



## Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report 2018 -19

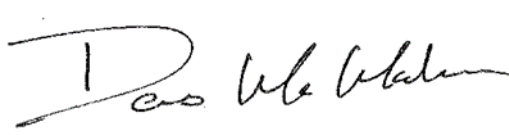
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Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/daera-equality-scheme-2016-2020>

### Signature:



**This report has been prepared using a template circulated by the Equality Commission.**

**DAERA's main objective is to support "a living, working, active landscape, valued by everyone". This report 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 2018 and March 2019.**

## **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 2018-19, 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.*

Following on from last year's developments, work continued during this reporting period to improve DAERA's governance structures for the delivery of its equality and good relations duties and diversity and inclusion priorities in line with its Equality Scheme commitment to having effective internal arrangements in place for ensuring effective compliance with the Section 75 duties. This will continue to ensure that these functions are overseen and supported at a senior level within the Department and that they continue to be mainstreamed and made central to policy development and the delivery of services to our citizens. This approach will contribute to enabling cultural change within DAERA by helping create a working environment where equality and good relations are embraced as core business values, and that they are promoted and respected both within the Department and in our engagement with stakeholders and customers.

An Equality and Diversity Steering Group (EDSG) was established in 2018, which is chaired by the Permanent Secretary and which is a sub-group of the DAERA Board. This demonstrates leadership and ownership of equality, good relations, diversity and inclusion at the most senior levels which, in turn, will ensure they are better promoted and championed within the Department and more widely. The EDSG is also responsible for overseeing and monitoring the Department's progress against its equality, good relations and human rights obligations and relevant strategies, policies and action plans. As set out in the Terms of Reference, this group sat twice in the reporting period and ensured that initiatives were given due consideration and progressed appropriately. This group agreed a proposal from the Equality Commission for NI (ECNI) in relation to a 'DAERA Train the Trainer' programme. The aim of this resource is to demonstrate the commitment of DAERA as an exemplar organisation to the promotion of equality of opportunity for all its staff, service users and stakeholders. At a practical level the resource will assist trainers within DAERA to deliver a range of training on equality, disability and diversity. Although this programme was initiated in the 2018-19 reporting period, much of the developmental work will be carried forward into the following reporting period of 2019-20.

Last year's Report highlighted that an Equality and Diversity Working Group (EDWG) had been established and the development of this Group continued during 2018 as it was restructured to include a diverse cross section of DAERA staff. This group reports,

and makes recommendations, to the EDSG. The EDWG is co-chaired by the Director of Corporate Services and the DAERA Diversity Champion. This group is responsible for, amongst other things, promoting equality, good relations and diversity best practice across business areas and maximising collaborative working on equality and diversity initiatives where possible. The group agreed to the proposed calendar of diversity events – LGBT Week; Racial Awareness Week and Autism Awareness Week - to be held between March and June. It was noted that these events were important in awareness raising but it is also necessary to build upon this and to embed diversity and inclusion more fully within DAERA.

#### **(i) College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE)**

During this reporting period, DAERA's College (CAFRE) continued to engage with GCSE and 'A' level pupils through the provision of syllabus support, Open Days and taster days in line with DAERA's commitment to achieving effective communications with its customers and the wider rural community.

This engagement took place with young people from all school types, i.e. controlled/ maintained/ voluntary/ integrated/single sex/mixed etc. In doing so, young people from all backgrounds were provided with opportunities to find out more about the agriculture, food and rural enterprise sectors and to make better informed career decisions and choices. In 2018-2019 CAFRE's enrolments were 1,700, of which 43% were female. The number of students declaring a disability or learning need has increased from 4% in 2017/18 to 10% in 2018/19.

In 2018/19 a new curriculum was introduced for the Level 2 and Level 3 agriculture and equine students, who are predominantly post GCSE students aged 16 – 18 years old. This new curriculum includes a change in the assessment method for the programmes, with previous internal college based assessments being replaced by externally set examinations. As a result, students were strongly encouraged to declare relevant learning needs to ensure that reasonable adjustments for the external examinations can be put in place. This change in assessment can partly be attributed to an increase in the number of students declaring a disability / learning need.

As a demonstration of DAERA's commitment to ensure that its services are fully accessible to everyone, CAFRE has a full-time Student Support Officer who provides information and advice to all students at induction and throughout the year at each of its three campuses. The officer is also available to provide targeted assistance to students who have additional needs. At the end of their education programme, additional assistance is provided by CAFRE staff to students with a disability, by signposting them to supported employment services.

In addition, CAFRE provides signposting to a wide range of support organisations and, during 2018-19, organised a broad forum of organisations to visit each campus and meet with students. During their time at CAFRE, students have the opportunity to represent the student body in discussions with College managers and through feedback forums. The student body is represented on College management committees to ensure student views are represented in decision making processes.

## **(ii) Northern Ireland Environment Agency**

### **Pathway improvement at Quoile Pondage Nature Reserve**

Following on from the installation of the accessible access ramp in the previous reporting year, the NIEA further improved accessibility at the Quoile Pondage National Nature Reserve (NNR). During this reporting period c1.5kms of riverside pathway was tarmacked to provide improved accessibility to less able-bodied visitors along the Quoile Pondage riverside walkway.

### **Extension of boardwalks and car park improvements at Peatlands Park**

During the reporting period works continued to install new sections of boardwalk at Peatlands Park to improve accessibility to sections of pathway which otherwise would be inaccessible to less able-bodied visitors. Funding has been secured in 2019-20 to continue to improve access.

During the reporting period works were undertaken to mark out parking bays at Peatlands Park. As part of this work the number of dedicated disabled parking bays increased from 5 to 8.

### **Development of play parks at Peatlands Park and Ness Country Park**

During the reporting period, planning permission was secured to develop play parks at Peatlands Park and Ness Country Park which includes play and sensory elements for play opportunities for less able bodied children. Funding has been secured to complete the installation of these play parks during the early part of 2019-20.

The design for Peatlands Country Park includes a wide range of play experiences including challenging climbing and clambering, role play and imaginative play, discovery and sensory play, problem solving and social and cooperative play.

The design has a strong focus on accessibility and the equipment has been designed to be inclusive of all abilities and to incorporate wheelchair access. For example, bonded rubber mulch surfacing throughout provides easier access to all areas for wheelchair users and pushchairs, as well as accessible picnic benches.

To enhance the sensory experience, bog cotton and bluebell posts with hidden bells have been placed around the play areas to enhance the sensory experience. Wheelchair users can also access these and can be involved in the play activity. Other inclusive play opportunities such as a basket swing and a central hill in the area for younger children have also been provided to allow children of all abilities to join in.

### **Procurement of all-weather off-road mobility scooters**

NIEA presently makes available mobility scooters at a number of Country Park properties to less able-bodied visitors. To improve the service available, during the reporting period, NIEA procured three new off-road mobility scooters with all-weather canopies. The inclusion of the all-weather canopies will allow less able-bodied visitors, who wish to borrow a mobility scooter, to have the option to do so in inclement weather conditions to allow them to still enjoy the park. The scooters are currently being trialled by NIEA staff to determine their suitability to access parts of sites with the view to launching these for public use in the current reporting year.

In summary, the above interventions have resulted in positive outcomes in terms of improved inclusivity and accessibility at DAERA funded sites for people throughout Northern Ireland in line with DAERA's commitment to ensuring accessible services for everyone.

In terms of headline visitor figures across the properties managed by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (7 Country Parks and in the region of 60 Nature Reserves), they have attracted an estimated 2.3 million visitors during 2018. This is an increase of around 300,000 on 2017 figures. NIEA anticipates a further increase in visitor numbers in 2019 following the play park installation. In addition, where access has been improved, for example, at Peatlands and Quoile, staff have observed an increase in visitor usage.

### **(iii) Marine & Fisheries Division**

#### **Inland Fisheries**

In order to increase participation in angling, Inland Fisheries provides concessionary licences and permits to those over 60 and those with disabilities, at a significant saving on the full cost.

In addition, the new online application system for licences and permits is designed to improve access for anglers, particularly those with, for example, a disability or caring responsibilities, as this online interaction removes the physical barrier of travel and visiting a distributor to obtain a licence or permit. Both methods of application are still available.

Inland Fisheries funds a small grant scheme to encourage new participants into angling. This is particularly targeted at under-represented groups, including those who are socially excluded, mentally or physically disabled or disadvantaged in some way. From 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019 there were 140 of these groups funded and full season complimentary fishing licences and permits were issued to 1,083 male and 515 female participants in those funded events.

#### **(iv) Forest Service**

The importance of green space to people's health and wellbeing is acknowledged in the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025 and there is research evidence to show how various interventions in green spaces, which include forests and woodland, can help address public health issues related to obesity, cardiovascular effects, mental health, wellbeing and equality.

##### Early engagement, collaboration and partnership

In 2018-2019 Forest Service, in collaboration and partnership with other organisations, implemented a number of interventions in woodland to maximise social, health and equality benefits. These are in line with DAERA's commitments in terms of consultation, effective communication and improving access. They included:

- Early engagement with stakeholders to encourage their involvement in the development of forestry plans for Sperrin and Antrim forests to ensure they reflect the diverse needs of people, wildlife and industry. For Sperrin's forests, 54 responses were received and for Antrim's forests 55 responses were received from a range of stakeholders including community groups, environmental organisations, farmers groups, councils, private individuals, forestry industry and government. DAERA welcomes this significant engagement from stakeholders which will be a valuable contribution to the development of meaningful draft forestry plans.
- Between January and March 2019, Forest Service engaged with stakeholders in the scoping stage of reviewing Forest Plans for the North West forests. There were 41 responses received from a range of stakeholders, including community groups, environmental organisations, farmers groups, councils, private individuals, forestry industry and government.
- During the reporting period the Forest Service prepared an "easy read" version of its scoping document to improve communication and to encourage people to contribute to Forest Plans. The launch of the "easy read" document is planned for the next reporting period (during June 2019) and it will be used regularly thereafter for forestry engagement.
- Promoting mutual understanding through education by encouraging joint working between the Royal Forestry Society (which aims to give children an opportunity to learn about trees) and the Speedwell Trust (an environmental awareness programme) based at Forest Service's Parkanaur Forest Park.
- Facilitating partnership working with Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council and DAERA's Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Initiative (TRPSI) to commence access improvement works at Garvagh forest with the aim of promoting and developing participation in sport and outdoor physical recreation.

- Developing partnership working with Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council to facilitate development of new and improved recreation facilities at Hillsborough forest, creating health opportunities and improving access to physical recreation in the forest. Phase 1 will include an accessible woodland play area for children of all abilities.
- Facilitating partnership working between Forest Service, Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council and DAERA's TRPSI Initiative to develop a community walking trail through Carnagh forest in South Armagh.
- Developing a collaborative partnership between Forest Service and Fermanagh and Omagh District Council to promote recreation and tourism in their council area facilitating the development of new and improved walking, cycling and horse riding facilities at Gortin Glen Forest Park. The partnership has also facilitated the development of a new woodland play area for children of all abilities within the Forest Park.
- Further development of recreation infrastructure at Slieve Gullion Forest Park through partnership working with Newry Mourne and Down District Council to improve visitor provision and amenities.
- Facilitating partnership working with Mid Ulster District Council, Eskra Community Association, Sport NI and DAERA's TRPSI initiative to commence access improvement works at Knockmany Forest, Augher with the aim of promoting and developing participation in sport and outdoor physical recreation.

#### **(v) Rural Affairs Division**

Rural Affairs Division is committed to ensuring that all initiatives supported are fully accessible to everyone in the community. Availing of funding provided by DAERA, through its TRPSI initiative and Sport NI, the Mae Murray Foundation has worked closely with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council to provide facilities at Cranfield Beach to enable the beach to become fully accessible for all ages and abilities, providing beach wheelchairs, floating chairs, beach walkers, changing bench and hoisting equipment. Cranfield is one of just three beaches in Northern Ireland where these facilities are currently available.

- 2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2018-19 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

In addition to the outcomes and impacts outlined in Part 1, the Department continued to progress its equality scheme commitments, which are prioritised as key business activities. During 2018- 2019, DAERA reflected its Section 75 obligations in its corporate business planning and achieved all targets set in relation to these, with the exception of the EDWG commitment to hold 4 meetings in the reporting period. Unfortunately, due to restructuring of this working group only 2 meetings took place during this reporting period.

Although DAERA had established a new business area responsible for Equality, Diversity and Public Appointments (EDPA) in 2017, this business area was reviewed during 2019, additional resources secured, and a dedicated Diversity Officer is now in place to ensure that DAERA identified and implemented a wide ranging calendar of diversity events. This was in recognition of the need to provide dedicated corporate resources to ensure that equality duties and broader diversity priorities are mainstreamed and made central to policy development within DAERA in a consistent manner. Following the establishment of the new branch, there was a restructuring of the governance structures to oversee the delivery of DAERA's equality and good relations duties and diversity and inclusion priorities. These revised structures are designed to ensure that the Department meets its commitment to have effective internal arrangements in place for ensuring effective compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties and for monitoring and reviewing its progress.

While the day to day delivery of equality functions is mainstreamed within the various business areas throughout DAERA, there is a dedicated Equality Officer in post supported by a deputy Equality Officer whose collective role is to ensure the Department meets its equality obligations in line with its commitment to have the necessary resources in place to ensure compliance with the statutory duties. The equality officers, along with their line managers, are members of a NICS wide Equality and Human Rights Practitioners Group which is responsible for sharing good practice across departments with regard to the implementation and application of the statutory equality duties and human rights obligations. This good practice can then be disseminated within DAERA and used as a reference in providing advice and recommendations to senior management or a Minister.

DAERA maintains a Section75 consultee list which is reviewed regularly. This is accessible to all staff and is used to maintain regular communication with Section 75 stakeholders, especially as policies are changed or reviewed. The results of equality screening exercises are shared with our Section 75 consultees as well as being published on the departmental internet page on a quarterly basis.

During 2018 Equality, Diversity and Public Appointments Branch, on behalf of DAERA, continued with its engagement campaign with organisations on the consultee list and, to date, has met with two stakeholder groups who have a particular interest in equality and human rights issues from a DAERA perspective. This campaign is ongoing throughout 2019-2020.



## PART A

During 2018-19, the dedicated equality unit continued to fulfil its key role in disseminating information to business areas on equality related issues; quality assuring policy screening exercises, including advice and support on how to conduct evidence based screening and reviewing the effectiveness of the screening template in conjunction with the Equality Practitioners Group (EPG) forum and ECNI.

A summary of the Equality Scheme has been made available to all DAERA staff and the complete Equality Scheme can be accessed from the departmental internet page.

DAERA continues to work closely with the Equality Commission to explore a proposal from the ECNI in relation to a 'Train the Trainer' programme. DAERA and ECNI are working on this product as a joint partnership to potentially deliver a range of training on equality, disability and diversity.

- 3** Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2018-19 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

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

Please provide any details and examples:

#### **2014-2020 Rural Development Programme**

DAERA is committed to having effective internal arrangements in place for ensuring compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties and for monitoring and reviewing progress. One major example was set out in last year's report and this project continues to be developed within this reporting year. That example originally involved an EQIA being completed at the onset of the Rural Development Programme for 2014-2020 which made a number of recommendations for improving the equality monitoring and data co-ordination. These have been set out again as a reminder and are as follows:

- 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;
- The number of monitoring forms issued should 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.

The statistics produced this year show that in total 26,103 Section 75 Surveys have been issued to NIRDP 2014-2020 applicants. 11,755 have been completed / partially completed, giving a total programme response rate of 45%.

Ongoing monitoring of the individual schemes within the Rural Development Programme demonstrated that for schemes where the Department facilitates completion of the Section 75 monitoring as an integrated part of the online application process, a completion rate of 82% or above is delivered. This is lower than the figure of

85% which was quoted last year but this is still a high percentage return rate and is based on a higher number of applications.

Roll out of the new administration computer system for the LEADER scheme has allowed Section 75 data collection to be completed online. The department has noted an improved response rate via this method in that it has increased from 51% previously to 73%, and the department continues to encourage completion of Section 75 forms to maximise response rates.

For area based schemes, a link was included on the 2018 Single Application Form to an electronic Section 75 survey form on Citizen Space. This has proved to be the least successful method of data collection, with a response rate of less than 12.5%. However, this is still higher than the 5% response rate which was presented in last year's report.

Analysis continues to be carried out by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) of equality data collected to review progress and to enable the department to adjust actions or introduce mitigating measures as appropriate. The inclusion of identifiers has enabled analysis to be carried out on the basis of successful and unsuccessful applications.

Work will continue with IT colleagues to develop an improved Section 75 data collection method for all applications to DAERA grant schemes, in order to reduce the burden of ongoing completion of Section 75 forms, reduce the risk of low response rates and increase data available to inform equal opportunity policy making.

The Department is committed to continuing to improve its response rate for Section 75 data collection and this remains challenging in light of the fact that the provision of this information is voluntary. The Department is aware, however, that where it supports and encourages the provision of Section 75 data as an inherent part of the application process, this leads to better response rates and the Department will continue to work towards adopting this approach where feasible.

- 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**

In the example provided at Part 3 in relation to improvements made to the Department's equality monitoring system for the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, this has the potential to lead to better outcomes for our service users.

Although this work has been challenging, it is still important to persist with it as an effective monitoring system will enhance the Department's capacity to perform its Section 75 duties as it will highlight possible inequalities and provide the evidence base for positive action to remove any identified disadvantage or unfairness in the system for individuals. This piece of work was mentioned last year and is still ongoing. It is intended to improve and enhance Section 75 data collection within the Department.

### **Public Appointments**

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

#### **Executive NDPBs**

Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute  
Agricultural Wages Board for Northern Ireland  
Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland  
Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority

#### **Statutory Advisory Body**

Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside

DAERA is committed to fulfilling its Section 75 statutory duties across all its functions and in terms of its functions in relation to public appointments, it is committed to following the Code of Practice for Ministerial Public Appointments in Northern Ireland, which is prescribed and published by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPANI).

The Department provided CPANI with a statement of assurance on compliance with the code of practice for the public appointments it made between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019. The Department also adheres to the principles that underpin the appointments process, including the principles of appointment on merit and equality of opportunity.

During this reporting period, the dedicated public appointments officer supported by a deputy and the EDPA Branch oversaw a centralised approach to the planning, management and delivery of two public appointment competitions and combined these functions with the broader equality functions and diversity responsibilities. This centralised and dedicated approach to public appointments allows for expertise in the area to be developed and provides a platform for best practice to be shared and disseminated within the Department which, in turn, reduces the risk of non-compliance with the CPANI Code and associated reputational damage for DAERA.

Furthermore, it provides an opportunity to streamline and develop processes for attracting a diverse range of candidates with the right skills to serve on DAERA bodies and to build on the success already achieved by the Department in terms of increasing female participation on its boards.

The number of females on the Department's public bodies is still below the 50% target set by the Executive. Of the 36 public appointments on its regulated bodies at 31 March 2019, 16 (44%) were held by women. Whilst this is a small increase from the previous year (43%) this was difficult to achieve due to the drop in the number of people appointed, but the Department is continuing to move towards achieving the overall target. Unfortunately, there has been little or no opportunity to change these statistics due to there not being a functioning executive, nor Ministers to make appointments to Boards.

The Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) Board has exceeded the 50% target for female membership. At 1 April 2018, there were eight females and five male AFBI Board members, which equates to 62% female representation. A public appointment competition for a new Chair was completed in this reporting period but the successful candidate was not appointed until 1 April 2019. Furthermore, there is a vacancy for Deputy Chair due to be filled in the next reporting year.

In terms of impact on individuals according to Section 75 category, the central public appointments unit helps to ensure that the processes for appointments are fairly and openly applied and that the principles underpin an inclusive process.

It is important that any individual who wishes to serve on one of DAERA's bodies, and who has the skills to contribute, is given the opportunity to put themselves forward for appointment. Having resources dedicated to public appointments also means that staff can be proactive in terms of outreach efforts when running a competition, including maximising all possible media opportunities to attract a large and diverse applicant pool.

When resources allow, the effectiveness of each public appointment competition will be assessed and any barriers to participation by under-represented groups will be identified to continually improve the process and to widen opportunities to participate for everyone.

**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):*

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

- 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*):
- The change to key services to the equality monitoring system, which was provided for the NIRDP, has improved access and improved monitoring returns. These have been set out above.
- 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 2018-19 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 relevant staff working in the Equality, Diversity and Public Appointments Branch include the following actions:

- Ensure that the Department fully complies with its statutory obligations, meets its Equality Scheme commitments and the targets in its Audit of Inequalities;
- Support the implementation of the Equality Scheme commitments across the Department;

PART A

- Ensure the Minister and the Department complies with its statutory duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act. Monitor, manage and maintain the commitments set out in the DAERA Equality Scheme and published action plans. Provide advice to senior management and business areas on significant equality issues and lead on the preparation of regular and annual progress reports towards a range of relevant NI, UK and international equality targets.
- Provide a high quality secretariat support to the Equality Diversity Steering Group and Equality Diversity Working Group; promote Section 75 across DAERA business functions; engage regularly with colleagues in policy areas; maintain regular engagement with relevant external organisations; regular attendance and participation on inter-departmental groups/projects; progressing work on equality-related action plans; Section 75 awareness raising and providing a quality assurance function to business areas.
- Engage as appropriate with DAERA colleagues and others on the development of key strategies and policies; share best practice and report on the Department's progress towards its published targets, for example the Audit of Inequalities, commission, collate and quality assure returns and input from business areas and provide evidence based recommendations and advice to senior managers on equality related issues.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2018-19 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:

An extract from a personal performance agreement in 2018-2019 is as follows:

“To support the Minister, Equality Officer, Departmental Board and the wider Department in ensuring the Department meets its statutory obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and through the commitments set out in our Equality Scheme and published action plans”.

6. In the 2018-19 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 2017-18 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The Department's Draft Strategic Plan 2020 states: As a public authority, DAERA has statutory equality obligations to meet under Section 75 of the NI Act 1998. We take these responsibilities seriously, and work hard to ensure that equality and good relations considerations are a core part of our business functions and all decision-making processes. Our Equality Scheme and Audit of Inequalities set out the actions the Department has promised to take to meet its equality obligations. We are also committed to meeting the Department's sustainable development and rural proofing obligations.

The Divisional Business Plan for DAERA's Central Management functions in 2018-2019 included an objective to ensure the Department met its statutory obligations in respect of its Equality Scheme; Disability Action Plan; Audit of Inequalities and Children and Young People's Action Plan.

### Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2018-19 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.



PART A

- 8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2018-19 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

None identified.

- 9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2018-19 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 2018-19 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 Basic Payment Scheme, accessed via the online Single Application and Map Service Scheme, is the main agricultural subsidy scheme in Northern Ireland and has replaced most of the individual Common Agricultural Policy subsidy payments previously made to farmers. Following consultation and engagement with users, a web chat facility was introduced in 2017 which allows users to communicate in real time using easily accessible web interfaces.

In addition, DAERA introduced an enhanced service of digital assistance appointments through its DAERA Direct Offices where customers can access specific, tailored help to enable them to make their Single Applications online. In 2018, 1,939 service users attended these appointments and benefitted from this additional service and online uptake of single applications has increased to 100%. This builds upon the work that was completed in the previous reporting period.

The Forest Service promotes the use of early engagement with stakeholders to encourage their involvement in the development of forestry plans for Sperrin and Antrim forests to ensure they reflect the diverse needs of people, wildlife and industry. For Sperrin's forests, 54 responses were received and for Antrim's forests 55 responses were received from a range of stakeholders including community groups, environmental organisations, farmers groups, councils, private individuals, forestry industry and government. DAERA welcomes this significant engagement from stakeholders which will be a valuable contribution to the development of meaningful draft forestry plans.

12 In the 2018-19 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:

For Sperrin's forests, 54 responses were received and for Antrim's forests 55 responses were received from a range of stakeholders including community groups, environmental organisations, farmers groups, councils, private individuals, forestry industry and government. DAERA welcomes this significant engagement from stakeholders which will be a valuable contribution to the development of meaningful draft forestry plans.

Between January and March 2019, Forest Service engaged with stakeholders in the scoping stage of reviewing Forest Plans for the North West forests. There were 41 responses received from a range of stakeholders, including community groups, environmental organisations, farmers groups, councils, private individuals, forestry industry and government.

- 13** Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2018-19 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes       No       Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

During 2018 Equality, Diversity and Public Appointments Branch, on behalf of DAERA, commenced an engagement campaign with organisations on the Section 75 consultee list and, to date, has met with two stakeholder groups who have a particular interest in equality and human rights issues from a DAERA perspective. This campaign which increases awareness raising of DAERA and its approach to equality amongst its stakeholders is ongoing throughout 2019-2020.

- 14** Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2018-19 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes       No       Not applicable – no commitment to review

The consultation list is continually kept under review and updated as required.

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

This can be found via the following link:

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

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

47

- 16** Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2018-19:

5	Policy consultations conducted with <b>screening</b> assessment presented.
0	Policy consultations conducted <b>with an equality impact assessment (EQIA)</b> presented.
0	Consultations for an <b>EQIA</b> 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:

- 1) Consultation on the proposed Marine Plan
- 2) Review of Higher Education Tuition Fees at the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE)
- 3) Consultation on the draft Agriculture (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 and the draft Residues (Charges and Examination) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019
- 4) Consultation on the Agriculture, Food and Horse (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Northern Ireland) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019
- 5) Consultation on Equine Identification in Northern Ireland - Horse Passport Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2018
- 6) Consultation on the Carcase Classification and Price Reporting Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2018 in respect of beef and pigs

**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:

During the previous reporting period, DAERA received a complaint in relation to the equality and human rights screening of the options for future support to Areas of Natural Constraint carried out in 2016. A further complaint in relation to this was, however, received during this reporting period. Further detail is provided at paragraph 27.

#### **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 2018-19 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

- Yes
                 
  No
                 
  Not applicable

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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 2018-19 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, already taken place |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No, scheduled to take place at a later date | <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable                     |

Please provide any details:

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

- |                              |  |   |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable |
|------------------------------|--|---|

Please provide any details and examples:

**22** Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2018-19 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

Not applicable in the period.

**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 for the period.

## **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 2018-19, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

The Equality Unit continued to provide advice and information to the Department's business areas throughout the reporting period to help ensure that the Department was compliant in carrying out their statutory obligations in relation to Section 75.

A summary of the Equality Scheme has been made available to all staff. The full Equality Scheme is available to all staff via the DAERA internet.

Induction training for new staff includes an awareness of Section 75 and the statutory duties. There has, though, been difficulty in accessing Section 75 training during the reporting period. In light of this, and in tandem with an increase in new entrants to DAERA following the construction of Ballykelly House in the North West, DAERA continues to work closely with the Equality Commission to explore a proposal from the ECNI in relation to a 'Train the Trainer' programme. This work will continue to be taken forward in the next reporting period. DAERA and ECNI are working on this product as a joint partnership to potentially deliver a range of training on equality, disability and diversity.

A range of the training undertaken by DAERA staff in 2018-2019 is outlined below:

### **Mental Health Awareness for Line Managers**

The aim of this course is to raise awareness of the issue of Mental Health in the workplace, and to assist line managers in supporting and signposting staff who may be going through a mental health issue. During 2018/19, 17 DAERA managers successfully completed this training.

### **Positive Mental Health Toolkit for All staff**

This training is designed to give all staff an understanding of how mental health affects how we think and feel and how we cope with life's ups and downs.

On completion of the course staff should understand what mental health and stress is, be able to identify problems that can lead to stress, understand what they can do to manage stress and build resilience, and be aware of the many services available if they want to understand more about specific mental health issues. During 2018/19, 33 DAERA staff completed this training.

### **Positive Mental Health Toolkit for Line Managers**

This training is aimed at line managers and is designed to raise awareness and promote understanding of mental health.

On completion of the course line managers should understand what mental health is and define depression, anxiety, stress and resilience; recognise internal and external

factors that could cause mental health problems in the workplace; and have knowledge of how to create positive relationships with their team members and know what steps to take to support their mental health issues. During 2018/19, 6 DAERA managers completed this training.

### **Autism Spectrum Disorder Awareness**

This course was been developed by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, providing information about what ASD is and the challenges faced by individuals living with it. Having an awareness of ASD will help staff understand why an individual with ASD may be acting or reacting in a particular way and it will help create and maintain positive working relationships.

This course was initially rolled out to all DAERA staff during 2016/17 and just under 500 staff completed training that year. In 2018/19 a further 26 staff completed the training.

### **Disability Awareness for front line staff**

The aim of this training is to increase staff knowledge of disability and to provide frontline staff with an introduction to disability awareness. The course is aimed at staff at all grades who are in, or new to a post that deals with the public.

In 2018/19, 7 DAERA staff successfully completed this training.

### **Supporting Vulnerable People**

This course has been designed to assist staff in supporting vulnerable people who may seek to use the services offered by the department. On completion of the course staff should be able to describe and define what a vulnerable person is, recognise ways to identify vulnerable people, explain ways to support vulnerable people, including methods for dealing with third parties, and state the sources of help, advice and support available in the NICS for employees.

The course is entirely voluntary and in 2018/19, 4 staff completed the training.

### **Unconscious Bias**

This course aims to help staff discover what personal bias they may have, explore its causes and consider some techniques to manage it. On completion of the course staff should be able to define what Unconscious Bias is; explain how Unconscious Bias can impact in the workplace and state ways to tackle Unconscious Bias.

This mandatory course was rolled out to DAERA staff during 2017/18 for completion by all DAERA staff in management grades i.e. EOII and above and 1,629 staff successfully completed the training. During 2018/19 a further 15 staff completed this training.

### **Introduction to Section 75**

Staff who require this training are those with responsibility for policy development or policy review and staff involved with the implementation of Section 75 duties, whether directly or indirectly. The aim of this course is to familiarise participants with the two statutory duties as outlined in Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and the guidance provided by the Equality Commission NI. 7 DAERA staff completed this training between April 2018 and March 2019.

### **Policy Making and Human Rights**

This course aims to raise awareness and understanding of the benefits of applying human rights principles and obligations throughout the policy development process. It is aimed at staff involved in developing policy, particularly policies which may have human rights impacts. This training aims to help staff identify relevant human rights standards, treaties and legislation to be engaged when developing policy and legislation; explain how combining NICS policy guidance with an understanding of human rights principles provides assurance that human rights standards and legislation are sufficiently considered; and demonstrate how the application of human rights principles adds value to the policy process ensuring policy making is inclusive, lawful and targeted at those most in need. During 2018/19, 2 DAERA staff completed this training.

### **Safeguarding Children & Young People**

This course is aimed at those staff who may come into contact indirectly with children and young people as part of their duties. The training aims to help staff understand how to recognise if a child is suffering abuse, what safeguarding is, what their responsibilities are and how to keep a young person safe. During 2018/19, 22 staff completed this training.

- 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:

This is covered in responses to question 24 above.

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

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2018-19, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

Nothing specific in the reporting period.



### Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

- 27** How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2018-19?

Insert number here:

1
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Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

DAERA received a notification of a complaint made to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland under Paragraph 10 of Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998; alleged failure to comply with an approved Equality Scheme in relation to the Areas of Natural Constraint Scheme. This was in relation to the equality and human rights screening of the review of options for future support to the Areas of Natural Constraint (ANC) carried out in 2016. The Equality Commission requested any relevant information that the Department would like the Commission's Statutory Duty Investigations Committee to take into consideration when coming to its decision on whether or not to authorise an investigation into the complaint. The Department duly made a submission of relevant evidence.

The Commission assessed the complaint against the statutory criteria set out in Paragraph 10 of Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and concluded that the complaint was outside the 12 month time limit as set out in the Act. As a result the Equality Commission did not authorise an investigation into the complaint.

### 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. The Department's Equality Scheme is due for review in 2020-21 and it is the intention to bring the Scheme forward for an incoming Minister's consideration and review it 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*)

Training and awareness raising will continue to be a particular focus for DAERA in the next reporting period. DAERA has been exploring a bespoke outreach/awareness programme

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for staff in collaboration with ECNI to potentially deliver a range of training on equality, disability and diversity.

**30** In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2019-20) 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)

Following on from last year's report it is clear that Brexit is still a current and significant priority for DAERA and will remain as such through the next reporting period. Work will be ongoing throughout 2019-2020 to develop and refine strategic policy priorities on a range of Brexit related issues through regular engagement with key stakeholders. The department will take forward the development of policy, and associated legislation, required as the result of the repatriation of EU policy to the UK. In addition, throughout the next reporting period, the department will co-ordinate the development and implementation of Day 1 delivery plans for those impacted areas to ensure the continued delivery of services post exit from the EU.



**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:**

**11**

Fully achieved

**2**

Partially achieved

**2**

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. Eleven of the actions have been achieved and are listed below:**

- **Review and monitor the accessibility of DAERA facilities and explore opportunities for improving access (Participation in public life)**
- **Ensure all managers are aware of their legislative responsibilities e.g. under the DDO, DDA, and Section 75 (Promoting positive attitudes)**
- **Staff Awareness Raising (Promoting positive attitudes and participation in public life)**
- **Provide specific disability and equality training for policymakers and front line staff (Promoting positive attitudes)**
- **Provision of information that is easy-to-access and understand (Promoting positive attitudes)**
- **Raise awareness about autism (Promoting positive attitudes)**
- **Increase awareness of College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) support services (Promoting positive attitudes)**
- **Improve representation across DAERA forums, groups, committees and CAFRE student groups.**
- **Increased support and engagement with the disability sector (Promoting participation in public life)**
- **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)**

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- **Hold biannual meetings of the Equality Diversity Steering Group (EDSG) (Promoting positive attitudes)**

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 <sup>i</sup>	Outcomes / Impact <sup>ii</sup>
National <sup>iii</sup>			
Regional <sup>iv</sup>	<b>Review and monitor the accessibility of DAERA facilities and explore opportunities for improving access</b>	<p>Following on from the installation of the accessible access ramp in the previous reporting year, the NIEA further improved accessibility at the Quoile Pondage National Nature Reserve (NNR). During this reporting period c1.5kms of riverside pathway was tarmacked to provide improved accessibility to less able-bodied visitors along the Quoile Pondage riverside walkway.</p> <p>NIEA presently makes available mobility scooters at a number of Country Park properties to less able bodied visitors.</p>	Improved inclusivity and accessibility at DAERA funded sites for people throughout Northern Ireland in line with DAERA’s commitment to ensuring accessible services for everyone; “A living, working, active landscape valued by everyone”
Local <sup>v</sup>	<b>Ensure all managers are aware of their legislative responsibilities e.g. under the DDO, DDA, and Section 75</b>	<p>Achieved and ongoing.</p> <p>Senior managers have been updated on disability, diversity and equality issues through the Equality and Diversity Steering Group and Equality and Diversity Working Group</p> <p>In 2018-2019, 7 additional DAERA staff completed the “Introduction to Section 75” training. There has been difficulty accessing Section 75 training during the reporting period and DAERA continues to work closely with the Equality Commission to develop a proposal in relation to a ‘Train the Trainer’</p>	Increased knowledge and awareness which, in turn, will lead to improved outcomes across the Section 75 categories.

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	<p><b>Staff Awareness Raising</b></p>	<p>programme of training / awareness raising for equality and disability issues.</p> <p>See Section 2 (b)</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><b>Provide specific disability and equality training for policymakers and front line staff.</b></p>	<p><b>Mental Health Awareness for Line Managers</b></p> <p>The aim of this course is to raise awareness of the issue of Mental Health in the workplace, and to assist line managers in supporting and signposting staff who may be going through a mental health issue. During 2018/19, 17 DAERA managers successfully completed this training.</p> <p><b>Positive Mental Health Toolkit for All staff</b></p> <p>This training is designed to give all staff an understanding of how mental health affects how we think and feel and how we cope with life's ups and downs.</p>	<p>Staff better able to assist our customers who at times may need additional assistance. Increased awareness of equality and disability issues which, in turn, can lead to better outcomes for staff and customers across the Section 75 categories.</p>

		<p>During 2018/19, 33 DAERA staff completed this training.</p> <p><b>Positive Mental Health Toolkit for Line Managers</b></p> <p>This training is aimed at line managers and is designed to raise awareness and promote understanding of mental health.</p> <p>During 2018/19, 6 DAERA managers completed this training.</p> <p><b>Autism Spectrum Disorder Awareness</b></p> <p>This course has been developed by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, providing information about what ASD is and the challenges faced by individuals living with it. Having an awareness of ASD will help staff understand why an individual with ASD may be acting or reacting in a particular way and it will help create and maintain positive working relationships.</p> <p>This course was rolled out for DAERA staff during 2016/17. In 2018/19 a further 26 staff completed the training.</p> <p><b>Disability Awareness for front line staff</b></p>	
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		<p>The aim of this training is to increase staff knowledge of disability and to provide frontline staff with an introduction to disability awareness. The course is aimed at staff at all grades who are in, or new to a post that deals with the public.</p> <p>In 2018/19 an additional 7 DAERA staff completed the course.</p> <p><b>Supporting Vulnerable People</b></p> <p>This course has been designed to assist staff in supporting vulnerable people who may seek to use the services offered by the department. On completion of the course staff should be able to describe and define what a vulnerable person is, recognise ways to identify vulnerable people and explain ways to support vulnerable people, including methods for dealing with third parties.</p> <p>In 18/19, 4 staff completed, or registered an interest in this voluntary training.</p> <p><b>Unconscious Bias</b></p> <p>This course aims to help staff discover what personal bias they may have, explore its causes and consider some techniques to manage it. On completion of the course staff should be able to define what Unconscious Bias is; explain how Unconscious Bias</p>	
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		<p>can impact in the workplace and state ways to tackle Unconscious Bias.</p> <p>During 2017/18 this course was made mandatory for completion by all DAERA staff in management grades i.e. EOII and above and 1629 staff successfully completed the training. A further 15 staff completed this training during 2018/19.</p> <p><b>Child Protection Awareness Training</b></p> <p>This training is specific to DAERA and in 2017/18 was procured by the department and delivered by NSPCC to staff working primarily in the 3 campuses of CAFRE (College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise). The training is mandatory for all CAFRE staff, including all who work directly or indirectly with students, many of whom are under 18 years of age. The awareness training is rolled out to staff every 3 years. In addition those staff who have additional supervisory care responsibilities for the students are required to complete Designated Officer Training.</p> <p>A total of 426 staff from CAFRE and those staff who regularly work on the 3 college campuses completed Child Protection Awareness refresher training in 2017/18 and a further 9 CAFRE Designated Officers completed the enhanced training. As this is only</p>	
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		<p>rolled out to relevant business areas every 3 years, there was none of this training delivered during 2018/19.</p> <p><b>Safeguarding Children &amp; Young People</b></p> <p>This course is aimed at those staff who may come into contact indirectly with children and young people as part of their duties. The training aims to help staff understand how to recognise if a child is suffering abuse, what safeguarding is, what their responsibilities are and how to keep a young person safe. During 2018/19, 22 staff completed this training.</p>	
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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	<b>Provision of information that is easy to understand and access</b>	<p>Achieved and ongoing.</p> <p>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</p>	<p>Information that is easy to understand and access helps people make better informed decisions and choices. It removes barriers so that people with particular needs are not excluded from accessing Departmental information and services and therefore ensures equality of access.</p>

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		versions of all major DAERA publications. These are provided on the internet and are in hard copy on request.	
2	<b>Raise awareness about autism</b>	<p>See 2 (b) in relation to Autism Spectrum Disorder training.</p> <p>CAFRE has a permanent student support officer who has attended autism specific training courses.</p>	<p>The training continues to improve the knowledge and understanding of staff and ensures they are more aware of the issues and concerns of student/customers dealing with these issues.</p> <p>Improved educational outcomes for students with autism.</p>
3	<b>Increase awareness of CAFRE support services.</b>	<p>During 2018-19 CAFRE provided support to approximately 180 students with disabilities and learning support needs. This support is provided through the CAFRE Student Support Officer who is employed on a full-time basis and works across all three CAFRE campuses. The Student Support Officer arranges a wide variety of support for students, depending on their needs, for example provision of IT / specialist equipment, provision of Campus Support Assistants</p>	<p>The uptake of support services, available to students with additional needs throughout the student body has improved, mainly due to a change in curriculum and a focus on signposting students to support services available. The increased knowledge and understanding of staff has meant that they are more aware of the issues and concerns of students/customers dealing with mental health issues.</p>

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		<p>or Study Skills tutors. The Student Support Officer will also link with course awarding bodies to obtain approval for academic support, for example additional time to submit coursework, specialist assistance during exams. This officer also signposts students to appropriate mental health support and counselling and administers the CAFRE Hardship Fund.</p> <p>The support available from the Student Support Officer is promoted on the CAFRE website and student intranet. The Officer also speaks to all student groups at induction each year and throughout the year to outline their role and how to access support.</p>	
4	<p><b>Improve representation across DAERA forums, groups, committees and CAFRE student groups.</b></p>	<p>In accordance with CAFRE student charter, there are a number of opportunities for students to be represented on College committees to provide feedback on the programme they are studying. In addition, they also have the opportunity to discuss and evaluate their experience either directly with a Course Tutor or anonymously using programme related surveys.</p>	<p>CAFRE reviews its education provision regularly using the feedback from students. Services are evaluated and improvements implemented for example:</p> <p>Students raised a number of issues in relation to industry visits on Food courses and availability of accommodation at Greenmount Campus while they were carrying out weekend practical activities. Both of these issues have been addressed and students' requests will be actioned in the forthcoming academic year.</p>

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		<p>During 2018-19, CAFRE students were represented at the monthly CAFRE Education Management Team meetings (attended by the Heads of Branches) to provide feedback to the senior education management team. In addition student representatives had the opportunity to provide feedback on their experiences of CAFRE to the College Advisory Group (CAG) - comprising external experts - at Loughry Campus in November 2018 and Greenmount Campus in February 2019, with a further student feedback session scheduled for the CAG meeting in September 2019 at Enniskillen Campus.</p>	<p>Feedback from the student representation at the College Advisory Group meetings has been very positive with no reported issues with the programmes. Suggested improvements to the courses in terms of increased industry visits on Food courses have been introduced as part of the ongoing development and revalidation of the degree programmes at CAFRE.</p>
5	<p><b>Hold biannual meetings of the Equality Diversity Steering Group (EDSG)</b></p>	<p>2 meetings were held during the reporting period.</p>	<p>Business areas and policy makers better informed about equality and disability issues to ensure improved outcomes for those with a disability.</p>

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact

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<p>1</p>	<p><b>Increased support and engagement with the disability sector</b></p>	<p>CAFRE Horticultural Branch assisted 8 students with brain injuries and 3 of their support workers, to take part in a 10 week course to allow them to gain new knowledge of a range of horticultural skills and achieved a national recognised qualification.</p> <p>CAFRE’s Enniskillen Campus provides facilities for Riding for the Disabled (RDA) programmes and hosted a visit by HRH The Princess Royal in February 2019.</p> <p>CAFRE organised a joint workshop with Senior Management from The Western Health and Social Care Trust to explore how our facilities and natural resources can be used to enhance the health and well-being of our local community.</p>	<p>All 11 attendees gained a Level 2 qualification in Practical Horticulture Skills and reported positive impacts on their health and wellbeing including improved self-esteem and self-efficacy.</p> <p>Widened access to services for people with autism and improved outcomes in relation to health and wellbeing.</p> <p>A number of joint initiatives are being developed to utilise the horses and natural resources at Enniskillen Campus to enhance the health and well-being of the local community, including walking in the countryside and using horses for equine assisted therapy.</p>
<p>2</p>	<p><b>Improve how we consult and engage with people with disabilities. This includes our own staff and those who use our services.</b></p>	<p>DAERA has conducted a number of consultations throughout the reporting period and these have been informed by input from various groups/individuals including the Disability organisations.</p>	<p>Policies and service provision better informed by service users which, in turn, will improve outcomes for those with a disability.</p>

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		<p>DAERA has continued its stakeholder engagement campaign with its Section 75 consultees which includes disability groups. Two meetings have taken place in the reporting period and this campaign will continue throughout 2019-2020.</p> <p>Inland Fisheries support a promotional stand at the Disability exhibition in June each year.</p> <p>Forest Service has encouraged various stakeholders to become involved in developing forestry plans for Sperrin and Antrim forests. Responses received will inform draft forestry plans.</p> <p>Forest Service engaged with stakeholders in the scoping stage of reviewing Forest Plans for the North West forests.</p> <p>Forest Service prepared an “easy read” version of its scoping document to improve communication and to encourage people to contribute to Forest Plans. However, the launch of the “easy read” document is planned for the next reporting period during</p>	<p>Face to face meetings and ongoing and early engagement will help build working relationships and strengthen networks. This will increase the potential for collaboration and partnership working in the future as policies and services are developed which are relevant to our customers.</p>
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		June 2019 and it will be used regularly thereafter for forestry engagement.	
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2 (e) Please outline **any additional action measures** that were fully achieved other than those listed in the tables above:

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1	<b>Promote employment opportunities</b>	All CAFRE students with a disability who require assistance to find employment are signposted, by the Student Support Officer, to supported employment services such as Cedar Foundation and the Department for Communities Workable Programme.	Improved career pathways for students with a disability.

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

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestonesvi / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	<b>Display positive messages and images about people with disabilities</b>	When appropriate the Department has included equality focused wording in key press releases, and has portrayed images and wording about people	This is a continuing action and further work on positive messaging will be carried forward to 2019-2020 as we take forward	Due to resource issues this action was only partially achieved within the reporting period.



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		with a disability in positive manner.	our revised Disability Action Plan 2019-2024.	
2	<b>Promote work placement opportunities</b>	Work placements provided to people through the NICS Work placement Scheme for those with a disability where relevant.		Unfortunately, no requests were received during the reporting period. This has been recorded in the partly achieved category as it does not fit in the other two categories of being achieved or not being achieved.

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	<b>Improve representation by people with disabilities on NDPBs.</b>	Progressing with public appointment competitions remains challenging in the ongoing political situation. There was limited opportunity to increase representation on DAERA's bodies by people with a disability this reporting period, as DAERA was involved in two competitions with only one progressed to completion stage.
2	<b>Promote the staff Disability Forum and encourage new members to join and to play an active role.</b>	Not achieved due to lack of resource and staff expertise.  Dedicated resources are now in place to take this work forward, including the outworking's of a NICS-wide working group which is currently considering a NICS-wide Disability Forum. The outcome of this will influence how DAERA moves forward with this issue.

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 emergency evacuation plans are 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. Review interviews with students availing of support services take place twice a year to establish if their needs are being fully met.

**Equality and Diversity Steering and Working Groups:** These will act as a consultative forum to discuss and escalate issues in relation to disability and to consider staff and customer views.

(b) Quantitative

**Facilities Management:** All personal emergency evacuation plans are assessed and tested twice yearly through practice evacuations. Monitoring and reviewing effectiveness of relocation projects to ensure no adverse impact on staff across the Section 75 categories.

**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. CAFRE assesses the number of students availing of student support services and supported employment opportunities.

**Marine & Fisheries Division – Inland Fisheries (IF):** Issue concessionary licences to range of groups including disabled anglers. In addition, complimentary licences and permits are issued to similar groups including disability groups. IF records the number of complimentary licences/permits issued. They also support groups through the angling events fund and record the grants issued to groups including disability groups such as Mental Health charities.

PART B

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?

Not applicable

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?

During the 2019/20 reporting period the Disability Action Plan will be re-drafted and it is then intended to be that this will then be consulted upon. In addition, the Department, in conjunction with ECNI, will be exploring an outreach/awareness programme for the Department to potentially deliver a range of training on equality, disability and diversity.

<sup>i</sup> **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.

<sup>ii</sup> **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.

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

<sup>iv</sup> **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level

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

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