



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

**Public Authority Statutory Equality, Good Relations and
Disability Duties - Annual Progress Report 2023-24**

Contact:

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan	As above <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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

(ECNI Q28):

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

Our Equality Scheme is due to be reviewed again by 31st March 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 2023 and March 2024.

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Please note:

(ECNI Q8,9) We are currently consulting on our new Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-2028.

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 0	Screened out with mitigation 2	Screened out without mitigation 0	Screening decision reviewed following concerns raised by consultees No concerns were raised by consultees on screening published in 2023-24
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	1			
5. Number of policy consultations conducted with screening presented. (See also Chapter 2)	1			

(ECNI Q24)

Training

6. Staff training undertaken during 2023-24. (See also Chapter 2, Q6)

Course	No of Staff Trained	No of Board Members Trained
Screening Training	12	0
Total	12	0

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

Part 1 – All Staff	6
Part 2 – Line Managers	0

**(ECNI Q27)
Complaints**

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

Please provide detail of any complaints:

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

8. Within the 2023-24 reporting period, please indicate the number of:

Actions completed:	<input type="text" value="1"/>	Actions ongoing:	<input type="text" value="2"/>	Actions to commence:	<input type="text" value="0"/>
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**(ECNI Part B Q1)
Disability Action Plan (see also Chapter 4)**

9. Within the 2023-24 reporting period, please indicate the number of:

Actions completed:	<input type="text" value="3"/>	Actions ongoing:	<input type="text" value="3"/>	Actions to commence:	<input type="text" value="0"/>
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Chapter 2 Section 75 Progress Report (ECNI Q1,2,3,3a,3b,23)

In 2023-24, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved. Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.

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

1. Promoting Ethnic Diversity

To progress NIPEC's work as the lead organisation in monitoring and reviewing access to education and leadership opportunities for the global majority (ethnically diverse) workforces of nurses, midwives, Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) and related support staff, In October 2023, NIPEC appointed five temporary Professional Officers to support one of NIPEC's business plan objectives and one of the actions contained within our Equality Action Plan 2023-2028. Their remit was to enhance access to post-registration education and career and leadership opportunities for overseas nursing, midwifery, AHPs and support staff working in HSC Trusts.

The Professional Officers also worked with their respective HSC Trusts and a NIPEC Senior Professional Officer to facilitate the first Regional Ethnic Diversity Collaborative Workshop held on 28 March 2024, chaired by NIPEC council member Dr Nirmala Bhogal. This was an opportunity to invite ethnically diverse staff from Bands 3 to 6 to attend this celebration and information event to share the excellent work in HSC Trusts and Education Providers supporting Ethnic Diversity. The event energised all who attended and was a great opportunity to share best practice and generate new ideas which will

be shared at the first Ethnic Diversity Project Board meeting in May 2024.

2. Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-2028

In September 2023, NIPEC Council approved our new Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-28 for submission to the Equality Commission NI, in line with the organisation's equality and disability duties. This followed approval of the draft Plans in March 2023 and a public consultation from 3 April to 30 June 2023 which was facilitated by the BSO Equality Unit. Several members of NIPEC's Council attended consultation events which were held jointly with other HSC regional organisations. Progress on the implementation of the actions will be submitted annually to the Equality Commission as part of the governance reporting cycle.

3. Covid-19 and Hybrid Working

A return to the office was facilitated in March 2023 under the Draft Pilot Hybrid Working Scheme and was trialled for three months from March 2023-June 2023.

All NIPEC staff were actively involved in the development of the Hybrid Working Policy and given the opportunity to comment on it. This was facilitated via staff meetings following which the policy was made accessible on NIPEC's server for individuals to go in and make comments, this was aimed at those staff who do not feel comfortable raising issues at meetings.

In addition, two Hybrid Working surveys were issued to staff to gauge their thoughts and concerns. All comments were considered by the Health and Wellbeing Committee and senior team and the Policy was amended and represented to a further staff meeting.

None of the issues raised were in relation to the section 75 categories.

A focus group which all staff were invited to participate in was held in January 2024 which specifically addressed comments raised in the surveys and agreed solutions.

The final draft of the Hybrid Working Policy was circulated to all NIPEC staff for comment in January 2024. The Hybrid Working Policy was approved by NIPEC Council and published on the NIPEC website in March 2024.

4. NIPEC Health and Wellbeing Committee

NIPEC's Health and Wellbeing Committee was re-established and had its first meeting in May 2023 and meets four times per year. This Committee is chaired by NIPEC's Chief Executive.

The Health and Wellbeing Committee undertook two staff wellbeing surveys of all NIPEC staff to obtain their views on their satisfaction of working for NIPEC. The findings from both surveys helped inform planning for the Health and Wellbeing Committee's work programme and to finalise the Draft Hybrid Working Policy. NIPEC's Health and Wellbeing Committee is made of a mix of grade and gender.

In addition, a wellbeing calendar was circulated to all staff in April 2024 outlining wellbeing events for 2024/25.

5. 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.

6. Disability Awareness Days

Two Disability Awareness Days were facilitated by the BSO Equality Unit every year for staff in the regional HSC organisations.

This year we focused on Stroke and Schizophrenia.

- Strokes -7th February 2024;
- Schizophrenia -12th March 2024.

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

7. Staff Training

During 2023/24 two of NIPEC's staff attended Equality Screening Training.

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

8. Equality presentation to Council members

In December 2023, Council invited the BSO Equality Unit to attend a workshop in order to summarise NIPEC'S statutory equality and disability obligations for Council members. The session specifically focussed on enhancing the ability of members to provide leadership on the equality and disability duties of the organisation. The session was well attended and covered the following areas:

- NI Public Sector Legislation: Section 75 of NI Act 1998 and Disability Discrimination Order (NI) 2006;
- NIPEC's Equality Scheme;
- Equality Screenings;
- Equality Impact Assessments;
- NIPEC's Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-2028; and

- The Equality Commission’s Leadership Guidance: Demonstrating Effective Leadership in Section 75.

9. NIPEC 21st Anniversary Celebration Conference

NIPEC celebrated its 21st anniversary with key stakeholders on 4 October 2023 at its first conference since the COVID-19 pandemic, “*Back to the Future*”. The 120 delegates enjoyed the journey of reflection and promotion of examples of best practice by NMC nurses and midwives. The presentations and videoclips of speakers are available to view and download on NIPEC’s website for those who were unable to attend on the day. NIPEC will continue with its commitment to the development, production and dissemination of evidence-based, quality and accessible high quality, evidence based, person centred and accessible information and resources

10. Disability Champion

Karen Diamond was appointed as NIPEC’s Disability Champion in August 2022 and continues to serve as NIPEC’s Disability Champion.

11. Tapestry

Tapestry attended NIPEC’s staff meeting in September 2023. Tapestry gave an overview of their role, aims, membership, how staff can become involved and attend Tapestry meetings and key actions for 23/24. This was well received by NIPEC staff.

12. 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 an easy read of the recently produced Equity of Access Report for people with a learning disability, that has been submitted to the DoH.

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 three 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). Tapestry attended the September 2023 NIPEC staff meeting to give an overview of their work.
Persons with and without dependants	

Where changes resulted from screenings, these will be listed in Chapter 5, the mitigation report. The following changes resulted from EQIAs: none undertaken

(ECNI Q4,5,6)

13. During the 2023-24 reporting period

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

	Yes/No	Details
Job descriptions	Yes	<p>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.”</p> <p>And</p> <p>“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.”</p> <p>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.</p>

	Yes/No	Details
Performance objectives for staff	Yes	<p>For some members of staff, such as the Chief Executive, Head of Corporate Services and Business Manager performance objectives will include section 75 duties.</p> <p>As an example, in 2023-24, on behalf of the organisation, the Business Manager carried out the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed, developed and consulted on the new Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-28 in collaboration with HSC partner organisations and with the support of the BSO's Equality Unit. • 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	<p>NIPEC's Corporate Plan 2024-28 outlines the HSC values that directly impact on what NIPEC does and how it does it.</p> <p>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.</p>
Annual business plans	Yes	<p>Within NIPEC's Business Plan 2024/25 it notes that NIPEC is committed to the promotion of good relations between people of differing religious belief, political opinion and racial group.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>NIPEC have also made a commitment within the Corporate Plan 2024-2028 to enable equality, inclusion and diversity.</p>

(ECNI Q11,12,17)

14. Please provide any details and examples of good practice in consultation during the 2023-24 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

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.

Involvement and Co-production Strategy

NIPEC continued to engage with its full range of stakeholders throughout 2023-24, adopting a blended approach to project meetings. An increased number were held face to face whilst the opportunity for virtual meetings remained when required. We continued to integrate partnership working at a strategic and operational level in our daily business approach.

One of the key achievements for NIPEC in 2023-24 was the development of an Involvement and Co-production Strategy which underlines our commitment to engage with people who have user and lived experience. The strategy outlines NIPEC's commitment to personal and public involvement (PPI), which is essential to influencing partnerships and achieving improved outcomes across the HSC system in Northern Ireland. The strategy aims to strengthen the monitoring of engagement which is an integral part of good governance arrangements as outlined in the Department of Health (DoH, 2018) *Co-production Guide Connecting and Realising Value Through People*.

NIPEC is steadfast in integrating partnership working at strategic and operational levels by encouraging participation as valued and equal stakeholders. The strategy will be implemented using various levels of involvement, engagement and co-production approaches including informing, consulting and engaging, to co-design, co-delivery and evaluation. Approaches will be influenced according to the context of the 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.

Registered Nurse Learning Disabilities (RNLD) – Strategic Workforce Development Project: RNLD Communities of Practice.

At the request of the CNO NIPEC established the Registered Nurse Learning Disabilities (RNLD) – Strategic Workforce Development Project who were tasked with defining a future model to maximise the RNLD impact towards recognising the abilities and meeting the health and care needs of people with a learning disability across Northern Ireland.

At the request of the co-chairs of the RNLD Strategic Workforce Development Group a RNLD Communities of Practice (CoP) was established. The COP aims to provide a mechanism to share best practice in learning disability nursing, promote continuous professional development and provide a platform to explore registration specific and wider professional issues. It is open to all RNLDs and other nurses who have an interest in supporting people with learning disabilities - across all settings to include HSC Trusts, the education sector and the independent/voluntary sector.

The RNLD CoP is co-chaired by two senior HSC Trust RNLDs, and plans virtual events three times a year. Since it was launched in April 2023 it has been extremely well attended with an average of 80 participants at each event. Participants are primarily RNLDs however medical staff, students and other professionals attend on a regular basis.

Senior Nursing and Midwifery Strategic Community of Practice

Communities of Practice (CoPs) are groups of people who share a passion for improving practice in health and care. Practitioners from different backgrounds, with different perspectives, come together across organisations and across hierarchies to meet as equals to create new knowledge and develop potential solutions to those “wicked problems” that go beyond what each of us can address in isolation.

Supported by the Chief Nursing Officer, it was envisaged that the strategic professional CoP would meet the ambitions of the regional Collective Leadership Strategy enabling a collective leadership culture to emerge. The vision was that the regional community of senior staff who learn from each other, share experiences, ideas and insights peer-to-peer, allowing inspiring practice to spread. It would provide a forum to focus on professional strategic issues, create new knowledge, define new territory, and develop a collective and strategic voice. Members are nurses and midwives from across the region who have an interest in the CoP and are AfC Band 8B and above.

Table 2: N/A

<p>Policy publicly consulted on</p>	<p>What equality document did you issue alongside the policy consultation document?</p>	<p>Which Section 75 groups did you consult with?</p>	<p>What consultation methods did you use? AND Which of these drew the greatest number of responses from consultees?</p>	<p>Do you have any comments on your experience of this consultation?</p>
<p>Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-2028</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Screening template <input type="checkbox"/> EQIA report <input type="checkbox"/> none</p>	<p>Full Section 75 consultation list</p>	<p>Online questionnaire (greatest number of responses received) Free written comments Online events One-to-one meeting</p>	<p>Most of those who responded were either from professional organisations (such as the Royal Colleges) or staff members. Only very few Section 75 voluntary sector organisations engaged with us, possibly reflecting their significantly reduced capacity to do so.</p>

(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 2023-24 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	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 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: **85%**
- To develop an understanding of the benefits of screening: **88%**
- To develop an understanding of the screening process: **77%**
- To develop skills in practically carrying out screening: **63%**

The rate of completion for evaluations was quite a bit lower than in other years at 58% overall. We know that some contributing factors were that for one session the evaluation was sent out at a later date rather than on the day which had an impact on the number of evaluations returned and more generally, we have seen a decline in evaluation returns since the move to online training.

As the evaluation figures for each of the four questions are quite a bit lower than in previous years, a review of the training will be carried out and necessary changes made.

(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 2024-25 we will focus on:

- 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;
- Consult with Council regarding statistical information;
- Take forward NIPEC's ethnically diverse work;
- Liaise with representatives from disability groups in relation to accessibility of NIPEC's website.

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: NIPEC with the support 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 2024.

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, on behalf of the regional organisations 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.

This action is on-going.

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 significant staff changes in 2023/24, this action has not been taken forward and will be reviewed in due course.

This action is on-going.

Equality Action Plan 2023-24: What we will do to promote equality and good relations

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: A Task and Finish Group, produced a series of recommendations to facilitate the promotion of access to education for Ethnic Diverse Nursing and AHP colleagues. NIPEC held a workshop in December 2021 with representatives from HSC Trusts including Ethnic Diverse colleagues considering possible next steps. These were presented in a workshop report which was submitted to the Department of Health (DoH).

NIPEC designed a survey to capture information from the five HSC Trusts and three Universities on their progress in meeting the relevant recommendations from the December 2021 workshop. The survey results

were presented at a stakeholder engagement workshop at the end of March 2023 Ethnic Diversity -equal access to education and leadership opportunities for all | NIPEC (hscni.net).

In addition, in December 2022 the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) also requested NIPEC to set up a regional ethnic diversity collaborative to support the progression of “equal access to education and leadership opportunities for all”.

The February 2024 survey results were presented at the first regional ethnic diversity collaborative workshop and for the first time also included the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Trust (NIAST). Although improvements were evident from the previous surveys, there was definitely more work to be done in promoting access to education for the ethnically diverse workforces in HSC Trusts. One of the findings from the survey was the evidence of the need for top-up degrees (for nursing) from each of the Hospital and Community Trusts. NIPEC established a Project Board to progress this important work.

All trusts released time for a representative from an ethnically diverse background to work with NIPEC to progress this work from December 2023 to March 2024. The Professional Officers Ethnic Diversity have worked on the following in each of their representative HSC Trusts:

- Presentation to each of Trust Executive Director of Nursing teams;
- Promote completion of survey return;
- Video to encourage completion of equality monitoring form;
- Video promoting race equality week;
- Promote the project in the HSC Trust Equality Newsletter.

The Regional ethnic diversity collaborative workshop was held on 28 March 2024. One hundred delegates were invited and the workshop was opened by the NIPEC Chair of the Professional & Business Committee. The next phase will be to establish governance and action planning for this group.

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.

This action is on-going.

Action 2: NIPEC Professional Team (March 2024)

What we will do: Stakeholder engagement

Provide advice and guidance on postgraduate access to education for Global Majority Community members working in NI.

What we are trying to achieve:

- Ensuring that Global Majority Community members working in NI have equal access and are aware of the relevant education for their career progression.

Performance Indicator and Target:

- Establishment of a collaborative to engage with Global Majority Community nurses, midwives, AHPs and related support staff working in NI HSC Trusts.
- Achievement of related objective on NIPEC's 23/24 Business Plan.
- Monitoring of how many members have accessed training.

What we did over the last year: To progress NIPEC's work as the lead organisation in monitoring and reviewing access to education and leadership opportunities for the global majority (ethnically diverse) workforces of nurses, midwives, AHPs and related support staff, NIPEC recruited 5 Professional Officers – Ethnic Diversity, (October 2023 to March 2024). The Professional Officers also worked with their respective HSC Trusts and NIPEC Senior Professional Officer to facilitate the first Regional Ethnic Diversity Collaborative Workshop held on 28 March 2024. This was an opportunity to invite ethnically diverse staff from Bands 3 to 6

to attend this celebration and information event to share the excellent work in HSC Trusts and Education Providers supporting Ethnic Diversity. The event energised all who attended and was a great opportunity to share best practice and generate new ideas which will be shared at the first Ethnic Diversity Project Board meeting in May 2024.

Additionally, an online survey was conducted with the five HSC Trusts & three AElS to gather data on compliance against the recommendations from the CNO commissioned review of ethnic diverse groups access to education. A report was then submitted to the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) Business meeting for discussion and progressing of the recommendations. NIPEC has subsequently completed a third scoping exercise to monitor progress on organisation compliance in the HSC Trusts and AElS. This work will continue on a six-monthly basis and a report will be submitted to the CNO business meeting.

All trusts have released time (December 2023 to March 2024 for a representative from an ethnically diverse background to work with NIPEC to progress this objective. The Professional Officers Ethnic Diversity have worked on the following in each of their representative HSC Trusts:

- Presentation to each of Trust Executive Director of Nursing teams;
- Promote completion of survey return;
- Video to encourage completion of equality monitoring form;
- Video promoting race equality week;
- Promote the project in the HSC Trust Equality Newsletter.

We completed this action.

Action 3: 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 2023/24 and the impact of ongoing industrial action a Carers survey of our staff has yet to be undertaken. It is planned to take place in 2024/25. 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 2).

We did some work on but didn't complete 2 actions (action 1 & 3).

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 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 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 2024). This showed that 13.73% of NIPEC staff told us they did not have a disability, no-one indicated they had a disability, whilst 86.27% 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 Health and Wellbeing agenda as a standing item and the importance of recording this information reiterated to members.

Most recently this action has been discussed at NIPEC's Business Team in June 2024 as a reminder to all staff.

This action is on-going.

Action 2 NIPEC Business Team with support from Equality Unit
(December 2023)

What we will do: Training

Train Council members on their responsibilities on disability equality and disability legislation

What we are trying to achieve: Increased staff and Council Member awareness of the range of disabilities and needs

Performance Indicator and Target: All staff and Council members trained within 2 years through interactive sessions

What we did over the last year:

In December 2023, Council invited the BSO Equality Unit to attend a workshop in order to summarise NIPEC's statutory equality and disability obligations for Council members. The session specifically focussed on enhancing the ability of members to provide leadership on the equality and disability duties of the organisation. The session was well attended and covered the following areas:

- NI Public Sector Legislation: Section 75 of NI Act 1998 and Disability Discrimination Order (NI) 2006;
- NIPEC's Equality Scheme;
- Equality Screenings;
- Equality Impact Assessments;
- NIPEC's Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-2028; and

- The Equality Commission's Leadership Guidance: Demonstrating Effective Leadership in Section 75.

The session ended with a presentation from a member of NIPEC's Professional Team and Ethnic Diversity Officers who are carrying out a project on access to education, development and career opportunities by overseas registrants working in NI.

In addition, all Council members have now been setup with a LearnHSCNI accounts and can avail of the mandatory training for staff if they wish.

We completed this action.

Action 3 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 of NIPEC's website by Internal audit 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 had confirmed that an accessibility audit of their WordPress framework had taken place a few years ago and it was deemed fully compliant. However, a check would need to be carried out on any materials NIPEC

had added since then. The ITS website team had offered to review the site and highlight any issues which need amendment.

The review would start in July 2024 and that the aim was to have it completed within the current financial year. Following that, NIPEC would be responsible for fixing any issues and would also have to seek stakeholder feedback as per the 5-year Equality & Disability Action Plan – this will be achieved by March 2025. NIPEC will engage with the BSO, Equality Unit, to identify groups for this feedback.

In 2023-24 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.

This action is ongoing.

Action 4 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 the following awareness days during 2023-24:

- Stroke Awareness Day, 7 February 24
- Schizophrenia Awareness Day, 12 March 24

For our Stroke Awareness Day, we had two speakers (Annie Rea, Advanced Practitioner Occupational Therapist, and Claire Murphy, Speech and Language Therapist) from the Community Stroke Team in the South Eastern HSC Trust. They explained what a stroke is, signs and symptoms, as well as hidden effects. They also presented information on stroke and work and on caring for someone with a stroke, and signposted to further advice and information. Nearly 50 staff and board members joined the call, some of whom also engaged in the Question and Answer session.

A Nurse Education Consultant (Mental Health) from BSO Clinical Education Centre, Martina Doherty, provided the expert input on the subject of Schizophrenia to almost 50 staff. Martina shared information on the condition, including spotting the signs, early interventions, assessment, diagnosis and prognosis. Importantly, Martina also provided insight into how to support someone living with the condition. This session was chaired by BSO Non-Executive Board member, and BSO Disability Champion, Professor Dorothy Whittington.

The Equality Unit issued a survey to staff in April 2024. The purpose of the survey was twofold: to ascertain views of the Awareness Days; and to find out which disabilities they would like us to focus on during 2024-2025.

Findings from the staff survey showed:

Strokes (out of 14 respondents who indicated they attended a session on the day or accessed any of the materials)

- 14 felt they knew more about Strokes as a result;
- 8 indicated they knew more about supporting a friend or family member;
- 8 indicated they knew more about supporting a colleague.

Schizophrenia (out of 13 respondents who indicated they attended a session on the day or accessed any of the materials)

- 10 felt they knew more about Schizophrenia;
- 11 indicated they knew more about supporting a friend or family member;
- 5 indicated they knew more about supporting a colleague.

Overall, almost 100 staff attended the events in total, with both sessions having lively and rich Q&A sessions with the speakers following the presentation, therefore it is evident that staff are interested in such events. Following the sessions, BSO uploaded the presentation or a recording of the session to the Tapestry website for those unable to attend on the day.

We completed this action.

Action 5: 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 2023-24, we took time to review the Disability Placement Scheme that we have been running for nearly 10 years. We also spoke to a number of voluntary sector organisations who run or are involved in running programmes for people with a disability that include work placements. We wanted to find out how other programmes work.

We have decided that we want to move away from running a cohort scheme where all participants start and finish at the same time. We think that giving greater flexibility as to when people start and how long placements last will allow more people to undertake placements with us.

This action is ongoing.

Action 6: NIPEC Business Team, with support from Equality Unit (March 2024)

What we will do: Tapestry

NIPEC Business Team to approach Tapestry to attend a NIPEC staff meeting to talk about Tapestry, its aims and objectives.

What we are trying to achieve: Staff with a disability feel more confident that their voice is heard in decision-making.

Performance Indicator and Target: Increases in Tapestry membership or in participation at meetings Tapestry attend.

What we did over the last year: Tapestry is supported by the BSO Equality Unit on behalf of NIPEC and our partners. For each Tapestry meeting, the Equality Unit issue advance notices to all staff. On key issues the Equality Unit also encourage those members who were unable or not

interested in attending the meetings to share their views and experiences by emailing them to a dedicated Tapestry email address.

During 2023-24, we made a conscious effort to raise the profile of the Network across all organisations. In November 2023 the network was on site in various locations across the region raising awareness and promoting the benefits of the Network. As well as corporate communications and posters, information and merchandise stands were set up and information shared over 6 half days in November. Over 200 staff engaged with the promotion and shared their experiences. In terms of the growth of the Network, as a result of the recent promotion, membership has grown by 60% and attendance at meetings has increased significantly in the last year.

As a result of this growth, it was decided that a formal Business Plan was needed. A Business Planning meeting was held with Tapestry members on 14th February. A new vision, objectives, and actions were developed as a result of the input on the day and these were shared and agreed with the wider network at the March 24 meeting.

In addition, a member of Tapestry attended NIPEC's team meeting in September 2023. The presentation gave an overview of Tapestry, its aims and objectives, how often the meetings are held and that invites will be sent to all staff in advance. This in turn gave more information to the NIPEC staff team on Tapestry and encouraged them to attend.

This action is complete.

(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 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

During 23/24 we held a training the session specifically focussed on enhancing the ability of Council members to provide leadership on the equality and disability duties of the organisation.

During 23/24 Tapestry attended our staff meeting in September this in turn encouraged staff to attend the meetings.

(7) Monitoring

We encourage our staff to record monitoring information on HRPTS.

(8) Revisions

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

Disability Action Plan – Conclusions

We completed 3 actions (these are actions 2,4 and 6).

We did some work on but didn't complete 3 actions (1,3 and 5).

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.



Equality and Human Rights Screening Report

April 2023 – March 2024

These screenings can be viewed on the BSO website under:
[Equality Screening - Business Services Organisation \(BSO\) Website \(hscni.net\)](https://www.hscni.net)

Policy/ Procedure	Policy Aims	Date	Screening Decision
Annual Business Plan 2022-23	NIPEC's Annual Business Plan for 2022-23 details how it will make best use of its resources to achieve its strategic objectives. It also details how NIPEC plan to improve how they work.	May-23	Screened out with mitigation
NIPEC Hybrid Working Policy– Guidance for Managers & Staff	The purpose of the NIPEC Hybrid Working Policy– Guidance for Managers & Staff is to set out the criteria and arrangements for how employees can apply for hybrid working. The Guidance shall ensure a consistent approach which meets the needs of our business and the health and wellbeing of staff. Productivity of NIPEC business will continue to be evaluated and reported to Council in line with NIPEC's Performance Management Policy.	Mar-24	Screened out with mitigation

No concerns were raised by consultees on any of the screenings published in 2023-24.

Chapter 5: Mitigation Report



Equality and Human Rights Mitigation Report

April 2023 – March 2024

Annual Business Plan 2022-23

<p><i>In developing the policy or decision what did you do or change to address the equality issues you identified?</i></p>	<p><i>What do you intend to do in future to address the equality issues you identified?</i></p>
<p>In screening the Business Plan, NIPEC have identified pieces of work within the Plan that will be equality screened during 2022-23 – see Appendix 1. Progress on completion of equality screenings will be monitored through NIPEC’s Business Team.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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 engagement events and meetings and developing information – this will cover the need to take account of specific needs of the nine groups.</p>

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 ongoing Pandemic, there has been 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, in normal times, NIPEC's procedure for booking external venues requires those responsible for organising events and meetings ensure that venues are fully accessible.

People with dependents, political opinion/religion

During the ongoing Pandemic, there has been 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, in normal times, when planning engagement events and meetings, NIPEC will consider their timing and location and the need for a neutral venue/location. Where

<p>applicable, assistance with travel expenses will also be considered.</p> <p>NIPEC is a regional body and organises engagement events and meetings on a geographical spread where possible – it will arrange for tele and video conferencing to facilitate those unable to travel.</p>	
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NIPEC Hybrid Working Policy– Guidance for Managers & 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>
<p>Gender: NIPEC have a separate policy to assist staff with flexible working requests. This may also be mitigated by providing staff with the opportunity to avail from home working 3 days per week.</p> <p>Marital Status: NIPEC have a separate policy to assist staff with flexible working requests. However, this may be mitigated by providing staff with the opportunity to avail from home working 3 days per week.</p> <p>Dependent Status: NIPEC have a separate policy to assist staff with flexible working requests. This may also be mitigated by providing staff with the opportunity to avail from home working 3 days per week.</p> <p>Disability: NIPEC will provide</p>	

<p>alternative formats on request to meet the needs of people with a disability who may need information in an accessible format. The policy sets out that it will consider all reasonable adjustments under the Disability Discrimination Act as a recommendation from Occupational Health.</p>	
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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.