



## Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties

### Annual Progress Report

#### Contact details:

|                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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| <p>➤ Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan</p> | <p>As above <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name: Click or tap here to enter text.</p> <p>Telephone: Click or tap here to enter text.</p> <p>Email: Click or tap here to enter text.</p> |
| <p>Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:</p>               | <p><a href="http://www.nb-housing.org">www.nb-housing.org</a></p>                                                                                                                                   |
| <p>Signature:</p>                                                                         |                                                                                                                  |

**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 2024 and March 2025**

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

- 1 In 2024-25, 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 to NB Housing

NB Housing is a registered social housing association with charitable status. It 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 further 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 2024/25 reporting period we had a team of 48 staff to include a Senior Management team comprised of Chief Executive, Director of Development & Property Management and Director of Housing Management & Corporate Services. This reporting year we embarked on a restructuring exercise to address an expansion of services, recruitment requirements and an increase of tenant expectations. By the end of the reporting period we had extended our line management positions to 7 to include the Business Improvement Manager, Finance Manager, Housing Manager, Foyer Scheme Manager, Development Manager, Customer Repairs Manager and Property Assets Manager who manage teams of officers, administrative, support and caretaking staff.

NB Housing completed its final year of our 3-year Corporate Strategy 2022-2025. We have a clear mission and 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.

## Our Mission

*To provide a place to call home and an outstanding service to those in need.*

*A home where people,*

*Feel they belong*

*Feel safe*

*Feel financially secure*

*Feel supported*

*Feel part of the community*

## Our Vision

*Everyone has an affordable, sustainable home in a supportive community that enables them to lead their best lives.*

We have continued to grow our stock and provide homes for those in need. Stock levels increased from 1136 homes in 23/24 to 1161 at the end of 2024/25 financial year. Whilst the majority of our stock is located in north and west Belfast we continue to expand outside the city in areas such as Ballygowan, Ballymena, Newtownards, Carrickfergus, Coalisland, Donaghadee, Millisle, Glenavy and Lisburn. We continue to accommodate across the Section 75 groups.

Our current stock portfolio of 1161 units accommodates for a variety of needs.

|                          |             |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| <b>General Needs</b>     |             |
| Houses                   | 690         |
| Bungalows                | 132         |
| Apartments               | 207         |
| <b>Supported Housing</b> | 68          |
| <b>Sheltered Housing</b> | 64          |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>1161</b> |

Whilst the majority of housing we provide is for general needs and families, we also provide accommodation and specific support groups. These are:

- Sheltered accommodation and support for the elderly at Holy Rood House
- Independent 55's and over in McCorry House providing one-bedroom apartments and support provided by our Tenant Support Worker.
- Homeless young people aged 18-25 at our Flax Foyer Scheme
- 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

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

### Communication

#### *Housing for All*

NB Housing commenced the development of its first Housing for All scheme in Kingsway, Dunmurry. Our vision is to enable and engage communities to interact and work together for engagement and opportunity in the community and embrace a more cohesive society. In preparation for the scheme opening in Nov 2025, we have recruited a Community Engagement Officer to implement the requirements of the Good Relations Plan. Working with other providers, our Community Engagement Officer will communicate and promote this new venture and aims to include representatives from all Section 75 groups in an effort to strengthen community relations in the area.

#### *Tenant Participation Strategy 2025-2028*

We finalised our new Tenant Participation Strategy 2025-2028 which aims to increase tenant involvement in the delivery of social housing services and to be part of the decision-making process on the services we offer. Our overall aim to improve the quality of social housing services for tenants and landlords, by encouraging partnership and discussion between the organisation, tenants, service users, local communities and authorities.

#### *My Tenancy Portal*

“My Tenancy” gives tenants access to their rent accounts and repairs progress at a time convenient to them. In addition to this our Reach Deck service is available to website users who do not have English as a first language where speech and translation support is easily accessible.

#### *Online Contact:*

Our Community Development Officer and Tenant Support Worker continued to provide engagement events online and contact via a “What’s App” group with tenants to offer further engagement opportunities. Zoom contact is also encouraged for group contact so any scheme or focus group meetings could be held online.

We continue to contact tenants via our improved texting service 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.

#### *Annual Tenant Satisfaction Surveys:*

Our 2024/25 survey was circulated as per previous years and provides feedback on how we are performing and any potential opportunity to improve service delivery. A summary of key satisfaction results for the reporting year is as follows:

| Tenant Satisfaction Summary                | 2024/25 |
|--------------------------------------------|---------|
| 1. NB Housing overall service              | 70%     |
| 2. Rent represents good value              | 73%     |
| 3. Your accommodation                      | 76%     |
| 4. Area/ location                          | 69%     |
| 5. Service charges provide value for money | 61%     |

*Tenants Newsletters:*

As part of our commitment to keeping tenants informed we produce a quarterly newsletter and an annual report to keep tenants updated of the performance of the Association. Information on useful topics is delivered in our quarterly newsletter. Topics include for example:

- Access to services offered by the Association and other useful links
- Contents Insurance
- Emergency Repair contacts
- Health and Safety Issues e.g. Fire Safety, Gas Safety
- Housing or Tenancy Advice
- Migration to Universal Credit
- New Team Members
- New Developments
- Notification of upcoming tenant engagement events
- Office operating hours
- Outcome of prize draws etc
- Money Management Advice
- Support signposting to Advice Space, North Belfast Advice Partnership, Ligoneil Advice Partnership, Family Support Hubs
- Tenant Satisfaction Results
- Updates on planned maintenance

Examples of these publications can be accessed on our website [www.nb-housing.org](http://www.nb-housing.org)

*Tenant Consultations:*

We ask for feedback on repairs and planned developments so that tenants have opportunity to inform the Association on how satisfied they are with their homes. This may lead to further improvements moving forward.

Tenant consultation and engagement is carried out when maintenance and development works are to be commenced. Once works are completed tenants are invited to provide feedback on the improvements.

Our Development department will also consult in regard to upcoming development and housing provision. This can be in a group meeting session or as a leaflet drop. Everyone within a 90m radius to the development is invited to attend.

Communication at NB Housing head office is aided with Loop service and our website provides a Reachdeck 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 & Tenant Engagement

During the reporting year we have worked closely with local agencies to provide support tenants who were in need of support services either due to their own particular circumstances, cost of living crisis or just to engage with others. Some of these developments included:

- **ASB Reactive Project:** Following some anti-social behaviour in local area the North Belfast District Police & Community Safety Partnership approved a funding application under our ASB Reactive Project to NB Housing. The funding supported a sports program consisting of 3 programmes scheduled over July, August & September 2024, facilitated by PeacePlayers NI. This collaborative project also involve AYE, NIFRS, the Belfast City Council ASB Officer, Clanmil HA and PSNI.

**Holyrood Garden project:** The project involved replanting of hanging baskets, window boxes, fruit and vegetable planters, wildflower planting, and a litter pick. A professional gardener was present to offer hints and tips to tenants on plant care. Tenants from the scheme and other NB Housing tenants were encouraged to participate. and

- **Therapy Day at Holyrood House.** Therapists from Ardoyne and Shankill Health Partnership set up a treatment room in the common room. Tenants had the opportunity to enjoy aromatherapy, massage, and nail treatments, followed by lunch. This session was the final project funded by the Awards for All Lottery fund awarded last year.
- **Seasonal Celebrations:** We make a concerted effort annually to include our tenants in celebrations such as presentation of selection boxes at Christmas to young homeless families, Christmas dinners for our older residents and craft making sessions such as table centre pieces and wreath making.
- We continue our **Interagency Working** and have been represented at the following group meetings throughout 2024/25. These meetings consist of members of other housing associations, NIHE, local community workers, local councillors, advice sector, and tenant representatives etc. Some of the groups include:
  - **Family Support Hubs:** NB Housing continues to attend Family Support Hub meetings as this ensures we are aware of the services available within the local community. These meetings provide information on various groups and initiatives that are accessible for struggling families.
  - **Tenant Participation Practitioners Network:** These quarterly meetings are attended by Housing Association to gain information on any tenant participation policy updates and ideas on tenant engagement.
  - **Upper North Multi Agency Meetings:** Held fortnightly the group deals with issues raised within the Upper North Belfast Area which are addressed

through statutory and voluntary parties working together. The majority of issues raised revolve around ASB and neighbour disputes.

- **North Belfast Interface Network (NBIN)** was established in 2002 in response to the critical levels of inter-communal conflict at interfaces in Ardoyne, New Lodge, Cliftonville, Marrowbone and the corresponding PUL (Protestant, Unionist, Loyalist) communities. This project was primarily single identity in nature but recognised the necessity of engaging on a cross-interface basis if levels of inter-communal violence were to be reduced and eradicated. For the past five years NBIN have partnered Lower Shankill Community Association, Twaddell Woodvale Residents Association and the Concerned Residents of Upper Ardoyne in the Twaddell Ardoyne Shankill Communities in Transition, (TASCIT) and IFI (International Fund for Ireland) Peace Walls programmes. These groups working together provide a great opportunity to address issues within our own communities and the wider community.
- **North Belfast Community, Partnership Funders, Voluntary and Statutory Engagement meeting** This group comprises of statutory and voluntary agencies that represent the following areas: Crumlin Road, Lower and Upper Ardoyne, Ligonell, Ballysillan and Inner North Belfast areas. The group are hoping to create a neighbourhood partnership to cover the whole of North Belfast, currently it is the only area where one does not exist. A number of exercises were completed and discussed to consider what this will look like in the short and long term, and how it will be implemented. These meetings will be ongoing.
- **North Belfast Development Meeting (Poverty Subgroup)**  
These meetings allow professionals from various organisations in North Belfast to discuss the issues in the area around the impact poverty is having in the local communities and ways to resolve these issues. The group is very keen to map what resources are currently available in the broader North Belfast area with a view to improving collaboration and optimising the use of limited resources and creating greater impact.
- **Local schools and Community Centres** Meetings have taken place with local schools and community centres to discuss issues around ASB, and events that could be held to benefit the local community. One of these events planned to be held is “Keep Warm” with the donation of warm coats, hat scarves etc for the older generation in the community. We will continue to work closely with these organisations to help achieve positive outcomes for the community.
- **The People’s Kitchen**  
A meeting was held with staff from the People’s Kitchen, whose staff assist NB Housing tenants with welfare support. Tenants who are struggling to meet basic needs can be referred to this service.

- We have continued to offer the **NB Housing Community Fund** of up to £1000 for community groups seeking assistance to provide services in areas in which we provide housing. Successful recipients in 2024/25 included,
  - *Derriaghy Cricket and Football Club* received a Community Donation towards the youth teams' football kits & training packs.
  - *Loch Mor dal gCais Hurling and Camogie Club* were successful in their application for training equipment including hurls, helmets and support tops. This went along way to support the clubs aim to provide every child with the opportunity to play sport and to ensure cost is not a barrier.
  - *Mental Health Movement* is a charity operating in North Belfast. They were successful in their application to provide additional counselling to young children and adults providing positive mental health outcomes.
  - *North-West Belfast District Scout Council* which operates in North Belfast offering services to both sides of the communities and to young people from low-income families received a donation to help with the cost of summer camp trip to France and Belgium.
  - *Prospect Park Street Party*: NB Housing Tenants organized a summer street party to coincide with an annual festival in the local area. Their application was supported and helped with the provision of 2 play buses, one mainstream and another sensory bus to cater for local children with autism.

➤ **Supporting Young Homeless People**

➤ **Homeless Awareness Week 2024**

The Commissioner of Children and Young People, Chris Quinn, met with the Young People's Providers forum to mark the start of Homeless Awareness Week. The forum highlighted the challenges faced by the voluntary sector in relation to youth homelessness and voiced a shared commitment to addressing these going forward.

- We work in partnership with many services providing support to our young homeless residents (18-25yr olds) at Flax Foyer. Some of these services include:



○ **Extern's** Moving Forward, Moving On project works with young people, aged 16-24, who are not in education, training or employment (NEET) and/or have a history of offending behaviour. It is a research and evidence-based model of working with young people, which provides support and the tools they need to make a successful start in the world. The mentoring support service works



with young people and young adults from across the city, who have previously been through alternative education projects, such as Extern's Pathways Project.



**HYPE** attend the Foyer every fortnight to discuss sexual health with our young residents.



**Daisy Project** provides a weekly drop-in facility at the Foyer for anyone who is seeking information/advice/counselling relating to Drugs or Alcohol misuse issues. The Drug and Alcohol Intervention for Youth (DAISY) provide support for young people and young adults experiencing problems with their alcohol or substance use. They provide a confidential service, and each client will be offered one to one support to reduce harm caused by substance use.



**Northern Ireland Youth Forum (NIYF)** Northern Ireland Youth Programme (NIYF) have a number of projects running for the young people in the Foyer including Mentoring Programmes, Young Women's Group, Group Work, PT Sessions, Fitness and a host of wellbeing programmes that offer 1-1 counselling and therapeutic interventions.

Northern Ireland Youth Programme (NIYF) held a round of the Relentless Change Project for 16-25-year olds who have a housing issue and want to create change. The young residents have enjoyed the weekly sessions with the team, challenging themselves to bring truth to power. NIYF Drop-in runs every Friday at the Foyer and 8 young people attended in the reporting year.

**Aspire** mentors have been offering exceptional, practical 1-1 support to young people when they need it. They have been able to take them for walks, coffee, shopping or outings to help them clear their head. The Aspire mentors have also been offering group work and 1-1 support with anger management to male residents.



Housing Rights delivered clinics in the Foyer, helping our young people that are struggling to get the Full Duty Applicant (FDA) points on their housing assessment. Their knowledgeable staff have been on hand to support staff and residents move complex cases forward.

## Good Relations

**Good Relations Week 2024** The young people in Flax Foyer embraced this year's theme of 'Opportunity' to celebrate Good Relations Week 2024. They engaged in a range of activities including hair braiding, sewing, CV writing, job club and cooking workshops. Our partner organisation Extern also joined forces with Barclays to provide an Accelerator Programme – Get into Business, helping inspire creativity and nurture entrepreneurial skills. The Northern Ireland Youth Forum have been running a 6-week cooking programme with a professional chef, with some tasty treats on the menu for all to enjoy. The young people learned a variety of new skills and got to know each other better. We finished off the week with some relaxation and fun, with the young people enjoying bowling and movie night with staff.

Last year NB Housing took the decision to recruit part time **Residential Security Wardens** for our Flax Street apartment buildings. Whilst Community Safety and Multi Agency Meetings continued to take place with the aim of building support across the board to look at local community safety and anti social behaviour issues (ASB) we noted complaints were still forthcoming in this area in particular. This has been a positive development as the staff have witnessed less activity during warden presence.

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 tenant's experience incidents of antisocial behaviour (ASB). The security service provides a means of contact should ASB arise outside office hours and when security wardens are not on site. The service gives our tenants an opportunity 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 maintain links with community police, local councillors, and encourage tenant liaison with our staff teams. Open communication with local youth workers in hotspot areas has been invaluable as the focus is to encourage youths involved in anti-social behaviour to engage with youth clubs and divert this unwanted behaviour and promote good relations.

In 2024/25, NB Housing received 85 complaints of antisocial behaviour, 77 of which were resolved. It is positive to report this a reduction in complaints of 14 over last year.

## Our People

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

- In March 2025 NB Housing became the first Housing Association in Northern Ireland to be awarded membership status of the **Belfast Business Promise**, an initiative developed by Belfast City Council to promote fair pay, good jobs, and secure contracts. The Housing Association joins over 50 other organisations committed to making Belfast a more inclusive and sustainable city through responsible business practices. To achieve membership status, NB Housing successfully met five of the eight pledges required for accreditation and is working

towards Ambassador status by meeting all eight pledges. The five pledges achieved are:

- ❖ *Providing fair wages and contracts:* Ensuring our employees are paid the Real Living Wage (RLW) and have security around their working hours.
  - ❖ *Working in partnership with our communities:* Engaging meaningfully with local communities to create positive change.
  - ❖ *Protecting our environment:* Committing to tackling climate change and safeguarding the environment for future generations.
  - ❖ *Offering opportunities into work:* Creating pathways to employment through job opportunities and development programs.
  - ❖ *Improving training, engagement, and well-being:* Fostering a workplace where employees feel valued and supported.
- We are an **Equal Opportunity Employer**: We completed a restructuring exercise across the organisation and offered some new opportunities. We introduced the following positions to support new ways of working with more emphasis on customer service improvements: Senior Support Worker, Business Improvement Manager, Customer Repairs Manager, Property Assets Manager and a Senior Finance Officer. Within the reporting year we advertised not only for these new positions but also for replacement staff. A total of 13 positions were advertised. Whilst all positions have been filled, for some posts it was necessary to advertise on more than one occasion. Each time the job specification was reviewed to allow for a wider pool of candidates.
  - NB Housing has been accredited as a **Real Living Wage Employer** ensuring all our staff are earning at least the Real Living Wage.
  - **Agile Working/Work Life Balance**: We continue to offer our office team Agile working. Staff now have the flexibility to work 3 days from the office and 2 days at home on a rota basis. Flexibility to staff working patterns has aided a new way of working and promotes a balanced work life.
  - **Vitality Private Healthcare**: Our staff continue to have an option for private healthcare with Vitality Healthcare. This provides a full range of medical services and rewards for members. Staff can also include family members in the plan should they wish. This service also offers staff a counselling option.
  - **Employee Assistance Programme**: We continue to offer our staff *Inspire Workplaces* services who deliver an employee assistance programme for all staff. The programme offers support to staff who may have situations affecting their well-being for example stress, relationships, finance etc. The programme delivers 24hr access to counselling as well as advice and information for support. The service is provided at no cost to our staff.
  - **Investors in People**: The Association has GOLD accreditation until 2025.
  - **Staff Survey**: Investors in People deploy an independent staff survey annually. The survey gives all staff the opportunity to have their say and rate their strength of agreement with a range of statements that directly correlate to investors in people assessment and accreditation criteria. Our next survey results will be included in our reaccreditation report in Sept 2025

## 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 completed 33 disability adaptations in the reporting year. Works included, the provision of level access showers, lighting upgrades, grab rails, safe play area etc.

| Adaptation Type     | Number Completed |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Level Access Shower | 11               |
| Grab & Stair Rails  | 14               |
| Access Ramp         | 1                |
| Lighting Upgrade    | 2                |
| Door Release        | 1                |
| Stair Lifts         | 3                |

Our Development Team continue to work to meet the needs of applicants on the housing waiting list providing a variety of house type in various locations.

During this reporting year, NB Housing completed a total of 26 units of accommodation in Lisburn and Belfast.

New developments completed during 2024/25 were:

- Crumlin Rd (North Belfast) – 14 Units 2 x 2person 1bedroom apartments, 3 x 5person 3bed houses and 9 x 3person 2bedroom houses
- Leamington Place, Lisburn – 2 x 2person 1bedroom wheelchair apartments, 10 x 3person 2edroom apartments for the active elderly.

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

## Age

**Digital Inclusion:** Our website includes a tenant function, “My Tenancy” an online portal which has meant tenants can access their rent accounts, or report repairs. We have seen an increase in the use of the portal as tenants become familiar its accessibility. Users increased by 5% over last year.

Our website will also enable tenants or visitors to make a comment, send a query, make a complaint or compliment. It also features a Reachdeck function which accommodates various languages, and those with both sight and hearing impairment.

Wi-Fi has been installed in the scheme for older residents (65yrs+) in Holyrood House to aid engagement and improve mental health.

**Social Inclusion:** Our Community Development Officer and Tenant Support Worker provide engagement sessions to include as many tenants as possible. We continue to make made good use of technology to ensure tenants are still involved with the Association.

**Welfare Reform:** Our Newsletter keeps our tenants up to date with changes in benefits and the Welfare Reform agenda. We provide information to tenants and signpost to debt advice agencies where necessary in an effort to reduce potential financial hardship.

Migration to universal credit is communicated to tenants to ensure they are prepared for changes to their income. We have provided information and contact details in our newsletters to ensure tenants can easily make application for universal credit and rates relief.

As we have seen tenants struggle we continue to signpost to local foodbanks and work with local agencies to ensure support is provided to those in need.

## Dependents

**Welfare Reform/Single Room Rate:** Young residents at our Foyer scheme have found it difficult to access accommodation on their own, this may be because of the points they have, or a lack of affordable accommodation. Our support staff continue to prepare 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 also carry 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. Nb Housing 2 bedroom stock will continue to rise as new developments and acquisitions are finalised going some way to meet need in this category.

## Disability

*Adaptations:* NB Housing completed 33 adaptations to homes throughout the year. Adaptions can include fixed aids, or home extensions to assist mobility or activities of daily living for those with 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.

*Communications/Electronic:* The *Reachdeck* function for hearing or sight impaired tenants and website visitors has been included as part of our website review. Our head office is serviced by the loop system. Failer 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. Activities offered during the year have attempted to address any gender imbalance. For example, attendance at the gardening projects, painting ceramics and the intergenerational Christmas dinner meant that anyone could participate.

## 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 only requests

application to Access Ni for all potential support staff and continues to recruit staff based on the Merit Principle.

## Race

**Communications:** We continue to engage 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 Reachdeck. 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 awareness of LGBTQI community to continue to improve positive attitudes among staff and tenants. The support-based training has provided a practical approach to the issues groups may experience and how our support staff can manage these. Staff practice and response is enhanced and as a result we are providing positive outcomes for our residents. Agencies consulted to provide support include, Gender Assessment Clinic at Knockbracken, Gender Jam, Cara-Friend, HYPE, and Rainbow.

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

☐ Yes

☒ No (go to Q.4)

☐ Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

- 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:

Click or tap here to enter text.

- 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):*

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.



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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

### **Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)**

**4** Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2024-25 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

☒ Yes, organisation wide

☐ Yes, some departments/jobs

☐ No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment

☐ No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

**5** Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2024-25 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

☒ Yes, organisation wide

☐ Yes, some departments/jobs

PART A

- ☐ 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:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

- ☐ Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- ☒ Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
- ☐ Yes, in some departments/jobs
- ☐ No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's corporate plan
- ☐ No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2024-25 report
- ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Equality action plans/measures**

- 7 Within the 2024-25 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:

25

Actions ongoing:

1

PART A

Actions to commence:

0

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

As reported in Section 2

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

None

- 9** In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2024-25 reporting period, the following have been identified: (*tick all that apply*)

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

**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 2024-25 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has

PART A

been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

☒ Face to face meetings

☐ Focus groups

☒ Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing

☒ Questionnaires

☐ Information by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation

☐ Internet discussions

☐ Telephone consultations

☐ Other *(please specify)*: Click or tap here to enter text.

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:

Click or tap here to enter text.

- 13** Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2024-25 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes

☒ No

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

PART A

Click or tap here to enter text.

- 14** Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2024-25 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)**

[Library - NB Housing](#) Click or tap here to enter text.

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

7 policies screened in reporting period

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

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

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

0 Consultations for an **EQIA** alone.

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

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:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

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

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☒ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

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

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

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No, already taken place
- ☐ No, scheduled to take place at a later date

PART A

☒ Not applicable

**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:

Click or tap here to enter text.

**22** Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2024-25 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

No adverse Impacts

**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 2024-25, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

#### **Pyramid Messenger Training**

Omniledger

Online

25/04/24

7/05/24

#### **Mental Health First Aid**

Jethro Centre, Lurgan

29/05/24

05/06/24

#### **Learning Day: Training, Engagement and Well being**

Belfast Business Promise

Invest NI

18/06/24

#### **Flexible working**

ECNI

Webinar

11/09/24

#### **Belfast Business Promise**

Learning Day

Girdwood Hub

24/10/24

#### **Introduction to mental wellbeing in the workplace**

ECNI

Webinar

24/10/24

#### **The disability reasonable adjustment duty in the recruitment and selection process**

ECNI

Webinar

31/10/24

#### **Promoting equality in employment for people with disabilities**

ECNI

Webinar

14/11/24

#### **Adult Safeguarding Training**

Volunteer Now

26/11/24



**Housing for All Practitioners - Learning Together Seminar**

Glenavon Hotel, Cookstown

27/11/24

28/11/24

**Managing harassment and bullying at work**

ECNI/LRA

LRA offices

11/12/24

- 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:

The NB Housing 2024/25 training plan covered a cross section of topics and was a working document that could be added to when a new skill or development area was required.

NB Housing recognises that awareness raising and training plays a crucial role in effective implementation of our Section 75 duties. The extent to which this training met the training objectives of the Equality scheme can be summarised as follows:

- Equality and Section 75 duties is addressed in induction plans, included in job descriptions, included in training plans and is an objective of the annual business plan.
- Equality Training delivered by the Equality Commission Northern Ireland provides a comprehensive overview for beginners in employment equality, covering the role and function of the Commission, an introduction to anti-discrimination legislation in NI, definitions of discrimination, the reasonable adjustment duty, Fair Employment Treatment Order and good practice.
- The Disability Reasonable Adjustment duty in the recruitment and selection process informs the organisation of legislation and best practise during recruitment processes and how policy can be reviewed to incorporate same.
- Managing Bullying & Harassment at Work examined the concepts of bullying and harassment at work and how to put in place an effective strategy. The course covered what constitutes an inclusive working environment.
- Introduction to Mental Wellbeing in the Workplace encouraged review of policies and procedures and examined how to implement good practice/positive action measures which are permissible under the law.

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

## PART A

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2024-25, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

As outlined in Section 2.

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

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

Insert number here: 0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

N/A

## **Section 3: Looking Forward**

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

March 2028

- 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*)

- ❖ As with last reporting period Equality Screening is an area we have been working on. We have attended both in person and online training in Equality Screening and any new staff are also referred to the online training video provided by the ECNI.

- 30** In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next reporting period? (*please tick any that apply*)

## PART A

- ☐ Employment
- ☐ Goods, facilities and services
- ☐ Legislative changes
- ☐ Organisational changes/ new functions
- ☒ Nothing specific, more of the same
- ☐ Other (please state):

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

|                                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1. Number of action measures for this reporting period that have been:</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                |                    |              |
|----------------|--------------------|--------------|
| <b>13</b>      | <b>2</b>           | <b>0</b>     |
| Fully achieved | Partially achieved | Not achieved |

|                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>2. Please outline below details on <u>all</u> actions that have been fully achieved in the reporting period.</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

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                                                                                            | Outcomes / Impact                                      |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| National <sup>i</sup>  | 1.Representation on both Board and Staff Teams at NB Housing as well as Housing Sector/NIFHA Meetings | Recruitment Processes/Board Recruitment<br><br>Attendance at Meetings and Sub Committee Meetings   | Positive input to decision making process.             |
| Regional <sup>ii</sup> | 2.Tenant Consultation/ Engagement/Participation Strategy                                              | Implementation of the Tenant Participation Strategy and monitoring of action plan. Dedicated staff | Increased involvement particularly among older tenants |

PART B

|        |                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|        |                                               | <p>member in post to drive Tenant Participation Strategy/Tenant Welfare.</p> <p>Recruitment of new Community Engagement Officer to work on Good Relations Plan /Housing for All.</p> <p>Choices available on methods of involvement circulated to all tenants to encourage participation.</p> <p>Greater publicity of engagement both in newsletters, mail drops, one to one and website to encourage involvement</p> <p>Access to meetings via Zoom, What App etc when required</p> | <p>with the provision of WiFi and greater accessibility to website.</p> <p>Expanded involvement methods to online access e.g. Zoom.</p> <p>Publicised in tenants quarterly Newsletter seeking involvement/engagement opportunities.</p> <p>Contact has been made via Community Development Officer</p> <p>Increased contact expected with new post of Community Engagement Officer</p> |
| Localv | 3.Review internal and external communications | Yearly review of Annual Report.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Positive imagery included in Annual Report.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

PART B

|  |                                                                              |                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |                                                                              | <p>Tenants surveyed to inform of preferred methods of communication.</p> <p>Application for JAM card recognised organisation</p>          | <p>Continued use social media sites, texting service &amp; Reachdeck function.</p> <p>Introduced "My Tenancy" portal</p> <p>Staff trained in communicating with tenants with communication difficulties.</p>                             |
|  | 4. Recruitment Drives reaching a wide audience.                              | <p>Jobs advertised externally via Nijobs.com, Community NI or NIFHA and on Careers page on website. Internally via email to all staff</p> | <p>Applications received from those with and without disability</p>                                                                                                                                                                      |
|  | 5. Support Staff with disabilities to fulfil career development and learning | <p>Training needs analysis for all staff. Performance appraisal process on going.</p>                                                     | <p>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.</p> <p>Outcomes provide increased awareness and improved service provision.</p> |

PART B

|  |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | 6. Conduct a monitoring survey of all Board Members and staff members with disabilities                           | Distributed on recruitment                                                                                                                                      | Outcomes monitored and needs addressed as required.                                                                                                                                                                   |
|  | 7. Recruitment & Support: Exit Interviews                                                                         | Exit interviews held to identify needs that may impact policy direction                                                                                         | Policy includes reference to exit interview process. Interviews carried out for 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 tenants to maintain their tenancies independently. |
|  | 9. Encourage interaction between those with disabilities and those without                                        | Activities programme ongoing in supported schemes and within community via Community Development Officer and Community Engagement Officer                       | Interaction encouraged via Zoom/Whats App                                                                                                                                                                             |
|  | 10. Promotion of positive attitudes                                                                               | Ongoing engagement to adopt principles of disability duties                                                                                                     | Improved services to those with disability                                                                                                                                                                            |

PART B

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

|    | Training Action Measures                                                                                                                                                             | Outputs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Outcome / Impact                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 11 | <p>Provide Training/Refreshers on disability duties to Board members and staff.</p> <p>Disability Awareness Training to be included in staff review policy and induction process</p> | <p>2024/25 training plan included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Mental Health First Aid</li> <li>❖ Introduction to mental wellbeing in the workplace</li> <li>❖ Promoting equality in employment for people with disabilities</li> <li>❖ The disability reasonable adjustment duty in the recruitment and selection process</li> </ul> | <p>Ongoing annual action measure. Refreshers that included awareness raising of Section 75 duties and legislation and the roles and responsibilities of the NB Housing Team. Staff are informed of the measures to promote equality during induction process.</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                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 12 | <p>Accessibility</p> <p>Review external and internal Communications and access policies</p> | <p>Information available online in various formats including Reachdeck function</p> <p>Tenants Forum and Menu of Involvement circulated to tenants to</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 online where available.</p> |



PART B

|  |                                                  |                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | Tenant Consultation/<br>Engagement/Participation | choose most appropriate<br>engagement option                                                                 | Accessible via website<br>Paper based survey offered and<br>implemented.                                                                                                                                                        |
|  | Information/Publications                         | Information available in alternative<br>formats, on request. Reachdeck<br>facility, large print, texting etc | Also included online survey in this reporting<br>year.<br>One to one or group contact offered online<br>via Whats App and Zoom<br>Improved access to information for tenants or<br>applicants with sight or hearing impairment. |

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

|    | Encourage others Action<br>Measures                                    | Outputs                                                                    | Outcome / Impact                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 13 | Encourage engagement for<br>those with disability and those<br>without | Encourage attendance at any, or<br>online, events                          | Attendance at meetings of those with<br>disability and without.                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|    | Engagement with external<br>organisations and multi-<br>agencies       | Establish positive working<br>relationships with external<br>organisations | Contact with external organisations such as,<br>Aware NI, ECNI, Autism awareness,<br>Disability action, Daisy, Belfast Trust, Local<br>GPs, OTs, Support and Care Providers etc.,<br>has a positive impact and promotes<br>independence for our tenants and residents. |

PART B

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 |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-------------------|
|  | None                                                                                      |         |                   |

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, this is ongoing as new applicants become tenants           | Profiling questionnaires for tenants.<br>Use of new staffing resource/apprentice to assist in the process. | To better address housing needs for tenants with disability.<br>Applications for adaptations are being received and needs addressed.<br>Nicore information being uploaded onto Housing Management system. | This is an ongoing process. Tenants are not forthcoming regarding information in relation to personal information on request. |
| 2 | Include Questions in Policy Screening template to assess significance of disability duties as part of screening exercise | Questions on disability are included in the screening template                                             | To determine significance of disability as part of screening                                                                                                                                              | Screening Ongoing                                                                                                             |

PART B

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

|   | Action Measures not met | Reasons |
|---|-------------------------|---------|
| 1 | None                    |         |

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 Satisfaction Surveys
- Tenant Activity Surveys
- Tenant Participation/Engagement Events
- Maintenance & Development Consultations
- Adaptation Consultations
- Response Maintenance Satisfaction Surveys
- Training Evaluations
- Complaints Monitoring

(b) Quantitative

- Recruitment monitoring returns
- NICORE Statistics
- Fair Employment Monitoring
- Annual Satisfaction Survey

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?

If yes please outline below:

No further revisions have been made review of Disability Action Plan

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

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

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