





### TRUST BOARD / SLT COVER SHEET

	<p>The cover sheet purpose is to provide the Trust Board/Committee with a clear summary of the paper being presented, how it impacts on the people we serve, key matters for attention and the ask of the Trust Board/Committee</p> <p>The Accountable Director must satisfy themselves that the cover sheet is accurate and fully reflects the paper. The expectation is that the Accountable Director has read and agreed the content of both the cover sheet and paper.</p>	
<b>Meeting and Date of meeting</b>	Trust Board - Thursday 25 <sup>th</sup> September 2025	
<b>Title of paper</b>	Section 75 Annual Progress Report 2024-25	
<b>Accountable Director</b>	<b>Name</b>	Mrs Vivienne Toal
	<b>Position</b>	Director of HROD
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<b>This paper sits within the Trust Board role of:</b>	Accountability	
<b>This paper is presented for:</b>	Approval <i>(Notes on completion at end of document)</i>	
<b>Links to Trust Strategic Priorities</b>  	<input type="checkbox"/>	Collaborative Working
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Learning Organisation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Safety, Quality & Experience
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community First
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Whole-Life Approach

## 1. Reason for Presentation of Paper / Report

For approval to submit to the Equality Commission for NI and to provide a summary update on key successes for 24/25 and future areas of focus for 25/26.

## 2. Detailed summary of paper contents:

The Report reflects progress made between April 2024 and March 2025. The Section 75 Equality Annual Progress Report is a statutory report that must be submitted to the Equality Commission for NI annually.

The report is a high level summary of what the Trust has achieved in furthering its statutory duties, the aim of which is to bring about improved outcomes for the 9 Section 75 equality categories including staff and service users. The report comprises three elements:

**Report** - Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report 2024-25 (*Equality Commission prescribed template*)

**Appendix 1** - Equality Action Plan & Disability Action Plan (2024-2025) Year 1 update

**Appendix 2** - Equality in Action newsletter [APRnewsletter - 2025](#)

## 3. Areas of improvement/achievement:

Through our EDI plans (regional Equality and Disability Action Plans 2024-2029) and associated activities, and in line with our vision and strategy 2030 and People Framework we aim to address discrimination and promote a fairer, more representative workplace and patient experience.

There are many achievements that the Trust and our employees should be proud of during another challenging year; a snapshot of some of those is highlighted in the accompanying newsletter "Equality in Action."

[APRnewsletter - 2025](#)

- Developed an interpreting card for patients and service users, currently being piloting in ED. This has been produced in 31 different languages including the most common languages used within the Trust area.
- A new women's health hub opened at DHH offering rapid access for gynaecological and early pregnancy support.
- In partnership with the Stroke Association the Trust introduced a new Stroke Buddy initiative at Lurgan Hospital. The new pilot initiative will see stroke survivors introduced to the Lurgan Stroke Unit to share their

story and lived experience to support patients and their families through a life changing time.

- The Purple Heart Project which aims to support patients living with dementia or experiencing confusion during visits to hospital, has been rolled out in CAH and DHH EDs and was launched as part of Dementia Awareness Week.
- Handheld pocket translation devices for service users who do not speak English as a first language. This device helps improve communication between staff and patients.
- Cultural Competency Framework - this new regional framework will help HSC staff to improve their confidence and competence in engaging with and providing services to people from a range of diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Culture Night May 2024 - an evening in celebration of our internationally educated staff and the cultural diversity within the Southern Trust.
- Disability Advocate & Staff Network – Dr Clodagh Corrigan – *update on Action plan*

#### **4. Areas of concern/risk/challenge:**

- Provision of appropriate accommodation/changing and toileting facilities for transgender people: This is such a complex area for both HSC service providers and employers given that we have different equality legislation here in NI - with the additional complexity of the Windsor Framework. At this point the Equality Commission have set out a 6-stage process on their website, the aim of which is to help them shape the legal questions that will ultimately be put to the Courts in Northern Ireland, and culminate in more definitive guidance to employers, service providers and public authorities when it comes to matters such as the meaning of “sex” and how to protect and balance the rights of girls, women and transgender people. Their final guidance may be at least another year away from being issued for consultation. In the meantime, there is a vacuum in relation to concerns regarding the appropriate guidance and advice to provide to staff both from an employment and service perspective.
- Community tensions around race: Civil unrest across NI has been concerning, in particular for our internationally educated staff. As reflected in our values, no one should feel unsafe or unwelcome in their workplace or community. Ongoing support is available for our internationally educated staff, liaison with PSNI, staff & operational networks and information sessions.
- As a Trust, we recognise that barriers exist for people with disabilities, and we continue to strive to improve the experience of our employees with disabilities and service users. Ensuring Trust staff and managers

are aware of disability legislation and the rights of people (both employees and service users) with disabilities can be a challenge. We strive to be an employer of choice and ensure all our services and facilities are accessible for all service users.

**5. Impact on Statutory Duties: Provide details on the impact of the following and how.**

<b><i>Financial Impact</i></b>	<b><i>Safety and Quality Impact</i></b>
<p>Yes, there are Financial Impacts</p> <p>Costs of interpreting service (telephone, sign language and translation) for 2024/25 was £97,442. An increase from the previous year of £13,387.</p> <p>Costs of the f2f interpreting are £1,522,364 for 24/25, a decrease of £54,732.17 from the previous year.</p> <p><i>(NB: SPPG cover the cost of all telephone, face to face and sign language interpreting across the region. Trusts approve the invoices for telephone interpreting and this is then recouped from SPPG. Face –to- Face interpreting and sign language interpreting is paid directly by SPPG.)</i></p>	<p>Yes, there are Quality, Safety or Experience Impacts</p> <p><i>The summary report highlights a range of improvements in relation to quality and experience for service users – positive impact.</i></p>

**6. Risk Assessment (Risk level and state if a risk assessment be completed)**

Risk assessment regarding changing and toilet facilities for transgender patients / service users and staff needs to be completed in the absence of clarity on the legal position in NI to inform review of policy position.

**7. Other Business Intelligence/data (If appropriate)**

n/a

**8. Impact: Provide details on the impact of the following and how. If this is N/A you should explain why this is an appropriate response.**

<b>Corporate Risk Register</b>	People – reducing risk associated with low staff morale Access to Services
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<b>Board Assurance Framework</b>	S75 Annual Report presented to Trust Board annually for approval Regional networks review actions plans and progress
<b>Equality and Human Rights</b>	The report demonstrates how the Trust is mainstreaming its Section 75 equality duties, human rights and disability duties into the core functions of the Trust.

### Trust Board Role Fulfilment

<b>Strategy</b>	<i>Papers in this category should address forward-looking priorities, long-term objectives, or service transformation. These are typically focused on shaping the future of the organisation and will often involve decisions on direction, investment, or innovation.</i>
<b>Culture</b>	<i>These papers aim to influence or reflect the values, behaviours, and staff or patient experiences within HSC. They may relate to leadership development, equality, diversity and inclusion, staff engagement, or initiatives intended to reinforce our organisational ethos.</i>
<b>Accountability</b>	<i>Papers falling into this area relate to governance, assurance, performance monitoring, compliance, and risk. They provide evidence that responsibilities are being fulfilled, standards are being met, and corrective actions are being taken where necessary.</i>

### Reasons for Paper Presentation

<b>Approval</b>	<i>Used when an item requires a formal agreement or endorsement by the meeting / committee members. Examples are approving minutes, budgets, proposals or policies.</i>
<b>Assurance</b>	<i>Used when an item can be measured against a certain criteria / standard. Examples are a project is on course with delivery or financial targets are being met.</i>
<b>Information</b>	<i>Used when an item is presented for the purpose of updating or informing the attendees without requiring a decision or action, such as reports, updates, or announcements.</i>
<b>Discussion</b>	<i>Used when an item is listed primarily for open discussion, brainstorming or gathering input from the members without requiring an immediate decision.</i>