

Tourism Northern Ireland



**Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties
Annual Progress Report**

Contact details:

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan	As above <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:	Tourism NI Equality Scheme

This report has been prepared using a template circulated by the Equality Commission.

It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties and implementing Equality Scheme commitments and Disability Action Plans.

This report reflects progress made between April 2023 and March 2024

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

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

- 1 In 2023-24, please provide examples of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.**

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

Tourism NI provides funding support for capital development-based projects through the Tourist Industry Scheme (TIS). Between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, Tourism NI supported a range of projects throughout Northern Ireland via the Experience Development Programme 2021-23.

Projects funded under TIS aim to promote equality of opportunity between all the Section 75 Groups. Projects assisted by Tourism NI also aim to promote good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, gender, disability, marital status, dependants, and sexual orientation, all of whom can enjoy the benefits offered by the investment in our tourism infrastructure, tourist amenities, visitor attractions and visitor experiences equally.

Section 75 is included as a standard element within all capital programme guidelines and Letters of Offer.

As part of the application process, applicants must outline how their project will meet Section 75 duties. This element of the application form is an assessed criterion on which applicants are scored. Section 75 is also an integral part of the monitored conditions within Tourism NI's Letter of Offer to successful applicants.

Experience Development Programme 2021-23

The Experience Development Programme (EDP) was designed to develop new, as well as enhance existing tourism experiences. In 2023/24, **3** projects accepted offers of financial assistance under EDP (**See Table 1 below**). All 3 projects were initially included in 2022-2023 EDP but could not be completed within the time frame so approval was given to subsequently carry over into 2023/24.

The programme overall aimed to:

- Develop new and enhanced demand generating tourism experiences to support tourism recovery and growth.
- Improve the range and quality of experiences throughout Northern Ireland in line with our experience brand – *Northern Ireland Embrace a Giant Spirit*.

As an outcomes-based programme the objectives was to fund projects which demonstrated the best prospects of delivering on the outcome.

- Increase our domestic and international reputation as an attractive holiday destination
- Build the number of visitors who come here
- Increase the length of time visitors spend here
- Increase the amount of money that visitors spend per head
- Support the growth of our large, medium, and small tourism businesses
- Support the development of an economically and environmentally sustainable tourism economy
- Support regional and seasonal extension
- Support the growth and development of our night-time economy offer.

The 3 Letters of Offer contained monitored clauses relating to both:

- Disability Access
- Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

As part of their conditions the project provider was required to explain how their project promoted good relations and ensured inclusivity. Providers achieved this through a range of varying means, for example:

- Experience infrastructure designed in line with accessibility standards to meet the requirements of the DDA 1995 – e.g., accessible parking, ramps, automatic doors, lifts, disability toilet facilities, hearing enhancement systems e.g. hearing loops for hearing impaired, aids for visually impaired, simple language for individuals with cognitive disabilities and reduced glare for people with visual sensitivity.
- Training with staff on Equality, disability awareness and S75 requirements.
- Providing information on their website on the inclusivity of their experience.
- Providing information on-site in accessible formats – e.g., large print, braille, audio formats.
- Considering accessibility of routes on walking tours and sensory experience.
- Provision of audio enhanced designed tours which provide clear and audible information for people with hearing impairment.
- Consulting with varying groups and communities on the inclusivity of the experience.

Table 1: Experience Development Programme 2021 -2023

Project Name		Value Approved
1.	The Llama Experience	£129,815.83
2.	Friels Famine and Folklore Experience	£168,030.21
3.	Maritime Mile Connectivity	£73,625.96
Total:		£371,472

International Tourism Events Funding Programme 2023/24

Tourism NI's **International Tourism Events Fund Programme** for 2023/24 supported **9** international tourism events occurring between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024 (See **Table 2 below**).

Applications for financial support were scored against key criteria and requirements, including:

Equality of opportunity, accessibility, and good relations

Vision for events

As outlined in Section 1.2, Tourism NI's vision for events includes reference that all experiences that Tourism NI support and fund must be open and inclusive to all visitors, including all communities across Northern Ireland and should not offend or insult the public or damage community relations.

*This vision has been developed to ensure that Tourism NI fulfils its statutory duty to promote "good relations" in accordance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The Equality Commission of Northern Ireland consider that promoting good relations means "**the growth of relations and structures for Northern Ireland that acknowledges the religious, political and racial context of this society, and that seek to promote respect, equity and trust, and embrace diversity in all its forms**".*

As a result, Tourism NI shall consider how the event shall promote such good relations or whether the event aligns with its statutory obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 or shall cause Tourism NI to contravene such statutory obligations.

Equality of opportunity and accessibility

As applicants will be aware, there is a vast network of equality and anti-discrimination laws to protect the rights of individuals. The equality and anti-discrimination laws will be relevant to applicants as an employer, in any of its volunteer programmes, through its procurement of goods and services, in its delivery of the event and in ensuring access to the event for all.

Applicants must at all times comply with all applicable fair employment, equality of treatment and anti-discrimination legislation, including but not limited to: the Employment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002, Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006, the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 as amended by the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1988, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, The Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 as amended by the 2003 Regulations.

It will be necessary for applicants to have policies and practices in place to ensure that the event has due regard for the need to promote equality of treatment and opportunity between:

- *persons of different religious beliefs or political opinions;*
- *men and women or married and unmarried persons;*
- *persons of different ages;*
- *persons of differing sexual orientation;*
- *persons with and without dependents (including women who are pregnant or on maternity leave and men on paternity leave);*
- *persons of different racial groups (within the meaning of the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997); and*
- *persons with and without a disability (within the meaning of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995).*

While the above are legal requirements which all events must comply, Tourism NI's vision is to create events that are inclusive and welcoming to all. Applicants should demonstrate how the event programming, content, delivery and operations fulfil this vision and go the extra mile to be as inclusive as possible.

Content of your Business Plan in respect of equality of opportunity, accessibility and good relations

As set out above, events funded under the International Tourism Events Fund must align with Tourism NI's statutory obligation to promote good relations and also provide for equality of opportunity and accessibility in line with fair employment, equality of treatment and anti-discrimination legislation.

Whilst Tourism NI does not intend to act as curators of any event that is successful in its application to the International Tourism Event Fund, it will be necessary for any successful event to promote equality of opportunity and good relations to ensure public funds are applied appropriately and that Tourism NI complies with its statutory obligations as a public body.

Within your business plan you must evidence your engagement with this section. This may include:

- *reference to your policies and procedures to evidence compliance with equality and anti-discrimination laws as referenced above;*
- *evidence how the event shall promote equality of treatment and opportunity through its programme, risk assessments, accessibility measures and adjustments, specific contract terms with suppliers and service providers;*
- *how the event shall promote good relations as defined above, including but not limited to:*
- *how the event shall be inclusive, from its content, promotion to your policies;*
- *how the event shall promote respect, equity and trust across the different communities of Northern Ireland society;*
- *evidence that the event content (including but not limited to the event performers and their content) would not insult or offend the public, or any community, or damage community relations;*
- *evidence that the event shall refrain from including any content within the event which is party political or for political purposes. For the purpose of this guidance a "political purpose" is any purpose that is aimed at either furthering the*

interests of a political party or campaign on behalf of or in alignment with a political party;

- *the security measures and procedures for the event to ensure the health and safety of all attendees from members of the public, employees of the Applicant, suppliers and performers, and which shall consider the necessary remedial actions to ensure the protection of all attendees.*

You should provide Tourism NI with your Good Relations Policy or equivalent (where available).

All Letters of Offer within the **International Tourism Events Funding Programme** include terms and conditions highlighting the need to consider accessibility and inclusivity.

Table 2: [International Tourism Events Fund 2023/24:](#)

Event Name	International Award
Antrim Half Coast Marathon	£30,000
August Feile	£80,000
Belfast City Marathon	£50,000
Belfast International Arts Festival	£40,000
Belfast Maritime Festival	£60,000
Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival	£40,000
Derry International Halloween Festival	£105,000
North West 200	£100,000
SuperCup NI	£55,000

Antrim Half Coast Marathon:

Approved by World Athletics as an Elite Event, the MEA Antrim Coast Half Marathon takes in some of the most stunning scenery in Europe, combined with some famous landmarks along the route. With its flat and fast course, the race is one of the fastest half marathons in the world. Starting at the beginning of the iconic Antrim Coast Road, the course sweeps into Larne Harbour and through Larne town before moving onto the world-famous Antrim Coast Road. The coast's stunning landscapes featuring in many movies and television series, including HBO's Game of Thrones, who used the area extensively as one of the filming locations.

August Feile:

Féile an Phobail is based in West Belfast and provides a programme of arts, cultural and community-based activities throughout the year with its flagship festival, with the August Féile being the highlight of its calendar. Féile an Phobail offer an increasing number of specialist festivals throughout the year; Draíocht, an arts festival for children and young people takes over the Halloween festivities and Féile an Earraigh that celebrates Irish and Celtic art and culture, music and language which takes place in Spring.

Belfast City Marathon: Belfast City Marathon is one of the leading marathons in the UK and Ireland and is an AIMS certified race. It is the first, and only, marathon in Northern Ireland to join the World Athletics Label Road Race Series. The race starts at Stormont and finishes in Ormeau Park, running through all four areas of the city: North, South,

East and West. It is renowned for the incredible local support as crowds line roads to cheer participants on throughout their 26.2 mile journey. There is an event to suit all levels of fitness including a Marathon Run, Wheelchair Race, Team Relay and 8 Mile Walk, attracting over 15,000 participants annually.

Belfast International Arts Festival:

Belfast International Arts Festival, formerly known as Belfast Festival at Queen's, is the city's longest running international arts event. The event covers theatre, dance, classical and roots music, visual, film and digital arts and literature accompanied by outreach and education events. It takes place every October in venues and locations across Belfast. The mission of Belfast International Arts Festival is to be the preeminent, progressive international arts event within Northern Ireland, actively engaging both global and local communities in the richness and diversity of contemporary arts practice.

Belfast Maritime Festival:

Titanic Quarter hosts the Belfast Maritime Festival, with an array of free entertainment from live music to captivating quayside street performers along the Maritime Mile, as well as fun interactive activities, demonstrations and live shows along Titanic Slipways.

Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival:

The Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival (CQAF) is an annual festival of music, comedy, theatre, art and literature that takes place in Belfast. The festival traditionally takes place in the first weeks of May in Belfast's Cathedral Quarter, so called because of its proximity to St Anne's Cathedral. Regarded these days for its socially inclusive agenda and its eclectic programming blend of 'big names', emerging acts and fringe performances, The Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival began life in May 2000 attracting an audience of just over 5,000. The festival now regularly attracts over 60,000 people to over 100 events in Belfast's city centre.

Derry International Halloween Festival

Derry International Halloween Festival Celebrations are renowned worldwide, voted Number One Halloween Destination in the World by USA Today and in the Top 6 Halloween Destination by the New York Times. As Halloween has its origins in the Irish and Celtic tradition of Samhain, there is a significant opportunity for Northern Ireland to claim authentic ownership of Halloween and to tell the story of Halloween to a global audience. Created by the people of the city 32 years ago, the festival enjoys mass support from local people, arts, cultural, business and tourism initiatives from across the Region and continues to support the development of new, innovative, and imaginative festivals and participative events year on year. Staged across the October Mid Term break, it engages with a broad audience, promoting Northern Ireland as the premier destination for a Halloween break.

North West 200

The North West 200 is one of the world's fastest motorcycle road races. The event, which is organised by Coleraine & District Motorcycle Club, was established in 1929, it is one of the largest annual sporting events in Ireland, attracting over 150,000 visitors from all over the world.

Super Cup NI

SuperCup NI, formerly NI Milk Cup, was established in 1983 and is one of the world's most renowned youth football tournaments. This elite competition is held annually and provides opportunities for boys and girls from across the world to participate in a week-long football extravaganza. The competition has attracted teams such as Manchester United, Valencia, Arsenal, Rangers, Leeds United, Celtic and Right to Dream from Ghana.

Inclusive Tourism Working Group

Tourism NI established an internal Inclusive Tourism Working Group on 1 April 2023. Working across several teams, this group aims to co-ordinate and influence efforts within Northern Ireland, to ultimately support industry to improve the inclusiveness and accessibility of the Northern Ireland Visitor Experience.

The group will do this by providing industry with practical supports and enablers for them to use to ensure that the tourism experience in Northern Ireland is as accessible as possible, irrespective of age or ability, thereby enabling all visitors to participate in and enjoy tourism experiences offered.

It will also seek to communicate industry efforts to future visitors through Tourism NI's various channels. It will collaborate with key partners, industry, and representative sectoral bodies to inform its work, complementing other supports in reducing duplication. This work is aligned to the Draft Tourism Strategy (DTS) which calls out *Inclusive* as one of the key pillars. Whilst the definition of *Inclusive* in the DTS is much broader, the group's work will certainly contribute.

The work of the group will also contribute to compliance with Tourism NI's statutory obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, and Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995, through the implementation of the organisation's Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan.

In 2023-24, the group implemented a wide range of activity including:

- In February 2024, Tourism NI launched MyTourismNI, an innovative e-learning platform for the tourism industry. The platform provides free learning across topics such as sales and marketing, digital, sustainability and people. Dedicated e-learning modules on Accessible & Inclusive Tourism are in development.
- An agreement was secured with Visit Britain to licence their 'Inclusive & Accessible Toolkit' for the tourism industry. This will be launched in early 2025.
- Tourism NI partnered with Belfast City Council to sponsor a dedicated seminar on Inclusive & Accessible Tourism held on 20 February 2024 - [Embrace the Inclusive Spirit: How welcoming disabled visitors makes business sense \(tourismni.com\)](#). The event was attended by 135 delegates from 75 organisations.
- In March 2024, the group worked to produce an industry survey to gauge the levels of accessibility within the industry and to better understand industry support requirements to help make the tourism offering more accessible to all

potential customers. Disability Action reviewed the questions before the survey went live. The results of the survey will be shared to wider tourism industry in early 2025.

- A section with guidance for industry on Accessibility was developed on Tourism NI's industry website - [Accessibility \(tourismni.com\)](https://www.tourismni.com/accessibility).
- Tourism NI, in partnership with Belfast Met, funded the delivery of a tour guiding course for deaf people in January to March 2024, resulting in 10 new tour guides from the deaf community. Plans are being discussed for future roll out.
- Tourism NI also sits on a dedicated Inclusive & Accessible Tourism working group alongside representatives from Visit Britain, Visit Scotland, Visit Wales and Fáilte Ireland. The primary objective is to bring consistency and uniformity to Accessible feature information provided to consumers across the UK and Ireland tourism industry, and tailor this guidance to 6 industry categories; Attractions and Experiences, Food and Drink, Events and Festivals, Serviced accommodation, Guest accommodation, Self-Catering and Camping.

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

No:	Action Measure:	Outcome / Impact:
	<p>Tourism NI's Investment Funding Programme Guidelines and Letters of Offer specify the need for project promoters to consider equality legislation when delivering tourism capital projects.</p>	<p>3 projects accepted offers of financial assistance under the Experience Development Programme in 2023/24. Supported projects confirmed that they would fulfil their requirements in relation to Section 75.</p>
	<p>Tourism Event Funding Programme Letters of Offer specify the need for event promoters to consider equality legislation when delivering tourism events.</p>	<p>x9 events were supported under the International Tourism Events Fund (ITEF). All Letters of Offer included terms and conditions re accessibility and inclusivity, and compliance is monitored and reviewed. Note - the National Tourism Events Sponsorship Scheme did not run in 2023/24.</p> <p>Conditions re promoting good relations have been included in ITEF Letters of Offer since 2022/23. The standard terms and conditions include compliance with all legislation and regulations. All events state they are as fully inclusive as possible.</p>
	<p>Raise awareness with the NI Tourism Industry, of issues in relation to disability and accessibility.</p>	<p>In February 2024, Tourism NI launched MyTourismNI, an innovative e-learning platform for the tourism industry. The platform provides free learning across topics such as sales and marketing, digital, sustainability and people. Dedicated e-learning modules on Accessible & Inclusive Tourism are in development.</p> <p>An agreement was secured with Visit Britain to licence their 'Inclusive & Accessible Toolkit' for the tourism industry. This will be launched in early 2025.</p> <p>Tourism NI partnered with Belfast City Council to sponsor a dedicated seminar on</p>

		<p>Inclusive & Accessible Tourism held on 20 February 2024 - Embrace the Inclusive Spirit: How welcoming disabled visitors makes business sense (tourismni.com). The event was attended by 135 delegates from 75 organisations.</p> <p>In March 2024, the group worked to produce an industry survey to gauge the levels of accessibility within the industry and to better understand industry support requirements to help make the tourism offering more accessible to all potential customers. Disability Action reviewed the questions before the survey went live. The results of the survey will be shared to wider tourism industry in early 2025.</p> <p>A section with guidance for industry on Accessibility was developed on Tourism NI’s industry website - Accessibility (tourismni.com).</p> <p>Tourism NI, in partnership with Belfast Met, funded the delivery of a tour guiding course for deaf people in January to March 2024, resulting in 10 new tour guides from the deaf community. Plans are being discussed for future roll out.</p> <p>Tourism NI also sits on a dedicated Inclusive & Accessible Tourism working group alongside representatives from Visit Britain, Visit Scotland, Visit Wales and Fáilte Ireland. The primary objective is to bring consistency and uniformity to Accessible feature information provided to consumers across the UK and Ireland tourism industry, and tailor this guidance to 6 industry categories; Attractions and Experiences, Food and Drink, Events and Festivals, Serviced accommodation, Guest accommodation, Self-Catering and Camping.</p>
	<p>Ensure relevant TNI staff are trained in relation to Section 75.</p>	<p>Tourism NI has access to the NICS Centre for Applied Learning online Learning Management System, LInKS, which provides all Tourism NI staff with online training</p>

		<p>resources. <i>'Introduction to Section 75'</i> is a compulsory training module for all staff. As of 31 March 2024, 88 out of 140 (62.9%) active employees have completed this training.</p> <p>As one of the 9 groups identified in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, <i>'Disability Awareness for Frontline Staff'</i> is also a compulsory training module for all staff. As of 31 March 2024, 96 out of 140 (68.6%) active employees have completed this training.</p> <p>Both Equality and Disability awareness training must be completed annually by all staff to maintain 'certification'. In addition, all new and returning staff are subject to a staff induction programme and the obligations of public authorities under <i>Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998</i> and the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1995</i> are included as part of this. As well as highlighting Section 75 and DDA, induction sessions signpost to the organisations Equality Scheme, Equality Action Plan, Disability Action Plan and other information sources, including the ECNI website.</p>
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3 Has the application of the Equality Scheme commitments resulted in any changes to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2023-24 reporting period? (tick one box only)

Yes

No (go to Q.4)

Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

- In February 2024, Tourism NI launched MyTourismNI, an innovative e-learning platform for the tourism industry. The platform provides free learning across topics such as sales and marketing, digital, sustainability and people. Dedicated e-learning modules on Accessible & Inclusive Tourism are available in development.
- An agreement was secured with Visit Britain to licence their 'Inclusive & Accessible Toolkit' for the tourism industry. This will be launched in early 2025.
- Tourism NI partnered with Belfast City Council to sponsor a dedicated seminar on Inclusive & Accessible Tourism held on 20 February 2024 - [Embrace the Inclusive Spirit: How welcoming disabled visitors makes business sense \(tourismni.com\)](#). The event was attended by 135 delegates from 75 organisations.
- In March 2024, the group worked to produce an industry survey to gauge the levels of accessibility within the industry and to better understand industry support requirements to help make the tourism offering more accessible to all potential customers. Disability Action reviewed the questions before the survey went live. The results of the survey will be shared to wider tourism industry in early 2025.
- A section with guidance for industry on Accessibility was developed on Tourism NI's industry website - [Accessibility \(tourismni.com\)](#).
- Tourism NI, in partnership with Belfast Met, funded the delivery of a tour guiding course for deaf people in January to March 2024, resulting in 10 new tour guides from the deaf community. Plans are being discussed for future roll out.
- Tourism NI also sits on a dedicated Inclusive & Accessible Tourism working group alongside representatives from Visit Britain, Visit Scotland, Visit Wales and Fáilte Ireland. The primary objective is to bring consistency and uniformity to Accessible feature information provided to consumers across the UK and Ireland tourism industry, and tailor this guidance to 6 industry categories; Attractions and Experiences, Food and Drink, Events and Festivals, Serviced accommodation, Guest accommodation, Self-Catering and Camping.

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

Please provide any details and examples:

The establishment of an Inclusive Tourism Working Group, whose aim is to co-ordinate and influence efforts within Northern Ireland to support the tourism industry to improve the inclusiveness and accessibility of the Northern Ireland visitor experience, will have a direct impact on people with disabilities. The group's work with the tourism industry will encourage and support them in making their businesses more accessible and therefore more welcoming to everyone. Enabling customers with disabilities, carers and people of all ages and abilities to access a business' services will help eliminate discrimination by dispelling stereotypes and misconceptions as well as widen a business' customer base.

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

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

Other (please specify and give details):

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)

4 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

6 In the 2023-24 reporting period were objectives/ targets/ performance measures relating to the Section 75 statutory duties integrated into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? (*tick all that apply*)

- Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
- Yes, in some departments/jobs
- No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's corporate plan
- No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2023-24 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Equality action plans/measures

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

Actions completed:

6

Actions ongoing:

5

Actions to commence:

1

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

The initiative for ‘*Raise awareness with the NI Tourism Industry of issues in relation to disability and accessibility*’ was changed to, ‘*Establish an Accessibility Working Group and associated Action Plan with a view to sharing the out workings with industry*’. The Performance Indicator was also updated to, ‘*Disseminate on www.tourismni.com*’.

- 9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2023-24 reporting period, the following have been identified: (*tick all that apply*)**

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

Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)

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

- All the time
- Sometimes
- Never

PART A

- 11 Please provide any *details and examples of good practice* in consultation during the 2023-24 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:**

n/a

- 12 In the 2023-24 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were most frequently used by consultees: (*tick all that apply*)**

Face to face meetings

Focus groups

Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing

Questionnaires

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

Internet discussions

Telephone consultations

Other (*please specify*): No consultations conducted in the 2023/24 period.

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:

n/a

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

Yes

No

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2023-24 reporting period? (tick one box only)

Yes

No

Not applicable – no commitment to review

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

[Equality - Our Plans, Schemes & Progress | Tourism NI](#)

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

7

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

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

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

0 Consultations for an **EQIA** alone.

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

n/a

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

Yes

No concerns were raised

No

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

- 19 Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2023-24 reporting period? (tick one box only)**

Yes

No

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

20 From the Equality Scheme monitoring arrangements, was there an audit of existing information systems during the 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes

No, already taken place

No, scheduled to take place at a later date

Not applicable

Please provide any details:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

Yes

No

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

22 Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2023-24 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

n/a

- 23 Please provide any details or examples of monitoring that has contributed to the availability of equality and good relations information/data for service delivery planning or policy development:**

n/a

Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)

- 24 Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2023-24, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.**

Tourism NI has access to the NICS Centre for Applied Learning online Learning Management System, LInKS, which provides all Tourism NI staff with online training resources. *'Introduction to Section 75'* is a compulsory training module for all staff. As of 31 March 2024, 88 out of 140 (62.9%) active employees have completed this training.

As one of the 9 groups identified in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, *'Disability Awareness for Frontline Staff'* is also a compulsory training module for all staff. As of 31 March 2024, 96 out of 140 (68.6%) active employees have completed this training.

Both Equality and Disability awareness training must be completed annually by all staff to maintain 'certification'. In addition, all new and returning staff are subject to a staff induction and the obligations of public authorities under *Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998* and the *Disability Discrimination Act 1995* are included as part of the induction programme. As well as highlighting Section 75 and DDA, induction sessions signpost to the organisations Equality Scheme, Equality Action Plan, Disability Action Plan and other information sources, including the ECNI website.

- 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:**

As of 31 March 2024, 88 out of 140 (62.9%) active employees have completed **'Introduction to Section 75'** training.

As of 31 March 2024, 96 out of 140 (68.6%) active employees have completed **'Disability Awareness for Frontline Staff'** training.

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

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

n/a

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

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

Insert number here: 0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Section 3: Looking Forward

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

March 2024

- 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)**

With access to the NICS Centre for Applied Learning online Learning Management System, Tourism NI asks all new members of staff to complete the relevant training courses in relation to equality and disability as well as provide refresher training annually for existing staff to maintain certification.

Tourism NI will continue to improve internal communication and processes in relation to equality screening including circulating ECNI's training videos on [Equality Screening](#) and [Equality Impact Assessment](#).

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

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

Click or tap here to enter text.

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

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

12	1	2
Fully achieved	Partially achieved	Not achieved

2. Please outline below details on all actions that have been fully achieved in the reporting period.

2 (a) Please highlight what **public life measures** have been achieved to encourage disabled people to participate in public life at National, Regional and Local levels:

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputsⁱ	Outcomes / Impactⁱⁱ
National ⁱⁱⁱ	1. Tourism NI’s consumer website (discoverni.com) is subject to ongoing review to ensure compliance with accessibility standards.	1. Ongoing development and build of new web platforms incorporating accessibility features to recognised industry standards.	1. The web platform on which the Discover Northern Ireland website is built complies with the best practice accessibility standards and has been augmented with Browsealoud software.

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	2. Promote positive images of people with disabilities.	2. New marketing and promotional content commissioned is to be used across multiple marketing platforms with diverse cast in terms of ethnicity and ability.	2. Casting briefs for marketing and/or promotional material now specify the need for diversity in ethnicity and ability (where possible and if appropriate).
Regional ^{iv}	As above	As above	As above
Local ^v	As above	As above	As above

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Increase staff awareness of the disability legislation, duties, and issues.	To ensure that all staff are aware of Tourism NI's obligations, as a public authority, in relation to the Disability Discrimination Act (1995).	As of 31 March 2024, 96 out of 140 (68.6%) active employees have completed training in 'Disability Awareness for Frontline Staff' via the NICS Centre for Applied Learning online learning management system, LInKS. This training must be completed annually by all staff to maintain 'certification'. In addition, all new and returning staff are subject to a staff induction and the obligations of public authorities under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 are included as part of the induction programme. The session also signposts staff to Tourism NI's Disability Action Plan.

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2(c) What Positive attitudes **action measures** in the area of **Communications** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Promote available good practice and guidance, in relation to accessibility, to NI Tourism Industry by way of signposting relevant information on tourismni.com	Ongoing 2023/24	The accessibility page on www.tourismni.com is continually monitored and kept refreshed with latest learnings and developments and signposts to ECNI guidance re: Every Customer Counts.
2	Promote positive images of people with disabilities.	Specify the need to promote positive images, with reference to people with disabilities, on casting briefs when commissioning marketing or promotional material.	The promotion of people with disabilities is written into both the agency brief and the casting brief for content commissions, in particular for content produced in support of the Northern Ireland experience brand.

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Tourism NI’s Investment Funding Programme Guidelines and Letters of Offer specify the need for project promoters to consider equality legislation when delivering tourism capital projects.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Every Letter of Offer to include accessibility in the terms & conditions. 2. 100% of supported projects confirm that they will fulfil their requirements (where applicable) in relation to Accessibility. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 3 projects accepted offers of financial assistance under the Experience Development Programme in 2023/24. 2. Supported projects confirmed that they would fulfil their requirements in relation to Section 75. All Letters of Offer contain monitored clauses relating to both Equality of Opportunity and Accessibility. As part of their conditions all projects must explain how their projects promote good relations and ensure inclusivity.

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<p>2</p>	<p>Tourism Event Funding Programme Letters of Offer specify the need for event promoters to consider equality legislation when delivering tourism events.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Every Letter of Offer to include accessibility in the terms & conditions. 2. Applications to the International and National Tourism Events Sponsorship Scheme to include an accessibility plan within their business plan or explain in their application how their event is accessible and inclusive to all. 3. % of supported events confirmed that they are fully accessible and inclusive. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. x9 events were supported under the International Tourism Events Fund (ITEF). All Letters of Offer included terms and conditions re accessibility and inclusivity, and compliance is monitored and reviewed. Note: The National Tourism Events Sponsorship Scheme did not run in 2023/24. 2. Schemes specifically request details on their Equality of Opportunity and Accessibility Plans. These plans are taken into account when assessing applications and awards. 3. All events supported stated they are as fully inclusive as possible.
<p>3</p>	<p>Tourism NI disability champion to positively promote accessibility, acting as a point of contact for staff and industry when required.</p>	<p>Assist in highlighting issues and identifying potential solutions relating to accessibility.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In June 2023, Tourism NI’s Disability Champion joined the Belfast City Council Accessible and Inclusive Working Group. Members consist of representatives from various statutory, voluntary and private sector organisations. 2. Led by the organisation’s Disability Champion, Tourism NI subsequently partnered with Belfast City Council to sponsor a dedicated seminar on Inclusive & Accessible Tourism held on 20 February 2024 - Embrace the Inclusive Spirit: How welcoming disabled visitors makes business sense (tourismni.com). The event was attended by 135 delegates from 75 organisations.

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<p>4</p>	<p>Raise awareness with the NI tourism industry, of responsibilities in relation to disability and accessibility.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Generic statements within Inspection Reports on service provider compliance with statutory duties. 2. Inspection Checklists sent with all self-catering, B&B and guest accommodation certification appointment letters contain reference for the need to comply with DDA. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1720 certification reports issued during 2023-24 containing a generic statement regarding compliance with statutory duties which includes the DDA. The following statement is included on all types of accommodation certified with conditions, <i>'It is the operator's responsibility to ensure compliance with all relevant statutory areas applicable to your business. Visit https://www.tourismni.com/business-guidance/sector/accommodation/accommodation-getting-started/legal-considerations/'.</i> 1. 1052 of Inspection Checklists issued with self-catering, B&B and guest accommodation new venture and statutory reports during 2023-24.
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2 (e) Please outline **any additional action measures** that were fully achieved other than those listed in the tables above:

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1	Provide a complaint handling service in relation to accessibility concerns in NI tourist accommodation.	Complaints are logged and acknowledged within 3 working days and a response provided within 10 working days or 28 days if a site visit is required.	Learn from complaints received in relation to accessibility in tourist accommodation and use findings to encourage accommodation providers to be more aware of accessibility.
2	Gain a better understanding of the issues in relation to the Northern Ireland tourism visitor experience for persons with a disability.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Produce a Visitor Survey to see a parity in the net promoter score(s) of visitors with a disability in relation to and compared with visitors without a disability. 2. Produce and disseminate an 'Accessibility/Disability' Insights Paper. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Questions were included in the September 2023 and March 2024 Waves of Tourism NI's Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland consumer sentiment research to monitor NPS/track parity. 2. The Insights Paper was presented to Tourism NI's Inclusive Tourism Working Group in April 2023. The group identified a need to undertake some primary research with consumers and Northern Ireland's tourism industry, prior to wider dissemination. <p>Questions were included in the September 2023 Wave of Tourism NI's Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland consumer</p>

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			sentiment research and an industry survey was designed (with input from Disability Action), to be undertaken in Q1 2024/25.
2	Ensure our buildings are accessible for all staff and visitors.	Implement recommendations from accessibility audit.	<p>Following on from the implementation of recommendations from an accessibility audit in 2019 and extensive reconfiguration works in Tourism NI offices to ensure collaboration spaces are safe and accessible to all, Tourism NI also initiated a health and safety review which was conducted and completed by an independent expert working alongside Belfast City Council's Health and Safety Regulators. This review resulted in the development of an Action Plan which contained several recommendations.</p> <p>Two recommendations resulted in updates to the Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) procedure for those with mobility or sight impairment issues. The PEEP form, which all staff are asked to update annually, was also updated. Tourism NI's People and Organisational Development Team will work through the other recommendations.</p>

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

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	Tourism NI industry website (tourismni.com) subject to ongoing review to ensure compliance with accessibility standards.	Ongoing 23/24	Tourism NI's industry website maintained to best practice coding conventions listed in the ATAG guidelines from the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI).	www.tourismni.com now has functionality to conduct these scans to check on compliance internally. Tourism NI will work with provider on how best to utilise this tool.

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	Raise awareness of accessible tourist product and / or accessibility issues for NI tourism industry through the internal communication of relevant press articles.	Due to staff resource, articles on accessibility were not followed up with the PR agency who source them and therefore not shared with staff.
2	Development Roadmap for the consumer website to include accessibility objectives.	The new Discover Northern Ireland website will be built during 2025, and accessibility has been considered within the procurement specification.

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5. What **monitoring tools** have been put in place to evaluate the degree to which actions have been effective / develop new opportunities for action?

(a) Qualitative

n/a

(b) Quantitative

n/a

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

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

Please select

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1	Raise awareness with the NI Tourism Industry, of issues in relation to disability and accessibility.	Establish an Accessibility Working Group and associated Action Plan with a view to sharing the out workings with industry.	Ongoing in 2023/24

7. Do you intend to make any further **revisions to your plan** in light of your organisation's annual review of the plan? If so, please outline proposed changes?

Not at this time.

ⁱ **Outputs** – defined as act of producing, amount of something produced over a period, processes undertaken to implement the action measure e.g. Undertook 10 training sessions with 100 people at customer service level.

ⁱⁱ **Outcome / Impact** – what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action? Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training.

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

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

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