



*Quality Care - for you, with you*

**Progress Update Regional Equality and Disability Action Plans Year 5**

**Equality Action Plan  
Regional and Local Actions**

**2018 – 2023**

**Progress Report  
Year 5: 2022-2023**

## Section 1 – Ensuring the effective discharge of our Section 75 Equality Duties

We want to ensure that the focus is on outcomes for people within the nine Section 75 equality categories and to make a positive difference for them. The following actions are therefore aimed at simplifying the process.

Action Measure	Completed
<p>1. We will develop a Screening and Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Tool Kit to guide staff through the process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A toolkit will be available for policy and decision makers.</li> <li>• More robust and regionally consistent screening/EQIAs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Progress Year 5 - Completed</b></p> <p>The Equality Screening Toolkit was launched in September 2022 to support staff with S75 screening. This resource is available on the Staff intranet.</p> <p>One to one screening clinics, specific to a policy, project or proposal are available on request. These have been popular with staff and positive feedback has been received.</p>
Action Measure	Completed
<p>2. We will review our staff training to ensure best practice is followed when screening and conducting EQIAs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to date training programme for all policy makers across health and social care will be made available to ensure best practice.</li> <li>• Skilled staff, policy leads and decision makers.</li> <li>• Consistent and effective approach in the training programme across all Trusts (targets to be set).</li> <li>• Effective compliance with the S75 Equality Duties</li> </ul>	<p><b>Progress year 5 – Completed</b></p> <p>Equality screening toolkit launched in September 2022.</p> <p>This toolkit is available on the Staff Intranet. One to one screening clinics, specific to a policy, project or proposal are available on request. In addition, group Equality screening masterclasses are offered regularly to ensure our policy leads and decision makers have the requisite knowledge and skills to mainstream equality considerations and due process to enhance the quality of decision making and policy formulation</p> <p>The extensive EDI training programme offered by Southern Trust offers a range of different options in terms of online self-directed training or facilitated training. The online Making a Difference training is still available for staff and compliance continues to be monitored having increased during the 22.23 year. The Trust’s Equality Unit continues to provide policy leaders and decision makers across the Trust with specific advice and support on best practice in screening and EQIAs.</p>

Action Measure	
<p>3. We will develop and implement a communication strategy to ensure that stakeholders are aware of Trust Equality Units, their functions and how they can be engaged on equality and human rights issues</p>	<p><b>Progress year 5 – Completed</b></p> <p>Strategy in place to improve communication.            Raised awareness among S75 groups of Trust Equality Units and how they can be involved in and influence Trust equality agenda.</p>
<p><b>Progress Year 5 – Completed for this reporting period</b></p> <p>The Trust uses a range of methods to communicate with stakeholders, representative groups and individuals. This includes ongoing media, social media, and newsletters.</p> <p>The Equality Section of the Trust’s website includes screening outcome reports, Annual Progress Report, Disability and Equality Action Plans and newsletters/bulletins are published regularly. Communication and awareness raising also continues through social media including Facebook and Twitter as well as press coverage of events/initiatives etc. Frequent articles are also drafted for staff and published on the Trust Staff intranet pages.</p> <p>The SHSCT Trust Board reviews annually the Section 75 Annual Progress Report - a further means of raising awareness and highlighting key achievements during the current reporting period.</p> <p>The Trust continues to raise awareness through established networks and user panels such as the Equality, Human Rights and Good Relations Joint Consultative Forum, which facilitates ongoing communication and collaboration between the Equality and Human Rights Commissions and the Community Relations Council in order to optimise outcomes for Section 75 groups.</p>	
Action Measure	Rollover to new 5 year equality action plan
<p>4. We will work with the Department of Health and other relevant stakeholders to make sure we are prepared for the introduction of Age Discrimination Regulations.</p>	<p>Progress Year 5 – Rollover to next 5 year equality plan as legislation still not in place.</p>

## Section 2 – Promoting Equality in our Services

The following actions have been developed in response to what we have heard and are aimed at providing welcoming, person-centred and accessible services for everyone.

<p><b>Action Measure</b></p>	
<p>5. We will review our equality training programme in collaboration with service users, carers and their advocates. Consistent staff training and awareness raising, co-produced and delivered, where appropriate, across health and social care. Raised awareness among staff of the best way to promote equality of opportunity for service users. Each Trust to identify a process to monitor e-learning.</p>	<p><b>Progress year 5 – Completed</b></p> <p>During this reporting period, Northern Trust led on developing a training video resource featuring people with disabilities on behalf of the region. This offers practical support and tips when engaging with disabled people and is a worthwhile and valuable resource. This is now included in Southern Trust disability awareness training <a href="https://vimeo.com/771500523">https://vimeo.com/771500523</a></p> <p>The Mandatory Equality Training for Staff and Management is continually featured through the EDI Annual training portfolio. Management and staff can complete the training through the Regional HSC e- Learning platform or request a facilitated Learning package to be delivered by the EDI Team.</p>
<p><b>Action Measure</b></p>	
<p>6 We will work in partnership with LGBT representative organisations to develop guidance for health and social care staff to ensure LGBT service users have access to services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent up to date staff guidance developed in partnership with LGBT organisations.</li> <li>• Enhanced awareness of access barriers for LGBT service users and carers.</li> <li>• Improved satisfaction with health and social care services for LGBT service users and carers</li> </ul>	<p><b>Progress year 5 – Completed</b></p> <p>There is ongoing work to ensure service users who identify as LGBTQ+ can access services through training provision and sharing of best practice. The Trust has also publicly supported Pride week over the last 2 years.</p>

Action Measure	
<p>7 We will work in partnership with Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups and groups representing BME older people to develop guidance for health and social care staff on meeting the needs of older people in BME communities and ensure access to services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff guidance co-produced with BME communities and representative organisations.</li> <li>• Raised profile of needs of BME older people.</li> <li>• Increased awareness among staff of the needs of BME older people.</li> <li>• Improved access to services for BME older people.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Progress year 5 – Completed</b></p> <p>An Access to Health and Social Care Services information booklet has been developed, which provides information on health and social care services and information on eligibility to ensure everyone receives services that meet individual needs - produced in a range of languages and is available on the staff intranet and Southern Trust Website</p> <p>Migrant Minority Ethnic needs assessment was undertaken to determine needs and set priorities to tackle inequalities and barriers experienced by minority ethnic communities in the SHSCT area. The outworking's of this evidence based assessment has enabled the Trust to set an action plan in place with a multi-stakeholder forum meeting regularly to measure/monitor progress – reference - Migrant Minority Ethnic Access to Services Task Group -CYPSP. (2022). Migrant Minority Ethnic Families Access to Services. Armagh. CYPSP.</p> <p>Community development initiatives and support continues across the Trust working with marginalised communities, promoting social inclusion, capacity building and partnership working to redress structural inequalities that exist. The SHSCT are also involved and committed at a regional level with the PHA regional ethnic minority forum.</p>
Action Measure	
<p>8 We will work with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission to develop a training programme on a human rights approach to dealing with complaints – building on work done by the Ombudsman's Office.</p>	<p><b>Progress year 5 – Completed</b></p> <p>HSC had decided to re-prioritise this training with a focus instead on residential care for vulnerable people. The training will be based on case studies provided by the Trusts, to ensure that it is meaningful, realistic and impactful to participants.</p> <p>Initial work has taken place during this reporting period to scope the training, the format and the audience. Further work is needed but it is anticipated this will be delivered in the next reporting period.</p>

Action Measure	
<p>9 We will hold an annual event to showcase best practice in equality and diversity within health and social care.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An annual Equality and Diversity event delivered.</li> <li>• Health and social care viewed as a sector that promotes equality and diversity.</li> <li>• Improved awareness of equality and diversity best practice models and shared across health and social care and beyond.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Progress year 5 – Completed</b></p> <p>During this year, the Trust marked a range of different days and initiatives including International Human Rights Day, Good Relations week, Pride 2022, International Day of People with Disabilities, Carers’ week. This is part of a wider Diversity &amp; Inclusion Calendar produced to recognise and raise awareness of diversity days throughout the year. This will be reviewed on an annual basis and has continued input from staff, in particular the Trust ethnic minorities staff network REaCH.</p> <p>A regional event was convened in November 2022 on respiratory health and differential impacts in health outcomes for people from black and minority ethnic communities.</p>

### Section 3 – Supporting our Staff

The following actions help to promote equality of opportunity for our staff and support them to understand their responsibilities in valuing differences and advancing equality of opportunity to ensure an inclusive and welcoming environment.

Action Measure	Rollover
<p>10. We will ensure compliance with any new legislation governing gender pay reporting and address any inequalities identified.</p> <p>Pay structure that ensures fairness and equity in pay and reward arrangements in line with any new legislation.</p>	<p>Legislation has yet to be enacted by the NI Assembly. We will rollover this action to the next Equality Action Plan.</p>
Action Measure	
<p>11. We will work in collaboration with relevant stakeholders to extend the remit of our Employability Schemes to enhance employment opportunities for marginalised S75 groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scope in year 1 opportunities and availability for our employability schemes.</li> <li>• Employability scheme available to other marginalised S75 groups.</li> <li>• Improved employment opportunities for marginalised S75 groups.</li> <li>• Access to employment is improved for marginalised S75 groups.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Progress year 5 – Completed</b></p> <p>All HSC Trusts are actively exploring ways to encourage the participation of persons with a disability in the workplace. Examples include experiential job placements, Job Shadowing, the Workable Programme leading to substantive employment opportunities within Trusts, career events and targeted recruitment. HSC Trusts have forged closer links with the disability sector including USEL to further promote meaningful opportunities for disabled persons to participate in the workplace.</p> <p>Work is ongoing on re-establishing and re-energising the Trust Disability Placement Scheme as due to Covid this was halted. Work has taken place on revising documentation and raising awareness with managers at all levels to encourage participation. This will continue into the new Equality and Disability Action Plans.</p>

<b>Action Measure</b>	
<p>12. We will review our harmonious working environment advice in light of any new findings and recommendations from the work conducted by the Commission on Flags, Identity, Culture and Traditions.</p> <p>Consistent regional approach to ensuring all health and social care environments are welcoming to everyone.</p>	<p><b>Progress year 5 – Completed</b></p> <p>The Trust has published its HSC Good Relations statement on a poster and shared it across its facilities for display. Trusts have worked collaboratively to review the Harmonious Working Environment Statement and Joint Declaration of Protection on display throughout its facilities. This declares that the Trust will aim to provide a good and harmonious working environment. It therefore prohibits the display of flags emblems etc., which may give offence or cause apprehension to other employees.</p> <p>Work is ongoing on a continuous basis working with staff and managers on ensuring a harmonious working environment including team based interventions.</p>
<b>Action Measure</b>	
<p>13. We will work with relevant organisations and Trade Unions to develop best practice in supporting our staff who are victims of Domestic Violence/Abuse.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best practice model established in each Trust with support mechanisms for staff experiencing Domestic Violence/Abuse.</li> <li>• Improved support for staff who are victims of Domestic Violence/Abuse.</li> </ul> <p>Raised awareness among staff of the best way to support colleagues who are victims of Domestic Violence/Abuse.</p>	<p><b>Progress year 5 – Completed</b></p> <p>The Trust's domestic and sexual abuse workplace policy has been updated aimed at making the workplace a safe and supportive environment for all employees of the Trust who experience domestic or sexual abuse. The objectives of the policy are to offer support to our employees in addressing problems arising from domestic or sexual abuse sympathetically to maximise the safety of our employees, and to deal appropriately with alleged or confirmed perpetrators of domestic or sexual abuse among our workforce.</p>

Action Measure	
<p>14. We will make sure that our staff who are carers are supported in the workplace so that they can continue with their caring role.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent regional approach established to support carers in our workforce.</li> <li>• Improved support for staff who are carers.</li> <li>• Raised awareness among staff of the best way to support staff who are carers.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Progress year 5 – Completed</b></p> <p>The Trust's Carers Co-ordinator supports carers by actively identifying their needs and developing services and actions to address these with the support of staff teams. The Co-ordinator works closely with carers, carers' groups, carers' organisations and other voluntary organisations who provide support to carers. Working in partnership to ensure that all carers are provided with the support and care that they need to remain in the caring role.</p> <p>The Trust website has a dedicated Carers Support section which includes a range of useful resources and supports that can be shared with carers. all resources have been co-produced with carers through the Trust Carers Reference Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In addition to the Trust Carers website, Learning Disability carers can access tailored information on supports.</li> <li>• A booklet is available to help staff signpost to appropriate supports.</li> <li>• Translated and accessible support materials are available on the CYPSP Translation Hub <a href="https://cypsp.hscni.net/translation-hub/">https://cypsp.hscni.net/translation-hub/</a></li> </ul> <p><i>Support for staff who are carers</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust Work Life Balance Policy (Flexible working policy) has been amended and updated to recognise and support the needs of staff who are carers</li> </ul> <p><u><a href="#">Carers' Support   Southern Health &amp; Social Care Trust (hscni.net)</a></u></p> <p>Trust staff are increasingly seeking flexible ways of working for a broad range of reasons. A toolkit has been developed to accompany the policy, to facilitate implementation and ensure all staff feel supported during any application. This encourages smart, modern and flexible ways of working to meet the needs of staff and balance the demands of work and home</p> <p><i>Carers support contracts</i> – We continue to contract with Clanrye Group, CAUSE, Alzheimer's Society, Action Mental Health ADAPT and Action for Children to provide key supports, advice and activities to support carer health and wellbeing.</p>

	<p>In May-June 2022 the Carers Support team carried out “<i>What matters to you?</i>” engagement with carers across the Trust to inform a refreshed Trust Carers Action plan. 80 carers responded to our campaign to tell us what matters to carers which was followed up with an online discussion event with 34 participants focused on ‘what would make a difference’. The feedback has been collated to inform co-production of our action plan with staff and carers in the Carers Reference Group.</p> <p>Carers Week and Rights Day are annual events that helps carers know where to get help and support and publicly raises awareness of the needs of carers. A week long programme of events took place for Carers Week from 6<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> June with a wide range of both online and face to face information sessions and activities available.</p> <p>Carers First hosted a Carers Rights Day in the Armagh City Hotel on 24 November with guest speakers and information stands with a wide range of information and advice available on the day. There was a really good turnout of carers who availed of information and advice from a large number of services and organisations. Carers enjoyed lunch after the event.</p> <p>Learning Disability Carer Consultants held an information day to highlight the supports and services available in Learning Disability, wider Trust services and Community and Voluntary organisations. There was a good turn out and very positive feedback was received from those who attended.</p> <p>Regional Work: Working in partnership with the British Deaf Association, the regional Carers Coordinators and Sensory Team staff were involved in the development of a “Carers information” video for the Deaf Community.</p>
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<b>Total actions Year 5</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>Total actions completed in Year 5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Rolled over to next plan</b>	<b>2</b>
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Southern Health  
and Social Care Trust

*Quality Care - for you, with you*

Disability Action Plan  
Regional and Local Actions  
2018 – 2023

Progress Report  
**Year 5: 2022-2023**

## Section 1 – Promoting positive actions and increased participation through training, awareness and resources

Disabled people have told us that promoting well-informed social attitudes to disability is central to securing the right to equality for all disabled people. We are committed to providing training and resources to support our staff in the implementation of our disability duties.

### *Actions to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people*

Action Measure	Description
<p>1. We will co-design and deliver bespoke disability equality training for frontline staff in partnership with disabled people.</p>	<p><b>Progress year 5 – Completed</b></p> <p>The Making A Difference E-Learning mandatory training, including scenario based learning, is the main training resource which all staff are required to complete. This incorporates disability awareness training and scenario based learning and is promoted through the Trust corporate training directory.</p> <p>In addition, HSC Trusts have revised the Staff Disability Etiquette Booklet which includes important information on Autism. This resource is aimed at raising staff awareness.</p> <p>During this reporting period, Northern Trust led on developing a training video resource featuring people with disabilities on behalf of the region. This offers practical support and tips when engaging with disabled people and is a worthwhile and valuable resource. This is now included in Southern Trust disability awareness and disability equality training.</p> <p><a href="https://vimeo.com/771500523">https://vimeo.com/771500523</a></p>
Action Measure	Description
<p>2. We will work with the consortium of mental health organisations and the ECNI to ensure health and social care is signed up to the Mental Health Charter.</p>	<p><b>Progress Year 5 - Completed</b></p>

Southern Trust Recovery College offers a range of free courses that are available for anyone with an interest in mental health and wellbeing including: service users, family members and staff.

Creating and delivering courses together using the combined expertise of mental health professionals and peer trainers with real life experience, breaks down traditional barriers and allows people to learn together.

The Trust's Umatter website and app have a specific section on Mind Your Mind, which provide resources, self-help guides and training opportunities.

A new psychological support service for staff has been developed and is rolling out Schwartz Rounds. Schwartz Rounds were introduced in the Trust in November 2022. It was developed following engagement with staff and their feedback on what would help support staff health, wellbeing and working lives as part of the Staff Support Fund. Schwartz Rounds provide a structured forum where all colleagues, clinical and non-clinical, come together monthly to discuss the emotional and social aspects of working in healthcare. The underlying premise for Rounds is that the compassion shown by colleagues can make all the difference to a patient's experience of care, but that in order to provide compassionate care, colleagues must, in turn, feel supported in their work and share their emotions through story telling of work related scenarios.

Rounds help colleagues feel more supported in their jobs, allowing them the time and space to reflect on their roles. Evidence shows that colleagues who attend Rounds feel less stressed and isolated, with increased insight and appreciation for each other's roles. They also help to reduce hierarchies between colleagues and to focus attention on relational aspects of care. The purpose of Rounds is to understand the challenges and rewards that we all face personally in working in healthcare, not to solve problems or to focus on the clinical aspects of patient care.

	<p>Feedback from previous Rounds: <i>“It was really beneficial for me to attend. I did not expect it to be so therapeutic. I did feel like sharing but I was too emotional at that point to even form a sentence. So thank you once again for arranging the Schwartz round. I have recommended it to all my colleagues as well.” “A really valuable session” “Excellent session, very powerful stories.</i></p> <p>We also updated the Trust Responding to Stress Policy and accompanying Responding to Stress Toolkit. This replaces the previous Managing Stress in the Workplace Policy and Stress Risk Assessment Tool.</p> <p>This is one part of the Trust’s response to both promoting wellbeing and preventing work-related stress. The Trust as part of the wider Health and Wellbeing Steering Group identified this as a priority and as such wanted to provide support and guidance to both employee and managers in having conversations that can reduce or prevent work-related stress. The toolkit is designed with a user friendly interface to help find ways to reduce the impact of challenging experiences within the workplace and to help identify potential resolutions.</p>
<p><b>Action Measure</b></p>	<p><b>Description</b></p>
<p>3. We will continue to support the implementation of the Regional Physical and Sensory Disability Strategy.</p>	<p><b>Progress Year 5 - Completed</b></p> <p>The Physical and Sensory Disability Strategy is led by SPPG (previously HSCB) and it has been agreed that the work on the Regional Accessible Information Standard should also be led by a regional organisation rather than a Trust. There has been previous engagement with DoH and PHA on how this can be taken forward. The Trusts will of course continue to be involved in this work given the commitment made in their respective Disability Action Plans. It is important to note that this will continue to be a</p>

	<p>priority piece of work, particularly highlighted by the importance of providing clear accessible information as we roll out Encompass.</p> <p>The Encompass Programme has established a service user and carer group to ensure unique knowledge and lived experience is integral to the provision of accessible information.</p>
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***Actions to encourage participation by disabled people in public life***

<b>Action Measure</b>	<b>Description</b>
<p>4. We will develop for staff a welcome pack with information about accessibility such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• arrangements for sign language interpreting</li> <li>• provision of auxiliary aids</li> <li>• disability etiquette</li> <li>• alternative formats.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Progress Year 5 - Completed</b></p> <p>The remote sign language interpreting service established during Covid continues to support sign language users with access to services. The service user can download an app to access a free online remote sign language interpreter 24/7. The service user can use this service to contact the NHS111 Northern Ireland COVID19 Helpline, NI COVID19 Community Helpline, GP surgeries, hospitals, dentists, social care services etc.</p> <p>Resources are available on the EDI (Equality Diversity Inclusion) pages of Sharepoint (staff intranet) in relation to interpreting, translations and organising a sign language interpreter, as well as a range of other resources including a pack on accessible communication and communicating effectively with people with hearing loss or who are deaf.</p> <p>The regional procurement process was finalised in January 2023 for the provision a Health and Social Care Communication Support Service for People who are d/Deaf, d/Deafblind and Hard of Hearing, contracted directly by the Strategic Planning and Performance Group. A specialist Provider has been secured to deliver a range of high quality, accessible, regionally consistent, and sustainable communication supports for people</p>

	<p>who are d/Deaf, d/Deafblind, or Hard of Hearing across all HSC services. The design and development of the service reflects the RQIA Review of Sensory Support Services in 2011 and subsequent extensive research, public consultation and engagement with sign language users and interpreters</p> <p>A new page tiger guide on interpreting, translations and organising a sign language interpreter has also been developed for staff and is available on the internal sharepoint EDI pages.</p> <p>The EDI Team offers disability training to ensure staff are fully equipped and feel confident in providing a responsive and accessible service to people with a disability.</p> <p>A Disability Toolkit and etiquette guide has been produced for all staff. It includes details on accessibility, how to provide information in alternative formats, and accessing the remote interpreting service.</p>
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<b>Action Measure</b>	<b>Description</b>
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<p>5. We will work with relevant organisations to adopt a communication standard in line with the Accessible Communication Standard in England to ensure information is accessible for all disabled people including those with autism and those with communication disability.</p>	<p><b>Progress Year 5 - Rollover to new DAP</b></p> <p>Trusts have been actively engaging with Encompass to stress the need for accessibility for all users going forward with the new health and social care system.</p> <p>Responsibility for the Accessible Communication Standard has been assumed by SPPG and DOH colleagues. This is further to their previous work on a Regional Physical and Sensory Disability Strategy, which has led to the establishment of a Regional Disabled People’s Forum. The Forum consists of Trust representatives, Dept. of Education, Dept. of Infrastructure, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and Service Users. The accessible communication standard work will be taken forward when a Regional Sensory Group is established.</p>
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	The Trusts three Adult Learning Disability Community Teams achieved UK Communication Accessible accreditation and are now included in the CAUK national directory.
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## Section 2 – Supporting full participation of disabled people by improving accessibility

We have done much work over the years in enhancing the accessibility of health and social care services but disabled people continue to tell us that barriers to full accessibility remain. We are committed to working with disabled people on the initiatives listed below to improve accessibility for and participation of disabled people when accessing our buildings, information and services.

### *Actions to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people*

Action Measure	Description
<p>6. We will work with disabled people to make sure we are ready for the introduction of new legislation including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental Capacity</li> <li>• Age Discrimination (Goods/Facilities/Services)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Progress Year 5 - Rollover to new DAP</b></p> <p>The Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016, when fully implemented, will bring together mental capacity and mental health law for those aged 16 years and over within a single piece of legislation. The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards as set out in the Mental Capacity Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 (MCA) have been in law since December 2019.</p> <p>Age Discrimination legislation has not progressed.</p>
Action Measure	Description
<p>7. We will review how we communicate with and seek feedback from disabled people (staff and service users) about health and social care and develop guidance to ensure effective engagement in the future</p>	<p><b>Progress Year 5 - Completed</b></p> <p>The Trust has a number of service user forums it actively engages with on a regular basis in seeking feedback from disabled people.</p>

	Preparatory work has taken place on AccessAble route maps to enhance accessibility.
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***Actions to encourage participation by disabled people in public life***

<b>Action Measure</b>	
<p>8. We will work to ensure access to all forms of communication support including support for BSL/ISL users, Makaton users and people who have Autism Spectrum Disorder.</p>	<p><b>Progress Year 5 – Completed</b></p> <p>In 2013 the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) initiated a regional review of the provision of Communication Support Services in Northern Ireland to determine the most appropriate arrangements for providing the service in the future. The review concluded in January 2016 and proposed that communication support services should be supplied in future on the basis of a regional shared service provided by the Business Services Organisation. In June 2016 <u>a consultation on the recommendations from the regional review of communication support services for people who are deaf or hard of hearing across Northern Ireland</u> was launched. The public consultation supported the recommendation that the Business Services Organisation would be commissioned to supply Regional Communication Support Services (RCSS) for deaf and hard of hearing people who need to access to health and social care across Northern Ireland. The RCSS service development has been driven by the need to improve the accessibility, quality and safety of current communication support to service users as intended by RQIA in its Recommendation in 2011. The RCSS Service Delivery Model has been developed based on the recommendations from the review of communication support in 2016. During the reporting period a regional procurement process was established for the provision a Health and Social Care Communication Support Service for People who are d/Deaf, d/Deafblind and Hard of Hearing which will be contracted directly by the Strategic Planning and Performance Group. A specialist Provider has been secured to deliver a range of high quality, accessible, regionally</p>

	consistent, and sustainable communication supports for people who are d/Deaf, d/Deafblind, or Hard of Hearing across all HSC services.
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**Section 3 – Supporting full participation of disabled people in our workforce**

We know that there continues to be gaps between the proportion of disabled people employed in health and social care compared with non-disabled people. We are committed to ensuring that disabled people are afforded equality of opportunity in respect of entering and continuing employment in health and social care. We will work in partnership with disabled people to make sure our employment policies and practices and working environments are as inclusive and accessible as possible. Please note the nature of the actions detailed below will relate directly to participation by disabled people in public life.

Action Measure	Description
9. We will work with staff, schools and disability organisations to promote health and social care as a disability friendly employer.	<p><b>Progress Year 5 – Completed</b>  HSC Trusts continue to work with the Disability Sector to promote itself as an Equal Opportunity Employer. The Trust works with partners to collaborate on initiatives to enhance employment opportunities for people with disabilities.</p> <p>All Trusts are actively exploring ways to encourage the participation of persons with a disability in the workplace. We work closely with the Department for Work and Pensions in implementing a range of programmes to support disabled employees.</p>
10. We will review opportunities for staff to disclose their disability.	<p><b>Progress Year 5 – Completed</b>  Staff are encouraged to keep their equality data up to date at regular intervals and via Trust communication methods. A new user friendly page tiger guide on how and why to keep your equality data up to date has been produced by the EDI team.</p> <p>In addition, we have a staff information booklet entitled ‘Should I Disclose to My Employer that I have a Disability’ setting out the benefits of</p>

	<p>disclosure. Whilst disclosure is voluntary, there are clear benefits for an employee in being open and transparent about their disability status. Firstly, it enables an employer, in this instance HSC Trusts, to provide for timely and practical implementation of reasonable adjustment in the workplace for new or existing employees with a disability. This is particularly important where there are health and safety considerations. This staff information booklet draws on best practice advice provided by Disability Action. This booklet has now been produced alongside the Trust's Disability Equality Policy and Reasonable Adjustment Toolkit.</p>				
<b>Action Measure</b>	<b>Description</b>				
<p>11. We will develop guidance on supporting people with autism in employment in partnership with representative organisations.</p>	<p><b>Progress Year 5 – Completed</b></p> <p>The Trust hosted a number of training sessions on neurodiversity for staff. In addition, the Trust Autism service regularly host training sessions for those engaging with parents and young people in terms of autism awareness.</p> <p>The EDI team regularly work with managers and staff on providing support and advice on reasonable adjustments that can be put in place in the workplace.</p> <p>A regional Staff information Booklet is almost complete and will be adopted by HSC Trusts. This resource provides practical advice for managers and staff re managing Autism in the Workplace.</p>				
<b>Total actions Year 5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Total actions completed in Year 5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>Rolled over to next plan</b>	<b>2</b>