

Section 75 Equality Action Plan 2020-2022

Public Health Agency (PHA)

Updated April 2020

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Introduction

In 2010 the Equality Commission for NI asked the Public Health Agency (PHA) to develop an action plan outlining actions to promote equality of opportunity and good relations and address inequalities.

Our action plan outlines actions related to our functions and takes account of our Equality Scheme commitments relating to Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Our Equality Scheme is available on our website: www.publichealth.hscni.net

The law requires us when we carry out work that we promote equality of opportunity across nine equality categories; age, gender, disability, marital status, political opinion, caring responsibilities, sexual orientation, religion and ethnicity. The appendix provides examples of groups covered under these categories. It also requires us to consider good relations in relation to political opinion, religion and ethnicity.

In all our reviews and updates of this plan, we have given consideration to existing priorities and new and emerging priorities. This plan will remain a 'live' document and as such will be reviewed every year. When we have completed an action we take it off our plan. This way, our updated plan shows the actions we still need to complete.

In 2017, when our plan came towards its end, we spoke to the Equality Commission about what we should best do. This is because in late 2015, the Minister for Health announced that there would be important changes in Health and Social Care that would affect us. The Health and Social Care Board would be closed and the Public Health Agency would be impacted by this in important ways. We agreed with the Equality Commission that we would extend our plan until those changes have been made; we would develop and consult on a new plan after that; and, in the meantime, we would update the plan every year to make sure we keep making things better for people across the nine equality categories.

Some of our partner organisations in Health and Social Care, such as the Business Services Organisation and the Patient and Client Council, developed and consulted on new plans in 2017-18. We have drawn on the learning from this work for our plan. We have updated our actions and have added a number of new actions. We want to deliver on several of these jointly with our partner organisations in Health and Social Care.

This document presents the updated action plan for 2020-22.

We monitor progress on our plan and report on this every year, as part of the Annual Progress Report on Section 75 implementation to the Equality Commission.

We will undertake a wider review following the pending reconfiguration in Health and Social Care. We will involve Section 75 equality groups and individuals in this review.

The actions in this plan are reflective of the outcomes and associated actions defined in the PHA's Corporate Plan 2017-2021. Each theme in the action plan includes a reference to the relevant outcome and associated actions, for ease of reference.

What we do

The Public Health Agency is part of health and social care in Northern Ireland. We were set up in April 2009.

We do things like:

- We find out what things people need to protect them from diseases and other hazards.
- We find out what services people in Northern Ireland need to keep healthy.
- We do not provide the services but work with other organisations that are called Trusts and other voluntary and private organisations that do so.
- We buy services from Trusts including, for example, hospital services.
- We organise and buy screening services. This is about finding out at an early stage whether a person is ill or is at risk of becoming ill.
- We try to make it easier for people to make healthier choices, for example in what they eat.
- We work with other organisations to try and reduce the big differences between different groups of people in Northern Ireland in how healthy and well they are.
- We develop and run campaigns for the general public in Northern Ireland on important health topics, for example on smoking.

- We develop websites on a number of health topics, for example on drugs, alcohol and smoking. Some sites are for specific groups such as young people or health professionals.
- We support research. We also buy and pay for research. We carry out some of the research ourselves.
- We make sure we learn from when something goes wrong in how health care is provided in Northern Ireland.
- We work with other organisations to improve the range and quality of services, for example for people of all ages with learning disabilities.
- We need to make sure services are good quality and check out that they are.
- We work with other health and social care organisations to improve how they engage with those who use their services, with carers and with the public.
- We also employ staff.
- We have to make sure that we obey the laws about employment, services, equality and rights.

Addressing inequalities in health and wellbeing is at the core of our work. As we face a difficult economic climate, inequalities may worsen over the coming period. For this reason, the PHA will redouble its efforts, working with partners in many different sectors, as well as directly with communities, to ensure we make best use of our collective resources.

What is in our Equality Action Plan

The following table outlines our key actions for the coming two years. It does not reflect all of our work to address inequalities in health and wellbeing. Rather, it presents a set of priority actions relating to the nine categories under Section 75. This document is also available on our website: www.publichealth.hscni.net

The Public Health Agency (PHA) Equality Action Plan 2020-2022

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve and who for	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
<p>1. Newborn Hearing Screening programme (NHSP)</p> <p>[Link to Corporate Plan: Outcome #1. All children and young people have the best start in life]</p> <p>Develop new NHSP leaflets for service users.</p>	<p>Ethnicity</p> <p>Ensure NHSP resources are accessible for those whose first language is not English.</p> <p>Use of ethnically diverse imagery in redevelopment of the NHSP leaflet.</p> <p>Plain English will be used so that the messages contained within NHSP leaflets are clear and easily understood.</p>	<p>NHSP leaflets have been redeveloped</p>	<p>Assistant Director Public Health/Screening</p> <p>End March 2021</p>
<p>2. Northern Ireland Maternity System (NIMATS)</p> <p>[Link to Corporate Plan: Outcome #3. All individuals and communities are equipped and enabled to live long healthy lives]</p> <p>Add new fields to NIMATS to record if a pregnant woman has a disability.</p>	<p>Disability</p> <p>Quantitative data will be available on the numbers and types of disabilities amongst pregnant women to help inform future work.</p> <p>Staff will be more aware of patient needs.</p>	<p>Fields added to NIMATS</p> <p>Fields completed by the hospital midwives.</p> <p>Quantitative data available by 2021</p>	<p>NIMATS operational group</p> <p>End March 2021</p>

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve and who for	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
<p>3. Northern Ireland Cancer and Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Screening Programmes</p> <p>[Link to Corporate Plan: Outcome #3. All individuals and communities are equipped and enabled to live long healthy lives]</p> <p>Work with transgender groups to produce a regional screening transgender leaflet for cancer (i.e. breast, bowel and cervical) and AAA.</p>	<p>Gender</p> <p>Transgender people are in a position to make an informed choice about their participation in cancer and AAA screening</p>	<p>Leaflet has been produced in collaboration with gender identity groups</p>	<p>Assistant Director Public Health/Screening</p> <p>End March 2021</p>
<p>4. Regional Antenatal Infection Screening Programme</p> <p>[Link to Corporate Plan: Outcome #3. All individuals and communities are equipped and enabled to live long healthy lives]</p> <p>Look at the numbers & ethnicity of women diagnosed with hepatitis B who do not attend for review appointments and try to improve attendance for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) women.</p>	<p>Ethnic minority</p> <p>Examine barriers preventing BME women attending review appointments and look at ways to address these.</p>	<p>Data collection and analysis of ethnicity of women who attend/do not attend review appointments</p> <p>Increased numbers of BME women attending for review appointments within 10 working days as per National standard</p> <p>Target $\geq 97\%$</p>	<p>Regional Antenatal Screening Co-ordinator</p> <p>End March 2022</p>

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve and who for	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
5. Cancer Prevention [Link to Corporate Plan: Outcome #1. All children and young people have the best start in life] Explore uptake rates for HPV vaccination programmes throughout NI for both post-primary boys and girls.	Gender Maintain high uptake of HPV vaccines in girls and ensure high uptake of new programme for boys is also achieved in line with that achieved for the girls. Monitor uptake at school level and target appropriate interventions at those with lower uptake.	Collection and analysis of vaccination uptake data for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Boys and girls - School location. 	Assistant Director of Health Protection End March 2021
6. HSC Research & Development (R&D) Division [Link to Corporate Plan: Outcome #4. All health and wellbeing services should be safe and high quality] Investigate barriers to Personal and Public Involvement (PPI) in HSC Research, especially for those who are less likely to take part in research and PPI, such as younger people, and those from ethnic minority groups.	Age and ethnic minority Increase the number of young people and ethnic minorities taking part in PPI activities.	Study to evaluate PPI in HSC R&D has been commissioned/undertaken Recommendations for next phase of PPI in HSC Research have been provided A new membership scheme has been established Public Awareness Days for PPI have been developed	Assistant Director HSC Research & Development End March 2022

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve and who for	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
7. Roll out the Gender Identity and Expression Employment Policy [Link to Corporate Plan: Outcome #5: Our organisation works effectively] Deliver awareness and training initiatives to relevant staff.	Gender Transgender and non-binary staff feel more supported in the workplace.	Feedback from staff who have drawn support through the policy indicates a positive experience.	Director of Human Resources with support from Equality Unit End March 2021
8. Supporting staff who are carers [Link to Corporate Plan: Outcome #5: Our organisation works effectively] Deliver promotional campaign raising awareness of carer's support and policies available.	Dependent status Staff who are carers feel more supported in the workplace.	Awareness of support and policies available for staff who are carers has increased.	Director of Human Resources with support from Equality Unit End March 2021
9. Domestic violence [Link to Corporate Plan: Outcome #5: Our organisation works effectively] Undertake awareness raising relating to new support mechanisms (developed by BSO) to support staff	All section 75 categories Staff with experience of domestic violence feel better supported.	Feedback from staff who have drawn support through the mechanisms indicates a positive experience.	Director of Human Resources with support from Equality Unit End March 2021

What we will do	What we are trying to achieve and who for	Performance Indicator and Target	By whom and when
with experience of domestic violence.			

Appendix Examples of groups covered under the Section 75 categories

Please note, this list is for illustration purposes only, it is not exhaustive.

Category	Example groups
Religious belief	Buddhist; Catholic; Hindu; Jewish; Muslim, people of no religious belief; Protestant; Sikh; other faiths.
Political opinion	Nationalist generally; Unionists generally; members/supporters of other political parties.
Racial group	Black people; Chinese; Indians; Pakistanis; people of mixed ethnic background; Polish; Roma; Travellers; White people.
Men and women generally	Men (including boys); Transgender people; Non-binary people; Women (including girls).
Marital status	Civil partners or people in civil partnerships; divorced people; married people; separated people; single people; widowed people.
Age	Children and young people; older people.
Persons with a disability	Persons with disabilities as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. This includes people affected by a range of rare diseases.
Persons with dependants	Persons with personal responsibility for the care of a child; for the care of a person with a disability; or the care of a dependant older person.
Sexual orientation	Bisexual people; heterosexual people; gay or lesbian people.



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