



Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery

Public Authority Statutory Equality
and Good Relations Duties

Annual progress report

Date: 31 August 2026

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Annual progress report

Contact details:

Section 75 of the NI Act 1998
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As above ☒

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

<https://icir.independent-inquiry.uk/>

Signature:



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

It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties and implementing Equality Scheme commitments and Disability Action Plans.

This report reflects progress made between April 2025 and March 2026.

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

- 1 In 2025-26, 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.

The Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (the Commission) was formally established on 1 May 2024. Since formal establishment our principal focus has been providing services to requesting individuals and their families, ensuring compassionate, inclusive, and equitable support.

To achieve this, we have rapidly grown our workforce to over 250 individuals, ensuring a broad skill base and representation from diverse communities across Northern Ireland, Great Britain and beyond.

Implementation of statutory duties and Equality Scheme

The Commission is guided by its statutory duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and its Equality Scheme, which underpin our commitment to eliminating discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations across all functions.

The Commission has demonstrated due regard for the rights and needs of individuals across the following Section 75 categories:

- Religious belief
- Political opinion
- Racial group
- Age
- Marital status
- Sexual orientation
- Men & woman generally
- Disability status
- Dependents

The Commission's Disability Action Plan was published in July 2024. The plan, shaped by a 12-week public consultation with feedback from the public and key stakeholders, underscores our commitment to promoting inclusivity and supporting people with disabilities, during recruitment and for our staff and those who have been affected by the Troubles/Conflict. Since the publication of our Disability Action Plan we have made meaningful progress in promoting accessibility, inclusion and awareness across the organisation:

Accessible public spaces: Our premises, which are used by staff and the public, have been designed to ensure full physical accessibility for people with disabilities.

Staff training: We have implemented mandatory Disability Awareness Training for all staff through the iHASCO training platform, helping to promote a more inclusive, accessible and informed workplace. The training raises awareness of disability-related issues, encourages positive attitudes towards disability, and supports staff in understanding their role in creating an inclusive working environment.

Accessible information: All public documents and communications are available in accessible formats.

These actions reflect our ongoing commitment to removing barriers and ensuring equal access for all members of the community.

Employment and recruitment practices

Our recruitment policies and practices actively reflect our commitment to diversity and equality:

Inclusive job descriptions: We ensure job criteria focus on essential skills and experience, using gender-neutral and inclusive language.

Broad outreach: Positions are advertised across varied platforms to reach a diverse candidate pool, including underrepresented communities.

Clear diversity messaging: Application materials explicitly welcome candidates from all backgrounds and promote our inclusive values.

Diverse interview panels: Where feasible, interview panels are assembled to reflect differences in age, gender, and background. We seek to ensure that interview panels reflect a balanced mix of ages, genders, and backgrounds wherever feasible.

Transparent and fair selection: We use structured interviews and objective scoring systems to ensure a consistent and equitable assessment process. Panel members complete the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) *Recruiting Fairly* training, helping to ensure recruitment is conducted fairly, impartially and in line with best practice.

Accessibility: We are committed to removing barriers to participation in our recruitment processes. We will consider and, where reasonable, provide adjustments to support candidates' individual needs and ensure everyone has an equal opportunity to demonstrate their suitability for the role.

Flexible working: Arrangements are promoted to support staff with caring responsibilities, health needs, or accessibility requirements. The introduction of a flexible working policy has resulted in 16% of ICRIR staff taking advantage of flexible working patterns, including part-time working and compressed hours.

The flexi system also enables employees to vary their start and finish times and accumulate up to two days of flexi leave per month.

Hybrid and alternative working arrangements: Staff can also benefit from a hybrid working scheme, enabling a blend of office and home working where roles permit.

Reasonable adjustments and workplace support: ICRIR is committed to ensuring that employees with disabilities, long-term health conditions, or other accessibility needs can work effectively and comfortably. Through its reasonable adjustments programme, workplace adaptations and tailored support are provided to meet individual needs. Employees can also access support through the PAM Assist service, which offers specialist advice and assistance to help staff remain healthy, safe and productive at work.

During 2025-26, the Commission continued to embed its Trauma and Resiliency Informed Model across all areas of its work. The model underpins how the Commission engages with Requesting Individuals and families and is intended to ensure that all interactions are conducted in a manner that is respectful, compassionate, inclusive and sensitive to the impact of trauma.

All staff, including those in both operational and corporate roles, are required to complete training on the Trauma and Resiliency Informed Model. This approach helps ensure that employees understand the potential effects of trauma, develop the skills required to engage sensitively with individuals, and recognise the diverse experiences of those affected by the Troubles/Conflict.

Through the development and implementation of the Trauma and Resiliency Informed Model, the Commission has sought to create a service environment that recognises and respects the experiences of individuals from all backgrounds affected by the Troubles/Conflict. By providing a safe, impartial and respectful environment in which individuals can engage with the Commission, the model supports mutual understanding, dignity and trust across communities with differing experiences and perspectives.

The model also contributes to the promotion of good relations by ensuring that individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, regardless of their religious belief, political opinion or community background. Through a consistent focus on empathy, impartiality and respect, the Commission seeks to build confidence in its services and foster constructive engagement with people from all sections of the community.

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

2 Please provide examples of outcomes and/or the impact of equality action plans/ measures in 2025-26 (or append the plan with progress/examples identified)

The Equality Scheme was approved in May 2025 with a target of January 2027 to publish the Equality Action Plan. The ICRIR commissioned an Equality Working Group to complete an Audit of Inequalities and as a result of this audit, an action plan is now in the final stage.

3 Has the application of the Equality Scheme commitments resulted in any changes to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2025-26 reporting period? (tick one box only)

☒ Yes

☐ No (go to Q.4)

☐ Not applicable (go to Q.4)

The Commission formally introduced its Equality Scheme in 2025. During the 2025–26 reporting period, progress has been made in embedding the principles of the Scheme across the organisation. Key areas of focus have included the assessment and screening of policies, the development of an Audit of Inequalities, increasing organisational awareness and understanding of equality responsibilities, and strengthening organisational capacity to deliver the Scheme. To support this work, a recruitment campaign was undertaken to appoint a dedicated Equality Officer, reflecting the Commission's commitment to embedding equality within its governance and operational structures. The successful candidate is due to onboard in Autumn 2026.

A major area of activity has been the review of existing policies and associated screening reports. As many of the Commission's policies were developed prior to the introduction of the Equality Scheme, a programme of retrospective screening was initiated to ensure full compliance with Section 75 obligations and Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) guidance. This work remains ongoing, and it is anticipated that all policies implemented before the adoption of the Equality Scheme will be reviewed and screened during the 2026–27 financial year.

The implementation of the Equality Scheme has resulted in substantive changes to policy development and governance processes. All new and revised policies are now subject to formal equality screening, with outcomes published on a quarterly basis. This has strengthened the consideration of equality

impacts at the earliest stages of policy development and has improved transparency and accountability in organisational decision-making.

To support policy owners in meeting these requirements, targeted training was delivered in March 2026 by the Chief of Staff and People Analyst to staff with responsibility for policy development. The aim of this training was to enhance organisational capability and support the integration of equality considerations into policy design and review processes.

Further improvements have included the development of a dedicated equality and policy screening section on the staff intranet. This resource provides clear and accessible guidance on policy development, screening requirements, publication arrangements and consultation obligations, ensuring a more consistent approach across the Commission.

In parallel, standardised screening procedures and templates have been introduced to promote consistency and quality in the assessment of equality impacts. These processes facilitate the early identification of policies that may affect Section 75 groups and ensure that appropriate screening, assessment and consultation are undertaken where required.

An Equality Working Group was established in August 2025, chaired by the People Analyst and comprising representatives from each Directorate. The group was created to support the implementation of the Equality Scheme across the organisation and to help ensure compliance with statutory equality duties. Its establishment has strengthened internal governance arrangements and provided a dedicated forum for progressing equality-related initiatives.

One of the group's first priorities was the completion of an Audit of Inequalities. The audit gathered and analysed information across the Section 75 categories to identify any inequalities experienced by individuals who engage with the Commission or who may be affected by its functions, policies and services. The findings from this work have informed the development of a comprehensive Equality Action Plan aimed at addressing identified inequalities and improving outcomes for affected groups.

A draft Audit of Inequalities and the associated Equality Action Plan have been completed and submitted to action owners for review. It will then be subject to senior leadership approval and stakeholder consultation. In line with the commitments set out in the Equality Scheme, the final Equality Action Plan will be submitted to ECNI by January 2027.

As the Commission continues to expand to meet increasing organisational demands, an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) has been implemented to enhance equality, fairness and transparency within recruitment and selection processes. The system enables greater visibility of how applicants are assessed against essential criteria, helping to reduce the potential influence of unconscious bias. It also supports anonymised recruitment practices and allows candidates to identify any reasonable adjustments they may require during the recruitment process, ensuring greater accessibility and compliance with equality

legislation. In addition, the ATS provides robust audit trails and supports equality monitoring, strengthening the Commission's ability to demonstrate fair and equitable recruitment practices.

Collectively, these actions have strengthened the Commission's approach to equality, improved compliance with statutory obligations, and embedded equality considerations more effectively within policy development, governance arrangements and organisational decision-making.

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:

The changes implemented during the reporting period are intended to improve equality of opportunity and ensure that the needs of all Section 75 groups are considered more systematically within the Commission's decision-making processes.

A number of positive outcomes have been achieved. The introduction of a flexible working policy has supported greater inclusion in the workplace, with 16% of staff utilising alternative working arrangements. This has particularly benefited employees with caring responsibilities, disabilities and long-term health conditions by providing greater flexibility and supporting work-life balance. In addition, Disability Awareness Training achieved completion rates of over 90%, improving staff understanding of disability-related issues and helping to foster a more inclusive and accessible working environment.

During the reporting period, six policies were formally screened and published, helping to embed equality considerations within policy development and decision-making processes.

The introduction of mandatory equality screening for all new and revised policies, together with the retrospective review of existing policies, has strengthened the Commission's ability to identify and address potential adverse impacts on individuals across all Section 75 categories. At the time of this report's submission, 30% of operational policies that were implemented prior to the introduction of the Equality Scheme had been reviewed and screened, with no significant adverse equality impacts identified to date. The Commission expects to complete the review and screening of all remaining policies by the end of the 2026-27 reporting period. This work has improved transparency and helped ensure that equality considerations are routinely taken into account at an earlier stage of policy development and decision-making.

The establishment of the Equality Working Group and completion of the Audit of Inequalities have improved the Commission's understanding of the experiences, needs and potential barriers faced by different groups. This work has informed the development of the Commission's first Equality Action Plan

and has provided a stronger evidence base for future service improvements and policy development.

The introduction of standardised screening procedures, guidance materials and staff training has increased organisational awareness and capability in relation to equality considerations. Feedback from policy owners following training indicated improved understanding of equality screening requirements and greater confidence in identifying potential equality impacts.

The implementation of the Applicant Tracking System (ATS) has strengthened equality monitoring and recruitment governance arrangements. The system now captures equality monitoring information across Section 75 categories and community background in a more consistent manner, enabling the Commission to better understand applicant diversity, monitor recruitment outcomes and identify potential barriers to participation. The system also facilitates requests for reasonable adjustments and supports anonymised recruitment practices, helping to improve accessibility and fairness for applicants.

The Commission's Trauma and Resiliency Informed Model has also contributed to improved outcomes for individuals engaging with the organisation. All staff, including those in operational and corporate roles, receive training in the model, helping to ensure that interactions with Requesting Individuals and families are delivered in a manner that is respectful, inclusive, compassionate and sensitive to the impact of trauma. This approach promotes dignity, trust and confidence amongst individuals from different religious, political and community backgrounds and supports the Commission's good relations responsibilities.

Collectively, these measures have strengthened the Commission's compliance with Section 75 obligations, improved organisational capability to identify and address equality issues, enhanced accessibility and inclusion, and provided a stronger evidence base to support fair and informed decision-making.

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

☐ **As a result of the organisation's screening of a policy (please give details):**

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

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

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

☒ Other (*please specify and give details*):

The changes implemented during the reporting period arose from the Commission's commitment to meeting the requirements of its Equality Scheme and embedding Section 75 considerations into organisational policies, procedures and decision-making processes.

During 2025–26, the Commission experienced significant organisational growth, including an increase in recruitment activity. In response, a number of measures were introduced to strengthen compliance with statutory equality obligations and promote equality of opportunity.

These measures included the introduction of mandatory equality screening for all new and revised policies, retrospective screening for all policies implemented prior to commitment to our Equality Scheme, the establishment of an Equality Working Group, the completion of a draft Audit of Inequalities, the development of an Equality Action Plan, and the implementation of an Applicant Tracking System (ATS).

The ATS was introduced to support fair, transparent and consistent recruitment practices. It strengthens the Commission's ability to meet its Section 75 and Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order (FETO) obligations by facilitating equality monitoring, supporting anonymised recruitment processes, enabling candidates to request reasonable adjustments, and providing robust management information and audit trails. This enables the Commission to identify and address potential barriers or adverse impacts on Section 75 groups and helps ensure equality of opportunity throughout the recruitment and selection process.

The organisation also identified the need for a dedicated Equality Officer. A recruitment campaign was launched at the end of Summer 2025 to appoint a specialist officer responsible for driving equality initiatives, monitoring compliance, providing advice and guidance, and supporting the organisation in meeting its Equality Scheme commitments. The successful candidate is due to join the organisation in September 2026.

Collectively, these changes were driven by the Commission's commitment to embedding equality considerations across all aspects of its work and ensuring that its policies, practices and services are accessible, inclusive and compliant with statutory equality duties.

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 2025-26 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**

Throughout the 2025-26 period, the Commission ensured full integration of Section 75 statutory duties across all job descriptions by adopting a standardised job application template. This template guarantees alignment with our Equality Scheme and statutory obligations in every recruitment exercise.

- Guaranteed Interview Scheme activated for candidates who disclose a disability, alongside a robust framework of reasonable adjustments, occupational health support, and disability-friendly workplace policies.
- Flexible working options, including hybrid arrangements, compressed hours, and job share partnerships to support diverse working styles and life circumstances.
- Geographic flexibility, with roles offered in both London and Belfast to enhance reach and accessibility for candidates across regions.
- Enhanced family leave provisions exceeding statutory minimums for maternity, paternity, adoption, and shared parental leave—plus compassionate and emergency leave for unexpected needs.
- A dedicated diversity and inclusion page in all job packs, encouraging applicants from a wide range of backgrounds, cultures, and experiences.

These measures demonstrate ICRIR's ongoing commitment to inclusive employment practices and ensure that all recruitment is conducted in line with the principles of equality and good relations enshrined in Section 75.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2025-26 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**

The ICRIR does not have a formal 2025–26 performance plan. Instead, the organisation operates through its Annual Workplan 2025–26, which sets out its strategic goals and commitments for the year. The Annual Workplan explicitly references the Commission's obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and its commitment to implementing the Equality Scheme.

How the organisation is performing against the commitments outlined in our Equality Scheme is reported on for internal quarterly Board reports, Audit and Risk Committee and People Committee.

6 In the 2025-26 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 2025-26 report**

☐ **Not applicable**

Section 75 statutory duties were integrated into the Commission's organisational planning through the ICRIR Work Plan 2025–26. The Work Plan identifies Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) as a key organisational priority and commits the Commission to implementing its Equality Scheme 2024–29 and Disability Action Plan 2024–29 across all functions. It explicitly recognises the Commission's obligations under Section 75, including promoting equality of opportunity across all Section 75 categories and promoting good relations

Integration is demonstrated through a range of planned organisational activities, including implementation of the Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan as core organisational frameworks; disability awareness as part of the Commission's learning and development programme; commitments to accessible communications, consultations and services; recruitment and workforce planning aimed at building a skilled and diverse workforce; policy development and review processes aligned with equality commitments; and outreach and stakeholder engagement activities designed to promote inclusion and participation.

The ICRIR Annual Work Plan 2026–27, published in January 2026 further demonstrates how Section 75 statutory duties will continue to be integrated into

organisational planning. The Work Plan includes strategic objectives and priorities relating to workforce diversity and inclusion, accessible communications, stakeholder engagement, promotion of reconciliation, trauma-informed service delivery, and effective organisational governance. It also commits to developing a highly skilled and valued workforce through embedding inclusivity and diversity in recruitment, workforce development and organisational culture.

Integration is further evidenced through strategic workforce planning that promotes inclusivity and diversity; organisational priorities focused on engagement, collaboration and accessibility; commitments to produce accessible reports and communications; governance and performance arrangements that incorporate feedback from Requesting Individuals; and the embedding of reconciliation as a core strategic priority for the organisation.

These commitments demonstrate that equality of opportunity and good relations considerations are embedded within the Commission's corporate priorities, annual business planning, workforce planning, stakeholder engagement and performance management arrangements, rather than being delivered as stand-alone equality activities.

7 Within the 2025-26 reporting period, please indicate the number of: Actions Completed, Actions Ongoing

N/A

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

N/A

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2025-26 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

N/A

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2025-26 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

N/A

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

N/A

- 11 Please provide any details and examples of good practice in consultation during the 2025-26 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 2025–26 reporting period, the Commission undertook a range of engagement and consultation activities designed to promote equality of opportunity and support good relations with stakeholders and the wider public.

The Commission disseminated three stakeholder newsletters, providing updates on key areas of work, organisational developments and issues of interest to stakeholders. In addition, awareness of the Commission’s role and services was promoted through a programme of print, digital and broadcast media activity.

As part of its investigative work, the Commission issued witness appeals relating to four ongoing investigations. These appeals were supported by media coverage and targeted outreach, including the distribution of hard-copy materials to almost 1,500 households, helping to ensure that affected individuals and communities had opportunities to engage with the Commission’s work.

The Commission continued to utilise accessible information resources developed in the previous reporting period, including the Requesting Individuals Information Pack and the Easy Read Guide. These resources remained available throughout the year and were supplemented by a new A5 guide providing a concise overview of the Commission and its services. The guide is available both in print and online, improving accessibility and supporting engagement with a broad range of individuals and groups.

The Commission also facilitated two stakeholder discussion events in June and November 2025 to support the development and implementation of its Trauma and Resiliency Informed Model. These events provided opportunities for engagement with practitioners and stakeholders, enabling the sharing of experiences, perspectives and emerging good practice. The November event, *Delivering a Trauma and Resiliency Informed Service*, brought together practitioners from a

range of sectors to showcase good practice, encourage collaboration and promote shared learning in the delivery of trauma-informed services.

These activities demonstrate the Commission's commitment to meaningful engagement, accessibility, information sharing and stakeholder participation in areas relevant to the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations.

12 In the 2025-26 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.**

- Stakeholder engagement meetings
- Discussion events
- Stakeholder newsletters
- Media engagement
- Targeted outreach activities.

The Commission did not undertake any formal public consultations during 2025–26. Engagement primarily took place through meetings and discussions with stakeholders, including victims and survivors, representative and community groups, elected representatives and statutory bodies. The Commission also communicated with stakeholders through newsletters, discussion events, witness appeals, media activity and the dissemination of accessible information materials in both print and digital formats.

13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2025-26 reporting period?

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2025-26 reporting period?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not applicable

Our stakeholder email list was reviewed as part of our GDPR requirements early in 2025-26.

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

Screening templates have been published on our website for all policies screened during the reporting period.

Document library - Independent Commission for Reconciliation & Information Recovery

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

6

16 Please provide the number of assessments that were consulted upon during 2025-26:

0 Policy consultations conducted with screening assessment presented.

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

0 Consultations for an EQIA alone.

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

N/A

- 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

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 2025-26 reporting period?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☒ Not applicable

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 2025-26 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)**

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

An audit of existing information systems was completed during the 2025–26 reporting period. The findings of the audit are currently being finalised in advance of a planned consultation process.

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

☐ Yes

☒ No

☐ Not applicable

22 Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2025-26 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

None

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:

The implementation of the Commission's Applicant Tracking System (ATS) has significantly enhanced the collection, monitoring and analysis of equality data, providing a more robust evidence base to support service delivery planning and policy development.

As part of the Applicant Tracking System (ATS) implementation, mandatory equality monitoring questions relating to Section 75 categories and community background were incorporated into the recruitment process. This has enabled the Commission to systematically collect, analyse and report on applicant and workforce diversity data, supporting compliance with Fair Employment and Treatment Order (FETO) monitoring requirements and providing greater insight into the diversity of individuals engaging with the Commission's recruitment processes.

The introduction of a secure and anonymised platform for the completion of equality monitoring information at application stage has also improved data quality. As a result, there has been a reduction in the number of applicants recorded as undetermined within the Commission's 2025/26 FETO return, providing a more accurate and comprehensive evidence base for equality monitoring and workforce planning purposes.

The availability of this information has improved the Commission's ability to identify trends, monitor representation across equality categories, and assess whether recruitment policies and practices are attracting applicants from a broad range of backgrounds. The data also helps identify potential barriers to participation and informs decisions on where targeted action may be required to promote equality of opportunity.

Importantly, the ATS has improved the consistency, accuracy and accessibility of equality monitoring information. This has enabled the Commission to adopt a more evidence-based approach to decision-making, ensuring that equality considerations are informed by reliable data rather than assumptions. The

information collected through the system has enhanced service delivery by providing greater insight into who engages with the Commission's recruitment processes and where potential inequalities or barriers may exist. In turn, this has supported the development of more inclusive policies and practices. The data has also informed equality screening, workforce planning and wider policy development, helping to ensure that the needs and experiences of different groups are appropriately considered in the design and delivery of services.

As the volume and quality of data continues to grow, the Commission will be better positioned to identify emerging issues, measure progress against equality objectives, and demonstrate how equality and good relations considerations are being reflected in organisational policies, procedures and service delivery. The introduction of the ATS therefore represents a significant step forward in strengthening the Commission's equality monitoring framework and supporting informed, inclusive and transparent decision-making.

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 2025-26, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme

During the 2025-26 reporting period, staff across all departments completed mandatory e-learning modules focused on disability and inclusion. Completion and success rates were high, reflecting increased confidence in applying equality principles in day-to-day operations.

Our e-learning platform was updated in July 2025 to include courses on autism awareness, menopause, gender identity and expression, neurodiversity awareness and new and expectant mothers at work to name a few.

In addition to online training, monthly town halls and staff briefings provided updates on the Equality Scheme with a focus on policy screening and FETO monitoring.

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:

During the 2025–26 reporting period, a range of training and awareness-raising activities demonstrated positive outcomes, with participants acquiring the skills and knowledge required to support the objectives of the Equality Scheme.

Mandatory E-Learning Module – Disability Awareness and Inclusion

The Commission requires all new staff to complete a mandatory 50-minute e-learning module on disability awareness and inclusion, with annual refresher training required thereafter. The training is designed to increase awareness and understanding of disability, promote inclusive behaviours in the workplace, and ensure staff understand their responsibilities under equality legislation.

The module supports the objectives of the Equality Scheme by equipping staff with the knowledge and skills required to contribute to an inclusive and accessible workplace culture. Staff completion rates exceeded 90% during the reporting period, demonstrating a strong level of engagement across the organisation and a commitment to equality and inclusion.

The training has helped raise awareness of the barriers that people with disabilities may face and reinforced the importance of inclusive practices, reasonable adjustments and respectful workplace behaviours. High completion rates provide assurance that equality and inclusion principles are being consistently communicated across the organisation.

Trauma and Resilience Informed Model Training

The TRIM training module, delivered through our e-learning training platform, focused on trauma-informed and resilience-based approaches, with particular emphasis on recognising and responding to the needs of individuals who may have experienced trauma or adversity.

- Participants developed a greater understanding of the impact that trauma can have on behaviour, communication and engagement.
- Staff reported increased confidence in adopting a person-centred approach when interacting with service users and colleagues.
- The training enhanced awareness of the importance of empathy, inclusion and appropriate support mechanisms, helping staff to better meet the diverse needs of individuals.

The training has supported the organisation's Equality Scheme objectives by increasing staff capacity to recognise the effects of trauma and adversity, promote equality of opportunity, and deliver services in a manner that is inclusive, responsive and person-centred. The knowledge and skills gained through the programme contribute to improved experiences and outcomes for service users, particularly those who may be vulnerable, marginalised or disproportionately affected by trauma. As a result, the training has strengthened the organisation's ability to meet its Section 75 responsibilities and foster a culture of equality, dignity, respect and inclusion.

ICRIR Monthly All Staff CEO Sessions and Weekly Comms briefings

Weekly Comms and CEO Sessions were used to reinforce equality objectives and communicate progress against organisational priorities.

As a result:

- These sessions helped maintain staff awareness of equality commitments, organisational priorities and strategic developments throughout the year.
- The briefings encouraged ongoing discussion and engagement with equality-related matters, helping to embed equality principles within organisational culture and day-to-day decision-making.

- The sessions were also used to highlight the importance of high-quality workforce data and to promote participation in statutory equality monitoring exercises, including the Fair Employment and Treatment Order (FETO) return. This has contributed to increased staff awareness of the purpose and value of equality monitoring and resulted in higher participation rates in the annual FETO survey.
- Staff were provided with regular opportunities to raise questions, share feedback and contribute to discussions on equality, diversity and inclusion, supporting a culture of openness and continuous improvement.

These ongoing communications have supported the objectives of the Equality Scheme by increasing staff knowledge and understanding of equality responsibilities, promoting engagement with equality initiatives, and strengthening the organisation's ability to monitor and address equality outcomes through improved workforce data collection and reporting.

Lunch and Learn Sessions – Policy Screening and Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

A dedicated Lunch and Learn session was delivered for policy makers, focusing on policy screening requirements and the practical application of Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs).

- Participants gained a clearer understanding of how to undertake policy screening and identify potential equality impacts.
- The session improved awareness of Section 75 obligations and the role of screening and EQIAs in supporting evidence-based and inclusive policy development.
- As a result of the training, there has been a noticeable increase in staff capability and confidence in conducting policy screening across the organisation.
- Feedback from participants highlighted improved understanding of the screening process and greater confidence in applying equality considerations throughout policy development and review.

Overall, these training initiatives have strengthened staff knowledge, increased confidence in applying equality principles in practice, and enhanced organisational capacity to meet its Equality Scheme commitments and Section 75 responsibilities.

Skill Session – Supporting you at work

In July 2025, all staff were invited to a *Supporting You at Work* skills session. The session was designed to increase awareness and understanding of the ICRIR's employee support programme, supportive people policies and the range of wellbeing initiatives available to staff.

The training contributed to the objectives of the Equality Scheme by promoting an inclusive and supportive working environment and ensuring that staff were aware of the resources and support mechanisms available to them. Feedback from

participants indicated an increased understanding of the supports available and how these could be accessed, helping to foster staff wellbeing, inclusion and equality of opportunity across the organisation.

The session also reinforced the Commission's commitment to creating a workplace culture where all employees feel supported, valued and able to access appropriate assistance when required.

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

26 Please list any examples of where monitoring during 2025-26, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation to access to information and services:

The commission regularly monitors user needs to ensure we are providing an equitable service to Requesting individuals, staff and applicants.

- In reviewing our guides, we identified a need for concise and accessible information about the Commission's work. In response, an A5 guide to the Commission, and its services was produced in both hard-copy and online formats.
- Monitoring of our website accessibility highlighted the need to more clearly promote accessible information options. An alternative formats statement was therefore made more prominent on the website, increasing awareness of the availability of information in accessible formats.
- Monitoring of accessibility requirements identified an ongoing need for Easy Read materials. Existing Easy Read guides and information on accessing the Commission were therefore reprinted to ensure continued availability.
- Reviews of digital communications identified opportunities to improve accessibility for Deaf and hard-of-hearing users. Subtitles were added to video content as standard practice.
- Monitoring of social media accessibility highlighted the need to better support screen reader users. Alternative text is now added to all images published on LinkedIn.
- Accessibility reviews of corporate publications identified that data visualisations could present barriers for some users. Graphs within the Accountability Report were therefore labelled more clearly to improve accessibility and understanding.
- Publication monitoring demonstrated the importance of making users aware of accessible formats. As a result, all publications now include an accessible formats availability statement.
- Workforce monitoring data identified employees with disabilities and highlighted the importance of proactively considering accessibility requirements for events and engagement activities. Consequently, reasonable adjustments are routinely offered for interviews, meetings and events, helping to improve participation and access.

- Monitoring information relating to age, gender and caring responsibilities highlighted a need for greater flexibility in working arrangements across the organisation. In response, the Commission reviewed its existing arrangements and introduced a new Flexible Working Policy for all staff. The policy was developed to better support employees with a range of personal circumstances and commitments, helping to promote equality of opportunity, improve work-life balance and create a more inclusive working environment. This demonstrates how monitoring information can be used to identify emerging needs and inform positive changes to organisational policies and practices.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

27 How many complaints in relation to the Equality Scheme have been received during 2025-26?

Insert number here: 0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome: N/A

Section 3: Looking forward

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

This is due to be reviewed by February 2030.

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

During the last reporting period, the Commission's priority was to embed the Equality Scheme across the organisation and ensure that staff were aware of their responsibilities and statutory obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Building on this foundation, the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR) will focus during the next reporting period on further strengthening compliance, increasing organisational capability, and demonstrating to staff and external stakeholders our commitment to being an equitable, inclusive and accountable organisation where equality considerations are fully integrated into decision-making.

Screening

A retrospective review of all Commission policies has been ongoing since the implementation of the Equality Scheme. During the next reporting period, the Commission aims to complete the review of all policies and procedures that were introduced prior to the adoption of the Equality Scheme.

This work will ensure that all existing policies, procedures and practices affecting staff, applicants and individuals engaging with the Commission are fully aligned with the principles and requirements of the Equality Scheme and Section 75 obligations. The review will identify any gaps, inconsistencies or potential equality impacts and, where necessary, policies will be updated to strengthen compliance and promote equality of opportunity.

Completing this exercise will provide assurance that equality considerations are consistently embedded across the Commission's policy framework, support a more robust approach to policy development and decision-making, and demonstrate the Commission's commitment to operating as an equitable, inclusive and accountable organisation.

Consultation

The Commission will seek to expand its consultation and engagement activity to ensure a broader and more diverse range of perspectives informs its work. Particular emphasis will be placed on improving outreach to underrepresented groups and strengthening accessibility within consultation processes, enabling more meaningful engagement with stakeholders across all Section 75 categories.

Through this work, the Commission aims to build stronger relationships with external stakeholders and demonstrate its commitment to ensuring that equality considerations are informed by genuine and inclusive engagement.

Training

The Commission will continue to build organisational awareness, knowledge and capability through:

- Delivery of updated training on equality, inclusive communication and accessibility.
- Strengthening staff knowledge of equality screening, consultation requirements and the practical application of the Equality Scheme.
- Promoting a culture where equality considerations are routinely embedded into policy development and operational decision-making.

Appointment of a Dedicated Equality Officer

A key development during the next reporting period will be the appointment of a dedicated Equality Officer. The appointment of a dedicated Equality Officer will provide the Commission with specialist capacity to move beyond establishing equality processes and towards measuring, evidencing and improving outcomes. The postholder will strengthen governance and compliance, provide expert advice to policy makers, improve equality monitoring and analysis, support consultation and stakeholder engagement, and help identify emerging issues affecting Section 75 groups. The role will increase organisational capability to demonstrate how equality of opportunity and good relations considerations are shaping policy development, service delivery and decision-making.

Overall, these initiatives will support a more proactive, evidence-based and inclusive approach to equality, ensuring that equality considerations remain embedded within the Commission's policies, procedures and decision-making processes. They will also demonstrate to staff, service users and external stakeholders the Commission's commitment to operating as an equitable, inclusive and accountable organisation.

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):**

Over the next reporting period, the Commission's equality and good relations priorities will focus on embedding equality considerations across the organisation and strengthening organisational capacity through the appointment of a dedicated Equality Officer. Particular emphasis will be placed on improving the collection and use of equality monitoring information, reviewing policies and practices to ensure they

promote equality of opportunity, and maintaining accessible communications and services.

The Commission will continue to engage with victims and survivors, representative groups, community organisations and statutory bodies to ensure a broad range of perspectives inform its work. A continued focus on trauma- and resiliency-informed service delivery will support inclusive engagement and accessibility.

Staff development and awareness raising will remain important priorities, alongside ongoing efforts to promote good relations through fair, respectful and impartial engagement with all communities. The Commission will also continue to develop accessible information resources and monitor the effectiveness of its policies and services in meeting the needs of diverse stakeholders.

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:

8	0	0
Fully achieved	Partially achieved	Not achieved

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

Action 1 – Accessible Infrastructure

Achieved: Accessible infrastructure was installed within the Commission's public-facing premises, ensuring that facilities are accessible to people with disabilities and support inclusive access to Commission services.

Outcome: Reduced physical barriers and improved accessibility for staff, visitors, victims, survivors and members of the public.

Action 2 – Accessibility of Operational and Off-Site Locations

Achieved: Accessibility requirements were considered in the selection and use of operational sites and off-site meeting venues. Accessibility assessments were undertaken and accessibility needs incorporated into planning arrangements.

Outcome: Disabled staff and stakeholders are better able to participate in meetings, consultations and engagement activities.

Action 3 – Disability Awareness Training

Achieved: Disability awareness and disability equality training were incorporated into staff induction arrangements and made part of mandatory training for new employees.

Outcome: Increased awareness and understanding of visible and hidden disabilities, encouraging positive attitudes and supporting an inclusive organisational culture.

Action 4 – Accessible Formats

Achieved: Public documents and information are available in alternative formats, including large print, braille and audio, upon request. Information about obtaining alternative formats is included within Commission publications.

Outcome: Improved access to information for disabled people and greater equality in accessing Commission services and communications.

Action 5 – Wider and Easier Engagement

Achieved: Assistive technologies, interpretation services and other reasonable adjustments were made available to support participation in meetings, events and engagement activities.

Outcome: Increased opportunities for disabled people to engage with the Commission and participate in its work.

Action 6 – Consultation with Disability Support Services

Achieved: The Commission engaged with disability organisations and representative groups through consultation and engagement mechanisms and included these organisations within stakeholder networks.

Outcome: Disabled people's views and experiences were considered in Commission activities, helping to inform service development and decision-making.

Action 7 – Representation in Decision-Making

Achieved: All processes were designed to attract diverse candidates and minimise barriers to participation. Opportunities were advertised openly and monitored for diversity.

Outcome: Increased opportunities for disabled people to contribute to governance, advisory structures and decision-making processes.

Action 8 – Inclusive Recruitment and Disability Confident Commitment

Achieved: The Guaranteed Interview Scheme was implemented for disabled applicants meeting the minimum criteria, and disability representation continued to be monitored through workforce diversity reporting. Progression towards Disability Confident accreditation was embedded within workforce planning.

Outcome: Improved access to employment opportunities for disabled people and strengthened the Commission's commitment to becoming a more inclusive employer.

During the reporting period, all eight Disability Action Plan measures were fully achieved.

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

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs ⁱ	Outcomes / Impact ⁱⁱ
National ⁱⁱⁱ	Widespread use of media to reach all audiences	Improved access to information for diverse audiences, and enhanced opportunities for inclusive engagement across all sections of the community.	Increased awareness and understanding of ICRIR's work among a broader and more diverse audience, leading to improved access to information, greater inclusivity and stronger public engagement.
Regional ^{iv}	Provision of the Guaranteed Interview Scheme for disabled applicants.	Scheme integrated across departments.	Improved access to employment opportunities in public bodies and increased visibility of disabled professionals in national decision-making
Local ^v	Availability of accessible formats for public documents	Formats available upon request	Improved access to public communications and enhanced transparency and dignity

2(b) What training action measures were achieved in this reporting period?

Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
We will provide disability awareness training for staff to promote understanding and inclusivity.	Mandatory Training package included in induction from May 2024	Boosted disability literacy; deeper understanding and inclusive attitudes embedded in workplace culture

2(c) What Positive attitudes action measures in the area of Communications were achieved in this reporting period?

Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
Social Media and mainstream Media Engagement	Regular posts on LinkedIn. Use of news outlets to share information.	Broadened access, reach and visibility of ICRIR communications supporting inclusive engagement by ensuring that updates, news and key messages are accessible to a wider audience. This has led to increased public awareness of ICRIR's work, improved access to information, and greater opportunities for diverse groups to engage with and benefit from ICRIR communications.
Accessible reading formats	Large print, braille, audio, easy read formats; visual descriptions for images.	Enhanced inclusivity for people with visual impairments and screen reader users. Ensured equitable access to visual and textual content.
Website Accessibility – WordPress Tool	Ongoing website scans and content improvements.	Reaching a wider audience due to the removal of barriers to understanding and accessibility of our content.

Translation Services	Documents translated upon request.	Supported linguistic diversity and cultural inclusion. Improved understanding across language groups.
Interpreting Services and Accessible PDFs	BSL and ISL interpreting services; accessible PDF documents	Promoted access for Deaf and hard of hearing communities. Delivered vital content in formats compatible with assistive technologies.

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

Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
Disability awareness and equality training provided to all staff	Disability awareness and disability equality legislation incorporated into induction and ongoing learning programmes	Increased understanding of disability issues across the organisation. By equipping staff with knowledge of disability rights, equality legislation and inclusive practices, the organisation enables employees to act as advocates for disability equality in their day-to-day work. Staff are encouraged to challenge barriers, promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and share good practice with colleagues, service users and partner organisations.
Engagement with disability organisations and representative groups through consultation and outreach activities	Disability support organisations included in consultation, engagement and information-sharing mechanisms	Strengthened relationships with disability stakeholders and encouraged partner organisations and community groups to participate in shaping services and promoting disability inclusion.

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

Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
Implementation of accessible support arrangements for meetings, events and service users	Assistive technologies, interpreting services and reasonable adjustments made available to participants where required	Improved accessibility of Commission activities, enabling wider participation by disabled people and helping ensure services are delivered in an inclusive and person-centred manner.

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

(a) Qualitative

Staff and stakeholder feedback: Gathered through workshops, surveys, and employee groups to assess perceptions of accessibility improvements and inclusion practices.

(b) Quantitative

Website analytics: Monitoring traffic patterns, engagement metrics, and bounce rates to assess the impact of accessibility changes.

Social media metrics: Tracking reach, interactions, and audience growth linked to inclusive messaging campaigns.

Training participation data: Monitoring numbers of attendees in equality and inclusion training to identify uptake and opportunities for broader engagement.

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

If yes please outline below: N/A

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

The disability action plan is due for Review in 2026-27.

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

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

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

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

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