

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council



Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties

Annual Progress Report

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Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:	Equality - Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council (armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk)
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 2023 and March 2024

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 2023-24, 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.

Corporate and Business Plans

The Council revised its Corporate Plan which will cover the period 2023-2027. Both staff and elected members were engaged in the development of this plan, and it was issued for formal consultation on the Consultation Hub in December 2023, shared with section 75 stakeholders and advertised on social media. An equality screening exercise and a section 75 monitoring questionnaire was attached to the consultation. Analysis of the monitoring questionnaire indicated that a broad range of people responded to the consultation.

The Corporate Plan sets out the vision of the organisation, its values, and priorities. It is the roadmap for delivery of the Borough Community Plan 2017-2030.

The three draft values in the Corporate Plan will shape the culture, behaviour and decision making and overall identity of the organisation.

1. People Centred – Inclusive and welcoming, a place where people and staff are valued. Engage positively in partnership working, empowering others to achieve success.
2. Leaders
3. Responsible

The first value recognises the importance of inclusion in everything we do.

The draft plan proposes five priorities.

1. Environment & Place
2. Community Wellbeing
3. Economic Growth
4. Service Delivery
5. Staff, leadership, and Resources

The Community Planning Partnership representing the Borough launched a statement of progress in March reflecting on key achievements and areas of work over the past two years realising the long-term outcomes in Connected, our Community Plan.

The Partnership is represented by over 80 members across the statutory, community, voluntary and business sector with organisations working together to engage with local people and lead on delivering the community action plan 'Connected', improving outcomes for our residents.

The Statement of Progress highlights many positive findings, over half the population indicators that have been used to track progress, show improvement. These include an

increase in levels of physical activity and a reduction in both the number of accidental dwelling fires and fear of crime. Economic indicators have also shown a positive change in terms of the number of businesses, employee qualification levels and employment rate.

The Performance Improvement Plan 2023-2024 was implemented.

The Performance Improvement Plan is central to ensuring we are delivering on our vision and meeting the needs of a range of stakeholders in the Borough many of whom will fall within the nine section 75 categories. Council strategies, plans, projects, and services linked to draft performance improvement objectives have been or are required to be equality screened in order to ensure that the Council's statutory duty to promote equality and good relations is fully considered.

PI01 relates to sickness absence, and this has the potential to positively impact on Disability. PI04 relates to communications on waste management, and this has the potential to positively impact on both Disability and Race.

The Council also revised its Disability Action Plan, Audit of Inequalities and Equality Action Plan. Members from the Inclusive ABC Operational Working Group were engaged when agreeing new actions for the plans. Membership of this group includes staff members from a number of service areas across the Council as well as representatives from the Southern Health and Social Care Trust. They were issued for formal consultation on the Consultation Hub in February 2024 and advertised on social media. Two additional online consultation dates were also offered, and all section 75 stakeholders were informed about the consultation as well as the community planning stakeholders and the age sector stakeholders. Equality screening exercises were attached to the consultations as well as section 75 monitoring questionnaires. During the reporting period a face-to-face meeting was held with a disability organisation and Issues raised were shared with the relevant departments and action taken where possible.

The actions contained within the Equality Action Plan reflect four of the priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan. These are:

- Community Wellbeing
- Economic Growth
- Service Delivery
- Staff Leadership and Resources

The departmental business plans which are renewed annually include where appropriate actions which specifically promote equality and good relations. These are linked to the priorities included in the Corporate Plan

Policy Development and Policy Screening

Representatives from RNIB, IMTAC, Guide Dogs and TADA attended an open meeting in April 2023 to discuss the development of the Banbridge Place Plan. Section 75 groups were again invited to join an online meeting in October 2023. Representatives from Disability Action, Guide Dogs, IMTAC and RNIB attended this meeting. The place plan sets out a vision for the future to create a vibrant, creative, and environmentally

responsible town and it suggests some 'Big Ideas' for the future including an improved evening economy, new footbridges, and the development of a cycling network.

A number of face-to-face meetings were also held with teenagers/younger people and older people. The survey conducted also included an equality screening exercise and a section 75 monitoring questionnaire. The nine section 75 categories were well represented in the survey responses. The research showed that children and young people; older people; people with a disability and carers are affected by the current urban form, layout and engagement that happens in the town. Common themes identified were:

- Skills and employment
- Accessibility of walking routes
- Traffic dominance within the town centre

These are reflected in the actions in the plan and the partnership commits to ongoing dialogue with section 75 categories to ensure that their needs are addressed in its implementation.

Minor impact in relation to disability and accessibility will be addressed within the Banbridge Place Plan via actions AHL3, SP1, SP2, SP6, LH12, HSI3

Play actions will be improved via AHL2, LH5

Action HSI9 focuses on the employability and skills agenda to meet the future needs of the labour market.

Further details about these actions can be found in the engagement report.

[Banbridge-Engagement-Report.pdf](#)

[Banbridge-Place-Plan.pdf](#)

The Place Plan was launched in March 2024. Coordinated by the Council and funded by the Department for Communities the plan was developed through engagement with local residents, community groups, businesses, stakeholders, and statutory organisations.

A survey was carried out on the Consultation Hub between January 2024 and March 2024 on proposed locations for the N.I Centenary Stones. This survey was conducted in order to determine the equality and good relations impact of these locations and to provide data for the equality screening exercise. The link for the survey was shared with the Council's Community Development and Section 75 stakeholders and advertised through the council's social media channels. A range of views were expressed.

Work began on the development of a co-designed Local Community Action Plan under Investment area 1.1 of the new PEACEPLUS Programme. The Action Plan will be centred around three core themes:

1. Local Community Regeneration and Transformation
2. Thriving and Peaceful Communities

3. Building respect for all cultural identities

A survey was conducted on the consultation hub in July 2023 and a section 75 monitoring questionnaire accompanied the survey. A series of public workshops were also held.

The Council's draft Performance Improvement Plan 2024-2025 went out for public consultation just before the end of March. It was made available on the consultation hub and an equality screening exercise, and a section 75 monitoring questionnaire accompanied the plan. The Council's section 75 stakeholders were informed about the consultation.

Policy screening reports were issued in April, September, December, and March.

The Policy, Equality & Diversity Manager attended a number of Head of Department and Senior Leadership Team meetings throughout the reporting period. The Senior Team were advised of the guides to assist with consultation and policy and strategy development as well as the importance of screening policies in a timely manner and in advance of papers going to Committee.

During the previous reporting period details of all Council policies were transferred to a Smartsheet with all relevant dates added to include approval date, equality screening and automated review dates. This has created a more efficient procedure for policy review, and it has a traffic light system in place for all ABC Council approved policies. The Heads of Department were advised of the new process and have viewer access. During the reporting period Heads were provided with regular reports detailing the status of policies and strategies and when they were due for review.

Work was undertaken on the corporate website to ensure that the Equality and Policy sections of the website were more accessible.

During the reporting period the Policy, Equality & Diversity Team alongside other organisations had meetings with officials from the Department of Health to assist with the revision of an accessible business checklist for the Equality Commission's Every Customer Counts initiative. The checklist is being revised so that it adequately reflects the support needs of neurodivergent people, including autistic people. This Checklist can assist large public sector organisations, smaller businesses, private traders, and service providers with practical tips on improving the accessibility of their services and identify practical ways of improving access and provision of services for existing and new customers including people who are neurodivergent and/or autistic.

Officials from the Department of Health also met with the Council's Inclusive ABC Operational Working Group to advise them of the requirements for Council following the development of the new Autism Strategy.

Equality Initiatives and Events

In May the Council marked Mental Health Awareness Week by organising a range of staff initiatives and events designed to equip everyone with the tools needed to manage their mental health.

In recognition of Men's Health Week in June close to 50 front line staff from our Environmental Services Department got the chance to hop on board the Cancer Focus

NI 'Keeping Well Van' and get free personalised health checks. An online cancer awareness session was made available for male office-based colleagues.

Get Active ABC put together a programme of activities to inspire men and boys to try something new. The programme of events included Kinnego Marina fun day, paddleboarding at the Argory, angling and kayaking at the South Lake Leisure Centre, Chi Me, sailing and a men's health fayre. Residents were also advised that the aim of Men's Health Week is to heighten awareness of preventable health problems for males of all ages, support men and boys to engage in healthier lifestyle choices and activities plus encourage the early detection and treatment of health difficulties in males.

A celebration event was held in June to shine a light on the fantastic results achieved by over 40 young entrepreneurs from the borough during the successful Enterprise Pathway programme. Developed by the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Labour Market Partnership (ABC LMP) in collaboration with the Council, the Enterprise Pathway Programme aims to promote the creation of new businesses by providing eligible individuals with tailored start-up advice, mentoring and financial support.

Congratulating the young entrepreneurs, Chair of Council's Economic Development and Regeneration Committee, Councillor Kevin Savage said:

"I am always delighted to see young people with passion and drive get the support, encouragement, and investment they need to begin their journey towards self-employment."

A wide range of health and recreation activities were offered to young people over the summer months. The annual campaign helped deliver well over 160 indoor and outdoor events, activities, and programmes. Examples included the Inclusive Summer Scheme which offers inclusive sports and physical activity opportunities for children with a disability, along with siblings and friends. A programme for teenage girls provided a range of activities in the afternoons over the summer in both Dromore Community Centre and South Lake Leisure Centre. Other examples included Water Sports Activity Days, Family Snow Tubing, Multi Sports Camps, Gymnastics and Dance.

All Out Trekking was available at Gosford Forest Park every Thursday and Saturday. This is an inclusive outdoor recreation programme using battery powered all terrain buggies, open to disabled and non-disabled people enabling inclusive participation in a beautiful parkland setting.

The All-Stars Summer Scheme is a three-week programme organised and delivered by the Council's Sports Development team and supported by the Southern Health and Social Care Trust. It brings together young people with disabilities aged between 7 and 17 to enjoy a range of inclusive physical and sporting activities through a series of week-long sessions during July and August.

Based at Gilford Community Centre, the scheme brings young people together to experience everything from outdoor play, nature walks, football, dance, boccia, Kurling and clay modelling to an away day at South Lake Leisure Centre for cycling, swimming, canoeing and the wheelie boat.

Throughout the year examples of programmes advertised on GetActive ABC included Sight Loss Couch to 5K, Walking Football – a game of football where players walk instead of run, offering a slower paced version for adults of all ages and abilities to enjoy.

An Easter Quiet Roller-Skating session was provided in Banbridge Leisure Centre. Quiet swim sessions were offered in the Orchard Leisure Centre as well as Autism Friendly sessions in Gulliver's Soft Play. These sessions provide a quiet hour with reduced numbers, no noise or flashing lights, the provision of a safe space tent and fibre optic lights. Disability lane swimming is also available at the Orchard Leisure Centre on Saturday 3pm-4pm and on Sunday 3.30pm-4.30pm. Participants with a disability can swim for free at their own pace within a lane allocated solely for them for the entire session.

The Inclusive ABC Operational Working Group was established in May. It evolved from the Autism Friendly Working Group to enable consideration of a range of issues that may affect our disabled customers. The new terms of reference for the group include for example

- Engaging with equality stakeholders where necessary to inform future service delivery.
- Sharing of information and ideas on how to resolve more complex problems in relation to service delivery linked to equality, good relations, and disability access.
- Ensuring information on relevant activities is shared on the Inclusive pages of the Council's website/s.

The group also informs the actions included in the Council's Equality and Disability Action Plans and met five times during the reporting period.

Following a Notice of Motion in November 2023 the first meeting of the Inclusive ABC Strategic Working Group was held in March. The Inclusive ABC Operational Working Group was extended to include Members from the existing Health Working Group and other stakeholders (as and when required).

This group meets on a quarterly basis and reports to the Governance, Resources and Strategy Committee. The Operational Working Group is a subgroup reporting into the Inclusive ABC Strategic Working Group. The terms of reference for the strategic group includes for example

- Inform and support the work of the operational Inclusive ABC Working Group
- Engaging with local & regional sectoral stakeholders where necessary to inform future service delivery.

Throughout the reporting period the Policy, Equality & Diversity Team attended a number of ASD Forum meetings which are co-ordinated by the Southern Health and Social Care Trust. This Forum includes health care professionals and representatives from organisations that provide services for children and adults on the Autism Spectrum.

In August 2023, the officer Diversity Ambassadors met with the elected member Ambassadors (The Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor) about the Ambassador role. A further meeting was held in September with members of the regional equality & diversity group about how best to support this role in Council. A role specification was agreed,

and a number of events arranged by the Local Government staff Commission for the Ambassadors to attend.

The Policy, Equality & Diversity Manager attended a number of the regional Equality & Diversity Group meetings. This group was established to prioritise and influence equality, good relations and diversity initiatives across local government and contribute to the development of the regional equality, diversity, and inclusion strategy. The membership of this group is drawn from stakeholder bodies across the local government sector and includes Chief Executives, Diversity Ambassadors, Equality Officers, Good Relations Officers and HR Officers in Councils, trade union Officers and Staff Commission members, as well as representatives from external stakeholder groups.

Also In August, groups and charities representing older people, were invited to The Palace Demesne in Armagh for an event to celebrate ABC Borough joining the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities, which currently includes 1,445 cities and communities in 51 countries, covering over 300 million people worldwide.

This age friendly status is an important step forward in reflecting the commitment from ABC Council in listening to the needs of the ageing population and providing effective advice, support, and practical help.

Lord Mayor of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough, Alderman Margaret Tinsley welcomed guests which included members of the ABC Seniors Network, the Age Friendly Alliance, council officers and the Public Health Agency who provide funding for the Age Friendly Programme.

"This is a hugely significant and positive step forward in ensuring that we help and care for the senior members of our community, and it is a clear demonstration of how much we value our older people. We can learn and share information with other parts of the world, as many of us continue to enjoy longer lives than previous generations," said the Lord Mayor.

In September over 2500 people attended a family fun day in Lurgan Park to celebrate Good Relations Week. The theme of Good Relations Week 2023 was 'Together' and how togetherness can make a difference to breaking down barriers and building more inclusive communities. It also continued to build upon the progress already achieved in pursuit of empowering change within our communities.

Families were able to enjoy everything from inflatables, a soft play bus and nerf wars to balloon modelling, face painting and much more.

A Disability Employment Programme was launched in September. This programme is part of the Council's Labour Market Partnership and will be delivered by Stepping Stones NI. It supports individuals who have a disability, and are either unemployed, underemployed or at risk of redundancy.

Participants of the Disability Employment Programme will receive one-to-one support through mentoring and job matching as well as free accredited training. They will also have the option of work placements and guaranteed job interviews with partner employers across a range of industries and job types.

Lord Mayor, Alderman Margaret Tinsley commented:

“As a council we are proud to support people with disabilities and those who may be facing challenges to reach employment by helping them overcome barriers. We know that work has a huge positive impact on people’s health and wellbeing and with this programme it will assist more people to reap the benefits of fulfilling employment with the right help.

Through this programme we hope to provide more inclusive employment opportunities across our borough and unlock people’s potential to help grow our economy.”

Students from local post-primary schools attended a special local democracy event on Tuesday 10 October at Craigavon Civic Centre. To mark Local Democracy Week students had the opportunity to find out how their Council works and ask local Councillors their thoughts on some big issues.

Representatives from four local schools – Lismore Comprehensive School, Craigavon Senior High School, Portadown College and St. Catherine’s College, Armagh – got to sit in the Council chamber as mock councillors. After learning the basics of how elections work and what the Council does, they posed their own questions to councillors.

Lord Mayor, Alderman Tinsley commented:

“I am delighted to see the return of this event, after taking a hiatus due to covid restrictions. The students who were present were thoroughly engaged and asked some excellent questions to the panel. I hope that they enjoyed the event, learned something new, and perhaps have even become inspired to get more involved with local politics.”

A programme of events was organised to celebrate Positive Ageing Month in October. Hundreds of people aged 50 and over attended the dozens of events organised in towns and villages across the Borough to celebrate the annual positive ageing campaign, which bids to improve both mental and physical well-being in later years.

As well as a diverse range of physical classes including Pilates, Yoga, rambling and walking football, Positive Ageing Month also included events on fall prevention, home safety, health checks, crafts, and computer skills.

Lord Mayor, Alderman Margaret Tinsley, who is an Age Friendly Champion said the campaign was a great success.

“The events organised as part of Positive Ageing Month covered such a wide range of activities and delivered a lot of important health and safety advice, which many of us will need as we get older,” said the Lord Mayor.

I have no doubt of the huge positive impact that these events have had on local people’s lives and that is exactly what Positive Ageing Month is all about.”

On 16 November, the Council hosted over 120 students from post-primary schools across the borough at an ‘Entrepreneurial Masterclass’, as part of Enterprise Week in partnership with Young Enterprise NI.

The Council’s Labour Market Partnership (LMP) programme organised the event as part of the ‘Get Future Ready’ initiative. The event included over 20 business mentors who worked with the students on their business ideas, pitches, and fun competitions.

The students and business mentors were put into 15 Teams and were tasked with creating a business idea and promotional branding. They then had to pitch their idea to a Dragon's Den style judging panel in just 60 seconds.

Lord Mayor Alderman Margaret Tinsley spoke at the event and commented:

"I am passionate about ensuring that the young people of our borough have opportunities to learn and grow as they develop their future career paths. As part of the Council's Enterprise Week 2023 programme, it was vital that we included an event that targeted those who will be entering the workforce in the coming years. This Young Enterprise event offered ideas and inspiration, as well as advice and experience from participating businesses. The energy from everyone in the room was fantastic to experience!"

In November, the Council and the Southern Health and Social Care Trust (SHSCT) teamed up for the third year in a row to host a Physical Activity Ambassador Leadership Day for female students at Dromore Community Centre.

Funded by the Public Health Agency, and led by the Council and the SHSCT, this programme is designed to inspire students to create targeted campaigns that encourage and support their peers to become active, irrespective of age, ability, and shape.

This year's event welcomed 23 girls aged 12-15 years from New-Bridge Integrated College, Banbridge High School, and Killicomaine Junior High School. The students took part in interactive workshops, fun physical activity sessions and team-building exercises designed to develop their leadership skills and confidence to positively influence and inspire their peers to be more active.

New to this year's programme is the 'I can Lead' award, developed by the Leadership Skills Foundation, which all ambassadors will be working towards over the course of the academic year to achieve their certificates.

Speaking about the programme, Lord Mayor, Alderman Margaret Tinsley commented:

"We know from the research that teenage girls are more likely to disengage and drop-out from sport and physical activity during their teenage years. Initiatives such as this are so important to ensure girls are actively engaged with the design and delivery of activities that will lead to improved opportunities that appeal to all girls.

I am delighted to see that this programme has continued to build on the successes of the first two years and I wish all the girls involved in the programme every success in their physical activity ambassador roles."

Following on from the leadership day, the girls will now act as role models and leaders within their school to drive improved marketing and delivery of new physical activities, which appeal to a wider range of girls.

An evening of culture to celebrate the start of Ulster Scots Language Week that ran from 20-25 November took place on 20 November in the Court Rooms, Markethill. The event featured a talk by guest speaker Nelson McCausland, dancing by Mid-Armagh Community Network Highland Dancers and music.

The magical relaxed Christmas experience at Bleary Business and Community Centre was held over the first two weekends in December. Over 280 children and their families attended the events with all sessions booked out. The relaxed Christmas experience is

designed to provide a memorable and enjoyable festive environment for families with children who have autism or Special Educational Needs (SEN).

Upon arrival, families were assigned a dedicated mischievous elf who guided them through their Christmas adventure taking care of all their needs. The experience offered a range of seasonal activities that appealed to all senses, featuring thoughtfully chosen Christmas decorations, lighting, props, and sensory items.

Each room was customised with appropriate festive activities including a sensory room with soft play, a ball pit and much more. Another highlight included a magical creative experience with Mrs Claus, where children made reindeer food and decorated cookies with different ingredients of various textures, shapes, and colours. To finish things off a special Christmas petting farm was open, adding to the ultimate Christmas experience.

The AccessAble contract was renewed for another year. The Council has agreed to fund the review of the detailed Access Guides on www.AccessAble.co.uk relating to Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon. Working with over 150 partners AccessAble produces Access Guides to places people want or need to visit, publishing them on www.AccessAble.co.uk and the AccessAble App. The Access Guides are for anyone with accessibility requirements. The annual review of surveyed venues was carried out in 2023 and the review report was produced in February 2024. A number of survey updates were detailed in the report. Over the summer months residents were advised via social media about the Council's partnership with AccessAble.

In March, the Council organised various events to celebrate International Women's Day.

Local schools participated in a special event with the theme 'Inspiring Inclusion.' This event aimed to empower and inspire young minds, highlighting the remarkable achievements of women across various fields.

Hosted by BBC radio presenter Lynette Fay the event was held on Tuesday 5 March at Craigavon Civic Centre and attended by over 120 students. Excellent speakers from diverse backgrounds shared their experiences, wisdom, and insights with students, encouraging them to dream big and break down barriers. Speakers included: Amanda Ferguson, NI Journalist, Emer Maguire, Comedian, Amanda St John, Singer/songwriter, Motivational Coach & Speaker and Fiona Derry, Derry Group Ireland.

Lord Mayor Alderman Margaret Tinsley attended the event and commented:

"International Women's Day is a time to celebrate the incredible contributions of women throughout history. I was delighted to meet with pupils from local schools as we heard from a range of inspirational speakers. Hoping to ignite passion, foster resilience, and empower our next generation. Our young people deserve role models who exemplify courage, leadership, and determination. By celebrating the achievements of women, we pave the way for a more equitable and inclusive society."

An Inspiring Inclusion Staff Event was held in Craigavon Civic and Conference Centre, bringing together over 50 employees. Championing women's achievements and challenging bias, the event also promoted this year's theme of #InspireInclusion which represents a call to action to celebrate diversity and empowerment on IWD and beyond.

The event saw three inspirational speakers, Caroline Leonard, Caroline Smyth, and Rosemary Williamson take to the stage to share their experiences, guidance and support

while exploring this year's theme and the steps needed to forge a better, more inclusive world.

Seven primary schools from across Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon were represented at the inaugural Girls Active Primary Inspiration Day, in celebration of International Women's Day.

Thanks to funding from Sport NI, through the District Council Community Planning 23/24 Investment Programme, the Council teamed up again with the Youth Sport Trust to deliver this programme for the first time with local primary schools, following the success of the programme with secondary schools.

'Girls Active' is an initiative from the Youth Sport Trust charity, which is run in partnership with Women in Sport. The programme aims to tackle the declining participation in physical activity by girls and its associated implications for health, wellbeing, and academic attainment. The programme encourages teachers and girls to work together, empowering them to take positive action through influencing, leadership and inspiring their peers.

Irish Olympian Shirley McCay shared her own personal journey in sport leading to the pinnacle of her career in representing Ireland at the Olympic Games. Speaking about the highs and lows of her sporting career, Shirley encouraged each girl to believe in themselves, to keep working towards their dreams and to never give up when things seem impossible.

Throughout the event, the girls took part in a range of different activities including dance and exercises, team building games and workshops focusing on leadership, marketing, and action planning. The action plans developed on the day will help the girls and teachers work together to engage more girls to be active within school.

The Deputy Lord Mayor, Cllr Sorcha McGeown commented: "These initiatives are so important to ensure girls are actively engaged with the design and delivery of activities that will lead to improved opportunities that appeal to all girls. Following on from the success of our girls' leadership work within local secondary schools, and thanks to funding from Sport NI, we can now support primary schools to develop 'Girls Active Leaders' within their school. I wish all the girls involved in the programme every success."

The Deputy Lord Mayor also hosted an International Women's Day event at Brownlow Hub which was open to the community to attend.

The Marketplace Theatre celebrated International Women's Day by hosting two film screenings. One for schools during the day on Friday 8 March and an adult evening screening. The films were:

- The Breadwinner
- La Syndicaliste

Urban ABC developed 6 short video clips profiling the businesses of inspiring women located in our 6 urban centres. These were shared across social media platforms throughout this week. The women talked about what inspired them, their key to success and what they were most proud of.

Urban ABC in partnership with the Equality Commission and the Council's Policy, Equality & Diversity Team provided two free online workshops focusing on advice and support to ensure that Every Customer Counts. The online workshops took place on Tuesday 12 March and Wednesday 13 March.

The workshops covered issues around accessibility for disabled and older people, and how making small improvements for customers could benefit businesses. Some examples of simple amendments included having a menu in larger text for those with sight difficulties, or offering a seat for someone who cannot stand for long periods.

Lord Mayor, Alderman Margaret Tinsley said:

"We are committed to not only encouraging more people into our town centre businesses but in helping our borough become a more inclusive one. This workshop is one small part of the ongoing work in this area."

Translation and Interpretation and Access to Information and Services

Work began on updating the Translation and Interpretation Guide. This document provides information on how to provide interpretation and translation services as and when required. It also advises staff how to provide documentation in alternative formats.

During the reporting period the Council provided Translation & Interpretation in a number of service areas which included the following:

- The provision of a Portuguese interpreter at one of the Neighbourhood Policing Team's events covering Road Safety, Crime Prevention, and services available for victims of crime including domestic violence.
- The provision of telephone interpreting.
- The translation of Agri Food Heartland documents into Ukrainian and Portuguese.
- We had a sign language interpreter at our Tak£500 event to ensure Lurgan Deaf Club who were one of our applicant groups could fully participate in the market staff and decision-making events.
- We also had a sign language interpreter at our Labour Market Partnership Reverse Jobs Fair.

Play parks and leisure facilities across the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough welcomed new and improved resources, making the facilities more accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities.

The Council received £82,700 in funding for 4 projects from the Department for Communities' Access and Inclusion programme, which aims to promote a more inclusive society by enabling people with disabilities to participate more fully in arts, cultural and active recreation activities.

Speaking at the launch of the new equipment at Oxford Island Play Park, Lord Mayor Alderman Margaret Tinsley said:

“We should all be able to access sport and leisure activities that help us to keep healthy, including those of us with complex disabilities.

The funding attained through the Access and Inclusion Programme has made a huge contribution to improving the facilities at local parks and leisure facilities. In turn, this will provide an instant lift for our community, providing inclusive and fun places for everyone.”

The funding has been used at Oxford Island Play Park to install an inclusive springer see saw – one of the first of its kind in NI – which encourages children to play together including those with a wide range of disabilities. The Park also features braille, sensory play, and communication boards.

The funding has also been used to install audio described trails including tactile maps and trail features at Lurgan and Solitude Parks; inclusive swim equipment including sensory lighting at South Lake, Orchard and Banbridge Leisure Centres and sensory pods to create a quiet space for self-regulation at Orchard and Banbridge Leisure and Dromore Community Centres.

The Council extended its long-standing partnership with Disability Sport NI (DSNI) to ensure that opportunities are created for disabled people and those with a long-term health condition to be involved in sport and physical activity.

Working with Sports Development, the Inclusive Sport and Leisure Officer has a focus on indoor leisure and club development for people with a disability and the Get Out, Get Active Recreation Officer delivers a broad range of inclusive activities that target the least active people across the borough.

The Mobile Accessible toilet was available at a number of large outdoor events throughout the year, and this was advertised widely on social media. This facility is for wheelchair users and anyone with mobility impairments.

Residents were reminded of the availability of Changing Places toilets at seven locations throughout the borough and where they can purchase a radar key to access these facilities

Over the summer months the access arrangements in place for our leisure facilities and outdoor spaces were also advertised on social media and residents were advised of the dedicated webpage on inclusive information. Examples included:

- Pool pods-platform lift system for access to swimming pools
- Sensory pods – a calming and relaxing space to enhance sensory regulation
- Accessible glamping pods at Gosford Forest Park

Residents were advised of the wide range of inclusive equipment in our play parks and to visit the inclusive ABC webpage for more information. All social media posts that reference inclusive equipment or facilities include #inclusiveABC so that inclusive equipment/facilities can be easily searched.

Equality Training

During the reporting period 17 sessions of Equality and Diversity Training were delivered to staff. 6 of these sessions were delivered online and 11 were delivered face to face at Induction. This training covers the section 75 duties and the Disability Action Plan, anti-discrimination legislation with further emphasis on the Disability Discrimination Act and communicating with people with a range of disabilities. A total of 197 staff attended. Evaluation of the training revealed that staff found the practical examples useful, but some indicated they would prefer more interaction in the online sessions. This will be explored further as the training sessions are regularly updated. 2 online workshops were organised for the Council's elected members, 1 in June and 1 in November. It also covered information on the section 75 duties. 9 elected members attended the workshop in June and 10 attended in November.

94 front line staff attended Code of Conduct and Equality Training.

4 sessions of Policy Screening, Equality and Rural Needs Impact Assessment Training were delivered online via Microsoft Teams to staff members responsible for policy development. The training covers an outline of the equality and good relations duties, when and how to screen and when to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment. A total of 34 staff attended. Evaluation of this training showed that the breakout rooms and case studies were useful. It was suggested that going through a specific example of an equality screening would be useful. During the next reporting period a face-to-face session will be organised in place of one of the online sessions and practical examples will be further explored.

114 staff completed the Equality & Diversity in the workplace e-learning module. It includes equality section 75 duties, disability duties, equality in the workplace, respectful language and DDA and reasonable adjustments.

Other training was delivered to ensure Council staff have a better understanding of the needs of our residents, customers, and employees and to further promote equality of opportunity.

3 staff members attended Autism Awareness Training, 1 attended Empowering Autistic Voices, 21 attended Disability Inclusion & Autism and 113 completed the Basic Autism Awareness e-learning module.

2 staff attended creating real impact with inclusion at work, 6 attended Disability and Inclusion Training and 53 completed a course on Disability Support Systems. This is site specific for South Lake Leisure Centre staff and covers all the different equipment in the centre such as the Fire Alarm and Deaf Alert System, Disabled WC Alarm System, Motorised Hoist in Changing Places and Pool Pods.

In November 2023 the Policy, Equality & Diversity Team delivered a short presentation to a number of Facility Managers from Community Centres to outline the 'Every Customer Counts' Initiative which included advice on how to become more disability aware and highlighting the business case for promoting accessible services. The Managers were advised of the 'Every Customer Counts Access Checklist' which they can conduct on their own facility and may assist them in making reasonable adjustments for their disabled customers.

PART A

As part of the Council's commitment to health and wellbeing 17 members of staff completed a 4-day mental health first aid training course. This latest group now join around 20 other Mental Health First Aid Champions from across the organisation, who will help raise awareness, normalise, and encourage conversations about mental health as well as signpost colleagues to support services.

- 2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2023-24 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

1. Inclusion of equality and good relations measures into the Council's Performance and Improvement Plan, Departmental/operational plans, and service plans.

The Performance Improvement Plan 2023-2024 was implemented

The Performance Improvement Plan is central to ensuring we are delivering on our vision and meeting the needs of a range of stakeholders in the Borough many of whom will fall within the nine section 75 categories. Council strategies, plans, projects, and services linked to draft performance improvement objectives have been or are required to be equality screened in order to ensure that the Council's statutory duty to promote equality and good relations is fully considered.

PI01 relates to sickness absence, and this has the potential to positively impact on Disability. PI04 relates to communications on waste management, and this has the potential to positively impact on both Disability and Race.

The departmental business plans which are renewed annually include where appropriate actions which specifically promote equality and good relations. These are linked to the priorities included in the Corporate Plan

2. All Council strategies, plans, projects, and services to be screened for equality of opportunity and good relations in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Equality Scheme

The Policy, Equality & Diversity Manager attended a number of Head of Department and Senior Leadership Team meetings throughout the reporting period. The Senior Team were advised of the guides to assist with consultation and policy and strategy development as well as the importance of screening policies in a timely manner and in advance of papers going to Committee.

During the previous reporting period details of all Council policies were transferred to a Smartsheet with all relevant dates added to include approval date, equality screening and automated review dates. This has created a more efficient procedure for policy review, and it has a traffic light system in place for all ABC Council approved policies. The Heads of Department were advised of the new process and have viewer access. During the reporting period Heads were provided with regular reports detailing the status of policies and strategies and when they were due for review.

All policies are required to have a completed screening form attached before the relevant Council Committee consider them. The Committee reporting template also includes a section – Equality or Good Relations implications. This ensures that any equality or good relations implications are brought to the elected members' attention. Equality Impact Assessments are conducted where it is considered proportionate to do so in order to further examine the policy for equality impacts, mitigation, and/or opportunities to promote equality of opportunity. Staff members are regularly reminded to adhere to these guidelines. During the reporting period 30 policies were screened as part of the policy development process. Policy screening reports were issued in April, September, December, and March.

- 3. Delivery of Equality and Disability Training to elected members, line managers and employees. A minimum of 2 sessions to be delivered each year.**

Delivery of Policy Screening and EQIA training to Heads of Department and Managers. A minimum of 2 sessions to be delivered each year.

During the reporting period 17 sessions of Equality and Diversity Training were delivered to staff. 6 of these sessions were delivered online and 11 were delivered face to face at Induction. This training covers the section 75 duties and the Disability Action Plan, anti-discrimination legislation with further emphasis on the Disability Discrimination Act and communicating with people with a range of disabilities. A total of 197 staff attended. Evaluation of the training revealed that staff found the practical examples useful, but some indicated they would prefer more interaction in the online sessions. This will be explored further as the training sessions are regularly updated. 2 online workshops were organised for the Council's elected members, 1 in June and 1 in November. It also covered information on the section 75 duties. 9 elected members attended the workshop in June and 10 attended in November.

94 front line staff attended Code of Conduct and Equality Training.

4 sessions of Policy Screening, Equality and Rural Needs Impact Assessment Training were delivered online via Microsoft Teams to staff members responsible for policy development. The training covers an outline of the equality and good relations duties, when and how to screen and when to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment. A total of 34 staff attended. Evaluation of this training showed that the breakout rooms and case studies were useful. It was suggested that going through a specific example of an equality screening would be useful. During the next reporting period a face-to-face session will be organised in place of one of the online sessions and practical examples will be further explored.

- 4. Introduce an equality e-learning module**

The Equality and Diversity in the workplace e-learning module was launched in 2021. 114 staff completed the Equality and Diversity in the workplace e-learning module. It includes equality section 75 duties, disability duties, equality in the workplace, respectful language and DDA and reasonable adjustments.

- 5. The Council workforce will be monitored for section 75 breakdown**

This measure was not achieved. However, following the development of an updated employment monitoring form by the Local Government Staff Commission, officers within the Council's Policy, Equality & Diversity Team and the Council's HR Team agreed an employment monitoring form for the Council. This will be issued to all employees in the next reporting period in order to establish a baseline.

- 6. Identify any gaps in section 75 involvement and those facing barriers to inclusion and deliver targeted projects with communities to ensure everyone can shape the community plan and its actions**

No further update

7. Work with children and young people to develop innovative models to engage them in the partnership.

Council led on the community planning partnership's Take500+ Participatory Budgeting Project to promote public involvement in decision making, improve individual wellbeing and create community connections. Any group of 3 people aged 8 years and over could put forward an idea to bring to life the Take 5 public health message. 4286 people attended the three decision events and voted to allocate £105,906 to 108 community driven health and wellbeing projects. Nearly a fifth 19.9% of voters were aged between 8 and 15 years old. For more information see:

<https://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/take500plus/>

8. Organise a Local Democracy Event

Students from local post-primary schools attended a special local democracy event on Tuesday 10 October at Craigavon Civic Centre. To mark Local Democracy Week students had the opportunity to find out how their Council works and ask local Councillors their thoughts on some big issues.

Representatives from four local schools – Lismore Comprehensive School, Craigavon High School, Portadown College and St. Catherine's College, Armagh – got to sit in the Council chamber as mock councillors. After learning the basics of how elections work and what the Council does, they posed their own questions to councillors.

9. Organise an International Women's Day Event for post primary schools and organise an International Women's Day Event for staff.

In March, the Council organised various events to celebrate International Women's Day. Local schools participated in a special event with the theme 'Inspiring Inclusion.' This event aimed to empower and inspire young minds, highlighting the remarkable achievements of women across various fields.

Hosted by BBC radio presenter Lynette Fay the event was held on Tuesday 5 March at Craigavon Civic Centre and attended by over 120 students. Excellent speakers from diverse backgrounds shared their experiences, wisdom, and insights with students, encouraging them to dream big and break down barriers. Speakers included: Amanda Ferguson, NI Journalist, Emer Maguire, Comedian, Amanda St John, Singer/songwriter, Motivational Coach & Speaker and Fiona Derry, Derry Group Ireland.

An Inspiring Inclusion Staff Event was held in Craigavon Civic and Conference Centre, bringing together over 50 employees. Championing women's achievements and challenging bias, the event also promoted this year's theme of #InspireInclusion which represents a call to action to celebrate diversity and empowerment on IWD and beyond.

The event saw three inspirational speakers, Caroline Leonard, Caroline Smyth, and Rosemary Williamson take to the stage to share their experiences, guidance and support

while exploring this year's theme and the steps needed to forge a better, more inclusive world.

10. Further develop the capacity of the ABC Women's Network. 2 outreach programmes to be delivered.

No programmes were delivered in relation to an ABC Women's Network. However, the Good Relations Team have supported a number of community groups that have a majority female membership to develop their capacity and provide financial support.

11. Holistic Health Programmes to be delivered in the Borough.

Armagh Community

The 12-week Men's Health, Tools for Living commenced with a series of Health checks on the 10th January. 16 men registered for the programme which was delivered by Officers in the Council's Community Development department and the Age Friendly Officer in partnership with a number of other agencies namely, the Southern Health and Social Care Trust (SHSCT), Staff from a local GP practice, West Armagh Consortium and Men's Shed. Over the course of the 12 weeks the Men participated in both a physical activity and information session facilitated by one of the partners. Over the course of the 12-week programme the following was delivered:

- Health Checks for 16 participants.
- A Slow Cooker information session attended by 14 participants.
- Take 5 information session for 15 participants.

The celebration event took place on the 27 March and the evaluations were extremely positive with data collected showing real improvements in the Men's Health.

Banbridge Community

Men's Health Fayre Event Banbridge

Over 50 attended a Men's Health Day Event in Dromore Library. Over 18 health and wellbeing organisations were invited to come along and promote their services and signposting opportunities. In addition to ongoing health checks facilitated by chest heart and stroke. In terms of the data on the day they carried out 27 Atrial Fibrillation and Blood Pressure Checks. 26% (7 individuals) signposted to their GP for high blood pressure and 1 individual signposted for Possible Atrial Fibrillation. There was positive feedback about the event.

Dromore Men's Health & Lifestyle Programme

Following on from needs assessments and a successful men's health fayre in September, a 10-week Men's Health & Lifestyle programme was developed and commenced on Thursday 11th January 2024 in Dromore Leisure Centre and in partnership with the centre's leisure coaches, who delivered on the programme. The programme consisted of 10 weeks of physical activities in addition to health checks at the start and again at the end of the programme. Various outside organisations facilitated health and wellbeing awareness sessions on the importance of physical activity, drugs & alcohol, cancer awareness, male domestic abuse, Parkinson's and pain management

and Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing, delivered by ABC Health Improvement Team. There were 10 men who completed the programme, and a celebration event took place on 21st March 2024 where the men were presented with certificates. Feedback was really positive.

In just 10 weeks, results showed:

- ✓ As a group there was a total weight loss of 6.6 kg, which equates to over 1 stone.
- ✓ Results showed a 100% reduction in BMI levels compared to the start of the programme.

Craigavon Community

Craigavon Men's Health Programme

A 10-week men's health & lifestyle programme commenced on Wednesday 24th January 2024 in Legator Centre, Craigavon. This was a partnership with Council, Craigavon Surestarts, Fitzzone and SHSCT. A total of 16 men completed the programme, which consisted of Health Checks at the beginning and end of the programme, weekly physical activity sessions in addition to various health and wellbeing awareness sessions which included Healthy Eating, Drugs & Alcohol, Cancer Awareness, Positive mental health by AMH, Parkinsons and pain management; Male Domestic Abuse, Take 5 steps to wellbeing. Whilst the programme emphasised the importance of physical activity, a lot of the men found the talks very worthwhile for the social aspect and making connections as some of these men struggle with mental health problems. Feedback from the evaluations proved very successful and positive.

Loughshore Community Men's Health Programme

A 5-week men's health & wellbeing programme commenced with Cancer focus delivering 17 health checks on Monday 11th November. On Saturday 17th February a forest bathing session took place at Lough Neagh Discovery Centre, with 6 men taking part. Feedback was very positive. Due to lack of numbers, the remaining activities will be further explored in the next reporting period.

Nutrition and Slow Cooker Bereaved Men's Health Project.

3 weeks of slow cooker and healthy eating programme was delivered in Richmond Community to a group of 8 bereaved men. The programme proved very successful, and feedback was really positive.

12. Support the annual male health conference

The Health Inequalities Officers continue to support and contribute to the Southern Area Men's Health Steering Group in the planning and development of the annual Men's Health Seminar which takes place in March each year. The steering group is a partnership of practitioners and representatives of services and organisations across the Southern Trust area, with a remit and commitment to improving the health of men in the local area.

70 male year 10 students from various schools in the southern area attended the 'Young Men Matter Conference' delivered by the Southern Area Men's Health Steering Group at the Lough Neagh Discovery Centre.

Getting away from the classroom for the day gave these male students an opportunity to find out about the importance of looking after their mental health and wellbeing. Through engaging workshops and open and honest discussions led by inspirational figures, the students were also given practical tips and tools to support their journey into adulthood, such as making better social connections with family and friends, developing healthy hobbies, embracing the power of exercise and signposting to local support services.

13. Organise an annual consultation event to be held with consultees. Explore additional ways of raising awareness of the initiative with AccessAble and members of the Customer Care Project Team.

The AccessAble contract was renewed for another year. The Council has agreed to fund the review of the detailed Access Guides on www.AccessAble.co.uk relating to Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon. Working with over 150 partners AccessAble produces Access Guides to places people want or need to visit, publishing them on www.AccessAble.co.uk and the AccessAble App. The Access Guides are for anyone with accessibility requirements. The annual review of surveyed venues was carried out in 2023 and the review report was produced in February 2024. A number of survey updates were detailed in the report. Over the summer months residents were advised via social media about the Council's partnership with AccessAble. A stakeholder engagement event will be organised in the next reporting period.

14. Jam Card Initiative to be discussed with Facility Managers

In order to raise awareness of disability access issues generally, in November 2023 the Policy, Equality & Diversity Team delivered a short presentation to a number of Facility Managers from Community Centres to outline the 'Every Customer Counts' initiative which included advice on how to become more disability aware. Incorporated into that training were the different initiatives the Council has already signed up to such as the Jam Card.

15. The Jam Card initiative and the availability of the e-learning module will be publicised on the Council Intranet. Information to be publicised biannually.

Staff that attend the equality and diversity training at Induction and as a refresher are reminded about this initiative.

16. Provision of Community Support Helpline

Community Support Assistance is available and there are 2 officers dedicated to dealing with queries received via e-mail. These officers aim to provide information, support, and signposting in relation to volunteering, employability, training, health and wellbeing advice services and food support. [Community Support Assistance - Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council \(armaghibanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk\)](http://armaghibanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk)

17. The Council's Community Development Working Group will explore and develop options for progression on the arrangements around flags and emblems.

A number of meetings of the Emerging Issues Working Group were held to explore the different issues that arise in relation to the display of flags and emblems on Council

PART A

property. Information on how other Councils deal with these issues was shared with members of the group.

3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures, and/or service delivery areas during the 2023-24 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes

No (go to Q.4)

Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

The three draft values in the revised Corporate Plan will shape the culture, behaviour and decision making and overall identity of the organisation.

1. People Centred – Inclusive and welcoming, a place where people and staff are valued. Engage positively in partnership working, empowering others to achieve success.
2. Leaders
3. Responsible

The first value recognises the importance of inclusion in everything we do.

The Performance Improvement Plan 2023-2024 was implemented.

The Performance Improvement Plan is central to ensuring we are delivering on our vision and meeting the needs of a range of stakeholders in the Borough many of whom will fall within the nine section 75 categories. Council strategies, plans, projects, and services linked to draft performance improvement objectives have been or are required to be equality screened in order to ensure that the Council's statutory duty to promote equality and good relations is fully considered.

PI01 relates to sickness absence, and this has the potential to positively impact on Disability. PI04 relates to communications on waste management, and this has the potential to positively impact on both Disability and Race.

The Council also revised its Disability Action Plan, Audit of Inequalities and Equality Action Plan. Research and stakeholder engagement led to the development of new actions.

Representatives from RNIB, IMTAC, Guide Dogs and TADA attended an open meeting in April 2023 to discuss the development of the Banbridge Place Plan. Section 75 categories were again invited to join an online meeting in October 2023. Representatives from Disability Action, Guide Dogs, IMTAC and RNIB attended this meeting. The place plan sets out a vision for the future to create a vibrant, creative, and environmentally responsible town and it suggests some 'Big Ideas' for the future including an improved evening economy, new footbridges, and the development of a cycling network.

A number of face-to-face meetings were also held with teenagers/younger people and older people. The survey conducted also included an equality screening exercise and a section 75 monitoring questionnaire. The nine section 75 categories were well represented in the survey responses. The research showed that children and young people; older people; people with a disability and carers are affected by the current

urban form, layout and engagement that happens in the town. Common themes identified were:

- Skills and employment
- Accessibility of walking routes
- Traffic dominance within the town centre

These are reflected in the actions in the plan and the partnership commits to ongoing dialogue with section 75 groups to ensure that their needs are addressed in its implementation.

A survey was carried out on the Consultation Hub between January 2024 and March 2024 on proposed locations for the N.I Centenary Stones. This survey was conducted in order to determine the equality and good relations impact of these locations and to provide data for the equality screening exercise. The link for the survey was shared with the Council's Community Development and Section 75 stakeholders and advertised through the council's social media channels. A range of views were expressed.

Work began on the development of a co-designed Local Community Action Plan under Investment area 1.1 of the new PEACEPLUS Programme. The Action Plan will be centred around three core themes:

1. Local Community Regeneration and Transformation
2. Thriving and Peaceful Communities
3. Building respect for all cultural identities

A survey was conducted on the consultation hub in July 2023 and a section 75 monitoring questionnaire accompanied the survey. A series of public workshops were also held.

During the previous reporting period details of all Council policies were transferred to a Smartsheet with all relevant dates added to include approval date, equality screening and automated review dates. This has created a more efficient procedure for policy review, and it has a traffic light system in place for all ABC Council approved policies. The Heads of Department were advised of the new process and have viewer access. During the reporting period Heads were provided with regular reports detailing the status of policies and strategies and when they were due for review. This has also enabled screening exercises to be conducted in a timely manner.

The Inclusive ABC Working Group was established in May. It evolved from the Autism Friendly Working Group to enable consideration of a range of issues that may affect our disabled customers. The new terms of reference for the group include for example

- Engaging with equality stakeholders where necessary to inform future service delivery.
- Sharing of information and ideas on how to resolve more complex problems in relation to service delivery linked to equality, good relations, and disability access.
- Ensuring information on relevant activities is shared on the Inclusive pages of the Council's website/s.

The group also informs the actions included in the Council's Equality and Disability Action Plans and met five times during the reporting period.

Following a Notice of Motion in November 2023 the first meeting of the Inclusive ABC Strategic Working Group was held in March. The Inclusive ABC Operational Working Group was extended to include Members from the existing Health Working Group and other stakeholders (as and when required).

This group meets on a quarterly basis and reports to the Governance, Resources and Strategy Committee. The Operational Working Group is a subgroup reporting into the Inclusive ABC Working Group. The terms of reference for the strategic group includes for example

- Inform and support the work of the Inclusive ABC Operational Working Group
- Engaging with local & regional sectoral stakeholders where necessary to inform future service delivery.

An Easter Quiet Roller-Skating session was provided in Banbridge Leisure Centre. Quiet swim sessions were offered in the Orchard Leisure Centre as well as Autism Friendly sessions in Gulliver's Soft Play. These sessions provide a quiet hour with reduced numbers, no noise or flashing lights, the provision of a safe space tent and fibre optic lights.

The magical relaxed Christmas experience at Bleary Business and Community Centre was held over the first two weekends in December. Over 280 children and their families attended the events with all sessions booked out. The relaxed Christmas experience is designed to provide a memorable and enjoyable festive environment for families with children who have autism or Special Educational Needs (SEN).

The Council received £82,700 in funding for 4 projects from the Department for Communities' Access and Inclusion programme.

The funding has been used at Oxford Island Play Park to install an inclusive springer see saw – one of the first of its kind in NI – which encourages children to play together including those with a wide range of disabilities. The Park also features braille, sensory play, and communication boards.

The funding has also been used to install audio described trails including tactile maps and trail features at Lurgan and Solitude Parks; inclusive swim equipment including sensory lighting at South Lake, Orchard and Banbridge Leisure Centres and sensory pods to create a quiet space for self-regulation at Orchard and Banbridge Leisure and Dromore Community Centres.

The Mobile Accessible toilet was available at a number of large outdoor events throughout the year, and this was advertised widely on social media. This facility is for wheelchair users and anyone with mobility impairments.

Residents were reminded of the availability of Changing Places toilets at seven locations throughout the borough and where they can purchase a radar key to access these facilities

Over the summer months the access arrangements in place for our leisure facilities and outdoor spaces were also advertised on social media and residents were advised of the dedicated webpage on inclusive information. Examples included:

- Pool pods-platform lift system for access to swimming pools
- Sensory pods – a calming and relaxing space to enhance sensory regulation
- Accessible glamping pods at Gosford Forest Park

Residents were advised of the wide range of inclusive equipment in our play parks and to visit the inclusive ABC webpage for more information. All social media posts that reference inclusive equipment or facilities include #inclusiveABC so that inclusive equipment/facilities can be easily searched.

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:

Engagement with section 75 groups has ensured that actions within the relevant plans have considered their needs. Examples include the Disability and Equality Action Plans and the Banbridge Place Plan. Conducting a survey on the proposed locations for the N.I Centenary Stones ensures that the equality and good relations impact is carefully considered.

The improved process for reviewing policies will ensure that screening is undertaken and in a timely manner so that all equality and good relations implications are considered.

The Inclusive ABC Strategic and Operational Working Groups ensure that issues affecting our disabled customers are discussed and subsequent improvements made to service delivery.

The other service delivery changes referenced in 3a will improve access to services for disabled customers and the communication of these changes will ensure greater awareness among residents of these changes.

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):*

The Disability and Equality Plans and the Banbridge Place Plan were equality screened and subject to public consultation. The proposed locations for the N.I Centenary Stones will be subject to a screening exercise.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

PART A

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*):

Changes to services to make them more inclusive includes quiet sessions, the relaxed Christmas experience, changes to play parks and other indoor leisure facilities and the availability of the Mobile Accessible toilet at a number of large outdoor events. The changes to these facilities were advertised via social media.

Other (*please specify and give details*):

Engagement with stakeholders and follow up discussion with the members of the Inclusive Strategic and Operational Working Groups which subsequently leads to changes in policy and service delivery.

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 2023-24 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 2023-24 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment

PART A

- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The section 75 duties are most clearly reflected in the Strategy and Performance Department's Business Plan

6 In the 2023-24 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 2023-24 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The Corporate Plan sets out the vision of the organisation, its values, and priorities. It is the roadmap for delivery of the Borough Community Plan 2017-2030.

The three draft values in the Corporate Plan will shape the culture, behaviour and decision making and overall identity of the organisation.

1. People Centred – Inclusive and welcoming, a place where people and staff are valued. Engage positively in partnership working, empowering others to achieve success.
2. Leaders
3. Responsible

The first value recognises the importance of inclusion in everything we do.

The Borough Community Plan has three strategic themes of Community, Economy, and Place from which nine long term outcomes have been identified. The plan is underpinned by three cross-cutting themes of equality, connectivity, and sustainability.

The departmental business plans include where appropriate actions which specifically promote equality and good relations. These are linked to the objectives included in the annual performance improvement plan and the Corporate Plan.

The section 75 duties are most clearly reflected in the Strategy and Performance Department's Business Plan.

PART A

The Equality Action Plan links the relevant corporate priority to each of the actions included in the plan.

Equality action plans/measures

- 7 Within the 2023-24 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:

11

Actions ongoing:

3 and will be included in the revised Equality Action Plan

Actions to commence:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

- 8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2023-24 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

The plan was revised during the reporting period and issued for consultation in February 2024.

- 9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2023-24 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 2023-24 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

The Council revised its Corporate Plan which will cover the period 2023-2027. Both staff and elected members were engaged in the development of this plan, and it was issued for formal consultation on the Consultation Hub in December 2023, shared with section 75 stakeholders and advertised on social media. An equality screening exercise and a section 75 monitoring questionnaire was attached to the consultation. Analysis of the monitoring questionnaire indicated that a broad range of people responded to the consultation.

The Council also revised its Disability Action Plan, Audit of Inequalities and Equality Action Plan. Members from the Inclusive ABC Working Group were engaged when agreeing new actions for the plans. Membership of this group includes staff members from a number of service areas across the Council as well as representatives from the Southern Health and Social Care Trust. They were issued for formal consultation on the Consultation Hub in February 2024 and advertised on social media. Two additional online consultation dates were also offered, and all section 75 stakeholders were informed about the consultation as well as the community planning stakeholders and the age sector stakeholders. Equality screening exercises were attached to the consultations as well as section 75 monitoring questionnaires. During the reporting period a face-to-face meeting was held with the Inclusive Ability Trust. Issues raised were shared with the relevant departments and action taken where possible.

Representatives from RNIB, IMTAC, Guide Dogs and TADA attended an open meeting in April 2023 to discuss the development of the Banbridge Place Plan. Section 75 groups were again invited to join an online meeting in October 2023. Representatives from Disability Action, Guide Dogs, IMTAC and RNIB attended this meeting. The place plan sets out a vision for the future to create a vibrant, creative, and environmentally responsible town and it suggests some 'Big Ideas' for the future including an improved evening economy, new footbridges, and the development of a cycling network.

A number of face-to-face meetings were also held with teenagers/younger people and older people. The survey conducted also included an equality screening exercise and a section 75 monitoring questionnaire. The nine section 75 groups were well represented in the survey responses. The research showed that children and young people; older people; people with a disability and carers are affected by the current urban form, layout and engagement that happens in the town. Common themes identified were:

- Skills and employment
- Accessibility of walking routes
- Traffic dominance within the town centre

These are reflected in the actions in the plan and the partnership commits to ongoing dialogue with section 75 groups to ensure that their needs are addressed in its implementation.

PART A

A survey was carried out on the Consultation Hub between January 2024 and March 2024 on proposed locations for the N.I Centenary Stones. This survey was conducted in order to determine the equality and good relations impact of these locations and to provide data for the equality screening exercise. The link for the survey was shared with the Council's Community Development and Section 75 stakeholders and advertised through the council's social media channels. A range of views were expressed.

Work began on the development of a co-designed Local Community Action Plan under Investment area 1.1 of the new PEACEPLUS Programme. The Action Plan will be centred around three core themes:

1. Local Community Regeneration and Transformation
2. Thriving and Peaceful Communities
3. Building respect for all cultural identities

A survey was conducted on the consultation hub in July 2023 and a section 75 monitoring questionnaire accompanied the survey. A series of public workshops were also held.

The Council's draft Performance Improvement Plan 2024-2025 went out for public consultation just before the end of March. It was made available on the consultation hub and an equality screening exercise, and a section 75 monitoring questionnaire accompanied the plan. The Council's section 75 stakeholders were informed about the consultation.

12 In the 2023-24 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)*: online meetings, online consultation hub

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 described in response to question 11 the Council used a range of consultation methods in order to engage section 75 categories in the development of its policies, plans and strategies.

13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes

No

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Consultees are frequently advised of the Council's equality duties throughout the community planning process. Section 75 consultees were contacted in relation to the consultations described above in response to q.11. Many of the screening exercises were included on the consultation hub. Section 75 monitoring questionnaires were also included in the consultation exercises for the Corporate Plan, Disability Action Plan, Equality Action Plan, Banbridge Place Plan, Local Community Action Plan and Performance Improvement Plan.

E-mails and hard copies of documentation are forwarded to potentially interested groups.

There were social media posts advertising the many inclusive activities and events #InclusiveABC.

During the reporting period staff were reminded of the Council's equality duties as training was made available to staff throughout the year. This was advertised via e-mail and in the staff newsletter. Staff were also advised of the consultations on the Disability and Equality Action Plans.

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2023-24 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)

[Equality - Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
\(armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk\)](http://armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk)

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

30

16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2023-24:

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

5

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

0

Consultations for an **EQIA** alone.

0

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

As detailed in response to question 11 the consultations that included an equality screening exercise were the Corporate Plan, the Disability Action Plan, the Equality Action Plan, the Banbridge Place Plan, and the Performance Improvement Plan.

The equality screening of the Banbridge Place Plan includes relevant qualitative and quantitative data and clearly states the impact on the relevant section 75 categories.

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 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes

No

PART A

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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 2023-24 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:

Further consideration was given to how best to progress with an audit of existing information systems, and this has been included in the 24/25 business plan. Work was undertaken to agree an employee monitoring questionnaire to be issued to staff as baseline data for all section 75 categories is not yet available.

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 2023-24 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

Click or tap here to enter text.

- 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:

Section 75 monitoring questionnaires were issued alongside consultation exercises, and these are also issued to participants of a number of funded programmes. Officers will be encouraged to analyse this information to inform future service delivery and share with other departments.

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 2023-24, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

During the reporting period 17 sessions of Equality and Diversity Training were delivered to staff. 6 of these sessions were delivered online and 11 were delivered face to face at Induction. This training covers the section 75 duties and the Disability Action Plan, anti-discrimination legislation with further emphasis on the Disability Discrimination Act and communicating with people with a range of disabilities. A total of 197 staff attended. Evaluation of the training revealed that staff found the practical examples useful, but some indicated they would prefer more interaction in the online sessions. This will be explored further as the training sessions are regularly updated. 2 online workshops were organised for the Council's elected members, 1 in June and 1 in November. It also covered information on the section 75 duties. 9 elected members attended the workshop in June and 10 attended in November.

94 front line staff attended Code of Conduct and Equality Training.

4 sessions of Policy Screening, Equality and Rural Needs Impact Assessment Training were delivered online via Microsoft Teams to staff members responsible for policy development. The training covers an outline of the equality and good relations duties, when and how to screen and when to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment. A total of 34 staff attended. Evaluation of this training showed that the breakout rooms and case studies were useful. It was suggested that going through a specific example of an equality screening would be useful. During the next reporting period a face-to-face session will be organised in place of one of the online sessions and practical examples will be further explored.

114 staff completed the Equality & Diversity in the workplace e-learning module. It includes equality section 75 duties, disability duties, equality in the workplace, respectful language and DDA and reasonable adjustments.

Other training was delivered to ensure Council staff have a better understanding of the needs of our residents, customers, and employees and to further promote equality of opportunity.

3 staff members attended Autism Awareness Training, 1 attended Empowering Autistic Voices, 21 attended Disability Inclusion & Autism and 113 completed the Basic Autism Awareness e-learning module.

2 staff attended creating real impact with inclusion at work, 6 attended Disability and Inclusion Training and 53 completed a course on Disability Support Systems. This is site specific for South Lake Leisure Centre staff and covers all the different equipment in the centre such as the Fire Alarm and Deaf Alert System, Disabled WC Alarm System, Motorised Hoist in Changing Places and Pool Pods.

In November 2023 the Policy, Equality & Diversity Team delivered a short presentation to a number of Facility Managers from Community Centres to outline the 'Every Customer Counts' Initiative which included advice on how to become more disability aware and highlighting the business case for promoting accessible services. The Managers were advised of the 'Every Customer Counts Access Checklist' which they can conduct on their own facility and may assist them in making reasonable adjustments for their disabled customers.

As part of the Council's commitment to health and wellbeing 17 members of staff completed a 4-day mental health first aid training course. This latest group now join around 20 other Mental Health First Aid Champions from across the organisation, who will help raise awareness, normalise, and encourage conversations about mental health as well as signpost colleagues to support services.

- 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 training programmes have the objectives outlined at the beginning of the training and the programme is again reviewed and summarised at the end. An evaluation sheet is issued at the end of the training. The information received in the evaluation forms is used to inform further developments to the training programmes. Feedback received for training delivered during the reporting period is detailed in response to question 24 above.

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

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2023-24, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

Work began on updating the Translation and Interpretation Guide. This document provides information on how to provide interpretation and translation services as and when required. It also advises staff how to provide documentation in alternative formats.

During the reporting period the Council provided Translation & Interpretation in a number of service areas which included the following:

PART A

- The provision of a Portuguese interpreter at one of the Neighbourhood Policing Team's events covering Road Safety, Crime Prevention, and services available for victims of crime including domestic violence.
- The provision of telephone interpreting.
- The translation of Agri Food Heartland documents into Ukrainian and Portuguese.
- We had a sign language interpreter at our Tak£500 event to ensure Lurgan Deaf Club who were one of our applicant groups could fully participate in the market staff and decision-making events.
- We also had a sign language interpreter at our Labour Market Partnership Reverse Jobs Fair.

Following feedback from customers that information about our inclusive services and events needs to be advertised more widely over the summer months the access arrangements in place for our leisure facilities and outdoor spaces were advertised on social media and residents were advised of the dedicated webpage on inclusive information. Examples included:

- Pool pods-platform lift system for access to swimming pools
- Sensory pods – a calming and relaxing space to enhance sensory regulation
- Accessible glamping pods at Gosford Forest Park

Residents were advised of the wide range of inclusive equipment in our play parks and to visit the inclusive ABC webpage for more information. All social media posts that reference inclusive equipment or facilities include #inclusiveABC so that inclusive equipment/facilities can be easily searched.

Play parks and leisure facilities across the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough welcomed new and improved resources, making the facilities more accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities.

The Council received £82,700 in funding for 4 projects from the Department for Communities' Access and Inclusion programme, which aims to promote a more inclusive society by enabling people with disabilities to participate more fully in arts, cultural and active recreation activities.

Speaking at the launch of the new equipment at Oxford Island Play Park, Lord Mayor Alderman Margaret Tinsley said:

"We should all be able to access sport and leisure activities that help us to keep healthy, including those of us with complex disabilities.

The funding attained through the Access and Inclusion Programme has made a huge contribution to improving the facilities at local parks and leisure facilities. In turn, this will provide an instant lift for our community, providing inclusive and fun places for everyone."

The funding has been used at Oxford Island Play Park to install an inclusive springer see saw – one of the first of its kind in NI – which encourages children to play together including those with a wide range of disabilities. The Park also features braille, sensory play, and communication boards.

The funding has also been used to install audio described trails including tactile maps and trail features at Lurgan and Solitude Parks; inclusive swim equipment including sensory lighting at South Lake, Orchard and Banbridge Leisure Centres and sensory pods to create a quiet space for self-regulation at Orchard and Banbridge Leisure and Dromore Community Centres.

The Council extended its long-standing partnership with Disability Sport NI (DSNI) to ensure that opportunities are created for disabled people and those with a long-term health condition to be involved in sport and physical activity.

Working with Sports Development, the Inclusive Sport and Leisure Officer has a focus on indoor leisure and club development for people with a disability and the Get Out, Get Active Recreation Officer delivers a broad range of inclusive activities that target the least active people across the borough.

The Mobile Accessible toilet was available at a number of large outdoor events throughout the year, and this was advertised widely on social media. This facility is for wheelchair users and anyone with mobility impairments.

Residents were reminded of the availability of Changing Places toilets at seven locations throughout the borough and where they can purchase a radar key to access these facilities.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

- 27** How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2023-24?

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:

The Equality Scheme will be due for review in 2025

- 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*)

PART A

The Council will remain focused on all of the above and will continue to offer support and training to staff in relation to the equality and good relations duties.

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)*

- 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

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:

15	4	1
Fully achieved	Partially achieved	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	Outputsⁱ	Outcomes / Impactⁱⁱ
National ⁱⁱⁱ	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Regional ^{iv}	Community & Voluntary Sector Panel not included in the plan.	The Panel was established in 2018 as part of the ABC Community Planning Partnership. The Panel has over 60 members from community, voluntary and social enterprise organisations from across the Borough working together to create a shared vision for community and voluntary support across the Borough.	The Community & Voluntary Sector Panel was established to ensure the community and voluntary sector has a voice on the community planning partnership promoting the active participation of underrepresented groups and to promote collaborative working and facilitate wider engagement with local residents.

PART B

Local ^v	A range of section 75 groups are contacted during consultation exercises including the consultation on the revised Disability Action Plan.	As detailed in the equality section of the report methods include face to face meetings, focus groups, surveys/questionnaires. These views are considered before a final decision on the plan/policy/strategy is made.	The needs of disabled customers are considered in policy development.
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2(b) What **training action measures** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Induction Training which is mandatory for all new employees Training covers: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Equality Scheme • The Disability Action Plan and DVD highlighting different types of disabilities • The Council's Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work policies and procedures 	100% of new starts received training.	Evaluation of the training revealed that staff found the practical examples useful, but some indicated they would prefer more interaction in the online sessions. This will be explored further as the training sessions are regularly updated.
2	17 sessions of Equality and Diversity Training were delivered to staff. 6 of these sessions were delivered online and 11 were	A total of 197 staff members attended.	Evaluation of the training revealed that staff found the practical examples useful, but some indicated they would prefer more interaction in the online

PART B

	delivered face to face at Induction.		sessions. This will be explored further as the training sessions are regularly updated.
3	2 online Equality and Diversity Training workshops were organised for the Council's elected members.	9 elected members attended the workshop in June and 10 attended in November.	Elected members will have increased awareness of the equality and disability duties.
4	<p>Introduce equality e-learning module</p> <p>Module covers: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality section 75 duties • Disability Duties • Equality in the workplace • Respectful Language • DDA and reasonable adjustments 	114 staff completed the Equality and Diversity in the workplace e-learning module.	There is a questionnaire available at the end of the module.
5	There was a commitment in the plan to provide training on specific disabilities where a need is identified. Staff attended courses to assist a wide range of disabled people.	<p>3 staff members attended Autism Awareness Training.</p> <p>1 staff member attended Empowering Autistic Voices.</p> <p>21 staff members attended Disability Inclusion & Autism.</p> <p>113 staff members completed the basic Autism Awareness e-learning module.</p> <p>6 staff members attended Disability and Inclusion Training.</p> <p>53 staff members completed a course on Disability Support Systems.</p> <p>In November 2023 the Policy, Equality & Diversity Team delivered a short presentation to a number of Facility</p>	The training will improve the customer service offered to customers with a range of disabilities. The mental health first aid training course will support employees.

PART B

		<p>Managers from Community Centres to outline Every Customer Counts Initiative which included advice on how to become more disability aware and highlighting the business case for promoting accessible services. The Managers were advised of Every Customer Counts Access Checklist which they can conduct on their own facility and may assist them in making reasonable adjustments for their disabled customers.</p> <p>As part of the Council's commitment to health and wellbeing 17 members of staff completed a 4-day mental health first aid training course. This latest group now join around 20 other Mental Health First Aid Champions from across the organisation, who will help raise awareness, normalise, and encourage conversations about mental health as well as signpost colleagues to support services.</p>	
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2(c) What Positive attitudes **action measures** in the area of **Communications** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

PART B

2	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Senior Sports Awards	The awards were held in Craigavon Civic Centre.	The event celebrates the achievement of sports people within the Borough. There is an award category for Sports Person with a Disability.
2	Junior Sports Awards	The awards were held in Craigavon Civic Centre.	The event celebrated the achievements of sports people within the Borough. There is an award category for Sports Person with a Disability however nominations were not received this year.

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	Policy screening – ongoing implementation of screening requirements in relation to new and amended policies (screening form includes questions relating to the disability duties)	The completed screening forms will address the disability duties.	All new or amended policies will incorporate the disability duties where appropriate.
2	Engage with the local disability sector and local disabled people in relation to the	Towards the end of the reporting period all section 75 consultees were contacted regarding the consultation on the revised Disability Action Plan. Two additional	Improved engagement with the disability sector with the intention of devising new or revised actions.

PART B

	drafting, implementation, and monitoring of the plan.	online consultation dates were also offered. During the reporting period a face-to-face meeting was held with a local disability charity. Issues raised were shared with the relevant departments and action taken where possible.	
3	Appoint elected member Diversity Champion at the AGM	The Council appointed two elected member Diversity Ambassadors. The Council's Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor. The officer Ambassadors met with the elected member Ambassadors to further discuss the role.	Together they will promote equality, good relations, and diversity as well as act as points of contact for advice, guidance, and support.
4	Raising awareness among staff of the role of diversity champions	During the equality and diversity training staff are reminded of this initiative.	Together they will promote equality, good relations, and diversity as well as act as points of contact for advice, guidance, and support.
5	Further develop working relationships with voluntary organisations such as Cedar, Mencap and others so that the Council can successfully respond to requests for work placement opportunities.	A new work experience and placement procedure was approved in the previous reporting period.	There were 8 placements during the reporting period for those with a learning difficulty or disability. Partners included Southern Regional College, Armagh, Appleby Trust, Stepping Stones NI, (LMP), Clanrye Group/Southern Regional College (Employ me) or from schools directly. These work placement opportunities will provide relevant employability and skills development to assist people to prepare for the world of work by assisting with their development in becoming valued and successful members of a workplace.

PART B

			Work experience and placement opportunities are open to all school, college and university students and those persons who are part of an Employability Support organisation (persons with a disability) regardless of what equality category they fall within.
6	To work with stakeholders to achieve an Autism Friendly Borough	The Autism Action Plan 22-23 was implemented, and an update report provided to committee to advise that any outstanding actions would be included in the revised Disability Action Plan	Work has been undertaken to improve access for autistic customers.
7	The GetActive website will provide access information where appropriate	Access information is added throughout the year.	More people with a disability accessing sport and physical activity opportunities independently
8	Prepare annual report on the implementation of the plan	To monitor and report on progress	

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	Equality Commission for N.I – Every Customer Counts. The Council will demonstrate its commitment to customers by signing up to deliver the Commission’s Every Customer Counts Disability access initiative.	In November 2023 the Policy, Equality & Diversity Team delivered a short presentation to a number of Facility Managers from Community Centres to outline Every Customer Counts Initiative which	Accessible services for the Council’s staff and customers.	Promoting the initiative with businesses in the Borough was undertaken at the same time so there was less time to focus on promoting the initiative with staff. A similar action has been included in

PART B

		included advice on how to become more disability aware and highlighting the business case for promoting accessible services. The Managers were advised of Every Customer Counts Access Checklist which they can conduct on their own facility and may assist them in making reasonable adjustments for their disabled customers.		the revised Disability Action Plan.
2	Play Strategy 2018-2026. 46 play parks to be completed as part of a 5-year Capital Programme.	42 completed by end of March 2024	All play parks are designed to be inclusive and offer opportunities for children regardless of their needs and abilities. A Sensory & Communication Board will now be included in all new/refurbished play parks.	The Play Strategy is 2018-2026. A further Capital Programme has been approved. This will be taken forward in the next reporting period and will be included in the revised Disability Action Plan.
3	Ensure strapline advising that documents can be obtained from the Council in alternative formats is included in all external publications.	On the Home Page of the Council website there is an accessibility section where customers are advised to contact the Council if they require a publication in a different format. The ReciteMe function is available on all Council websites and	It is intended that publications will be accessible to a wide range of people	The Policy, Equality & Diversity Team and the Communications and Design Services Team will continue to work with relevant departments to ensure that all external publications advise that documents are

PART B

		allows individual users to access Council information in a range of formats including large print, colour contrast, audio, and screen mask.		available in alternative formats.
4	To have a database of images for use in Council publications that display positive images of disabled people	The Marketing & Communications Team increased the visibility of disabled people in website and social media photographs throughout the year displaying positive images of disabled people.	Promotes positive attitudes towards disabled people	This action has been included in the revised disability action plan

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	To avail of the Employers for Disability NI bulletin board to advertise job vacancies check with recruitment	Click or tap here to enter text.
2	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

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

PART B

Towards the end of the reporting period all section 75 consultees were contacted regarding the consultation on the revised Disability Action Plan. Two additional online consultation dates were also offered. During the reporting period a face to face meeting was held with the Inclusive Ability Trust. Issues raised were shared with the relevant departments and action taken where possible. Improved engagement with the disability sector assists with devising new or revised actions.

(b) Quantitative

Click or tap here to enter text.

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?

A revised Disability Action Plan was issued for consultation in February 2024

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
2	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
3	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
4	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
5	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

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?

See above. The new plan when approved will be for the period 2024-2027.

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.