

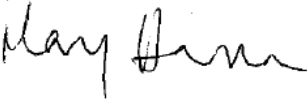
**Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council**



**Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties**

**Annual Progress Report**

**Contact details:**

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan</li></ul>	As above <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Name: Click or tap here to enter text. Telephone: Click or tap here to enter text. Email: Click or tap here to enter text.
Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:	<a href="#">Equality - Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council</a>
<b>Signature:</b>	

**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 2024 and March 2025**

## **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 2024-25, 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.*

#### **Council Plans**

##### **Community Plan**

During the reporting period the mid-point review of the borough Community Plan was undertaken with several engagement workshops held, and a public consultation was launched in October 2024 via the Consultation Hub, shared with section 75 stakeholders, and advertised on social media. An Equality Impact Assessment and a section 75 monitoring questionnaire were attached to the consultation. The Community Plan serves as the main framework for the Borough, aiming to enhance social, economic, and environmental well-being while connecting local government community plans with the new Programme for Government as a model for funding and investment. The final EQIA was approved just beyond the reporting period.

##### **Corporate Plan**

The Council's current Corporate Plan is for the period 2023-2027. During the previous reporting period both staff and elected members were engaged in the development of the Plan, and it was issued for formal consultation on the Consultation Hub in December 2023, shared with section 75 stakeholders and advertised on social media. An equality screening exercise and a section 75 monitoring questionnaire were attached to the consultation. Analysis of the monitoring questionnaire indicated that a broad range of people responded to the consultation.

The Corporate Plan sets out the vision of the organisation, its values, and priorities. It is the roadmap for delivery of the Borough Community Plan 2017-2030.

The three values in the Corporate Plan will shape the culture, behaviour and decision making and overall identity of the organisation.

1. People Centred – Inclusive and welcoming, a place where people and staff are valued. Engage positively in partnership working, empowering others to achieve success.
2. Leaders
3. Responsible

The first value recognises the importance of inclusion in everything we do.

The plan has five priorities.

1. Environment & Place
2. Community Wellbeing
3. Economic Growth
4. Service Delivery
5. Staff, leadership, and Resources

## **Performance Improvement Plan**

The annual Performance Improvement Plans are central to ensuring we are delivering on our vision and meeting the needs of a range of stakeholders in the Borough many of whom will fall within the nine section 75 categories. Council strategies, plans, projects, and services linked to draft performance improvement objectives (PIO's) have been or are required to be equality screened in order to ensure that the Council's statutory duty to promote equality and good relations is considered.

The Performance Improvement Plan 2025-2026 was issued for consultation in February 2025. It was placed on the Consultation Hub, shared with section 75 stakeholders, and advertised on social media. An equality screening exercise and a section 75 monitoring questionnaire were attached to the consultation.

PI01 relates to sickness absence, and this has the potential to positively impact on Disability. PI04 relates to communications on waste management, and this has the potential to positively impact on both Disability and Race.

## **Disability Action Plan, Audit of Inequalities and Equality Action Plan**

During the previous reporting period the Council commenced its revision of the Disability Action Plan, Audit of Inequalities and Equality Action Plan. They were issued for formal consultation on the Consultation Hub and advertised on social media. Equality screening exercises were attached to the consultations as well as section 75 monitoring questionnaires. Further stakeholder engagement took place in April 2024.

The actions contained within the Equality Action Plan reflect four of the priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan. These are:

- Community Wellbeing
- Economic Growth
- Service Delivery
- Staff Leadership and Resources

We received thirty two responses to the Disability Action Plan questionnaire via the Consultation Hub and a further seventeen written responses.

Support was given to the actions within the draft Disability Action Plan, as all the actions received between 96% to 100% agreement from consultees. 12% of respondents were male, 86% female. Responses were received from all the section 75 age categories with the exception of the 0–15-year age group. 26.5% of respondents cared for a disabled child and 26.5% also for other dependent children. 32% stated that they have a disability noting long-term health condition, physical disability, sensory disability, or mental health condition.

As a result of the feedback received regarding the importance of consultation and engagement a further action was added to the plan under the theme of Partnership Working and it is to facilitate an annual stakeholder engagement event. This will provide us with the opportunity to engage with the public as part of our commitment to continuous improvement.

One response was received in relation to the Equality Action Plan questionnaire via the consultation hub and a further seventeen written responses.

Support was given to our proposed actions with all of the actions receiving 71% to 94% support. However, the majority of these responses were submitted in the absence of a face-to-face meeting with Council officers, and this may have impacted their understanding of what is being proposed. 18% of respondents were male and 82% female. In relation to the analysis of the other categories one respondent who completed the Section 75 monitoring questionnaire was a heterosexual female aged 45-54yrs, married/civil partnership, Irish, white, non-disabled. All other respondents were members of a local community group who didn't share any section 75 data apart from gender. Following further review by officers the first action within the Plan which relates to section 75 monitoring was amended.

In line with best practice and to close the consultation loop, the 'We asked, You Said, We Did' section of Council's Consultation Hub was updated accordingly. The final plans were also issued to consultees and placed on the website.

### **Policy Development and Policy Screening**

#### **Dromore Place Plan**

The Dromore Place Plan has been developed following an extensive engagement and research exercise. Led by the Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon Community Planning Partnership, with co design by the people who live, work, and visit Dromore, setting out a shared vision for the future to improve the social, economic, and environmental aspects of the town.

Desktop research of the available evidence from NISRA and Statutory Partners was compiled to support development of Dromore Place Plan.

The research showed that children and young people; older people; people with a disability and carers are affected by the current urban form, layout and engagement that happens in the town. Common themes identified were:

- Skills and employment
- Accessibility and movement around the area
- Transportation

These are reflected in the actions in the plan and the plan commits the partnership to ongoing dialogue with section 75 groups to ensure that their needs are addressed in its implementation.

Section 75 groups were invited to attend two separate meetings in May 24 and January 2025. 614 people got involved in the development of the plan between April-June 2024.

A formal consultation on the Dromore Place Plan commenced in November 2024. In addition to the online survey placed on the Consultation Hub there was an opportunity to attend local public consultation and activity events within Dromore. An equality screening exercise and a section 75 monitoring questionnaire were attached to the consultation. It was also shared with section 75 stakeholders, advertised on social media, within local newspapers, through word of mouth and with flyers.

Analysis of the section 75 monitoring questionnaire showed that a higher proportion of respondents to the online survey stipulated that they had no religion compared to the census data for the Dromore settlement. Information about Political opinion was gathered during the community engagement survey. There was a high proportion of respondents choosing the 'Neither' category to whether they were Unionist or

Nationalist. 98.3% of the survey respondents identified as white which aligns to the census data.

The majority of survey respondents were in the 45–54 years age bracket, followed closely by 35–44 years. 26.97% of the survey respondents were aged 55+ years. This highlights a lack of engagement by children and young people via the survey.

This was recognised during the engagement phase and separate activities for children and young people were delivered: -

- A Dromore Park design session was held with Dromore Central Primary School, Primary 6 children.
- Young people from the Dromore High School youth club took part in a photography project 'The Good, The Bad and More of Dromore.'

To further engage with persons within the Age Friendly category a session was held with members of the Dromore Knit and Natter group and a number of Older Persons dropped into the weekly Forums to chat with the team on a 1 – 1 basis.

A higher proportion of respondents to the consultation were married at 75% compared to the census data. A lower percentage of single people responded at 15%. Statistics from the engagement survey for sexual orientation are very similar in breakdown to the census data. The majority of people who completed the survey were female. The majority of people who completed the survey stated they had no disability. The majority of respondents who completed the survey had the responsibility for the care of a child/children.

### **Heritage Places**

Details of the Heritage Places Online Survey were issued to the Council's section 75 consultee list. The first stage of this work is to develop a 10-year Heritage Strategy, which represents an opportunity to shape a positive vision for heritage across the Borough.

### **Policy Screening and Guidance Updates**

Policy screening reports were issued in September and December 2024.

Details of all Council policies are located on a Smartsheet with all relevant dates added to include approval date, equality screening and automated review dates. This has created a more efficient procedure for policy review, and it has a traffic light system in place for all ABC Council approved and new policies. The Heads of Department have viewer access and during the reporting period were provided with regular reports detailing the status of policies and strategies and when they were due for review.

The Policy, Equality & Diversity Manager attended Head of Department and Senior Leadership Team meetings throughout the reporting period advising on the updated Policy Development Guidance and the Inclusive and Accessible Events Guidance. This was further communicated via Heads of Department to their teams via email or at their Department Management Team meetings.

A further report was presented to Heads of Department to advise on the extent of section 75 monitoring being conducted across Council departments. Discussions were held with Tier 4 Managers and Business Support Officers across most departments to identify data currently collected and consider the potential to collect more detailed section 75 data. Recommendations were set out highlighting the challenges and opportunities in

doing so, recognising that by improving monitoring baseline data, the Council will be better able to inform decision making in relation to our services.

### **Stakeholder Engagement -Disability Action Plan**

As a result of the feedback received during the Disability Action Plan consultation a further action was added to the Plan to facilitate an annual stakeholder engagement event.

Three stakeholder engagement events were arranged in December 2024 to mark International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December. Events were held in Loughbrickland on 4 December and in Ardmore Recreation Centre and Craigavon Civic Centre on 10 December. The Deputy Lord Mayor Cllr Kyle Savage opened the Craigavon event, noting he was proud to hold the role of Diversity Ambassador and raise awareness about the importance of embracing diversity and fostering an inclusive environment in the Borough. The Council's section 75 consultees, members of the Inclusive ABC Working Groups, (operational and strategic) were advised of these events and colleagues within Community Planning and the Southern Health and Social Care Trust (SHSCT) were also advised to issue to their relevant contacts. Details were widely shared on social media. A total of thirty four people attended the events.

At each of the Disability Stakeholder events we asked the participants – in relation to service provision for those with disabilities:

- What does Council do well? and
- Where could Council do better?

We received several comments in relation to how Council communicates with residents, and particularly our reliance on social media. These and other comments relating to communication were addressed by the Communications and Branding Team.

There was positive feedback on the accessibility of our large-scale events, programmes, initiatives, and facilities. Examples included:

- Georgian Day & light show
- Relaxed Christmas at Bleary
- All Stars Partnership with SHSCT
- Pre-visit guides
- Quiet hours
- Communication Boards in Play parks
- Mobile accessible toilet
- Marketing and communications around access needs and the information available on the InclusiveABC page

Participants complemented the staff who facilitate these events and how they are improving accessibility throughout. It was noted that despite acknowledging that we're 'getting it right' in many ways and ahead of other councils, there are still areas that could be improved.

There was also constructive feedback on operational issues which were sent to the relevant managers for feedback but generally these included comments on

- provision of disability swimming lessons
- the need for ongoing staff training
- back to basics communication plans for residents who are not on social media
- promotion of what's on in the facilities themselves

- the need for engagement & consultation with the wider disability & carer sector
- good practice in some areas around support, registration etc. This will be analysed to see how we can share across Council departments
- practical issues around managing misuse of accessible facilities, possible reasonable adjustments, and the challenges of staff shortages

It was noted at the Banbridge event that people felt Craigavon and Armagh had a higher profile and more on offer and in Armagh the participants believed Banbridge and Craigavon had more on offer.

Just beyond the reporting period participants were advised of the outcome of these stakeholder events and the steps Council had or was planning to take to address their concerns. This information was also made available on the InclusiveABC page of the corporate website.

### **Communication**

Throughout the reporting period staff were advised via the internal online staff magazine 'The Inside Line' of the updates to the Consultation and Policy Guidance, the updated Translation and Interpretation Guide, the Accessible Communications, and Inclusive Language Guide and the Inclusive and Accessible Events Guide. They were also advised of the various equality initiatives e.g. International Womens Day. All equality related training was advertised via e-mail and 'The Inside Line.'

Further information was added to 'Inclusive ABC,' the council's dedicated webpage which features information on accessible facilities, activities, and events. Participants at the stakeholder engagement events were advised of this page.

### **Equality Initiatives and Events**

Men's Health Week ran from 10-16 June. The overall aim is to raise awareness of preventable health problems that disproportionately affect men and encourage them to gain the courage to tackle their issues.

Staff events included an Inspire Webinar on Men's Mental Health. Health and Recreation activities included Bikes at Gosford Forest Park and Foot Golf at Craigavon Golf & Ski Centre. The Cancer Focus NI buses were available at three locations so that staff could receive a personalised health check.

In July 2024, a campaign was launched by the Council challenging sexism and misogyny within our society to help improve safety for women and girls. Working in partnership with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, the Southern Health and Social Care Trust and Women's Aid, the campaign sought to raise awareness around the serious issue of violence against women and girls.

Through the creation of a short film, which can be found across a wide range of social media channels and the council website, the focus of the 'Stand Up. Speak Out. Be the Change' campaign is on men's inappropriate behaviour towards women and encourages men to stand up and speak out when they see or hear harassment towards women.

Good Relations Week 2024, coordinated by the Community Relations Council ran from Monday 16 to Sunday 22 September 2024. The Council joined local groups and organisations in celebrating Good Relations Week by embracing the 'OpportUNiTY' to host a range of cross-community and cultural events as part of the celebration.

The events were designed to demonstrate the strength of communities in working together to break down barriers and creating opportunities to deliver a more inclusive

society. The week shines a light on the positive work going on every day to address societal challenges such as sectarianism, racism, gender inequality, health and well-being, poverty, and education.

A family fun day was held in Tannaghmore Gardens to celebrate Good Relations Week.

The Community Awards ceremony was also held during this week. A total of thirty four groups and individuals from across the Borough were shortlisted for eleven awards. Each received high praise for being a leading example of good citizenship and selfless dedication to better community causes and deliver positive outcomes for people from all backgrounds. Included in the award categories were the Equality and Good Relations award, the Age Friendly award, the Under 18 Youth Volunteer and the Youth Champion award.

In August 2023, the Borough became an official member of the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities, and the addition of Age Friendly Champions is a further reflection of the commitment from Council in listening to the needs of the ageing population and providing effective advice, support, and practical help.

There was a packed programme of events for Positive Ageing Month in October.

Four Age Friendly Champions were appointed including The Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor, Chair of the Environment Services Committee and Deputy Chair of the Economic Development and Regeneration Committee.

A wide range of events were held in the Borough which included activities such as Tai Chi, Nordic Walking, table tennis. There were also events that focussed on health checks, protection against accidents and scams, as well as local history and family history talks.

Lord Mayor and Council Age Friendly Champion, Cllr Sarah Duffy said the annual Positive Ageing Month campaign was providing a "wealth of opportunities."

"There is a fantastic programme of events and taster sessions being held in all our local communities and I would encourage as many people as possible to come along and try out something new," she said.

A conference to raise awareness of Hate Crime was held in Craigavon Civic Centre on 15 October 2024. Attended by Junior Minister Aisling Reilly, the 'Put Yourself in their Shoes' event gave voice to a number of guest speakers from a variety of walks of life, who shared their very personal experiences of being a victim of Hate Crime.

Organised in partnership with Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon Policing & Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) and Victim Support NI, this event also focussed on the Victim Support NI Hate Crime Manifesto which highlights how statutory, community and private sector partners can work collaboratively to improve support to victims and curb hate in society.

Junior Minister Reilly said: "Hate crime is the perpetrator's hostility or prejudice against any person or property on the grounds of the victim's ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, political opinion or disability – and these incidents have continued to rise in Northern Ireland over the past decade."

Also, in October Deputy Lord Mayor Cllr Kyle Savage welcomed young people and leaders from the newly established ABC Youth Voice to the Council Chamber to participate in Local Democracy Week.

The ABC Youth Voice event took place as part of Local Democracy Week which is an annual initiative designed to foster the knowledge of local democracy and promote the idea of democratic participation at a local level.

The theme of the event was “Local communities putting democratic resilience at the forefront” and members of ABC Youth voice had the opportunity to learn how Council operates as well as ask questions to a number of our elected representatives.

Council’s Community Development and Community Planning Departments are working in partnership with the Education Authority’s Youth Service to support the group of young people, aged 16 to 19 years old, in the ‘Youth Voice’ project.

Deputy Lord Mayor, Cllr Kyle Savage commented:

“The Council has always been a strong supporter of Local Democracy Week as an initiative which helps bring local democracy closer to the people that we as councillors serve – our local citizens.”

Jake McCourt, member of ABC Youth Voice said, “This event is a fantastic opportunity for young people to work with our Council to ensure that the voices of young people are being promoted, are being fulfilled, and being taken into consideration.”

Sixteen participants completed a ‘Multiply’ programme which is an innovative training programme designed to empower individuals who have not yet achieved a GCSE Maths Grade C or above. This course particularly focuses on those for whom English is not a first language, providing tailored support to enhance their mathematical skills and confidence. Organised by the Council and delivered by People 1<sup>st</sup>, the course also focussed on cookery, teaching budgeting skills as well as some healthy recipes.

This project was funded by the UK government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This is part of a £5.9m Multiply fund being managed by the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland.

In November 2024, the Council in collaboration with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, Southern Health, and Social Care Trust and South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust launched a digital and PR campaign to raise awareness of violence against women and girls. The ‘#No Excuse’ campaign highlighted the issues that are prevalent in our society in relation to violence against women and girls. Statistics used throughout the campaign showed how women and girls are impacted from the harmful attitudes and behaviours exhibited by men and boys. Information sessions took place in Down Leisure Centre and South Lake Leisure Centre to enable women and girls to learn more about what services are available across the borough for those experiencing gender-based violence.

In December 2024, the #RespectMySpace campaign was launched. It was also developed in collaboration with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, Southern Health, and Social Care Trust and South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust. The campaign focussed on raising awareness of the unwanted harassment that women and girls experience here in our local community, whether it’s travelling home from a night out or going for a run in the local park.

The relaxed Christmas event returned to Bleary Business and Community Centre, Craigavon and additional sessions were made available due to demand. The Relaxed

Christmas Experience is designed to provide a memorable and enjoyable festive environment for families with children who have autism or Special Educational Needs and offers a range of seasonal activities to give them the opportunity to spend quality time together in a truly magical atmosphere.

In February 2025, the Council hosted the 'Autism Reality Experience' bus, in partnership with the Southern Health and Social Care Trust. The Autism Reality Experience (ARE) truly puts the challenges that people with Autism face into perspective to embed empathy, understanding and inclusive support through the use of a virtual reality vehicle, which gives participants an immersive experience.

Local parents and carers experienced the impact of hypersensitivity to the sensory environment, how it feels to become overwhelmed and being in an environment that doesn't account for your needs. A variety of wraparound services also attended. The event was funded through DfC Growing Communities Project.

The Employability and Skills Conference was held in Armagh City Hotel on Thursday 13 March 2025. The event focussed on helping businesses to 'get future ready' by recruiting, retaining, and reskilling a resilient and talented workforce to help secure the future growth of the local economy.

A host of keynote speakers shared their experience and insights. Elaine Leonard from the Appleby Trust discussed the subject of Embracing Neurodiversity and Unlocking unique strengths for a Thriving Workforce.

The Council demonstrated its commitment to celebrating women's achievements and supporting gender equality when it hosted a special event for local schools at Craigavon Civic and Conference Centre on Tuesday 11 March 2025 to mark International Women's Day. Around one hundred and forty pupils heard from an exciting line up of speakers.

They included Lord Mayor and Diversity Ambassador Cllr Sarah Duffy, Council Deputy Chief Executive Charlene Stoops, and international musician and motivational coach Amanda St. John. Local entrepreneur Lauren Toal, who runs her own brand and marketing consultancy, hosted the event.

These inspiring role models spoke very openly, each sharing their journeys and experiences and providing insights into how they have championed inclusion as well as overcome challenges in their professional and personal lives.

Speaking after the event, Lord Mayor Cllr Sarah Duffy said:

"It was great to see the collective spirit of the young women who came together to celebrate International Women's Day. As the next generation, they have a key role to play in advancing gender equality and championing true inclusion.

Today's event focussed on learning from and inspiring each other and most importantly empowering these young ladies to thrive, succeed and become positive role models in their own right."

The staff International Women's Day event which took place on Wednesday 05 March at Craigavon Civic Centre saw two incredible guest speakers, Emer Maguire and Ruth Allen share their inspiring journeys, life experiences and invaluable insights with us.

The event was a resounding success, reflecting our commitment to championing gender equality and empowering women across our organisation and beyond.

During the same week over fifty ladies from walking netball groups across Northern Ireland gathered at Banbridge Leisure Centre for on-the-court and off-the-court activities to celebrate International Women's Day.

The event was organised by the Council's Sports Development Department and funded by Sport NI, through the District Council's Community Planning Investment Programme.

Walking Netball has evolved from a growing demand for walking sports. The inclusive nature of the game encourages those who have dropped out of the sport they love due to serious injury, to those who believed they had hung up their netball trainers many years ago, to get going again.

"International Women's Day is a crucial moment to celebrate the achievements of women and girls around the world, and to reflect on the work that still needs to be done to achieve true gender equality," said the Lord Mayor, Cllr Sarah Duffy.

"I am incredibly proud to support Women's Aid Armagh Down during my term. Their tireless work providing refuge, support, and advocacy for women and children experiencing domestic abuse is vital to our community. Lighting our borough purple is a visual reminder that we all have a role to play and demonstrates our commitment to promote positive behaviours and end violence against women and girls."

On 8 March 2025, the Market Place Theatre held a panel discussion, and the theme was Women in Culture.

To celebrate International Women's Day a series of videos featuring women in a range of professional roles was posted on Urban ABC and details shared on the Council's Facebook page. Six inspirational women shared their stories to success.

The Council hosted a conference in support of the campaign to end violence against women and girls. The conference was entitled 'It's in Your Hands' and took place on 31 March in Armagh City Hotel. The purpose of the conference was to assist local organisations to better understand the issues around ending violence against women and girls, to support them in changing attitudes and to help end this violence.

The 'Girls Active' initiative which was developed by the Youth Sport Trust also took place in March. With funding from Sport NI, through the Community Planning Investment Programme 24/25, the Council teamed up with the Youth Sport Trust to deliver this programme with local primary schools.

This initiative supports schools to increase girls' engagement and enjoyment in PE, school sport and physical activity. The programme encourages teachers and girls to work together, empowering them to take positive action through influencing, leadership and inspiring their peers.

Throughout the event, the girls took part in a range of activities including dance and exercises, team building games and workshops focussing on leadership, marketing, and action planning. The action plans developed on the day will help the girls and teachers work together to engage more girls to be active within their schools.

Speaking at the conference, Deputy Lord Mayor, Cllr Kyle Savage said: "We are seeing a very welcome popularity in female sports across our Borough. Physical fitness and mental wellbeing go hand-in-hand with academic achievement, and as such, 'Girls Active' offers girls the chance to get involved in the design and delivery of activities that will appeal to their peers and boost interest and participation in sports within their schools. I wish all the girls involved in the programme every success."

A wide range of health and recreation activities were offered to young people over the summer months. The annual campaign delivered both indoor and outdoor events, activities, and programmes. Examples included the Inclusive Summer Scheme which offers inclusive sports and physical activity opportunities for children with a disability, along with siblings and friends. Other examples included 1 hour swim sessions for £1 for children and young people, Teen Gym, Water Sports Activity Days, Family Snow Tubing, Multi Sports Camps, Gymnastics and Dance.

All out Trekking was made available at Gosford Forest Park. This is an inclusive outdoor recreation programme using battery powered all terrain buggies, open to disabled and non-disabled people enabling inclusive participation in a beautiful parkland setting.

The All-Stars Summer Scheme is a three-week programme organised and delivered by the Council's Sports Development team and supported by the Southern Health and Social Care Trust. It brings together young people with disabilities aged between 7 and 17 to enjoy a range of inclusive physical and sporting activities through a series of week-long sessions during July and August.

Based at Gilford Community Centre, the scheme brings young people together to experience everything from outdoor play, nature walks, football, dance, boccia, Kurling and clay modelling to an away day at South Lake Leisure Centre for cycling, swimming, canoeing and the wheelie boat.

Autism Friendly sessions were available in Gulliver's Soft Play. These sessions provide a quiet hour with reduced numbers, no noise or flashing lights, the provision of a safe space tent and fibre optic lights. Disability lane swimming is also available at the Orchard Leisure Centre on Saturday 3pm-4pm and on Sunday 3.30pm-4.30pm. Participants with a disability can swim for free at their own pace within a lane allocated solely for them for the entire session.

The Inclusive ABC Operational Working Group was established in the previous reporting period, and it evolved from the Autism Friendly Working Group to enable consideration of a range of issues that may affect our disabled customers. The group also informs the actions included in the Council's Equality and Disability Action Plans and met 7 times during the reporting period.

Following a Notice of Motion in November 2023 the Inclusive ABC Operational Working Group was extended to include Members from the existing Health Working Group and other stakeholders (as and when required). The group met quarterly and reported to the Governance, Resources and Strategy Committee. Topics of discussion included how best to incorporate a total communications approach, stakeholder engagement events, and a presentation and discussion with Communication Access UK.

The Operational Working Group is a subgroup reporting into the Inclusive ABC Strategic Working Group.

During the reporting period the council was shortlisted as a finalist in the Local Government Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Award 2025 for its Inclusive ABC initiative. This initiative is designed to promote equality by fostering collaboration both internally among our departments and elected members and externally with our community and the Southern Health and Social Care Trust. The initiative is structured around two pivotal groups: Operational Level Group chaired by the Policy, Equality & Diversity Manager and Strategic Level Group chaired by the Governance, Resources & Strategy Committee Chair. Together, these groups act as a central resource offering support and expertise on issues related to equality, diversity, and inclusion. They actively engage with the community enhancing the sharing of information about inclusive facilities,

events, and initiatives. By working collaboratively, the initiative aims to create a more equitable environment that embraces diversity and inclusion at all levels.

Throughout the reporting period the Policy, Equality & Diversity Team attended a number of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Forum meetings which are co-ordinated by the Southern Health and Social Care Trust. This forum includes health care professionals and representatives from organisations that provide services for children and adults on the Autism Spectrum.

In July 2025 the Policy, Equality & Diversity Manager met with the Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor about the Diversity Ambassador initiative and their role as Diversity Ambassadors. The Officer Ambassadors attended events arranged by the Local Government Staff Commission to assist them in their role. This included the Diversity Ambassadors Best Practice Event which was held at the Seamus Heaney Homeplace in October 2024. During this workshop organised by the Local Government Staff Commission the Policy, Equality & Diversity Manager delivered a presentation showcasing how we, as a Council, are championing the needs of people with disabilities and promoting equality of opportunity for all groups. In particular, she spoke about the work of the Inclusive ABC Operational and Strategic Working Groups as well as the dedicated Inclusive ABC section on our corporate website, which provides information on our accessible facilities, activities, and events.

The Policy, Equality & Diversity Manager attended a number of the regional Equality & Diversity Group meetings. This Group was established to prioritise and influence equality, good relations and diversity initiatives across local government and contribute to the development of the regional equality, diversity, and inclusion strategy. The membership of this group is drawn from stakeholder bodies across the local government sector and includes Chief Executives, Diversity Ambassadors, Equality Officers, Good Relations Officers and HR Officers in Councils, trade union Officers and Staff Commission members, as well as representatives from external stakeholder groups.

During the reporting period the Council's Our People Programme Steering Group was established. This group oversees the implementation of the People Programme of Work to include the workstreams of: Communication & Engagement; Values, Behaviours and Customer Care, Employee Recognition; Equality, Diversity & Inclusion; Health & Wellbeing; and Leadership and Development.

The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Workstream developed an Action Plan, identifying resources required and oversees its implementation and reporting on progress to the Our People Programme Steering Group. The plan includes actions to enhance equality, diversity, and inclusion within the workplace.

A staff engagement forum was also established, and it provided feedback on the proposed actions in the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan.

A new three year contract with AccessAble was agreed. The Council funds the review of the detailed Access Guides on [www.AccessAble.co.uk](http://www.AccessAble.co.uk) relating to Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon. Working with over 150 partners AccessAble produces Access Guides to places people want or need to visit, publishing them on [www.AccessAble.co.uk](http://www.AccessAble.co.uk) and the AccessAble App. The access guides are for anyone with accessibility requirements. The annual review of surveyed venues was carried out and the review report was produced. A number of survey updates were detailed in the report. There was representation from AccessAble at the Stakeholder Engagement Events in December.

### **Translation and Interpretation and Access to Information and Services**

A number of access arrangements were in place for Georgian Day, Saturday 30 November 2024 which included

- Mobile Accessible Toilet from 12noon – 9pm, Mall East
- Accessible portable toilets from 12noon – 9pm, Mall East
- Quiet Space from 12noon – 9pm Market Place Theatre
- Quiet Space from 12noon – 6pm, The Mall
- Disabled Parking within City Centre Car Parks
- Disabled access on the Park & Ride Coaches
- Light Show pre-bookable Accessible Platform, Sensory areas, disabled parking

During the reporting period the council provided Translation & Interpretation in a number of service areas which included the following:

- Updates to the resident guide were translated into the following languages: Romanian, Bulgarian, Tetum, Ukrainian, Polish, Arabic, Lithuanian, Portuguese. This was funded through the Good Relations Plan

The following translation and interpretation costs were funded under the Asylum Seeker Dispersal Fund and Refugee Integration Fund

#### **Asylum Seeker Dispersal Workshops**

- Arabic Translation for SRC and Law Centre Workshop
- Arabic Translation for Small Worlds Workshop
- Arabic Translation for Food Hygiene Training
- Arabic Translation for First Aid Training
- Arabic Translation for CV building Workshop

#### **Community Support Hub**

- Tetum Interpreting Service
- Translation of the Community Support Hub Flyers – 5 languages
- Bulgarian Interpreter for Armagh Community Support Hub

A French Interpreter supported the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Day of Twinning between Banbridge and Ruelle, France on 9 May 2024.

Discounted membership for carers has been officially introduced across the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council's GetActive ABC leisure facilities.

Following a successful pilot scheme of the GetActive ABC carers card, led by Council and the Southern Health and Social Care Trust (SHSCT), eligible caregivers will receive 20% discount to normal membership fees providing access to gym, swimming pools, classes in all centres, water sports and footgolf at Craigavon Golf and Ski Centre.

Speaking about the initiative, Deputy Lord Mayor, Cllr Kyle Savage said: "This pilot was extremely well received with carers across the borough. We want to keep momentum going by striving to ensure that access to fitness and leisure facilities remains as affordable as possible.

Carers play a vital role in keeping vulnerable people safe. It's a rewarding yet demanding role that places huge pressure on the caregiver and it's important they get the opportunity to look after their own physical and mental health and wellbeing by getting active."

The GetActive ABC carers card is open to any ABC borough carer of an adult or child who uses the Southern Trust's Learning Disability and Fostering services.

The Market Place Theatre achieved Autism NI's Impact Award for another 3 years, demonstrating staff's ongoing commitment to inclusion for autistic and neurodivergent customers. They first achieved the award in 2020, with staff achieving reaccreditation following an assessment. Sensory packs, pre-visit information and a quiet room are some examples of the support available.

Other adjustments the Market Place Theatre have in place include:

- Dementia Friendly Screenings - the films are carefully selected, and the layout of the venue is changed to suit more people with mobility problems. All audience members receive a cup of tea/coffee & biscuits.
- Accessible Performances for Pantomime – 2 relaxed performances were organised, 1 for the public and 1 for school audiences. There is a BSL signed performance and a captioned performance.
- Relaxed film screenings were introduced to help those who may benefit from a more relaxed environment.
- Many activities/workshops are aimed at specific age groups such as young people.

A new public sensory garden was created at Oxford Island and will provide a therapeutic and inclusive area, promoting positive physical and mental health and wellbeing.

The project was part funded by the Department for Communities through its Access and Inclusion Fund with almost £30,000 allocated to the garden. A further £3,273 of funding for the project was provided by the Council. The garden was developed by the Council to provide a therapeutic and calming outdoor sanctuary and to support children and adults who have additional needs, disabilities or are living with an illness or health condition.

### **Equality Training**

During the reporting period twenty-six sessions of Equality and Diversity Training were delivered to staff. Nine of these were delivered at corporate induction. The remaining sessions were delivered either face to face with specific departments or online. These sessions were tailored to suit the different job roles. This training covers the section 75 duties and the Disability Action Plan, anti-discrimination legislation with further emphasis on the Disability Discrimination Act and communicating with people with a range of disabilities. A total of three hundred and thirty two staff attended. Evaluation of the training revealed that staff found the use of examples helpful and the explanation of the legislative requirements. An online workshop was organised for the Council's elected members. It also covered information on the section 75 duties. Sixteen Members attended.

Three hundred and seventy four staff attended Code of Conduct and Equality training.

Four sessions of Policy Screening, Equality and Rural Needs Impact Assessment Training were delivered online via Microsoft Teams to staff members responsible for policy development. The training covers an outline of the equality and good relations duties, when and how to screen and when to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment.

## PART A

A total of thirty nine staff attended. Evaluation of this training revealed that staff had a better understanding of the policies and procedures in place regarding the section 75 processes and enjoyed the breakout rooms and the case studies.

Other training was delivered to ensure Council staff have a better understanding of the needs of our residents, customers, and employees and to further promote equality of opportunity.

Two sessions of Neurodiversity – Autism, Dyslexia & ADHD/ADD were delivered online by Employers for Disability NI. A total of fifty five staff attended. Evaluation of this training showed that staff found the course very worthwhile and gained a much better understanding of neurodiversity in the workplace and the steps employers can take.

Ten staff members attended Epilepsy Awareness and one attended Dyslexia training.

The Policy, Equality & Diversity Team delivered three sessions of 'Every Customer Counts' training. This included Facility Managers, Managers from the Tourism, Arts and Culture Department and Managers from the Outdoor Leisure Team. The training covered advice on how to become more disability aware and highlighting the business case for promoting accessible services. The Managers were advised of the 'Every Customer Counts Access Checklist' which they can conduct on their own facility and may assist them in making reasonable adjustments for their disabled customers.

The Policy, Equality & Diversity Manager delivered a 30-minute presentation to Managers on equality and section 75 as part of the Core Management Programme.

A representative from the Equality Commission attended a meeting of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to deliver an awareness session on equality, section 75, and anti-discrimination law.

2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2024-25 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

1. **Undertake activities to provide opportunities for people from all section 75 groups to take part in community planning such as Participatory Budgeting. A minimum of 1 activity to be delivered annually.**

During the mid-point review of the Community Plan equality focus groups were held with the following:

- Disability sector x 3
- ABC Seniors Network
- Youth Voice
- LGBTQ+
- Women's Sector

2. **Under the 3 overall objectives of Mental Health & Wellbeing, Suicide Prevention & Physical Health & Wellbeing- work with people in the top 30% deprived areas of the Borough to deliver programmes that will tackle Health Inequalities. Annual action plan delivered. (Gender, Age, Disability, Dependants, Race, Religion/Political Opinion)**

During the year 998 participants attended a variety of sessions aimed at improving their mental health and physical health and wellbeing. Examples included Take 5, Take 5 Ambassador and Review, Renew and Relax, Strength and Balance programmes, Chair Yoga, Chi Me programme and Tai Chi for Health programmes. The Council's Health Improvement Team delivered these. The majority of participants on these programmes reside in deprived areas. This team also signposted participants to suicide prevention programmes and physical health & Wellbeing programmes delivered by partners such as the Trust.

3. **Delivery of Sporting programmes to improve health & wellbeing across the categories of Age, Gender, and Dependants. A target of 10 sports development activities to be delivered annually was noted in the plan.**

An incorrect target was recorded for this action. 529 targeted programmes were delivered. 252 of these were targeted at young people, 68 for Women and Girls, 53 for older people and 208 were for those with Disability and Health Conditions (Macmillan Move More programme)

4. **Peace Plus Local Community Action Plan submitted to SEUPB for approval in August 2024. Action Plan to be delivered.**

The Plan was not approved until March 2025, and the letter of offer was not received until beyond the reporting period.

5. **Delivery of Holistic Male Health Programmes. 3 programmes to be delivered annually.**

Armagh Community

Ardmore 8 week Men's Health Programme

An 8-week Men's Health programme commenced on the 15 January and completed on the 12 March 2025 with a celebration event. 15 men registered for the programme and 14 completed. Health checks and a number of information

sessions covering a range of topics was delivered as part of this programme. Evaluations from the programme were very positive with the majority of men continuing with a six week boot camp. As a result of taking part in the programme 92% of participants maintained or reduced their weight/BMI readings.

#### Armagh Men's Shed

Men's Shed Cook It- A cook It programme was delivered to 5 members of Armagh Men's Shed over February and March 2025.

#### Banbridge Community

##### Future Proof, Youth Engagement Service, Banbridge

Working in partnership with the Youth Engagement Officer and following a needs assessment, a programme was developed and delivered to a group of up to 12 young men, age ranging from 11-18 years with various physical and learning disabilities in the Banbridge Community. Activities included I Can Cook It! Programme; Healthy Relationships and various health & wellbeing talks.

#### Craigavon Community

##### South Lake Leisure Centre Men's Health & Lifestyle Programme

A total of twenty men took part in a 10-week health & lifestyle programme. Awareness sessions included: Health Checks; Start360 – Drugs & Alcohol; Cancer Focus – Cancer awareness, Vaping & Smoking; Chest Heart & Stroke – Heart Health awareness; Action Mental Health on Emotional Wellbeing – Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing; Diabetes UK & Healthy Eating; Men's Alliance - Male Domestic Abuse Awareness & weekly physical activity sessions. Group evaluation and baseline results showed:

- 75% lowered BMI levels.
- 100% felt the programme was worthwhile.
- 100% stated they will continue physical activities following the programme

#### Portadown Men's Shed

In order to tackle loneliness and isolation, over fourteen older men took part in a 5-week Men's Health & Wellbeing Information project which included Slow Cooker; Take 5 Talk; Save an Adults Life Workshop; Healthy Eating and Crime Prevention/ Home Security, in order to help give them the tools and support needed to live independent and happy lives.

#### Annaghmore Men's Sheds

Health & Lifestyle Programme; Slow Cooker Bitesize Session was delivered to a total of six older men, tackling social isolation and providing the tools to live happily independently.

#### International Men's Health Day – 19 November 2024

The ABC Health Inequalities Team provided support in partnership with the Epicentre. Various health organisations were contacted to provide support on the night, i.e. Start360, Drugs and Alcohol Awareness, ABC Health Inequalities; Tobacco control – Vaping; Resilience speakers.

**6. Support the annual Male Health Conference in partnership with Southern Area Men's Health Steering Group. Conference delivered annually.**

Southern Area Men's Health Steering Group – Annual Men's Health Event – March 2025

'Strong Foundations – Healthy Relationships Matter' was the theme of this year's Men's Health Conference delivered by the Southern Area Men's Health Steering Group at the Lough Neagh Discovery Centre on Thursday 13 March 2025. A total of one hundred and seventeen representatives from local schools, men's sheds, men's health organisations and professionals working with men attended the event, which focussed on the importance of establishing strong and healthy foundations that support positive relationships at all stages of life. Through a series of workshops and discussions, guests received practical tips and tools to support them through their life journey of making better social connections with family and friends, developing healthy hobbies, embracing the power of exercise and signposting to local support services. The Deputy Lord Mayor opened the event with his own inspirational story followed by guest speaker, Kevin Duggan, Interim Social Care Commissioning Lead who delivered a powerful presentation on building the foundations of strong and healthy relationships between fathers and their children in the early years.

**7. Organise and Deliver Local Democracy Event. Event delivered annually.**

Deputy Lord Mayor Cllr Kyle Savage welcomed young people and leaders from the newly established ABC Youth Voice to the Council Chamber on Tuesday 15 October to participate in Local Democracy Week.

Council's Community Development and Community Planning Departments are working in partnership with the Education Authority's Youth Service to support the group of young people, aged 16 to 19 years old, in the 'Youth Voice' project.

The theme for the event was "Local communities putting democratic resilience at the forefront" and members of ABC Youth voice had the opportunity to learn how Council operates as well as ask questions to a number of our elected representatives.

**8. Report on the actions achieved under the Age Friendly Action Plan. Action Plan delivered annually.**

While the Council's Age Friendly Officer reports on all actions achieved under the Age Friendly Action Plan, the Council takes the lead or works in partnership on several activities.

Activities

- Digital IG Programme Celebration  
As part of a Digital Inclusion Programme, a group of local adults were mentored over a six-week period by Year 13 A Level pupils from St. Patrick's Grammar in Armagh on a range of IT skills. This was a partnership with the Promoting Wellbeing Team in SHSCT, Ark Housing and the Council's Age Friendly Officer.

- ABC Senior Network Craft Event  
The Council's Age Friendly Officer worked in partnership with the ABC Senior's Network to organise and deliver a Spring Craft Event. 33 older people attended the event in Banbridge Old Town hall. The activity was a great opportunity to make new connections and learn new transferable skills that could be brought back to their own older people's groups.
- Volunteer Now Event  
The Council's Age Friendly Officer worked in partnership with Volunteer Now to launch the start of Volunteering week in May 2025.
- Lord Mayors Age Friendly Tea Dance  
Organised by the Council's Age Friendly Officer and hosted by the Lord Mayor, an afternoon Tea Dance was held on 30th May 2024 at the Palace, Armagh. There was over one hundred and ten attendees.
- Intergenerational Training  
The Council's Age Friendly Officer completed The CPD Standards Office CPD accredited activity, An Introduction to Intergenerational Practice for Youth & Older People's Practitioners delivered by: Linking Generations Northern Ireland.
- Age Friendly Design Principles  
The Council's Age Friendly Officer in partnership with the Age Friendly Officer in Belfast lead on the subgroup – Age Friendly Design Options for Age Friendly Communities. This subgroup took forward one action this year: a Webinar (Creating Age-Friendly Developments). A Housing Needs Survey was carried out just beyond the reporting period.
- Kindness Post-box and cards to Sunnymeade Residential Home  
The Council's Age Friendly Officer working in partnership with the Southern Health and Social Care Trust and the Participatory Budgeting Working Group visited Sunnymeade Residential home to deliver some messages and artwork posted in the Kindness Post-box that were written as part of a children's activity for the Participatory Budgeting Marketplace Events.
- Loneliness Awareness Event with ABC Loneliness Network  
The Council's Age Friendly Officer worked in partnership with the ABC Loneliness Network to support and promote the work of the Network. The Loneliness Network launched the awareness campaign which ran from the 10 to 16 June and encouraged people to connect with each other and to undertake some simple 'Random Acts of Connection' which was the theme for this year's Loneliness Awareness Week (LAW).
- Physical Activity Messaging for older adults  
The Council's Age Friendly Officer working in partnership with the SHSCT and other Age Friendly Officers in the Southern area launched a 'Movement for Life' competition to capture and celebrate positive images of over 50s being active. The winning photographs will be used to form a Trust-wide campaign which will raise awareness of the many physical and mental health benefits of staying active as we get older.

- Banbridge Town Centre Walking Audit  
Working in partnership with the Council's Regeneration Team, the Age Friendly Officer organised a meeting with older people who use Banbridge Town Centre on a regular basis, to carry out a Walking Audit. This was to gather views on the location of street furniture, smart benches, and new signage within the town centre as well as the impact current arrangements and proposed changes would have on pedestrians using the town centre.
- ABC Seniors Newsletter (Positive Ageing Month Edition)  
2500 hard copies of the Positive Ageing Month edition of ABC Seniors Newsletter have been printed and distributed to digitally excluded older people.
- ABC Seniors Network Tea Dances  
The Council's Age Friendly Officer worked in partnership with ABC Senior Network to successfully host three tea dances across Gilford, Portadown, and Keady to promote Positive Ageing Month. The events drew approximately one hundred and fifty attendees
- Age Friendly focus group have their say on the Community Plan  
The Council's Age Friendly Officer in partnership with ABC Seniors Network and the Council's Community Planning Dept. in Council brought together 24 people aged 50+ for a focus group to have their say on the future direction of the borough's Community Plan.
- Age Friendly Champions  
Four elected members were appointed as Age Friendly Champions. The Age Friendly Champions came together to support those pensioners who may be impacted by the changes to the winter fuel payments. At its monthly meeting in September 2024, the Council agreed to write to the Prime Minister urging the government to reverse the changes to winter fuel payments.
- ABC Seniors Newsletter (Spring Edition)  
The ABC Seniors Newsletter had a host of advice and activities to help make the most of the longer days. It was shared extensively online, and 2000 hard copies went out to digitally excluded people in the Borough.
- ABC Seniors Network AGM  
The ABC Seniors AGM took place in January with 40 attendees.
- LGNI's Network Meeting (covering the areas of Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon, Mid Ulster and Newry, Mourne & Down Network)  
A meeting took place on 18 February and the Council's Age Friendly Officer provided an update on activities within the ABC Borough.
- Boccia Programme  
The Council's Age Friendly Officer in partnership with the Southern Health and Social Care Trust and Ark Housing Association ran an 8 week Programme in Armagh facilitated by Sport Changes Life
- Armchair Yoga  
The Council's Age Friendly Officer in partnership with the Health Improvement Officer offered a Chair Yoga Programme for participants aged 50+ which took place in Banbridge Leisure Centre.

- **Afternoon Tea Dance**  
In January 250 people aged 50+ attended an ABC Age Friendly Tea Dance held in the Armagh City Hotel. It was organised by the Council's Age Friendly Officer and funded by the Public Health Agency. As well as the tea dance, the event included information stands from a wide range of Service Providers who were on hand to offer helpful advice.
- **Move More to Live More Programme**  
This is a 2 week health and wellbeing, falls prevention programme for anyone aged 65+ delivered by Age NI. Expert speakers spoke on different aspects of health, such as sleep, nutrition, and mental health and how this can relate to falls. Each session ended with some strength and balance exercises for all abilities and light refreshments were served to encourage building connections with participants to reduce loneliness and social isolation. The programmes took part in: Richhill (15 participants), Banbridge (15 participants), Rathfriland (14 participants), Eire Og Golden Years Club (14 participants) and Derrynoose (15 participants)

**9. Women Returners Programme, Disability Employment Programme (12 people), Migrant Workers Support, Get Future Ready Programme-Economic Development Labour Market Partnership. Programmes delivered annually**

The only programme that ran in 24-25 was the Disability Employment Programme

	Target %	Actual %
Annual Completion Rate %	80	73
Qualifications Achieved %	80	100
Employment Gained by Completers %	50	65

**10. Undertake an audit of existing information systems within Council departments to identify opportunities to use section 75 monitoring data to inform decision making and service delivery.**

The Policy, Equality & Diversity Manager held discussions with Tier 4 Managers and Business Support Officers across most departments to identify data currently collected and consider the potential to collect more detailed section 75 data. A report was presented to the Heads of Department in March setting out recommendations and highlighting the challenges and opportunities in doing so. Opportunities to increase the use of monitoring data will be further explored in the next reporting period.

**11. Review of the Accessible Communication & Inclusive Language Guide, Inclusive & Accessible Events Guide and Translation and Interpretation Procedure to ensure staff can support customers effectively.**

These guides were updated during the reporting period and approved at Heads of Department meetings. Staff were advised of the changes via the internal staff magazine 'The Inside Line.' These documents will be kept under review.

- 12. Council's Diversity Ambassadors (Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor, Policy, Equality & Diversity Manager and Organisational Development and Performance Manager) to participate in the Diversity Ambassador Programme and explore networking opportunities across the 11 Councils. Attend 4 workshops.**

Only three workshops were held during the reporting period. These were attended by at least one Diversity Ambassador.

A workshop was held in June 'Equality, Diversity & Inclusion in Employability & Talent Management in Council and Community.' A best practice event was held in October and the Policy, Equality & Diversity Manager delivered a presentation on the Council's Inclusive ABC initiative. A network meeting was held in November.

- 13. All new and amended policies screened before Council approval and implementation, ongoing 2024-2027**

The Policy, Equality & Diversity Manager attended Head of Department and Senior Leadership Team meetings throughout the reporting period advising on the updated Policy Development Guidance and the Inclusive and Accessible Events Guidance. This was further communicated via Heads of Department to their teams via email or at their Department Management Team meetings.

Details of all Council policies are located on a Smartsheet with all relevant dates added to include approval date, equality screening and automated review dates. This has created a more efficient procedure for policy review, and it has a traffic light system in place for all ABC council approved policies. The Heads of Department have viewer access. During the reporting period Heads were provided with regular reports detailing the status of policies and strategies and when they were due for review.

All policies are required to have a completed screening form attached before the relevant Council committee consider them. The Committee reporting template also includes a section – Equality, Rural Needs or Good Relations Implications. This ensures that any equality and good relations implications are brought to the elected members' attention. Equality Impact Assessments are conducted where it is considered proportionate to do so in order to further examine the policy for equality impacts, mitigation, and/or opportunities to promote equality of opportunity. Staff members are regularly reminded to adhere to these guidelines. During the reporting period 22 policies were screened as part of the development process. An EQIA on the mid-point review of the borough Community Plan was also commenced. Policy screening reports were issued in September and December.

- 14. Mandatory Induction Training for all new employees, which includes Equality & Diversity training. 80% of new staff to complete Induction Training within first 3 months of employment.**

76% of new staff completed Induction Training within the first 3 months of employment which is just below the target of 80%. Many employees had arranged to attend the training later in the year.

**15. Provide Equality and Diversity Training for all staff. 3 sessions to be delivered annually.**

During the reporting period 26 sessions of Equality and Diversity Training were delivered to staff. 9 of these were delivered at corporate induction. The remaining sessions were delivered either face to face with specific departments or online. These sessions were tailored to suit the different job roles. This training covers the section 75 duties and the Disability Action Plan, anti-discrimination legislation with further emphasis on the Disability Discrimination Act and communicating with people with a range of disabilities. A total of 332 staff attended. Evaluation of the training revealed that staff found the use of examples helpful and the explanation of the legislative requirements.

**16. Provide Equality and Diversity Training for Elected Members. 1 session to be delivered annually.**

An online workshop was organised for the Council's Elected Members. It also covered information on the section 75 duties. Sixteen Members attended.

**17. Encourage Tier 4 Managers to support staff completion of corporate eLearning modules – Equality and Diversity in the Workplace and Autism Awareness. Attend three Team meetings and one meeting of the Tier 4 Managers Keeping Connected Network.**

The e-learning modules are currently being redeveloped so there was no engagement with Tier 4 Managers in relation to these modules. However, The Policy, Equality & Diversity Team delivered 3 sessions of 'Every Customer Counts' training. This included Facility Managers, Tier 4 Managers in Tourism, Arts and Culture and Tier 4 Managers in Outdoor Leisure. The training covered advice on how to become more disability aware and highlighting the business case for promoting accessible services. The Managers were advised of the 'Every Customer Counts Access Checklist' which they can conduct on their own facility and may assist them in making reasonable adjustments for their disabled customers.

The Policy, Equality & Diversity Manager also delivered a 30-minute presentation to Managers on equality and section 75 as part of the Core Management Programme.

**18. The Council's Emerging Issues Working Group will explore and develop options for progression on the arrangements around flags and emblems. Time frame to be agreed with Working Group**

This group met in April to consider a number of emerging issues which included bonfires and third parties placing flags on Council property. The Working Group meets when required.

**19. Promotion of Health & Wellbeing activities and awareness raising for categories of Gender, Age, and those with dependants. Activities delivered annually.**

10 activities relating to the categories of Gender, Age and those with dependants were delivered during the reporting period.

The following activities were delivered:

- Healthcare Cash Plan information sessions
- NILGOSC online information session
- Menopause Nutritionist
- Money Matters – Menopause and pensions
- Retirement Workshop
- Strength & Balance
- Tai Chi
- DrumTastic
- Men's Cancer NI Keeping well vans
- Carers Coffee Morning

**20. Organise International Women's Day Events during the month of March for post primary schools, staff, and promote using Council's social media platforms. 2 events delivered annually**

In March 2025, the Council organised various events to celebrate International Women's Day.

The Council demonstrated its commitment to celebrating women's achievements and supporting gender equality when it hosted a special event for local schools at Craigavon Civic and Conference Centre on Tuesday 11 March to mark International Women's Day. Around 140 pupils heard from an exciting line up of speakers.

They included Lord Mayor and Diversity Ambassador Cllr Sarah Duffy, Council Deputy Chief Executive Charlene Stoops, and international musician and motivational coach Amanda St. John. Local entrepreneur Lauren Toal, who runs her own brand and marketing consultancy, hosted the event.

These inspiring role models spoke very openly, each sharing their journeys and experiences and providing insights into how they have championed inclusion as well as overcome challenges in their professional and personal lives.

The staff International Women's Day event which took place on Wednesday 5 March at Craigavon Civic Centre saw two incredible guest speakers, Emer Maguire and Ruth Allen share their inspiring journeys, life experiences and invaluable insights with us.

The event was a resounding success, reflecting our commitment to championing gender equality and empowering women across our organisation and beyond.

During the same week over fifty ladies from walking netball groups across Northern Ireland gathered at Banbridge Leisure Centre for on-the-court and off-the-court activities to celebrate International Women's Day.

The event was organised by the Council's Sports Development Department and funded by Sport NI, through the District Council's Community Planning Investment Programme.

On 8 March, the Market Place Theatre held a panel discussion, and the theme was Women in Culture.

To celebrate International Women's Day a series of videos featuring women in a range of professional roles was posted on Urban ABC and details shared on the Council's Facebook page. Six inspirational women shared their stories to success.

**21. Establish a section 75 baseline for the Council's staff in partnership with the Local Government Staff Commission.**

While monitoring questions were agreed during the previous reporting period, the survey has been postponed until the Council acquires a new HR system which is anticipated in 2026.

**3** Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures, and/or service delivery areas during the 2024-25 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes

No (go to Q.4)

Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

### **Community Plan**

During the reporting period the mid-point review of the borough Community Plan was undertaken with several engagement workshops held, and a public consultation was launched in October 2024 via the Consultation Hub, shared with section 75 stakeholders, and advertised on social media. An Equality Impact Assessment and a section 75 monitoring questionnaire were attached to the consultation. The Community Plan serves as the main framework for the Borough, aiming to enhance social, economic, and environmental well-being while connecting local government community plans with the new Programme for Government as a model for funding and investment. The final EQIA was approved just beyond the reporting period.

### **Corporate Plan**

The Council's current Corporate Plan is for the period 2023-2027. During the previous reporting period both staff and elected members were engaged in the development of the Plan, and it was issued for formal consultation on the Consultation Hub in December 2023, shared with section 75 stakeholders and advertised on social media. An equality screening exercise and a section 75 monitoring questionnaire were attached to the consultation. Analysis of the monitoring questionnaire indicated that a broad range of people responded to the consultation.

The Corporate Plan sets out the vision of the organisation, its values, and priorities. It is the roadmap for delivery of the Borough Community Plan 2017-2030.

The three values in the Corporate Plan will shape the culture, behaviour and decision making and overall identity of the organisation.

1. People Centred – Inclusive and welcoming, a place where people and staff are valued. Engage positively in partnership working, empowering others to achieve success.
2. Leaders.
3. Responsible.

The first value recognises the importance of inclusion in everything we do.

The plan has five priorities.

1. Environment & Place
2. Community Wellbeing
3. Economic Growth
4. Service Delivery
5. Staff, leadership, and Resources

## **Performance Improvement Plan**

The annual Performance Improvement Plans are central to ensuring we are delivering on our vision and meeting the needs of a range of stakeholders in the Borough many of whom will fall within the nine section 75 categories. Council strategies, plans, projects, and services linked to draft performance improvement objectives (PIO's) have been or are required to be equality screened in order to ensure that the Council's statutory duty to promote equality and good relations is considered.

The Performance Improvement Plan 2025-2026 was issued for consultation in February 2025. It was placed on the Consultation Hub, shared with section 75 stakeholders, and advertised on social media. An equality screening exercise and a section 75 monitoring questionnaire were attached to the consultation.

PI01 relates to sickness absence, and this has the potential to positively impact on Disability. PI04 relates to communications on waste management, and this has the potential to positively impact on both Disability and Race.

## **Disability Action Plan, Audit of Inequalities and Equality Action Plan**

During the previous reporting period the Council commenced its revision of the Disability Action Plan, Audit of Inequalities and Equality Action Plan. They were issued for formal consultation on the Consultation Hub and advertised on social media. Equality screening exercises were attached to the consultations as well as section 75 monitoring questionnaires. Further stakeholder engagement took place in April 2024.

The actions contained within the Equality Action Plan reflect four of the priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan. These are:

- Community Wellbeing
- Economic Growth
- Service Delivery
- Staff Leadership and Resources

We received thirty two responses to the Disability Action Plan questionnaire via the Consultation Hub and a further seventeen written responses.

Support was given to the actions within the draft Disability Action Plan, as all the actions received between 96% to 100% agreement from consultees. 12% of respondents were male, 86% female. Responses were received from all the section 75 age categories with the exception of the 0–15-year age group. 26.5% of respondents cared for a disabled child and 26.5% also for other dependent children. 32% stated that they have a disability noting long-term health condition, physical disability, sensory disability, or mental health condition.

As a result of the feedback received regarding the importance of consultation and engagement a further action was added to the plan under the theme of Partnership Working and it is to facilitate an annual stakeholder engagement event. This will provide us with the opportunity to engage with the public as part of our commitment to continuous improvement.

One response was received in relation to the Equality Action Plan questionnaire via the consultation hub and a further seventeen written responses.

Support was given to our proposed actions with all of the actions receiving 71% to 94% support. However, the majority of these responses were submitted in the absence of a face-to-face meeting with Council officers, and this may have impacted their

understanding of what is being proposed. 18% of respondents were male and 82% female. In relation to the analysis of the other categories one respondent who completed the Section 75 monitoring questionnaire was a heterosexual female aged 45-54yrs, married/civil partnership, Irish, white, non-disabled. All other respondents were members of a local community group who didn't share any section 75 data apart from gender. Following further review by officers the first action within the Plan which relates to section 75 monitoring was amended.

In line with best practice and to close the consultation loop, the 'We asked, You Said, We Did' section of Council's Consultation Hub was updated accordingly. The final plans were also issued to consultees and placed on the website.

## **Policy Development and Policy Screening**

### **Dromore Place Plan**

The Dromore Place Plan has been developed following an extensive engagement and research exercise. Led by the Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon Community Planning Partnership, with co design by the people who live, work, and visit Dromore, setting out a shared vision for the future to improve the social, economic, and environmental aspects of the town.

Desktop research of the available evidence from NISRA and Statutory Partners was compiled to support development of Dromore Place Plan.

The research showed that children and young people; older people; people with a disability and carers are affected by the current urban form, layout and engagement that happens in the town. Common themes identified were:

- Skills and employment
- Accessibility and movement around the area
- Transportation

These are reflected in the actions in the plan and the plan commits the partnership to ongoing dialogue with section 75 groups to ensure that their needs are addressed in its implementation.

Section 75 groups were invited to attend two separate meetings in May 24 and January 2025. 614 people got involved in the development of the plan between April-June 2024.

A formal consultation on the Dromore Place Plan commenced in November 2024. In addition to the online survey placed on the Consultation Hub there was an opportunity to attend local public consultation and activity events within Dromore. An equality screening exercise and a section 75 monitoring questionnaire were attached to the consultation. It was also shared with section 75 stakeholders, advertised on social media, within local newspapers, through word of mouth and with flyers.

Analysis of the section 75 monitoring questionnaire showed that a higher proportion of respondents to the online survey stipulated that they had no religion compared to the census data for the Dromore settlement. Information about Political opinion was gathered during the community engagement survey. There was a high proportion of

respondents choosing the 'Neither' category to whether they were Unionist or Nationalist. 98.3% of the survey respondents identified as white which aligns to the census data.

The majority of survey respondents were in the 45–54 years age bracket, followed closely by 35–44 years. 26.97% of the survey respondents were aged 55+ years. This highlights a lack of engagement by children and young people via the survey.

This was recognised during the engagement phase and separate activities for children and young people were delivered: -

- A Dromore Park design session was held with Dromore Central Primary School, Primary 6 children.
- Young people from the Dromore High School youth club took part in a photography project 'The Good, The Bad and More of Dromore.'

To further engage with persons within the Age Friendly category a session was held with members of the Dromore Knit and Natter group and a number of Older Persons dropped into the weekly Forums to chat with the team on a 1 – 1 basis.

A higher proportion of respondents to the consultation were married at 75% compared to the census data. A lower percentage of single people responded at 15%. Statistics from the engagement survey for sexual orientation are very similar in breakdown to the census data. The majority of people who completed the survey were female. The majority of people who completed the survey stated they had no disability. The majority of respondents who completed the survey had the responsibility for the care of a child/children.

### **Policy Screening and Guidance Updates**

Details of all council policies are located on a Smartsheet with all relevant dates added to include approval date, equality screening and automated review dates. This has created a more efficient procedure for policy review, and it has a traffic light system in place for all ABC council approved policies. The Heads of Department have viewer access. During the reporting period Heads were provided with regular reports detailing the status of policies and strategies and when they were due for review.

### **Stakeholder Engagement – Disability Action Plan**

As a result of the feedback received during the Disability Action Plan consultation a further action was added to the plan to facilitate an annual stakeholder engagement event.

Three stakeholder engagement events were arranged in December 2024 to mark International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December. Events were held in Loughbrickland on 4 December and in Ardmore Recreation Centre and Craigavon Civic Centre on 10 December. The Deputy Lord Mayor Cllr Kyle Savage opened the Craigavon event, noting he was proud to hold the role of Diversity Ambassador and raise awareness about the importance of embracing diversity and fostering an inclusive environment in the borough. The Council's section 75 consultees, members of the Inclusive ABC Working Groups, (operational and strategic) were advised of these events and colleagues within Community Planning and the Southern Health and Social Care Trust were also advised to issue to their relevant contacts. Details were widely shared on social media. A total of 34 people attended the events.

At each of the Disability Stakeholder events we asked the participants – in relation to service provision for those with disabilities:

- What does Council do well? and
- Where could Council do better?

We received several comments in relation to how Council communicates with residents, and particularly our reliance on social media. These and other comments relating to communication were addressed by the Communications and Branding Team.

Just beyond the reporting period participants were advised of the outcome of these stakeholder events and the steps Council had or was planning to take to address their concerns. This information was also made available on the InclusiveABC page of the corporate website.

### **Inclusive ABC Working Groups**

The Inclusive ABC Operational Working Group was established in the previous reporting period, and it evolved from the Autism Friendly Working Group to enable consideration of a range of issues that may affect our disabled customers. The group also informs the actions included in the Council's Equality and Disability Action Plans and met 7 times during the reporting period.

Following a Notice of Motion in November 2023 the Inclusive ABC Operational Working Group was extended to include Members from the existing Health Working Group and other stakeholders (as and when required). The group met quarterly and reported to the Governance, Resources and Strategy Committee. Topics of discussion included how best to incorporate a total communications approach, stakeholder engagement events, and a presentation and discussion with Communication Access UK.

The Operational Working Group is a subgroup reporting into the Inclusive ABC Strategic Working Group.

### **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Workstream**

During the reporting period the Council's Our People Programme Steering Group was established. This group oversees the implementation of the People Programme of Work to include the workstreams of: Communication & Engagement; Values, Behaviours and Customer Care, Employee Recognition; Equality, Diversity & Inclusion; Health & Wellbeing; and Leadership and Development.

The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Workstream will develop a draft Action Plan, identifying resources required and will oversee its implementation and reporting on progress to the Our People Programme Steering Group. The plan will include actions to enhance equality, diversity, and inclusion within the workplace.

A staff engagement forum was also established, and it provided feedback to the proposed actions in the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan.

### **Improvements to Service Delivery**

The Market Place Theatre achieved Autism NI's Impact Award for another 3 years, demonstrating staff's ongoing commitment to inclusion for autistic and neurodivergent customers. They first achieved the award in 2020, with staff achieving reaccreditation following an assessment. Sensory packs, pre-visit information and a quiet room are some examples of the support available.

Other adjustments the Market Place Theatre have in place include:

- Dementia Friendly Screenings - the films are carefully selected, and the layout of the venue is changed to suit more people with mobility problems. All audience members receive a cup of tea/coffee & biscuits.
- Accessible Performances for Pantomime – 2 relaxed performances were organised, 1 for the public and 1 for school audiences. There is a BSL signed performance and a captioned performance.
- Relaxed film screenings were introduced to help those who may benefit from a more relaxed environment.
- Many activities/workshops are aimed at specific age groups such as young people.

A new public sensory garden was created at Oxford Island and will provide a therapeutic and inclusive area, promoting positive physical and mental health and wellbeing.

The project was part funded by the Department for Communities through its Access and Inclusion Fund with almost £30,000 allocated to the garden. A further £3,273 of funding for the project was provided by the Council. The garden was developed by the Council to provide a therapeutic and calming outdoor sanctuary and to support children and adults who have additional needs, disabilities or are living with an illness or health condition.

The relaxed Christmas event returned to Bleary Business and Community Centre, Craigavon and additional sessions were made available due to demand. The Relaxed Christmas experience is designed to provide a memorable and enjoyable festive environment for families with children who have autism or Special Educational Needs and offers a range of seasonal activities to give them the opportunity to spend quality time together in a truly magical atmosphere.

A number of access arrangements were in place for Georgian Day, Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024 which included

- Mobile Accessible Toilet from 12noon – 9pm, Mall East
- Accessible portable toilets from 12noon – 9pm, Mall East
- Quiet Space from 12noon – 9pm Market Place Theatre
- Quiet Space from 12noon – 6pm, The Mall
- Disabled Parking within City Centre Car Parks
- Disabled access on the Park & Ride Coaches
- Light Show pre-bookable Accessible Platform, Sensory areas, disabled parking

Further information was added to 'Inclusive ABC,' the council's dedicated webpage which features information on accessible facilities, activities, and events. Participants at the stakeholder engagement events were advised of this page.

**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:

Engagement with section 75 groups has ensured that actions within the relevant plans have considered their needs. Examples include the mid-point review of the Community Plan, the Disability and Equality Action Plans and the Dromore Place Plan.

As a result of the feedback received during the Disability Action Plan consultation a further action was added to the plan to facilitate an annual stakeholder engagement event. Three events were held in December, and they offered a valuable opportunity to find out where improvements could be made and steps were taken to address concerns and improve access to council services.

The improved process for reviewing policies will ensure that screening is undertaken and in a timely manner so that all equality and good relations implications are considered.

The Inclusive ABC Strategic and Operational Working Groups ensure that issues affecting our disabled customers are discussed and subsequent improvements made to service delivery.

The other service delivery changes referenced in 3a will improve access to services for disabled customers and the communication of these changes will ensure greater awareness among residents of these changes.

**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):*

The Disability and Equality Action Plans and the Dromore Place Plan were equality screened and subject to public consultation.

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

The mid-point review of the Community Plan was subject to an EQIA. Workshops were held with a wide range of stakeholders to help inform changes to the Community Plan.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Changes to services to make them more inclusive includes quiet sessions, the relaxed Christmas experience, adjustments made at the Market Place Theatre as part of the Autism Impact Award, other changes to leisure programmes and facilities and the availability of the Mobile Accessible toilet at several large outdoor events.

Other *(please specify and give details):*

Engagement with stakeholders and follow up discussion with the members of the Inclusive Strategic and Operational Working Groups which subsequently leads to changes in policy and service delivery.

## 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 2024-25 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:

Click or tap here to enter text.

- 5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2024-25 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 section 75 duties are most clearly reflected in the Strategy and Performance Department's Business Plan

- 6 In the 2024-25 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 corporate plan
  - No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2024-25 report
  - Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The Corporate Plan sets out the vision of the organisation, its values, and priorities. It is the roadmap for delivery of the borough Community Plan 2017-2030.

The three values in the Corporate Plan will shape the culture, behaviour and decision making and overall identity of the organisation.

1. People Centred – Inclusive and welcoming, a place where people and staff are valued. Engage positively in partnership working, empowering others to achieve success.
2. Leaders
3. Responsible

The first value recognises the importance of inclusion in everything we do.

The departmental business plans include where appropriate actions which specifically promote equality and good relations. These are linked to the objectives included in the annual performance improvement plan and the Corporate Plan.

The section 75 duties are most clearly reflected in the Strategy and Performance Department's Business Plan.

The Equality Action Plan links the relevant corporate priority to each of the actions included in the plan.

### **Equality action plans/measures**

- 7** Within the 2024-25 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:

14

Actions ongoing:

5

Actions to commence:

3

Please provide any details and examples (*in addition to question 2*):

- 8** Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2024-25 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

The plan was finalised during the reporting period.

PART A

**9** In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2024-25 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 2024-25 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:

During the reporting period several engagement workshops were held, and a public consultation was launched as part of the mid-point review of the borough Community Plan. Consultation documents were placed on the Consultation Hub in October 2024, shared with section 75 stakeholders, and advertised on social media. An Equality Impact Assessment and a section 75 monitoring questionnaire were attached to the consultation.

During the previous reporting period the Council commenced its revision of the Disability Action Plan, Audit of Inequalities and Equality Action Plan. Further stakeholder engagement took place in April 2024.

As a result of the feedback received during the Disability Action Plan consultation a further action was added to the plan to facilitate an annual stakeholder engagement event. Three events were held in December, and they offered a valuable opportunity to find out where improvements could be made and steps were taken to address concerns and improve access to council services.

Work commenced on the development of the Dromore Place Plan. Section 75 groups were invited to attend two separate meetings in May 24 and January 2025. 614 people got involved in the development of the plan between April-June 2024.

A formal consultation on the Dromore Place Plan commenced in November 2024. In addition to the online survey placed on the Consultation Hub there was an opportunity to attend local public consultation and activity events within Dromore.

PART A

It was recognised that there was a lack of engagement from young people via the online survey so during the engagement phase separate activities for children and young people were delivered: -

- A Dromore Park design session was held with Dromore Central Primary School, Primary 6 children.
- Young people from the Dromore High School youth club took part in a photography project 'The Good, The Bad and More of Dromore.'

To further engage with persons within the Age Friendly category a session was held with members of the Dromore Knit and Natter group and a number of Older Persons dropped into the weekly Forums to chat with the team on a 1 – 1 basis.

During the reporting period the Council's Our People Programme Steering Group was established. This group oversees the implementation of the People Programme of Work to include the workstreams of: Communication & Engagement; Values, Behaviours and Customer Care, Employee Recognition; Equality, Diversity & Inclusion; Health & Wellbeing; and Leadership and Development.

A staff engagement forum was also established, and it provided feedback to the proposed actions in the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan.

**12** In the 2024-25 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 by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
- Internet discussions
- Telephone consultations
- Other *(please specify)*: Click or tap here to enter text.

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:

As described in response to question 11 the Council used a range of consultation methods in order to engage section 75 categories in the development of its policies, plan, and strategies.

**13** Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2024-25 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes
- No

PART A

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Section 75 consultees were contacted in relation to the consultations described above in response to q.11. The screening exercises and one EQIA were included on the consultation hub. Section 75 monitoring questionnaires were also included in the consultation exercises for the mid-point review of the borough Community Plan, the Dromore Place Plan, and the Performance Improvement Plan. Details of the Heritage Places Online Survey were issued to the Council's section 75 consultee list.

E-mails and hard copies of documentation are forwarded to potentially interested groups.

There were social media posts advertising the many inclusive activities and events #inclusiveABC.

During the reporting period staff were reminded of the Council's equality duties as training was made available to staff throughout the year. This was advertised via e-mail and in the staff newsletter. Staff were also advised of the updates to the consultation and policy guidance, the updated translation and interpretation guide, the accessible communications and inclusive language guide and the inclusive and accessible events guide.

**14** Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2024-25 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes

No

Not applicable – no commitment to review

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

[\[Equality - Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council\]](#)

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

22

**16** Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2024-25:

Policy consultations conducted with **screening** assessment presented.

2

Policy consultations conducted **with an equality impact assessment** (EQIA) presented.

1

PART A

Consultations for an **EQIA** alone.

0

- 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 consultations that included an equality screening exercise were the Performance Improvement Plan and the Dromore Place Plan. An EQIA was issued with the mid-point review of the borough Community Plan.

The equality screening of the Dromore Place Plan includes relevant qualitative and quantitative data. A range of consultation methods were engaged which included separate activities for children and young people and older people. It was also placed on the consultation hub. The EQIA on the mid-point review of the borough Community Plan included several engagement workshops as well as being made available on the consultation hub.

- 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:

Click or tap here to enter text.

**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 2024-25 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The EQIA on the mid-point review of the borough Community Plan was approved just beyond the reporting period.

**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 2024-25 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

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

Please provide any details:

A report was presented to Heads of Department to advise on the extent of section 75 monitoring being conducted across Council departments. Discussions were held with Tier 4 Managers and Business Support Officers across most departments to identify data currently collected and consider the potential to collect more detailed section 75 data. Recommendations were set out highlighting the challenges and opportunities in doing so.

By improving monitoring baseline data, the Council will be better able to inform decision making in relation to our services.

**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 2024-25 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

**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:

Section 75 monitoring questionnaires were issued alongside consultation exercises and surveys, and these are also issued to participants of a number of funded programmes. Analysis of these questionnaires have shown under representation by some section 75 groups such as younger people. As a result, these groups were engaged in different ways in order to get their input.

### **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 2024-25, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

During the reporting period twenty six sessions of Equality and Diversity Training were delivered to staff. Nine of these were delivered at corporate induction. The remaining sessions were delivered either face to face with specific departments or online. These sessions were tailored to suit the different job roles. This training covers the section 75 duties and the Disability Action Plan, anti-discrimination legislation with further emphasis on the Disability Discrimination Act and communicating with people with a range of disabilities. A total of three hundred and thirty two staff attended. Evaluation of the training revealed that staff found the use of examples helpful and the explanation of the legislative requirements. An online workshop was organised for the Council's elected members. It also covered information on the section 75 duties. Sixteen Members attended.

Three hundred and seventy four staff attended Code of Conduct and Equality training.

Four sessions of Policy Screening, Equality and Rural Needs Impact Assessment Training were delivered online via Microsoft Teams to staff members responsible for policy development. The training covers an outline of the equality and good relations duties, when and how to screen and when to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment. A total of thirty nine staff attended. Evaluation of this training revealed that staff had a better understanding of the policies and procedures in place regarding the section 75 processes and enjoyed the breakout rooms and the case studies.

Other training was delivered to ensure Council staff have a better understanding of the needs of our residents, customers, and employees and to further promote equality of opportunity.

Two sessions of Neurodiversity – Autism, Dyslexia & ADHD/ADD were delivered online by Employers for Disability NI. A total of fifty five staff attended. Evaluation of this training showed that staff found the course very worthwhile and gained a much better understanding of neurodiversity in the workplace and the steps employers can take.

Ten staff members attended Epilepsy Awareness and one attended Dyslexia training.

The Policy, Equality & Diversity Team delivered three sessions of 'Every Customer Counts' training. This included Facility Managers, Managers for the Tourism, Arts and Culture Department and Managers from the Outdoor Leisure Team. The training covered advice on how to become more disability aware and highlighting the business case for promoting accessible services. The Managers were advised of the 'Every Customer Counts Access Checklist' which they can conduct on their own facility and may assist them in making reasonable adjustments for their disabled customers.

The Policy, Equality & Diversity Manager delivered a 30-minute presentation to Managers on equality and section 75 as part of the Tier 4 Core Management Programme.

A representative from the Equality Commission attended a meeting of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to deliver an awareness session on equality, section 75, and anti-discrimination law.

- 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:

The training programmes have the objectives outlined at the beginning of the training and the programme is again reviewed and summarised at the end. An evaluation sheet is issued at the end of the training. The information received in the evaluation forms is used to inform further developments to the training programmes. Feedback received for training delivered during the reporting period is detailed in response to question 24 above.

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

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2024-25, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

The Translation and Interpretation guide and the Accessible Communications and Inclusive Language Guide were updated. The Policy, Equality & Diversity Manager attended a Heads meeting to explain the changes and a follow up e-mail was sent to the Heads. These changes were also highlighted via the staff magazine.

During the reporting period the council provided Translation & Interpretation in a number of service areas which included the following:

- Updates to the resident guide were translated into the following languages: Romanian, Bulgarian, Tetum, Ukrainian, Polish, Arabic, Lithuanian, Portuguese. This was funded through the Good Relations Plan

The following translation and interpretation costs were funded under the Asylum Seeker Dispersal Fund and Refugee Integration Fund

#### Asylum Seeker Dispersal Workshops

- Arabic Translation for SRC and Law Centre Workshop
- Arabic Translation for Small Worlds Workshop
- Arabic Translation for Food Hygiene Training
- Arabic Translation for First Aid Training
- Arabic Translation for CV building Workshop

#### Community Support Hub

- Tetum Interpreting Service
- Translation of the Community Support Hub Flyers – 5 languages
- Bulgarian Interpreter for Armagh Community Support Hub

A French Interpreter supported the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Day of Twinning between Banbridge and Ruelle, France on 9 May 2024.

A number of access arrangements were in place for Georgian Day, Saturday 30 November 2024 which included

- Mobile Accessible Toilet from 12noon-9pm, Mall East
- Accessible portable toilets from 12noon – 9pm, Mall East
- Quiet Space from 12noon – 9pm Market Place Theatre

- Quiet Space from 12noon -6pm, The Mall
- Disabled Parking within City Centre Car Parks
- Disabled access on the Park & Ride Coaches
- Light Show pre-bookable Accessible Platform, Sensory Areas, disabled parking

Discounted membership for carers has been officially introduced across the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council's GetActive ABC leisure facilities.

Following a successful pilot scheme of the GetActive ABC carers card, led by the council and the Southern Health and Social care Trust (SHSCT), eligible caregivers will receive 20% discount to normal membership fees providing access to gym, swimming pools, classes in all centres, water sports and footgolf at Craigavon Golf and Ski Centre.

Speaking about the initiative, Deputy Lord Mayor, Cllr Kyle Savage said: "This pilot was extremely well received with carers across the borough. We want to keep momentum going by striving to ensure that access to fitness and leisure facilities remains as affordable as possible.

Carers play a vital role in keeping vulnerable people safe. It's a rewarding yet demanding role that places huge pressure on the caregiver and it's important they get the opportunity to look after their own physical and mental health and wellbeing by getting active."

The GetActive ABC carers card is open to any ABC borough carer of an adult or child who uses the Southern Trust's Learning Disability and Fostering services.

The Market Place Theatre achieved Autism NI's Impact Award for another 3 years, demonstrating staff's ongoing commitment to inclusion for autistic and neurodivergent customers. They first achieved the award in 2020, with staff achieving reaccreditation following an assessment. Sensory packs, pre-visit information and a quiet room are some examples of the support available.

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- Accessible Performances for Pantomime – 2 relaxed performances were organised, 1 for the public and 1 for school audiences. There is a BSL signed performance and a captioned performance.
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A new public sensory garden was created at Oxford Island and will provide a therapeutic and inclusive area, promoting positive physical and mental health and wellbeing.

The project was part funded by the Department for Communities through its Access and Inclusion Fund with almost £30,000 allocated to the garden. A further £3,273 of funding for the project was provided by the Council. The garden was developed by the Council to provide a therapeutic and calming outdoor sanctuary and to support children and adults who have additional needs, disabilities or are living with an illness or health condition.

Further information was added to 'Inclusive ABC,' the Council's dedicated webpage which features information on accessible facilities, activities, and events. Participants at the stakeholder engagement events were advised of this page.

### Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

- 27 How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2024-25?

Insert number here: 0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

Click or tap here to enter text.

### Section 3: Looking Forward

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

The Equality Scheme is due for review in 2025

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

The Council will remain focussed on all of the above and will continue to offer support and training to staff in relation to the equality and good relations duties.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

**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:**

Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
21	5	4

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

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>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Regional <sup>iv</sup>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Local <sup>v</sup>	Engage with the local disability sector and local disabled people in relation to the drafting, implementation, and monitoring of the Council's next Disability Action Plan	Further stakeholder engagement took place in April 2025 before the plan for 2024-2027 was finalised	The views of disabled people were considered before the plan was finalised. As a result of the feedback received, a further action was added to the plan to facilitate an annual stakeholder engagement event
Local <sup>vi</sup>	Link with external organisations / schools / colleges to promote work experience / placement opportunities in Council	The target was to engage with 5 organisations annually and the Council engaged with 8 Disability Action, NOW Group x 2, Praxis Care, Barnardo's, The Cedar Foundation, Mencap,	As well as the placements that were facilitated, work experience opportunities were provided to a number of others. This will increase the likelihood of further employment

PART B

		<p>Appleby Trust</p> <p>Two placements were facilitated</p> <p>Barnardo's (Tourism, Arts and Culture department), consisting of 6 sessions between June-August 2024</p> <p>The Cedar Foundation at Gilford Community Centre, (Health &amp; Recreation department), a few hours a day for 6 weeks from 25 March – 29 April 2025</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>Mandatory Induction Training for all new employees, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan</li> <li>• Examples of barriers faced by disabled people.</li> </ul>	<p>76% completed Induction Training within the first 3 months of employment which is just below the 80% target set. Many employees agreed to attend later in the year</p>	<p>Evaluation of the training revealed that staff found the use of examples helpful and the explanation of the legislative requirements</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate language and etiquette</li> <li>• DDA and reasonable adjustments</li> <li>• The Council's Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work policies and procedures</li> </ul>		
2	Provide Equality and Diversity Training for all staff	During the reporting period 26 sessions of Equality and Diversity Training were delivered to staff. 9 of these were delivered at corporate induction. The remaining sessions were delivered either face to face with specific departments or online. These sessions were tailored to suit the different job roles. A total of 332 staff attended	Evaluation of the training revealed that staff found the use of examples helpful and the explanation of the legislative requirements
3	Provide Equality and Diversity Training for Elected Members	An online workshop was organised for the Council's elected members. 16 members attended	Elected Members will have increased awareness of the equality and disability duties
4	<p>Provide training on specific disabilities or general disability awareness where need identified</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental Health First Aid</li> <li>• Autism Awareness</li> <li>• Disability Awareness Training</li> </ul>	<p>2 sessions of Neurodiversity – Autism, Dyslexia &amp; ADHD/ADD were delivered online by Employers for Disability NI. A total of 55 staff attended</p> <p>10 staff members attended Epilepsy Awareness</p> <p>1 attended Dyslexia training</p> <p>The Policy, Equality &amp; Diversity Team delivered 3 sessions of 'Every Customer Counts' training. This included Facility Managers, Tier 4 Managers in Tourism,</p>	The training will improve the customer service offered to customers with a range of disabilities and support employees

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		Arts and Culture and Tier 4 Managers in Outdoor Leisure. The training covered advice on how to become more disability aware and highlighting the business case for promoting accessible services. The Managers were advised of the 'Every Customer Counts Access Checklist' which they can conduct on their own facility and may assist them in making reasonable adjustments for their disabled customers	
5	Review of training materials for Induction and Equality and Diversity Training	Training materials were updated throughout the year	Staff are advised of the most up to date position in relation to disability legislation and how best to remove barriers to access

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	Have a database of images for use in Council publications that display positive images of disabled people	Images of disabled people were used in Council publications/social media posts/website throughout the year to advertise health and recreation activities	Visibility of disabled people across a range of areas reflected in Council marketing/promotional materials
2	Develop and update an Inclusive section on the Council's main corporate website bringing together information from Corporate, GetActive ABC and	Relevant sections reviewed and updated throughout the year to add new events or information on upgrades to facilities. Details on the outcome of the stakeholder engagement events held in	Collective approach to promotion of inclusive activities/events/support services in ABC. Increased awareness of the range of accessible facilities, activities, and events available

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	Tourism websites into one area for customers. Add appropriate links to Council affiliated websites	December were also added. These were discussed at the Inclusive ABC Operational Working Group meetings	
3	Advertise inclusive facilities, activities, and events on social media as and when required	There were 14 Inclusive ABC disability related social media posts on the Council's Facebook page in 24-25 just above the target of 12 set. In addition, there were 31 Inclusive ABC posts on the GetActive ABC Facebook page	Collective approach to the promotion of inclusive activities/events/support services in ABC. Increased awareness of the range of accessible facilities, activities, and events available

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Junior Sports Awards	Annual Junior Sports Award for a Sports Person with a disability	This event was held on 27 September and celebrates the achievement of sports people within the Borough. A Sports Person with a Disability Award was presented on the night
2	Senior Sports Awards	Annual Senior Sports Award for a Sports Person with a disability	This event was held on 28 March and celebrates the achievement of sports people within the Borough. A Sports Person with a Disability Award was presented on the night and there was a separate award for a Sports Team with a Disability

2 (e) Please outline **any additional action measures** that were fully achieved other than those listed in the tables above:

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	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1	Engage with the Southern Health and Social Care Trust's Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Forum for shared learning	The Policy, Equality & Diversity Team attended 2 meetings of the SH&SCT ASD Forum. An update was provided to the group for the other meeting that the team could not attend	Sharing of good practice in order to inform changes to service provision for customers with Autism
2	Build on partnership with AccessAble to improve the visibility of Council Facilities and other private sector facilities in the Borough	Access Guides reviewed annually	Improved information for disabled people visiting our facilities/participating in Council activities
3	Facilitate a Disability Stakeholder engagement event in partnership with AccessAble	3 events were held in December	Improved access to Council Services
4	Maintenance of Autism Impact Award in the Navan Centre and Market Place Theatre	2 Awards maintained	Improved access to Tourism, Arts & Culture facilities for people who are neurodivergent and their families
5	Deliver a range of inclusive summer schemes and other programmes in partnership with external providers	51 annual accessible sports programmes were delivered which exceeds the target of 30 set	Accessible Sports Programmes available for a wide range of customers
6	Provision of Inclusive Swimming lessons	2 Disability swims and 2 Quiet Hour swims were delivered weekly	Improved access to swimming and improved health outcomes for disabled customers
7	Develop membership of Inclusive ABC Working Group to include elected members and all Council departments reflecting all areas of direct service provision	4 Inclusive ABC Strategic Working Group meetings were held, and 7 Inclusive ABC Operational Working Group meetings were held exceeding the target of 5.	Collective approach to the sharing of best practice in the areas of disability access and inclusion. Improved awareness internally on how to meet customer access needs

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		9 departments are represented on the Inclusive ABC Operational Working Group	
8	Provision of Quiet spaces for Council activities and events to support the needs of Neurodivergent citizens & families	<p>The Target of 3 Quiet spaces facilitated throughout the year was met</p> <p>South Lake Leisure Centre and the Market Place Theatre have quiet rooms Quiet spaces were provided at Georgian Day Gulliver's Soft Play provides a quiet hour</p> <p>Quiet Hour provided at a funfair Quiet Hour swim sessions were offered at Banbridge Leisure Centre Summer programmes organised by the Community Development Team ensure that children who require regular breaks or a quiet space can be accommodated</p>	Inclusive activities facilitated for all
9	The Mobile Accessible Toilet will be made available at 12 large scale Council events each year	The Mobile Accessible Toilet was available at 13 large scale Council events	Improved access at large scale Council events

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

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	Sharing of Equality Commission Training opportunities quarterly with	Information was shared with relevant staff as considered necessary	Increased disability awareness for Tier 4 managers supporting	Information wasn't always available quarterly

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	Tier 4 Managers & Inclusive ABC Working Group		disabled employees and meeting the needs of disabled customers	
2	Provision of Inclusive Gym sessions	1 session was organised weekly	Improved access to gym activities and improved health outcomes for disabled customers	The target was to have 2 weekly inclusive gym sessions but there was only demand for 1 session weekly.
3	Maintain Inclusive Sports Facility (ISF) Accreditation for SLLC and obtain for the other 2, Tier 1 Council Leisure Centres in Armagh and Banbridge	ISF accreditation was maintained at SLLC. Improvements are currently being made to the other Tier 1 Leisure Centres in Armagh and Banbridge	Annual accreditation obtained for 1 Tier 1 Leisure Centre	Increased participation of Disabled People in Sport and Leisure Activities
4	Non-fixed inclusive play programmes such as  Play in the Community, Play Through the Ages and Forest Schools	While these exact programmes did not run Love Parks Week ran in August and this included opportunities for inclusive play. There was a 'Forest School Taster' session at Scarva Park and Tannaghmore Gardens. Other activities included 'Traditional Playground Games,' 'Tree Study & Nature Activities,' "Young Conservationists" and 'Storytelling & Craft Session'	These activities are developed to ensure outdoor play opportunities for all children and young people regardless of their needs and abilities.	Different options will be considered regarding non fixed play
5	Work in partnership with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the Council's Economic Development Services Department to raise	As stated in section 2(b) above The Policy, Equality & Diversity Team delivered 3 sessions of		

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	awareness of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's Every Customer Counts Initiative with staff and retail businesses	'Every Customer Counts' training. This included Facility Managers, Tier 4 Managers in Tourism, Arts and Culture and Tier 4 Managers in Outdoor Leisure		
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4. Please outline what action measures **have not been achieved** and the reasons why.

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	42 play parks completed as part of a 5-year Capital Programme 2	Still awaiting committee approval to progress with the second Capital Programme. The target will be for a further 29 playparks to be completed by 2028
2	Encourage Tier 4 Managers to support staff completion of corporate eLearning modules-Equality and Diversity in the Workplace and Autism Awareness	The modules were being updated during the reporting period, so no further staff have completed the modules
3	Work with the Department of Health and other stakeholders to update the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's Every Customer Counts Accessibility checklist to ensure the needs of people who are neurodivergent are included	The Department of Health did not arrange any further meetings. The Council had provided feedback on early drafts of the Checklist
4	Pilot a 'Reverse Jobs Fair' in Armagh to match disabled people with employers and employment opportunities. This is the first of its kind in N. Ireland	Regrettably, the event was cancelled on the day it was scheduled to take place due to severe weather

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

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(a) Qualitative

Before the plan was finalised a new action was added which was to Facilitate a Disability Stakeholder engagement event annually in partnership with AccessAble. The three events held in December provided an opportunity for feedback on the accessibility of Council services and helps to inform the action plan. Staff on the Inclusive ABC Operational Working Group are reminded of the actions in the plan and to report back on progress throughout the year

(b) Quantitative

Click or tap here to enter text.

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 revised Disability Action Plan 2024-27 was finalised during the reporting period and all new measures are included above.

If yes, please outline below: Not Applicable

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
2	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
3	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
4	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
5	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

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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?

Some revision may be required to show changes to targets or programmes

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