



Southern Health & Social Care Trust

Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report April 2023 - March 2024

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan	As above <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (double click to open) Name: Telephone: Email:

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

<https://southerntrust.hscni.net/involving-you/equality-and-diversity/>

Signature:


Cathy Lavery, Head of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

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 2023 and March 2024

Appendix 1

Equality and good relations examples of outcomes, impacts and good practice

Appendix 2 (a/b)

Equality Action Plan & Disability Action Plan Year 5 Update

Appendix 3

Equality in Action Newsletter

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 2023 -2024, 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.

Q1 – Introduction part

The Southern Health and Social Care Trust (SHSCT or referred to as the Trust) welcomes diversity and inclusion, recognising that difference brings value to the organisation. During 2023-24, the Trust has continued to take steps to promote equality and inclusion and continues to mainstream it and make it a key strategic priority for the organisation.

This year's report provides a high-level summary of what the Southern 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.

It is important to note that this report stands alongside the range of other Trust reports, such as the Corporate Plan, Quality Annual Report, Trust's Public and Personal (PPI) Involvement Progress Reports and Community Development Report.

Copies of any of these reports can be obtained by contacting us on Equality.Unit@southerntrust.hscni.net

The Health and Social Care Trusts have worked collaboratively to develop the new five year Section 75 Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan. Respective Trust Boards have approved the final plans. Appendix 2 provides updates on the actions not completed in the previous Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan. Reporting on actions in the new plans will commence in 24-25.

The Trust has developed ***Equality in Action*** – a user friendly newsletter for stakeholders and staff to highlight the extensive work than has taken place across the Trust to promote equality of opportunity, good relations and the disability duties.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

It is our aim to help create and support a culture that is inclusive at all levels and help create a sense of belonging, in line with the Trust's Vision, Values and Priorities. We strive to ensure the Trust is a 'great place to work' that promotes positive attitudes to diversity, both in relation to employees and service users. We wish to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded across our organisation and that our employment practices are fair, flexible and enabling so that each employee can reach their full potential.

Some key highlights during 2023-2024 year are detailed in the following pages:-

- A comprehensive programme of training is provided both by the in-house Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) team and also in partnership with a range of organisations such as Rainbow, BDA and Employers for Disability NI.
- Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights e-learning programme for all employees is available on the regional HSC learning platform.

Diversity & Inclusion Calendar

Last year we developed our first Diversity & Inclusion Calendar making a commitment to celebrate a number of diversity days throughout the year. For 2023-2024 year this included awareness raising and sharing of information on celebratory events such as:



- **Good Relations Week**, September 2023. The Southern Trust is committed to the promotion of good relations amongst people of different religious belief, race or political opinion, during GRW the EDI team took the opportunity to promote our good relations statement and highlight our commitment that our staff and service users should be treated with respect and dignity in line with the HSC Values.
- **Global Diversity Awareness Month**, October is a reminder of the positive impact diverse cultures have on society as a whole. It aims to raise awareness of diversity and inclusion and celebrate all the ways our different ethnicities, cultures, heritages, experiences and abilities contribute to a more dynamic and inclusive workplace. During this time, the EDI Team helped raise awareness of the diversity of our workforce - *Southern Trust - One Team, Many Nationalities*. We hosted two drop in engagement sessions for our ethnic minorities Staff Network – REaCH and produced a Global Diversity Awareness Month video which was shared across numerous forms of communications.

Celebrating Global Diversity Awareness Month



October is Global Diversity Month, which aims to raise awareness of diversity and inclusion and celebrate all the ways our different ethnicities, cultures, heritages, experiences and abilities contribute to a more dynamic and inclusive workplace.

During this time, our Equality Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Team will be helping to raise awareness of the diversity of our workforce.

Our diverse workforce is one of its greatest strengths and during the month of October we will be taking the opportunity to highlight the unique perspectives this brings to the organisation.



Southern Trust - One Team, Many Cultures

As part of this, the EDI Team will be hosting two drop in engagement sessions for our ethnic minorities Staff Network - REaCH. You can find us at:

Daisy Hill Hospital, Newry - Friday 13th October 11.30 – 1.00pm
(Entrance to the Canteen)

Craigavon Area Hospital – Monday 23rd October 11.30 – 1.00pm
(Entrance to the Canteen)

To learn more about Global Diversity Awareness Month, please click [here](#)
For further information, contact the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Team [here](#)



Belfast PRIDE took place on 29 July 2023. During this time (Friday 22 July – Sunday 31 July), the EDI team took the opportunity to show support for our LGBTQ+ staff and service users and to highlight the Trust as an inclusive employer for all. To take steps

towards this we adopted the [HSC Rainbow Badge](#), to show that Southern Trust is an open, non-judgmental and inclusive place for people that identify as LGBTQ+. Members of the EDI team (and Trade Union colleagues) hosted 2 engagement sessions in CAH and DHH, where Rainbow lanyards and the Rainbow Pin were available for staff.

We also used Pride to educate ourselves on how we can improve on equality of access to employment and training, provision of support and services and how we work with our colleagues identifying as LGBTQ+. A [Link & Learn LGBTQIA+ Inclusion in the Workplace](#) was hosted by Business in the Community and facilitated by [Cara-Friend](#) on Friday 28 July 2023.



As part of **International Men’s Day** on 17 November 2023, the EDI Team facilitated a Movember Men’s Health session; delivered by Business in the Community. It included Walk & Talk Health Checks with the Trust Occupational Health team in Armagh and we welcomed the Cancer Focus Keeping Well Service, who facilitated health checks aimed at increasing awareness of how to reduce the risk of cancer and promote healthier living and lifestyles.



To help raise awareness of **International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3 December 2023)** the EDI Team organised a number of events for staff including:

- Disability Positive Practice: Reasonable adjustments Awareness session
- Disability Awareness Training for Managers: Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Drop-In-Clinic for Managers on Supporting Reasonable Adjustments in the workplace

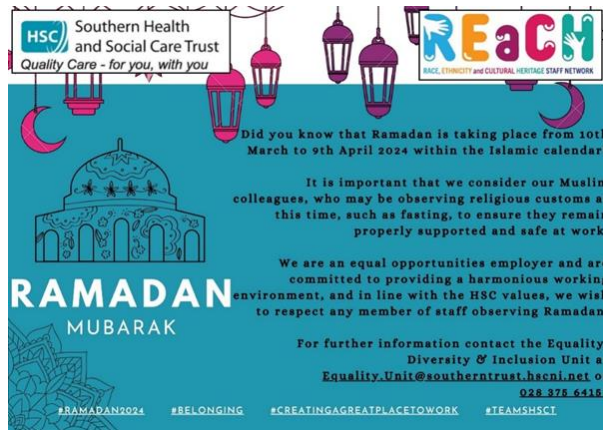
International Women’s Day International Women’s Day took place on Friday 8 March 2024. With 85% of our workforce female, raising awareness of IWD helps to demonstrate our commitment to creating a diverse and inclusive workplace for everyone. This year’s theme was #inspireInclusion.



Some of our staff participated by striking the #InspireInclusion pose to show solidarity. We also used this opportunity to highlight the range of resources available in particular on Women's Health on U Matter, Menopause Awareness Information and information on the lighter weight uniforms and how to order.



Ramadan



Ramadan took place from the evening of 10 March – 9 April 2024, with the first day of fasting from Monday 11th March. As a Trust, we have a diverse workforce and it is important that we consider our Muslim colleagues during this time, who may be observing religious customs such as fasting, to ensure they remain properly supported and safe at work.

In recognition of our staff practising Ramadan, we offered a provision of light snacks in both Craigavon Area Hospital (CAH) and Daisy Hill Hospital (DHH) dining rooms overnight and shared information on how to support staff and colleagues throughout the month of Ramadan.



New Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan

The five Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts and the NI Ambulance Service (NIAS) worked collaboratively to develop and consult on a five year Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan. Input from a range of stakeholders shaped the draft plans and a public consultation provided the opportunity for interested parties to comment on the proposed content and to share ideas, knowledge and experiences.

The feedback we received helped us to think about what else we could do to make a difference and helped to shape the final plans. The plans detail the actions we will take forward over the next five years to address Section 75 inequalities, to promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability and encourage participation in public life.

Employee Networks

The **REaCH Staff Network** is a place of support for all current and new employees from different race and ethnic minority backgrounds and allies. The network continues to grow and we have seen a 124% increase from 2022. There are regular meetings and organised events throughout the year such as Hiking, Zumba, Badminton and continued communication via the What's App grp, regular emails, meetings and drop in events. The EDI team hosted two social events – our first ever SHSCT Culture Night 2023 and a walk in Tollymore Forest Park.



The **HSC LGBTQ+ Staff Forum** exists to support LGBTQ+ employees within the HSC and create a more LGBTQ+ inclusive work environment. Members of the EDI team along with regional HSC colleagues participated in the Belfast Pride celebrations on 29th July 2023



Culture Night 29 April 2023

On Thursday 27 April 2023, staff joined together for our first ever Culture Night. It was an evening in celebration of our International Staff and the cultural diversity within the Southern Trust. 75 staff and senior management attended.

We enjoyed some traditional foods, dress, dance and music – a great night was had by all!

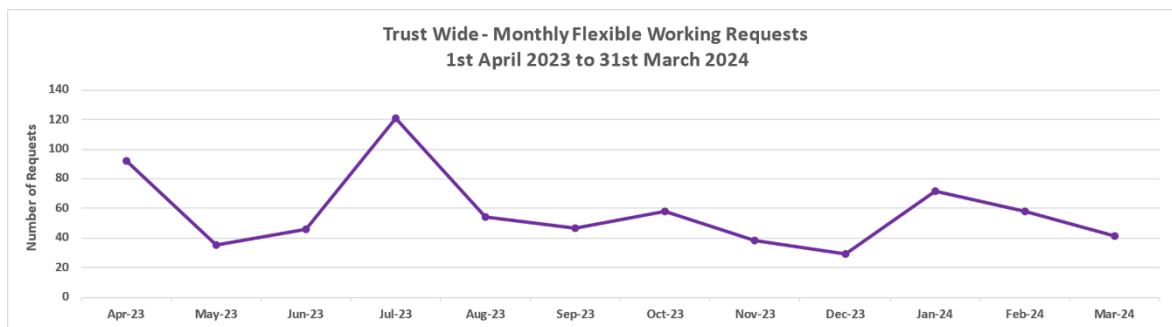


Flexible Working



It is widely accepted that flexibility at work is key to attracting, retaining and supporting our skilled and valued workforce and assisting in the delivery of high quality services across Health and Social Care into the future.

During 2023-24 we continued to promote the HSC Flexible Working Framework along with supporting resources. This included briefing communications, awareness training and resources for managers and information on flexible working options for employees. During the time frame April 2023 to March 2024, we received **661** requests for flexible working (last year 441) The most common reason for requesting flexible working was reduced/personalised hours, and the biggest staff group is N&MW. Over 85% of requests were accepted. Also, we have approximately **4540** remote access users who work from home part of the time.



SMT Visibility Plan

We implemented our [SMT Visibility Plan](#) to support key messaging associated within our Corporate Plans and to communicate our vision, ambition, values and culture of the Trust, to explain where we are headed and how our people can help us get there.

Our weekly 'Chat with the Chief' continued throughout 2023-24 and had consistently good numbers of attendees and feedback has also been positive. Video recordings of the short sessions are also being viewed by those who aren't able to attend the live sessions.

Leadership Walks also continued throughout 2023-24, with Directors visiting teams across the organisation. The feedback template piloted in 2022/23 has been amended, as a result of feedback, and is being rolled out. Follow up visits are planned to ensure any actions for the organisation have been completed.

Recognition and Appreciation

A newly launched work-stream was established in October 2023 (the Recognition & Inclusion Work-stream). This work-stream is cross Directorate and includes staff from all areas, services and grades within the Trust. It reports to the People & Culture Group on the progress of work associated with equality, diversity, inclusion, recognition and appreciation.

A Recognition & Inclusion Action Plan 2023-24 has been developed and implemented as follows:-

- The launch of our re-branded 'Our People Awards' in October 2023 which resulted in the receipt of 292 nominations from across all services areas. The awards ceremony took place on 19th April 2024.
- The development and roll out of the Recognising our People Tool-kit in August 2023 (a resource for all managers and employees detailing how recognition and appreciation can be embedded across service directorates).
- A number of employee appreciation days took place during 2023-24 to show gratitude for various professions. This was particularly well received in those areas where this had not occurred before e.g. for Administrative Teams, Facilities Support Teams and Estates Services.
- Ongoing promotion of the #ThankYouThursday campaign and use of GREATix, (mechanisms by which to show appreciation for colleagues). In addition, communications issued as part of the Friday Focus campaign on the importance and benefits of showing gratitude in the workplace.
- The implementation of a 3-month pilot corporate monthly recognition programme in the Mental Health Directorate in the latter end of 2023. Positive feedback received and consideration to be given to extending across the Trust pending suitable resource and systems.
- External awards and achievements are regularly celebrated in our Employee Newsletter 'Southern-i'.
- We have also developed an Employee Benefits brochure



Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights eLearning Training – Making a Difference

Corporate Mandatory Training (CMT) is training that **all** staff must complete and keep up-to-date. CMT is a process to help all staff to get to know the Trust, what it expects of them and how they will be supported to provide a safe, effective service and to perform to the highest level within their post. Part of this process involves providing training that is essential for staff to do their jobs safely and well.

The Corporate Mandatory Training (CMT) Compliance comparisons since March 2020 are outlined below:

CMT	% Compliance as at 31 st 2020		% Compliance as at 31 st 2021		% Compliance as at 31 st 2022		% Compliance as at 31 st 2023		% Compliance as at 31 st 2024	
	at May		at March		at March		at March		at March	
Equality, Good Relations & Human Rights	42%		73%		53%		65%		83%	

Corporate Mandatory Training Element	% Compliance as at 31 st March 2023	% Compliance as at 31 st March 2024	Variance (%)
Equality, Good Relations & Human Rights: Making a Difference	65	83	+18%

With continued awareness raising, communication and face-to-face training organised on request to those who may not have adequate access to e-learning; the EDI team are delighted to see a further increase in uptake of 83% compliance (up from 65% in March 2023). This is the highest compliance rate in the last 5 years.

Accessible Communication for service users

The Southern Trust has one of the largest ethnic minorities populations in Northern Ireland. Provision of language assistance is a legal requirement for public sector organisations and an essential part of providing safe, high quality care to all patients and clients.

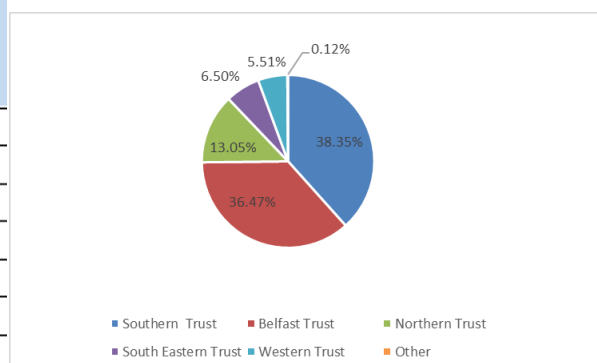
The primary aim of the NI HSC Interpreting Service is to improve equality of access to Health and Social Care for patients who do not speak English as a first or competent second language. It also ensures that information is communicated through a qualified interpreter, which in turn ensures high quality safe services.

During the reporting period, the Southern Trust made 49,848 (last year – **46,309**) requests for interpreters through the NI Regional HSC Interpreting Service. This has shown an increase again in the face-to-face interpretation. The top 3 languages requested were Polish, Lithuanian and Tetum.

NI HSC Interpreting Service Report 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

Requests 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

HSC Organisation	Number of Requests
<u>Southern Trust</u>	49848
Belfast Trust	47402
Northern Trust	16958
<u>South Eastern Trust</u>	8448
Western Trust	7161
Other	161
Total	129978



% Requests per HSC Trust/Org

Top 20 Southern HSC Trust Languages 2023-24

1. Polish	10185
2. Lithuanian	8065
3. Tetum	6848
4. Bulgarian	6247
5. Portuguese	5704
6. Romanian	3447
7. Arabic	1780
8. Russian	1463
9. Ukrainian	1054
10. Slovak	992
11. Latvian	986
12. Hungarian	466
13. Urdu	424
14. Cantonese	388
15. Mandarin	363
16. Bengali	288
17. Spanish	169
18. Pashto Central	138
19. Somali	115
20. Czech	111

In addition, 9,470 (*last year 11,669*) calls were serviced through the telephone interpreting service during 2023-24. 142 (*last year 134*) documents were translated into minority languages during 2023-24.

Annual Fair Employment Monitoring Return

The Trust submitted its statutory Annual Fair Employment Monitoring Return to the Equality Commission showing workforce composition between the two main communities in NI, applicant flows/appointees, promotees and leavers for the year.

PART A

As at 1 January 2024, the community background of the Southern Trust was as follows: 34% Protestant, 57% Roman Catholic and 9% non-determined.

The analysis is again in line with an increasing trend within the Health Sector in favour of Roman Catholics as evidenced in the Equality Commission's Annual Fair Employment Monitoring Report No 33 – A Summary of NI Monitored Workforce Returns 2022.

As at 1 January 2024, the Trust employed 15,797 staff of which 14% were male and 86% were female. According to the NI Health and Social Care Workforce Census March 2022, published by the Department of Health (DoH) 78.0% of the HSC workforce were female and 22.0% were male (unchanged from last year). ([Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Workforce Census March 2022 \(health-ni.gov.uk\)](https://health-ni.gov.uk))

Preparing for a Positive Retirement

We value the loyalty, dedication and contribution our people have made to Health & Social Care during throughout their career. We recognise that retirement is an important time in every employee's life. We want to help ensure that all employees who are approaching retirement are supported and given the opportunity to plan and prepare.

Therefore, we developed a resource to highlight some of the advice and support available to our people. As part of this 'preparing for retirement', workshops were offered and attended by 59 Trust employees during the year.

Disability placement scheme

The Disability Placement Scheme is an initiative established by the Trust to provide experiential learning for persons with a disability in a live workplace setting. The Disability Placement Scheme can help individuals build on skills they may have already acquired, for example IT skills. It enables participants to put their skills and experience to use in a live workplace environment.

Placements are short-term yet long enough to enable the individual to gain valuable work experience. Most placements last between 3 months, but no longer than 6 months maximum. Placement are not viewed as job substitution and therefore do not usually last more than a maximum period of 6 months. Most placements are usually part-time which may be between 1 or 2 days per week and working hours are intended to be flexible to suit both the manager and participant.

For further examples, please see Appendices 1 – 3 and Trust Website: www.southerntrust.hscni.net

- 2 Please provide examples of outcomes and/or the impact of equality action plans/ measures in 2023-24 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

See Appendices 1 - 3 for detailed examples of good practice and outcomes.

- 3 Has the application of the Equality Scheme commitments resulted in any changes to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2023-24 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

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

Please provide any details and examples:

The application of the Trust's Equality Scheme, equality screening and consultation processes have ensured that an equality focused lens has been brought to policy and service development as well as decision making.

For evidence please refer to the Trust's Quarterly Screening Outcome Reports which illustrate how the Section 75 equality duties have been mainstreamed into the decision making/policy development processes of the Trust – available on the Trust's website under 'About the Trust / Publications / Policy Screening Outcome Reports'.

Please see Appendices 1 – 3 for further examples.

- 3 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:

Please see Appendices 1 – 3 for further examples.

- 3 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*):
New and revised policies adopted by the Trust during this period have been screened. Please see the Trusts Screening Outcome Reports

<https://southerntrust.hscni.net/involving-you/equality-and-diversity/policy-screening-outcome-reports/>

- 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)*:

From 1 April 2023 'Sign Language Interactions' provides face to face and remote sign language interpreting services for people who are d/Deaf and provide a full range of communication supports for people who are deafblind and hard of hearing attending health and social care appointments. The Strategic Planning and Performance Group commissions this regional service.

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

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

Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)

4 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2023-24 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:

- Compliance with the Section 75 equality duties are stipulated in job descriptions under 'Staff and Managerial Responsibilities'.
- Compliance with the Section 75 equality duties is also included in specific guidelines for Trust Board members and the Trust's Senior Management Team.
- Arrangements and responsibility for ensuring the effective and timely discharge of the Trust's Section 75 equality duties are set out in Chapter 1 of the Trust's approved Equality Scheme - which elaborates on how the Trust proposes to fulfil its equality duties in relation to its specific functions. The accountability structure is also clearly outlined in the Equality Scheme.
- Equality objectives are specifically included in the job descriptions of the Trust's Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development and the Trust's Head of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion.
- They are also included as part of the knowledge and skills framework and monitored via staff appraisals.
- Incorporated in Training Programmes – Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights – Making a Difference – eLearning programme.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2023-24 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:

- Progress in implementing the Section 75 duties is reported in the Trust's Annual Progress Report and regularly to the Trust Senior Management Team and Trust Board.
- Equality training is mandatory in the Trust. Compliance is monitored and reported through the Trust's accountability framework.
- The Trust's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion team provides ongoing training, hosts workshops for policy leads/decision makers and provides advice and guidance in the area of Section 75, the disability duties and human rights

obligations. They also act as a business partner - participating in discussions of policy development and decision making processes.

6 In the 2023-24 reporting period were objectives/ targets/ performance measures relating to the Section 75 statutory duties integrated into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? (tick all that apply)

- Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
- Yes, in some departments/jobs
- No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's ongoing corporate plan
- No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2023-24 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Section 75 equality duties are incorporated and mainstreamed at a strategic level into the business of the Trust.

Objectives/targets/performance measures relating to the Section 75 statutory duties were integrated into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans as follows:

- The Trust's Corporate Plan
- The Trust's own Annual Report
- The Trust's Management of Change Framework embeds the principles of fairness and equity
- Trust's Section 75 Annual Progress Report
- Equality Screenings are tabled at the Policy Scrutiny Committee along with the policy document
- Equality and Human Rights are a standard section for consideration for reports progressing to SMT/Trust Board

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2023-24 reporting period, please indicate the number of:

Actions completed:	0	Actions ongoing:	3	Actions to commence:	to	Actions in New Plans
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Please refer to Appendix 2 for progress updates on Year 5 action measures.

3 actions to commence relate to legislative delays and rolled forward to 2024-29 plans.

The pre-election period restrictions caused a delay to the consultation process and as a result, the timeframe for the Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan have been revised. A detailed update on the actions in the 2018-2023 Equality Action Plan can be found in Appendix 2 of last year's Annual Progress Report available on the Trust's website.

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2023-24 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

None – See Appendix 2 for details of progress made with regards Year 5 action measures.

The Equality and Disability Action Plans are 'live documents' and therefore constantly under review to ensure they deliver on outcomes.

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2023-24 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

During the 2023-24 year, the Equality Action Plan (EAP) and Disability Action Plan (DAP) actions were rolled out for Year 5.

In addition, the new 5 year EAP and DAP (2024 - 2029) was developed on regionally which included extensive engagement and consultation with stakeholders.

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

Where relevant, we engage with targeted groups in a pre-engagement phase of consultation. This initial engagement is to inform the consultation at an early stage and helps us shape the scope of the wider consultation.

- 11 Please provide any details and examples of good practice in consultation during the 2023-24 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, the Trust consulted on the **regional five year Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan**. The draft plans were shaped and developed with input from a range of stakeholders during three pre-consultation online listening events on 28th June, 1st July and 25th October 2022, the latter facilitated by Disability Action. The purpose of these events was to engage with key stakeholders regarding development of our new 5-year Equality Action Plan (EAP) and Disability Action Plan (DAP). The feedback received helped to shape our plans. Our draft actions were also informed by our broader research and audit of inequalities.

On 5 June 2023, we commenced a public consultation on the draft Equality Action Plan and draft Disability Action Plan. The consultation closed on 30 September 2023. We extended the length of the consultation given that summer holidays fell during the consultation period. The consultation was an opportunity for members of the public and interested parties to comment on the proposed content of the plans and to share ideas, knowledge or experiences to help inform and shape the final plans.

We used several different methods of engagement, detailed below, to encourage interested groups and individuals to provide feedback. To raise awareness of the consultation process we publicised the consultation documents through our regional consultation list, made up of 445 organisations and representative groups and in addition through local groups and organisations including service user and carer groups. Consultation documents were made available to the public on all the Trusts websites. We made all attempts to ensure the consultation was easy to understand. Plans were

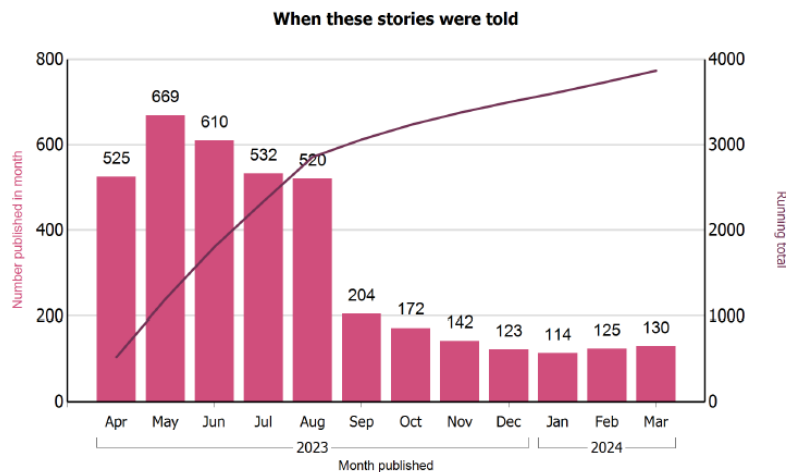
available in British and Irish Sign Language and Easy Read format and other formats on request.

An online proforma, hosted on Citizen Space, was available to complete. We are mindful that to engage through Citizen Space individuals need to have access to a suitable device, broadband, and knowledge to complete an online proforma. In recognition that some people may prefer to respond in a different way, we welcomed responses in other formats including hard copies of written or typed responses, sent in by post, or email, by means of face-to-face meetings and responses provided over the telephone.

We held two consultation listening events on 25th and 26th of September 2023. The in person listening event on 25 September were held in a central geographic location and participation was enabled through accessible facilities and communication support. Communication support was also available at the online listening event on 26 September. Participants had the opportunity to view the draft plans and to provide feedback.

12 detailed responses were received during the formal consultation period. These responses, along with feedback from listening events, have been collated into key themes relating to the EAP and to the DAP. The Plans have been amended to reflect the feedback. Our Trust Boards have considered this report and the amended plans at their public meetings. This report and all amended plans are available on all Trust websites and all individuals and organisations we have engaged with and those listed on the consultation database have been notified.

The implementation of **Care Opinion** is continuing across all directorates within the SHSCT. During the reporting period (01/04/2023 – 30/03/2024) a total of **3866** stories were received.



Numbers of stories by Directorate

Each operational Directorate received feedback for reflection and learning via the Care Opinion platform.

Adult Community Services	<u>408</u>
Children and Young People Services	<u>474</u>
Mental Health and Disability Services	<u>77</u>
Surgery and Clinical Services	<u>1330</u>
Medicine and Unscheduled Care Services	<u>1474</u>

Celebrating Service User Involvement



Disclaimer: No Senior Managers were harmed in the making of this film!

The Children and Young People's Services held an event recently to showcase projects where young people have been involved in helping to improve service delivery.



Over 80 young people, family members, carers and staff attended with young people's involvement at the forefront throughout the evening.

The event was arranged by young people from the CYP Service User Forum, SKETCH (Sharing Known Experiences to change Health and Social Care) along with the Social Work and Social Care Governance Team. In keeping with the theme of young people being at the centre of the event, the evening was compered by one of the SKETCH members, Adam.

Our Vision Forum members provide feedback

Members of our Vision Forum recently provided feedback on the Banbridge public realm works.

Jill Hanna, along with her guide dog Ace, and Gerard McEvoy, who is a competent long cane user, took part in a two-hour walk in the town centre.



Jill and Gerard were joined by Ray Maxwell from our Sensory Disability Team, staff from Guide Dogs NI, RNIB, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council (ABC Council). During this walk, Jill and Gerard pointed out some of the hazards members of the public experience on their daily commute while walking through the town.

[Read more](#)



12 In the 2023-24 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were most frequently used by consultees: (tick all that apply)

- Face to face meetings
- Focus groups
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- Questionnaires
- Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
- Internet discussions
- Telephone consultations
- Other (*please specify*): The Trust continues to engage with its established user groups. Care Opinion.

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:

13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2023-24 reporting period? (tick one box only)

- Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

- Publication of S75 Quarterly Equality Screening Outcome Reports
- Section 75 Annual Progress Report was made available
- Equality newsletter "Equality in Action" disseminated
- Equality section included in the Trust's Annual Report
- Engagement exercises
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion section on Trust website/SharePoint
- Staff Training
- Ongoing guidance and briefings to senior management and Board
- Informal meetings with the Equality Commission and other organisations

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2023-24 reporting period? (tick one box only)

PART A

Yes No Not applicable – no commitment to review

The consultation list is constantly under review and is updated on an ongoing basis.

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

Details can be found at:

<https://southerntrust.hscni.net/involving-you/equality-and-diversity/policy-screening-outcome-reports/>

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

12

16 Please provide the number of assessments that were consulted upon during 2023-24:

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

Future Provision of Emergency General Surgery [EQIA Screening | Southern Health & Social Care Trust \(hscni.net\)](#)

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

As above.

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

PART A

Yes No concerns were raised No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

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 2023-24 reporting period? (tick one box only)

Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Future Provision of Emergency General Surgery [Consultations | Southern Health & Social Care Trust \(hscni.net\)](#)

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 2023-24 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:

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:

NI HSC Interpreting Service – ongoing review of language trends used to determine future language needs in order to ensure equality of access to services and in the interest of providing high quality safe services.

- 22 Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2023-24 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:**

N/A

- 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 Trust continues to monitor staff across the 9 equality categories. The monitoring of staff is enhanced by the self-service function of the Human Resources, Payroll, Travel and Subsistence System (HRPTS).

This information is used for screening purposes and helps to identify specific issues that need to be addressed to ensure the promotion of equality of opportunity. The Trust regularly raises awareness to encourage staff to keep their details up to date and more is planned for 2024-25.

The Trust completes an Article 55 Review Report every three years which involves gathering and analysing to inform the completion of the review.

We use equality data to inform equality-screening exercises, which in turn inform policy development.

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 2023-24, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.**

In keeping with the commitments in its approved Equality Scheme, the Trust has put in place a range of training interventions to ensure the effective discharge of its Section 75 equality and disability duties.

Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights eLearning Training

During the 2023-24 year, the Trust continued the emphasis on enhancing our staff knowledge and capacity around equality, diversity and inclusion, across all parts of the organisation. To this end, we continue to roll out the corporate mandatory online training equality training "Making a Difference". **10,243** employees undertook the training during 2023-24.

The Corporate Mandatory Training (CMT) Compliance comparisons since March 2020 are outlined below:

CMT	% Compliance as at 31 st March 2020		% Compliance as at 31 st May 2021		% Compliance as at 31 st March 2022		% Compliance as at 31 st March 2023		% Compliance as at 31 st March 2024	
	Equality, Good Relations & Human Rights	42%		73%		53%		65%		83%

Corporate Mandatory Training Element	% Compliance as at 31 st March 2023	% Compliance as at 31 st March 2024	Variance (%)
Equality, Good Relations & Human Rights: Making a Difference	65	83	+18%

Employment - Selection and Recruitment

The Trust has in place arrangements to ensure recruitment panels receive training on the Trust's procedures for ensuring a fair selection process.

A regional eLearning module has been developed. During the reporting period, **818** staff undertook the on-line Selection and Recruitment Training in the Trust

EDI Staff Training 2023-24

Month	Name of Training	By	No attended
Apr-23	Making a Difference – Equality, Diversity & Human Rights	EDI	5
May-23	Making a Difference – Equality, Diversity & Human Rights	EDI	30
Jun-23	Cultural Competence	External	17
	Cultural Competence	External	19
	Making a Difference – Equality, Diversity & Human Rights	EDI	24
	Disability Awareness Training - Disability Positive Practice: Neurodiversity Awareness	EfD	84
Jul-23	Cultural Competence	External	11

PART A

Aug-23	Making a Difference – Equality, Diversity & Human Rights	EDI	34
Sep-23	LGBTQ+ awareness training	BitC/ Cara Friend	15
	Disability Awareness Training - Disability Positive Practice: Neurodiversity Awareness	EfD	83
	Equality Screening Training	EDI	15
Oct-23	Making a Difference – Equality, Diversity & Human Rights	EDI	24
Nov-23	International Men's Day - Movember Men's Health Session	BitC	15
	Neurodiversity	EDI	10
	Making a Difference – Equality, Diversity & Human Rights	EDI	19
	Working Well with Interpreters	NIHSC	29
Dec-23	Disability Awareness Training - Disability Positive Practice: Reasonable Adjustments Awareness	EfD	14
	Making a Difference – Equality, Diversity & Human Rights	EDI	30
	Disability Awareness Training - For managers	EDI	10
	Reasonable Adjustments Drop in Clinic	EDI	7
Jan-24	Working Well with Interpreters	NIHSC	20
Feb-24	Equality Screening Training	EDI	11
	Making a Difference – Equality, Diversity & Human Rights	EDI	34
Mar-24	Reasonable Adjustments Drop in Clinic	EDI	7
	Working Well with Interpreters	NIHSC	25
	Making a Difference – Equality, Diversity & Human Rights	EDI	30
	Making a Difference – Equality, Diversity & Human Rights	EDI	27
		Total	646

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:

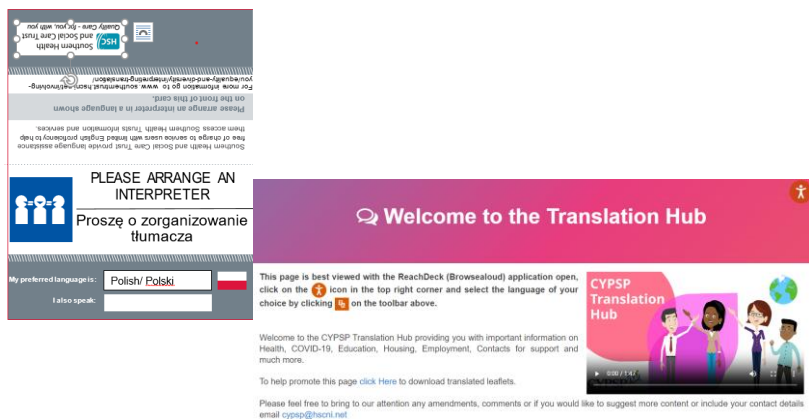
Refer to Q24 above.

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

26 Please list any examples of where monitoring during 2023-24, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation to access to information and services:

The Trust continues to provide information in a range of languages and on request.

Language Interpreter Cards and Care Opinion leaflets are in development in the top languages to address the impact of language barriers within Health & Social Care.



Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

27 How many complaints in relation to the Equality Scheme have been received during 2023-24?

Insert number here:

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

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

2029.

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)

It is anticipated that focus during the next reporting period will be on:

- HSC Trusts will be rolling out the new regional 5 year Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan.
- Support for any EQIAs / Equality Screenings
- Continued support for Trust managers and staff to ensure best practice and compliance with DDA legislation / reasonable adjustments in the workplace. Supporting the new Disability Advocate.
- Support for under-represented groups of staff, including ethnic minorities' staff (including development of a Buddy Scheme and Cultural Competency) and LGBTQ+ colleagues.
- Promoting and raising awareness of Diversity & Inclusion via the D&I Annual Calendar and a range of Celebratory Days throughout the year.
- Continuing to raise awareness and mainstreaming of equality, diversity & inclusion.

30 In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what equality and good relations priorities are anticipated over the next (2023-24) 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):

