

NB Housing



Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report 2018-19

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

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 2018 and March 2019

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 2018-19, 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

As a social housing provider, 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.

Within the 2018/19 we have expanded our area of operation to Carrickfergus, Coalisland, and Newtownards with the majority of stock predominately in North and West Belfast including, Ardoyne, Cliftonville, Oldpark, Lower Antrim Road, Lower Shankill, Limestone Road, Ligoneil, Crumlin Road, Lower Falls and Newtownabbey.

NB Housings second Corporate Plan 2018-2021 and Annual Business Plan 2018 was approved in this reporting period and with an organisational mission to provide outstanding social housing we continue to accommodate a cross section of the Section 75 groups.

At the end of the reporting period we had increased our social housing portfolio from 981 to 1004 units over the year. This comprises 873 units for General Needs Housing, made up of 561 houses, 122 bungalows, and 190 apartments. We also provide accommodation for specific needs groups, 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
- Accommodation for vulnerable families at Thorndale House in joint management with the Salvation Army
- 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 is governed by a voluntary Board of 11 members. Responsible for effective governance of the Association the Board comprises of Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and 7 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 36 staff to include a Senior Management team comprised of Chief Executive, Director of Development & Property Management and Director of Housing Management & Corporate Services. Our 5-line managers include the Finance Manager, Housing Manager, Foyer Scheme Manager, Development Management and Maintenance Manager, who manage teams of officers, administrative, support and caretaking staff.

Examples of Key Policy and Service Delivery Developments throughout reporting period 2018/19:

Communication

Tenant engagement and communication with our tenants is 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.

Tenant Participation events have included:

- ✚ *Community Clean up days*: providing cleaner, tidier spaces that ensure tenants take pride in their surroundings.
- ✚ *Halloween Party* for Holyrood residents by Foyer residents for Intergenerational event at Houben Centre.
- ✚ *PWC volunteering with Foyer residents* to decorate shared inside and outside space for residents use
- ✚ *Tenant Surveys*: providing feedback on how we can improve service delivery
- ✚ *Tenants Newsletters*: Informing tenants of upcoming events, useful contacts, how the Association is performing etc
- ✚ *Tenant Consultations*: Feedback on repairs carried out and planned developments.

We encourage tenant feedback by surveying our tenants on an annual basis and each time they receive maintenance or repairs to their property. Our annual survey is posted out to all tenants and residents and we also carry out a shorter telephone survey to a number of tenants who have chosen not to return the written survey. The combined written and telephone survey results indicated high satisfaction levels as summarised below:

Area	Satisfaction Level
1. NB Housing's overall service	91%
2. Rent represents good value for money	92%
3. Accommodation	89%
4. Area/Location	82%
5. Quality of repairs	85%

A quarterly newsletter and annual report keep tenants informed of the performance of the Association. Information on useful topics is delivered in our quarterly newsletter for example:

- Access to services
- Results Tenant Satisfaction Survey
- Health and Safety Issues e.g. Fire Safety, Gas Safety
- Rate rebate information
- Universal Credit Updates
- Debt advice
- Contents Insurance
- Office operating hours
- Emergency Repair contacts
- Outcome of clean up days, prize draws etc
- Information from Consumer Council
- Support signposting to Advice Space, North Belfast Advice Partnership, Ligoniel Advice Partnership, Family Hubs
- Effective Recycling
- Energy efficiency/Fuel Poverty

Tenants Meetings continue to discuss issues that are of concern to tenants. Meetings occur with tenants residing in apartment buildings primarily and with supported tenants. A total of 15 tenants' meetings were held in the year to discuss topics such as progress on planned maintenance works, anti-social behaviour, maintenance issues, residents social fund, to name just a few.

Tenant consultation and engagement is carried out when maintenance and development works are to be commenced. We had a number of improvement schemes within 2018/19 all of which tenants were consulted on e.g.

- Boiler Replacement Scheme
- Bathroom Replacement Scheme
- Internal Communal Redecoration
- Structural works to front porches
- Oil to Gas conversions
- External Redecoration Scheme

- Kitchen Replacements
- Window and Door Replacement Scheme

Once works are completed tenants are invited to provide feedback on the improvements.

Our tenant texting service is ongoing and has proved successful as it provides immediate contact with tenants who may not have made contact in the past. This is a key improvement in communication with tenants as it ensures two-way engagement to ensure service delivery.

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 those with sight and hearing impairment and where English is not a first language. Tenants are also supported via Big Word and Flex Language Services in relation to translating tenancy documentation into their chosen language and interpretation services for any tenancy related communication.

Community Engagement

As a valued based organisation, our role in the community is important to both staff and the tenants we serve.

NB Housing is committed to supporting and empowering our tenants to be active and effective members of their community. During 2018/19 we developed an NB Housing Community Funding policy where locally based charitable organisations or groups could apply for funds to develop initiatives within the community. The aim of the policy is to improve community spirit and quality of life by supporting local communities in which we operate. This year we donated to two youth clubs in the community. Eleven young people from one youth club travelled to Romania to volunteer in orphanages, family homes and a disability centre. The second youth club took 13, 16-18-year olds to Berlin and Romania to upskill participants to volunteer in youth work, planning youth work initiatives to volunteer and to give back to their communities.

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:

Those providing services to our Foyer Scheme:



The Foyer are part of the Food Cloud scheme with Lidl who provide donations of any unsold food to the Foyer. We also avail of local food banks.



Daisy Project provides a drop-in facility at the Foyer for anyone who is looking information/advice/counselling relating to Drugs or Alcohol misuse issues. This is a confidential service.



HYPE attend the to provide information on Sexual Health

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust



Chest, Heart and Stroke provide a Health and Homelessness Service. This consists of Health Checks, Information sessions, Choose Healthy talks, Stop smoking sessions, De-stress and pampering sessions.



New Life Counselling provide a group session in relation to Mental Health to better understand mental health and get some practical ideas to help deal with any issues.



Bytes ran a programme called Life Mapping in the Foyer. This covered mapping resident's life's out and building self-esteem, confidence and opportunities for the future.

The Bytes Project also completed the second run of a programme called Peace4Youth which consists of a unique ICT creative approach which focuses on personal development, peer leadership and citizenship.

Bytes secured funding with PWC to run a project in relation to Mental Health in conjunction with the Hummingbird Project.

The Hummingbird Project is a Community Interest Company provides services to all of Northern Ireland. The Project aims to support people who are suffering from mental ill health and provides early intervention and prevention solutions to upskill all members of society in emotional resilience. They have a keen interest in recovery and resilience and work collectively within local communities, to improve people's mental health, life circumstances and reduce stigma.

The Bytes Exodus 500 project supported young people, aged 16-25 who were excluded from or disadvantaged in the labour market. The project aimed to overcome multiple barriers to employment faced by young people in today's society, provide the opportunity to gain new skills, experiences and training opportunities.



Northern Ireland Youth Programme (NIYP) are currently running a Relentless Change Project for 16-25-year olds who have a housing issue and want to create change.



Staff run the Duke of Edinburgh Award (DofE) in the Foyer in partnership with PBNI.



The Ashton centre attends to provide 1:1 support to residents with CV writing, job applications, training.

We also work in partnership with many other local agencies providing general advice on a variety of Housing and Support issues

- North Belfast Advice Partnership: Providing advice on benefits, impact of welfare reform, housing issues, provision of food banks etc.
- NB Housing continues to be represented at many of the community meetings held through our area of operation. These meetings will consist of members of other housing associations, NIHE, local community workers, local councillors, advice sector, and tenant representatives.

Some of the agencies involved included;

- ✚ Ardoyne Association Housing & Environmental Subgroup,
- ✚ Upper North Multi-Agency Meeting
- ✚ Glencairn Residents Group & Interagency group
- ✚ Ligoneil Community Cohesion Group
- ✚ Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sectors Workshop events in March 2019 on strengthening participation and representation in community planning

Community Safety

We have continued to engage a mobile security company for our apartment buildings to deter anti-social behaviour. Operating in areas of high deprivation and density, some of our tenants experience incidents of antisocial behaviour (ASB). The security service provides 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 introduced a car parking policy at one of our apartment buildings to ensure tenants were confident that only those who are authorised to park do so. Positively this has reduced anti-social behaviour and vandalism of property at the apartment building. 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.

Within this reporting period, NB Housing received 123 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 take part in the “*Let’s Keep on Supporting People*” campaign lobbying against funding cuts 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, as does Holy Rood House for 65+ and McCorry House for independent 55-year olds.

The NB Housing Staff Team

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: We conducted an organisational staff review this year to ensure we have the right staffing complement to provide an excellent service to all our tenants. With the introduction of Universal Credit and our commitment to developing more social homes we extended our staff team to include four new roles, an Assistant Housing Officer and Maintenance Officer, an Assets Officer and Community Development and Tenant Support Officer. These positions are providing much needed administrative support, expertise and advice to the Maintenance, Development and Housing Departments.
- We we are an Equal Opportunity employer. From April 18 to March 19 we advertised a total of 17 jobs, received 94 applications, shortlisted 80, interviewed 49 and filled 10 vacancies.
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy: In conjunction with Health Matters, NB Housing is in its second year of the Health and Well Being Strategy for staff. As the workplace is an integral setting for health promotion we wish to show our ongoing commitment to improve the health, safety & wellbeing of employees by applying the WHO Healthy Workplaces Model in support of healthy lifestyles and positive work environments. The four key avenues of influence are:
 - Maintaining a safe and healthy physical work environment
 - Promoting a positive psychosocial work environment
 - Providing personal health resources within the workplace
 - Supporting organisational involvement within the community

The Health and Well Being Action plan has incorporated many health initiatives such as the Staff Step Challenge in which staff compete to raise funds for our nominated charity Chest Heart and Stroke.

We have also commenced training in Mental Health Awareness to equip staff with the knowledge of triggers of mental ill health, how to engage tenants who suffer and to recognise any symptoms staff too may experience. As part of this strategy two of our staff have been trained as Mental Health 1st Aiders.

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

- Investors in People: NB Housing was reassessed in Jan 2019 for reaccreditation in the 6th Generation Framework of Investors in People. Previous annual reviews of progress were a useful experience and the positive changes have been communicated to the staff team. We have included changes such as review of the staff appraisal process to include a focus on core values, development of staff reward and recognition, health and wellbeing action plan, career development and enhancement, suggestion boxes and extremely positive results from the employee engagement survey held in at the end of January.
- Flexible Working Request: 4 staff members have availed of our Flexible Working Policy.
- Flexitime Policy: 97% of our staff team utilise the flexitime policy promoting a positive work life balance.

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.

The Association received 31 adaptation requests at a total investment value of £144,873. 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

Adaptation Type	Number Completed
Level Access Shower	13
Grab/Stair Rails (Internal & External)	12
Self-Cleaning WC	2
Definition of Steps	1
Electrical Works	1
Extensions for Bathroom/Bedroom	1

The Association continues to develop homes for those in need. We currently have two new build developments on site:

- Forthriver in the Glencairn area of Belfast will complete April 2020 and will provide 24 new build social houses.
- Hopefield off the Antrim Road in North Belfast, commenced this year and will provide 9 one- and two-bedroom apartments.

In addition to the new builds above, our development department continues to add to our property portfolio acquiring the following houses within the reporting year.

- 4 Existing Satisfactory Purchases
- 7 Rehab properties
- 3 Off the Shelf purchases

These properties consist of 2, 3 and four-bedroom houses and a two-bedroom bungalow across North & West Belfast, Newtownards and Carrickfergus.

Our community consultation process in relation to this and other proposed new build developments are carried out throughout the development process.

- 2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2018-19 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

Age

Communication: The outcome of our annual surveys has highlighted positive satisfaction rates in relation to communication.

Communication	Satisfied
1. Your views taken into account	83%
2. Keeping you informed	89%
3. Opportunities for participation in management and decision making	76%* ¹
4. Were you satisfied with the ability of the staff to deal with your query quickly and efficiently?	87%
5. Were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the final outcome?	88%

- It was also noted that respondents would prefer to be consulted by letter (31%*), telephone (31%*) and text (13%*).
- 76%* of tenants expressed a preference of reporting a repair by telephone or visiting the office.

Our 2018/19 survey noted that 75% of respondents would prefer to be consulted by letter (31%), telephone (31%) or text (13%).

In this year's survey the question was asked, "*If you had the opportunity to access your NB Housing Account online or from your smartphone, to view your rent statement, request a repair etc., would you make use of this?*" This was to measure uptake should we make improvements to online access. A breakdown of the responses is provided below.

	General (18+)	Needs (65yr)	Holyrood House (18-25yr)	Flax Foyer (18-25yr)
Yes	46%	5%	95%	95%
No	54%	95%	5%	5%

Digital Inclusion: Our organisational staffing review highlighted the need for a staff resource to concentrate efforts on establishing improved Tenant Participation. As part of this role our Tenant Support and Community Development Officer will explore further avenues for access to computers for our older residents who currently have little or no accessibility.

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

Our website provides an accessible means of contact where tenants can present questions/queries, pay their rent, make a complaint or request a repair.

Social Inclusion: Both our Foyer scheme and sheltered scheme tenants are consulted in relation to activities they would like to participate in. Tenants have suggested a varied programme of activities, both social and informative that encourages both genders to attend.

Activities included:

- **St Patrick's Day Party** 17th March 18
- **Bus Trip to Newcastle** July 18
- **Halloween Party** October 18
- **Christmas Lunch** December 18
- **Christmas Party** December 18
- **Bingo** every Wednesday evening
- Foyer staff are running the **Cooking Programme** every Thursday
- Trip to the **Eddie Irvine Centre** on 14th November 2018.
- Foyer Residents and staff attended the **Lord Mayor's Christmas Lunch** at Belfast City Hall on the 17th December 2018.

Welfare Reform: Welfare Reform remains an agenda item for our Tenant Newsletter as the impact will affect all tenants of working age in receipt of benefit. We provide information to tenants and signpost to debt advice agencies where necessary in advance of upcoming changes in an effort to reduce potential financial hardship. Staff have attended training and information sessions to ensure they understand the impact on our tenants. The reform is impacting 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.

A forum has been established with other Housing Associations to assess the ongoing impact of the introduction of Universal Credit. This forum also serves as a learning tool as the process is monitored and lessons learned are shared amongst the group to better manage the process of transition.

We continue to lobby against the removal of mitigations payments in March 2020. The removal will mean tenants currently receiving supplementary payments for

Benefit Cap and Social Sector Size Criteria (Bedroom Tax) will experience further hardship as payments cease.

Dependents

Welfare Reform/Single Room Rate: As above, the adverse impact of Welfare Reform may be extensive. Our Foyer scheme has been preparing 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.

We signpost our tenants to various advice agencies to raise awareness to families in particular, as tenants considering a transfer to other accommodation may be impacted. The outcome of the equality action plan has positively highlighted the need to provide relevant and timely information to our tenant base. We are now also carrying out benefit checks to ensure our tenants struggling with rent payments are receiving all benefits they are entitled to.

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 45% of its total stock. This 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. Our new build stock is built to Lifetime Homes standard with development plans to incorporate a further 24 lifetime homes at our new build scheme at Forthriver and 9 apartments at Hopefield Avenue in Belfast.

Adaptations: NB Housing completed 31 adaptations to homes throughout the year. 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.

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 1% of households who do not have English as a first language, this is an increase from 0.41% last year. This year we have engaged with both Big Word and Flex Language Services who have provided translation and interpretation services for our tenants. We continue to provide information on 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.

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.

Agencies consulted to provide support include, Gender Jam, Rainbow, Cara Friend, HYPE, GPs, Brackenburn Clinic and Gender Assessment Clinic at Knockbracken.

PART A

3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2018-19 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

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

Please provide any details and examples:

With increase in tenant households who do not have English as a first language we have improved availability of translation/interpretation services.

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:

It has improved access to information, communications and service delivery for those tenants.

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):*

As above (No 3 and 3A)

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 2018-19 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:

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2018-19 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:

- As a value-based organisation, our core values are integrated into our appraisal/performance plans for all our staff.

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.

- Staff training in Equality is included in our staff training and development plan
- Equality remains an objective in our Operational Planning

6 In the 2018-19 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 2018-19 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Our Operational Plan for 2018/2019 has incorporated NB Housing targets in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties of our Equality Scheme and Disability Action plan.

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

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2018-19 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:	24	Actions ongoing:	2	Actions to commence:	
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Please provide any details and examples (*in addition to question 2*):

As at Question 2

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2018-19 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

No changes during this period

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2018-19 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 2018-19 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:

Examples of good practice in consultation during this 2018/19 period can be summarised as:

1. We continue to encourage engagement with our tenants, whether on a one to one basis, in small groups, focus groups or through tenant satisfaction surveys. 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. As we work through our Tenant

Participation Action Plan, we continue to experience 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. Our engagement with locally based organisations representing both sides of the community is also evident through our attendance and involvement in meetings.

2. NB Housing quarterly newsletter seeks interest from tenants who wish to be become involved in the consultation and engagement process. Tenants are 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 and this year we have engaged further with Supporting Communities to develop ideas and potentially train tenants in participation activities. We have joined a Tenant Participation Practitioners Network to information share with other associations in the consultation process.

Tenants are aware of what is taking place within their communities, with newsletter articles to ensure all tenants have the advice and information required to contribute to their local community. Involvement in Tenant Participation is a two-way process which can ensure tenants and staff work together for the best outcome of tenants.

3. Our Development and Maintenance Department consult with tenants before work commences and once completed. Areas of operation have expanded this past year with new builds in Forthriver and Hopefield areas of Belfast, and acquisitions in Newtownards, Carrickfergus and Coalisland.

Consultations carried out in 2018/19

- Hopefield Avenue, North Belfast: Community Meeting at a local venue.
 - Millview Meadow, Coalisland & Tullygarley Road, Ballymena: Leaflet Drops and Information to local elected representatives.
 - Forthriver Road: Ongoing community meetings with Glencairn Community Group.
4. As an Investor in People accredited organisation, consultation with our staff is key to how we operate and deliver services to our tenants. 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. This is an opportunity to assess the services we offer to tenants and how staff are enabled to deliver them.

We consider all consultation methods as an opportunity to improve.

PART A

12 In the 2018-19 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: (*tick all that apply*)

- Face to face meetings
- Focus groups
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- Questionnaires
- Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
- Internet discussions
- Telephone consultations
- Other (*please specify*):

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 2018-19 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

- Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2018-19 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)

www.nb-housing.org

PART A

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

0

- 16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2018-19:

0

Policy consultations conducted with **screening** assessment presented.

0

Policy consultations conducted **with an equality impact assessment (EQIA)** presented.

0

Consultations for an **EQIA** alone.

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

N/A

- 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 2018-19 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 2018-19 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 2018-19 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

No adverse impact

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:

N/A

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 2018-19, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

**Mental Health First Aid
Health Matters**

*Unit 3 College House, Citylink Business Park, Durham Street, Belfast
13/09/*

Adults at Risk of Harm

CHNI

Andras House

25/09/18

CIH Level 3 Certificate in Supporting Homeless People

CIH

Online programme

22/10/18

Ending Homelessness Together Conference

NIHE

Canal Court, Newry

26/10/18

UC Taskforce Meeting

The Belfast Advice Group

Ligoneil Improvement Association

13/11/18

Round Table Discussion on Universal Credit

NICVA

61 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast

23/11/18

Universal Credit & Housing: Elements & Impacts

Housing Rights

The Skainos Centre, 239 Newtownards Road Belfast

26/11/18

Universal Credit and Supporting Clients to Move to Private Rented Accommodation

Housing Rights

The Skainos Centre, 239 Newtownards Road Belfast

27/11/18

29/11/18

Working Together: Promoting the Mental Health Charter in the Workplace

ECNI

La Mon Hotel & Country Club, 41 Gransha Road, Comber

03/12/18

Idapt Training

Idapt

Crumlin Road Office

10/01/19

Managing Workplace Harassment

ECNI

Malone House, Belfast

24/01/19

20/03/19

Promoting Disability Equality in the Workplace

ECNI

Malone House, Belfast

30/01/19

06/03/19

ASSIST

Action Mental Health
Emmanuel Church, Lurgan
25/02/19
26/02/19

**Mental Health First Aid
Health Matters**

Health Matters Belfast Office
28/02/19
07/03/19

Recruiting Fairly

ECNI

Malone House, Belfast
31/01/19
27/02/19
27/03/19

**NIHE Update on Housing Benefit and Welfare Reform in Supported Accommodation
NIHE**

Twickenham House, Ballymena
01/02/19

Dignity at Work

Labour Relations Agency

LRA Head Office
12/02/19

Equality Training

Julie Allen Consulting

Gatelodge Boardroom
22/03/19

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:

- Overview of Equality in the workplace to increase awareness of issues that are likely to affect people across a range of Section 75 categories
- Will help to inform policy reviews to ensure promotion of equality for Section 75 categories
- Increased awareness of the impact Universal Credit will have on Section 75 groups in particular, young people, families, those between 25-35yr olds etc.
- Increases awareness and understanding of the impact homelessness in particular that of young people aged 18-25yr olds
- Understanding of how homelessness, debt, fuel poverty, social challenges will impact on behaviour
- 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
- The importance of Health, Safety and Wellbeing of others and ourselves in the workplace.
- Raises awareness of the issues those suffering with mental ill health endure and how to effectively support them. The training has enabled staff to

understand different mental health issues and their potential symptoms. Training provided information on the steps that should be taken to ensure someone is given the support and guidance they require to seek appropriate professional help.

- 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:

NB Housing formulates a Learning and Development Plan on an annual basis. The plan outlines training in areas that staff are required to develop skills and to raise awareness in other areas that will assist in the effective delivery of the job role.

An annual review of the training plan and sessions delivered through the year is devised to inform of positive impact of training and further learning required for the upcoming year. Each training session is evaluated immediately following delivery and is 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.

Welfare Reform, in particular the introduction of Universal Credit in 2018, has resulted in a number of our tenants being negatively impacted as available income has been stretched. This hardship is likely to continue as Supplementary Payments cease in 2020. Our Staff team have attended many events this past year to share knowledge and best practise on how to best manage universal credit claims, where to signpost those in debt, and generally the practicalities for tenants working through the process. An inevitable increase in rent arrears has meant staff are working closely with new claimants as they await claims being assessed and ensuring all required information is provided to allow for a seamless claim process. This aims to reduce the amount of time claimants are without reduced income to manage households. The training has highlighted shared experiences and understanding to ensure any pitfalls of the system are recognised and avoided for the benefit of the tenant.

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and Labour Relations Agency provide training sessions that are practical, informative and interactive where practitioners and service providers are able to present and discuss 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. We refresh training in Recruitment and Selection, Section 75 Duties, Employer Updates on Equality etc. on an annual basis to ensure we capture new staff, as well as providing updates for current staff, management and Board.

Support teams provide services to both young and older clients. Both groups will experience changing needs and we must ensure our staff are equipped with the knowledge to deal with these needs. Our support planning sessions will guide staff on how to develop a holistic service which addresses individual needs of the residents, including risk assessment and an outcome-based action plan. We have seen an increase in the need for specialist training sessions in mental health awareness, health and well being and wellness recovery plans etc as clients present

with differing needs. The staff have found these sessions extremely helpful and have put knowledge gained into practise positively impacting on the tenants.

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

- 26 Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2018-19, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:
- Awareness raising of Universal Credit/Welfare Reform and attendance at information sharing forums to enable a better transition for tenants
 - An increase in tenants who do not have English as a first language led to an evaluation of translation and interpreting services has resulted in a new provider
 - Further engagement with Supporting Communities following review of Tenant Participation Action plan to improve consultation
 - One to one consultation with tenants in relation to issues affecting them, i.e. anti-social behaviour, new development plans, planned maintenance etc.
 - Website access providing continual updates of information about our services and tenancy documentation
 - Greater uptake in telephone surveys opposed to written questionnaires

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

- 27 How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2018-19?

Insert number here:

0

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 2022
- 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)*
- Continue with profiling tenants
 - Screening Training for Managers

30 In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2018-19) 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:

13

Fully achieved

1

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 ⁱ	Outcomes / Impact ⁱⁱ
National ⁱⁱⁱ			
Regional ^{iv}	1.Representation on both Board and Staff Teams at NB Housing as well as Housing Sector/NIFHA Meetings	Recruitment Processes/Board Recruitment Attendance at Meetings and Sub Committee Meetings	Positive input to decision making process.
Local ^v	2.Tenant Consultation/ Engagement/Participation Strategy	Choices available on methods of involvement circulated to all tenants to encourage participation.	Greater interest in smaller one to one or scheme specific meetings held on site or at tenants home. Responses received from a small number of tenants seeking

PART B

		Greater publicity of engagement both in newsletters, mail drops, one to one and website to encourage attendance	involvement. Meetings held quarterly as a minimum.
	3. Review internal and external communications	Yearly review of Annual Report. Tenants surveyed to inform of preferred methods of communication.	Organisational Communications Strategy to be reviewed in upcoming year. Positive imagery included in 2018 Report. NB Housing 2018/19 Operational plan included continued use social media sites, texting service & browse aloud function.
	4. Recruitment Drives reaching a wide audience.	Jobs advertised externally via nijobs.com, job centre, Community NI or NIFHA. Internally via email to all staff, adverts displayed on noticeboards.	Applications received from those with and without disability
	5. Support Staff with disabilities to fulfil career development and learning	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

PART B

			awareness and improved service provision.
	6. Conduct Staff Survey to include disability issues	Survey distributed via Investors in People	Positive survey results
	7. Recruitment & Support: Exit Interviews	Exit interviews held to identify needs that may impact policy direction	In 2018 policy reviewed to include reference to exit interview process. Interviews carried out for all leavers.
	8. Work with joint partners to adopt the principles and spirit of disability duties/ Links with disability groups	Quarterly and annual review meetings with joint partners. Report on performance provided. As and when required contact with external agencies to address needs.	Documented meetings/actions with Joint Management Partners. Contact with external groups for example OTs, disability action, sensory awareness teams etc to assist tenant to maintain their tenancies independently.
	9. Encourage interaction between those with disabilities and those without	Encourage attendance at community events in local areas and in-house activity	Attendance at events in local community has engaged residents with support needs.
	10. Promotion of positive attitudes	Ongoing engagement to adopt principles of disability duties	Improved services to those with disability

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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.	<p>2018/19 training plan included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting Disability Equality in the Workplace (ECNI) • Working Together: Promoting the Mental Health Charter in the Workplace (ECNI) • Equality in the Workplace • Recruiting Fairly (ECNI) 	<p>Refreshers that included awareness raising of Section 75 duties and legislation and the roles and responsibilities of the NB Housing Team.</p> <p>Reference to reasonable adjustment duties.</p>

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	Accessibility	<p>Information available online in various formats.</p> <p>Two office sites, out of hours meetings, one to one meetings.</p> <p>Loop system available in Office</p>	<p>Greater accessibility to information for those with/without disability.</p> <p>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.</p>

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2	Tenant Consultation/ Engagement/Participation	Menu of Involvement circulated to tenants to choose most appropriate engagement option.	Greater uptake in Telephone surveys. Paper based survey offered and implemented. One to one or group contact with tenants regarding needs, views and opinion taken on board for the betterment of service delivery. Focus Groups commenced.
3	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 (d) What action measures were achieved to ‘**encourage others**’ to promote the two duties:

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	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.
2	Engagement with external organisations and multi-agencies	Establish positive working relationships with external organisations	Contact with external organisations such as Chest Heart and Stroke, New Life Counselling, Aware NI, ECNI, Autism awareness, Disability action, Daisy, Belfast Trust, Local GPs, OTs, Support and Care Providers etc., has a positive impact and promotes independence for our tenants and residents

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3	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	N/A		

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

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	Establish the scale of disability amongst NB Housing Tenants (Ongoing)	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. Applications for adaptations are being received and actions taken.

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	Include Questions in Policy Screening template to assess significance of disability duties as part of screening exercise	Screening due 2019

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

- Tenant Participation events
- Training Evaluations
- Maintenance Consultations
- Adaptation Consultations
- Tenant Activity Surveys
- Response Maintenance Satisfaction Surveys
- Complaints Monitoring

b) Quantitative

- Recruitment returns
- NICORE Statistics
- Fair Employment Monitoring
- Tenant Annual Satisfaction/Telephone Surveys

PART B

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 further revisions have been made following review in 2017.

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1			
2			
3			

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?

NB Housing continues to keep the plan under review and should opportunities for new measures arise we will endeavour to incorporate.

ⁱ **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.

ⁱⁱ **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.

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

^{iv} **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level

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