an annual report on the implementation of its Equality Action Plan. The report will be included as part of the Council's annual report to the Equality Commission on the progress of the implementation of the Equality Scheme.

A draft Annual Report will be considered at the Council's Policy and Resources Committee and once approved will be returned to the Equality Commission.

A copy of the Annual Report will be made available by contacting the Corporate and Strategic Services section.

Equality Action 2025-2028 Priorities

- Community Wellbeing
- Employment
- Council Services
- Staff Development and Internal Resources

Priority A: Community Wellbeing

Citizens' health profile is of significant concern. Almost one-quarter (24%) of children living in our most deprived areas are overweight or obese when they start school in Primary 1, this is four percentage points above the regional average, and it rises to 32% in Year 8 (NI average is 26%)¹.

In adulthood, the two most common health issues are hypertension and obesity. Over 20,000 of our residents receive treatment for hypertension, 6,721 for diabetes mellitus, and almost 5,000 for non-diabetic hyperglycaemia (pre-diabetes)².

The Fermanagh and Omagh District population has an ageing profile. Approximately 18% of the population is aged 65 years or older – and this is projected to increase to 22% by 2030. The rurality of the Fermanagh and Omagh district exacerbates levels of loneliness and isolation experienced by older people.

It is well documented and researched that physical health and emotional wellbeing can be improved through physical activity interventions and socialisation. Research also shows, people with a limiting long-term illness and older people are much less likely to do the recommended amount of exercise (30 mins, 5 days per week, or 150 mins per week or more).

Through the action plan outlined, the Council's various directorates aim to promote equality of opportunity and aid community wellbeing.

Priority B: Employment

There are approximately 50,500 economically active residents in employment (31% full-time, 12% part-time and 11% self-employed) and 12,900 residents (excluding students) economically inactive.³

Research conducted by Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (UUEPC) on behalf of FODC analysed the reasons for economic inactivity in the region in 2019. The analysis identified that the largest proportion of those economically inactive in the Council area at that time were classified as long-term sick or having a disability (35%), which is significantly higher than the NI equivalent at that time which equated to 26%. A total of 22% were caring for family or home and the remaining 13% fell into the retired or 'other' categories.

In 2021, statistics demonstrate that within the District, 23.94% of the population identified as having a long-term health problem or disability that limits their day-to-

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¹ Health Inequalities Report 2024

² NISRA - Disease Prevalence (accessed via NISRA Datahub)

³ NISRA, 2021

day activities. Also, within the District, 11.02% of the population identified as providing unpaid care to a family, friend or neighbor. ⁴

Through the action plan outlined, the Council's various directorates aim to promote equality of opportunity to employment.

Priority C: Council Services

The roles and functions of councils, established in the Local Government Act 2014 and in other legislation, fall into four types:

- Direct service provision in response to community needs and legislative requirements – setting priorities for the area and for the Council and being accountable for the choices made.
- A development role as enabler/facilitator on economic and community development initiatives – enabling and empowering local people; setting out the vision for local strategies in partnership with other agencies.
- A representative role on boards such as health and education championing the District.
- A consultative role on issues such as education, water, roads and housing, by providing a challenge to the performance of all of the delivery agencies in the District.

To ensure the Council's services continually have due regard to and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between Section 75 categories, the council has outlined actions for its council services.

Priority D: Staff Development and Internal

The Council employs over 800 people, to ensure staff are continuously educated and informed in order to fulfil Section 75 duties, the council has developed a range of actions. Actions have also been developed to promote equality and good relations between its staff.

The following tables outline our actions from 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2028 and these have been linked to the priorities.

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⁴ NI Census 2021

Priority A: Community Wellbeing

Priority A: Community & Wellbeing

Provide opportunities for Section 75 Categories to participate in community, health and wellbeing activities

Section 75 Equality Group	Action	Lead Responsibility	Performance Indicator	Standard / Target	Expected Outcome / Impact	Timeframe
1. Age	Co-ordinate, report and review the delivery of the actions within the Fermanagh and Omagh Age Friendly Strategy	Community Services Age Friendly Officer (AFO)	Delivery of Age Friendly	Delivery of Age Friendly Action Plan	To raise the profile of issues relating to older people, both within Council departments and other partner organisations, both statutory and community, with the overall aim of making the District a more Age Friendly place.	Annually

2. All	Engage with the Traveller Community	Community Services Good Relations (GR) Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP)	No. of engagement events held with traveller community. No. of Omagh Traveller Interagency Group meetings.	6 engagement events 4 Interagency Group meetings.	Animation of Traveller community to raise awareness of traveller culture and issues, and to interface with statutory and non- statutory agencies.	Ongoing 1- 3 years
3. All Go	Good Relations Serv		Delivery of the Good Relations Action Plan across the four T:BUC themes		Increased	
		Community Services Good Relations (GR)	our children and young people	Full delivery of actions detailed in the Good	positive attitudes to people from a different	Ongoing 1- 3 years
	do por 070(2)	rtolationo (Ort)	our shared community	Relations Action Plan	religious or ethnic	
			our safe community		background.	
			our cultural expression			

4. All	Promote Irish, Ulster Scots, and the availability of Council services in alternative language formats. Enhance access to Council services and information in a range of languages.	Community Services Irish Language Officer Good Relations Others as required	The number of requests for alternative language formats received.	The number of requests for alternative language formats responded to.	Enhance access to Council services and information in a range of languages.	Ongoing 1- 3 years
5. Age	Work with Fermanagh and Omagh Youth Voice to increase participation and engagement of young people in community consultations.	Community Services Good Relations (GR)	The number of consultation responses submitted.	Three consultation responses per annum.	Increasing active citizenship among young people.	Ongoing 1- 3 years

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					Develop new relationships	
					on a cross	
					community and	
					cross border	
					basis through a	
					range of	
					activities that	
					will bring	
					people	
					together,	
					increase	
					understanding	
	Co-ordinate	Economic	Submission of		respect and	00.14
	and deliver the	Development	quarterly claims	Completion of	acceptance of	36 Months
6. All	PEACEPLUS	and Investment PEACEPLUS	and progress	Completion of Action Plan		from 'Letter of Offer'
	Local Action	Administration	reports to	ACTION FIAM	Empower groups to	date
	Plan	Team	SEUPB		increase	uale
		Icani			capacity and	
					engage in	
					community	
					development	
					activities	
					across the	
					district and	
					work to make a	
					significant	
					lasting	
					contribution to	
					peace and	
					reconciliation.	

7. Religion Race Age Gender Disability	Assist the Council in fulfilling priority two (People and Communities) of the Corporate Plan by increasing participation in physical activity within communities by providing enhanced inclusive and accessible opportunities. We will also work in partnership to tackle the wider determinants of health inequality through the provision of a range of targeted physical health intervention programmes.	Community Services & Wellbeing & Cultural Services	Number of activities delivered through Community Wellbeing Plans. Number of participants in FODC physical activity programmes from targeted groups.	Ongoing	Improve population wellbeing and tackle health inequalities to give everyone the opportunity to lead a healthier life.	2024-2028
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8. All	Assist the Council in fulfilling priority two (People and Communities) of the Corporate Plan by increasing participation in physical activity within communities by providing enhanced inclusive and accessible opportunities. We will also work to maintain and enhance the Council's leisure, recreation, arts and cultural facilities to ensure people have opportunities to be active and engaged in	Wellbeing & Cultural Services Leisure and Recreation services & facilities.	Number of usages of Leisure Centres, participants in FODC physical activity programmes from targeted groups and participants in arts, cultural and heritage programmes.	Ongoing	Improve population wellbeing and tackle health inequalities to give everyone the opportunity to lead a healthier life.	2024-2028
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	their everyday lives.					
9. Race Age Marital status Gender Disability People with dependants	Assist the Council in fulfilling priority two (People and Communities) of the Corporate Plan by working with under- represented groups to promote equality of opportunity for all and reduce the risk of social exclusion.	Anti-Poverty Officer	Number of individuals receiving wraparound support to alleviate poverty	Delivery of Pathways Out of Poverty Strategy	Support people and communities to minimise the impact of poverty and inequalities on their quality of life and work to provide equal opportunities for all.	2024-2028
10. All	Assist the Council in fulfilling priority two (People and Communities) of the Corporate Plan	Wellbeing & Cultural Services Theatres Tourism Facilities	Number of participations in arts, cultural and heritage activity programmes.	Ongoing	Protect, enhance, and make accessible the rich, diverse, natural, built and cultural	2024-2028

	by working in partnership to create opportunities for participation, supporting greater inclusion, understanding and valuing the diverse and dynamic cultural heritage in the	Arts, Heritage and Cultural Development			heritage of our district.	
	district. Assist the				Ensure our	
11. All	Council in fulfilling priority one (Climate Action) of the Corporate Plan by ensuring our parks and open spaces are modern, safe, fun, and inclusive spaces for all to use and enjoy.	Parks, Estates and Property	Percentage of Council play parks that have achieved a minimum of Silver Play Value	Ongoing	Council owned estate is accessible, safe, and clean and meets the needs of residents and visitors, focusing on sustainable, low carbon and renewable energy solutions.	2024-2028

Priority B: Employment

	Priority B: Employment Support Section 75 Categories with training and employment									
Section 75 Equality Group (delete irrelevant groups)	Action	Lead Responsibility	Performance Indicator	Standard / Target	Expected Outcome / Impact	Timeframe				
1. All	Develop Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnership Action Plan for 2025- 2027	Head of Economic Development and Investment	Completion of action plan	Two-year action plan based on key themes	Improve employability outcomes and labour market conditions locally by working with partners from across the public, private and community/voluntary sectors.	Q2 2025				

2. All	Deliver Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnership 2025-2027 Action Plan	Economic Development and Investment	Delivery of final approved action plan	Delivery of final approved action plan	Improve employability outcomes and labour market conditions locally by working with partners from across the public, private and community/voluntary sectors.	2025-2028
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3. All	Co-ordinate and deliver the Rural Economic Accelerator Programme (REAP)	Head of Economic Development and Investment Grants and Funded Programmes	20% of programme participants progressing to paid employment and 10% progressing to further education and training.	Fulfil requirement of Memorandum of Understanding relating to all project targets.	REAP 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.	24 months Funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund until 31st March 2025. Application for successive funding will follow.
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Priority C: Council Services

Ensure a	Priority C: Council Services Ensure all Council services and activities promote equality of opportunity and meet statutory duties								
Section 75 Equality Group (delete irrelevant groups)	Action	Lead Responsibility	Performance Indicator	Standard / Target	Expected Outcome / Impact	Timeframe			
1. All	Report bi- annually on Council's Equality Screening questionnaires	Head of Corporate and Strategic Services Policy Officer	Website updated	Two reports annually	Transparency of the Council equality screening procedures	Bi-annual			
2. All	Promote & report annually on Inclusive Language Guide, Translation and Interpretation services	Head of Corporate and Strategic Services Customer Services Registration Policy Officer	Report	August Annual report	Visibility on usage	Annually			

3.	Ensure representation of Section 75 Categories in Council visual promotional material	Head of Corporate and Strategic Services Communications Manager Communications Officers All Officers	All Section 75 Categories have been involved in a photo or video	9 photos/videos	Promotion of Section 75 categories	Annually
4. All	Council's Diversity Ambassador and Policy Officer to participate in Local Government Diversity Ambassador Programme	Democratic Services Head of Corporate and Strategic Services Council's Diversity Ambassador Policy Officer	Number of workshops attended	Four meetings annually	Increased knowledge on diversity and additional ideas on diversity	Every quarter

5. All	All new and revised policies, action plans, strategies, programmes, projects, etc., equality screened before Council approval and implementation	All Directorates - screened by policy developer / updater and signed off by relevant Head of Service	Screening report	Ongoing	Equality and Good Relations are considered and opportunities to improve them are implemented before the policy is approved.	Ongoing
6. All	Review Council equality screening matrix	Head of Corporate and Strategic Services Policy Officer	Updated document	Annually updated document	Up to date figures of the Council's Section 75 category	Annually
7. All	Produce equality screening guide for staff	Head of Corporate and Strategic Services Policy Officer	Completed and published equality screening guide	Video on Staff Hub	Staff have a resource to have them equality screen policies	2025

8. All	Continue to deliver the current policy in place for Assisted Bin Lift service.	Head of Waste Management Waste Collection	Number of assisted bin lifts provided; however, this is not a target led programme - this is an application-based process open to all who meet the relevant criteria.	Continued delivery of policy	This service is aimed at those residents who have no other person(s) to assist with setting bins out for collection.	Service currently in place - policy implemented in June 2022. Assisted Lifts Policy is reviewed every two years.
9. Disability	Co-ordinate, report and review the delivery of the actions within the Disability Action Plan	Head of Corporate and Strategic Services Access & Inclusion Officer	Delivery of Disability Action Plan	Annual equality report and quarterly PHA monitoring	Ensure Council functions, have due regard to promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities and encourage participation by people with disabilities in public life.	2025-2028

Priority D: Staff Development and Internal Resources

Priority D: Staff Development and Internal Resources Ensure staff are continuously educated on Section 75 duties, and promote equality and good relations between staff

Section 75 Equality Group (delete irrelevant groups)	Action	Lead Responsibility	Performance Indicator	Standard / Target	Expected Outcome / Impact	Timeframe
1. All	The provision of online equality training to staff	Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development All Staff	Number of training completions	All operational and management staff	All staff are aware of Equality duties and how to promote equality of opportunity	Ongoing
2. Sexual Orientation	Promote awareness and support to the LGBTQIA+ community through participation in Pride and related events	Health & Wellbeing Group Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development	Number of staff participating	Representation across all service areas	Demonstrate the Council's support for LGBTQIA+ communities	Annual

3. All	Deliver the Health and Wellbeing Calendar of events & information	Health & Wellbeing Group Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development	Number of events and informative sessions delivered	Deliver the Health and Wellbeing Calendar plan	Staff are more informed of support available for a range of health issues and staff are provided with opportunities to benefit their health and wellbeing.	Annual
4. All	Facilitate healthcare and pension provider informative sessions	Health & Wellbeing Group Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development	Number of informative sessions delivered	Facilitate informative sessions for all new staff. Facilitate a number of drop-in sessions across council staff canteens and continue to update staff via the online intranet	Staff are aware of the health and wellbeing support available to them.	Annual

5. Age	Raise awareness of planning for retirement sessions	Health & Wellbeing Group Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development	Number of informative sessions delivered	Promote one- to-one sessions as they become available and continue to update staff via the online intranet	Staff are supported and informed on preparations for retirement	Annual
6. All	Deliver policies relevant to section 75 categories such as menopause, paternity leave, maternity leave, domestic abuse leave, retirement, breastfeeding and carers leave	Health & Wellbeing Group Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development	Ensuring all are up to date and continue to meet the needs of staff	All policies up to date and functional	All staff are supported through different stages of their lives	Annual
7. Gender	Form, train and promote a group of Menopause champions	Health & Wellbeing Group Head of Human Resources &	Formation of Menopause champions	Develop a group of Menopause champions as an additional support avenue for staff	Staff have more support when dealing with the menopause	2025 - 2028

		Organisation Development				
8. Gender	Raise awareness of the impact of Domestic Abuse and support those impacted	Health & Wellbeing Group Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development	Promoting awareness of confidential advisors and other support available to staff	Ongoing support and promotion	Staff have more support when dealing with domestic abuse	2025 - 2028
9. Gender & People with Dependents	Support and promote Breastfeeding Champions	Health & Wellbeing Group Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development	Number of communications - either offering support to staff or promoting champions to staff	Ongoing support and promotion	Staff have more support when breastfeeding	2025 - 2028
10.	Support the employment of people with disabilities through the implementation of reasonable adjustments for both new recruits and existing employees	Head of Human Resources & Organisation Development	Number of employees with disability in employment	To increase the number of employees with disability employed by the Council,	To increase the number of employees with disability employed by the Council,	Ongoing

If you would like a hard copy/or a copy in an alternative format, not already available on our website, please contact:

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