

Equality Action Plan 2019-2023

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

The Equality Action Plan 2019 -2023 outlines the actions and measures Mid and East Antrim Borough Council will undertake during the period April 2019 to March 2023 that will ensure that the Council in meeting its statutory responsibilities under the Act.

As well as outlining the Council's desired achievements over the period of 2019-2023, this Action Plan also aims to address specific key issues that were identified in an audit of inequalities and the review of the previous Equality Scheme and Equality Action Plan.

This Plan should be considered in conjunction with Mid and East Antrim Borough's Disability Action Plan.

The Policy Team will monitor and review progress against the Plan which will be reported annually to Council and the Equality Commission.

Section 75 categories

The Council shall, in carrying out its functions, have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different religious belief;
- between persons of different political opinion;
- between persons of different racial group;
- between persons of different age;
- between persons of different marital status;
- between persons of different sexual orientation;

- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependents and persons without.

Actions and Measures

Measures/Actions and Rationale	Performance Targets and Timescales			
	2019-2020 (Year 1)	2020-2021 (Year 2)	2021-2022 (Year 3)	2022-2023 (Year 4)
TRAINING				
	2019-2020 (Year 1)	2020-2021 (Year 2)	2021-2022 (Year 3)	2022-2023 (Year 4)
Provision of training and guidance on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) matters, including the relevant legislation, in order to raise awareness of the increasing and diverse needs of people living in the Borough to ensure effective service delivery	Develop a core training curriculum for Staff and Elected Members Conduct a scoping exercise to procure a suitable training system and/or provider	Roll out the training curriculum across all staff and Elected Members, ensuring new staff receive training as soon as possible after their start date	Continue the training curriculum across all staff and Elected Members, ensuring new staff receive training as soon as possible after their start date	EDI awareness training becomes included in the new Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Corporate Plan (2023-2027)
	Incorporate EDI awareness sessions into	Build mandatory EDI awareness training	Mainstreaming EDI awareness by	Encourage opportunities for staff to obtain accredited

	Council's corporate induction program and departmental team days	into departmental business plans and personal development plans	delivering refresher sessions to staff and Elected Members	training through personal development plans and supported study
	Monitor and maintain a record of training and attendance	Monitor and maintain a record of training and attendance	Survey staff for feedback on training, additional support required and future development	Evaluate training to determine if curriculum objectives have been met
		Training for shortlisting and interview panels to better equip them to fairly recruit people from varying Section 75 categories	Offer tailored EDI awareness information to key delivery partners, contractors and interested groups within the Borough	Offer tailored EDI awareness information to key delivery partners, contractors and interested groups within the Borough
		Access to employment and training opportunities for: disabled people; people with dependents, younger and older people	Access to employment and training opportunities for: disabled people; people with dependents, younger and older people	Access to employment and training opportunities for: disabled people; people with dependents, younger and older people

ENGAGEMENT				
	2019-2020 (Year 1)	2020-2021 (Year 2)	2021-2022 (Year 3)	2022-2023 (Year 4)
Engagement with local and regional Section 75 represented groups, representatives and service users interested in order to identify creative and innovative ways to best meet the increasing and diverse needs of people living in our Council area	Undertake a communications audit to determine the best and most effective means of communicating and distributing information to consultees			
	Create and maintain a centralised database of consultees e.g. local minority groups, charities, etc.	Conduct outreach visits to Section 75 groups within the Borough to better understand their role, services and membership		
	Develop a proposal for an engagement forum in order to engage and build a consultative network to best allow Council to explore the barriers to participation	Establish the engagement forum and hold at least two meetings	Maintain momentum of the Engagement Forum	Involve the engagement forum in the review of the Action Plan and development of the

	in public life and learn the best ways to make a tangible difference to those living in a minority in our Borough			Equality Action Plan for 2023-2027
	Develop a proposal for an engagement forum in order to engage and build a consultative network to best allow Council to explore the barriers to participation in public life and learn the best ways to make a tangible difference to those living in a minority in our Borough	Raise awareness of the engagement forum within Council as a means of consulting and engaging with equality and disability representatives to increase participation in Council activities and to seek feedback on plans and consultations	Maintain awareness of the engagement forum within Council	Maintain awareness of the engagement forum within Council
		Develop an e-newsletter to support the work of the engagement forum, inform members and invite attendance and engagement in	Continue to distribute e-newsletter to support the work of the engagement forum, inform members and invite attendance and	Continue to distribute e-newsletter to support the work of the engagement forum, inform members and invite attendance and

		Council activities and public consultations	engagement in Council activities and public consultations	engagement in Council activities and public consultations
PARTICIPATION				
	2019-2020 (Year 1)	2020-2021 (Year 2)	2021-2022 (Year 3)	2022-2023 (Year 4)
<p>Take measures to encourage and create opportunities for everyone to participate fully in Council activities, events, services, employment and public life positions</p> <p>Work to remove barriers to the participation in public life.</p> <p>Equality of opportunity for all citizens, staff and stakeholders to have their voice heard in relation to decisions which impact on them.</p>	Review the public life positions available through the Council including the roles, terms of office, responsibilities, advertisement, promotion, recruitment and selection to best allow everyone to see the opportunities	Research and consult on the barriers to participating fully in Council activities, events, services, employment and public life positions	Roll out shadowing programme for employment/Elected Members/local businesses to encourage confidence to participate in everyday life	Continue shadowing programme for employment/Elected Members/local businesses to encourage confidence to participate in everyday life
		Develop and Deliver bespoke 'How the Council Works' sessions to various local Section 75 groups e.g. attendance at	Continue to deliver the bespoke 'How the Council Works' sessions to various local Section 75 groups e.g. attendance at monthly Council meetings	Continue to deliver the bespoke 'How the Council Works' sessions to various local Section 75 groups e.g. attendance at monthly Council meetings

		monthly Council meetings		
	<p>Through the Community Plan and strategic partnerships, work to address causes of social exclusion including issues such as:</p> <p>Transport; crime; health and wellbeing; unemployment and housing</p> <p>Address how these issues of social exclusion affect:</p> <p>Older people; Single people; Disabled people; LGBT people; people from an Ethnic minority; and people with dependents (including people with multiple identity)</p>	Continue to work in partnership to address issues of social exclusion by scoping proactive methods to address problems identified	Continue to work in partnership to address issues of social exclusion by using proactive methods to address problems identified	<p>Continue to work in partnership to address issues of social exclusion by using proactive methods to address problems identified</p> <p>Report on progress in this area and ensure any learning is identified and included in the Corporate Plan 2023-2027</p>

ACCESSIBILITY				
	2019-2020 (Year 1)	2020-2021 (Year 2)	2021-2022 (Year 3)	2022-2023 (Year 4)
Strive to achieve equality of opportunity to Council services and facilities for those from a minority group through enhanced accessibility and encouraged participation.	Enhance arrangements for accessibility and additional requirements at key Council buildings and events	Review the current provision of accessibility measures across Council services and buildings	Establish and conduct regular front of house audits to ensure our accessibility measures are fit for purpose	Continue to conduct regular front of house audits to ensure our accessibility measures are fit for purpose
	Screen annual events programme and recommend accessibility improvements for Section 75 groups if appropriate	Review the current provision and arrangements for accessibility and additional requirements at all events, including consultation with Events staff and organisers	Scope a mystery shopping exercise to assess Council's accessibility to services, facilities and events	Commission a mystery shopping exercise to determine progress made in respect of access to services and events
	Monitor and assess accessibility of our website	Undertake website accessibility assessment exercise and address issues of inaccessibility	Develop and promote an accessible information guide to improve access to information for users	

			who have any additional access needs	
			Improved personal hygiene/changing facilities across the Borough including considerations made for optimal facilities in all new Council buildings	Ensure inclusion and consultation with Section 75 groups in the design of new or renovation of Council buildings. Encourage the use of the engagement forum to critically review plans and offer improvements
		Review the current provisions for the Section 75 group of People with Dependents and scope the possible opportunities to make improvements		
	Record and monitor customer complaints or compliments in relation to access to services and information about services		Develop guidance in respect of Council signage for improvements in accessibility	

	Deliver sports/activity programs and services to facilitate access to physical activities for people of all ages and abilities	Deliver sports/activity programs and services to facilitate access to physical activities for people of all ages and abilities	Deliver sports/activity programs and services to facilitate access to physical activities for people of all ages and abilities	Deliver sports/activity programs and services to facilitate access to physical activities for people of all ages and abilities
	Provision of alternative formats and/or translation of information/documents upon request	Provision of alternative formats and/or translation of information/documents upon request	Provision of alternative formats and/or translation of information/documents upon request	Provision of alternative formats and/or translation of information/documents upon request
	Develop the proposed Ageing Well (AW) model	Deliver the Ageing Well (AW) model	Deliver the Ageing Well (AW) model	Deliver the Ageing Well (AW) model
COMMUNICATIONS				
	2019-2020 (Year 1)	2020-2021 (Year 2)	2021-2022 (Year 3)	2022-2023 (Year 4)
Council's external and internal communication practices, policies and procedures will be such that people from all Section 75	Increase external and internal awareness of the locations and availability of services and facilities across the Borough, including feeding rooms, etc.	Dedicated equality and disability area on the Council website to promote services, events,	Develop video content to promote services and to explain the processes and how to access Council services	Continue to develop website content to promote services and to explain the processes and how to access Council services

groups are portrayed in an inclusive and positive way		consultations, concessions, etc.		
Take measures to promote positive attitudes towards people from a minority amongst employees, Elected Members and the public		Increased visibility of people from Section 75 groups in Council promotional and branded material and social media	Maintain a high level of visibility of people from Section 75 groups in Council promotional and branded material and social media	Maintain a high level of visibility of people from Section 75 groups in Council promotional and branded material and social media
Ensure that Mid and East Antrim Borough is an inclusive and welcoming destination for all		Dedicated equality and diversity feature in every edition of the Council magazine “Who Are We” - profiles of staff/members/constituents from minorities in Council magazines		Promote partnerships with other businesses and organisations (USEL, RNIB, Disability NI, etc.)
REPORTING				
	2019-2020 (Year 1)	2020-2021 (Year 2)	2021-2022 (Year 3)	2022-2023 (Year 4)
Ongoing review of Council’s actions to ensure learning, continual improvement and	Promote the centralised equality and disability function within Corporate Services to	Analyse data from the new booking system in the Braid and identify		

<p>facilitate standard setting for the future</p> <p>Conduct ongoing research to identify ways to meet the increasing and diverse needs of people with a disability living in our Council area and take action towards securing funding and implementing the identified requirements</p>	<p>implement, coordinate, review and report on Council's compliance with the Equality Scheme</p>	<p>measures to help improve access to services</p>		
			<p>Draft an action plan to achieve the NI Diversity Charter Mark</p>	<p>Achieve the NI Diversity Charter Mark</p>
		<p>Update the Audit of Inequalities for use in equality screenings, to better inform policy development processes and to better understand the profile of the Borough</p>	<p>Review Equality and Disability Action Plans based on the updated audit of inequalities</p>	
	<p>Report to Senior Management Team, Policy & Resources Committee and Council</p>	<p>Report to Senior Management Team, Policy & Resources Committee and Council on the</p>	<p>Report to Senior Management Team, Policy & Resources Committee and Council on the</p>	<p>Report to Senior Management Team, Policy & Resources Committee and Council on the review</p>

	on the progress of the Equality Action Plan	progress of the Equality Action Plan	progress of the Equality Action Plan	of the Equality Action Plan
	Conduct annual exercise to encourage staff to provide information to assist with monitoring and reporting on Section 75 minorities in the workplace	Conduct annual exercise to encourage staff to provide information to assist with monitoring and reporting on Section 75 minorities in the workplace	Conduct annual exercise to encourage staff to provide information to assist with monitoring and reporting on Section 75 minorities in the workplace	Conduct annual exercise to encourage staff to provide information to assist with monitoring and reporting on Section 75 minorities in the workplace
	Review the use of disclaimer or restricted access notices (at events, premises or activities) to facilitate access and participation	Review quarterly screening reports and analyse Equality Screenings which have been integrated into Council's new policy development mechanism		
		Provide update report to Council on the progress/initiation of the Engagement Forum	Provide update report to Council on the work of the Engagement Forum	Report on the effectiveness of the Engagement Forum