

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

www.health-ni.gov.uk

Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report 2020-21

Contact:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme	Name: Judith Tener Telephone: 02890 522433 Email: judith.tener@health-ni.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: Telephone: Email:

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

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/doh-equality>

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 2020 and March 2021

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 2020 -21, 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.

The Bengoa Review and ‘Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together’ provide the overall blueprint for transforming health and social care (HSC) services in Northern Ireland to better meet the needs of our population. However, COVID-19 presented our HSC system with its biggest challenge since inception, while there remained the need to continue to tackle issues such as the impact of an ageing population; increasing demand; long and growing waiting lists; workforce pressures; the emergence of new and more expensive treatments; and ongoing budget constraints.

A key commitment in the ‘Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together’ associated action plan was to bring forward proposals to establish **elective care centres** to provide a dedicated resource for less complex planned surgery and other procedures, aimed at reducing waiting times for planned care, and providing a better experience for both patients and staff. The Department has been working with doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, service managers and other health professionals from across HSC since 2017 to consider the evidence base, to establish two prototype centres, and to develop proposals for a regional model for day procedure centres.

Given the urgent need to begin rebuilding day procedures, in July 2020 the Department published a policy statement entitled **The Establishment of a Regional Service Delivery Model for Daycase Elective Care Procedures in NI**. This document set out actions to concentrate delivery of day procedures initially on one ‘hub’ Day Procedure Centre site at Lagan Valley Hospital. This ‘hub’ will interact with

several hospital sites (the spokes) around Northern Ireland. A clinically led Regional Network has also been established to oversee the development of the Day Procedure Centre hub and spoke model. This Regional Network is tasked with driving forward a whole system, integrated approach to the delivery of Day Procedure Centres to achieve benefits for patients in terms of reduced waiting times and improved quality and outcomes.

The policy is founded on the engagement carried out as part of the ongoing work on the development of the Day Procedure Centre model. The actions in the policy document are consistent with the messages received from service users and staff throughout this work. Given the urgent need to rebuild elective day procedures during the pandemic, the policy statement was not subject to public consultation, however service users and staff will continue to be engaged in the detail of the implementation of the model both at a local level and at a regional level as appropriate. Further consultation will take place as required in line with guidance as the model is developed. There will also be ongoing engagement with HSC staff, TUS and professional bodies.

In June 2020 Minister Swann launched the **Strategic Framework for Rebuilding Health and Social Care Services**, acknowledging the massive challenge faced in rebuilding health and social care in the wake of the first Covid-19 wave. The rebuilding process aims to secure better ways of delivering services but will require innovation, sustained investment and society-wide support.

Services will not be able to resume as before. Rebuilding will be significantly constrained by the continuing threat from Covid-19 and the need to protect the public and staff from the virus.

The Strategic Framework for Rebuilding Health and Social Care Services is complemented by plans published by Northern Ireland's six Trusts setting out the immediate work being done in their areas. More detail is available on the DoH website at <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/rebuilding-hsc-services>

The Minister for Health approved the development of an **Advance Care Planning Policy** for adults in Northern Ireland. The scope of the policy is for those aged 18 years and over, and will include ‘What matters to me’ – personal wishes, feelings, beliefs and values, Advance Decisions to Refuse Treatment (ADRT) and conversations and decisions on specific interventions such as cardio pulmonary resuscitation. As part of its early stakeholder engagement, between December 2020 and late February 2021 the Advance Care Planning Programme Team held 40 engagement sessions involving 226 individuals from across a wide range of sectors and organisations. One of the key aims of the Advance Care Planning policy is to ensure standardised practice for those providing care and support. During this engagement, a number of stakeholders identified the ReSPECT process and documentation as a tool to support Advance Care Planning. ReSPECT stands for Recommended Summary Plan for Emergency Care and Treatment. It supports the clinical component of Advance Care Planning conversations and decision-making through the recording of personalised recommendations for a person’s future care and treatment in the event of an acute medical emergency. In light of this, further specific stakeholder engagement was undertaken which endorsed the ReSPECT approach to be incorporated within the Advance Care Planning policy. A ReSPECT Task and Finish group will be constituted, chaired by the Deputy Chief Medical Officer to agree the high operational principles which can be detailed in the Advance Care Planning Policy before Public Consultation.

Subject to Public Consultation, once implemented, the Advance Care Planning policy, including the ReSPECT aspect, will streamline Advance Care Planning documentation and may negate the need for stand-alone DNACPR (Do Not Attempt Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) form and process. Implementation of all aspects of the Advance Care Planning Policy, including ReSPECT, will be underpinned by a comprehensive training strategy, a suite of supporting documents and a public messaging campaign.

As set out in the Equality Action PLAN (EAP) update, attached at Annex A, work on **Childhood Obesity** was paused during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. However meetings of the Regional Obesity Prevention Implementation Group restarted in May 2021 to consider options going forward. Work on developing a

successor obesity prevention strategy began in February 2021.

As a commitment in New Decade New Approach, a **New Substance Use Strategy** issued for public consultation in October 2020. More detail is included in the EAP attached at Annex A.

As part of our commitment to provide high quality, safe, sustainable and appropriate **maternity services**:

- video info clips were developed with PHA communications team to encourage women to attend maternity services if they have any worries or concerns. These were shared on social media during the pandemic.
- NI Maternity and Parenting Website was developed for women and partners to provide regional up to date information on COVID 19 during pregnancy and Trust specific service changes www.ni-maternity.com
- Online virtual antenatal education was made available for all women and partners in NI with over 100 translations available.

More details on maternity care are included in the EAP year 2 update, attached at Annex A.

The Department has, under very difficult circumstances, introduced a significant number of **regulations** to counteract the impact of Covid 19. Copies of the legislation can be found at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/covid-19-legislation>

The link also includes an analysis¹ of how the **Coronavirus Act** has helped the Department's response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the Executive Decision-Making Framework on Coronavirus Regulations.

The Department's **Equality Scheme** remains under review with proposed amendments to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations. The

¹ <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/coronavirus-act-analysis>

consultation closed on 10 April 2017 and a new Equality Scheme was to be progressed with the appointment of a Minister in January 2020; however, this has been further delayed as a result of the impact of, and redeployment of resources to combat, Covid-19.

The Department's Equality Action Plan, and Disability Action Plan (DAP) 2019-2024 were published on 1 April 2019. A year 2 review is attached to this report.

Following establishment of a NICS **Diversity Champions Network (DCN)** in 2015, the Department of Health representative attends quarterly DCN meetings feeding back, as appropriate, to promote and encourage diversity within the Department. The network includes 4 thematic leads for LGB&T, Disability, Gender and Ethnic Minorities. Meetings this year were held on 17th June 2020, 8 October 2020, 28 January 2021 and 10 March 2021. A number of diversity related messages were circulated in 2020-21 and are detailed in Annex C.

The Departmental **Racial Equality Champion** continued to represent the Department at the NICS Racial Equality Champions Network and the associated sub-group with membership comprising of people working with, or representing minority ethnic people and migrants, including representatives of refugees and asylum seekers. Due to Covid-19, only one meeting was held, on 11 November 2020, with a further meeting scheduled for 1 April 2021, however, ethnic minorities were of particular focus during 2020/21 with regard to the impact of Covid-19 on certain groups and the need to ensure that all minority groups were reached with regard to Covid risks and messaging. Racial Equality is a standing agenda item on the DoH chaired Equality and Human Rights Steering Group, comprised of Equality Leads across HSCTs, ensuring appropriate information is disseminated across the HSC sectors.

The Public Health Agency (PHA) also reported emerging evidence indicating that the Roma communities in NI had been disproportionately affected by Covid 19, in terms of the prevalence of the illness and aggravation of socio-economic conditions. Getting the 'correct' public health information directly to the communities was essential and a number of PHA publications were translated, with video and 'voice

overs' of hand washing and social distancing measures. Some of these were specifically designed in easy read for the Roma communities who have high levels of illiteracy in their own language. A bespoke COVID-19 helpline for Roma was also established by PHA.

3 meetings of the DoH **Support group for staff with children with a disability** took place in 2020-21. The self-help group is made up of colleagues who are supporting a child with specific needs.

The Department, as part of the NICS, remains committed to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's **Mental Health Charter** and its duty to protect the mental health of its staff. Awareness raising and support for mental health, in particular in the context of Covid-19 and working from home, in 2020-21 is included in Annex C.

All staff also have access to, and receive regular updates from, the NICS Health and Wellbeing programme, **NICS WELL** which is overseen by the Occupational Health service (OHS). Messages this year included a series of talks by the Samaritans aimed at highlighting their role to help anyone who's struggling to cope, who needs someone to listen without judgement or pressure. Due to the overwhelming demand for these sessions, more sessions were scheduled.

Despite the pandemic and subsequent pressures on the Department, the **Deliver Together Team** recognised the increased importance of health and wellbeing for staff and continued to promote and inform staff of relevant issues and seminars throughout the year, as set out in Annex C.

As set out in the Equality Scheme, the **Equality and Human Rights Unit (EHRU)** continued to provide support and advice within the Department. Together with advising on equality screenings and related matters, the EHRU:

- as part of the Deliver Together monthly message published a Disability Action piece reproducing a BBC article '25 things you didn't know about Disability' to

mark 25 years since disability rights were enshrined in law under the **Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)**. It defined what disability was and set out what disabled people could expect so they don't face barriers. The article explored the blue badge, the secret button at pedestrian crossings, access, invisible disability and dogs - amongst other things.

- circulated an email to all staff which included the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission Annual Statement; The '**Independent Mechanism**' in **Northern Ireland (IMNI)** responses on Disability and Covid; and relevant training offered by NIHRC/ CAL/ ECNI. Relevant areas were highlighted for policy areas.
- placed an article on DoH intranet, and email to HSCT Equality Leads, to draw attention to the new translation service on nidirect (www.nidirect.gov.uk) which will enable instant translation of content into over 100 languages. The facility allows immediate translation and lasts for the length of the session a person is on nidirect.
- e-mailed all staff encouraging sign-up to the Equality Commission webinars on **Section 75** and the **Disability Discrimination Act 1995**.
- circulated advice regarding statutory obligations in relation to **Section 75** of the **Northern Ireland Act** during the Covid 19 pandemic, including concerns raised by the Equality Commission.
- emailed all staff promoting the Equality Commission on-line event to launch the data sign-posting guidance 'Section 75: Using Evidence in Policy Making'.
- circulated advice on equality obligations and the new accessible screening template.
- email sent to relevant staff on Equality Commission 'Briefing Note on Need for Equality Data'.

In addition to many of the seminars listed in Annex C, staff in the Department's Equality Unit also attended a (Promoting Reconciliation & Integration through Safe Mediation (PRISM) Virtual Conference to launch the 'New beginnings: The Lived Experience of newcomer and traditional communities on the path to inclusion and integration in Northern Ireland and Ireland'. Funded by the EU PEACE IV Programme, the PRISM project brings together the British Red Cross, ArtsEkta, Corrymeela and the Irish Red Cross in partnership. The attitudinal change contact programmes aimed to promote positive attitudinal change within the Catholic /Nationalist/ Republican, Protestant/ Unionist/Loyalist & Refugee Asylum Seeker and Vulnerable Migrant communities by bringing the communities together through contact programmes and residentials.

The EHRU continues to organise and chair the **Equality and Human Rights Steering Group**, with membership from across the HSC. Staff in the EHRU were redeployed at the start of the year to assist with the Covid response, however, meetings in 2020-21 were held on 19 November 2020 and 16 February 2021. Despite efforts to arrange guests for the meetings this was not possible due to Covid pressures.

Equality Unit staff continue to be active participants of the **TEO Equality Practitioners Group and the ECNI/ NICS Equality Forum**.

The EHRU also attends the **Joint Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights Forum**, established in May 2019 and comprised of Equality Leads from each of the 6 HSC Trusts and senior representatives from ECNI, NIHRC and Good Relations Council. Creation of the forum derived from an action in the HSC Trust Regional Equality Action Plans and the aim is for this partnership to be mutually beneficial and to foster closer partnerships and understanding with the external bodies. The Department joined, and hosted, the meeting in February 2020. Due to Covid, only one meeting took place in 2020-21, in December 2020.

2. Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2020-21 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

The Department's **Equality Action Plan** (EAP) was finalised in March 2019. A copy of the EAP for 2019-2024 is attached with a year 2 update, to March 2021, included.

The Department continued to progress EAP measures during 2020-21 including:
(more details can be found in the EAP update at Annex A)

- Implementation of the first year of programmes under **Reform of Adult Social Care** that provided invaluable training and career pathways for the social care workforce.

- Public consultation on a **New Substance Use Strategy** from October 2020 to February 2021.

- Finalising of the new Strategy for looked after children and care-experienced young people: **A Life Deserved Caring for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland**, published on 19 February 2021. In tandem with the work to finalise the Strategy for publication, a number of actions were progressed including:
 - A total of 121 specialist foster carer are in place across all Trusts.
 - Intensive wraparound support is in place for all carers.
 - Preparations regarding a Programme of training/ development for staff primarily focusing on coaching skills.
 - Signs of Safety training moved mainly online due to Covid

- PHA continued to commission the **Women's Resource and Development Agency (WRDA)** to run a programme to raise awareness of cancer screening and promote informed choice via peer education. WRDA adapted the programme for online delivery during the pandemic. WRDA also designed a two-minute animated promotional video to launch the online service and shared this widely on social media and via press release.

PART A

- PHA developed Video info clips, shared on social media during the pandemic, to encourage women to attend maternity services if they have any worries or concerns.
- The **NI Maternity and Parenting Website** was developed for women and partners to provide regional up to date information on COVID 19 during pregnancy and Trust specific service changes.
- Online virtual antenatal education available for all women and partners in NI with over 100 translations available.
- Effective operation of the **Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline** during the Covid-19 pandemic including:
 - additional guidance to ensure easy access, in one place, to contact details for different support organisations;
 - development of the 'Ask for ANI' pharmacy code word scheme to allow those at risk or suffering from abuse to discreetly signal to pharmacy staff that they need help to access support;
 - additional funding for initial care packages for families who have experienced or been a victim of domestic abuse;
 - piloting the Identification and Referral to Improve Safety ('IRIS') programme in East Belfast and Newry and District GP Federations.

3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2020-21 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

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

Equality processes

The Department's Equality Unit proactively encourages departmental business areas to involve the Unit, and the Department's Information Research Branch, at an early stage, ensuring that equality issues are considered early, quality of content is improved and business areas have access to a wide range of relevant data, contributing to a stronger evidence base to assess possible impacts and greater

appreciation of the particular needs of the various Section 75 groups within the policy development process.

Every member of staff has access to NINIS Statistics direct from their desktop and the Equality Unit will signpost specific data where relevant.

During 2020-21 the EHRU developed a Research and Data page for the DoH staff intranet. The page includes links to a wide range of resources including ECNI information and Data Signposting Guide; and LGBT and Ethnic Minority websites and research.

The Department's standard submission template includes a section on Section 75 to ensure equality implications are considered and documented.

In line with our Equality Scheme commitment to consider any good practice or guidance issued by ECNI, the EHRU shares relevant information and guidance with all staff, as detailed under section (1).

The Department's **Equality Scheme** remains under review with proposed amendments to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations. These amendments will be considered by Minister Swann in due course.

The EHRU has also worked with TEO in respect of ethnic monitoring and collection of data within HSC. This matter will be further progressed with TEO and the Encompass team during 2021-22.

As part of the Hyponatraemia Implementation Programme, work continued to establish a **Duty of Candour** and develop guidance for openness in Health and Social Care. This is being led by a Duty of Candour Workstream and **Being Open sub-group** who are made up of HSC staff, service users and carers, the community and voluntary sector and also Departmental Policy Officers. Following initial induction sessions in October 2018, the groups alternated between separate group meetings and joint Workstream meetings throughout 2018 and 2019 before merging in 2020 to agree the policy proposals for public consultation. In October 2020, the draft proposals were reviewed and agreed by the IHRD (Inquiry into Hyponatraemia Related Deaths) Programme's Assurance Workstream, which independently reviews

the proposals developed by individual Workstreams to implement the IHRD recommendations, against an assurance framework developed for the programme. This framework sets out the tests to be met and evidence to be provided by the HSC/Department in order to provide assurance that each recommendation has been implemented. Consultation papers were prepared during 2020/21 with public consultation launched on 12 April 2021. The consultation exercise seeks to build on the extensive pre-consultation involvement and engagement previously undertaken by the Workstream and Sub-group, in order to further develop the policy proposals for implementation. Consultation documents can be found at <http://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations/duty-of-candour>

As part of early stakeholder engagement on development of an **Advance Care Planning Policy for Adults** (see section 1.1 for more detail), 40 engagement sessions involving 226 individuals from across a wide range of sectors and organisations were held. During this engagement, a number of stakeholders identified the ReSPECT process and documentation as a tool to support Advance Care Planning. In light of this, further specific stakeholder engagement was undertaken which endorsed the ReSPECT approach. Departmental approval has now been obtained to incorporate ReSPECT within the Advance Care Planning policy, which will go for Public Consultation. This policy will be underpinned by a comprehensive training strategy, a suite of supporting documents and a public messaging campaign.

- 3** With regard to the change(s) made to policies, practices or procedures and/or
a 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:

Equality considerations, and commitments in the Equality Scheme, continue to influence policies across all the functions of the Department. In respect of consultation and stakeholder engagement:

As at (3) above, the **Duty of Candour** will ensure openness and honesty within

health and social care and aims to ensure a consistent culture within the health and social care service which allows staff, service users, and carers to speak up when things go wrong.

The intended policy is expected to benefit patients/service users/carers/families (or their duly authorised representatives), as well as staff and organisations providing health and social care services, by providing a clear framework for openness and candour in these settings. It is therefore expected to benefit all Section 75 categories.

The **Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Seven Year Strategy** Action Plan was published and delivered in 2020/21. A key priority was to ensure that essential services, such as the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline, continued to operate effectively and remain fully available during the covid-19 pandemic. This work also included:

- publication of additional guidance so that victims (or those concerned about others) can easily access contact details for different support organisations;
- development of the 'Ask for ANI' pharmacy code word scheme to allow those at risk or suffering from abuse to discreetly signal to pharmacy staff that they need help to access support;
- additional funding to Women's Aid, for initial care packages for families who have experienced or been a victim of domestic abuse. Nexus NI and Men's Advisory Project also received an uplift in funding under their existing contracts with the HSC Board to help reduce counselling waiting lists;
- piloting the Identification and Referral to Improve Safety ('IRIS') programme in East Belfast and Newry and District GP Federations. IRIS is being delivered in partnership with Women's Aid, Victim Support NI, Men's Advisory Project and Nexus NI, to train and support GPs to recognise and respond to domestic and sexual abuse and refer patients to advocacy support.

As part of early stakeholder engagement on development of an **Advance Care Planning Policy for Adults** (see section 1.1 for more detail), 40 engagement sessions involving 226 individuals from across a wide range of sectors and organisations were held. During this engagement, a number of stakeholders identified the ReSPECT process and documentation as a tool to support Advance Care Planning. In light of this, further specific stakeholder engagement was undertaken which endorsed the ReSPECT approach. Departmental approval has now been obtained to incorporate ReSPECT within the Advance Care Planning policy, which will go for Public Consultation. This policy will be underpinned by a comprehensive training strategy, a suite of supporting documents and a public messaging campaign.

A 12 week consultation seeking views on proposals to establish a regional **Care and Justice Campus** for Northern Ireland launched in October 2020, following a primary recommendation of the Review of Regional Facilities for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (“the Review”), commissioned by the then Health Minister in January 2017, with support from the then Justice Minister, and published in December 2018. The work to develop the proposals in this consultation document was led by a cross-departmental, multi-agency Programme Board, jointly chaired by the Chief Social Worker in the Department of Health and the Director of Reducing Offending in the Department of Justice. The decision to proceed to consultation on these proposals was taken jointly by the Health and Justice Ministers with the proposals contained in the consultation document developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders including statutory authorities, academics, NGOs, staff and their representatives in both Lakewood and Woodlands, children and young people with experience of the Secure Care Centre. A Programme’s Stakeholder Reference Group facilitated this engagement — VOYPIC², Start360, Include Youth, NIACRO³, Extern. The views expressed by children and young people during the engagement exercise is reflected throughout the consultation document. Children’s versions, along with a short animation explaining the proposals, were also produced. Feedback on the animation was positive from all parties, as it provided an overview

² Voice of Young People in Care

³ NI Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders

of the “journey” into and out of secure care.

Equality screenings are published on the Department of Health website at

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/doh-equality#toc-4>

3
b 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 Department’s commitment in the Equality Scheme endeavours to ensure that all policies are screened at an early stage ensuring equality issues are considered and form part of the policy/ decision making process.

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

As at Q 3a above and Q’s 10-11, the Department is actively engaging relevant parties through the process of pre-engagement and involvement of key stakeholders prior to formal consultation, and through the consultation process.

Inputs from the early engagement in developing proposals for a **new regional service delivery model for separated and unaccompanied asylum seeking children (S/UASC)** in Northern Ireland (see section 10 for more details), highlighted two particular areas which were explored further with the young people during the conversations with VOYPIC Youth Rights Workers:

- provision of legal support; and
- whether a peer mentoring service would be welcomed.

In both cases, having considered the views of the young people provided during their conversations with VOYPIC, the proposals for the service delivery model were altered to include these as proposed core components of a new regional service; further views on these and the other proposed core components have been sought within the targeted consultation which is running from 25 May 2021 until 21 July 2021 and which will inform the final design of the new model.

- As a result of analysis from monitoring the impact (please give details):
All major policies are subject to ongoing monitoring and reporting including impact monitoring.

A mid-term review of the **Tobacco Control Strategy** was published in early 2020 which identified progress to date and priorities for future implementation. The resulting recommendations will form the basis for new and enhanced actions over the remaining lifetime of the strategy. They include recommendations relating to the formulation of actions to address smoking prevalence in deprived areas, amongst those with mental health conditions and amongst pregnant women. [Mid-term Review TCS link](#).

A **Protect Life 2 Steering Group** has been set up and is meeting quarterly. The group is chaired by the Chief Medical Officer, Dr Michael McBride. Membership is comprised of representatives from Government Departments, Health and Social Care, local government and community and voluntary organisations.

The Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Seven Year

Strategy's yearly Action Plans continue to be delivered in partnership with key stakeholders. The Department co-Chairs a Stakeholder Assurance Group with DoJ. Members of the group include voluntary and community organisations who represent specific equality and disability groups. The Group met quarterly during 2020/21 via online meetings and workshops to share learning and best practice.

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

Consultations carried out by the Department can be found at <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations>. In conjunction with ECNI the Department introduced the new accessible equality screening form and is now using the updated version introduced in December 2020. Consultations for 2020/21 include:

[Draft Budget Outcome Consultation](#)

[Consultation on the Draft Mental Health Strategy 2021-2031](#)

[Legislative options to inform the development of an Adult Protection Bill for Northern Ireland](#)

[Public Consultation Document on the introduction of a statutory opt-out system for organ donation for Northern Ireland](#)

[Consultation on the New Substance Use Strategy](#)

[Consultation on Establishment of a Regional Care and Justice Campus](#)

[Temporary Amendment of the Health and Social Care Framework document for the period June 2020 to May 2022](#)

[Consultation on cross-departmental Covid-19 Vulnerable Children and Young People's Plan](#)

[Distributing vaccines and treatments for COVID-19 and flu](#)

[Department of Health - Update of consultation list](#)

[Consultation on proposed amendments to the pharmaceutical service regulations \(NI\) 1997](#)

The proposals to establish a **new regional service delivery model for separated and unaccompanied asylum seeking children (S/UASC)** in Northern Ireland where subject to targeted consultation and include a focus on enhancing the current service provision for S/UASC and on providing a regional and consistent approach to the delivery of services including ensuring the provision of age appropriate and accessible information about their situation and their rights, with language support services which enable them to communicate effectively and enhancement of child-centred and trauma-informed approaches throughout the care pathway and through to aftercare services.

Other (*please specify and give details*):

Where possible, the Department continues to promote Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations when consulting. All consultation documents include a section on the Section 75 statutory duties and pre-engagement and targeted consultation is encouraged with early stakeholder engagement as evidenced within this report.

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 2020-21 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:

Paragraph 2.9 of the Department's Equality Scheme sets out that, where relevant, employees' job descriptions and performance plans reflect their contributions to the discharge of the Section 75 statutory duties and implementation of the equality scheme.

Given its functions in relation to Section 75, all relevant staff within the Department's Corporate Management Directorate have included Equality duties as part of their job descriptions. This is also reflected, as appropriate, in other business areas across the Department. As duties and roles can change from one year to the next the focus is more on Annual Personal Performance Agreements (PPAs) see part 5 below.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2021-21 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:

Paragraph 2.9 of the Department's Equality Scheme sets out "Where relevant, employees' job descriptions and performance plans reflect their contributions to the discharge of the Section 75 statutory duties and implementation of the equality scheme. The personal performance plans are subject to appraisal in the annual performance review".

All staff in the Department have PPAs (Personal Performance Agreement) which include Personal Development Plans (PDPs). Each staff member agrees the content of these with their line manager according to their particular function. Where appropriate Section 75 duties are recorded and this may either be in relation to work planned for the coming year or particular training needs that have been identified in relation to that planned work. As noted in section 1(1) advice and guidance was circulated to staff with a specific notification encouraging sign-up to the Equality Commission webinars on **Section 75** and the **Disability Discrimination Act 1995**.

The implementation of the Department's Equality Scheme is directed and overseen by staff within the Department's Corporate Management Directorate. Section 75 duties are mainstreamed within policy development and policy leads are supported accordingly by staff within the Department's Equality and Human Rights Unit. The discharge of Section 75 duties are reflected as objectives in the personal performance plans of relevant staff within Corporate Management Directorate which are subject to an annual appraisal.

6 In the 2020-21 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? *(tick all that apply)*

- Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
- Yes, in some departments/jobs
- No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's ongoing corporate plan
- No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2020-21 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Business Planning

The Department continues to reflect the importance of promoting equality through measures that aim to reduce health inequalities and measures to implement the statutory duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order 2006.

Business plan objectives reflect Ministerial priorities and support the health commitments made in New Decade, New Approach (NDNA) and draft Programme for Government (PfG) framework, including the overarching outcome: *"We All Enjoy Long, Healthy, Active Lives"*. The goal is to work collaboratively with all delivery partners to enable and support citizens to take greater control over their own lives; to make healthy choices about how they live their lives; to create environments that makes such choices easier and to tackle the root causes of ill-health and reduce health inequalities.

The Business Plan cascades down through the Department and is reflected as appropriate in each business area's own plans. For example, the business plan for the Corporate Management Directorate references the role of the Equality and Human Rights Unit to provide advice relating to the compliances with

statutory equality obligations of equality and implementation of the Department's Equality Scheme and collation of inputs into other Equality related strategies together with ensuring proper monitoring of equality and disability obligations with timely reporting to ECNI.

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2020-21 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:	4	Actions ongoing:	20	Actions to commence:	0
--------------------	---	------------------	----	----------------------	---

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

A new Equality Action Plan (EAP) was published for 2019-2024 The Action Plan is attached and includes progress on actions in 2020/21:

- Service delivery during Covid-19.
- Consultation on the new substance use strategy – Preventing Harm and Empowering Recovery.
- Finalising of A Life Deserved “Caring” for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland.
- Implementation of the first year of programmes under Reform of Adult Social Care.
- Programme to raise awareness of cancer screening and promote informed choice via peer education - programme adapted for online delivery during the pandemic.
- Video info clips, shared on social media during the pandemic, to encourage women to attend maternity services.
- NI Maternity and Parenting Website developed to provide regional up to date information on COVID 19 during pregnancy and Trust specific service changes.

- Online virtual antenatal education available for all women and partners in NI with over 100 translations available.
- Effective operation of the **Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline** during the Covid-19 pandemic including additional guidance; 'Ask for ANI' pharmacy code word scheme; additional funding for initial care packages for families who have experienced or been a victim of domestic abuse; and piloting the Identification and Referral to Improve Safety ('IRIS') programme.

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2020-21 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

The EAP has been reviewed and a year 2 update included at Annex A. The Intended Outcome and Performance Indicator/ Target have been updated in respect of the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs Phase 2 to reflect the current position ie moving from a 'review/ evaluation of NSD Phase 2' to development of a new Substance Use Strategy.

The Performance Indicator and Target has also been updated in respect of the **Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Seven Year Strategy** to reflect publication of the Year 5 Action Plan for 2020/21.

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2020-21 reporting period, the following have been identified: (*tick all that apply*)

Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the known inequality

A new EAP and DAP were developed for 2019-24 and are attached, with year 2 updates, at Annex A.

Two areas listed on the **Disability Action Plan** have ended and are being progressed to the next stage:

- The Autism Strategy 2013-20 came to an end in December 2020. Preparatory work has been undertaken to inform priorities for a revised

strategy but stakeholder engagement was paused due to Covid-19. An Interim Autism Strategy 2021-2023 published in March 2021.

- The **UK Rare Diseases Strategy** came to a close in December 2020. In anticipation of this, work to develop a post-2020 UK wide Rare Diseases Framework was undertaken throughout 2019 and 2020, with NI taking part in a UK wide National Conversation survey in 2019. The results of the National Conversation informed the development of the **new UK Rare Diseases Framework** which was published in January 2021 by all 4 Health Ministers of the UK.

Work has now commenced in NI to develop a NI Rare Diseases Implementation Plan under the new Framework.



Action(s) to address the known inequality in a different way

An outstanding objective from the **Maternity Strategy 2012-2018** on BME will now be addressed with a population health needs assessment by the PHA for the maternity and neonatal review leading into the next maternity strategy. The PHA communications team also developed, and shared on social media, video info clips to encourage women to attend maternity services if they have any worries or concerns during the pandemic. They also developed a NI Maternity and Parenting Website for women and partners to provide regional up to date information on COVID 19 during pregnancy and Trust specific service changes. Further details and actions on maternity care are included in the EAP year 2 update at Annex A.

The Department recognised risks associated with Covid-19 and, under the **Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy**, a key priority was to ensure that essential services, such as the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline, continued to operate effectively and remain fully available during the covid-19 pandemic. This work is detailed in section 3(a) and on the EAP update and included:

- publication of additional guidance to ensure easy access contact details for different support organisations;
- development of the 'Ask for ANI' pharmacy code word scheme;
- additional funding to Women's Aid and uplifting of funding for Nexus NI and Men's Advisory Project;
- piloting of the Identification and Referral to Improve Safety ('IRIS') programme.

Action(s) to address newly identified inequalities/recently prioritised inequalities

The Department reacted quickly to the Covid-19 pandemic, introducing regulations⁴ and guidance to protect the population as a whole and, in particular, the most vulnerable.

'Covid' related screenings were completed and published on:

The Children's Social Care (Coronavirus) (Temporary Modification of Children's Social Care) Regulations (NI) 2020

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/childrens-social-care-coronavirus.pdf>

Proposed amendments to Pharmaceutical Services Regulations (NI) 1997

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/pharmaceutical-screening-q1-20-21.pdf>

COVID-19 Guidance - Foster Care and Supported Lodgings Settings in NI

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/covid19-foster-care-supported-lodgings-screening.pdf>

The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) Regs (NI) 2020

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/corono-international-travel-screening.pdf>

The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) Regs (NI) 2020

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/corono-international-travel-human-rights-assessment.pdf>

COVID-19: Guidance for Providers of 16-21+ Supported Accommodation Projects

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/Covid19-16-21-supported-accomodation-projects.pdf>

COVID 19: Guidance for providers of Adoption Services

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/covid19-guidance-providers-adoption->

⁴ <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/covid-19-legislation>

[services.pdf](#)

COVID CARE NI Advisory Service

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/covid-care-ni-advisory-service.pdf>

Covid-19: Guidance for Residential Children’s Homes in NI

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/covid19-guidance-residential-childrens-homes.pdf>

Nightingale Project – Second Wave surge planning

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/nightingale-project-second-wave%20screening.pdf>

Vaccination Booking Platform

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/screening-online-covid-booking.pdf>

Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (NI) 2021

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/screening-coronavirus-regulations-21.pdf>

Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) Regs (NI) 2021

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/screening-coronavirus-international%20travel-21.pdf>

Grant Scheme to Support Carers

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/screening-template-grant-scheme-carers.pdf>

In June 2020 Minister Swann launched the **Strategic Framework for Rebuilding Health and Social Care Services**, acknowledging the massive challenge faced in rebuilding health and social care in the wake of the first Covid-19 wave. See section 1 for more details.

Work continued with the Department of Education (DE) on finalising the new Strategy for **Looked after Children** and care-experienced young people: A Life Deserved “Caring” for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland. In tandem with this work, a number of actions were progressed in 2020-21 including placement of 121 specialist foster carers across all Trusts; and preparations with a provider regarding training and development. More detail is included in the EAP year 2 update.

✕ Measures to address a prioritised inequality have been completed

The Strategy for Looked After Children was published in February 2021. An update on progress on related actions is included in the EAP.

The **Sexual Health Action Plan**, originally scheduled for 2019-2023 was agreed in January 2020 and will now run from 2020- 2025.

The **Improving Health within Criminal Justice Strategy** and Action Plan were published in June 2020. The Action Plan will run for an initial 3 year period.

The **E-Health and Data Analytics Pathfinder** – Dementia Project Phase II project was completed in July 2020. A number of follow on actions continue. An external evaluation of the Pathfinder project concluded that significant progress has been made across all strands however, it is acknowledged that the true value of this investment will be in the extent to which the products / outcomes from the project can be used to inform and improve service design and practice into the future, most crucially, the roll-out of the regional Dementia Care Pathway.

Further detail can be found on the EAP

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

Despite the impact of, and additional pressures due to, Covid-19, the Department undertook a number of consultations. Pre-engagement and targeted consultation is encouraged with, for example, early and targeted stakeholder engagement held on:

The Department of Health led on the development of a **Covid-19 Vulnerable Children and Young People's Plan**, produced on a cross-departmental basis with Departments of Communities, Education, Justice, and Economy.

The plan was developed in response to the challenges and risks facing children,

young people and their families due to the Covid-19 pandemic and was intended to reflect a series of activities that will be, or have been, undertaken across the Executive to meet the needs of vulnerable children, young people and their families during this time and in the recovery period after. A targeted consultation ran from 18 September 2020 to 13 November 2020 and was aimed at helping to support the next steps in rebuilding services to meet the needs of vulnerable children and young people.

The Department of Health (DoH) and Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) have been developing proposals for a **new regional service delivery model for separated and unaccompanied asylum seeking children (S/UASC)** in Northern Ireland. Co-production has been and will continue to be central to the design and development of the proposals as it is recognised that the input of those children, service providers and other partners with first-hand experience of the services for separated and unaccompanied asylum seeking children will be integral to the success of a new model.

As recognised in the Equality Commission's guidance on consulting and involving children and young people, the DoH/HSCB Project Team leading on the development of the proposals was cognisant of the need to ensure that the cultural needs of separated and unaccompanied asylum seeking children were taken into account in planning the early engagement with them and that engagement was appropriately designed to ensure participation of these children and young people within an environment in which they felt safe to share their stories. Challenges around the Covid-19 pandemic and ensuring compliance with public health advice also had to be factored into the planning processes. The Project Team invited the Voice of Young People in Care (VOYPIC) to put forward a proposal for engagement based on its in-depth knowledge of working with and advocating for this cohort of children and young people.

The approach adopted by VOYPIC was centred on ensuring that engagement was designed to be flexible and to best meet the individual support needs of the young people taking part, with engagement led by 2 VOYPIC Youth Rights

Workers (YRW) with experience of supporting separated and unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people, with support from an interpreter where necessary. Given the experience of these young people who are required to participate in multiple interviews as part of their asylum process, it was decided that the engagement would take place in the form of conversations, to be held wherever and however the young people felt most comfortable. For most, this involved one-to-one, face-to-face discussions with the young people where they lived, or, in some cases, away from their place of residence, in a public park; all engagement adhered to the relevant COVID-19 restrictions and public health advice. Where necessary, telephone interpretation services were used. Conversations were designed to evoke discussion around the young people's personal experiences since arriving in Northern Ireland and their views on key areas related to the development of a new service model. Young people were approached through their social worker, key worker or accommodation provider, with 10 young people agreeing to take part in discussions with the VOYPIC YRWs.

A child rights approach has been adopted in the development of the proposals and a child rights impact assessment was also completed for the proposals, with advice taken from the NI Commissioner for Children and Young People.

Finally, an early engagement questionnaire was issued to a number of key stakeholders in August 2020. The inputs from the various strands of early engagement were used to inform the development of the proposals, which were issued for targeted consultation in May 2021 in the next stage of the policy development process. The consultation questionnaire seeks stakeholder views on how to ensure appropriate and ongoing engagement with children and young people throughout the further development and design of the service model, through to implementation. The views of children and young people and key stakeholders will also be sought around participation of children and young people in future monitoring and review arrangements.

- 11** Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2020-21 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:

Of the consultations carried out this year, good practice examples include:

- Use of an independent facilitator to act as host and report-writer for three extremely well-received on-line / virtual public consultation events as part of the recent consultation on the new **Substance Use Strategy**.
- As detailed in section 1.1 and section 3, an **Advance Care Planning (ACP) Policy for Adults** is being developed with the principle of coproduction and engagement, inclusive of all including those with communication barriers and difficulties, acknowledging all ethical and cultural requirements. Accessibility arrangements were put in place during phase1 early stakeholder engagement. This included:
 - Providing written information electronically a number of weeks prior to sessions
 - Providing BSL interpreters
 - Offer of pre meetings
 - Increased engagement session timings

At these sessions the ACP Policy Team learnt that accessibility and inclusiveness could be further enhanced to maximise engagement opportunities. The need for an inclusive and accessible approach to ensure effective access, communication and engagement was expressed by representative groups for the following cohorts:

- Learning disability community
- Deaf/blind community
- Those with non-verbal communication
- Those with Cognitive Impairment

To further enhance inclusiveness and accessibility of phase 2 engagement

sessions the ACP Policy team have undertaken the following activities to ensure the needs of all are met.

- Contacted Equality Unit (DoH) for advice
- Liaised directly with Equality Unit at BSO
- Engaged with PaLs (Business Service Organisations Procurement and Logistics Service) to identify appropriate service providers for ISL/BSL & Braille translation.

The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) participated in an ACP Policy engagement session on 15th February 2021 and expressed an interest in providing advice. Subsequently an advisory report was commissioned and produced in May 2021. In addition, RNIB provided accessibility advice on the second draft of the policy. An accessible version has been produced and circulated in line with the RNIB advice to all those who registered for the phase II events.

The engagement sessions and follow up meeting with British Deaf Association identified that some of the concepts within the draft Advance Care Planning Policy are new to those in the deaf community and direct translation into ISL and BSL is not the best option. Therefore the ACP programme team have been working with British Deaf Association to see how best the concepts can be explained to those in the deaf community, and will produce materials to support the deaf community engagement.

Advance Care Planning Programme Team members have all now completed Communication Access UK (CAUK) training and have been accredited by CAUK.

The Northern Ireland Council for Racial Equality (NICRE) attended the first phase stakeholder engagement and will be part of the phase II events. NICRE have also provided advice on the languages required for translation for the draft policy for public consultation.

- As detailed in (10) above, in developing a targeted consultation to establish a new regional service delivery model for **S/UASC**, engagement with VOYPIC ensured appropriate methods of engagement with this group of children and young people.

Policy leads are encouraged to publish their draft/provisional screening with the consultation documents and these can be found with the consultation documents at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations>

Where appropriate the inclusion of easy read versions are included. For 2020/21 easy read versions were produced for:

- The draft ten year **Mental Health Strategy** designed to improve mental health outcomes for people in Northern Ireland which also included a Children's and Young Persons version.
- The consultation on Legislative options to inform the development of an **Adult Protection Bill** for Northern Ireland.
- Consultation on Northern Ireland's new substance use strategy "**Making Life Better – Preventing Harm and Empowering Recovery: A Strategic Framework to Tackle the Harm from Substance Use**"
- Consultation on Improving health within criminal justice.

A Children's version was also produced for The Department of Health and Department of Justice joint consultation on proposals to establish a regional Care and Justice Campus for children and young people.

Following Executive agreement the new Strategy for looked after children and care-experienced young people: **A Life Deserved "Caring" for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland** was published on 19 February 2021, alongside children's and teenage versions. More detail is available on the EAP year 2 update.

12 In the 2020-21 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: (*tick all that apply*)

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

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:

Due to Covid-19 and restrictions in place, face to face meetings, in-person focus groups or workshops etc were not generally permitted. The Department continued to engage, where possible, by electronic means eg

A 12 week public consultation on proposals to establish a regional **Care and Justice Campus** launched in October 2020. Proposals contained in the consultation document were developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders including statutory authorities, academics, NGOs, staff and their representatives in both Lakewood and Woodlands, children and young people with experience of the Secure Care Centre. A Programme's Stakeholder Reference Group facilitated this engagement — VOYPIC, Start360, Include Youth, NIACRO, Extern.

The new **Substance Use Strategy** was co-developed & co-designed and issued for public consultation from October 2020 to February 2021. The consultation involved an Online Survey, a series of independently-facilitated Stakeholder Engagement Events, and Bi-Lateral Meetings.

In developing proposals for a **new regional service delivery model for separated and unaccompanied asylum seeking children (S/UASC)** in Northern Ireland, engagement with young people was in the form of ‘conversations’ held wherever and however the young people felt most comfortable. For most, this involved one-to-one, face-to-face discussions with the young people where they lived, with support from an interpreter where necessary; all engagement adhered to the relevant COVID-19 restrictions and public health advice. In some cases, discussions were carried out away from the young person’s place of residence, in a public park. Where necessary, telephone interpretation services were used. Conversations were designed not to follow a standard interview process of ‘question and answer’, but rather to evoke discussion around key areas and the young person’s personal experiences. Finally, an early engagement questionnaire was issued to a number of key stakeholders in August 2020.

As part of the consultation on the **Draft Mental Health strategy**, the Department hosted a number of virtual consultation events via Zoom. The first was held in January 2021 with further events advertised on the DoH consultation page. Small, themed consultation meetings in March 2021 provided an opportunity for individuals to virtually meet with the Strategy Project Team to discuss specific actions:

- Early intervention/prevention
- Community mental health
- Psychological therapy/digital model
- Children’s mental health
- Dual diagnosis
- Pharmacy/medicine management

PART A

- Specialist interventions
- Data and Outcomes
- Single mental health service
- Workforce

13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2020-21 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The Equality Scheme, the DAP, EAP, equality screenings, and other equality information is available on the DoH website.

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2020-21 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes No Not applicable – no commitment to review

A central list of stakeholders is maintained with details of areas of interest to allow a stakeholder to opt in or out. This list was reviewed and updated in November 2020 including contact preference. In order to ensure that it consults as widely as possible the department also included a request on the DoH consultation page seeking new consultee / stakeholder contacts.

<http://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations/department-health-update-consultation-list>

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

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

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

13

In line with Equality Scheme commitments the Department publishes completed screenings on its website on a quarterly basis. Completed screenings for 2020/21 can be found at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/doh-equality#toc-4>

Individual endorsement of National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance by DoH was suspended in 2020-21 due to Covid-19.

16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2020-21:

9*	Policy consultations conducted with screening assessment presented.
1	Policy consultations conducted with an equality impact assessment (EQIA) presented.
0	Consultations for an EQIA alone.

* Excludes NICE.

11 consultations were published on the Department website in 2020-21. Of these, 6 included screening assessments (including one EQIA). The Distributing Vaccines for Covid-19 and Flu was a UK (DHSC) consultation and the Review of the Departments Consultee List did not require an assessment.

The remaining 3 did not include screenings as:

- The Legislative options to inform the development of an **Adult Protection Bill** for Northern Ireland included reference to equality screening in the consultation document stating that “this consultation on legislative options to inform the development of an Adult Protection Bill has been equality screened and a preliminary decision has been taken that a full equality impact assessment is not required at this stage. The preliminary decision is subject to change following analysis of feedback received during this consultation.
- Consultation on cross-departmental **Covid-19 Vulnerable Children and Young People's Plan** was developed in response to the challenges and risks facing children, young people and their families due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It reflected a series of activities that will be, or have been, undertaken across the Executive to meet the needs of vulnerable children, young people and their families during this time and in the recovery period after. This was a cross-departmental project subject to a targeted consultation.
- The consultation on proposed amendments to the **pharmaceutical service regulations (NI) 1997** included equality questions in the consultation document.

An EQIA formed part of the consultation on the Draft Mental Health Strategy with consultation taking place from 18 January to 12 April 2021.

Please note that the policies recorded in the screening reports and assessments consulted on may not be the same as draft screenings are usually published as part of the consultation but a screening may not be finalised and included in the screening report in the same period.

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

Consultations carried out in 2020/21 are published on the Departmental website at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations>

As noted above an EQIA was included in the consultation on the Draft Mental Health Strategy.

- 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

Following receipt of a complaint received on 1 March 2021 on The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Wearing of Face Coverings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 and all applied amendments, a retrospective equality screening was carried out. The complainant alleged that the Department had failed to apply its policies as part of the screening process and EQIA and that the Departments failure to comply with Section 75 duties had had a continuous devastating and detrimental impact on the complainant and on the most vulnerable in our society.

An equality screening was carried out retrospectively and concluded that there was no negative impact on S75 groups and the intention of the regulations was to safeguard and protect the population as a whole. An EQIA was not considered necessary. More detail included in section 27.

again in February 2019 with the Department's Information Research Branch to discuss monitoring, and in particular, ethnic monitoring within the Department. TEO, who have responsibility for racial equality, are considering the report and DOH is actively involved in progressing this matter. The proposed HSC Encompass programme which will replace all existing systems and collect data centrally and make it available across the HSC (collect it once and share) will have the facility to record ethnicity data. The new system is expected to commence roll out in Spring 2023 over a 18 month to 2 year period.

Information and research carried out by the Department is available at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/doh-statistics-and-research>

- 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:

Monitoring information is used widely across the department to inform progress on various strategies, and address emerging pressures. The information is used in decision making and in assessing equality impacts of policies etc. Information is routinely collated on a number of areas with additional information collated as required through targeted monitoring or as part of the consultation process. Information can be found at <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/doh-statistics-and-research> and includes:

Health Inequalities

The [Health inequalities annual report 2021](#) is one of a series of reports produced as part of the NI Health & Social Care Inequalities Monitoring System (HSCIMS). The report presents a comprehensive analysis of health inequality gaps between the most and least deprived areas of NI and within

HSC Trust and LGD areas, across a range of health indicators. Areas covered include life expectancy, alcohol, smoking and drug related indicators, premature mortality, pregnancy and early years, childhood obesity and mental health.

Health Survey

The [Health Survey \(NI\)](#) includes questions relating to general health, long term conditions, mental health and wellbeing, loneliness, smoking, e-cigarettes, alcohol, BMI, and fruit and veg consumption. Due to the impact of COVID-19, the 2020/21 health survey moved from household interview to telephone mode. This resulted in a much shorter questionnaire and although some S75 variables were collected, we did not have all the variables we would normally collect; ethnic group and sexual orientation were not included.

Quarterly [Autism Statistics](#) for NI are published with attached tables which present the number and the rate of accepted referrals for children's autism assessments and the number and the rate of children diagnosed with autism in each of the Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts in Northern Ireland.

Information on Mental Health and Learning Disability can be found at <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/mental-health-and-learning-disabilities>

Hospital statistics, Family Health Services statistics and Covid-19 statistics were also published.⁵

Information gathered informs priorities within the Department and ensures informed monitoring of impacts on S75 groups.

The Department was also involved in the ECNI initiative to develop **Section**

⁵ <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/doh-statistics-and-research>

75 Signposting Guidance to assist in the equality screening process.

- 22 Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2020-21 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/ adverse impacts previously assessed:

Emerging evidence of a disproportionate impact of Covid on ethnic minorities, including the Roma community, were of particular focus during 2020/21 with awareness of the need to ensure that all minority groups were reached with regard to Covid risks and messaging, together with alternative means of delivering ongoing services including adaptation of maternity services messaging and operation of the Domestic and Sexual Abuse services.

- 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:

Monitoring of the Covid pandemic resulted in decisions being made to protect the more vulnerable and to ensure messaging reached all groups including those with underlying health conditions, older age groups etc. The Covid Dashboard made information publicly available in a timely fashion and the vaccination programme was rolled out based on those likely to be at most risk. As the programme progressed messaging moved to encourage other eligible groups to be vaccinated eg ethnic minorities and younger people.

More general examples include **statistics and reports** on health inequalities, lifestyle choices and behaviour, and autism. Statistics and reports are listed on the Departmental website at:

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/doh-statistics-and-research>

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/type/statisticalreports>

On 2 February 2021, the EHRU issued an email to Equality Leads in the

HSCTs and to all Community and Voluntary (C&V) groups on our S75 contact list promoting involvement in the Census 2021 on Sunday 21 March 2021. The purpose was to encourage participation in the census to ensure it represents everyone.

The e-mail included information and links to information leaflets in different languages, including easy read pdfs for anyone with learning difficulties or literacy issues. We specifically highlighted information for C& V Groups and a link to the Census Engagement Team for those wishing to help.

The aim was to ensure inclusion of more robust and accurate data in the next census for use in policy and decision making.

We had a positive response from groups who were going to circulate and promote the information.

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 2020-21, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

The key actions set out in para 5.4 of the Department's Equality Scheme were completed in line with the timetable of the Scheme. Staff continue to have access to a summary and a full copy of the Equality Scheme, on the Departmental intranet. Further messaging and awareness of processes during the Covid pandemic were circulated to staff to ensure awareness of Section 75 requirements.

All available CAL courses are circulated to staff regularly throughout the year.

The Department's web pages, and Intranet pages, are regularly updated and contain a useful source of information and ECNI guidance for staff on

Section 75 matters.

As detailed in section 1, the EHRU also circulated details of:

- relevant training offered by NIHRC/ CAL/ ECNI.
- the Equality Commission webinars on Section 75 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
- advice regarding statutory obligations in relation to Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act during the Covid 19 pandemic, including concerns raised by the Equality Commission.
- the Equality Commission on-line event to launch the data sign-posting guidance 'Section 75: Using Evidence in Policy Making'.
- advice on equality obligations and the new accessible screening template.
- Equality Commission (ECNI) 'Briefing Note on Need for Equality Data'

During 2020-21 the EHRU developed a Research and Data page for the DoH staff intranet. The page includes links to a wide range of resources including ECNI information and Data Signposting Guide; and LGBT and Ethnic Minority websites and research.

Diversity Now Training

Refresher diversity training e-learning is completed by all staff every 3 years, and for new staff. Currently most new staff transferring from elsewhere in the NICS do not require the training.

Awareness Raising

Full details of events, publications and awareness raising are included in section 1(1) and Annex C and include awareness seminars on disability/ diversity related themes under the Deliver Together Programme, articles

published on the intranet and staff magazine and other initiatives.

The Disability Action Plan for 2019-2024 includes a number of targets on training and awareness raising including liaison with the Equality Commission to arrange and deliver training on Section 75 and disability duties to Department staff, including senior management. Due to resource issues within the EHRU, and additional Departmental pressures due to EU Exit and then Covid-19, this area has not progressed.

- 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:

Due to Covid restrictions no classroom or face to face training took place in 2020-21. Section 1(1) and Annex C outlines training, seminars and events available to staff.

Due to the unique circumstances of the past year, with most staff working from home, much of the training/ awareness raising focussed on mental health and well-being of staff, with the Department recognising the needs of staff and also their contribution in responding to the needs of the population during the pandemic.

The pandemic, and other events during 2020-21 also brought Ethnic Minorities and other diversity issues to the fore. Annex C includes some awareness raising on these issues.

The Department's Equality Unit continues to be involved with individual screenings with a view to improving the quality of the content and to ensure the staff working on the policy are more aware of the relevance of equality to their work.

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

26 Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2020-21, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

The Department adapted quickly to the Covid situation ensuring public health messages and information were made available by public advertising campaigns and on the Department and Public Health Agency websites. By February 2021, the NIDirect website allowed for instant translation of information via Google translate.

The Department website included Advice for People with Disabilities:

- [Advice for blind and partially sighted people during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Supporting people with learning disabilities and/or autism\(external link opens in a new window / tab\)](#)
- [Irish Sign Language Video - Important Information about COVID-19\(external link opens in a new window / tab\)](#)
- [British Sign Language Video - Important Information about COVID-19\(external link opens in a new window / tab\)](#)
- [COVID-19: The Safe and Legal Use of Restraint and Seclusion in Mental Health and Learning Disability Services during the Coronavirus Period](#)

The Public Health Agency (PHA) engaged with Vulnerable Groups and Ethnic minorities on COVID-19 and developed a **Contact Tracing Vulnerable Groups Action Plan** to facilitate this engagement, recognising the increased risks for specific vulnerable groups within the Northern Ireland population and a need to put measures in place to support proactive steps to optimise testing, tracing and compliance with PHA COVID-19 Guidelines. PHA continued links with Inter-Ethnic Forum staff, providing

voice-over of relevant information; re-issue of prevention messages; supporting staff who are self-isolating to ensure they have adequate support; bi-lingual support as required on mobile testing sites.

The Action Plan had particular focus on early intervention, prevention and reacting quickly to outbreaks within vulnerable groups is vital to reduce the numbers testing positive for COVID-19 and subsequent potential deaths.

Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Interpreting Service (NIHSCIS)

Previously demand for interpreting services within HSCTs had continued to grow year on year with 132,434 requests in 2019/20 for the top 20 languages (a small rise from 130,025 in 2018/19 but a significant increase from 114,382 in 2017/18 and 106,541 in 2016/17). However, in 2020-2021 only 60,550 requests were recorded. This was put down to a significant reduction in demand for face to face interpreting when “lockdown” was announced on 23 March 2020. A gradual increase in demand was noted from the beginning of June 2020.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

27 How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2020-21?

Insert number here:

2

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

5 complaints were submitted to the Equality and Human Rights Unit but only 2 were deemed to fall under the Equality Scheme for investigation:

(1) A complaint was received in August 2020 alleging a failure to properly screen the Mental Health Action Plan. The basis of the complaint included:

- a lack of data in respect of LGBT+

- flawed identification of impact on LGBT+
- no specific mention of LGBT+ people or their mental health needs in the Mental Health Action Plan.

In response the Department noted that the Mental Health Action Plan is the first in a series of steps the Department is taking to ensure those suffering from mental health will be able to access the services they need, when they need them. The intended outcome is to improve the general mental health of all people in Northern Ireland and, primarily, about delivering good quality mental health services when they are needed in the population as a whole.

The Action Plan provides foundations for the Mental Health Strategy and is, as such, intended to be short lived, and provide basis for decisions and make immediate service improvements.

With regard to data, the Department acknowledged a lack of up-to-date data and welcomed resources forwarded by the complainant. The EHRU issued an information e-mail and added these resources to the Department intranet, to ensure use of more recent information in future screenings. However, while consideration of more recent data would have been preferable, it was not considered that this would have changed the position in the screening for the Action Plan. The specific needs of LGBT+ will be considered at policy, project and service development level.

It was concluded that the policy area had not breached the Department of Health Equality Scheme and that the equality screening of the Mental Health Action Plan was properly conducted in line with NICS, Departmental and Equality Commission guidance. The Draft Mental Health Strategy, including a full EQIA, issued for consultation in December 2020.

(2) March 2021 – complaint alleging disability discrimination and a failure to

screen The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Wearing of Face Coverings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 and all applied amendments. The complainant alleged that the Department had failed to apply its policies as part of the screening process and EQIA and that the Departments failure to comply with Section 75 duties had had a continuous devastating and detrimental impact on the complainant and on the most vulnerable in our society.

The Department accepted it had failed in implementing commitments under the Equality Scheme, in so far as an equality screening exercise was not carried out at the time. However, while a formal screening document was not completed at the time, consideration was given to Section 75 groups with decisions made to protect the most vulnerable. The circumstances in which the Department was working, including the pressing need to respond promptly to emerging threats during the pandemic and the allocation of resources, should be taken into account. A retrospective screening of The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Wearing of Face Coverings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 was completed and did not change the decision made. The screening recorded a positive impact in respect of disability and other S75 groups based on the protections afforded. The intention of the regulations being to safeguard and protect the population as a whole. An EQIA was not considered necessary

Regarding the complaint detailing disability discrimination, while acknowledging the distress suffered, the investigation concluded that the Department acted quickly in the best interests of the maximum number of people, taking into account medical and scientific advice. The aim was, and continues to be, to benefit all S75 groups, in particular older people and those with a disability who may be more at risk from Covid-19. The complainant has raised the complaint with ECNI and NIPSO for further investigation.

Section 3: Looking Forward

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

The Department's Equality Scheme was approved by the Equality Commission on 28 March 2012 and is currently under review.

The Scheme issued for public consultation in January 2017 with a closing date for responses by 10 April 2017. Consultation responses are under consideration and a draft Equality Scheme will be put to Minister Swann, for approval in due course.

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)*

Finalisation of a new Equality Scheme was delayed due to the absence of a Minister and now due to COVID-19; however, the Department continued to raise awareness of the equality duties by direct contact with policy areas; highlighting issues by e-mail and through the staff magazine 'Pulse'. ECNI training courses were circulated to staff. The Equality and Human Rights Unit continues to work closely with policy leads to improve the screening process.

30 In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2021-22) 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):
 - Training on Section 75 and disability duties.
 - Completion of a revised Equality Scheme.

The Department has oversight responsibility for the 17 arm's length bodies which, together, make up the health, social care and public safety system.

- Belfast HSC Trust
- Blood Transfusion Service
- Business Services Organisation
- Health and Social Care Board
- NI Ambulance Service HSC Trust
- NI Fire and Rescue Service
- NI Guardian Ad Litem Agency
- NI Medical and Dental Training Agency
- NI Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery
- NI Social Care Council
- Northern HSC Trust
- Patient Client Council
- Public Health Agency
- Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority
- Southern HSC Trust
- South Eastern HSC Trust
- Western HSC Trust

ANNEX A

A copy of the Equality Action Plan for 2019-2024, with year 2 updates for 2020-2021, is attached at Annex A.

ANNEX B

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

Relevant ongoing actions are included in the Disability Action Plan for 2019-2024. The Action Plan with year 2 updates for 2020-2021 is attached at Annex B.

ANNEX C

Notifications to all staff during 2020-21 included:

- acknowledging the work of staff in responding to the mental health and emotional wellbeing needs of the population during the pandemic and signposting HSC developed resources which may be of benefit to staff and their families, for example, an **HSC Apps Library** which provides safe and approved apps for download to help people with a range of issues, such as sleep management, anxiety and stress.
- advertising free **Stress Control classes** and a wide range of other supports e.g. material to support those bereaved. The classes were repeated at different times each week to give people more flexibility.
- promoting the **NICS Health & Wellbeing Seminar Series** - delivered by Inspire and stressing the importance of staying connected and feeling supported. Seminars included Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction and Anti-Stigma and Mental Health Awareness.

- advertising a seminar on “Let’s talk about sexual health (again)!” by the NICS LGBT Network, in partnership with NICS WELL, aimed at helping to support good overall physical and mental health, as well as social and emotional wellbeing. Designed for all colleagues, regardless of gender, sexual identity or age. The event also highlighted issues affecting women and young people with presentations from Common Youth (formerly Brook NI) and a menopause nurse who gave staff and managers a practical overview and understanding of the menopause – what are the symptoms and how can these be managed? Seminar was aimed at parents wanting advice on how to handle those difficult conversations with young people or those interested from a personal or professional point of view.
- promotion of Inclusive Building Design for those with **Cognitive and Sensory Impairment Seminar** in association with the Global Brain Health Institute (GBHI). The conference focussed on how to create a more inclusive and equitable society for people living with cognitive, sensory and/or physical impairments while reducing health and social care costs.
- **TEO Racial Equality webinar**. The webinar gave an overview of the Racial Equality Unit in TEO with a view to creating an inclusive workplace where diversity is valued. The webinar also included a presentation from Dr Livingstone Thomson on UN Decade for People of African descent, including a focus on recognition, justice and experience of Africans, and a presentation from Dr Lucy Michael on language and terms used around race.
- Stronger Together Network presentation on the **EU Settlement Scheme** outlining updates and requirements including widening of Scheme in August 2020 to allow non-EU family members of ‘relevant people from NI’ to apply.
- The **Diversity Mark NI Newsletter** included information on the findings of the McKenzie-Delis Packer Review on Diversity and Inclusion in the UK workplace. The NICS participated in the D&I survey which formed the basis of the Review and encompassed race and ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental health, disability, socioeconomic background, nationality, religion, and parenthood. The review was commissioned to broaden the awareness and understanding of visible

and invisible segments of diversity and better understand how organisations are reporting, measuring and taking action to become more inclusive and diverse employers.

- **TEO Diversity Group's Mental Health webinar** and accompanying presentations by Lindsay Robinson, a blogger, writer, speaker and campaigner for Maternal Mental Health, who spoke about Perinatal Mental Health and the help available in coping with this condition, and Paul Tracey who helps people with significant mental health concerns, confidence building and coping skills, who demonstrated two techniques to help people to cope with, and improve their, mental health.
- Deliver Together team circulated to all staff details and promotional video for the Chinese New Year 2021 virtual celebrations, presented by the Chinese Welfare Association (CWA).
- **NICS Online Seminar on Domestic Violence and Abuse Awareness** – aim to educate and raise awareness of the key issues around domestic abuse and inform agencies of how they can help support victims and survivors
- **Well Mind** - Dealing with stress and its impact on your health (Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke).
- **'Leading with Dignity'** by Dr Donna Hicks, an Associate at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, and the former Deputy Director of the Program on International Conflict Analysis and Resolution (PICAR).
- **Caring for the Carer: First, Care for Yourself** - live seminar presented by Anne Costello (Inspire), a mindfulness consultant with 15 years' experience.

NICS Live Online seminars for Feb 2021 were circulated and later placed on the staff intranet for those who couldn't attend to view at their convenience:

- Fit your own oxygen mask first - practical techniques for building resilience and mental wellbeing
- More Power to your Pocket - the Consumer Council provided practical advice to help save money, particularly relevant this year with many households spending more time at home and may have noticed their spending has changed for example, increased energy use or bigger food bills.
- Mindfulness for Self Care - simple but effective Mindfulness techniques to effectively manage stress in daily life - at work and at home

The '**Upcoming Events**' bulletin included:

- Grassroot Sports Cafe – an Online Interactive Sport Talk Show run by the Ethnic Minority Sports Organisation NI - EMSONI to create periodic opportunities for people to air their views on topical sport related issues live on their Facebook, Instagram and Youtube platforms.
- Stronger Together NI events calendar detailing a range of events including yoga, mindfulness and creative writing.
- Stronger Together Census Information Event with NISRA to raise awareness and focus on BAME issues and data collection for the upcoming Northern Ireland Census, giving members an opportunity to engage with NISRA with a Question and Answers session aimed at BAME groups and organisations. Included links to NISRA's 'Get Involved leaflets' – translated Census information in 18 languages.
- Building breathing room for diversity – a split panel discussion chaired by Dr Michael Wardlow, former chief commissioner of the Equality Commission, with a range of speakers addressing questions such as how the churches here in Northern Ireland have contributed to the conversation around race and racism; whether race-informed power structures are at play in the churches and what ecclesial inclusion looks like.

- Trauma, Forgiveness and Reconciliation Webinar by Candice Mama the author of “Forgiveness Redefined” who started her work in forgiveness, reconciliation, and trauma after her story of forgiving apartheid assassin and her father’s murderer, Eugene De Kock, made international news. Having been inundated with requests to show people how to forgive she went on to become an award-winning international speaker, who’s story has been heard by the Dalai Lama.

Advice NI information on:

- Free EUSS information sessions, by zoom, with Advice NI and Migrant Centre NI immigration advisers in English, Lithuanian, Romanian and Polish.
- Q&A session with Seraphus/EU Delegation solicitors and Advice NI immigration advisers.
- Promotion of Advice NI’s free and confidential advice & support to anyone who wishes to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme.
- Exploring Race and Racism Workshops by Stronger Together NI - Three online sessions including ‘Historical Context’, ‘What does Race mean to me?’ and ‘Beyond the race Conversation’.
- COVID impact on support for migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers – a free online QUB event with Dr Aisling O’Boyle presenting on ‘Gathering evidence on the impact of COVID-19 on pre-existing community programmes supporting the social integration and English language education of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers’.
- Ethnicity and Covid-19: Addressing the impact of the pandemic on Black and Minority Ethnic people – a Joseph Rowntree Foundation event.