

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

Contact:

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan	As above <input type="checkbox"/> (double click to open) Name: Telephone: Email:

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

www.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 2023 and March 2024

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 2023-24, 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.

a) 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 2023/2024 reporting period, the Council continued to implement actions to achieve its statutory duties, as well as regularly reviewing progress. They were discussed by the Corporate Leadership Team (as required), as well as being included within all reports made to the Council's Committee meetings (which are subsequently ratified by the full Council at the next meeting).

During the 2023/2024 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.

b) Equality Scheme and Equality Action Plan

The Council continued to fulfil its commitments outlined within the Equality Scheme (2022-2027). The Council then undertook a five-year review which was presented to the Policy and Resources Committee in December 2021 and subsequently ratified by the full 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. Officers plan to review the Equality Action Plan within the next reporting period, and this will include developing a new document and consulting widely for 12 weeks.

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/>

c) 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. Officers plan to review the Disability Action Plan within the next reporting period, and this will include developing a new document and consulting widely for 12 weeks.

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/>

d) Equality Screening

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

- Assistance Dog Policy
- Breastfeeding Policy
- Community Plan Action Plan
- Maternity Policy
- Performance Improvement Plan 23/24
- Pleasure Grounds Byelaws
- Paternity Policy
- Parental Leave Policy
- Shared Parental Leave Policy

e) 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 2023/2024 period, the Council responded to 26 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:

- DFI Revenue Raising consultations issued in 2023
- Department of Health's Autism Strategy 2023-2028
- Department for Infrastructure Free and Discounted Fares on Public Transport (Concessionary Fares)
- The Executive Office Consultation on the Provision of Free Period Products
- Department for Communities Consultation on Changes to the Discretionary Support Scheme Equality Impact Assessment
- The Executive Office Consultation on the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy
- Department of Education Consultation on the Reduction and Management of Restrictive Practices in Educational Settings in Northern Ireland
- Local Government Staff Commission Draft Model Trans Equality Policy
- Department of Health and Department of Justice Consultation on the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy 2023 - 2030

f) Elected Members and Civic Receptions

The Chair and Vice Chair hosted a range of Civic Receptions from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. 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:

- Hosted Receptions for the Hungarian Ambassador and Polish General Consul
- Attended Omagh Pride Event
- Attended ERANO's Multicultural Celebration Event
- Launched Dementia NI's 'Real Life' Exhibition
- Launched FODC's Good Relations Week 2023
- Recognised International Sign Language Day
- Attended the Inclusive Sensory Trail in Omagh
- Hosted Skyzdalimit and Brightstarz (local drama groups for people with disabilities)
- Launched Positive Aging Month
- Visited Omagh Women's Aid and Fermanagh Women's Aid
- Attended Culture Night Events
- Attended the Fermanagh Indian's Association Christmas and New Year

Event

- Attended the Erne District Chinese Family and Friends Association New Year Celebration
- Hosted a Reception for Youth Voice participants.
- Launched 'Herstory' Exhibition in Omagh
- Hosted a Reception for Local Young Achievers
- Attended ERANO's International Women's Day Event

g) Access and Inclusion Advisory Group

In 2023 a review was undertaken to examine the format of 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 is to provide support, guidance and direction to elected members and officers of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council on matters related to equality and disability and how they impact upon service delivery and design across the Council.

During the 2023/2024 reporting period, the group met three times.

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

- Chair: Councillor Barry McElduff
- Vice Chair: Dermot Devlin (Volunteer Member).

Due to the geographical spread of members and problems with accessible transport all meetings were held virtually. This allowed members to engage and participate fully in meetings.

During the 2023/2024 reporting period, the Access and Inclusion Advisory Group undertook some key pieces of work. Examples of this work includes the following:

- Inputs to FODC consultation responses, including:
 - Statutory Guidance on the Reduction and Management of Restrictive Practices in Educational Settings
 - Revenue Raising Consultations e.g. the Introduction of Prescription Charges, Domiciliary Care Charges and the Re-introduction of Hospital Car Parking Charges
- Misuse of Blue Badge Car Parking Spaces
- Accessible Toilets and Changing Place Facilities
- Public Health Agency 'Access Inclusion' funded projects.
- Issues with local footpaths and traffic light infrastructure
- Accessibility of the Council website
- New Internal Assistance Dog Policy
- Accessible buses and taxis

At a special group meeting, members were able to discuss issues with local footpaths and traffic lights with officers from the Department for Infrastructure.

Members of the Advisory Group also played an active part in advertising

inclusive activities and raising awareness of disability.

As part of International Women's Day on 8th March, two members recorded videos to inspire women and young girls with a disability. These were posted on the Council's social media platforms and were viewed over 4,700 times.

h) 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:

- i. 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 Pilot 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.
 - Mental Health Programme – this pilot project provided interactive and informative workshops for adults with learning disabilities to improve their mental health.
 - Explore your Senses – this programme provided sensory workshops for children with neurodiverse conditions.
 - International Day of Persons with Disabilities – a range of information talks were arranged to raise awareness of disability, accessibility and available support. A recording of an inclusive dance and singing session was posted on the Council's social media channels and was viewed over 3,000 times.
 - 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.
 - I Can Fest – the festival provided opportunities for people with a disability to attend fun activities and learn more about support and projects across the district.
 - Digital Poetry Project – pupils from the two local SEN schools engaged with officers to create their own poetry books.
 - Autism Support Cafes – the Council supported the WHSCT to deliver two information sessions for parents of children with or awaiting an Autism diagnosis.
 - Mystery Shoppers Audits – people with disabilities were involved in auditing a number of Council venues and parks to highlight issues with accessibility.
 - Neurodiversity Awareness Training – a range of community organisations and volunteers attended training on how to create more

inclusive events and activities for people with neurodiverse conditions.

- Roll out of Department for Communities' Access and Inclusion Capital Programme – the council was awarded capital funding to create a sensory pathway and to install more accessible picnic tables.

ii) Community & Wellbeing (including Leisure & Age Friendly)

- Inclusion Activity Programmes – these activities, including Inclusive and Sensory Walks, were delivered to ensure people with all abilities can stay active together.
- Walk of the Month Campaign – promoting monthly walks including accessible walks suitable wheelchairs and walking with buggies.
- 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.
- Sensory Room – two of the Council-run Leisure Centres now offer Sensory Rooms. This allows families who have members with a neurodiverse condition to experience play together.
- Accessible Changing – All the Leisure Centres and two Cultural Venues offer a range of changing including accessible changing and Changing Places Facilities. This has helped people with changing needs to stay active and experience various activities.
- Children and Young People Summer Programme – the inclusive programme provides opportunities for children and young people over the summer period.
- Consultation on Age-Friendly Strategy – the consultation has provided older people with an opportunity to create a local strategy to support older people to live well for longer.
- 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 about days gone past. It has also been used for intergenerational projects.
- Directory of Services for Older People – this document has provided older people with useful information on 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.
- Age Friendly Training – training staff and stakeholders on age friendly practices.
- Age Without Limits Action Day – an event for older people, fostering mental agility through a quiz, encouraging social interaction and giving

people an opportunity to discuss what it is like to be an older person in the Fermanagh and Omagh district area.

- Reminiscence Workshops – in collaboration with the Western Trust, the Council hosted workshops for people with dementia that helped encourage reminiscing of local history.
- Culture Night 2023 – an event celebrating the richness and diversity of culture in the District.
- Intergenerational Project, Stories of the River, encouraging the younger and older generations in Omagh to work together to develop a media library sharing the history of the River Strule.
- In celebration of our LGBTQ+ colleagues and residents, the Marble Arch Caves welcomed members of the LGBTQ+ community, friends and allies to join them for a fun weekend of adventurous cave activities. The event, which aimed to create a safe and supportive environment for the LGBTQ+ community, focused on the natural and unique Marble Arch Caves and featured a diverse range of activities with options to suit everyone.
- Supported Pride Omagh in celebration of our LGBTQ+ colleagues and residents.
- Enniskillen Castle and Strule Arts Centre were lit up to recognise various international, regional and local awareness days and events.

iii) Environmental Health

- 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. These checks helped to identify hazards in peoples' homes and provides them with advice and equipment.

iv) Climate Change and Sustainable Development

- School education programmes for children and young people – these workshops help provide information to children and young people from a range of backgrounds and abilities.
- Outdoor activities – by providing activities such as tree/ bulb planting and litter picking helped encourage people from various backgrounds to take action against climate change.
- Establishment of the Sustainable Food Partnership – this recently established group has allowed people from different backgrounds to come together and discuss sustainable food.

v) Good Relations

- Holocaust Memorial workshops for post primary schools were delivered by Generation 2 Generation. This project shared the story of a young female Jew fleeing Germany to Britain in 1939.
- Officers provided support to Fermanagh and Omagh Youth Voice. We worked with the Education Authority to engage young people in democracy and decision making. Activities undertaken included a Study Visit to Stormont, 'Meet the Councillors' event and participation in consultations such as the EA Local Assessment of Need and FODC Corporate Plan.
- Continued ongoing work with Omagh Churches Forum, Fermanagh Churches Forum and the Fermanagh & Omagh Interfaith Group to organise seminars and workshops on different topics.
- Officers worked as part of an inter-agency group to support the establishment of a Traveller-led support group for the Omagh area - the first of its kind in Northern Ireland.
- Co-ordination of memorial service to mark the 25th anniversary of the Omagh bomb.
- 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 develop a website to act as a one stop shop for newcomers to the district. Practical supports such as ESOL classes, advice clinics as well as coffee mornings and other social activities were also delivered.
- Provided Grant Aid to support community organisations delivering good relations activities across the district.
- Support to encourage groups to engage in future FODC Peace Plus programmes, CRC and TEO Central Good Relations Fund and other funding opportunities.
- Ongoing practical programme support to Omagh Peace Park partner organisations in the development of the Peace programme content as part of the bid to PEACE PLUS.
- Supported and attended ERANO's International Women's Day event.
- In partnership with ERANO, the Council delivered a pilot 'Intensive Conversational English Course' to 15 participants from newcomer communities in the Enniskillen area.
- Range of cultural events targeting Irish and Ulster Scot communities.

vi) Human Resources

- HR continued to screen Section 75 information of employees and job applicants.
- HR also continue to liaise with the triage i.e. employee, line manager and Occupational Health in relation to any reasonable adjustments required for employees.
- Officers arranged a LGBTQ+ awareness session for staff on 15 August 2023.

- 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. A new group to support Men’s Mental Health has also been formed, with staff attending a range of wellbeing walks and cancer awareness sessions.
- Traveller Awareness Training was also provided for staff members. This helped provide information to staff on how best support travellers when using Council services.

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.
- 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. 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 for 2023/24 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 schools, food support for older people, discretionary support for essential items, and support to foodbanks in the district. The initiatives were targeted at those most in need and beneficiaries included people from all Section 75 groups.
- Food Poverty Support - Financial and Wraparound Support (WRAP Programme) - This programme, funded by DfC, targeted households in the district experiencing, or at risk of, food poverty, and provided both financial and wraparound support. This programme benefitted people from many of the Section 75 groups.

ix) Interpreting & Translation

In the reporting period 23/24, the Council has procured suppliers 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.

- 2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/measures** in 2023-24 (*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)

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 22/23 and this Annual Equality Progress Report will lead to it being completed for 23/24.

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

Theme 2 contains 4 actions, there are 10 actions identified. 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 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 procured suppliers 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. During August 2023, the Marble Arch Caves welcomed employees and members of the LGBTQIA+ community to an evening of adventurous cave activities. Visitors enjoyed a programme of activities designed to connect local communities with their landscape, with engaging well-being, leisure and adventure sessions on offer.

Human Resources also organised training on LGBTQ+ awareness. This helped provide information to staff on the issues that the community may face and how to provide better support.

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 2023.

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 2023-2024 reporting period.

The following sessions were delivered in this reporting period:

- Disability Awareness Training
- JAM Card Training (PHA funded)
- Neurodiversity Awareness Training (PHA funded)
- LGBTQ+ Awareness Training
- Assistance Dog Awareness Sessions
- Accessible Design Standards Presentation (PHA funded)
- Information on Autism Support
- Age Awareness Training
- Accessibility and Tourism
- 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 I Can Fest and 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 Champion attended quarterly Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) workshops organised by the Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland.

The FODC Diversity Champion also attended a range of events promoting equality of opportunity such as International Women's Day events and LGBTQ+ events.

3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2023-24 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 2023 – an event celebrating the richness and diversity of culture in the District held at numerous venues in towns and villages across the district. • Provided Grant Aid to support community organisations delivering good relations activities across the district. In the reporting period 664 grants were provided totalling £226,542.63. • Continued ongoing work with Omagh Churches Forum, Fermanagh Churches Forum and the Fermanagh & Omagh Interfaith Group to organise seminars and workshops on different topics. Eight events were organised with 150 participants.
Political Opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture Night 2023 – an event celebrating the richness and diversity of culture in the District held at numerous venues in towns and villages across the district. • Range of cultural events targeting Irish and Ulster Scot communities were organised and delivered.

	<p>This included 16 workshops delivered to 16 primary schools with 576 pupils in attendance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to encourage groups to engage in future FODC Peace Plus programmes, CRC and TEO Central Good Relations Fund and other funding opportunities. • Ongoing practical programme support to Omagh Peace Park partner organisations in the development of the Peace programme content as part of the bid to PEACE PLUS. • Officers provided support to Fermanagh and Omagh Youth Voice. The Council worked with the Education Authority to engage 18 young people in democracy and decision making. Ten activities were undertaken including a Study Visit to Stormont, ‘Meet the Councillors’ event and participation in consultations such as the EA Local Assessment of Need and FODC Corporate Plan.
Race	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported and attended ERANO’s (Empowering Refugees and Newcomer Organisation) International Women’s Day event which had 150 people in attendance. • In partnership with ERANO, the Council delivered a pilot “Intensive Conversational English Course” to 15 participants from newcomer communities in the Enniskillen area. • Engagement with 300 asylum seekers and refugees arriving in the district to make them aware of the range of support available. • Support was provided to ERANO to develop a website to act as a one stop shop for newcomers to the district. Delivery of practical supports was also provided such as ESOL classes, advice clinics as well as coffee mornings and other social activities. • Officers worked as part of an inter-agency group to support the establishment of a Traveller led support group for the Omagh area - the first of its kind in Northern Ireland. Four meetings were held with 9 organisations being represented.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traveller Awareness Training was also organised for the Council's Registration Team. Eight staff members attended. • Holocaust Memorial workshops for post primary schools was delivered by Generation 2 Generation. This project shared the story of a young female Jew fleeing Germany to Britain in 1939. Two workshops were held with 380 pupils in attendance.
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JAM Card Training – staff, local businesses and community groups have taken part in the e-training to familiarise themselves with how to support someone who presents a JAM Card. To date a total of 400 people have received JAM Card Training. • 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. 105 people have attended AIM Talks, a further 135 have looked at the documentation online and around 250 people have received a hard copy booklet. • Reaching Rural Pilot Programme – a range of interactive workshops for people with disabilities were delivered in rural areas. A total of 150 individuals engaged with the project. • GIVE Volunteer Programme – adults with disabilities were provided with supportive to gain volunteering experience. The project benefitted over 50 participants. • Mental Health Programme – this pilot project provided interactive and informative workshops for adults with learning disabilities to improve their mental health. To date 75 adults with learning disabilities took part in the project. • Explore your Senses – this programme provided sensory workshops for children with neurodiverse conditions. 72 participants took part in the project. • International Day of Persons with Disabilities – a range of information talks were programmed to raise awareness of disability, accessibility and available support. A total of 127 individuals took

	<p>part in the activities. A recording of an inclusive dance and singing session was posted on the Council's social media channel. It was viewed over 3,000 times.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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. A total of four meetings have been held.• I Can Fest – the festival provided people with a disability with opportunities to attend fun activities and learn more about support and projects across the district. During the project 350 people took part in the activities and two social media videos were viewed 4,762 times.• Digital Poetry Project – pupils from the two local SEN schools engaged with officers to create their own poetry books. The books were then provided to parents, as well as local Nursing Homes. The project reached approximately 300 participants.• Autism Support Cafes – the Council supported the WHSCT to deliver two information sessions for parents of children with or awaiting an Autism diagnosis.• Mystery Shoppers Audits – four people with disabilities were involved in auditing a number of Council venues and parks to highlight issues with accessibility.• Neurodiversity Awareness Training – a range of community organisations and volunteers attended training on how to create more inclusive events and activities for people with neurodiverse conditions. 24 individuals attended the training.• Roll out of Department for Communities' Access and Inclusion Capital Programme – the council was awarded capital funding to create a sensory pathway and to install more accessible picnic tables.• Sensory Room – two of the Council-run Leisure Centres now offer Sensory Rooms. This allows families to experience play together.• Accessible Changing – all the Leisure Centres and two Cultural Venues offer a range of changing
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	<p>including accessible changing and Changing Places Facilities. This has helped people with changing needs to stay active and experience various activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation on Age-Friendly Strategy – the consultation has provided older people with an opportunity to create a local strategy to support older people to live well for longer. A total of 925 responses were received. • 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 about days gone past. It has also been used for intergenerational projects. • Directory of Services for Older People – this document was included in a booklet and listed on the Council’s website. It provided older people with useful information on 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. A total of 173 people attended events. • Age Friendly Training was provided for 58 staff and stakeholders on age friendly practices. • Age Without Limits Action Day – this was an event for older people, fostering mental agility through a quiz, encouraging social interaction and giving people an opportunity to discuss what it is like to be an older person in the Fermanagh and Omagh district area. A total of 52 people attended. • Reminiscence Workshops – in collaboration with the Western Trust, the Council hosted workshops for 28 people with dementia, reminiscing about local history. • An Intergenerational Project called ‘Stories of the River’ encouraging younger and older generations in Omagh to work together to develop a media library sharing the history of the River Strule. 32 people participated in the programme.

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"> • A LGBTQ+ awareness session was arranged for 15 staff in August 2023. • In celebration of our LGBTQ+ colleagues and residents, the Marble Arch Caves welcomed members of the LGBTQ+ community, friends and allies to join them for a fun weekend of adventurous cave activities. The event, Journey Together, which aimed to create a safe and supportive environment for the LGBTQ+ community, focused on the natural and unique Marble Arch Caves and featured a diverse range of activities with options to suit everyone. Approximately 40 people took part. • Supported Pride Omagh in celebration of our LGBTQ+ colleagues and residents. • The Enniskillen Castle and Strule Arts Centre were lit up in recognition of Pride Omagh.
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Wellbeing Committee – The internal committee continues to roll out a range of support that helps staff with mental, financial, women and men’s health topics, as well as parenting support. • A new group to support Men’s Mental Health has also been formed, with staff attending a range of wellbeing walks and cancer awareness sessions. To date over 50 members of staff have benefitted. • 20 One-to-one women’s health advice appointments were organised for staff. • An International Women’s Day event with a menopause talk was arranged for 70 staff members. An additional Menopause event was delivered to 13 employees.
Dependency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness campaigns – a range of campaigns, for example the Blind Cord Toddler Choke Hazard Campaign, helped to prevent injury to children.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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. 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.
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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 2023-24 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 2023/2024 reporting period.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2023-24 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 2020-2024 states that the vision for Fermanagh and Omagh is 'a welcoming, shared and inclusive district, where people and places are health, safe, connected and prosperous...'. Ultimately, this is the shared vision which will influence the work of the Council until 2024. Note that a new Corporate Plan 2024-28 has also been agreed however this will be reported on in the 2024/25 progress report.

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 2023-24 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 2023-24 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 2020-2024 document states that the vision for Fermanagh and Omagh is 'a welcoming, shared and inclusive district, where people and places are health, 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 2023-24 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 2023-24 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 2023-24 reporting period.

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2023-24 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 2023-24 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 2023-2024 reporting period. These include:

- Draft Improvement Objectives 2024 – 2025
- Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028
- Draft Improvement Objectives 2023-2024
- FODC Local Development Plan — draft Plan Strategy 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), due to the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions on the potential for face-to-face meetings.
- Facility to provide feedback via telephone – again due to the restrictions on face-to-face meetings.

- 12 In the 2023-24 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

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- 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 such as the EA Local Assessment of Need and FODC Corporate Plan. 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 2023-24 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

- 14** Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2023-24 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*):

10

16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2023-24:

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 2023-24 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 2023-24 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 for 2023 in relation to employees, applicants, appointees, promotes and leavers. This information has been collated and was reported to Policy & Resources Committee in May 2024.

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 2023-24 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 2023-24, 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.

As part of International Day of Persons with Disabilities various events, activities and information sessions were planned, programmed and delivered (the programme was funded by the PHA). The following information sessions were delivered:

- Accessible Design Standards
- How to Create Social Stories
- Assistance Dogs

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

- Neurodiversity Awareness Training (PHA funded)
- JAM Card Training (PHA funded)
- Assistance Dog Awareness Sessions
- Disability Awareness Sessions
- LGBTQ+ Awareness Training
- Age Friendly Training
- Women's and Men's Health Awareness Sessions

- 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:

LGBTQ+ Training

A training session on LGBTQ+ 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 400 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.

Assistance Dog Policy

Members of staff received information sessions on Assistance Dogs in January 2024. The sessions helped highlight the rights of people who use assistance dogs and best practice on how to support them access Council services.

Feedback was very positive, and it has resulted in better customer service and staff confidence in identifying recognised assistance dogs and other support dogs.

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

26 Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2023-24, 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:

- Cost of Living Support & Anti-Poverty Strategy
- Age-friendly Survey
- Signage for various projects
- Capital Projects – planning stage

Members of the Access and Inclusion Advisory Group also helped to market a range of projects for social media and local press, including the I Can Fest and JAM Card Training.

The Council has also started to create Easy-read versions of key documents. The first was a guide on the Complaint's Procedure and in 2024/25 a review of other key documents will take place with easy-read versions made available.

In this reporting period the Council has also 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 our website.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

27 How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2023-24?

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, particularly due to the fact that the Equality Scheme has recently been reviewed.

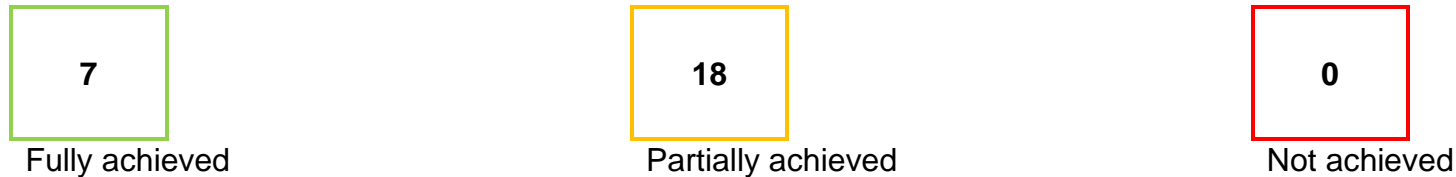
There will be a particular focus on training, learning and development opportunities for both employees and elected members in areas such as Equality and Disability as well as in the awareness raising for the new Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan.

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

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



* 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			
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.
Local ^v	The number of voluntary members on the Access and Inclusion Advisory Group remained as eight members - two more than elected	During this reporting period there were:	Improved participation by people with disabilities in public life.

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	<p>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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 meetings of the Access and Inclusion Advisory Group • 6 meetings of the Access Advisory Groups. • Continued virtual meetings, ensuring that barriers to travel were overcome. 	<p>People with disabilities are consulted with on important issues that affect them – for example public footpaths, community transport and cost of living.</p>
<p>Local</p>	<p>Organisation and delivery of a series of Accessibility Information Sessions to coincide with International Day of Persons with Disabilities</p>	<p>Through funding with the Public Health Agency, FODC facilitated the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 information sessions for people with disabilities to learn more about support and to engage with others. • 127 participants took part in the sessions. • A short Inclusive Christmas Dance Video by adults with a learning disability was highlighted on social media. 	<p>The workshops encouraged people with disabilities to participate in public life through a dance routine which was showcased online.</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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<p>Local</p>	<p>People with disabilities were involved in carrying out Mystery Shopper surveys on Council property.</p>	<p>A total of 4 mystery shopper audits were conducted across venues and parks within the district</p>	<p>Issues with accessibility were highlighted and addressed. Council venues/ facilities are more accessible. Improved participation in public life. Increased public involvement to ensure continued service improvement.</p>
<p>Local</p>	<p>People with disabilities were encouraged to take part in volunteering with the Council.</p>	<p>Over 50 people with disabilities took part in a range of volunteering opportunities.</p>	<p>Encourage civic responsibility among people with disabilities. More representative volunteers. 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	Neurodiversity Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24 participants took part in the training virtually. • Recordings of the training are available for future use. 	<p>Members of the public and staff are more aware of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on various Neurodiverse Conditions • Signs of Neurodiverse Conditions • Appropriate language around Neurodiversity • Things to consider when planning events/ workshops to support people with neurodiverse conditions to attend • How to support people who become overwhelmed at events/ workshops • How to support people who are hypo sensitive • Examples of Best Practice Ideas
2	JAM Card Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To date 400+ staff/ members of the public have received access to the JAM (Just-A-Minute) Card E-learning training. 	<p>Participants are more equipped to:</p> <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.
3	Assistance Dog Awareness Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 members of staff attended the information sessions. 	<p>Staff are more aware of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rights of people who have Assistance Dogs.

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of Assistance Dogs. • The Council's position on Assistance Dogs. • How to support/ interact with people with Assistance Dogs.
4	Disability Awareness Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 members of staff attended the information session. 	<p>Staff received information on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is 'Disability' • Legislation • Council's role – including Disability Action Plan • Top tips on how to support the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Physical Disability ○ Learning Disability ○ Dementia ○ Brain Injury ○ Autism/ Neurodiverse ○ Deaf/ Hard of Hearing ○ Blind/ Visual Impairment • Accessible Documents/ Website

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

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Provision of responsive and accessible services	Through the 10 meetings of the various advisory groups, people with disabilities were able to highlight issues with Council officers and elected members.	Improved access to information and advice. Improved participation in public life. 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.

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	<p>Organisation and delivery of a series of Accessibility Information Sessions to coincide with International Day of Persons with Disabilities and as part of I Can Fest.</p>	<p>Worked in partnership with over 10 different organisations/ volunteers to deliver information and activity sessions to highlight disability awareness and how others can improve accessibility. This included topics such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible Design Standards • How to create Social Stories • Assistance Dogs • Work Placement • Social Inclusion • Visual Impairment <p>Three videos highlighting topics such as the ‘Ability of Adults with a Learning Disability’ and ‘Empowering Women and Young Girls with a Disability’ were created and highlighted on social media. They were viewed over 7,500 times.</p>	<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>Encouraged other community groups and organisations to make changes to become more accessible.</p>

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<p>2</p>	<p>Employment and Training – Managers and employees were informed of reasonable adjustments, when required.</p>	<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.</p> <p>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>During 23/24 the total number of applications for Council jobs/positions from people with a disability was 44 and 2 adults with a disability were offered work placements.</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>
<p>3</p>	<p>Screen all new/revised policies to assess the significance of the policy on the disability duties.</p>	<p>100% of new and revised policies screened for impact on disability duties.</p>	<p>Council's proactive approach ensures that all policies and services are accessible and inclusive to people with a disability.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Civic Leadership</p>	<p>Throughout the year there were many civic receptions held by the Chair of FODC, as well as photo</p>	<p>Greater awareness of people with disabilities in the community.</p>

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		<p>launches for various initiatives. These events help raise the profile of residents/ groups and projects. At least 15 of these events directly related to people with disabilities. A few examples include the NOW Group visit in Enniskillen, launching International Day of Persons with Disabilities and attended the Inclusive Walk in Omagh.</p>	<p>Improved recognition of the contribution people with disabilities make to communities. 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.	Improved access to services for people who speak languages other than English. Improved levels of inclusivity in the district.
3	Continue to deliver inclusive fitness/leisure programmes for everyone, including people with disabilities.	During the 2023/2024 reporting period, the Council continued to promote activities that are inclusive for all, including people with disabilities and/or access requirements.	Encourage people with disabilities to participate in fitness activities. Improved health and wellbeing.
4	Relaunch of the Disability Advisory Group.	The Disability Advisory Group was relaunched as the Access and Inclusion Advisory Group in 2023.	Empowerment of people with disabilities. Improved levels of consultation and communication with people with disabilities.

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			Improved standard of services provided by the Council.
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 to install accessible picnic benches in areas close to playparks.</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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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 have 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 Champions and plan to launch it during Mental Health Week in 2024.	Improved understanding of Mental Health among elected members, staff and the public.	Due to the nature of the action, the work to achieve it will be ongoing throughout the 5-year Council term.

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			Raise awareness of the role of Mental Health Champions.	
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.

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

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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.