



Southern Health & Social Care Trust

Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties


Annual Progress Report April 2024 - March 2025

Contact:	Name:	Cathy Lavery
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme	Telephone:	02837 564151
	Email:	cathy.lavery@southerntrust.hscni.net
<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.

Appendix 1

Equality Action Plan & Disability Action Plan 2024-2029 Year 1 Update March 2025

Appendix 2

Equality in Action Newsletter

This report reflects progress made between April 2024 and March 2025

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

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

- 1 In 2024 -2025, 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) is an employer of approximately 15,000 staff and welcomes diversity and inclusion, recognising that difference brings value to the organisation. During 2024-25, 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

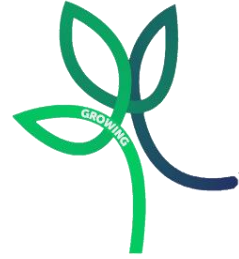
The Health and Social Care Trusts have worked collaboratively to develop a five year Section 75 Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan. Appendix 1 provides updates on the actions.

The Trust has also produced "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.

Some key highlights during 2024-2025 year are detailed on the following pages:-

Diversity & Inclusion Calendar

The Trust Diversity & Inclusion Calendar for 2024-25 included awareness raising and sharing of information on celebratory events such as:



- **Good Relations Week (GRW) September 2024.** The Southern Trust is committed to the promotion of good relations amongst people of different religious belief, race or political opinion, during GRW the Equality Diversity & Inclusion (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.
 - We also took the opportunity to highlight the importance of our names. Our names are an incredibly important part of our identity. They carry deep personal, cultural, family and historical connections. They give us a sense of who we are, the communities in which we belong and our place in the world. Names are very much attached to who we are as individuals, they are part of our personal DNA. Names are also often linked with our ethnicity and culture. Pronouncing names correctly shows respect and signals inclusion.



- **Global Diversity Awareness Month October 2024** 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 and the supports which are available through the REaCH Staff Network, SHSCT Buddy Scheme, Importance of our names and the Diversity and Inclusion Calendar.



Belfast PRIDE took place on 26 July 2024.

During this time (Friday 18 July – Sunday 27 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 continued the adoption [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 SHSCT attended the Pride parade in Belfast.



We also used Pride as an opportunity to promote the HSC LGBTQ+ Staff forum to support employees within the HSC to create a more LGBTQ+ inclusive workforce environment. The purpose of the staff forum is to:

- To create visibility for LGBTQ+ people in our organisation (HSC)
- To provide a point of contact and sign posting for LGBTQ+ employees
- To be actively involved in HSC policy development To be accessible with a mailing list, meetings, activities/events
- Improve our knowledge of intersectionality in our LGBTQ+ community

To help raise awareness of **International Day of Persons with Disabilities** (3 December 2024) the EDI Team organised a number of events for staff including:

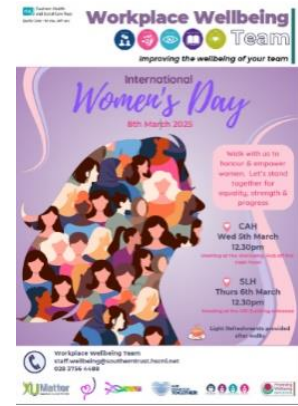


- Disability Awareness Training for Managers
- Drop-In-Sessions for staff in CAH and DHH facilitated by the newly appointed Disability Advocate Dr Clodagh Corrigan.



International Women’s Day took place on *8 March 2025*. With 86.5% of our workforce female, raising awareness of IWD helps to demonstrate our commitment to creating a diverse and inclusive workplace for everyone.

Members of the Workplace Wellbeing and EDI teams took part in Walk with Us to honour and empower women across sites in Southern Area. We also used this opportunity to highlight the range of resources available in particular on Women’s Health on Umatter and Menopause Awareness Information.



Community Inclusion Women's wellness event

To celebrate **International Women’s Day** the SHSCT Community Inclusion Worker worked in partnership with ABC Community Network and Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council to hold a women’s wellness event on the 3rd April 2025 at South Lakes Leisure Centre, Craigavon

The event aimed to promote women’s health, wellbeing, and inclusion by offering access to information, services, and activities in a welcoming and supportive environment. **70 women aged 18 to 80 attended**, including local women from different backgrounds and countries. The event provided an inclusive, culturally sensitive space where all women could engage, learn, and participate fully.



Participant "comments" | Event photos



Ramadan took place from the evening of *28 February – 30 March 2025*, with the first day of fasting from Saturday 1 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 and Daisy Hill Hospital dining rooms overnight and shared information on how to support staff and colleagues throughout the month of Ramadan



Disability Advocate

The Trust welcomed a new role of Disability Advocate during *July 2024*. Dr. Clodagh Corrigan is a Specialty Doctor in Emergency Medicine and is based in the Emergency Department in Daisy Hill Hospital.

As a Trust, we recognise the difficulties and barriers that exist for staff and students with disabilities and long-term conditions. This role will provide support for those staff and students and allow them to continue to participate fully in our organisation. The Southern Trust is the first Trust in Northern Ireland to establish this role and Clodagh, who is a wheelchair user, hopes to bring real life experience to the position.

Upon the introduction of the disability advocate role, ongoing work has identified a number of target areas to make improvements for both our people and our service users:

- **Policies and Procedures**

The Disability Advocate fed into the regional review of the absence management policy, altering language and making improvements to encompass the rights of disabled workers. Also tailoring guidance for line managers regarding how to reasonably accommodate disabled staff who require time off for appointments.

- **Staff survey**

Carried out a survey of all staff with almost 400 respondents across the breadth of employees, identifying areas for improvements, some of which have been actioned already.

- **Staff network**

Established a Trust staff network, **ValuABLE** for all our people with disabilities and long term health conditions. The network has met a number of times and has developed a plan for the next 12 months including raising awareness and education pieces.

- **Education**

Carried out education sessions for line managers on how to make reasonable adjustments for employees with disabilities and has shared learning across directorates.

- **Estates**

Identified areas where improvements can be made and have begun the process of planning. We anticipate many of these low cost but significant impact works will begin to take place in the Autumn of 2025.

Employee Networks



- ***REaCH Staff Network***

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. 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.



LGBTQ+ Regional HSCNI Staff Network

The EDI Team continues to support the LGBTQ+ Regional Network. The network was re-established in 2022 and the Forum is focused:

- To create visibility for LGBTQ+ people in our organisation
- To provide a point of contact and to sign post for LGBTQ+ employees
- To be actively involved in HSC policy development
- To be accessible with a mailing list, meetings, activities/events
- Improve our knowledge of intersectionality in our LGBTQ+ community

The Forum is promoted through emails, training, newsletters and global messages to staff and support for Pride.

SHSCT Buddy Scheme

We launched the SHSCT Buddy Scheme during *September 2024*. The Buddy Scheme has been designed to help new internationally educated staff settle into life at the Southern Trust, and life in Northern Ireland in general.

The main purpose of a buddy is to help ease the transition of both moving to a new country and a new job in Health & Social Care at the same time. This guide is designed for new internationally educated staff who will be paired with a current staff member (Buddy Volunteer) who will support them.

Culture Night 9 May 2024

On Thursday 9 May 2024, staff joined together for our second Culture Night in DHH in Newry. Over 120 staff, senior management and Trust Board members attended.



It was an evening in celebration of our International Staff and the cultural diversity within the Southern Trust. The night included traditional dancing and entertainment

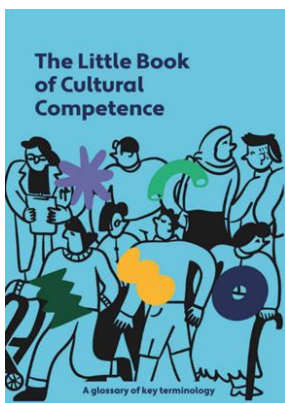
with nationalities from Brazil, Philippines, Portugal, Pakistan, India, Nigeria and Zimbabwe represented.

A Cultural Competency Framework to Guide Health and Social Care

A Cultural Competency Framework to Guide Health and Social Care was launched on 5 February 2025 by the Health Minister and HSC Trust Leads. 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.

The framework, which is underpinned by staff training and resources, including the **‘Little Book of Cultural Competence’**, is designed to promote equity and enhance patient care. At the launch event Health Minister Mike Nesbitt said: *“This regional framework is an important step as part of our broader efforts to create an environment of inclusivity and equality within healthcare. I am delighted to say that this initiative will provide our staff with the necessary tools to enhance patient care and help reduce health inequalities right across Northern Ireland.”*

The Little Book of Cultural Competence is a guide for understanding 10 essential terms around cultural competence. Each section unpacks a key term by sharing a real-life account, addressing common misconceptions, and offering suggestions to assist you in your cultural competence journey.



Human Library Events

“Many Cultures, One Community: Human Library Events”

Human Library events were organised by the Community Inclusion Worker in collaboration with local community organisations. Human Libraries aim to open dialogue about personal experiences, expertise, cultures, and identities. We want to use these conversations to promote empathy and connectivity within our diverse community. Participants from diverse backgrounds and many countries shared their powerful life stories, promoting understanding, empathy, and inclusion. These events created safe spaces for dialogue, challenged stereotypes, and celebrated the richness of cultural diversity.



[Contact details](#)

[Human Library Events](#) | [Feedback](#) | [Comments](#) | [Photos](#)

Human Rights Resource and Video

The Trust has worked in collaboration with fellow regional Trusts to produce a staff resource and video to promote a Human Rights based approach to the delivery of care and service user support.

We know that Health and Social Care can be full of complex and challenging situations, where often we have to balance rights, for example a person’s ability to make their own decisions, their autonomy, versus managing risk and our duty of care.

We want all HSC staff who provide care and treatment on behalf of HSC Trusts, to be aware of their human rights duties in the context of the FREDA principles.

FREDA stands for Fairness, Respect, Equality, Dignity and Autonomy

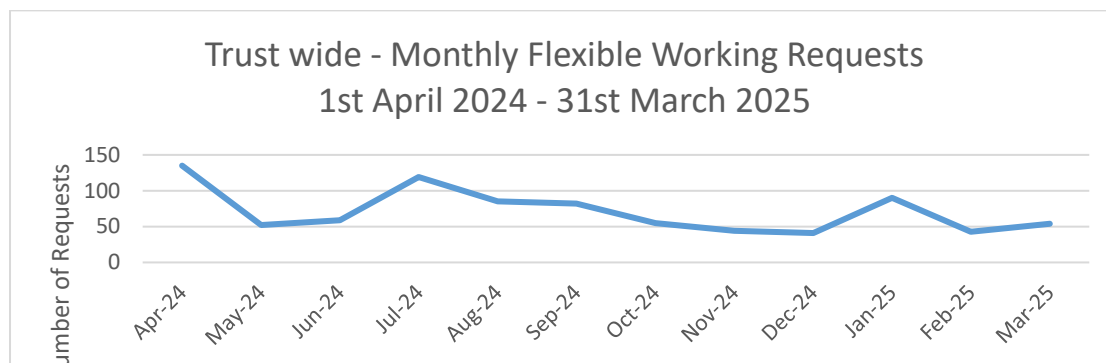
This guide and video takes our staff through each of the five FREDA principles and how they apply to day-to-day work within health and social care. We want to ensure that the human rights of our patients, service users, carers and staff are protected, promoted and supported.



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 the time frame *April 2024 to March 2025*, we received 848 requests for flexible working (previous year 661). The most common reason for requesting flexible working was reduced/personalised hours, and the biggest staff group requesting flexible working is Nursing & Midwifery. Over 75% of requests were accepted.



Accessible Communication for Service Users

➤ **Provision of Face to Face and Telephone Interpreting**

The Trust continues to provide a robust face to face and telephone interpreting service for patients and clients who do not speak English as a first language. This is a part of the Trust's commitment to ensuring and promoting equality of access to all our services.

During the reporting period, the Southern Trust made 47,761 (last year – **49,848**) requests for interpreters through the NI Regional HSC Interpreting Service. The top 3 languages requested were Polish, Lithuanian and Bulgarian.

To support this work the Trust has, in conjunction with the NI Regional HSC Interpreting Service, delivered 2 Working Well with Interpreters training sessions online. This was extremely successful as we have 30 members of staff who attended these online sessions from all Trust facilities. The top four location requests for an interpreter in the 2024-2025 period were: Physiotherapy, Health Visiting, Radiology and Outpatients.

NI HSC Interpreting Service Report 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

HSC Organisation	Number of Requests
Southern Trust	47,761
Belfast Trust	47,358
Northern Trust	15,541
South Eastern Trust	9,406
Western Trust	7,019
Other	167
Total	127,252

Top 20 Southern Trust Languages 2024-25

1. Polish	9810
2. Lithuanian	7108
3. Bulgarian	5943
4. Tetum	5934
5. Portuguese	5398
6. Romanian	3603
7. Arabic	1884
8. Russian	1657
9. Ukrainian	1173
10. Latvian	885
11. Slovak	870
12. Urdu	544
13. Hungarian	515
14. Mandarin	451
15. Cantonese	341
16. Pashto Central	201
17. Bengali	179
18. Somali	157
19. Spanish	141
20. Czech	134

In addition, 6,875 (last year 9,470) calls were serviced through the telephone interpreting service and 121 (last year 142) documents translated.

Addressing the impact of language barriers in HSC Digital Translation devices

Language barriers, cultural differences and insensitivity are key barriers facing many people from minority communities.

The Promoting Wellbeing Division Inclusion team and the MDT social work team in the GP Federation in Newry & Mourne have worked in partnership to address inequalities in access to HSC. This work is an intrinsic part of the partnership across the Southern Area Outcomes Group (SAOG) evolving over the past 2 years in response to needs identified within ethnic minority communities in the SHSCT area.

Utilising community development approaches and creativity, **funding was secured from the Department of Health to purchase 65 digital translation devices** and these have been piloted in GP practices, the Emergency Department in Craigavon area hospital and Daisy Hill hospital and across community settings.

"Service User feedback"

100% found the device easy to use

95% found the device improves patient contact.

84% felt it increased access to services.

96 % feel the devices should be available in all Health Care settings

67% had no difficulties with the device

When I attended the clinic, I was able to have a confidential chat with the nurse through the device –it made me feel so comfortable and valued.

Masen -Yemen

This device enabled me to be part of the conversation and gave me peace of mind. Omar -Syrian

➤ **Handheld pocket translation devices**

Promoting well-being team and Primary Care Multidisciplinary Teams launched a new handheld pocket translation devices to help improve communication between staff and patients who do not speak English as a first language in CAH, DHH and GP practices across the Southern Trust area. The pocket-sized digital kit can translate up to 108 languages through audio or text in real time.



➤ **Regional Sign Language Remote Interpreting Service**

A free remote Interpreting Service Sign Video for British Sign Language (BSL) and Irish Sign Language (ISL) users in NI has been introduced to meet the ongoing needs of our deaf and hard of hearing patients and clients.

To compliment face to face Sign Language Interpreters, Trust staff can now access the Video Relay Service (VRS) and the Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) to facilitate communication with service users who require sign language interpreting services.

encompass

The Southern Trust was the last Trust (along with Western Trust) to go live with encompass on 8 May 2025.

The EDI Team have been supporting the ongoing Equality Screening of the proposals locally to identify if there are any potential impacts. This work goes hand in hand with our Trust Management of Change process, which looks at issues such as redeployment, retraining and possible additional expenses for someone having to travel further to their place of work.

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.

As at 1 January 2025, the community background of the Southern Trust was as follows: 34 % Protestant, 57% Roman Catholic and 9% non-determined.

As at 1 January 2025, the Trust employed 15,204 staff of which 13.5% were male and 86.5% were female. According to the NI Health and Social Care Workforce Census March 2025, 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 2025 \(health-ni.gov.uk\)](https://health-ni.gov.uk))

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

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

Please see Appendices for an update of actions progressed in the regional Equality and Disability Action Plans and examples of good practice.

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

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

Please provide any details and examples:

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 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 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/>

PART A

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

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

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

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

- 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 2024-25 reporting period were objectives/ targets/ performance measures relating to the Section 75 statutory duties integrated into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? (tick all that apply)

- Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
- Yes, in some departments/jobs

PART A

- No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation’s ongoing corporate plan
- No, the organisation’s planning cycle does not coincide with this 2024-25 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 2024-25 reporting period, please indicate the number of:

Actions Completed	15	Actions ongoing	28	Actions to commence	8
-------------------	----	-----------------	----	---------------------	---

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

The 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 2024-25 reporting period, the following have been identified: (tick all that apply)

- Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the known inequality
- Action(s) to address the known inequality in a different way
- Action(s) to address newly identified inequalities/recently prioritised inequalities
- Measures to address a prioritised inequality have been completed

The regional 2024-2029 Action Plans have been developed consulted on, approved and implemented.

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 2024-25 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:**

Stroke Buddy Scheme

In partnership with the Stroke Association, we introduced a new Stroke Buddy initiative at Lurgan Hospital.



The pilot will see stroke survivors introduced to share their story and lived experience to support patients and their families through a life changing time.

The initiative was born out of an idea by the unit staff and the stroke association to recruit a local stroke survivor group. The Orchard Women’s Group, who were keen to help other stroke survivors by sharing their stories. The five ladies, from various walks of life, have all suffered a stroke during their lives and know the impact it’s had on them individually and their own families and hope by sharing their lived experience they can give patients some hope and encouragement as they begin their road to recovery.

User Involvement Community of Involvement Event



The User Involvement Team in partnership with service users and carers held a community of involvement event on 18th September 2024. This was an opportunity to showcase great involvement projects within the Trust, network with organisations who support staff and patients and their families and learn more about how to support the work of our Health Service.

The event was very well attended and its success was another example of how working in partnership with service users and carers is such an important way of helping to achieve the best outcomes.

Purple Heart Project



A project to support patients living with Dementia or experiencing confusion during their visit to hospital was rolled out across Craigavon and Daisy Hill Emergency Departments.

The Purple Heart project was developed by Craigavon Area Hospital ED Sister Shauna Colyer in support of patients coming into the department with dementia and was launched as part of Dementia Action Week.

12 In the 2024-25 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were most frequently used by consultees: (*tick all that apply*)

- Face to face meetings
- Focus groups
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- Questionnaires
- Information/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 2024-25 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

- Yes No Not applicable

PART A

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

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)*:

19

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

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:

As above.

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

Yes No concerns were raised No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Arrangements for publishing the results of assessments (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

19 Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2024-25 reporting period? (tick one box only)

Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Arrangements for monitoring and publishing the results of monitoring (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

20 From the Equality Scheme monitoring arrangements, was there an audit of existing information systems during the 2024-25 reporting period? (tick one box only)

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

Please provide any details:

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 2024-25 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 2025-26.

Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)

- 24 Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2024-25, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.**

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 – 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.

During the 2024-25 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“. **5,259** employees undertook the training during 2024-25.

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 88% compliance (up from 83% in March 2024).

The Corporate Mandatory Training (CMT) Compliance comparisons since March 2021 are outlined below:

CMT	Compliance as at 31st May 2021	Compliance as at 31st March 2022	Compliance as at 31st March 2023	Compliance as at 31st March 2024	Compliance as at 31st Dec 2024*
Equality, Good Relations & Human Rights	73%	53%	65%	83%	88%

**due to Encompass the last report produced for 2024 was in December.*

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 delivered Staff Training 2024-25

Date	Name of Training	Numbers attended
April 2024	Making a Difference – Equality, Diversity & Human Rights (Dom Care staff)	35
May 2024	Disability Awareness Training - Disability Positive Practice: Neurodiversity Awareness Sessions (Autism, AD(H)D, Dyspraxia, Dyslexia, Dyscalculia)	28
June 2024	Equality Screening Training	4
	DOM Care – Making a Difference	14
	Cultural Competence, DHH	8
	Working Well with Interpreters	15
	Cultural Competence, STH	10

	Cultural Competence, CAH	7
July 2024	Cultural Competence, Lurgan	9
Sept 2024	Disability Awareness Training – Reasonable Adjustments	40
Nov 2024	Neurodiversity Awareness	5
Dec 2024	Disability Awareness Training for mgrs.	3
	Working Well with Interpreters	15
March 2025	BSO Interpreting Online Booking System - How to Book an Interpreter	2

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 2024-25, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation to access to information and services:

Addressing the impact of language barriers in HSC Digital Translation devices

Language barriers, cultural differences and insensitivity are key barriers facing many people from minority communities.

The Promoting Wellbeing Division Inclusion team and the MDT social work team in the GP Federation in Newry & Mourne have worked in partnership to address inequalities in access to HSC. This work is an intrinsic part of the partnership across the Southern Area Outcomes Group (SAOG) evolving over the past 2 years in response to needs identified within ethnic minority communities in the SHSCT area.

Utilising community development approaches and creativity, **funding was secured from the Department of Health to purchase 65 digital translation devices** and these have been piloted in GP practices, the Emergency Department in Craigavon area hospital and Daisy Hill hospital and across community settings.

"Service User feedback"

100% found the device easy to use

95% found the device improves patient contact.

84% felt it increased access to services.

96 % feel the devices should be available in all Health Care settings

67% had no difficulties with the device

When I attended the clinic, I was able to have a confidential chat with the nurse through the device –it made me feel so comfortable and valued.

Masen -Yemen

This device enabled me to be part of the conversation and gave me peace of mind. Omar -Syrianian

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

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

Insert number here:

0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

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 continuing with actions from the regional 5 year Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan (2024-2029).
- Support for EQIAs / Equality Screenings
- Policy review and development
- Continued support for Trust managers and support for staff with disabilities/ long term health conditions, to ensure best practice and effective reasonable adjustments in the workplace. Continued support for the Disability Advocate.
- Support for under-represented groups of staff, including internationally educated staff, LGBTQ+ colleagues and those with Caring responsibilities.
- 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 (2024-25) 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):

