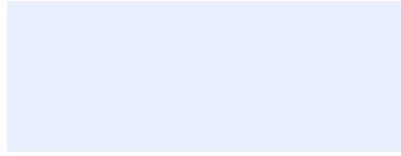


North South Language Body



Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report 2015-16

Contact:

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	As above	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Please insert link or details here

Foras na Gaeilge website: <http://www.forasnagaeilge.ie/fuinn/eolas-corparaideach/caipeisi-corparaideacha/sceim-comhionannais/>

<http://www.ulsterscotsagency.com/about-us/corporate-publications/>

Signature:

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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 2015 and March 2016

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 2015-16, 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 two constituent agencies of the Language Body (namely Foras na Gaeilge and The Ulster-Scots Agency) are mindful of their obligations in this area and use cross-agency co-operation to achieve outcomes beginning with increased communication, awareness and good relations between the agencies themselves and working out towards all communities.

For Foras na Gaeilge a key policy/service delivery development has been the funding of to increase awareness of and ability in the Irish language among communities not traditionally associated with it in recent times via funding for the East Belfast Mission during this reporting period.

The Ulster Scots Agency held a number of introductory meetings with CCEA to encourage the inclusion of Ulster-Scots in their educational resources. The Agency and USCN mapped out learning areas to be included in new resources, these were presented to CCEA for their approval, and CCEA will then take the lead in developing, producing and disseminating these resources to all schools in Northern Ireland.

In 2015 the Agency expanded upon the profile it has built within the Education sector with the introduction of an Ulster-Scots/Irish identity pilot programme. This programme has been developed in partnership with Foras na Gaeilge to fit within the Citizenship Curriculum area, World Around Us. The programme was successfully delivered in 4 integrated post primary schools

- 2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2015-16 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

Foras Na Gaeilge

Outcomes from funding the East Belfast Mission have been increased awareness of linguistic diversity – with increased sensitivity and appreciation of diversity generally as the underlying aim. The work of Foras na Gaeilge also contributes to wider Government objectives on promoting a “shared future” and good relations policies, promoting cultural diversity and in assisting rural and community development and promoting economic development.

The promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations is therefore central to Foras na Gaeilge’s strategic approach to carrying out its responsibilities. The active promotion of the Irish language as an aspect of shared heritage can have a positive impact on Northern Ireland’s communities including all Section 75 groups, both directly and indirectly, by enhancing cultural diversity and celebrating the cultural heritage of its peoples and communities.

One of the main funded Schemes is *Scéim Phobail Gaeilge (Irish in the Community)*. This Scheme promotes the use of Irish within communities throughout the island. Revised arrangements for the Scheme which aimed to promote greater geographical spread of funding have been under discussion with the Sponsor Departments since 2014 and an Equality Impact Assessment on the proposed changes was carried out in 2014. There was considerable discussion regarding the successor of this Scheme, planned for 2015 and after to the extent that the previous Scheme continued as an interim measure and new arrangements came into force only in 2016.

In the reporting period Foras na Gaeilge continued to find innovative ways of promoting the Irish language and will engage with a wide range of community groups and individuals to ensure that its work continues to meet needs and expectations of those that it works with. In particular, a report commissioned by Foras na Gaeilge from the Economic and Social Research Institute – Attitudes towards the Irish language on the Island of Ireland published in August 2015 convinced us of the need for further research into a number of specific areas, in particular the attitudes of non-Catholics in Northern Ireland to the language and this was commissioned. A paper on this issue was published in March 2016 and this paper was very explicitly informed by our good relation remit and is available here: <https://www.esri.ie/publications/attitudes-of-the-non-catholic-population-in-northern-ireland-towards-the-irish-language-in-ireland/>

The work of the East Belfast Mission in the area of language awareness has been recognized as being of strategic importance to the work of Foras na Gaeilge both in terms of equality of opportunity and in terms of good relations in terms of cross-community impacts. -

Ulster Scots Agency

The Agency introduced Ulster-Scots music to the Chinese new Year celebrations in the Ulster Hall February 2016 and have extended invitations to various groups to come the Discover Ulster-Scots centre.

We have continued to increase awareness of Ulster-Scots culture among children and young people through our provision of 30 After School Clubs (ASC), these were held across Ulster in Primary Schools and the demand was intense for the product. The average attendance at each Club was 22 (this is the literal average given the fluctuation between numbers according to school size) so this would bring a total of 660 primary school children and 60 staff in attendance in total. The feedback from staff was very positive and led, in many if not most cases, to enrolment in the Flagship Schools Programme. The period seen 22 Flagship School Programmes launched across Ulster in the time period involving an average of 40 pupils per school which is a total of 880 pupils. These were in addition to the ASC pupils and although there is an overlap in the schools, the pool of pupils is different. This is a hugely successful programme with growing demand on our resources witnessing an increase in pupil participation. We organised 25 School workshops throughout Ulster affecting from one class of 23 to an entire school of 680 pupils. The approximate number who availed of these is around 3,000 children of primary and post primary age.

A Touring Educational Drama which seen classes from a total of 30 primary schools attended the dramas held at four venues. Each school sent an average of 50 pupils making the total number 1,500 children and 120 teaching staff. The drama was also shown to three full schools in the post primary sector which was approximately a total audience of 1,800 pupils. 20 Ulster Scots Language Classes were delivered in schools and the community to audiences of an average of 35 people, a total of 700 men, women and children. Special Needs Workshops were delivered at 3 venues with 15 classes at each venue to a approx. 170 people. The Ulster Scots Agency Juvenile Pipe Band increased the number of venues to 4 where tuition is delivered as part of this programme. Although the number of participants is fluid due to the nature of the project, there are on average 40 children at each venue with an additional 20 in Raphoe, Donegal. The total would thus be approx. 180 children at any given time with new children coming in throughout the year, replacing those who move on.

The Agency took part in the Ballyclare Mayfair May 15 which was a Council led project. This took place in Ballyclare Town Centre which has disability access as per town centre planning. Circa 10,000 people attended over the entire festival period. Numbers similar in 2014.

The Bruce Festival took place in May 15 for the first time. Saturday visitor numbers were 2794, Sunday visitor numbers were 1712. Total numbers clicked in 4506 (may have been more in attendance who did not attend the Castle and so were not counted). Restricted disability

PART A

access in Castle as there is no lift in the Keep and no ability to make a provision for one. Other events were all held on council land and so totally accessible to users.

A series family orientated events took place in Cockle Row from April 15 – Sept 15 with visitor numbers being 2856 for Ulster Scots Agency funded events. Disability access is available at this site as it is council run.

The Agency were part of the NI Countryside Festival June 2015 with circa 10,000 people in attendance over the two day festival. This is roughly the same as in 2014. The Festival is held at Scarva Demesne which is effectively a field. There is restricted access for wheelchair users / people with disabilities given that it is held on grass with only some gravel paths available.

The Agency held a Tall Ships Event held at Discover Ulster Scots centre with further events in the Titanic Quarter and the launch of the Agency Maritime trail. The Discover Ulster Scots Centre is totally accessible and Titanic Quarter has full disability access as per Belfast City Councils planning. This event saw 100,000 over the course of the entire festival.

St Andrews Day in November 2015 saw numbers of 330 attend the event, this was down by 50% on previous year as there was other events taking place in the near vicinity and there had been a weather warning issued for the day of the event which had an impact on the activity that could be carried on outside. The Castle is accessible to those with disabilities however some entertainment took place in the keep which does not have disability access due to its construction.

The Annual Burns Concert January 2016 seen a reduction in numbers to 900 at the due to a move to the Ulster Hall. The Ulster Hall is totally accessible for those with disabilities.

PART A

3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2015-16 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

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

Please provide any details and examples:

The Language Body has an increased awareness of equality in the widest sense as an issue and arrangements were made for awareness training on aspects of this.

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 Language Body recognises, the cross-community aspect of our work has been enhanced by increased awareness as previously mentioned.

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):*

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

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

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

In Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency, specific, dedicated funding to address cross-community work.

Other *(please specify and give details):*

In Foras na Gaeilge's case, in assessing public access to information and services, as a result of feedback and in consultation with the sponsor departments, we separated out corporate information from general information about the Irish language and Irish-language services . General information is now hosted on www.gaeilge.ie and corporate information on forasnagaeilge.ie along with details of the services the body provides.

The Ulster Scots Agency screens policies regularly and to date has had no EQIA's initiated. The Agency takes all steps possible to ensure that all events are all inclusive and consistently strive to improve on events and also improve upon our own facilities with the inclusion of hearing loops and ensuring disability access is available at all times.

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 2015-16 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:

In Foras na Gaeilge, a restructuring exercise is proposed in our next Corporate Plan 2017-19 which will provide an opportunity to address this issue. The Ulster- Scots Agency have plans to incorporate it into job descriptions as well as induction training. Staff are aware of their statutory duties.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2015-16 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

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Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

In Foras na Gaeilge, in some departments it is relevant and was implemented, in the 'community' area, for example. The Ulster Scots Agency have raised awareness to staff of our Section 75 duties and have included it in our current Risk Register.

In the 2015-16 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 2015-16 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

In Foras na Gaeilge, again Yes, in some departments. The Ulster Scots Agency ensure that Corporate and Business Planning takes account of equal opportunity at all levels.

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2015-16 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:	<input type="text" value="7(USA)"/>	Actions ongoing:	<input type="text" value="3(USA)"/>	Actions to commence:	<input type="text" value="2(USA)"/>
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Please provide any details and examples *(in addition to question 2)*:

Frequent events in the Discover Ulster-Scots Centre where we organise transport for older people and those with impaired mobility and provide talks and displays. We visited 10 integrated schools and provided 2 schemes to cross community schools.

PART A

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2015-16 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2015-16 reporting period, the following have been identified: (*tick all that apply*)

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

Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)

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

- All the time Sometimes Never

11 Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2015-16 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:

12 In the 2015-16 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

PART A

- Telephone consultations
- Other *(please specify)*:

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:

13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2015-16 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2015-16 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)

USA - <http://www.ulsterscotsagency.com/about-us/corporate-publications/>]

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

13 (USA)

16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2015-16:

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

PART A

Please provide any details and examples:

- 22** Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2015-16 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:
- 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:

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 2015-16, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

Development officers (Customer facing) received DDA training March 2016. S75 & Equality training for all staff in 2016-17 year.

- 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:

DDA worked well.

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

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2015-16, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

- 27** How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2015-16?

Insert number here:

0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

Section 3: Looking Forward

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

Within five years of submission to the Equality Commission (i.e. before end of 2018).

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)*

In Foras na Gaeilge there will be greater emphasis on the formal screening process in review mechanisms. The Ulster Scots Agency will be focusing on more documenting of actions carried out.

30 In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2016-17) reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

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

In Foras na Gaeilge, 'goods facilities and service' applies – services regarding language awareness across the communities will be a focus. The Ulster Scots Agency would be of the opinion that nothing specific has been planned, however we will continue with the work we already do and strive to increase our profile.

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:

8

Fully achieved

6

Partially achieved

3

Not achieved

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

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

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs ⁱ	Outcomes / Impact ⁱⁱ
National ⁱⁱⁱ	In Foras na Gaeilge, targets have been integrated into Corporate and Business Planning.	NSMC approval of plans and oversight of operational aspects such as recruitment.	Joint policy on recruitment with USA for Language Body
Regional ^{iv}			
Local ^v			

PART B

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	DDA Training (USA)	More awareness for public facing staff	Public facing staff more aware of S75 (12)
2	Engage with Specialist Organisations (USA)	Training for staff	Equality & Diversity Training for HR Staff (1)
3	Review of Induction Materials (USA)	Policies reviewed as part of the induction materials	2 Staff have been through the induction process

For Foras na Gaeilge, a modular on-line awareness training about disability was made available to all staff. Staff for whom it is most relevant (e.g. reception staff, those with more public roles) were particularly encouraged to take part.

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	Images of people with disabilities	images on file	To be used in future publications
2	Notify Organisations representing people with disabilities of impending training courses(USA)	Opportunity for work placement in the Agency	Organisations approached no one suitable appointed.

In Foras na Gaeilge the redesign of the portal and corporate website during the period access issues were a consideration in the tender/selection processes. The possibility of adding abair.ie a text to speech synthesis tool is currently being considered for the future.

PART B

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	For Foras na Gaeilge, it is part of the remit of one of our Lead Organisations.	Referenced in funding agreement with the Lead Organisation.	Cross Community work in particular by the Lead Organisation.

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	Ensure Signer is Available	When Required	No requests in the period.
2	Include Emergency Evacuation procedures in relation to people with disabilities in H&S training. (USA)	Included in policies and rescue points with speaker modules available in the building	All staff have received and read the policies and procedures, 3 staff trained in evacuation chair procedures
3	Review of Visual Signage in Agency (USA)	Signage reviewed	Signage is adequate at this time.
4	Ensure Reasonable adjustment for staff (USA)	Workspace adjustments	Special Chairs provided for 2 members of staff. Staff satisfaction achieved.
5	Update List of Consultees(USA)	Review Listing	List reviewed and updated

PART B

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	Screening of new and revision of existing policies	Very complex major SPG Scheme screened	SPG Scheme in operation	Staff attrition, being without a full Board for much of the period.
2	Reviewed the Accessibility of Website(USA)	Now have the areas that improvement is required	We have had no complaints to date, we have had comments about the feel of the website, it is an area we are currently reviewing, however due to budgetary constraints we have no current timeline.	Reviewed the Accessibility of Website(USA)
3	Consider the application of Plain English to Public Documents (USA)	Review Completed	An internal review of policies and the website have deemed the majority of our documents to be in plain English	Not all the documents fit this category and it is a work in progress to try and make these fit with a review.
4	Raise Awareness for the need to increase the	We have photographers at events but have not specifically targeted.	We have photos that are not identifiable as persons with disabilities	We have not been able to identify persons with a disability.

PART B

	positive images of people with disabilities (USA)			
5	Review locations where events are held to ensure fully accessible to people with disabilities (USA)	All events hosted on our premises are fully accessible.	We have had people with disabilities visit our premises	We have events where parts of the event will not be accessible to some persons with disabilities
6	Raise awareness among staff of the need to provide information on parking for people with disabilities when planning public events. (USA)	Our marketing Team and outreach officers are aware parking for the disabled	We include the information where available on Facebook and websites and any pre event information	Information provided when available
7	Provide refresher training for all staff to promote awareness and commitment to disability equality. (USA)	Training provided to staff	Staff awareness increased	DDA training held for Development officers. Training to be arranged for the remaining staff with the Equality Commission.

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	Internal review in Foras na Gaeilge (see 7 below).	
2	Provide Disability Training to new Board Members (USA)	Scheduling Issues

PART B

3	Explore options for additional training for front-line staff, e.g. level one Certificate in British Sign Language (BSL)	We have not been able to source a staff member to avail of this training due to staff timing issues.
4	Review all monitoring procedures to ensure that information about people with disabilities is captured accurately and in sufficient detail.	This action has had to be put back to the next period.

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

Approval of plans by Sponsor Departments in particular.

(b) Quantitative

Feedback from Sponsor Departments and outside oversight (internal and external audit by S&AG, NIAO).

PART B

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

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

Please select

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

PART B

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?

While the Plan in itself is relevant, sound and robust in terms of the Language Body, in Foras na Gaeilge, due to a number of reasons, including staff resourcing, we recognise that while much has been achieved on a practical level, there is a need for an internal review of how we address the implementation of the Plan with a particular emphasis on specific training in the S75 area. A planned restructuring process – which would have provided a very useful opportunity to discuss this in a wider context – is on hold. USA intends to carry out a full review of the plan in 2016-17 year

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.