

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

(DAERA)



**Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties
Annual Progress Report 2016-17**

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Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/daeras-equality-scheme>

Signature:

This report has been prepared using a template circulated by the Equality Commission. It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties and implementing Equality Scheme commitments and Disability Action Plans. This report reflects progress made between April 2016 and March 2017.

PART A – Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Scheme

Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice

- 1 In 2016-17, 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.

Introduction and context

The NI Executive gave a commitment in the Stormont House Agreement to reduce the number of government departments from twelve to nine. As a result, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) was established in May 2016. DAERA combines the functions of the former Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (with the exception of Rivers Agency); the Inland Fisheries function from the former Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure; and environment functions (including the Northern Ireland Environment Agency) from the former Department of the Environment.

This progress report covers the period 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017 and DAERA is the name of the Department reflected within this report. Where appropriate, business functions of the former Departments are included for the period April – May 2016.

During this first year of its operation, one of DAERA's key activities has been the development of a Strategic Plan to 2020 and beyond, aligned to the Programme for Government 2016 – 2021. Once the NI Executive is re-established, and reaches agreement on its core priorities, the new Programme for Government will be finalised and a budget agreed for the period. The DAERA Strategic Plan will then be further developed and agreed.

The DAERA Equality Scheme 2016-2020 sets out the Department's equality commitments. In addition, the Department's Corporate Stewardship arrangements require heads of Groups, Divisions and Branches to confirm their personal commitment to the promotion of equality and human rights. The DAERA induction programme sets out the Department's equality commitments and activities for new entrant staff to the Department, and will be a key part of the transition of new staff joining DAERA, as a consequence of relocation of posts to new sites, including Ballykelly.

The Department's Equality Unit acts as a central resource for Section 75 activity. The Unit supports managers and staff throughout DAERA, guiding them through their equality responsibilities and ensuring that equality duties are at the heart of policy considerations. The Unit also manages the Department's Equality Steering

Group, chaired by the Permanent Secretary. The Group provides senior management oversight and monitoring of DAERA's progress against its equality, good relations and human rights obligations.

DAERA staff represent the Department on the following equality related groups:

- **DAERA led – with external representatives**
 - NI Rural Development Programme (NIRDP) Monitoring Committee; and
 - NIRDP Equality & Good Relations Sub-Group.

- **Inter-departmental Groups:**
 - Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Departmental Equality Practitioner's Group;
 - Ministerial Sub Committee for Children and Young People;
 - Regional Multi-Agency Implementation Team on Autism;
 - Disability Strategy Focus Group;
 - Gender Equality Panel; and
 - Age Discrimination – Goods, Facilities and Services (GFS).

- **External Groups**
 - Sign Language Partnership Group;
 - NICCY Participation Forum; and
 - LGB&T Consultative Forum.

Diversity Champion

All NICS departments made a commitment to deliver diversity awareness raising events. In order to ensure that this was meaningful to DAERA, the Champion created a small advisory group of staff drawn from across the Department, with the aim of identifying diversity issues and promoting these at a local Branch level.

The Champion also introduced an initiative to examine the culture, and associated behaviours, that exist within the DAERA, with a focus on attitudes, working practices and respect to diversity and equality. A series of engagement events with staff were planned for the 2017/18 year.

The Champion also helped to promote the diversity agenda within the NICS and beyond by representing the Department in a 'Dancing for Diversity' competition, the purpose of which was to raise funds for two local charities.

Unconscious Bias e-learning training has been developed to roll out to all staff in the 2017/18 year.

Outcome

Staff in DAERA and the wider NICS have been made more aware of diversity and equality issues.

CAFRE – College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE)

DAERA's College engaged with GCSE and A level pupils through the provision of syllabus support, work placement opportunities, open days and taster days.

These covered all school types, male/female and maintained/controlled schools. This gave those interested in the sector an opportunity to investigate the sector and make more informed decisions on possible careers.

Furthermore, CAFRE encourages equality of opportunity and its courses are offered on the basis of academic achievement. Any perceived issues requiring special support amongst the students are addressed at health fairs, which offer a wide range of stalls and enable students to be signposted to specific organisations for support.

Additionally, CAFRE ran a 'Worth Knowing' Programme at its Greenmount Campus which allowed for the development of key campaigns, such as mental health awareness and no smoking.

Outcome

The key outcome of this work was to raise awareness of CAFRE and also to highlight mental health issues and other support mechanisms among the students at CAFRE and those who may have considered CAFRE as their choice of college.

Supporting young farmers

DAERA provided funding to the Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster (YFCU) to deliver a targeted programme of work. One of its strategic themes is 'Inclusion' (Community Relations, Equality and Diversity, or CRED) Awareness and Section 75 Awareness. The YFCU is on target to deliver its required outcomes, with a number of key personnel already trained in equality awareness.

Outcome

Young farmers have participated in a programme of work that emphasises inclusion and have been made aware of community relations, equality and diversity. They have also been made aware of Section 75 issues.

DAERA Research

DAERA has different research funding grant programmes whose clients are large Research Performing Organisations and or Institutions e.g. Agri-Food Biosciences Institute, Queens University and the University of Ulster and some Small and Medium Enterprises.

The programmes are:

- Evidence and Innovation (E&I) Research Call;
- Research Challenge Fund (RCF); and
- Collaborative Research with DAFM (Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine) and the USA i.e. US-Ireland Research and Development Partnership Programme.

It is necessary for the Department to continue to ensure equality issues are to the fore and that our research partners are fully committed to the equality principles.

To help this, the Terms & Conditions in the RCF Letter of Offer stipulate the following as regards equality:

- The Consortium shall comply with the relevant statutory provisions from time to time in force in Northern Ireland imposing obligations on the Consortium in relation to discrimination on the grounds of religious belief, political opinion (including in relation to Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998), racial group, marital status, age, sexual orientation, gender, disability and having dependants.

In addition the Call specification in the US-Ireland R&D Partnership Programme call outlines the following:

- The research should be conducted in full respect of gender equality, the gender dimension in research and ethics considerations.
- The research and innovation activities undertaken should where possible explore, analyse and address sex and gender differences and take into account biological characteristics as well as the evolving social and cultural features of women and men and other relevant factors of diversity in a given context.

The guidelines for Applicants reads:

- The research should be conducted in full respect of gender equality, the gender dimension in research and ethics considerations. The research and innovation activities undertaken should where possible explore, analyse and address sex and gender differences and take into account biological characteristics as well as the evolving social and cultural features of women and men and other relevant factors of diversity in a given context.

Outcome

Research partners are made aware of equality issues and are fully committed to the equality principles.

Forestry Fund

The equality profile of visitors to forests on the Forest Service Estate are based on the last survey carried out by Forest Service in 2014. Around half of visits to Forest Service forests were made by people who normally visited the forest every day, while 90% of visits were made by people who visited more than once a week. These findings suggest that the estimated 4.7 million visits taken to forests each year are taken by a relatively small base of individuals.

Analysis of the results also shows that older people and younger people tend to be under-represented. Also, only 8% of visitors indicated that they had a disability, which is a significantly lower proportion than in the population of Northern Ireland as a whole.

One project that was taken forward by the Forestry Service was the Forestry Fund which delivered recreational facilities available to different age bands, particularly children and young people. Disability access was provided wherever practicable.

Outcome

A varied range of different age bands were able to access recreational facilities which the Forestry Fund helped provide. Where possible this also allowed for disability access.

Financial Management

DAERA ensures that High Level Impact Assessments are completed for all Resource and Capital bids, as well as all proposed Resource reductions. This ensures that all Section 75 duties are incorporated into the financial planning and decision making processes whenever recommendations are being made on allocations or reductions.

Outcome

Section 75 duties are incorporated within the decision making process for financial planning of DAERA programmes and projects.

- 2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2016-17 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation (TRPSI) Framework

The new Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation (TRPSI) Framework was developed by DAERA policy officials following public consultation and events opened to all stakeholders, which utilised community development networks to communicate with stakeholders.

The current TRPSI actions focus on reaching those most isolated or marginalised in rural areas and include actions that benefit the elderly, disabled, young people, unemployed and allows local communities to identify and support those in need.

Specific backing for community development continues to support capacity building across all Rural Areas. In particular, with specific support for capacity building in four PUL (Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist) areas with a focus and impact on integration.

Outcome

The focus and impact on integration has facilitated the Good Relations element of the equality agenda. This specific project has also focused on increasing the involvement and interaction with isolated and marginalised groups such as the elderly, disabled, young people and the unemployed in rural areas.

- 3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2016-17 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes No (go to Q.4) Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

The Department has taken forward regular equality screening exercises on its new and revised policies and although these may or may not have led to an EQIA, there have often been minor policy changes implemented and new actions to improve outreach, etc. as a result of working through this process. These are set out in the following sub-sections.

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

Please provide any details and examples:

2014-2020 Rural Development Programme

As a result of a number of recommendations in the EQIA, DAERA has been reviewing the method of collection of the Section 75 monitoring information for the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme and has introduced electronic monitoring for all schemes. The changes to the monitoring system aim to improve the quality and extent of the Section 75 information collected, which will in turn inform rural development policy.

The EQIA on the Rural Development Programme for 2014-2020 made a number of recommendations for improving the equality monitoring and data co-ordination.

- Section 75 should be incorporated into the requirements of IT systems to help improve return rates and data analysis.
- A unique identifier or reference number should be included on all forms so that information can be linked back to schemes / measures / tranches.
- Monitoring forms should be issued at application stage rather than post-award in order to collect information on those that are unsuccessful as well as successful.
- Numbers of monitoring forms issued need to be recorded in order to track response rates.
- Where possible, information such as age, gender, disability should be collected on the scheme application forms to ensure a maximum response rate.
- Consideration should be given to collecting a reduced amount of information via the monitoring forms and collecting other information such as political opinion using other methods.
- For projects with multiple beneficiaries, the project promoter should be required to submit a short equality report on those using the service rather than issuing equality monitoring forms to a large number of beneficiaries.

NISRA (NI Statistics & Research Agency) statisticians have carried out the initial analysis of the Section 75 monitoring data and compared each Section 75 group against the contextual population of Northern Ireland as a whole, rural NI and the farming population. Analysis has shown up a number of issues including that in relation to disability. Both schemes are showing percentage rates of 2.5%; however statistics show that 20% of the overall population have a disability, whilst in the farming population this rises to 26%.

The analysis will be sent to scheme policy leads who will determine if any additional mitigating actions need to be put in place to help address any areas where Section 75 groups appear to be under-represented.

Impact on those according to Section 75 category

These recommendations are being taken into consideration in the development of guidance for the 2014-2020 programming period. The analysis of the data has shown up some issues for the schemes and policy leads will address these in going forward.

Public Appointments

DAERA has responsibility for the following Non Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs):

- Executive NDPBs
 - Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI);
 - Agricultural Wages Board for Northern Ireland (AWB);
 - Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland (LMC); and
 - Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority (NIFHA).
- Advisory NDPB
 - Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside (CNCC) (from 8 May 2016)
- DAERA has also sponsored two Ad-hoc Advisory Groups – the Agri-Food Strategy Board (AFSB) (sponsored jointly with DETI (Invest NI)) and the TB Strategic Partnership Group (TBSPG). Although membership of these short-term bodies are not regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments NI, appointments are made in keeping with the principles of the Commissioner’s Code of Practice.

The Department is committed to following the Commissioner’s Code of Practice when making appointments to its public bodies. It adheres to the principles that underpin the appointments process including the principles of appointment on merit and equality of opportunity. Sponsor Branches are responsible for initiating and carrying out public appointment competitions for board members and chairs of their respective public bodies. During the appointment process Sponsor Branches seek to identify a wide field of candidates through public advertisement in the local and agricultural press, by placing the advertisement and candidate information pack on the Department’s and NI Direct websites. Sponsor Branches also write to a range of organisations and individuals, including those which have potential to identify suitable candidates from under-represented groups.

During 2014, the Department initiated a review of its arrangements for making public appointments with the aim of improving processes and developing initiatives to encourage more women to apply for positions on the boards of its public bodies. The review identified a range of issues for consideration and implementation, including, the scope for adjusting selection criteria to widen the pool of potential applicants for forthcoming competitions, the promotion of the Department’s commitment to encourage more women applicants to engender a greater awareness and interest amongst women of public appointment opportunities and the sharing of learning across the Department from successive competitions.

The number of females on the Department's public bodies remains low though an increasing percentage of female representation over recent years is now evident. Of the 42 public appointments on its regulated bodies at 31 March 2016, 11 (26%) were held by women. Since then and at 1 April 2017, women held 14 (38%) of the 37 public appointments on these bodies. This is only a slight increase from March 2016 to the end of March 2017 and more work has to be done if the percentage of women on public bodies is to be raised to a higher level.

The Department remains committed to increasing the number of women on its public bodies and to improve diversity generally. Sponsor Branches continue to review their procedures for making appointments with the aim of encouraging more women and other under-represented groups to apply for positions on the boards of their public bodies. This ongoing review includes the scope to adjust selection criteria to widen the pool of potential applicants for appointment competitions.

In addition, the Department has been involved with other NICS Departments in the development of a 5-year Diversity Strategic Action Plan (2016-21) to establish a corporate and coordinated approach to increasing diversity in NI public appointments. This interdepartmental group facilitates the cross-cutting discussions which help to develop the overarching strategy and action plan. The Action Plan will assist Departments meet the diversity targets for public appointments agreed by the NI Executive in February 2016.

Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) Board

During 2016/17, DAERA appointed seven new members to the AFBI Board - 2 males and 5 female.

At 1 April 2016, there were seven female and ten male AFBI Board members (41% female representation).

No other appointments were required during the period and on 31 March 2017, the departure of Board members who had reached the end of their tenure resulted in achievement of 50% female representation at 1 April 2017 (six female and six male AFBI Board members).

Impact on those according to Section 75 category

The appointments carried out during 2016/17 helped to increase the female representation on the AFBI Board and meet the 50% target for gender balance.

3b What aspect of the Equality Scheme prompted or led to the change(s)? *(tick all that apply)*

- As a result of the organisation's screening of a policy *(please give details):*
All new or revised policies continued to be screened for possible equality implications across the nine equality categories using the Department's

screening analysis form during the reporting period. The Department has also carried out focused pre-consultation with appropriate Section 75 representatives and this has helped in the formulation of the policies as well as in the identification of potential impacts.



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

2014-2020 Rural Development Programme

The RDP 2014-2020 EQIA was finalised as part of the programme approval. The EQIA set out a number of mitigating actions to ensure equality of opportunity for all potential beneficiaries of the Rural Development Programme. The mitigating recommendations were structured around each of the Section 75 Groups examined as part of the EQIA.

An Equality Action Plan has been developed which aligns the EQIA mitigating recommendations against the key areas of programme implementation. The Action Plan will be updated biannually in advance of the Programme Monitoring Committee on the actions taken for each process. This should help to ensure that the mitigating actions recommended in the EQIA are considered during further programme development and implementation. Further information about RDP is contained in section 3a above.



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



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

DAERA website

Upon its formation the DAERA website was upgraded. With the launch of the new mobile and tablet friendly website, DAERA customers have a more convenient way to complete their administration at a time of their choosing and not just when offices are open.

Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) area-based schemes – use of online technology

The CAP policy proposal to make online the primary channel for communication and transacting with DAERA has resulted in more accurate applications and quicker, earlier payments to the farmers. The bulk of payments were made by October 2016 rather than December of that year.

This was as a result of 60% of the applications being made on-line that year.

Other (*please specify and give details*):

Section 2: Progress on Equality Scheme commitments and action plans/measures

Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)

4 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2016-17 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Job descriptions for staff working in the Equality Unit include the following actions:

- Ensure that the Department fully complies with its statutory equality obligations, meets its Equality Scheme commitments and the targets in its Audit of Inequalities.
- Ensure implementation of the new equality scheme requirements across the Department.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2016-17 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The DAERA Corporate Balance Scorecard included an action for business areas to comply with S.75b requirements and Equality Scheme commitments.

6 In the 2016-17 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning

and/or operational business plans? *(tick all that apply)*

- Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
- Yes, in some departments/jobs
- No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's ongoing corporate plan
- No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2016-17 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The Department's 2014-16 Corporate Plan included reference, in the introduction, to the statutory equality obligations to be met under Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and referred to the Department's Equality Scheme and Audit of Inequalities setting out the actions the Department had promised to take to meet its equality obligations.

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2016-17 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:	13	Actions ongoing:	10	Actions to commence:	0
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Please provide any details and examples *(in addition to question 2)*:

- The majority of the actions in the Equality Action Plan were implemented at the introduction of the scheme.
- The actions which are ongoing are those which are time bound for quarterly, bi-annual and annual completion each year.
- There are no actions outstanding.

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2016-17 reporting period *(points not identified in an appended plan)*:

None identified.

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2016-17 reporting period, the following have been identified: *(tick all that apply)*

- Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the known inequality
- Action(s) to address the known inequality in a different way
- Action(s) to address newly identified inequalities/recently prioritised inequalities
- Measures to address a prioritised inequality have been completed

Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)

10 Following the initial notification of consultations, a targeted approach was taken – and consultation with those for whom the issue was of particular relevance: *(tick one box only)*

- All the time Sometimes Never

11 Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2016-17 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:

The Department undertook a two stage approach to the consultation on the EQIA related to policy proposals on “Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) area-based schemes – use of on-line technology”. An initial informal targeted consultation with relevant organisations and people helped develop the Department’s understanding of the views of those directly affected by the proposals, and also helped to shape the subsequent formal public consultation, in which comments were invited to be submitted in writing.

12 In the 2016-17 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: *(tick all that apply)*

- Face to face meetings
- Focus groups
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- Questionnaires
- Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
- Internet discussions

Telephone consultations

Other (*please specify*):

Please provide any details or examples of the uptake of these methods of consultation in relation to the consultees' membership of particular Section 75 categories:

The consultation on the EQIA related to policy proposals on "Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) area-based schemes – use of on-line technology" detailed in question 11 above elicited considerable responses from interested parties. Eight groups, including Disability Action, agricultural and staff trade unions, and rural representative bodies such as Rural Network NI took part in the informal consultation stage, and fed back their preference for face-to-face meetings. Groups also took opportunity to follow-up meetings with e-mail responses.

At the formal consultation stage, the Department published the outcomes from the informal stage and made the consultation papers available on-line and in hard copy. The consultation was promoted via the Department's internet website and in the 12 local DAERA Direct offices across Northern Ireland. Responses were invited by email, letter and telephone. A total of 261 responses were received, providing a strong base to finalise policy proposals.

13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2016-17 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes

No

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2016-17 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes

No

Not applicable – no commitment to review

Yes, the consultation list was kept under regular review. This was particularly important as the new Department consisted of areas of responsibility, and consequently with varied stakeholder interests, from across its previous constituent parts.

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

[Insert links to any web pages where screening templates and/or other reports associated with Equality Scheme commitments are published]

The DAERA Equality Scheme sets out arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies and this is available on the Departmental website: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/daeras-equality-scheme>

In addition the completed screening templates are also available on the Departments website: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/daeras-equality-scheme#toc-11>

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

12

16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2016-17:

12	Policy consultations conducted with screening assessment presented.
1	Policy consultations conducted with an equality impact assessment (EQIA) presented.
0	Consultations for an EQIA alone.

17 Please provide details of the **main consultations** conducted on an assessment (as described above) or other matters relevant to the Section 75 duties:

The main consultations conducted by the Department are listed below.

- 1) Rathlin Island (prohibition of fishing methods) Regulations (NI) 2016;
- 2) The Transposition of Directive 2014/52/EU (the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive) in respect of Marine Works;
- 3) Programme for Government – Air Quality Indicator 37 Delivery Plan;
- 4) Programme for Government – Water Quality Indicator 44 Delivery Plan;
- 5) Programme for Government – Indicator 29 Greenhouse Gas Emissions;
- 6) Programme for Government – Indicator 36 Recycling;
- 7) 2017 Review of Bathing Waters in NI;
- 8) Air Quality Standards (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2017;
- 9) Producer responsibility packaging waste regulations consultation for targets relating to 2018-20;
- 10) NIEA Prosperity Agreement Programme;
- 11) Programme for Government – Indicator 45 Biodiversity Delivery Plan; and
- 12) Environmental Farming Scheme.

All of the above policies were screened out.

The one policy consultation conducted with an EQIA is detailed at Question 11 i.e. proposal to make online the primary channel for communication and transacting with DAERA.

18 Were any screening decisions (or equivalent initial assessments of relevance) reviewed following concerns raised by consultees? *(tick one box only)*

Yes No concerns were raised No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Following the consultations on the CAP EQIA as detailed at Question 11, mitigating policies and/or procedures were introduced to address the adverse impacts:

- **Help to get online**
 - Funding and support helped to improve broadband access for customers across Northern Ireland. In turn this provided access for customers to computers in DAERA offices with staff assistance available if they should need it.
- **Help to use online services**
 - Online services were designed to help make them accessible.
 - The provision of a telephone helpline to give customers help and assistance was provided.
 - Face-to-face training sessions were also provided across NI.
 - Furthermore, online videos, information and help guides were made available for customers.
- **Alternatives to online**
 - Paper forms, leaflets, guidance etc. continue to remain available for those customers who are unable to use online services.

Arrangements for publishing the results of assessments (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

19 Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2016-17 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Arrangements for monitoring and publishing the results of monitoring (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

20 From the Equality Scheme monitoring arrangements, was there an audit of existing information systems during the 2016-17 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes No, already taken place
 No, scheduled to take place at a later date Not applicable

21 In analysing monitoring information gathered, was any action taken to change/review any policies? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

22 Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2016-17 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

Not applicable.

23 Please provide any details or examples of monitoring that has contributed to the availability of equality and good relations information/data for service delivery planning or policy development:

None available.

Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)

24 Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2016-17, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

The Equality Unit provided advice and information to the Department's business areas throughout the reporting period to help ensure that they carried out their statutory obligations in relation to equality objectives.

The Equality sections of the DAERA intranet and internet sites were updated as required and staff were made aware of any important equality information via mail shots and via the DAERA Team Brief.

A mandatory e-learning course about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Awareness

was rolled out across the Department.

Generic training on behalf of DAERA is also provided and delivered by the Centre for Applied Learning (CAL). The main courses available are: Introduction to Human Rights; Introduction to Section 75; Disability Awareness for Frontline Staff (which are all e-learning packages); and a workshop on Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA).

25 Please provide any examples of relevant training shown to have worked well, in that participants have achieved the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve the stated objectives:

Feedback was sought on e-learning packages provided by CAL:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Awareness;
- Disability Awareness for front line staff; and
- Supporting Vulnerable People.

Feedback was positive; participants had a preference for this type of learning and development, and there is evidence to show that staff who completed packages obtained the necessary skills and knowledge about the subject matter.

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

26 Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2016-17, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

Nothing specific to report in this area during the reporting period.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

27 How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2016-17?

Insert number here:

0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

None received.

Section 3: Looking Forward

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

The DAERA Equality Scheme 2016 – 2020 contains a commitment to review the Scheme within its lifetime; however, it is the intention to take the views of an in-coming

Minister on the Scheme on their appointment and review the Scheme thereafter as necessary.

- 29** Are there areas of the Equality Scheme arrangements (screening/consultation/training) your organisation anticipates will be focused upon in the next reporting period? *(please provide details)*

In 2017/18 there will be a particular focus on outreach to DAERA staff: promoting the work of the Equality Unit and available sources of advice and guidance. Two events are planned, at the HQ of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, and at the new DAERA site at Ballykelly.

- 30** In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2017-18) reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

- Employment
- Goods, facilities and services
- Legislative changes
- Organisational changes/ new functions
- Nothing specific, more of the same
- Other (please state):

The Equality Unit will work closely with DAERA's Brexit team on the equality aspects of any new/emerging policies

PART B - Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Disability Action Plans

1. Number of action measures for this reporting period that have been:

9

Fully achieved

3

Partially achieved

3

Not achieved

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

DAERA had 15 Actions to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage participation by disabled people in public life. Nine of these actions have been achieved and are listed below.

- Ensure all managers are aware of their legislative responsibilities e.g. under the DDO, DDA, and Section 75. (Promoting positive attitudes)
- Provide specific disability and equality training for policymakers and front line staff (Promoting positive attitudes).
- Staff Awareness Raising (Promoting positive attitudes and participation in public life)
- Provision of information that is easy-to-access and understand (Promoting positive attitudes).
- Improve how we consult and engage with people with disabilities. This includes our own staff and those who use our services (Promoting positive attitudes and participation in public life)
- Increased support and engagement with the disability sector (Promoting participation in public life)
- Raise awareness about autism (Promoting positive attitudes).
- Increase awareness of CAFRE (College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise) support services (Promoting positive attitudes).
- Review and monitor the accessibility of DAERA facilities and explore opportunities for improving access (Promoting positive attitudes and participation in public life)

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

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs ⁱ	Outcomes / Impact ⁱⁱ
National ⁱⁱⁱ			
Regional ^{iv}	<p>Review and monitor the accessibility of DAERA facilities and explore opportunities for improving access</p>	<p>In relation to the DAERA Relocation Programme, an EQIA published in 2014 considered potential equality impacts from the decision to relocate Forest Service Headquarters to Fermanagh, Fisheries Division Headquarters to South Down, the relocation of Rivers Agency to Loughry (now transferred to Department for Infrastructure) and the remainder of Belfast Headquarters to Ballykelly.</p> <p>During 2016/17, monitoring was commenced for the 2 completed relocations of Forest Service and Fisheries Division. NISRA have provided statistical</p>	<p>The first survey closed at the end of the 2016/17 reporting year and responses are currently being analysed. It is expected that a report will be published during late 2017. A further exercise will be undertaken for the relocation to Ballykelly.</p>

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		<p>analysis on staff prior to relocation and 12 months after relocation.</p> <p>All staff impacted by relocation, including those who have since left the service, have been issued with a staff questionnaire which examines those areas outlined in the EQIA with potential for impact, for example the impact on staff with disabilities, those with caring responsibilities, those who work part-time etc.</p>	
<p>Local^v</p>	<p>Ensure all managers are aware of their legislative responsibilities e.g. under the DDO, DDA, and Section 75</p>	<p>Achieved and ongoing with continuous review throughout the year. Senior managers have been regularly updated on disability / equality issues through the Equality Steering Group. The ESG is made up of senior representatives from across DAERA business areas, NIPSA and external representatives from key</p>	<p>Business areas and policy makers better informed about the DDO impacts on their business area and increased engagement and improved outcomes on disability and equality issues.</p>

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	<p>Staff Awareness Raising</p>	<p>organisations with an interest in DAERA business; and rural equality and good relations issues. Also ESG members are updated on equality / disability training on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>Staff awareness was raised through various training courses and these are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Awareness; - Disability Awareness for front line staff; and - Supporting Vulnerable People. 	<p>From feedback received the Department is aware all of these have helped staff to achieve the necessary skills and knowledge to fulfil the DAERA objectives.</p>
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2(b) What **training action measures** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	<p>Provide specific disability and equality training for policymakers and front line staff.</p>	<p>Staff awareness was raised through various training courses and these are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Awareness; 	<p>Staff better able to assist our customers who at times may need additional assistance.</p> <p>This training improved the knowledge and understanding of staff and made them much</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disability Awareness for front line staff; and - Supporting Vulnerable People. 	more aware of the issues and concerns of students dealing with mental health issues.
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2(c) What Positive attitudes **action measures** in the area of **Communications** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Provision of information that is easy-to-access and understand	Achieved and ongoing. All documents produced in-house have adhered to the written communication guidelines and have a disability/equality statement on how to access alternative formats. Equality Unit continues to promote the production of easy-read versions of all major DAERA publications. These are provided on the internet and in hard copy on request.	DAERA's commitment to producing Easy-read documents has been positively welcomed by people with disabilities and key organisations.
2	Raise awareness about autism	A mandatory e-learning course about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Awareness was rolled out across the Department during the reporting period.	This training improved the knowledge and understanding of staff and made them much more aware of the issues and concerns of students/customers dealing with mental health issues.

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		<p>A permanent student support officer at CAFRE is still in post, and has attended a number of Autism specific training courses. Each CAFRE campus has designated quiet areas, which all students can avail of and all campuses are well signposted, and students take part in orientation activities at the start of term.</p>	<p>Staff better able to assist our customers who at times may need additional assistance.</p>
3	<p>Increase awareness of CAFRE support services</p>	<p>A permanent student support officer at CAFRE is still in post, and provides information and advice to students throughout the year.</p> <p>Each CAFRE campus has designated quiet areas, which all students can avail of and all campuses are well signposted, and students take part in orientation activities at the start of term.</p>	<p>The improved knowledge and understanding of staff made them much more aware of the issues and concerns of students/customers dealing with mental health issues.</p> <p>Staff better able to assist students/customers who at times may need additional assistance.</p>

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

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	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Increased support and engagement with the disability sector	<p>DAERA has worked in partnership with a number of NICS Departments to deliver a range of initiatives to address rural poverty and social isolation.</p> <p>The new Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation (TRPSI) Framework was developed by policy colleagues following public consultation and events opened to all stakeholders, which utilised community development network to communicate with stakeholders.</p> <p>The current TRPSI actions focus on reaching those most isolated or marginalised in rural areas and include actions that benefit the elderly, disabled, young people, unemployed and allows local communities to identify and support those in need.</p>	<p>This Support Service will establish Social Farming as a beneficial day opportunity for individuals, within the health and social care system, who are living with a learning disability or mental health issue.</p> <p>Specific backing for community development continues to support capacity building across all Rural Areas.</p>
2	Improve how we consult and engage with people with disabilities. This includes our	DAERA have conducted a number of consultations throughout the reporting period and have had a lot	The approaches chosen by our consultees highlights the preferred communication methods that that should be used in future

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	<p>own staff and those who use our services</p>	<p>of input from various groups/individuals and this includes the Disability Action organisation.</p> <p>The Pre-consulters preferred face to face, focus groups and written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing.</p> <p>Some also preferred to follow up with emails to register their concerns.</p>	<p>consultations. This approach should improve the number and level of input to each consultation although this may still be influenced by the topic to be consulted upon.</p>
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2 (e) Please outline **any additional action measures** that were fully achieved other than those listed in the tables above: No additional action measures achieved

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1	Not Applicable		

3. Please outline what action measures have been **partly achieved** as follows:

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	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones ^{vi} / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	Display positive messages and images about people with disabilities	When appropriate the Department have included equality focused wording in key press releases, and have portrayed images and wording about disabled people in a positive manner.	This is a continuing action and further work needs to be taken in this area and will be carried over to the revised Disability Action Plan 2016-2020.	Due to resource issues and re-structuring of HR services this action was only partially achieved within the reporting period. The Disability Forum has not met within the past 2 years.
2	Promote work placements opportunities	DAERA's College (CAFRE) engaged with GCSE and A level pupils through the provision of syllabus support, work placement opportunities, open days and taster days. Additionally, CAFRE ran a 'Worth Knowing' Programme at its Greenmount Campus which allowed for the development of key	These covered all school types, male/female and maintained/controlled schools. This gave those interested in the sector an opportunity to investigate the sector and make more informed decisions on possible careers. Furthermore, CAFRE encourages equality of opportunity and its courses are offered on	Although work placements are promoted, more work has to be done to ensure people with disabilities are made aware and apply and are recruited for more work placements. Alternative methods of promotion and selection should be identified and implemented if possible.

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		campaigns such as mental health awareness and no smoking.	the basis of academic achievement. Any perceived issues requiring special support amongst the students are addressed at health fairs, which offer a wide range of stalls and enable students to be signposted to specific organisations for support.	
3	Hold quarterly meetings of the Equality Steering Group (ESG)	One meeting of DAERA's Equality Steering Group (ESG) was held during the reporting period. Updates on disability issues and progress were made by the various business areas and any areas of concern were highlighted.	Business areas and policy makers better informed about the DDO impacts on their business area and increased engagement and improved outcomes on disability and equality issues.	Due to resource issues only one ESG meeting was held within the reporting period.

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

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	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	Improve representation by people with disabilities on NDPB's	More work has to be done to ensure people with disabilities are represented on DAERA's NDPB's.
2	Improve representation across DAERA forums, groups, committees etc. e.g. RDP, Local Action Groups and CAFRE student groups.	Not achieved due to loss of staff under a Voluntary Exit Scheme; and movement of staff as a result of the DAERA relocation programme.
3	Promote the staff Disability Forum and encourage new members to join and to play an active role.	Not achieved due to loss of staff under a Voluntary Exit Scheme; and movement of staff as a result of the DAERA relocation programme.

5. What **monitoring tools** have been put in place to evaluate the degree to which actions have been effective / develop new opportunities for action?

(a) Qualitative

DAERA Website: Regular monitoring and publication of standard of website accessibility; web accessibility testing as appropriate.

Facilities Management: The effectiveness of the personal evacuation plans is assessed with individuals during evacuations (practice and real) to ensure they meet all parties' needs.

CAFRE: Specific training needs are discussed and assessed at the start of each academic year, and a training plan implemented to meet those needs.

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(b) Quantitative

Facilities Management: All personal evacuation plans for disabled staff are assessed and tested twice yearly through practice evacuations.

CAFRE: Training is provided for staff when it is identified that they will have students with specific difficulties. This is deemed the best approach as training can be tailored to the individual students' needs. The effectiveness of this training is monitored through interviews with the students to determine the level of satisfaction with the support they receive.

6. As a result of monitoring progress against actions has your organisation either:

- made any **revisions** to your plan during the reporting period or
- taken any **additional steps** to meet the disability duties which were **not outlined in your original** disability action plan / any other changes?

The disability action plan has been updated to reflect the re-structuring of the NI departments and new actions have been added where relevant.

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1	Not applicable		

7. Do you intend to make any further **revisions to your plan** in light of your organisation's annual review of the plan? If so, please outline proposed changes?

The plan is currently being reviewed.

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Now that the Departmental HR team has been subsumed into an NICS HR team and have become part of the Department of Finance there needs to be clarification of the roles and responsibilities of each group/organisation to ensure that all aspects of the plan and subsequent actions will be met and the appropriate input is received from the correct individual/team or department.

ⁱ **Outputs** – defined as act of producing, amount of something produced over a period, processes undertaken to implement the action measure e.g. Undertook 10 training sessions with 100 people at customer service level.

ⁱⁱ **Outcome / Impact** – what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action? Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training.

ⁱⁱⁱ **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments

^{iv} **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level

^v **Local**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.

^{vi} **Milestones** – Please outline what part progress has been made towards the particular measures; even if full output or outcomes/ impact have not been achieved.