




Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties

Annual Progress Report 2024-25

Contact details:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme	Name: Tara Byrne Telephone: 028 90897100 Email: equality@ppsni.gov.uk
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan	As above <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Name: Click or tap here to enter text. Telephone: Click or tap here to enter text. Email: Click or tap here to enter text.
Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:	Equality Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland
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 2024 and March 2025

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 2024-25, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.

Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.

Corporate Business Objectives

The PPS Corporate Business Plan for 2024-25 was based around five strategic priorities and sets out the actions and initiatives to be taken forward in support of delivering our business priorities and associated outcomes.

A number of these actions and initiatives reflected our commitment to equality and good relations. Further details on these actions are provided below.

Priority 1: Supporting a safer community by providing an effective and high quality prosecution service

- Development of legal policy and guidance, including the publication of:
 - Policy for Prosecuting Cases Involving Stalking (for Consultation).
 - Revised Victim and Witness Policy (for Consultation).

A range of policy areas were progressed during 2024-25. A key development was the publication of a new Policy for Prosecuting Cases of Stalking in January 2025. The purpose of this policy is to explain the approach of the PPS in taking prosecutorial decisions in respect of stalking, following the introduction of the Protection from Stalking Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. The document also outlines the assistance available to support victims and witnesses in these cases.

The PPS has continued to engage with stakeholders regarding the revision of the Victim and Witness Policy. In 2024-25, the Department of Justice (DOJ) conducted a public consultation about proposed measures for inclusion in a Victim and Witness Crime Bill which will help shape this policy. Work is also ongoing regarding the reform of current arrangements for the use of Victim Personal Statements at court.

In addition, substantial progress has been made on the drafting of a new Joint Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) / PPS Strategy for Investigating and Prosecuting Serious Sexual Offences. The Strategy, which will be published in 2025-26, sets out a number of agreed actions under four key outcomes including: providing support to victims; improving timeliness and quality; demonstrating accountability and leadership; and developing our staff.

- **Continuing to work with CJSNI partners to implement the agreed recommendations of the Independent Review of Hate Crime Legislation in Northern Ireland.**

The PPS has continued to engage with the DOJ regarding the introduction of new hate crime legislation in Northern Ireland. This has included ongoing liaison via the cross-agency Hate Crime Delivery Group (HCDG), as well as an assessment of the potential operational impact of the new legislation.

- **Continuing the ongoing development and evaluation of the Remote Evidence Centres.**

The Remote Evidence Centre (REC) facility has been operating since January 2021 under a pilot created following on from Gillen Review Recommendation 9. Initially the pilot was restricted to Crown witnesses in cases involving serious sexual offences dealt with at Laganside or Craigavon. In September 2023 the second phase of the pilot commenced and the criteria was extended to allow remote evidence to be offered to any witness required to give evidence to Craigavon or Laganside courts, who is eligible for Special Measures and who is more likely to provide their best quality evidence remotely. The availability of the REC is in addition to the court based live link facility.

PPS is a member of the Remote Evidence Centre User Group and representatives attend all meetings and work closely with other criminal justice agencies to deliver the service. The Remote Evidence Centres provide a safe space away from the court building for vulnerable witnesses to give evidence directly to the court from a video link. In 2024, 344 witnesses attended the RECs to give evidence, 145 of which were children. The conviction rate for all REC cases in 2024 was 91%. Figures to date for the period January to March 2025 show an increase in usage of 122% compared to the same period the previous year.

In addition, a Domestic Abuse Contest Court now sits on a 3 monthly basis with all victims giving evidence from the REC in Belfast. This has led to a substantial increase in the number of guilty pleas entered, convictions after contest and overall, a reduction in victim attrition in domestic abuse cases. Victim feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Work continues within the PPS to improve the usage of the Remote Evidence

Centre and to ensure that this facility is offered to all victims and witnesses who would benefit from the service.

Priority 2: Building confidence in the independence, fairness and effectiveness of the Service

- **Publishing official statistics and performance data, including statistical bulletins on hate crime and sexual offences.**

The PPS publish annual statistical bulletins to improve relations by raising public awareness of the role of the PPS and the standard of services expected among S75 groups and the wider public.

[‘Cases involving Hate Crime’](#) 2023/24 bulletin was published in September 2024. Along with the statistics, the bulletin outlines the role of the PPS and explains the two definitions applied in cases involving hate crime, as recorded by the PSNI and the PPS.

[‘Cases involving Sexual offences’](#) 2023/24 was published in November 2024. Along with the statistics the bulletin also outlines the role of the PPS and provides details of how these cases are dealt with by the PPS.

[‘Perceptions of the Public Prosecution Service: Findings of the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey’](#) was published in May 2024. The bulletin provides information on levels of public awareness of the PPS, as well as public confidence in the fairness, effectiveness and independence of the organisation.

The published analysis includes a breakdown of the findings by gender, age and religion of respondents.

- **Work completed under the PPS Communications and Engagement Strategy 2021-26.** This has included media and stakeholder engagement on the above Sexual Offences Bulletin.

Separate to this, there has been extensive media engagement on a large number of complex cases and themes to help build public understanding. This includes proactive campaign-style work around important themes such as on-line abuse and domestic abuse.

There has also been extensive engagement with stakeholders on a number of issues which could affect public confidence. This period saw the introduction of a new quarterly newsletter aimed at stakeholders, MPs and MLAs. The Service also organised

an outreach event at Stormont for MLAs which was attended by members of the PPS senior Team, including the Director and Deputy Director.

- **The achievement of our action plan objectives, in support of the PPS Equality Scheme and Disability Discrimination Act.**

Equality and Disability Action Plans setting out the PPS's objectives and targets for 2024-25 and 2025-26 were approved and published. Further details are provided in section 2.

Priority 3: Meeting the needs of victims and witnesses

- **Provide continued support for the Registered Intermediaries Scheme.**

The Gillen Review sets out a series of recommendations aimed at improving the services provided to those with physical, sensory or learning disabilities. This includes the use of Registered Intermediaries (RIs) to assist witnesses with communication difficulties and this service has been available in Northern Ireland since 2013.

We continue to support this scheme and apply for RI support through the courts for victims and witnesses who require the service. PPS is represented on the RI Core Users Group which meets on a regular basis to discuss issues and identify areas for improvement. This service has been, and continues to be, instrumental in providing access to justice to victims and witness of crime who previously may have been unable to participate.

- **Progress the actions agreed by the PPS/PSNI Domestic Violence and Abuse Working Group.**

A comprehensive Service Level Agreement has been implemented between the PSNI and the PPS, clearly setting out our respective roles and responsibilities in relation to the investigation, management and prosecution of cases involving domestic abuse.

Over the year, the joint PPS/PSNI Domestic Violence and Abuse Working Group has worked to ensure that the agreed working arrangements are operating effectively, which has included a number of joint quality assurance exercises.

- **Ensure effective consultation and engagement with stakeholders via the PPS Stakeholder Engagement Forum.**

The Stakeholder Engagement Forum (SEF) includes a wide range of representative and advocacy groups, for example Women's Aid, Victim Support, Nexus, Men's Advisory Project, Disability Action and the Migrant Centre. The SEF is seen as a key vehicle for

consultation on PPS policies and procedures, allowing for two way discussion on emerging issues.

The themes covered in 2024-25 included the operation of the new No File Decision (NFD) Pilot initiative introduced in late 2023.

Priority 4: Strengthening our capability by continuously improving the way we work

- **Engaging with the Youth Justice Agency and police to progress a new early intervention process in youth cases.**

As a result of developments in the youth justice system over the last two decades, there has been an increasing emphasis on the implementation of diversionary initiatives in Northern Ireland, aimed at preventing children and young people from entering or moving further into the justice system.

In line with this strategic approach, PPS has been working with PSNI and the Youth Justice Agency (YJA) to develop a diversionary disposal for children and young people, which focuses on early intervention. The aim is to exit children from the criminal justice system at the earliest opportunity, thereby minimising the impact on their future life chances.

A pilot for this is currently being operated in Southern Region, commencing on 1 January 2025 for 18 months. If successful, it is anticipated that the scheme will be rolled out across Northern Ireland.

Priority 5: Supporting and empowering our people

- **Achievement of agreed PPS People Plan objectives for 2024-25**

The PPS People Plan for 2024-25 focuses on four priorities: Communication and engagement, leadership, health and wellbeing, workforce planning and organisational development.

Within these priorities a commitment has been given to provide focused support for mental health and stress-related issues, as well as improving staff engagement with PPS culture and values and a greater emphasis on collaborative working.

In 2024-25 the PPS introduced two mental health ‘first aiders’. There were also sessions conducted by INSPIRE throughout the year to promote their counselling services to staff, including facilitated group reflection sessions.

Other training courses offered included: managing personal stress, blood pressure awareness and overcoming anxiety.

- **Commence the process of reaccreditation under Investors in People (IIP).**

The PPS met with the IIP Assessor in May 2024 and it was agreed that the PPS would be subject to a Strategic Review at the end of August 2024, with the full reaccreditation process being scheduled to commence in August 2025. The purpose of this was to ensure that the PPS could retain Silver accreditation status and provide the organisation with the time required to bed in the internal changes which were being planned and rolled out at that time.

Throughout 2024-25 the PPS continued work on preparations in relation to the reaccreditation process which will commence in August 2025. An all-staff survey will be launched in September 2025 and staff site visits in October 2025.

- **Implementation of PPS Corporate Social Responsibility and well-being objectives for 2024-25.**

The PPS carries out work to contribute towards an improved society under its commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Since 2011, Business in the Community (BITC) has worked as a member organisation with the PPS, helping to develop our responsibility towards People, the Planet and the Place where we operate.

During 2024-25, PPS staff have volunteered for a number of events including the BITC Shop Challenge in Newry and Belfast, Cares at Christmas and 12 PPS staff members volunteered at Camphill Mourne in Kilkeel which is an assisted living unit for adults with learning disabilities. Staff also promoted and participated in a range of health and wellbeing sessions relating to physical and mental health.

Improving Awareness

- **2024-25 Training Programme**

Equality and Diversity remained a key training priority for the Service during 2024-25. PPS staff are NI Civil Servants, recruited through the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) process. The Centre for Applied Learning (CAL) is contracted to provide a wide range of generic training courses to the whole of the NICS. PPS staff also attend other specialised training events, conferences and workshops that are arranged to provide staff with the required skills and knowledge for their current roles.

The following training was provided during the year:

Course Name	No. of Staff Completing Training
Unconscious Bias (e-Learning)	331
Introduction to Section 75 (e-Learning)	277
Equality and Diversity Essentials (e-Learning)	105
Introduction to Diversity and Inclusion (e-Learning)	99
Disability Awareness for Frontline Staff (e-Learning)	59
Domestic Abuse Training	50
Vulnerable Persons Practitioners Training	8
PACE, Policing and Children's Rights training	6
Domestic Abuse - Context and Change (e-Learning)	2
LGBTQ+ Inclusion - Manager (e-Learning)	1
Neurodiversity NICS Line Managers Toolkit (Resource)	2
Policy Making and Human Rights	1
Supporting Autistic People (e-Learning)	1
Supporting Vulnerable People (e-Learning)	2
Autism and ADHD – Living with a dual diagnosis	1
Deaf Equality Training	1
Disability Positive Training	1
Neurodiversity Awareness sessions	1

Information Events

Throughout the year, the Service also continued to highlight notable diversity and inclusion-related news and to promote attendance at information events through the PPS Intranet and all staff emails. For example:

- New Guidance on the use of Special Measures
- NICS Race and Ethnicity Cultural Awareness event
- International Day of Women and Girls in Science
- Endometriosis Action Month
- World Hearing Day
- International Women's Day
- PPS stalking policy launch
- NICE Live - overcoming anxiety
- Disability Awareness sessions
- Promoting Mental Health Sessions
- Race and Ethnicity Network – latest news and happenings
- Launch of Health and Wellbeing Strategy

PART A

- PPS and Women's Aid launch new film on Domestic Violence and Abuse
- NICS Well Online – Wellness Wednesdays
- NICS Live Online- Healthy Relationships
- Victim Champions' Summit – A Trauma Informed Approach to Supporting Victims and Witnesses
- The NICS Women's Network Online information Sessions
- Consultation launched on Gender Pay Gap information Sessions
- NICS Well – 'Movember': Men's Health Conversations toolkits
- LGBTQ+ Network Festive events
- International Men's Day
- Women encouraged to take part in NI-wide Health Survey
- Celebrate, Support and Challenge – Disability Conference
- Mentoring Programmes - Diversity Champions meet LGBTQ+ and Women's Network
- Anti Bullying Week
- Disability Awareness Session to Mark 'Purple Tuesday'
- Information on DOJ public consultation to improve the experiences of Victims and Witnesses.
- Inspire Sessions
- Women's Network events
- Sessions being held for ADHD awareness month
- Anti-Slavery Week
- NICS Well – Menopause in our workplace
- World Mental Health Day
- Baby loss awareness week
- Department of Health - Mental Health Survey
- Civil Service Carers Network launches
- PPS Charity shop morning
- LGBTQ+ Staff network wins Stonewall network of the year
- Directors Update- Staff welfare support available
- Holocaust Memorial Day 2024
- PPS animation to help victims and witness access Special Measures
- East and Southeast Asia Heritage Month
- PPS attendance at Mela
- Celebrating success: Civil Service Staff Networks
- Samaritans' awareness day
- PPS attends Pride
- International Women in Engineering Day
- Men's Health week
- Menopause awareness

- Free Periods product legislation
- Money Helper Pension Sessions
- International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia & LGBTQIA Awareness Week
- World day of Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development 2024
- World Mental Health Week
- Civil Service Diversity Action Plan 2024-25
- Accessible awareness training course
- Adenomyosis Awareness Month
- National Stalking Awareness Week
- Premenstrual Dysphoric Awareness Week
- Benenden Testicular Health Awareness sessions
- International Trans Day of Visibility 2024

Monitoring

- **Statistics and Research**

The PPS has maintained its research capacity, focusing primarily on the development of internal (staff) and external (stakeholder) surveys such as the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey.

Other data collected included information provided through membership of, and engagement with, a large number of interagency groups and through other meetings with external voluntary and community organisations; and the monitoring arrangements established to record the numbers and types of outreach events which PPS has delivered or supported.

The PPS Equality and Diversity Champion is also a member of the NICS Diversity Champions Network (DCN). The focus of the DCN is on the NI Civil Service workforce and its aims are to emphasise the importance of raising the issue of diversity, to champion the benefits of a culture where diversity is celebrated and the value of a diverse workforce to enable the NICS to best serve the entire NI community. The DCN procures data in support of its work in relation to gender, disability, LGBT and BME sectors.

Regular updates on progress against these objectives were provided internally to the Management Board (MB), Senior Management Group (SMG), People and Resources Committee (PRC) and Equality and Diversity Steering Group (EDSG).

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

Equality and Disability Action Plans for 2024-25 and 2025-26

Equality and Disability Action Plans setting out the objectives and targets for 2024-25 and 2025-26 were approved and published. The identified inequalities and issues to be addressed over the period are detailed below:

- **A need to raise public awareness of role of the PPS and the standard of service expected among s75 groups and the wider public.**
- **The need to increase satisfaction and confidence among s75 groups and members of the wider public.**

A number of community outreach events have been held, for example PPS attended Belfast Pride Village and Mela in summer 2024 and provided information about the role of the PPS including guidance around Hate Crime and other offences.

We also published our annual Sexual Offences / Hate Crime Statistical Bulletins, as well as the findings of the Life and Times Survey.

- **The need to improve the range of legal policy guidance available in respect of s75 groups, in consultation with our stakeholders.**

As noted above, a new Policy for Prosecuting Cases of Stalking was published in January 2025. This followed on from a period of public consultation and all responses received were carefully considered prior to launch.

Domestic Abuse, stalking and non-fatal strangulation offences have been a major focus of quality assurance (QA) undertaken by the Policy and Information Unit during 2024-25. This has been complemented by quality assurance undertaken in conjunction with the PSNI, under the umbrella of the joint Domestic Violence and Abuse Working Group, as part of an overarching programme to monitor the effectiveness of a revised PSNI / PPS Service Level Agreement on domestic abuse cases, introduced in August 2024.

Other areas covered by QA activity have included Special Measures (which are intended to support witnesses in providing their best evidence), restraining orders and the use of diversionary decisions.

In addition to this, the PPS along with Women's Aid have launched a new film on Domestic Violence and Abuse. An animation explaining Special Measures was also launched and highlighted to stakeholders. A member of the Policy Team also addressed the Law Society on gender-based violence.

- **The need for improved services, communications and support provided to Victims and Witnesses, across all Section 75 groups in Northern Ireland**

The PPS has given a commitment to improve awareness of Special Measures among victims and witnesses. Steps taken in 2024-25 have included the production of a new animated film to help explain how Special Measures are accessed.

New staff guidance has also been issued in this area and work is ongoing to develop a new Victim and Witness Policy.

- **The need to increase staff awareness in respect of equality and diversity issues and the importance of promoting equality of opportunity.**

As outlined above, a number of training courses have been provided, some of which are mandatory, and are intended to help raise awareness of equality and diversity issues.

Regular communications were also issued throughout the year to promote equality and diversity related matters.

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

Yes

No (go to Q.4)

Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

PART A

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

Other (*please specify and give details*):

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)

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

Yes, organisation wide

Yes, some departments/jobs

No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment

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

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

- The Senior Assistant Director for Resources and Change is the PPS Diversity Champion and is responsible for ensuring that s75 obligations are fully complied with in developing, reviewing and implementing policy decisions within their remit.
- The Head of Policy and Information and the Equality Officer's job descriptions specifically reflect the Public Prosecution Service's commitment to equality in ensuring its compliance with relevant legislation, particularly its obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.
- Section 75 statutory duties are integrated into staff job descriptions within the Policy and Information Unit.

PART A

- Section 75 statutory duties form part of a new induction programme for all staff.

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

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- 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:

- S75 statutory duties are integrated into performance plans within the Policy and Information Unit.
- The Head of Policy and Information and the Equality Officer's performance plans outline objectives to ensure the delivery of s75 targets and actions.
- The SAD for Resources and Change is responsible for ensuring that Section 75 obligations are fully complied with in developing, reviewing and implementing policy decisions within their remit.
- Staff training plans include a number of mandatory courses, including s75 e-learning.

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

- Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
- Yes, in some departments/jobs

PART A

- No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's corporate plan
- No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2024-25 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The PPS Corporate Business Plan for 2024-25 set out commitments to meet our objectives under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. It outlined the steps and actions needed to make this happen, as outlined at Section 1 of this Report.

Equality action plans/measures

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

Actions completed:

16

Actions ongoing:

1

Actions to commence:

Not applicable.

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

We maintained and improved access to information and policies on our website and also released of information via social media.

Provide mandatory e-learning training for all staff in Section 75 matters

This action is ingoing. All staff undergo mandatory s75 e-learning every two years. Rollout to all staff in the Northern Ireland Civil Service came under the direct centralised control of NICS HR in 2017-18.

PART A

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

None.

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

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

Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)

10. Following the initial notification of consultations, a targeted approach was taken – and consultation with those for whom the issue was of particular relevance: (*tick one box only*)

- All the time
- Sometimes
- Never

11. Please provide any details and examples of good practice in consultation during the 2024-25 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

Public consultation on the new PPS Policy for Prosecuting Cases of Stalking ran for a period of 12 weeks, from 10 June to 6 September 2024. Members of the PPS Stakeholder Engagement Forum (representing key advocacy groups) were encouraged to respond. This

PART A

yielded a number of detailed replies, all of which were considered and responded to individually.

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

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

Please provide any details or examples of the uptake of these methods of consultation in relation to the consultees' membership of particular Section 75 categories:

Close working relationships are maintained at a senior management level with representative and advocacy groups (for example Nexus, Women's Aid, Commissioner for Older People NI, Victim Support NI, Rainbow Project etc.), through both targeted consultation in particular policy areas and more general engagement and awareness raising through the PPS Stakeholder Engagement Forum.

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

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

PART A

Please provide any details and examples:

The Service continues to be represented at Belfast Pride and the Mela festival which are ideal opportunities for the PPS to meet the public and to raise awareness of our work generally, and our Equality Scheme. Other opportunities are taken forward as they arise.

The PPS Stakeholder Engagement Forum continues to meet at least 2 times per year, in addition to more targeted consultation engagement to inform policy development and business processes.

14. Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2024-25 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes

No

Not applicable – no commitment to review

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

As set out in the PPS Equality Scheme.

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

2

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

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

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

0 Consultations for an **EQIA** alone.

PART A

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

Not applicable.

18. Were any screening decisions (or equivalent initial assessments of relevance) reviewed following concerns raised by consultees? *(tick one box only)*

Yes

No concerns were raised

No

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

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

Yes

No

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

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 2024-25 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

PART A

Yes

No, already taken place

No, scheduled to take place at a later date

Not applicable

Please provide any details:

Click or tap here to enter text.

21. In analysing monitoring information gathered, was any action taken to change/review any policies? (*tick one box only*)

Yes

No

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

None.

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:

The PPS has maintained its research capacity, focusing primarily on the development of internal (staff) and external (stakeholder) surveys. The key surveys conducted during 2024- 25 included the following:

- **Northern Ireland life and Times Survey**

On an annual basis the PPS commissions questions for inclusion in the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey. A total of 4 questions were included in the 2024 survey to gauge public awareness of the PPS and its role. The findings of the survey, produced across a number of key variables including age, gender and religion, have been considered by senior managers and will help to inform the development of PPS policy.

- **Informal Feedback**

PPS policy staff have developed a wide network of informal contacts through their membership of, and engagement with, a large number of interagency groups and through other meetings with external voluntary and community organisations. These contacts provide qualitative data to the team which is used to inform policy development on an ongoing basis and is shared with other criminal justice partners where appropriate.

- **Staff Surveys**

PPS staff participate in the NICS People Survey.

Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)

24. Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2024-25, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

The training examples below (as well as others mentioned earlier) support the Equality Scheme training objectives.

Course Name	No. of Staff Completing Training
Equality and Diversity Essentials (e-Learning)	105
Introduction to Diversity and Inclusion (e-Learning)	99
Introduction to Section 75 (e-Learning)	277
Unconscious Bias (e-Learning)	331
Disability Awareness for Frontline Staff (e-Learning)	59

PART A

To ensure all staff are aware of and understand our equality obligations the following arrangements are in place / information events were provided during 2024-25:

- The Equality Scheme is available to all staff on the Equality and Diversity page of the PPS intranet.
- A PPS Users' Guide on Consultation is available on the PPS intranet.
- Section 75 Statutory Duties form part of new induction programme for new staff.
- Specific advice and guidance was provided to staff involved in, for example, conducting Section 75 equality screenings and consultations.
- The Equality Officer continued to circulate information and provide updates (for example, on equality and diversity articles / events / issues / progress on the implementation of actions set out within the Equality Scheme / Action Plan and Disability Action Plan) to staff, the Service's Equality and Diversity Steering Group, People and Resources Committee, Senior Management Group and Management Board as appropriate. This was achieved via the PPS intranet and e-mail.
- The staff intranet site which has a dedicated equality section makes available our Annual Progress Report, Disability Action Plan, Equality Scheme/Action Plan, Section 75 Consultation List, minutes from the EDSG / Equality and Diversity Drivers meetings and current consultations.
- For staff in policy areas, who are involved in screening, the site provides other useful information on s75 implementation, together with links to other organisations' websites, (for example, the Equality Commission). There is also a dedicated area on the staff website for diversity issues. Staff are encouraged to provide ideas for inclusion on the site.

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:

Evaluation of mandatory e-learning is not conducted.

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

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

Not applicable.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

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

Insert number here: 0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

Not applicable.

Section 3: Looking Forward

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

The next review of the PPS Equality Scheme is due in 2027-28.

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)*

This will be considered in advance of the next review.

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):

PART A

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

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

12	1	2
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	Outputs ⁱ	Outcomes / Impact ⁱⁱ
National ⁱⁱⁱ	The PPS does not hold influence over policy at this level, e.g. in relation to public appointments.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Regional ^{iv}	The PPS does not influence policy decision making at this level.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Local ^v	PPS continues to support the NICS work experience scheme for people with disabilities / guaranteed interview scheme for people with disabilities	Click or tap here to enter text.	NICS HR continue to make approaches about prospective placements, and individual circumstances are considered by local management.

PART B

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1.	To promote Disability Awareness training for staff (e-learning) for all new staff as appropriate, and regular refresher training.	Disability Awareness / Diversity and Inclusion training for Front line Staff (mandatory e-learning, refreshed every 2 years).	Better informed and trained workforce, with a greater understanding and appreciation of the experiences of colleagues and clients with disabilities.

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.	To review access to information and services relevant to disabled people.	Monitoring of feedback and complaints received from service users.	Monitoring complaints provides an additional means of capturing issues raised by disabled people.
2.	To encourage staff and stakeholders to submit articles, promoting positive attitudes towards disability, for inclusion on the PPS Intranet.	Examples of articles produced over the period included Autism Awareness, Good Relations Week, National Inclusion Week, participation in the Disability Positive Assessment by Employers for Disability NI, promotion of JAM Card awareness and the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities.	Increased awareness across all staff of support available for disability equality issues, promotion of responsibilities and lived experience.

PART B

3.	To publish and promote the Disability Action Plan.	The PPS Disability Action Plan was published in July 2024 on both the PPS intranet and website, and circulated to all staff. All consultees were notified of publication.	Highlights to both internal and external stakeholders the steps to be taken during the year in order to implement the disability duties.
----	--	---	--

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1.	To set out our commitments to disability equality in Corporate Business Plans	The PPS Business Plan for 2024-25, which sets out PPS commitments to disability equality, was published in July 2024.	The Corporate Business Plan and other key PPS policy and planning documents take account of, and reinforce our commitment to, implementation of the disability duties and other requirements under DDA legislation.
2.	To monitor feedback received from disabled people or representative groups via agreed consultation arrangements.	Relevant responses to consultations by PPS are monitored and recorded.	Provides a mechanism to obtain feedback directly from representative groups in relation to specific policies and initiatives, and to formulate responses and make changes as necessary.

PART B

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

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1.	To aid the development of Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans for relevant staff (PEEPs).	Request for PEEP detail issued in line with HR update planning – all staff were included in circulation and where appropriate advised to complete the form.	Improved data held on the level and diversity of disability among staff. In turn, PEEPs tailored to personal circumstances developed and rehearsed.
2.	To engage fully with the NICS Diversity Champions Network.	The Service participates in the meetings of the Diversity Champions Network, and also addresses all agreed PPS commitments in progressing recommendations of the Disability Working Group.	Maintain connections with NICS sector leads for disability matters, and contribute to NICS-wide actions in promoting disability awareness.
3.	To consider relevant survey findings (e.g. staff surveys) and address issues as appropriate.	Issues arising from the NICS People Survey findings are considered by the Investors in People Action Plan Group.	This provides an additional avenue for those with a disability within the organisation to provide feedback on a range of core areas including health and wellbeing, learning and career development, organisational culture and management.
4.	Manage PPS’s statutory equality responsibilities.	Throughout the period, meetings of the internal Equality and Diversity Steering Group took place to review Disability Action Plan measures, and identify new measures as appropriate. Regular	The EDSG and its reporting responsibilities support the internal framework for management of how the disability duties are addressed,

PART B

		progress reports were also provided to the Management Board.	and ensure that senior management are informed of progress in doing so.
5.	Preparation of the S75 Annual Report	The report is published on an annual basis, subject to final approval by senior management / EDSG.	The Annual Report will be published on our intranet and our website so that staff and stakeholders are informed of our 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.	To monitor impact of alternative working arrangements for employees with a disability.	Maintain contact with DoF and NICS HR and consider appropriate responses to any proposals for alternative working arrangements in support of employees with a disability.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Scoping requirements for alternative arrangements have been superseded by hybrid working arrangements

PART B

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1.	To increase the participation of disabled employees in the Equality and Diversity Steering Group	Efforts are ongoing to ensure that the membership of the EDSG is as representative as possible and efforts continue to attract new members, including those with disabilities.
2.	To provide opportunities for disability equality speakers to address the Equality and Diversity Steering Group (EDSG), the Victim and Witness Care Unit and other key personnel as appropriate.	This has not been possible due to a number of factors (e.g. availability) but is being taken forward in 2025-26.

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

Progress with the implementation of the Disability Action Plan is overseen by the Equality Officer and the EDSG throughout the life of the plan. The EDSG consists of managers from across a range of operational and HQ business areas and includes both administrative and legal staff, as well as volunteer staff with an interest in diversity issues. The group is chaired by the Equality and Diversity Champion, who is a member of the PPS Management Board and NICS Diversity Champions Network. Regular reports are provided to the Management Board.

(b) Quantitative

On receipt of feedback arising from consultation arrangements, follow-up engagement takes place to further examine issues raised.

Monitoring is undertaken in a confidential way. All information provided is held securely and questionnaires can be submitted anonymously.

PART B

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

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

No.

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?

No.

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.