Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties

Annual Progress Report

Contact details:

• Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme	Name: Claire Webb Telephone: 0300 123 4568 Email: claire.webb@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk
• Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan	As above ☒ Name: Click or tap here to enter text. Telephone: Click or tap here to enter text. Email: Click or tap here to enter text.
Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:	https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/council/equality/
Signature:	Claire Webb

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 2025 and March 2026

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 2025-26, 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.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Key policy/service delivery development **(Theme & Programme)**	**Action taken to promote equality of opportunity and good relations** **(What did we do?)**	**Outcome** **(Is anyone better off?)**
Age Friendly Antrim and Newtownabbey – Based upon the World Health Organisation 8 key domains for Age Friendly Communities, the Environmental Health and Wellbeing team work with our older residents to ensure they are supported, age well, enjoy good life and participate fully in their community	**Take a Seat** – Initiative where local business and community facilities provide a seat for anyone who needs a short rest while out shop or walking. There is no obligation to purchase items in the shop Participating premises display window sticker to show they are part of the scheme https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/dementia-safeguarding/	Take a seat is available in 42 premises and all libraries across the 7 Council DEAs. One participant stated, "It's *lovely to get out and about Knowing you can take a seat people rest when you need too*."

	Dementia Safeguarding Scheme – individuals living with dementia struggle to communicate when they need help. Our Dementia Safeguarding Scheme provides wristbands and hangtags with vital emergency details. If a member of the public comes someone wearing one of these devices, who are lost or confused they can quickly access their essential details using NFC technology on their phone https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/dementia-safeguarding/	Since its launch in October 2025, ANBC has partnered with NHSCT Dementia Team, Connect North, PSNI and Alzheimers Society to distribute the hangtags and wristbands across Antrim and Newtownabbey. ANBC has given out 93 wristbands and tags to those living with dementia.
	Silver Summer Scheme – During the summer months, many community groups and programmes for older residents pause their activities, resulting in a lack of accessible, structured opportunities for social engagement and participation. This can lead to increased social isolation and reduced wellbeing among older adults. To address the issue the silver summer scheme was piloted to help older residents stay active, connected and engaged.	The programme was delivered in partnership with the Waste, Leisure, Parks, Arts and Culture teams, arc 21, and Libraries NI, and successfully hosted events across all seven District Electoral Areas (DEAs). Activities included Nordic Walking, Bag Making Workshop, Tea and Tidy Litter Pick, Boccia and Brew, Pebble Art, Picnic and Planting and more. A total of 127 residents took part in the event with 100% of residents enjoying the event. Feedback from residents included: "*Keep up what you do, I enjoyed the bingo, music and getting to talk to other people I didn't know."*

	Positive Ageing Month – October is Positive Aging Month where the contribution of people 50 and over is celebrated. During this month During Positive events are held where residents can receive advice helping them keep active, connected and healthy. https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/residents/community-initiatives/age-friendly/positive-ageing-month/	*"The team is very enthusiastic and I would try to support future summer events. There is definitely a gap in summer for people without families."* Seven "Tea & Treats" events were held across each District Electoral Area, focusing on the Take 5 steps to wellbeing. Activities included boccia, quizzes, groups discussion on key issues such as transport in the Borough. Attendees shared insights on ageing in the Borough. A total of 469 residents participated, with 99% finding the events beneficial and 96% valuing social connections most. Feedback from attendees was overwhelming positive, with comments including: *"I enjoyed the treats and plenty of information given, keep up the good work"* *"I enjoyed being told of the support for older people that the Council are providing. It was well presented"* A Positive Ageing Month Booklet, listing over 100 community groups and events, was distributed both online and through 1,000 printed copies.

		In addition to “Tea and Treats,” several other events were held, including the launch of the Over 50s Council, Be Safe Be Well Antrim, Templepatrick Health Fair, a food program in Ballyclare for individuals living alone, and the “Hop Aboard” day trip, on the train to Coleraine.
	Over 50’s Council- Launched in 2025, the Council is made up of residents over the age of 50 represent the views, needs and interests of those aged 50 years and over living in the Borough. Those taking part ensure that the community have a voice that is heard and considered in the delivery of the Age Friendly Strategic Work Plan.	The meetings are held each quarter and held alternatively between Antrim and Newtownabbey with 63 residents being registered to take part. Residents have identified key issues in their community such as poor public transport, lack of activities for older people and are working in partnership with ANBC to address these issues.
	The Food Programme is a free one day course available to all residents, which covers topics such as; healthy eating, food safety, food skills such as shopping well on a budget, food storage and food waste reduction. Participants can prepare low cost nutritious meals in an air fryer which they could eat together or take home**.** Each participant also received an air fryer	The Food programme can be tailored to meet a group’s needs, cooking for 1 or cooking for young children. In 2025/26 156 residents completed the food programme course. 98% of residents stated that they enjoyed the programme and gained a better

Nutrition Programme- offers free community health initiatives focusing on basic nutrition and healthy cooking skills o	**Healthy Heroes –** Healthy Heroes is a free, one-hour nutrition and healthy-eating program for all primary-aged children. Featuring interactive group activities such as sugar awareness and fruit and vegetable intake followed by a practical session where children make healthy snacks.	understanding of healthy eating and cooking on a budget. One participant commented "with *food prices increasing constantly, it was fantastic to learn how to cheap meals and how to use leftovers to make healthy meals*" Healthy Heroes was part of ANBC summer scheme and was delivered to 719 children across the 7 Council DEAS. 97% of participants stated they enjoyed the session and learnt something new. Feedback from the session included "*Children were interacting well and it was clear that it was interesting to them and making a difference'*
Home Accident Prevention - Our Health & Wellbeing service provides Home Safety advice and information to help our residents identify and reduce the risks posed by hazards in the home and garden**.** We provide home safety checks for Over 65s, vulnerable adults and families with children under 5 where we can tailor the advice and in addition, can provide useful home safety items if eligible.	Home Safety Check – Home Safety Officer carries out a free informal consultation to help identify risks and provide tailored safety advice and information. Free home safety equipment can also be offered, we can refer people on to other useful services such as Home Fire Safety Checks from the NI Fire & Rescue Service, Assisted bin collections and Community Occupational Therapy. As part of the check participants also complete a dementia checklist. Home Safety Check available to everyone over the age of 65.	304 Residents received a Home Safety Check in 25/26. Of those surveys 90% stated that they had used the equipment and would recommend the service to friends/family.

Good Relations Programme	Council continued delivery of the Council Good Relations Programme across the Borough, with activity aligned to the T:BUC themes of Children and Young People, Our Shared Community, Our Safe Community and Our Cultural Expression. The programme included holiday and youth interventions, Youth Voice, shared schools and shared events, dialogue and conflict-resolution activity, cultural expression, historical commemorations, capacity building and work supporting minority ethnic communities.	Feedback across the Good Relations activities and programmes delivered during the reporting period was overwhelmingly positive, demonstrating strong participant satisfaction and indicating that delivery remains well on track to achieve our wider Good Relations objectives. Activities were closely aligned with our wider equality, diversity and inclusion work, creating opportunities for participants to engage with people from different backgrounds, experience different cultures and perspectives, and take part in activities outside their usual experiences. In particular, our Good Relations Week, Leid Week and Irish Language Week programmes were highly regarded by participants and community partners. Reflecting on a Good Relations Week activity, one participant highlighted how much they valued *"being with people from diverse backgrounds, trying something I had never tried before and getting out of my comfort zone by trying something so creative."*
Refugees and Asylum Seekers	Council delivered extensive support for refugees and asylum seekers through the Refugee and Asylum Seeker Integration Fund. Working with local integration Providers, Integration Hubs and MEARS accommodation, activity supported practical integration and access to local services. This included a travel scheme providing bus passes to refugees and asylum seekers, access to gym/leisure passes, capacity-building and networking	Feedback across the activities delivered through the Refugee and Asylum Seeker Integration Fund was overwhelmingly positive, demonstrating the practical impact of the programme in reducing barriers to participation and supporting integration within the Borough.

	opportunities for staff and volunteers from organisations supporting refugees and asylum seekers, and engagement and consultation with those organisations to identify emerging needs and inform delivery.	Recipients of the travel pass scheme and leisure memberships, as well as participants in the women-only swimming programme, reported very high levels of satisfaction with the support and their overall experience. The value of the travel scheme was particularly evident in feedback from the manager of the local MEARS accommodation at Chimney Corner, who highlighted the significant difference access to public transport makes to the hotel residents, enabling them to become familiar with the local area, maintain connections with friends and family across the city, access places of worship and participate more independently in everyday community life. Overall, the feedback demonstrates that these practical interventions are supporting independence, wellbeing, social connection and meaningful integration, while helping refugees and asylum seekers engage more fully with local communities and services.
Addressing racial tensions and improving social cohesion	Towards the end of the financial year, the Council also secured additional funding from The Executive Office (Rapid Response Fund) to address racial tensions and improve social cohesion. This enabled further locally focused activity aimed at supporting community integration, responding to emerging racial and social cohesion issues and strengthening partnership working with local organisations.	Through this work we supported more inclusive access to services, increased opportunities for positive engagement and strengthened local capacity to respond to needs.

Supporting The Executive Office's Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy	We have signed the White Ribbon Charter and Women's Night Safety Charter and Antrim PCSP in partnership with PSNI hosted an evening on 12 October 2025 presenting the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Community Toolkit.	Council promoting safety for women and girls.
British Deaf Association (BDA) BSL & ISL Deaf Charter	Under our commitments to this Charter, we have shared mayoral videos on social media which are BSL signed. On 25 September, the Mayor invited members of the Deaf Community and BDA to her parlour in celebration of International Day of Deaf People, and a social media post was shared.	Enhanced accessibility for Deaf people and BSL users, and greater awareness of Deaf culture.
Inclusive Council Events: • Summer Events • Halloween Events • Christmas Events • Christmas Theatre Shows • International Women's Day "We See You" Event for carers	Sign language provision, signed performances, AccessoLoo (inclusive toilet provision) and event accessibility.	Enhanced accessibility ensured through careful and considered planning. <u>Feedback for the Enchanted Winter Garden Christmas event included</u>: "Reduced number of attendees/crowds worked well for autistic child that become overwhelmed with too much noise/business." "The fewer people being there was amazing, my partner and I both have MS, and it makes such a difference having the inclusive evenings." "Evening wasn't overcrowded and noise levels were just right. Queues for amusements and food were short which made the whole event much more manageable for kids with disabilities." "It was a fantastic evening."

		<u>Feedback from the We See You International Women's Day event included:</u> "We need more days like these" "It was a great opportunity for me to attend this event. Meeting other carers, stimulating ideas and sharing problems and feelings." "The most valuable aspect for me was the stalls after, they offered so much valued advice I did not know about." "Do more days like these please!! What a lovely recharging morning."
Equality and Disability Awareness Dates	To recognise and raise awareness of key equality and disability awareness dates, relevant social media posts were shared and civic buildings lit up.	Council promoting enhanced understanding and sensitivity for key equality campaigns.
Sign Language Project, Department for Communities – funding secured	BSL Sign Language Level 1 and Level 2 provided to Elected Members, staff and residents of the Borough. Funding from DFC: £10,708.00 15 Places on BSL Level 1 12 Places on BSL Level 2	Ensuring greater accessibility, promoting inclusion and public participation of the Deaf community.
Autism Café – Northern Health Trust	In February 2026 Council hosted an Autism Café which was facilitated by the Northern Health Trust.	Parents and Carers of Autistic young people (with and without diagnosis) were provided with a safe community space to discuss potential issues and queries with

		expert organisations. Council promoted its ethos as a Neuroinclusive Organisation.
Autism Impact Award – Autism NI	Council attained reaccreditation of the Autism Impact Award in September 2026.	Council demonstrated commitment to autism inclusion and active support of the neurodivergent community.
Inclusive Summer Schemes Funding for Special Schools Council Inclusive Summer Scheme	 Funding was offered to the five Special Schools within the Borough to deliver their summer schemes £5,000 grant was paid to each SEN school. Inclusive summer scheme programming included sessions delivered in partnership with Mae Murray Foundation at the following locations: Antrim Forum Leisure Centre Mossley Pavillion Crumlin Leisure Centre (Inclusive Family Day)	 Community-building with Special Schools, enhanced inclusion for Disabled children and their families. Promoting inclusion and participation of Disabled children who don't attend Special Schools.
Accessible communications Website, alternative formats, council literature provision	Communications continue to be reviewed to ensure that they are accessible to all. Council offers: • Reach Deck platform • Alternative formats/language upon request • Borough Life provided in alternative formats such as braille, large print and audio • Language line available at Council reception areas In addition, training has been carried out to work towards Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) compliance.	Council is working towards compliance of WCAG.

Capital Projects Accessibility upgrades	Farmley Road: • Accessible parking bays • Improved lighting • New pathway Allen Park Leisure Centre: • New lighting • Car parking design improved • Textured paving and accessible colours Rathcoole Diamond Play Area: • Inclusive playpark equipment, swings, see-saw Wheelchair accessible roundabout, sensory play panel • Wheelchair accessible inclusive picnic table • Enhanced visibility of pedestrian gates Kings Park Play Area • Inclusive playpark equipment (swings, wheelchair roundabout, play unit with accessible steps, sensory play panel • Wheelchair accessible inclusive picnic table	Improved accessibility through inclusive design in Capital Projects.
Autism in Sport An inclusive sports workshop aimed at local sports coaches and volunteers, with a particular focus on improving understanding of autism and other disabilities. The workshop explored practical ways in which sports clubs, facilities and coaching sessions can be adapted to become more welcoming,	Over 50 coaches attended the workshop and heard from a range of expert guest speakers, including representatives from Ulster Rugby, Ulster GAA, the IFA, Autism NI and Adam Keefe from the Belfast Giants. Speakers shared their experiences, best practice and practical examples of how programmes, coaching approaches and facilities can be adapted to better support children with autism and other disabilities. The workshop provided coaches with increased awareness, practical tools and	The workshop identified a clear knowledge and confidence gap, with many participants having limited previous experience or understanding of autism and the varying needs of children on the autism spectrum. More than 50 coaches left with increased knowledge and practical strategies to make their sessions more inclusive. This learning is

accessible and inclusive for children with additional needs.	ideas that they could take back and implement within their own clubs.	expected to have a wider positive impact across participating clubs, potentially benefiting hundreds of children by helping to reduce barriers to participation and creating more supportive and inclusive sporting environments.
Healthy Kids Healthy Kids is a holistic health and wellbeing programme offered to schools across the Borough and delivered in 30 schools over two programme blocks. The 11-week programme was delivered to Primary 6 and Primary 7 pupils and addressed a range of factors that contribute to positive health and wellbeing, including nutrition, mental wellbeing, physical wellbeing and physical activity.	The programme was made available to schools across the Borough, helping to ensure that children had access to health and wellbeing education regardless of their background or circumstances. Delivery took place in 30 schools, including a number of schools supporting pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and schools located in areas experiencing higher levels of social deprivation. By bringing the programme directly into schools, barriers such as cost, transport and access to external health and physical activity opportunities were reduced.	More than 1,600 unique children participated in the Healthy Kids programme and gained increased knowledge and awareness across a range of health and wellbeing topics. The programme provided children with practical information and positive experiences around healthy eating, physical activity and mental and physical wellbeing. By delivering the programme universally through schools, while reaching a significant number of children who may experience additional barriers or disadvantage, Healthy Kids contributed to reducing inequalities in access to health and wellbeing opportunities.
Learn to Swim Programme The Learn to Swim Programme was developed to address inequalities in access to swimming lessons and water safety education. The programme provided free additional swimming lessons to 12 schools across the Borough where	Schools meeting the agreed criteria were contacted directly and offered an additional eight-week block of free swimming lessons for their pupils. By removing the cost of lessons and reducing the financial burden associated with swimming participation, the programme helped address an affordability barrier that can prevent children from accessing swimming	The programme resulted in a significant improvement in swimming attainment across participating schools and provided children with an opportunity to develop an important life skill that they may otherwise have been unable to access. It

25% or more pupils were entitled to Free School Meals, ensuring that additional opportunities were targeted towards schools where financial disadvantage was more prevalent.	opportunities. The programme also provided schools with additional capacity to support pupils who may otherwise have limited opportunities to develop their swimming skills.	also helped to bridge the affordability gap for families and schools experiencing financial disadvantage. One school principal described the programme as a "godsend", explaining that some pupils would normally miss school swimming sessions because their families could not afford the associated costs. The programme therefore not only improved swimming ability but helped remove a direct financial barrier to participation, ensuring that children were given a more equal opportunity to learn an essential life skill. Over 600 children enjoyed the programme over the 2 blocks of 8 weeks

2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2025-26 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

Click or tap here to enter text.

Theme	Positive action	Progress
Access to Council information		
Ensuring that the Council website is compliant with accessibility and user standards	Digital inclusion training delivered to Marketing and Communications Team, and Accessibility and Inclusion Team.	Training being rolled out to all relevant sections and staff during 2026. Further actions captured in new Equality and Disability Action Plans 2026-2030.
Communication of new Waste Harmonisation system	Braille and high visibility stickers developed for customers who are Blind or with sight loss to enable them to organise their bins. Developed in consultation with	Action completed.
Ensure that alternative communications are available for online services	Customers are offered alternative forms (Large Print/Braille/audio)	Action completed and ongoing.
Access to Council Services and facilities		
Offer accessibility at inclusive Council events	Sign language interpreters, AccessoLoo toilet provision, quiet/sensory rooms, accessible signage	Action completed and ongoing.
Carer/companion policy	Project to develop policy for ticketing in relation to carers/essential companions – to enhance inclusion and access to Council events and facilities.	Action ongoing – proposed policy will be brought to Council for approval in Autumn 2026.

Provide Inclusive Summer Scheme	Work with partners to ensure access to summer scheme provision for Disabled children across the Borough.	Completed.
Compliance of Equality and Good Relations Obligations	All new and revised Council policies, procedures and decisions equality screened before Council approval and implementation. Updated Equality Scheme, new Equality Action Plan 2026-2030 and Disability Action Plan 2026-2030. Development of new governance structure to strengthen compliance systems and reporting of equality matters. Equality and S75 screening training sessions S75 annual review of Consultee list. Application for reaccreditation of Autism Impact Award. BSL Level 1 and Level 2 training programme for staff, elected members and residents.	Ongoing. Final versions to be approved by Council in September 2026. Action contained within new Equality Action Plan 2026-2030. Is ongoing and will be completed by end of year 1. 7 sessions of Section 75/Equality Screening training delivered to staff. Completed. Achieved reaccreditation in September 2025. Ongoing.
Workforce equality and inclusion	Deaf Awareness training	Delivered to Organisation Development Directorate in December 2025. Key staff

		developing cultural awareness and inclusive practices.
	Reasonable Adjustments training	Delivered to Human Resources and Organisation Development Staff in February 2026.
	Supporting Autistic Employees and Colleagues	Delivered to key staff in March 2026, supporting the development of a Neuroinclusive workplace.
	Guaranteed interviews offered for Disabled candidates who meet the essential criteria for posts.	Ongoing
	Support staff and elected members who require reasonable adjustments to fulfil their roles in Council.	Ongoing
Deliver Disability Action Plan	Review and implementation of Disability Action Plan	New Disability Action Plan 2026-2030 developed, consulted upon and to be approved by Council in September 2026.

3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2025-26 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes

☒ No (go to Q.4)

☐ Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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):*

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

☐ Other *(please specify and give details)*:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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 2025-26 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:

Click or tap here to enter text.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2025-26 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:

Click or tap here to enter text.

6 In the 2025-26 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 corporate plan

☐ No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2025-26 report

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2025-26 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed: 19

Click or tap here to enter text.

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2025-26 reporting period *(points not identified in an appended plan)*:

N/a

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2025-26 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

We have reviewed the previous Equality Action Plan, carried out a consultation process and the final version will be approved in September 2026 by Council. The new Equality Action Plan 2026-2030 is ambitious and progressive, and will address known inequalities, and newly prioritised inequalities.

Arrangements for consulting

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 2025-26 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:

N/a

12 In the 2025-26 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently <u>used</u> by consultees**: *(tick all that apply)*

☐ Face to face meetings

☒ Focus groups

☒ Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing

☒ Questionnaires

☒ Information by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation

☐ Internet discussions

☐ Telephone consultations

☐ Other *(please specify)*: Click or tap here to enter text.

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:

Click or tap here to enter text.

13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2025-26 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes

☒ No

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2025-26 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not applicable – no commitment to review

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

https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/council/equality/

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

122

16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2025-26:

3 Policy consultations conducted with **screening** assessment presented.

0 Policy consultations conducted **with an equality impact assessment** (EQIA) presented.

0Consultations 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:

Draft Corporate Performance & Improvement Plan 2025-26
Anti-Poverty Consultation
Good Relations Survey

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:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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 2025-26 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes

☐ No

☒ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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 2025-26 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:

In reviewing Council's Equality Scheme 2026-2030, an Equality Action Plan has been created with measures to strengthen governance and information systems. This will be reported on next year.

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:

Click or tap here to enter text.

22 Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2025-26 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

24 Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2025-26, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

The following training took place this year:

- Section 75 Training
- Dignity and Respect at Work Training
- Rural Needs Equality Training
- Equality Screening Training
- Deaf Awareness Training
- Trauma Informed Practice
- Reasonable Adjustments Training
- Supporting Autistic Customers
- Supporting Autistic Employees and Colleagues
- Diversity Mark Summit
- Neurodiversity at Work Conference
- British Sign Language Training

E-learning modules to be completed by all staff and refreshed every 3 years:

- The Importance of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Disability Awareness
- Being Aware of Your Unconscious Bias
- Neurodiversity in the Workplace Guidance

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:

BSL students were awarded with certificates of their qualification (BSL Level 1/ Level 2) and feedback was very positive.

Deaf Awareness training was well received – it was organised to support a Deaf colleague, and staff were better informed to implement the recommendations on deaf inclusion in the workplace.

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

26 Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2025-26, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

N/a

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

27 How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2025-26?

Insert number here: 9

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Nature of complaint	**Outcome**
Accessibility of event	Not upheld
Accessibility of facility usage	Resolved
Accessibility of bin harmonisation	Not upheld
Accessibility of events	Resolved
Accessibility of bin collection	Resolved
Equality – communications	Not upheld
Equality – facility access	Not upheld
Equality – communications	Not upheld
Equality – bin harmonisation	Not upheld

Section 3: Looking Forward

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

The Equality Scheme has been reviewed in early 2026 and the final version will be approved by Council in September 2026. This will be provided to Equality Commission thereafter.

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)*

Priorities for the next reporting period include:

- Continued broad engagement with residents to shape equality objectives

- Ensuring stronger governance and co-ordination systems regarding equality, diversity and inclusion actions
- An audit to build a comprehensive data set regarding section 75 categories for Council workforce
- Continued progress with equality awareness training
- Review consultation feedback on Equality and Disability Action Plans and publish final versions (following approval by Council).
- Achieve accreditations to recognise Council's continued commitment to building inclusion.

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:

11	2	1
Fully achieved	Partially achieved	Not achieved

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

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

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs[i]	Outcomes / Impact[ii]
Regional	Disability Strategy consultation: Council provided a response to the NI Executive's Draft Disability Strategy 2025-2035	Consultation response sent to DfC in March 2026.	Council contributing to improvement of lives, rights, and inclusion of Deaf and disabled people, their families, and carers across Northern Ireland.

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	BSL Level 1 and Level 2 Training (Staff, Elected Members and Residents)	Accreditation achieved	Certified competency in British Sign Language, enhanced awareness of Deaf culture, promotion of Deaf inclusion in the Borough.
2	Staff training delivered	Courses delivered: • Section 75 Training • Dignity and Respect at Work Training • Equality Screening Training • Deaf Awareness Training • Reasonable Adjustments Training • Supporting Autistic Customers • Supporting Autistic Employees and Colleagues • Digital inclusion training E-learning modules: • The Importance of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion • Disability Awareness • Being Aware of Your Unconscious Bias • Neurodiversity in the Workplace	Staff received training on a range of disability equality related topics, supporting enhanced awareness, respect and inclusion for Disabled people

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	Training delivered to staff on digital inclusion	Marketing and Communications team and Accessibility and Inclusion team trained. More sessions are planned for key staff.	Enhanced understanding of digital content accessibility with a focus on Disabled customers.
2	Communications with customers on bins	Blind customers and customers with sight loss provided with bespoke stickers for bins in consultation with RNIB.	Enhanced inclusion and accessibility.

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Apply for reaccreditation of Autism Impact Award	Application and report provided to Autism NI in reaccreditation process	Autism Impact Award reaccredited in September 2026.
2	Carry out a 5-year review of Equality and Disability Action Plans	Progress reviewed, benchmarking and workshops carried out.	5-year review of equality action plans completed and sent to Equality Commission.

3	Roll out BSL training for staff, elected members and residents	BSL Level 1 and BSL Level 2 training rolled out.	Staff, elected members and residents developed greater awareness of Deaf culture and the training supported Council's accessibility commitments.

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	Capital Development Projects	Farmley Road – car parking	Improved lighting, new pathway and accessible parking bays – enhanced accessibility
2	Capital Development Projects	Allen Park Leisure Centre – car park	New lighting, textured paving, accessible colour, accessibility of car parking
3	Capital Development Project	Rathcoole Diamond Play Area	Accessible play equipment installed, wheelchair accessible picnic table, sensory panel installed
4	Capital Development Project	Kings Park Play Area and Rathcoole Diamond Play Area	Accessible play equipment installed, wheelchair accessible picnic table, sensory panel installed

PART B

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	Review of Disability Action Plan for ANBC	Draft Disability Action published April 2026. Draft version submitted to Equality Commission.	Final version reported to Council in September 2026. Final version will be provided to Equality Commission	Consultation process required

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	Work towards 'Disability Confident' status	'Disability Confident' status was not progressed this year again due to terms and conditions review being prioritised. However, after reviewing available accreditations, Council has included an action in the forthcoming Disability Action Plan (2026-2030) to instead attain 'Disability Positive' accreditation. This is a framework offered by Employers for Disability NI (of which Council is already a member for training/advice purposes); it is a rigorous, independently assessed accreditation and other comparable NI organisations have chosen this as their benchmark. As set out in the new Disability Action Plan, Council has a target of

		achieving AAA status in Disability Positive Employer accreditation by 2030. Council is already building disability inclusion through providing reasonable adjustments through recruitment (such as guaranteed interview) and for existing Disabled staff and elected members.
2	Work towards becoming a 'Dementia Friend' Organisation	Significant steps have been taken, including training, building audits, creative classes for residents with Dementia, forming a Dementia choir and introducing a Dementia Safeguarding Scheme. Other actions within the new Equality Action Plans include: developing lived experience groups, staff impact groups and working towards becoming a Carer Friendly Organisation. We will work with specialist organisations such as Alzheimer's Society to determine outstanding actions to attain this recognition.

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

Accessibility and Inclusion Officer reviews progress of the Disability Action Plan actions with the relevant officers. Consultation surveys also inform on performance and new opportunities.

Progress is regularly reported to Council. New mechanisms will be put in place next year under the new governance structure as set out in the Equality Action Plan 2026-2030.

(b) Quantitative

Council use NISRA data and localised data from consultations and surveys.

PART B

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?

The Disability Action Plan 2020-2025 was reviewed. Following consultation, and Council approval in September 2026, this will be published and sent to the Equality Commission.

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?

Yes. The Disability Action Plan 2020-2025 was reviewed. Following consultation and Council approval, this will be published and sent to the Equality Commission. This is an ambitious and progressive action plan to build disability inclusion within the Borough.

[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.