



## Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report 2016-17

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

[www.nb-housing.org](http://www.nb-housing.org)

### Signature:

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

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

**This report reflects progress made between April 2016 and March 2017**

## **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 2016-17, 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.*

#### **Introduction**

NB Housing has a clear vision to commit to providing outstanding social housing for those in need. We continue to aspire to a strong promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations for all prospective and current tenants, residents and staff.

We continue to provide social housing in predominately North and West Belfast including, Ardoyne, Cliftonville, Oldpark, Lower Antrim Road, Lower Shankill, Limestone Road, Ligoneil, Crumlin Road, Lower Falls and Newtownabbey.

NB Housing's vision is:

***“To lead physical, social and economic regeneration through outstanding social housing”***

As part of our Corporate Strategy 2015/16 – 2017/18 and Operational Plan for this reporting period 2016/17 we have continued to provide properties for those in need across Section 75 groups. At the end of the reporting period we had increased our social housing portfolio by a further 18 units to 942 units. This comprises 811 units for General Needs Housing, 63 units of Sheltered Housing and 68 Supported Housing units.

Our services vary and whilst the majority of housing we provide is for general needs and families we also provide accommodation and support specific groups. These are:

- Homeless young people aged 18-25 at our Flax Foyer Scheme
- Independent 55's and over in McCorry House,
- Sheltered accommodation for the elderly at Holy Rood House

Additionally we operate joint management partnerships with

- the Salvation Army in the provision of accommodation for vulnerable families at Thorndale House and,
- Hostel accommodation in partnership with Rosemount Ltd for recovering alcohol dependent residents.
- The Delaware Building at ParkendStreet/ Limestone Road. A Shared Housing initiative providing 22 one and two bedroom apartments in partnership with Newington Housing Association

NB Housing Mission is:

***“To provide affordable rents and homes that build vibrant neighbourhoods and communities”***

As a values based organisation through which we aim to deliver on both the Corporate and Operational plan year on year. Through our values we aim to ensure:

***Leadership***

We will demonstrate our leadership through the excellence of our housing and services and the professionalism of our team.

***Aspiration***

We encourage the aspiration of our employees in their own personal and professional development. In the same manner we encourage communities to aspire to better standards of housing and regeneration.

***Personal***

We build homes not houses. We consider the needs of families, individuals and the community before anything else in our developments.

***Esteem***

We value more than the physical regeneration of housing stock, but the restoration of esteem that people have for themselves, for their home and for their community.

***Community/Togetherness***

We will listen to and respect each other working together to achieve a vibrant and prosperous community. We act collectively as one team to support one another, working cooperatively, respecting each other's views and making our work environment enjoyable.

***Integrity***

We will be accountable and transparent to our customers, respectful of our tenants and proud of our service delivery.

NB Housing is governed by a voluntary Board of 12 members, 6 males, 6 females. Responsible for effective governance of the Association the Board comprises of Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer and 8 members.

The Chief Executive is responsible to the Board of Management for the operational management of the association as a corporate body and therefore will ensure that the association fully complies with the Equality Scheme.

At the end of this reporting period we had a team of 31 staff to include a Senior Management team comprised Chief Executive, Director of Development and Property Management and Director of Housing Management and Corporate Services. Our 4 line managers include the Finance Manager, Housing Manager, Foyer Scheme Manager and Maintenance Manager, who manage teams of officers, administrative, support and caretaking staff.

The Board has agreed a 3 year Corporate Business Plan and has set challenging but achievable targets for our team to deliver this plan incorporating,

## 5 Strategic Themes

**Fit for Purpose** – How we will manage our processes to reduce risk, increase efficiency and implement sound governance arrangements.

**First Class Quality Service** – How we will meet the expectation of our tenants, customers, partners and funders.

**Building for the Future** – How we will expand our business and provide more social housing for those in need.

**Our People** – How we will attract and retain motivated staff and how we will encourage our team to achieve the challenging targets contained within our plan.

**Housing Plus** – How we will ensure that we continue to provide additional support and services for clients in receipt of Supporting People Services.

Examples of Key Policy and Service Delivery Developments throughout reporting period 2016/17:

### Political Engagement

NB Housing held a series of political engagement sessions to communicate the objectives of the organisation across the communities within which we currently provide services and in potential areas of operation. Cross sections of political parties were represented for example TUV, SF, PUP, DUP and UUP. The engagement was positively received and we continue to work with political representatives during future scheme developments, social and community issues and neighbourhood regeneration initiatives.

### Community Safety

- Operating in areas of high deprivation and density, some of our tenants experience incidents of antisocial behaviour (ASB). This past year we implemented a security service as a means of contact should ASB arise outside office hours. The service gives our tenants an ability to report incidents and also gives assurance that resolution is forthcoming to not only ensure their safety but safety within the immediate community.
- We continue to invest in the use and maintenance of CCTV in our apartment buildings.
- Our housing and support teams attend training in Anti-Social Behaviour management and it remains a continual item on our Housing Management team meetings agenda.
- We continue to maintain links with community police, local councillors, and encourage tenant liaison with our staff teams, Community Restorative Justice and can signpost to mediation services if required.

- Within this reporting period, NB Housing received 113 complaints of antisocial behaviour, 112 of which were resolved.

### **Supporting People**

Administered by the Housing Executive for Northern Ireland, Supporting People funds a range of housing related support services for vulnerable people to improve their quality of life and attain independence. These services can be provided in tenants own homes or in Flax Foyer, sheltered housing or other specialised supported housing.

NB Housing continues to support campaigns lobbying for improved funds to maintain these much needed services. Flax Foyer scheme relies heavily on the funds to support homeless 18-25 year olds to develop skills to maintain tenancies in the community.

### **Property Maintenance and Development**

Tenant and residents needs are addressed through a number of key service delivery improvements throughout the year. Our adaptations service continues to address physical needs of our tenants by involving multidisciplinary teams such as OTs, Social Workers, Support workers etc. and ensuring needs are met.

Between 1st April 2016 and 31st March 2017 the Association completed 38 adaptation requests at a total investment value of £63,562.30. Works included mobility assistance by the way of handrails or grab rails, the provision of level access showers and bathroom fitments. Completed adaptation components included

- 15 Level Access Showers
- 26 Access Aids, Handrails, grab rails etc.
- 1 star lift
- 1 Through ceiling lift
- 2 specialist electrical equipment

We continued planning application for the Forthriver Scheme in Belfast. This development provides opportunity to build 18 social housing homes in the Glencairn area of Belfast. Our community consultation process in relation to a proposed new build development included the following

**Community Notices** lodged in the following newspapers:

- Belfast Telegraph 13/05/16
- Shankill Mirror 07/06/16

**Consultation Letters on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2016 to**

- Belfast City Area Councillors letter
- Letters issued to Area MLAs
- 93 Consultation letters issued to the local residents.
- Support received on 8<sup>th</sup> July 16.

**Other Consultation**

- Political Representatives Shankill Road
- Glencairn Residents Association.

- Public Meeting/Consultation surgery's took place on 6<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> October 2016, feedback was positive from local community and community group.

**Communication**

- NB Housing continues to ensure tenant engagement and communication with our tenants at the forefront of what we do. As part of our commitment to the Department for Communities Tenant Participation Strategy we have provided tenants with a menu of involvement or opportunities to give them a choice on how to become active in the decision making process and influence how the association operates when it comes to the issues that matter most to them.
- Tenants have participated in a number of Estate Walkabouts throughout the year to assess the maintenance and upkeep of the general area. This input and reporting from tenants allows the association to action any immediate concerns and maintain the areas in which our tenants live to a high standard.
- With a low uptake on the opportunity for a formal tenants forum, we have offered tenants an alternative to participate in smaller scheme based meetings that encourages discussion around issues that directly impact them.
- We encourage tenant feedback by surveying our tenants on an annual basis and each time they receive maintenance or repairs to their property. Our survey results indicated high satisfaction levels with the service;

Area	Satisfaction Level
1. NB Housing's overall service	81%
2. Rent represents good value for money	79%
3. Accommodation	94%
4. Condition of Property	77%
5. Area/Location	81%
6. How repairs are dealt with	79%

- Tenants receive a quarterly newsletter and annual report to keep them informed of the performance of the Association. The newsletter will also highlight topics such as:
  - Results Tenant Satisfaction Survey
  - Health and Safety Issues e.g. Fire Safety, Gas Safety
  - Impact of Welfare Reform
  - Upcoming information sessions on Welfare Reform and access to services
  - Information from Consumer Council
  - Signposting to Citizens Advice Bureau, Advice NI, North Belfast Advice Partnership
  - Effective Recycling

- Energy efficiency/Fuel Poverty
- Staff Donations to other community organisations i.e. PIPS
- Upcoming tenant engagement dates
  
- The introduction of the text messaging service last year has proved a success. The service provides an intelligent two-way communication platform text messaging service for tenants delivering increased communication. It also offers and promotes the operation of “self-service” information regarding rent accounts, repairs, payments, satisfaction surveys etc. at a time that suits tenants best. The aim of the communication solution continues to improve engagement and customer satisfaction among NB Housing tenants.
  
- Communication at NB Housing head office is aided with Loop service and our website provides a Browse aloud function for both Text, volume adjustment and language translation to assist to those with sight and hearing impairment and where English is not a first language.
  
- Tenant and Community consultation remains an important objective for the association as we consider development and maintenance of new and current property. Our development and maintenance department have consulted tenants and the local community in relation to redecoration of schemes and development proposals for local regeneration.

### **Community Engagement**

- As a valued based organisation, our role in the community is important to both staff and the tenants we serve. We continue to work with others locally and have engaged in intergenerational activities such as the Foyer resident’s involvement in Christmas and Halloween parties in the local community centre.
  
- NB Housing had sponsored local initiatives such as Homeless World Cup, which encourages young homeless people to develop their self-esteem and confidence. The launch at Stormont saw the players share their life experiences and how the involvement in this initiative has given a focus, built self-esteem and overcome past confidence issues. The team travelled to the games in Glasgow last year, one of the players was a Flax Foyer resident.
  
- NB Housing has a strong partnering relationship with local community and voluntary organisations who contribute to the work we do and provide much needed services for our more vulnerable residents and tenants. Some examples are:
  - North Belfast Advice Partnership: Providing advice on benefits, impact of welfare reform, housing issues, provision of food banks etc.
  - BYTES, who set up services in our Foyer Scheme, assisting young people to upskill, increase IT knowledge and prepare for employment
  - Start 360 providing person-centered services to young people, adults, families and communities across Northern Ireland
  - Ardoyne Youth Club & Community Centre: NB Housing Residents have planned community events as part of our intergenerational engagement activities.

- Daisy Project provides a drop in facility at the Foyer for young people needing information/advice/counselling relating to Drugs or Alcohol misuse issues.
- The HYPE service was re-engaged to deliver advice to our young people on sexual health and screening services.
- The Ashton centre provides 1:1 support to Flax Foyer residents with CV writing, job applications.
- NB Housing attends Multi Agency Meetings, Ardoyne Housing and Environmental meetings, North Belfast Cleansing Forum and Shankill PACT. Attendance not only ensures a voice for our tenants but highlights current issues within the community and presents possible opportunities for improvement through collaborative working.
- NB Housing took part in the Housing and Homeless Hustings event held at Girdwood on 15<sup>th</sup> April 16. This event was attended by many local and national political representatives in the run up to the election.
- NB Housing held a Welfare Reform Information Session event for our tenants at Girdwood Hub. This was a joined up initiative with Ardoyne Association and Ligoniel Improvement Association.
- NB staff contributed to the Winter Food Drive in partnership with Ligoniel Improvement Association and North Belfast Advice Partnership.

## **Our People**

At NB Housing we ensure all our staff avail of Equality of Opportunity in all aspects of their working life. Key developments this reporting period include:

- Recruitment and Selection: All of our vacant posts are advertised citing we are an equal opportunity employer. From April 16 to March 17 we advertised a total of 8 job vacancies, received 49 applications, shortlisted 30, interviewed 24 and filled 6 vacancies.
- Investors in People: The employee focus group formed from voluntary members, took part in the first year review of the Investors in People accreditation. The annual review of progress was a positive experience for our staff and we now continue progress in this area to include Reward and Recognition Strategy and Review of NB Housing Appraisal Process
- Flexible Working Request: 3 staff members have availed of our Flexible Working Policy, one of which was a new request within this reporting period.
- Flexitime Policy: 91% of our staff team utilise the flexitime policy promoting a positive work life balance.
- Counselling and Occupational Health; our staff are offered both of these services as part of our Absence Management strategy to assist staff back to health and ultimately resume working duties.



- 2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2016-17 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

### **Age**

*Communication:* The outcome of our annual surveys has highlighted preferences in methods of communication.

Our 2016 survey noted that 76% of respondents would prefer to be consulted by letter (40%), telephone (26%) and a visit (10%). 88% of tenants expressed a preference of reporting a repair by telephone or visiting the office. We have noted the majority of tenants in sheltered/supported schemes prefer one to one contact by phone or letter.

We have seen an increased use of texting by our younger tenants and residents, and would also note this group is less likely to respond to a paper based survey.

*Digital Inclusion:* Our action plan encourages a promotion of computer engagement particularly for our aging tenants. This reporting period we have been able to generate greater interest in this area than in previous years. We have organized a Digital Inclusion course delivered by Supporting Communities at the scheme Holy Rood House for residents there and McCorry House Residents. The course is designed to teach tenants the basic computers skills and how to access the internet. Several tenants within the scheme have internet access in their own home and own tablets. 8 residents have signed up for Digital Inclusion.

Younger residents are making good use of the computer suite at The Foyer both independently and with the BYTES project.

We have updated our website and provided accessible means of contact through the website, where tenants can present questions/queries, pay their rent, or make a complaint.

*Social Inclusion:* Our sheltered scheme tenants have been surveyed in relation to activities within the scheme. Tenants have suggested a varied programme of activities, both social and informative that encourages both genders to attend.

- Tenant Association Meetings (10 residents)
- Coffee Afternoon (15 residents)
- Crime Prevention Talk (13 residents)
- Political engagement (9 residents)
- St Patrick's Day Party (15 residents)
- Bryson Recycling (14 residents)
- Arts and Crafts (8 Residents)
- Computer Skills (8 Residents)

*Welfare Reform:* The impact will affect all tenants of working age in receipt of benefit. In partnership with NIFHA, Advice Agencies and other Housing Associations we have participated in the delivery of a Welfare Reform Clinic to

keep tenants informed of the upcoming changes in an effort to reduce potential financial hardship. Delivery has been ongoing throughout the reporting period and will continue through Universal Credit launch this year.

Staff have attended training and information sessions to ensure they have an understanding of the impact on our tenants. The reform will impact age groups differently, for example, while over 65's will not be impacted, those between 25 - 35 will be affected by a shared room rate capped by the local housing allowance, and families/households who are under occupying their properties will have housing benefit cut by up to 25%.

The delivery of these sessions to both staff and tenants will increase awareness in this area.

### **Dependents**

*Welfare Reform/Single Room Rate:* As above, the adverse impact of Welfare Reform may be extensive. Our Foyer scheme has been preparing the young people for the adverse impact particularly for this age group. Residents are supported by their keyworkers to understand the implications as they move on to independent living in the community.

Awareness among families has been raised by our housing team as tenants considering a transfer may be impacted. The outcome of the equality action plan has positively highlighted the need to provide relevant and timely information for our tenant base.

*Lack of 2 bedroom accommodation:* This accommodation type will be in high demand particularly for those vulnerable tenants in need of a carer, and single parents. At the end of this reporting period NB Housing 2 bedroom accommodation represented 46% of its total stock. This number will continue to rise as new developments and acquisitions are finalised going some way to meet need in this category.

### **Disability**

*Lifetime Homes:* The Lifetime Homes Standard incorporates a set of principles that should be implicit in good housing design that maximizes utility independence and quality of life. The Lifetime Homes Standard seeks to enable 'general needs' housing to provide, either from the outset or through simple and cost-effective adaptation, design solutions that meet the existing and changing needs of diverse households. NB Housing seeks to deliver on these principles on all new build properties. Currently 36% of our stock is built to Lifetime Homes standard with development plans to incorporate a further 18 lifetime homes at our new build scheme at Forthriver.

*Adaptations:* NB housing received a total of 45 applications to have homes adapted to meet disability needs. Within the reporting period a total of 38 adaptations have been completed. Adaptions can include fixed aids or additions to assist mobility or activities of daily living.

*Communications/Electronic:* We continue to deliver our browse aloud function for hearing or sight impaired on our website. Text phone provision is also available and head office is serviced by the loop system. Frailer tenants in our sheltered

scheme are equipped with pendant and pull cord devices to access assistance outside office hours. This provides assurance for those tenants dependent on support services.

### **Gender Imbalance**

*Activity Programmes:* Whilst activity programmes are essential in group living accommodation to prevent social isolation, it is as important to ensure activity planning is appropriate across genders.

As reported above our sheltered schemes delivered a varied activity programme this past year and encouraged inclusion of all tenants which received a positive response. We continue to survey and meet with tenants to gauge interest and participation in future activity planning.

Flax Foyer have also delivered a varied activity programme attended by a cross section of residents;

- Weekly cooking programme
- Annual community event at Ardoyne and Shankill Partnership organised in partnership with Foyer residents.
- Trip to Eddie Irvine Centre
- Bowling at the Odyssey
- Participation in Homeless World Cup. Training is ongoing and will see 2 Foyer residents take part in the first Women's competition.

### **Political Opinion**

A potential inequality was highlighted within our Audit of Inequalities and therefore included in our action plan. This related to perceptions for potential employees who have "political convictions". NB Housing continues to request application to Access Ni for all potential support staff and continues to recruit staff based on the Merit Principle.

### **Race**

*Communications:* Our current tenant profile has 0.74% of households who do not have English as a first language. Whilst there is currently no communication barrier, we continue to provide information of our services on our website which is serviced by Browse Aloud. This enables tenants or prospective tenants to translate information to any language.

*Good Neighbour Agreements:* For the promotion of Good Relations all of our tenants are required to sign up to the principles of the Good Neighbour agreement. The agreement encourages all tenants to,

"Respect all neighbours and their property, irrespective of their religion, race, ability, culture or political belief."

### **Sexual Orientation**

Our training programme includes staff development of awareness of LGBT community to continue to improve positive attitudes among staff and tenants.

LGBT Equality Seminar ECNI helped to inform policy reviews to ensure the

promotion of equality for LGBT.

The support based training in relation to LGB&T has provided a practical approach to the issues groups may experience and how our support staff can manage. Staff practice and response is enhanced and as a result providing positive outcomes for our residents.

**3** Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2016-17 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

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

Please provide any details and examples:

**3a** With regard to the change(s) made to policies, practices or procedures and/or service delivery areas, what **difference was made, or will be made, for individuals**, i.e. the impact on those according to Section 75 category?

Please provide any details and examples:

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

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

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

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

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

Other (*please specify and give details*):

## 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 2016-17 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:

All of NB Housing Job Descriptions have a requirement to adhere to associations rules on equality of opportunity.

“Adhere to the rules of Housing Association in relation to equality of opportunity”

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2016-17 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:

Our staff Training and Development Plan includes training on Equality Awareness, ECNI Equality Updates, Disability Awareness, LGBT Awareness, Child Protection etc. Throughout the plan staff attend various additional training sessions or seminars as part of our commitment to equality of opportunity. Training attended throughout this reporting period has been provided by the Equality Commission, Labour Relations Agency and other training providers.

Our staff appraisal process and forms were reviewed during this reporting period. The new format has incorporated a self-assessment of performance against the

values of the association for example:

- Aspiration : We encourage communities to aspire to better standards of housing
- Personal : We consider the needs of families, individuals and the community before anything else in our developments
- Esteem: We value the restoration of esteem that people have for themselves, their home and for their community.
- Community/Togetherness: We will listen to and respect each other working together to achieve a vibrant and prosperous community. We act collectively as one team to support one another, working cooperatively, respecting each other's views and making our work environment enjoyable.
- Integrity: We will be accountable to our customers, respectful of our tenants and proud of our service delivery.

In the 2016-17 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 2016-17 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

NB Housing Corporate plan 2015-2018 fully integrates Equality:

*"NB Housing will comply with the Equality Act and will develop an annual plan to demonstrate our commitment to meeting our Equality obligations"*

*"Ensure that NB Housing complies with all relevant regulation, laws and the requirements of the DfC, Charity Commission, Equality Commission, etc."*

Our Operational Plan for 2016/2017 has incorporated NB Housing targets in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties of our Equality Scheme and Disability Action plan.

**Equality action plans/measures**

**7** Within the 2016-17 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:  Actions ongoing:  Actions to commence:

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

Actions completed are as per listed in Question 2.

**8** Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2016-17 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

There have been no changes to the plan this reporting period.

**9** In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2016-17 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

**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

**11** Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2016-17 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:

The launch of the DfC Tenant Participation Strategy 2015-2020 resulted in a review of our engagement and consultation tools with tenants around the issues that affect them. We have seen a shift from the more formal setting of a Tenants Forum as a means of engagement to smaller, scheme or issue based consultation. Tenants now come together in scheme specific meetings, become involved in Estate walkabouts, consultations on planned maintenance works etc.

Tenants were consulted on the methods by which they would like to get involved.

They have an opportunity to put forward their views and opinions on how the Association provides its services. This is an ongoing and evolving process.

Our Development and Maintenance Department consult with tenants before work commences and after it is completed. Tenants are asked for satisfaction levels once complete. There have been positive results in this respect in relation to redecoration programmes in the Flax Foyer and McCorry House which took place within this reporting period. Both schemes have had full internal redecoration of all communal areas. During this period our maintenance department carried out 7 consultations session in relation to planned maintenance works including automated entrance door at Holy Rood House, boundary fencing, new windows & communal decoration works.

We also hold consultation meetings with the local community on development plans within the area. The views of the community are essential in ensuring plans are acceptable and encourages local residents to get involved.

Our Staff Brief gives us the opportunity to engage formally with staff. Held twice a year it encourages staff ideas, feedback, suggestions and also provides the Senior Management Team the opportunity to get together with all staff to report back on Association performance and progress.

Our confidential Staff Engagement Survey, was carried out in March 2017. The purpose of the survey was to engage with staff to enable us to measure our workplace approach, what we were doing right and where staff thought we could improve. Additionally, as the last survey was completed 1 year post merger (July 2015), it was important that we measured progress since then, so a comparative analysis was undertaken. The following areas were explored:

- Culture and Values
- Health and Wellbeing
- Communication and Involvement
- Direction and Performance
- Work Processors
- Opportunities for Growth
- Leadership, Teamwork and Relationships
- Overall Satisfaction

The results were very positive, encouraging, and showed a marked improvement on the 2015 results. Organisations with Engagement scores above 65% consistently are believed to deliver better business results. NB Housing achieved and average of 85% staff satisfaction levels across 35 questions. Results were communicated to staff at their briefing session.

12 In the 2016-17 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



PART A

- 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*):

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:

As above

- 13** Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2016-17 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes       No       Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

- 14** Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2016-17 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes       No       Not applicable – no commitment to review

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

[Insert link to any web pages where screening templates and/or other reports associated with Equality Scheme commitments are published]

[www.nb-housing.org](http://www.nb-housing.org)

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

15 (1 Policy area)
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PART A

**16** Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2016-17:

0	Policy consultations conducted with <b>screening</b> assessment presented.
0	Policy consultations conducted <b>with an equality impact assessment (EQIA)</b> presented.
0	Consultations for an <b>EQIA</b> 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:

**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 2016-17 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 2016-17 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:

- 22 Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2016-17 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

No adverse impact to date.

- 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:

None

#### **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 2016-17, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

As part of the Staff Performance Appraisal and the needs of the organisation the training plan is developed year on year. A review of our staff training programme showed an investment of £12,000, delivering 1130 hours to 194 attendees. Those sessions directly related to Equality are listed below:

#### **Managing Performance Training Labour Relations Agency**

*Labour Relations Agency Head Office*  
14/04/16

#### **NIFHA/ ECNI Update NIFHA/ECNI**

*NICVA Offices*  
27/04/16

#### **LGBT Equality Seminar ECNI**

*Malone House*  
17/05/16

#### **Working with Young People and Substance Misuse ASCERT**

*The Jethro Centre, Lurgan*  
20/06/16  
21/06/16

**Working with Young People and Substance Misuse  
ASCERT**

08/08/16 05/09/16

22/08/16 10/11/16 11/11/16

**Anti-Social Behaviour and Housing  
Housing Rights**

*Housing Rights*

03/08/16

**Child Protection Training CINI**

23/09/16 & 08/12/16

**Managing Bullying and Harassment  
ECNI**

*Equality House*

29/09/16

**Recruiting Fairly**

**ECNI**

*Equality House*

04/10/16

**Equality Training for Line Managers  
ECNI**

*Equality House*

19/10/16

**Suicide Prevention**

**CHNI**

20/10/16

**An Introduction to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995**

**ECNI**

*Malone House*

15/11/16

**Trans Equality Seminar**

**ECNI**

Malone House

17/11/16

**Equality Awareness in the Workplace**

**Julie Allen Consulting**

06/12/16

**Good Practice Seminar**

**Recruitment & Selection**

Labour Relations Agency, Belfast Metropolitan College

NB Housing recognises that awareness raising and training play a crucial role in effective implementation of our Section 75 duties. The impact this training has had can be summarised as follows:

- An increase in awareness of issues that are likely to affect people across a the range of Section 75 categories
- Will help to inform policy reviews to ensure promotion of equality for Section 75 categories
- Increases awareness and understanding of the impact of drugs and alcohol on young adults.
- Training provided staff with correct guidance on how to support and manage visitors to the building that are under 18.
- Provided staff with knowledge on how to lawfully and fairly manage a bullying or harassment complaint
- Provided staff with knowledge to ensure that any potential recruitment appointment is carried out fairly under Fair Employment Law.
- Develop understanding of the key responsibilities of the line manager in relation to equality law. No adverse equality of opportunity cases
- Training in Disability Discrimination Act 1995 provided information on the reasonable adjustment duty as it applies to recruitment and work practices.

**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:

Training sessions are evaluated immediately following delivery and are discussed as part of the performance appraisal process. Overall staff have given positive feedback on the sessions provided as training not only raises awareness but assists staff in their knowledge of legislative requirements but also ensures best practise.

The support based training i.e. Working with Young People & Substance Abuse, ASB, Trans Equality, Child Protection Training, Suicide Prevention for example, has provided a practical approach to the issues particular groups may experience and how our support staff can manage. Staff practice and response is enhanced and as a result providing positive outcomes for residents who may be affected. The training has enabled staff to recognise a need to signpost residents to agencies who specialise in specific issues.

Employer and Management based sessions provided by ECNI and LRA are again practical, informative and interactive where practitioners and service providers are able to present and discuss practical examples to improve practise and positive outcomes. Raising awareness of the availability of information such as policy templates, advice etc. is a valuable resource to assist in the delivery of our Equality Scheme objectives. Refreshers in all areas are always welcomed by staff to keep knowledge current and fresh.

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

**26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2016-17, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**: Provision of improved website, browse aloud function, texting service, greater tenant engagement through forums, improved newsletters etc

**Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)**

**27** How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2016-17?

Insert number here:

0
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Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

**Section 3: Looking Forward**

**28** Please indicate when the Equality Scheme is due for review:  
November 2017

**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)*

Review of the Equality Scheme  
Training on Policy Screening Processes

**30** In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2017-18) 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):

**PART B - Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Disability Action Plans**

**1. Number of action measures for this reporting period that have been:**

**12**

Fully achieved

**2**

Partially achieved

**1**

Not achieved

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

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

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs <sup>i</sup>	Outcomes / Impact <sup>ii</sup>
National <sup>iii</sup>			
Regional <sup>iv</sup>	<b>1.Representation on both Board and Staff Teams at NB Housing</b>	Board Recruitment Attendance at Meetings and Sub Committee Meetings	Positive decision making process. Agreement of operational planning for 3 <sup>rd</sup> year of corporate plan.
Local <sup>v</sup>	<b>2.Tenant Engagement/Participation Strategy</b>	Menu of Involvement circulated to all tenants to encourage involvement.  Greater publicity of engagement both in newsletters, mail drops, one to one and website to	Greater interest in smaller one to one or scheme specific meetings held on site.  Responses received from a small number of tenants seeking involvement. Meetings held

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		encourage attendance	quarterly as a minimum.
	<b>3. Adaptations Consultations</b>	One to one consultation on adaptation needs for those with disability	Tenant's disability needs addressed.
	<b>4. Recruitment Drives reaching a wide audience</b>	Externally via nijobs.com, and job centre. Internally via email to all staff, adverts displayed on noticeboards.	Applications received from those with and without disability
	<b>5. Promotion of positive attitudes</b>	Ongoing engagement to adopt principles of disability duties	Improved services to those with disability
	<b>6. Review internal and external communications</b>	Yearly review of Annual Report. Tenants surveyed to inform of preferred methods of communication.	Positive imagery included. NB Housing Corporate/ 2016/17 Operational plan included continued use social media sites, texting service & browse aloud function.
	<b>7. Support Staff with disabilities to fulfil career development and learning</b>	Training needs analysis for all staff. Performance appraisal process on going.	Training and development plans are in place for staff with or without disability. Staff inform of training needs at appraisal meeting or one to ones. Outcomes provide increased awareness and improved service provision.



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	<b>8. Work with joint partners to adopt the principles and spirit of disability duties/ Links with disability groups</b>	Quarterly and annual review meetings with joint partners. Report on performance provided. As and when required contact with external agencies to address needs.	Agree improvements with Joint Management Partners e.g. access provision to ground flat agreed. Contact with external groups for example OT Epilepsy Action NI, Disability Action etc to assist tenant to maintain their tenancies independently.
	<b>9. Encourage interaction between those with disabilities and those without</b>	Encourage attendance at community events in local areas and in house activity	Attendance at events in local community has engaged residents with support needs.
	<b>10. Recruitment &amp; Support: Exit Interviews</b>	Exit interviews held to identify needs that may impact policy direction  Staff Engagement Survey	In 2016/17 policy not impacted. Interviews carried out for all leavers.  90% participation with 85% satisfaction levels

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Provide Training/Refreshers on disability duties to Board members and staff.	Training Plan for 2016/17 has included: "An Introduction to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995" ECNI	Awareness raising of Section 75 duties and legislation and the roles and responsibilities of the NB Housing Team. Reference to reasonable adjustment duties.
2	Disability Awareness training	Staff Performance appraisal	Ensures attendance and increases

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	to be included in the staff review and induction process	<p>highlights training needs in all areas of Equality to include Disability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ An Introduction to Equality</li> <li>➤ Recruiting Fairly</li> <li>➤ Equality Training for Line Managers</li> </ul>	<p>awareness of staff team.</p> <p>Ensures compliance with legislation</p>
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2(c) What Positive attitudes **action measures** in the area of **Communications** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Information/Publications	Information available in alternative formats, on request. Text phone provision, browse aloud facility, large print, texting etc.	Improved access to information for tenants or applicants with sight or hearing impairment.
2	Tenant Engagement/Participation	Menu of Involvement circulated to tenants to choose most appropriate engagement option.	One to one or group contact with tenants regarding needs, views and opinion taken on board for the betterment of service delivery.
3	Accessibility	Two office sites, out of hours meetings, one to one meetings	Preferred method of contact is one to one meeting, telephone or in writing. Tenants meetings held on Scheme sites, tenant's homes, either one of two offices to increase accessibility for tenants.

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1.	Engagement with Political Parties	Establish positive working relationships with political groups to raise profile of disability needs	Engaged with local parties to inform/gain support for new developments that may include housing for those with complex needs.
2.	Engagement with external organisations and multi-agencies	Establish positive working relationships with external organisations	Contact with external organisations such as ECNI, Autism awareness, disability action, epilepsy action, Daisy, Belfast Trust, Local GPs, OTs, Care Providers etc., has a positive impact and promotes independence for our tenants and residents
3	Encourage engagement for those with disability and those without	Arrange attendance at both local community events and in house events	Attendance at events in local community has engaged residents and staff teams/those for with disability and without.
4.	Activity Programmes	Survey and feedback from residents/tenants/participants	Increased engagement between two supported schemes Activities within supported schemes encouraged those with disability or without to promote inclusivity.

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

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1			
2			

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

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestonesvi / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	Establish the scale of disability amongst NB Housing Tenants	Profiling questionnaires for tenants	To better address housing needs for tenants with disability	Tenants are not forthcoming regarding information in relation to personal information on request. However applications for adaptations are being received and actions taken.
2	Screening of Policies and Procedures	Inclusion of questions on disability to screening template	To better address the needs of those with disability	Screening still in progress/ ongoing.

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	Annual Report to include a clear statement to support representation of disabled people	Annual Report 2016/17 in progress. (Representation of those with/without disability in the 2015/16 annual report)
2		

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

(a) Qualitative

Maintenance Consultations

Adaptation Consultations

Tenant Activity Surveys

Response Maintenance Satisfaction Surveys

Complaints Monitoring

b) Quantitative

NICORE Statistics

Fair Employment Monitoring

Tenant Annual Satisfaction Surveys

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6. As a result of monitoring progress against actions has your organisation either:

- made any **revisions** to your plan during the reporting period or
- taken any **additional steps** to meet the disability duties which were **not outlined in your original** disability action plan / any other changes?

NO

If Yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

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

The Disability Action plan remains under review and should any new information or opportunities arise we will endeavour to incorporate into the plan moving forward.

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

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

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

<sup>iv</sup> **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level

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

<sup>vi</sup> **Milestones** – Please outline what part progress has been made towards the particular measures; even if full output or outcomes/ impact have not been achieved.