



**Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing
and Midwifery**

**Public Authority Statutory Equality, Good Relations and
Disability Duties - Annual Progress Report 2024-25**

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Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:
<https://nipec.hscni.net/publications/equality/>

(ECNI Q28):

The report on our most recent Five-Year Review of Equality Scheme can be found at: <https://nipec.hscni.net/publications/equality/>

Our Equality Scheme is due to be reviewed again by 30 June 2026

Signature:

This report has been prepared adapting a template circulated by the Equality Commission. It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and disability duties. This report reflects progress made between April 2024 and March 2025.

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Chapter 1 Summary Quantitative Report

(ECNI Q15,16,19)

Screening, EQIAs and Consultation

1. Number of policies screened (as recorded in screening reports). (see also Chapter 6)	Screened in 3	Screened out with mitigation 3	Screened out without mitigation	Screening decision reviewed following concerns raised by consultees No concerns were raised by consultees on screening published in 2024-25
2. Number of policies subjected to Equality Impact Assessment.	0			
3. Indicate the stage of progress of each EQIA.	N/A			
4. Number of policy consultations conducted	0			
5. Number of policy consultations conducted with screening presented. (See also Chapter 2)	0			

(ECNI Q24)

Training

6. Staff training undertaken during 2024-25. (See also Chapter 2, Q6)

Course	No of Staff Trained	No of Board Members Trained
Screening Training	3	0
Total	3	0

eLearning: Making a Difference hscclearning.com administrator for your organisation to provide report

Part 1 – All Staff	4
Part 2 – Line Managers	1

(ECNI Q27)
Complaints

7. Number of complaints in relation to the Equality Scheme received during 2023-24

0

Please provide detail of any complaints:

N/A

(ECNI Q7)
Equality Action Plan (see also Chapter 3)

8. Within the 2024-25 reporting period, please indicate the number of:

Actions
completed:

1

Actions
ongoing:

0

Actions to
commence:

0

(ECNI Part B Q1)
Disability Action Plan (see also Chapter 4)

9. Within the 2024-25 reporting period, please indicate the number of:

Actions
completed:

3

Actions
ongoing:

1

Actions to
commence:

0

Chapter 2 Section 75 Progress Report

(ECNI Q1,2,3,3a,3b,23)

In 2024-25, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved. Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.

Table 1 below outlines progress to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations¹.

¹ This includes as a result of

- screening / Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs)
- monitoring
- staff training
- engagement and consultation
- improvements in access to information and services
- implementation of Equality and Disability Action Plans.

In most cases, it is not possible to ascribe developments and changes to one single factor. New initiatives, such as the Gender Identity Employment Policy, for instance are not necessarily an outcome of screenings or Equality and Disability Action Plan implementation.

As mainstreaming progresses and the promotion of equality becomes part of the organisational culture and way of working, the more difficult it becomes to ascribe activities and outcomes to the application of a specific element of Equality Scheme implementation.

1. NIPEC Ethnic Diversity Monitoring and Review

During 2024-25 NIPEC continued with its work on monitoring and reviewing the access to education and leadership opportunities for the ethnically diverse workforces of nurses, midwives, AHPs and related support staff across HSC Trusts.

The members of the established NIPEC Ethnic Diversity Project Board worked with the NIPEC Professional Officers and Senior Professional Officer Project Lead to design a staff survey to understand the challenges facing Ethnically Diverse staff in accessing education and leadership opportunities. The Professional Officers promoted the survey across the five Trusts and Nursing Homes from 23 October 2024 to 22 January 2025. 1322 responses to the survey were received. Although 236 had indicated they were from a “white background” this proved very useful as a comparison group. The responses to the staff survey and the organisational survey were presented at the second annual Regional Ethnic Diversity Collaborative Workshop in February 2025. The delegates provided suggestions on their preferred way forward as a result of the findings and these were presented to the NIPEC Project Board in March 2025 and a subsequent action plan was agreed. The findings from the staff survey and organisational survey demonstrated that although organisations are undertaking improvements to promote access to education there is still work to do. NIPEC will continue to work with its key stakeholders to implement the learning from this work.

2. Post Covid Rebuild

During 2024-25, NIPEC continued to support the Chief Nursing Officer to take forward the outcomes of the Nursing and Midwifery Task Group Report (NMTG), launched in March 2020, and the subsequent Shaping our Future vision. The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in significant change in the nursing and midwifery workforce with the professions significantly impacted. This has only served to emphasise the pressing workforce and other challenges faced.

Following a review of progress on the NMTG recommendations, the Chief Nursing Officer and her team consolidated the outstanding

recommendations into a new governance structure. In November 2024, NIPEC's Chief Executive was asked to join the Shaping Our Future oversight group to direct the delivery of the work of four subgroups aligned to the four priority areas set out in the Chief Nursing Officer's 5-year vision for Nursing and Midwifery. NIPEC's Chief Executive was also asked to co-chair the education, training and regulation subgroup

a. Accessibility of NIPEC's website

BSO ITS completed the review and upgrade of NIPEC's website in March 2025, including accessibility-related updates on the Word Press themed template which hosts the website. The changes included an update of the layout of the main NIPEC website to improve accessibility compliance. These changes will ensure that the site is accessible to as wide an audience as possible, making it easier to navigate. A similar process is on-going for NIPEC's Careers' website.

In addition, the Senior Communications Officer has been linking with the universities to seek feedback from nursing students on the revised site including an existing neurodivergent student group.

The Business Manager has secured two members of the BSO Equality Tapestry network to test the site. Feedback forms have been developed for all stakeholders to evaluate and submit comments and these will be shared in due course with Council.

3. Providing Advice, Guidance and Information on best practice and matters relating to Nursing and Midwifery

In 2024-25, NIPEC continued to fulfil its unique role in Northern Ireland by providing guidance on best practice and matters relating to nursing and midwifery. NIPEC's websites and online facilities provided practitioners and organisations with information to support the delivery of safe and effective person-centred care. NIPEC's Senior Communications Officer has facilitated the organisation to enhance the profile of its projects and completed work programmes ensuring nurses, midwives and support staff are kept up to date with resources to support their practice, education and professional development.

Instead of hosting an annual conference, NIPEC reached out to each of the HSC Trusts' Executive Directors of Nursing and met senior nursing and midwifery teams and frontline nurses, through individual Trust hosted events. In addition, NIPEC's Chief Executive offered targeted stakeholder engagement with the NIPEC team, to provide updates on regional programmes of work and NIPEC resources. NIPEC will continue with its commitment to the development, production and dissemination of evidence-based, quality and accessible information.

4. Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-2028

In September 2023 NIPEC Council approved our new Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-2028. We continued to monitor these through 2024/25 and reported on the progress of our plans to the Equality Commission on 31st August 2024 this is part of the annual governance reporting cycle.

5. NIPEC Quality Strategy

NIPEC's Quality Strategy, Lead, Inspire & Improve sets out our ambitions for quality in a way that is meaningful to our staff and partners to deliver excellence in all that we do and enhance our organisational learning. Throughout 2024-25, we continued to address the actions from our IIP Silver accreditation including the adoption of a QI approach to improving team effectiveness by using team pulse surveys and team building days. One area which we have committed to is the development of a reward and recognition process for staff and this will be considered by the Health and Wellbeing Group in 2025 along with the outcomes from the staff wellbeing survey which was completed in late 2024.

6. Investors in People accreditation

In March 2024, we achieved the Silver level award of Investors In People. We are delighted that we have built on the excellent work which achieved Standard level three years previously. This has provided the team and Council with assurance that NIPEC's organisational culture enables healthy staff engagement, communication and working practices.

7. Disability Awareness Days

Two Disability Awareness Days were facilitated by the BSO Equality Unit in 2024/25 for staff in the regional HSC organisations.

This year we focused on arthritis and neurodiversity:

- Arthritis – Tuesday 3 December 2024
- Neurodiversity – Thursday 20 March 2025

Where changes resulted from screenings, these will be listed in Chapter 6, the mitigation report.

8. Staff Training

During 2024/25 five of NIPEC's staff attended Equality Screening Training.

Five of NIPEC's staff completed the mandatory eLearning: Making a Difference training (part 1).

9. Disability Champion

A NIPEC Council Member () was appointed as NIPEC's Disability Champion in August 2022 and continues to serve as NIPEC's Disability Champion.

10. Tapestry

Tapestry, jointly with BSO HR, ran a Lunch and Learn session on Reasonable Adjustments on 8th November 2024. This session covered the legislation in relation to Reasonable Adjustments and was well attended by staff and managers alike. A recording of the session was sent to all staff after the session and was made available on the BSO website for those who were unable to attend.

Tapestry are currently working on several engagement projects including looking at their overall experience of the accessibility of Sharepoint, NIPEC's new website and the Equip program.

Tapestry also furthered the Carers Agenda, it was added as a standing item on quarterly meeting agendas and, most recently hosted a presentation by Carers NI who discussed issues for working carers and sign-posted members to support resources

11. Creating Easy Read Versions of our work

We have made a commitment to provide our resources in easy read format when required, and we have demonstrated this commitment through producing easy read versions of our work.

12. Equality Portal

This year saw the launch of a new Equality Portal, which is a Microsoft SharePoint site, providing our staff with comprehensive access to a range of equality services provided by the Equality Unit in BSO. The Equality Portal was co-designed with clients, to feature what staff need to know as they consider and mainstream equality in their work and in the workplace, including detailed guidance and resources for use when undertaking equality screenings.

Table 1:

	Outline new developments or changes in policies or practices and the difference they have made for specific equality groupings.
Persons of different religious belief	
Persons of different political opinion	
Persons of different racial groups	NIPEC Council is now represented by members from different racial groups.
Persons of different age	
Persons with different marital status	
Persons of different sexual orientation	
Persons of different genders and gender identities	Given the appointment of NIPEC Council members, NIPEC Council is now made up of two male representatives. NIPEC staff team is now made up of two male members of staff.
Persons with and without a disability	Further work on promoting equality for people with a disability in the workplace is reported on in detail in Chapter 3 (the Equality and Disability Action Plan – Progress Report 2023-24).
Persons with and without dependants	

Where changes resulted from screenings, these will be listed in Chapter 6, the mitigation report.

The following changes resulted from EQIAs: No EQIA's conducted.

(ECNI Q4,5,6)

13. During the 2024-25 reporting period

(a) were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within...?

	Yes/No	Details
Job descriptions	Yes	For all new posts, the Job Description now includes the following: “Assist the organisation in fulfilling its statutory duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to promote equality of opportunity and good relations and under the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. Staff are also required to support the organisation in complying with its obligations under Human Rights Legislation.” And “Ensure the Organisation’s policy on equality of opportunity is promoted through his/her own actions and those of any staff for whom he/she has responsibility.” Some job descriptions have more specific references to Section 75 responsibilities and duties such as the Chief Executive, Head of Corporate Services and Business Manager.

	Yes/No	Details
Performance objectives for staff	Yes	For some members of staff, such as the Chief Executive, Head of Corporate Services and Business Manager performance objectives will include section 75 duties. As an example, in 2024-25, on behalf of the organisation, the Business Manager carried out the following: • Reported on the Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-28 to the Equality Commission by 31st August 2024; • Represented NIPEC on the quarterly HSC Equality Forum, participating in discussion and joint actions and feeding back to the Head of Corporate Services and senior team/Business Team on relevant issues; • Supported NIPEC Business Team in ensuring Equality duties were fulfilled, including completion of the Annual Progress Report, equality screening of policies, procedures, corporate and Business plans and decisions; • Represented NIPEC on the Disability Champions Network.

(b) were objectives and targets relating to Section 75 integrated into...?

	Yes/No	Details
Corporate/strategic plans	Yes	NIPEC's Corporate Plan 2024-28 outlines the HSC values that directly impact on what NIPEC does and how it does it. HSC Values will provide a constant reference for NIPEC as we seek to implement the Corporate Plan 2024-28. Our behaviours (organisational and individual) will continue to be underpinned by human rights principles, including dignity, respect and equality.
Annual business plans	Yes	Within NIPEC's Business Plan for 2024/25 and 2025/26 it notes that NIPEC is committed to the promotion of good relations between people of differencing religious belief, political opinion and racial group. As a Health and Social Care Organisation NIPEC is committed to promoting respect for diversity and to challenging sectarianism and racism in both employment and services. NIPEC have also made a commitment within the Corporate Plan 2024-2028 to enable equality, inclusion and diversity.

(ECNI Q11,12,17)

14. Please provide any details and examples of good practice in consultation during the 2024-25 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

NIPEC is committed to supporting practitioners and organisations, both in HSC and the voluntary, independent and private sector, to deliver safe and effective person-centred care. NIPEC acknowledges that this support is only made possible if it works collaboratively with its key stakeholders and engages effectively with them to address the challenges faced by health and social care services in Northern Ireland. Engaging, involving and working with our stakeholders, internal and external, continues to be an important aspect of our work.

Business Case for Ethnical Staff Access to Education

On behalf of the CNO NIPEC is responsible for monitoring and reviewing access to education for Nurses, Midwives, Allied Health Professions (AHPs) and related support staff in Northern Ireland (NI) who are from an ethnic diversity background.

NIPEC measures HSC Trusts and AEs compliance to recommendations which are designed to enhance access to education for the ethnically diverse workforces. A third survey was completed in February 2024 with the help of 5 Ethnic Diversity Officers (Band 7) funded by NIPEC representing each of the 5 HSC Trusts for one/two days per week between October 2023 and March 2024. The Officers also helped NIPEC facilitate the first Regional Ethnically Diverse Workshop held on 28 March 2024, for over 90 staff, Band 3 to Band 6 from an ethnically diverse background.

In March 2024 NIPEC submitted a business case to DoH for one year's financial support to ensure the continued promotion of access to

education and leadership opportunities for nurses, midwives, AHPs and related support staff from the global majority background.

NIPEC has also established a Project Board-Ethnic Diversity to help progress this work in partnership with Trust stakeholders.

Collective Leadership Framework

The HSC Collective Leadership Strategy (DoH, 2017) highlighted the need for staff to work across traditional boundaries to address the ever-increasing complexity and demands on our health and social care services.

To support this, in 2023, the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) asked NIPEC to develop a framework for nursing and midwifery aimed at increasing the collective leadership capacity across the HSC system at all levels.

A Collective Leadership Framework for Nursing and Midwifery (NIPEC, 2024) is the product of a dedicated and committed Project Task and Finish Group, led by NIPEC and including input from a wide range of regional and national stakeholders and partners. A Collective Leadership Framework for Nursing and Midwifery was launched in September 2024 by the Health Minister.

Whilst the framework was primarily developed for nurses and midwives, it sets out the standard for collective leadership to which all staff working in the HSC system in NI should aspire. It is based on the concept that acts of leadership can come from anyone in an organisation and are not restricted to people who hold designated or formal leadership roles. It also emphasises the responsibility of all staff in demonstrating appropriate capabilities, in seeking to contribute to the development and empowerment of the leadership capacity of colleagues.

The *Framework* is underpinned by the four components outlined in the HSC Collective Leadership Strategy which include:

- Leadership is the responsibility of all

- Shared leadership in and across teams
- Compassionate leadership
- Interdependent and collaborative system leadership

These components aim to maximise positive impact on the delivery of quality and compassionate care and support.

Public Stakeholder Involvement

Over the 2024-25 year, the NIPEC team engaged with senior nurses, midwives and frontline staff to ensure we were focusing on what was important to the professions. This engagement ensured that NIPEC's time and resources were being used in the best way to support priorities as they arose within the HSC system. Whilst NIPEC's Business Plan set out key priorities, there was an ongoing programme of collaboration with our stakeholders to address any urgent requirements for NIPEC support.

NIPEC's Involvement and Co-production Strategy was endorsed by Council in 2023. The document outlines our commitment to the engagement and promotion of people with user and lived experience, by encouraging participation in our programmes of work, as valued and equal stakeholders.

In September 2024, NIPEC Council endorsed our Communication and Engagement Strategy 2024-28: Purpose, People, Plans. The document supports NIPEC's overall aim to deliver on our strategic objectives as set out in the Corporate Plan and Quality Strategy. A Communication and Engagement Report for Council was reinstated and presented to the September meeting. The report covered the period April 2023 to March 2024 and highlighted several engagement improvements since the appointment of a Communications Officer in October 2023. These included the development of an annual communications planner, a health and wellbeing news sheet for staff, introduction of branding guidelines and dedicated planning to support key projects. The period also saw further development of NIPEC's two websites, a 33% increase in engagement and a 120% increase in proactive 'tweeting.'

Career Pathways

Development of career pathways, in line with the Guidance Framework for Career Pathway development, has become an expanding component of NIPEC's work. During 2024-25, NIPEC continued to work in partnership with key stakeholders in the development of Nursing Career Pathways to meet DoH strategic priorities for nursing and midwifery. The commissioned services will influence the roles adopted in each Trust, to ensure an effective nursing and midwifery workforce to meet the demands of the specific service and population needs. The individual career pathways will enable HSC Trusts to identify the posts needed for their services through effective workforce planning whilst supporting individual staff in considering their career journey.

The Perioperative Nursing Career Pathway is designed to help clarify and strengthen the range of important Perioperative Clinical Nursing and Support roles that support the delivery of high quality, safe effective, person and family centred care. The key knowledge, skills and behaviour and defined education will guide the development of individuals to enhance their knowledge, skills and experience in the perioperative environment.

The career pathway comprises of eight core roles, which have been agreed by the Executive Directors of Nursing of the five HSC Trusts: Perioperative Nursing Assistant, Perioperative Senior Nursing Assistant, Perioperative Support Worker, Perioperative Staff Nurse, Perioperative Senior Staff Nurse, Perioperative Specialist Nurse, Perioperative Advanced Nurse and Perioperative Consultant Nurse.

When approved, job descriptions that have been developed for relevant roles will be submitted for regional matching and evaluation. The career pathway will be submitted to CNO for endorsement before being published and shared on NIPEC's website, with expectation of implementation in HSC Trusts.

Along with key stakeholders, NIPEC is also leading on the development of a Cancer Nursing Career Pathway comprising of nine clinical roles.

The PHA are also leading on the development of a Critical Care Nursing Pathway with NIPEC input.

Regional Review of Casting

The CNO commissioned NIPEC to lead on a regional review of Casting education and training requirements for practitioners in Northern Ireland (NI) and in addition to review the model of service delivery. NIPEC undertook this important programme of work in partnership with Department of Health (DoH) and key stakeholders across the region.

In order to inform the work, two workshops were held with key stakeholders, which included, nursing service and education leads for fracture clinics, emergency departments and elective orthopaedics across the region; the Trauma and Medical Orthopaedic Lead; and Allied Health Professions (AHP) colleagues, (Northern Ireland Ambulance Service and physiotherapy) to discuss the current position and possible options for a future service delivery model and education and training programmes. Information was also sought from key stakeholders and colleagues across the UK and Ireland.

The proposed model of service delivery presents an opportunity for the development of a wider skill mix of staff to be involved in casting including training for non-registered staff. Principles were proposed which underpin the service delivery model in addition to the preparation and support of staff who are required to undertake casting as part of their role. A 'tiered' approach to training was recommended to enable practitioners to progressively develop their knowledge and skills as appropriate, in addition to NI-based provision of British Orthopaedic Association accredited training. A final report has been drafted for submission to CNO.

Table 2: N/A

Policy publicly consulted on	What equality document did you issue alongside the policy consultation document?	Which Section 75 groups did you consult with?	What consultation methods did you use? AND Which of these drew the greatest number of responses from consultees?	Do you have any comments on your experience of this consultation?
	☐ Screening template ☐ EQIA report ☐ none			

(ECNI Q21, 26)

15. In analysing monitoring information gathered, was any action taken to change/review any policies?

None.

Please provide any details and examples:

Table 3: N/A

Service or Policy	What equality monitoring information did you collect and analyse?	What action did you take as a result of this analysis? AND Did you make any changes to the service or policy as a result?	What difference did this make for Section 75 groups?
N/A			

(ECNI Q22)

16. Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2024-25 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

None

Table 4: N/A

Policy previously screened or EQIAed	Did you gather and analyse any equality monitoring information during 2022-23? (Please tick)	What were the adverse impacts at the point of screening or EQIA?	What changes to these occurred in 2023-24, as indicated by the equality monitoring data you gathered?
N/A	☐ Yes ☐ No		

(ECNI Q25)

17. 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:

The organisation avails of the joint Section 75 training programme that is coordinated and delivered by the BSO Equality Unit for staff across all 11 partner organisations. The following statistics thus relate to the evaluations undertaken by all participants for the training:

Screening Training Evaluations

The figures in bold below represent the percentage of participants who selected 'Very Well' or 'Well'. Participants were asked: "Overall how well do you think the course met its aims":

- To develop an understanding of the statutory requirements for screening: **100%**
- To develop an understanding of the benefits of screening: **96%**
- To develop an understanding of the screening process: **96%**
- To develop skills in practically carrying out screening: **86%**

(ECNI Q29)

18. 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)

During 2025-26 we will focus on:

- We will undertake a Five-Year Review of our Equality Scheme. The Review will commence during the 2025-2026 reporting period.
- Progressing work on our Equality and Disability Action Plan actions, jointly with our partner organisations;
- Conducting Equality Screenings as and when required;
- Ensuring all staff Band 5 and above in our organisation, complete Equality Screening Training and running reports to check the progress of virtual training;
- Take forward NIPEC's ethnically diverse work;
- Liaising with representatives from disability groups in relation to accessibility of NIPEC's website.

Appendix – Further Explanatory Notes

1 Consultation and Engagement

(ECNI Q10) targeting –

We did not undertake any public consultations or pre-consultation exercises during the year.

(ECNI Q13) awareness raising for consultees on Equality Scheme commitments –

During the year, in our quarterly screening reports we raised awareness as to our commitments relating to equality screenings and their publication.

(ECNI Q14) consultation list –

During the year, we reviewed our consultation list every quarter.

2 Audit of Information Systems

(ECNI Q20)

We completed an audit of information systems at an early stage of our Equality Scheme implementation, in line with our Scheme commitments.

Chapter 3 Equality and Disability Action Plan Progress Report (ECNI Q2)

We have provided an update from our previous Equality and Disability Action Plans (2018-2023) from 1st April 2023- 30th September 2023:

Equality Action Plan 2018-23: What we will do to promote equality and good relations

Action 1: BSO Human Resources (by end of March 2023)

What we will do: Identify and pilot training available from organisations in the gender identity sector and put arrangements in place to access such training for teams where a member of staff comes forward to disclose that they identify as transgender or non-binary.

What we are trying to achieve: Staff who identify as transgender and non-binary feel more supported in the workplace.

Performance Indicator and Target: Arrangements are in place. Feedback from staff who have drawn support through the policy indicates a positive experience.

What we did over the last year: A Gender Identity and Expression Employment Policy was approved and published in June 2018. NIPEC developed a Gender Identity and Expression Employment Policy which will be reviewed in 2025.

A suite of resources to support the implementation of the policy have been developed together with materials for HR staff, recruitment staff, line managers and individual staff who identify as transgender or non-binary.

During 2022/23, BSO commissioned The Rainbow Project to deliver training on Gender Identity Awareness to a team for whom this specific training need was identified. The training was well received by the team, with members

reporting they found it really useful. This positive feedback means that The Rainbow Project's details can be held as a provider of Gender Identity Awareness Training, to ensure timely access to training when the need arises in future. In addition, sexual orientation and Gender identity awareness training was rolled out to regional organisations in January 2024. A pre-course and evaluation questionnaire were issued to all participants before and after the training which was well received.

We completed this action.

Disability Action Plan 2018-2023: What we will do to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in public life

Action 1: NIPEC with support from BSO Equality Unit (by end of March 2023)

What we will do: Monitoring: Encourage staff to declare that they have a disability or care for a person with a disability through awareness raising and providing guidance to staff on the importance of monitoring. Prompt staff to keep up to date their personal equality monitoring records (via self-service on new Human Resources IT system).

What we are trying to achieve: More accurate data in place. Greater number of staff feel comfortable declaring they have a disability.

Performance Indicator and Target: Increase in completion of disability monitoring information by staff to 90%. Prompt issued to staff on a regular basis.

What we did over the last year:

This action has been carried forward to our 2023-2028 Disability Action Plan and progress reported in the Disability Action Plan 2023-2028 below.

Action 2: NIPEC (by end of March 2023)

What we will do: Communication: Monitor and assess accessibility of our website: Work with BSO ITS to ensure that NIPEC's website meet Accessibility Regulations (2018) and other recognised standards and, where required, develop an action plan to address any gaps in compliance and issues identified

What we are trying to achieve: Continue to meet best practice and guidance including legislative requirements

Performance Indicator and Target: Website accessibility complies with Accessibility Regulations (2018)

Action Plan to address any accessibility issues

What we did over the last year:

This action has been transferred to our Disability Action Plan 2023-2028 and an update provided in the Disability Action Plan 2023-2028 update below.

Action 3: NIPEC with support by BSO Equality Unit (by end of March 2023)

What we will do: Sign up to Mental Health Charter.

What we are trying to achieve: Staff with mental health conditions feel better supported in the workplace.

Performance Indicator and Target: The organisation has signed up and communication has been issued to all staff.

What we did over the last year:

Due to limited staff resources in 2024/25, this action has not been taken forward and will be reviewed in due course.

This action is on-going.

Equality Action Plan 2023-28: What we will do to promote equality and good relations

What we did between 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025

If you need this document in another format please get in touch with us. Our contact details are at the back of this document.

Our Equality and Disability Action Plan 2023-2028 can be found on our website at: [Equality | NIPEC](#)

Action 1: NIPEC Professional Team (March 2025)

What we will do: Stakeholder engagement

- Benchmark what other HSC organisations have done to improve engagement with Section 75 groups in particular members of the Global Majority Community working in NI. Implement learning from other HSC Organisations as to how they engage with registrants from this group.
- Pilot collecting equality/diversity information on a voluntary basis as part of our online events booking system and NIPEC Surveys.

What we are trying to achieve:

- Improved communication and engagement with those involved in our work

Performance Indicator and Target: Establishment of a collaborative to seek views from members of the Global Majority Community working in NI. As per NIPEC's 23/24 Business Plan. Feedback surveys issued and reviewed at all stakeholder and engagement events.

What we did over the last year: During 2024-25 NIPEC continued with its work on monitoring and reviewing the access to education and leadership opportunities for the ethnically diverse workforces of nurses, midwives, AHPs and related support staff across HSC Trusts.

The members of the established NIPEC Ethnic Diversity Project Board worked with the NIPEC Professional Officers and SPO Project Lead to design a staff survey to understand the challenges facing Ethnically Diverse staff in accessing education and leadership opportunities. The Professional Officers promoted the survey across the five Trusts and Nursing Homes from 23 October 2024 to 22 January 2025. 1322 responses to the survey were received. Although 236 had indicated they were from a “white background” this proved very useful as a comparison group. The responses to the staff survey and the organisational survey were presented at the second annual Regional Ethnic Diversity Collaborative Workshop in February 2025. The delegates provided suggestions on their preferred way forward as a result of the findings and these were presented to the NIPEC Project Board in March 2025 and a subsequent action plan was agreed. The findings from the staff survey and organisational survey demonstrated that although organisations are undertaking improvements to promote access to education there is still work to do. NIPEC will continue to work with its key stakeholders to implement the learning from this work.

In addition, feedback surveys are issued to all delegates at NIPEC stakeholder events. These are reviewed following stakeholder engagement events and any comments taken forward and actioned.

We completed this action.

Action 2: NIPEC (March 2025)

What we will do: Workforce / Human Resources

Work in partnership with BSO and other HSC organisations in undertaking a Carers' survey of our staff.

Develop Action Plan and amend NIPEC's Flexible Working Policy if required.

What we are trying to achieve:

- Staff with caring responsibilities feel well supported and that their needs are met;
- Signposting to and increased awareness of support for and existing policies and procedures available to staff who have caring responsibilities.

Performance Indicator and Target:

- Carer's survey undertaken and action plan developed to respond to any gaps identified in feedback received
- Feedback suggests that 80% of staff with caring responsibilities who had a need to draw on support felt well supported.

What we did over the last year: Due to limited resources in NIPEC during 2024/25 a Carers survey of our staff has yet to be undertaken. It is planned to take place in 2025/26. However, in the development of the Hybrid Working Policy and as part of the Equality Screening, issues in relation to those staff with caring responsibilities arose. Appropriate mitigation was put in place at this time and reference made to the flexible working policies that NIPEC have in place. Furthermore, a section was added to the Hybrid Working Policy to note that requests from staff who have a disability or caring responsibilities to work at home more than three days per week will be considered on an individual needs' basis.

In addition, Tapestry have included a standing item on issues for staff who are carers with one of the main aims being to make the case to HR senior management for the need for a dedicated carers policy.

This action is on-going.

Equality Action Plan – Conclusions

We completed 1 action (action 1).

We did some work on but didn't complete 1 action (action 2).

We didn't do any work on 0 actions.

All of the actions in our action plan are at regional and at local level.

Our action plan is a live document. If we make any big changes to our plan we will involve people in the Section 75 categories. We will tell the Equality Commission about any changes.

Disability Action Plan 2023-2028: What we will do to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in public life

Action 1: NIPEC Business Team with support from Equality Unit (March 2024)

What we will do: Monitoring

Continue to reassure and encourage staff to complete equality and diversity information to strengthen data.

The need to complete equality and diversity information will be included as part of the NIPEC Induction pack and added as an agenda item to the Health and Wellbeing Committee.

What we are trying to achieve: More accurate data in place. Greater number of staff feel comfortable declaring they have a disability.

Performance Indicator and Target: Increase in completion of disability monitoring information by staff to 90%.

What we did over the last year: The most recent staff monitoring data received was in quarter 4 (May 2025). This showed that 28.26% of NIPEC staff told us they did not have a disability, 2.17% indicated they had a disability, whilst 69.57% did not say whether they had a disability or not.

We regularly remind staff to complete and update their equality and diversity information both with regular emails from the Business Manager and from BSO Corporate Communications. We will continue to encourage staff to do so going forward. We will also ensure new staff joining the organisation are made aware of this as part of their induction programme.

In addition, the importance of completing equality and diversity information has been added to the Business Team agenda and the Health and Wellbeing agenda as a standing item and the importance of recording this information reiterated to members.

We completed this action.

Action 2 NIPEC Business Team (March 2025)

What we will do: Communication

Carry out an accessibility audit on both of NIPEC's websites to include disability testing for users.

What we are trying to achieve: Users with a disability have full access to all information and functionalities of NIPEC's websites. Users from a range of disabilities are involved in user testing. Continue to meet best practice and guidance including legislative requirements

Performance Indicator and Target: Website accessibility complies with Accessibility Regulations (2018) Action Plan to address any accessibility issues

What we did over the last year: Following an audit by BSO Internal Audit of NIPEC's website in 2021/22 the Career's Website had been transferred to BSO, ITS, WordPress in March 2024 and was fully operational. NIPEC were no longer reliant on an external supplier for website maintenance.

ITS have confirmed that an accessibility audit of their WordPress framework had taken place a number of years ago and it was deemed fully compliant. However, a check has been carried out on any materials NIPEC had added since then.

NIPEC with support from BSO ITS undertook a rebuild of NIPEC's main website from October 2024-February 2025 to ensure the website was compliant with Accessibility Legislation. NIPEC's new website went live in

March 2025 and we are now in the process of seeking stakeholder feedback as per the 5-year Equality & Disability Action Plan.

In 2024-25 NIPEC continued to fulfil its unique role in Northern Ireland by providing guidance on best practice and matters relating to nursing and midwifery. NIPEC's websites and online facilities provided practitioners and organisations with information to support the delivery of safe and effective person-centred care. NIPEC's Senior Communications Officer has facilitated the organisation to enhance the profile of its projects and completed work programmes ensuring nurses, midwives and support staff are kept up to date with resources to support their practice, education and professional development.

We completed this action.

Action 3 NIPEC Business Team with support from BSO Equality Unit (End Mar 2028)

What we will do: Awareness Days

Raise awareness of the lived experience of people with specific disabilities and conditions.

What we are trying to achieve: Increased staff awareness of a range of disabilities and conditions.

Performance Indicator and Target: Two awareness days profiled every year. >50% of staff taking part in the evaluation indicate they know more about people living with disabilities and conditions as a result of the awareness days.

What we did over the last year: We held two Awareness Days during the year, one covering Arthritis and one on Neurodiversity. Our Arthritis Awareness Day was held on 3rd December 2024 which is the UN International Day of People with Disabilities. We wanted to highlight and celebrate this important day with all our workplace colleagues who may/or may not be disabled. Lisa Carlisle, NI Regional Officer for Versus Arthritis

facilitated the Arthritis Awareness Day. Lisa talked about Arthritis and working and covered a range of topics including why work matters; the impact of Arthritis on working; research undertaken by Versus Arthritis; the rights of disabled people and reasonable adjustments requirements and how to manage the condition of Arthritis in the workplace.

Following the session, we uploaded a recording of the Arthritis Awareness session and a copy of the facilitator's slide presentation to the Equality Unit Portal for information for all staff.

Our Awareness Day on Neurodiversity was held 21 March 2025 during Neurodiversity Celebration Week which is a worldwide initiative that takes place during 17 -23 March. This session focused on Autism and ADHD and was led and facilitated by Sharon Didrichsen and Elaine Stephens from Specialisterne, which is a not for profit organisation specialising in Autism and ADHD. The content of this session was co-designed with staff in advance. This helped Specialisterne develop an awareness session which focused on the Neurodiversity information needs of staff attending, in relation to working with or managing a colleague who may be neurodivergent. This session was not recorded, however Specialisterne have produced an aide-memoire of the session which is available to all staff through the Equality Unit Portal.

We completed this action.

Action 4: NIPEC Business Team with support from BSO Equality Unit. (End March 2028)

What we will do: Placement Scheme

Create and promote a meaningful placement opportunity for people with disabilities.

What we are trying to achieve: People with a disability gain meaningful work experience.

Performance Indicator and Target: At least one placement offered each year. Feedback through annual evaluation of scheme indicates that placement meets expectations.

What we did over the last year: During the year, together with voluntary sector partners we developed new arrangements for offering placements for people with a disability. We have agreed to offer one set of placements together with Disability Action and another set together with Supported Employment Solutions. This way, we want to reach as broad a range of people with a disability as possible. Instead of a fixed starting point and a fixed duration, we will now offer placements throughout the year and for any length between two and six months, depending on the nature of the placement. By the end of March 2025, we had drafted a policy and guidance documents as well as a Memorandum of Understanding. We want to agree these and start offering placements early in 2025-26.

We did not complete this action.

(5) Additional Measures

We always include Disability on our list of things to talk about at our quarterly Equality Forum with our partner organisations.

We always provide our Business Team with an update on equality and disability at each meeting.

We update NIPEC Council on progress against our Equality and Disability Action Plan (the people at the top of our organisation) every year.

(6) Encourage Others

(7) Monitoring

We encourage our staff to record monitoring information on HRPTS.

(8) Revisions

During the year we monitored our new Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-28.

Disability Action Plan – Conclusions

We completed 3 actions (these are actions 1,2 and 3).

We did some work on but didn't complete 1 action (action 4).

We didn't do any work on 0 actions.

All of the actions in our action plan are at regional and at local level.

Our action plan is a live document. If we make any big changes to our plan we will involve people with a disability. We will tell the Equality Commission about any changes.

Chapter 4:

Equality Action Plan 2023-28: What we will do to promote equality and good relations

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve and who for (i.e. which Section 75 category specifically)	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
Stakeholder engagement - Benchmark what other HSC organisations have done to improve engagement with Section 75 groups in particular members of the Global Majority Community working in NI. Implement learning from other HSC Organisations as to how they engage with registrants from this group. - Pilot collecting equality/diversity information	Improved communication and engagement with those involved in our work	Establishment of a collaborative to seek views from members of the Global Majority Community working in NI. As per NIPEC's 23/24 Business Plan. Feedback surveys issued and reviewed at all stakeholder and	NIPEC Professional Team March 2025 Update: Completed

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve and who for (i.e. which Section 75 category specifically)	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
on a voluntary basis as part of our online events booking system and NIPEC Surveys.		engagement events.	
Provide advice and guidance on postgraduate access to education for Global Majority Community members working in NI.	Ensuring that Global Majority Community members working in NI have equal access and are aware of the Postgraduate Education programme.	Establishment of a collaborative to engage with Global Majority Community members working in NI. Achievement of related objective on NIPEC's 23/24 Business Plan. Monitoring of how many members have	NIPEC Professional Team March 2024 Update: Completed

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve and who for (i.e. which Section 75 category specifically)	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
		accessed training.	
Workforce / Human Resources • Work in partnership with BSO and other HSC organisations in undertaking a Carers' survey of our staff. • Develop Action Plan and amend NIPEC's Flexible Working Policy if required.	Staff with caring responsibilities feel well supported and that their needs are met Signposting to and increased awareness of support for and existing policies and procedures	Carer's survey undertaken and action plan developed to respond to any gaps identified in feedback received Feedback suggests that 80% of staff with	NIPEC March 2025 Revised implementation date: March 2026

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve and who for (i.e. which Section 75 category specifically)	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
	available to staff who have caring responsibilities	caring responsibilities who had a need to draw on support felt well supported.	

Disability Action Plan 2023-28: What we will do to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in public life

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
Monitoring - Continue to reassure and encourage staff to complete equality and diversity information to strengthen data. - The need to complete equality and diversity information will be included as part of the NIPEC Induction pack and added as an agenda item to the Health and Wellbeing Committee.	More accurate data in place Greater number of staff feel comfortable declaring they have a disability	Increase in completion of disability monitoring information by staff to 90%	NIPEC Business Team with support from Equality Unit Update: Completed
Training Train Council members on their responsibilities on disability equality and disability legislation.	Increased staff and Council Member awareness of the range of disabilities and needs	All staff and Council members trained within 2 years through interactive sessions and staff awareness	NIPEC Business Team with support from Equality Unit December 2023 Update: Completed

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
		initiatives Dedicated Equality Workshop for Council members on their duties in relation to Equality in 2023.	
Communication Carry out an accessibility audit on both of NIPEC's websites to include disability testing for users.	Users with a disability have full access to all information and functionalities of NIPEC's websites. Users from a range of disabilities are involved in user testing. Continue to meet best practice and guidance including legislative requirements	Website accessibility complies with Accessibility Regulations (2018) Action Plan to address any accessibility issues	NIPEC Business Team March 2025 Update: Completed

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
Awareness Days Raise awareness of the lived experience of people with specific disabilities and conditions.	Increased staff awareness of a range of disabilities and conditions.	Two awareness days profiled every year. >50% of staff taking part in the evaluation indicate they know more about people living with disabilities and conditions as a result of the awareness days.	NIPEC Business Team with support from BSO Equality Unit End Mar 2028 Update: Completed
Placement Scheme Create and promote a meaningful placement opportunity for people with disabilities.	People with a disability gain meaningful work experience.	At least one placement offered each year. Feedback through annual evaluation of scheme indicates that placement meets expectations.	NIPEC Business Team with support from BSO Equality Unit. End Mar 2028 Revised Implementation date: March 2026

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
Tapestry NIPEC Business Team to approach Tapestry to attend a NIPEC staff meeting to talk about Tapestry, its aims and objectives.	Staff with a disability feel more confident that their voice is heard in decision-making. Staff with a disability feel better supported.	Increases in Tapestry membership or in participation at meetings Tapestry attend	NIPEC Business Team, with support from Equality Unit Update: Completed



Equality and Human Rights Screening Report

April 2024 – March 2025

These screenings can be viewed on the BSO website under:

<https://bso.hscni.net/directorates/people-and-place/equality-and-human-rights/equality-screening/>

Policy/ Procedure	Policy Aims	Date	Screening Decision
A Collective Leadership Framework for Nursing And Midwifery In Northern Ireland	Develop a leadership framework to strengthen the professional leadership of nursing and midwifery at every level, support investment in leadership training and development and enhance the culture of collective leadership within the health and social care system in NI	Jun-24	Screened out with mitigation
Corporate Strategy 2024-2028	NIPEC's Corporate Plan 2023-28 is informed by the Programme for Government (PfG) draft Outcomes Framework. The over-arching PfG commitment for the DoH is that 'we all enjoy long, healthy and active lives.' NIPEC's Vision for 2024-28 is to continue to work as an	Feb-24	Screened out with mitigation

	organisation that will be: 'leading and inspiring nurses and midwives to uphold excellence in professional practice'. NIPEC's Mission is: 'to promote further the highest standards of practice, education and professional development of nurses and midwives to facilitate the delivery of safe, effective, compassionate, person-centred services.'		
Monitoring & Reviewing Access to Education & Leadership Opportunities for the Ethnically Diverse Workforces of Nurses, Midwives, AHPs & Related Support Staff	To evaluate access to education and leadership opportunities for the ethnically diverse workforces of nurses, midwives, AHPs and their support staff in HSC Trusts.	Sep-24	Screened out with mitigation

No concerns were raised by consultees on any of the screenings published in 2024-25.

Chapter 6: Mitigation Report



Equality and Human Rights Mitigation Report

April 2024 – March 2025

A Collective Leadership Framework for Nursing And Midwifery In Northern Ireland

<i>In developing the policy or decision what did you do or change to address the equality issues you identified?</i>	<i>What do you intend to do in future to address the equality issues you identified?</i>
People with a disability, those whose first language is not English NIPEC's Accessible Formats Policy outlines how those developing information should consider alternative formats, and how information and publications can be requested in alternative formats, receipt of which is recorded and requests are monitored. Children and Young People and Older People, People with Disabilities NIPEC will provide alternative formats on request to meet the needs of older people who don't have computer skills or access to a computer/internet and will also consider the need to provide age-appropriate information to meet the needs of children and young people. Those whose first language is not English As part of HSCNI, NIPEC can access the regional contract for interpreting, translation and transcription services. People with a disability During the pandemic, there was a move to conducting most business online using Zoom and other online platforms. This need to move to virtual meetings during Covid 19 highlighted the need for organisers to consider any additional impact on Section 75 groups.	Gender, People with a disability, those whose first language is not English, Ethnicity, Young People and Older People, Marital Status, Religion, Sexual Orientation Consideration of the specific needs of service users/carers within these groups who will be receiving care from Maternity Support Workers will be made and, wherever possible/appropriate, the education programme will be updated to equip the trainees with the knowledge and skills to be able to understand/meet the needs of these S75 groups.

However, NIPEC's procedure for booking external venues requires those responsible for organising events and meetings ensure that venues and information are fully accessible.

People with dependents, religion

During the pandemic, there was a move to conducting most business online using Zoom and other online platforms. This need to move to virtual meetings during Covid 19 highlighted the need for organisers to consider any additional impact on Section 75 groups.

However, when planning events and meetings, NIPEC will consider their timing and location and the need for a neutral venue/location. Where applicable, assistance with travel expenses will also be considered.

Gender, People with a disability, those whose first language is not English, Ethnicity, Young People and Older People, Marital Status, Religion, Sexual Orientation

Advanced Nurse Practitioner Trainees are employees of HSC Trusts, therefore equality needs assessment would have been carried out at commencement of employment.

University providers of Advanced Nursing Practice courses are responsible for meeting equality legislation.

People with a disability, those whose first language is not English

NIPEC will continue to monitor requests for alternative format and/or language to inform future production of electronic and written communication.

People with a disability, those whose first language is not English, Children and Young People and Older People, People with dependents, political opinion/religion A checklist has been developed to assist those organising events and meetings and developing information – this will cover the need to take account of specific needs of the nine groups.	
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Corporate Strategy

<i>In developing the policy or decision what did you do or change to address the equality issues you identified?</i>	<i>What do you intend to do in future to address the equality issues you identified?</i>
Action Measures An identification of different needs, experiences and priorities of any of the equality categories in relation to this action and what equality issues emerge from this. Specify the Section 75 equality categories where there are different needs. Note if staff or service users.	
Equality Screening NIPEC has identified areas of work to be screened as part of the Annual Business Planning process which supports the four-year Corporate Plan. These are: • Review the support required for practice experience for students; • Nursing and Midwifery Excellence/ Assurance Framework;	

• Nursing and Midwifery Leadership Framework; • Communities of Practice; • Strategic review of RNLD workforce model; • Review of casting work and structures within Trusts; • The career pathway for care homes; • Business Plan 2025/26; • NIPEC policies (where appropriate) People with a disability, those whose first language is not English NIPEC's Accessible Formats Policy outlines how alternative formats should be considered by those developing information. The policy also provides guidance on how information and publications can be requested in alternative formats and recording and monitoring of such requests. Children and Young People, Older People, People with Disabilities NIPEC will provide alternative formats on request to meet the needs of older people without computer skills/access to computer/internet. Consideration will also be given to the provision of age-appropriate information to meet	
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the needs of children and young people. People whose first language is not English As part of HSCNI, NIPEC can access the regional contract for interpreting, translation and transcription services. People with a disability The global COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for convenors of meetings to consider additional impact on Section 75 groups of the increased conduct of business using online platforms. NIPEC's procedure for booking external venues for face to face meetings requires that venues should be fully accessible. People with dependents; Political Opinion/Religious Belief The global COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for convenors of meetings to consider additional impact on Section 75 groups of the increased conduct of business using online platforms. NIPEC's procedure for booking external venues for events and meetings requires that timing and location and the need for a neutral	
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venue/location should be considered. NIPEC is a regional body and organises engagement events and meetings on a geographical spread where possible. Tele and video conferencing and other online platforms can be arranged for those unable to travel. People with a disability; those whose first language is not English NIPEC will continue to monitor requests for alternative format and/or language to inform future production of electronic and written communication. People with a disability, those whose first language is not English, Children and Young People, Older People, People with dependents; Political Opinion; Religious Belief A checklist has been developed to assist those organising engagement events and meetings and developing information. This will cover the need to take account of specific needs of the nine groups.	
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Monitoring & Reviewing Access to Education & Leadership Opportunities for the Ethnically Diverse Workforces of Nurses, Midwives, AHPs & Related Support Staff

<i>In developing the policy or decision what did you do or change to address the equality issues you identified?</i>	<i>What do you intend to do in future to address the equality issues you identified?</i>
<u>Those whose first language is not English</u> As part of HSCNI, NIPEC can access the regional contract for interpreting, translation and transcription services. During the pandemic, there was a move to conducting most business online using Zoom and other online platforms. This need to move to virtual meetings during Covid 19 highlighted the need for organisers to give consideration to any additional impact on Section 75 groups. However, NIPEC's procedure for booking external venues requires those responsible for organising events and meetings ensure that venues and information are fully accessible & the timing and location meets the needs of those attending.	<u>Those whose first language is not English</u> NIPEC will continue to monitor requests for alternative format and/or language to inform future production of electronic and written communication. A checklist has been developed to assist those organising events and meetings and developing information – this will cover the need to take account of specific needs of the nine groups.

Project Board Membership

In establishing membership of the Project Board, it was determined that it should be co-chaired by a Nurse/Midwife or AHP from an ethnically diverse background. In this regard an Assistant Service Manager from Belfast Health and Social Care Trust was nominated as Co-Chair.

Nominations were also invited from those with an ethnically diverse background/lived experience of ethnic diversity and those with a responsibility for ethnic diversity within their job role.

Methodology

A commitment has been made to conduct surveys to capture information from those with an ethnically diverse background. This will enable specific recommendations and solutions to be developed for specific groups.