

Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report 2025/26

Contact:

Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme	Name: Angela Starkey Telephone: 028 9054 0696 Email: Angela.Starkey@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk
Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan	As above ☒ Name: Telephone: Email:

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

[Department for Infrastructure's Equality Scheme](#)

Signature:

Angela Starkey (e-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 2025 and March 2026.

PART A

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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 2025-26, 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.

1.1 General Section 75 and Outcomes Delivery Plan

The Department for Infrastructure (DfI)'s fundamental objective is to deliver safe integrated infrastructure that connects people, enables opportunity and creates sustainable communities across Northern Ireland (NI).

The [DfI Business Plan 2025/26](#) clearly details the strategic objectives and associated programme of work that the Department is progressing to ensure delivery of the objectives necessary to enhance connectivity through infrastructure.

i. Mainstreaming Equality across the Department

Since February 2021, the DfI Equality Scheme has underpinned the Department's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and strengthening good relations. The Equality Unit ensures the Department meets its statutory equality duty providing expert advice and guidance to staff and leads on equality related work across the Department, as required. To ensure compliance with the Department's Equality Scheme, the Equality Unit have effective internal arrangements in place so that section 75 (S75) is fully embedded across the Department. Annex 2 summarises the actions taken during this reporting period.

To strengthen staff understanding of S75 related issues and the needs of protected groups, officials participate in both external and internal training, engage in practitioner meetings and collaborate with relevant organisations. These engagements provide the opportunity for sharing of best practice, identifying emerging issues and raising / resolving issues that could potentially result in inequalities for particular S75 groups.

The Department is represented on the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) and the Equality Commission Northern Ireland (ECNI)'s Statutory Forum, contributing to the development of guidance and promotion of equality across Departments. This engagement facilitates regular networking and access to expert advice from ECNI. Contact with ECNI is maintained on an ad-hoc basis to obtain guidance on specific issues.

The DfI Equality Scheme is now in its fifth year and as such, a review of the scheme is now due. The review must assess how effectively the department has been implementing the commitments set out in the scheme and how well the department has complied with the S75 statutory duties over the five years the scheme has been in place. It is aimed to commence the review following the submission of the annual report to the Equality Commission. The development of a new scheme will follow.

A commitment within the current Equality Scheme is to conduct an Audit of Inequalities (AOI) of departmental functions. This type of audit involves collation and analysis of S75 data, evidence and information relating to Departmental functions. The audit follows the completion of the equality scheme's five year review. Once the audit is complete, a five-year an Equality Action Plan (EAP) and Disability Action Plan (DAP) will be developed to address inequalities identified in the AOI.

The priority within the Equality Scheme is to complete the work on a new scheme, AOI and new draft five-year EAP and DAP. These will require both Departmental Board and Ministerial agreement before a 12-week public consultation can proceed.

Following the publication of the current Equality Scheme, an AOI was completed and a draft EAP was developed. Following consultation, a report was prepared, which together with the EAP was approved by the Minister on 5 November 2024. The consultation report and approved plan were submitted to the Committee for Infrastructure for information, following which, both documents were published on 13 December 2024. The Action Plan is being monitored and progress set out within this report.

The 'New Decade, New Approach' agreement committed to developing a series of four cross cutting Social Inclusion Strategies – Anti-Poverty, Disability, Gender and LGBTQI+. These strategies focus on tackling poverty and inequality while promoting inclusion across key groups in NI.

The development of the strategies has followed the co-design approach. Dfl is a member of each strategy's Departmental Working Groups, working alongside other Departments and the independent Co-Design Groups in developing these strategies. Progress has been made on the Disability Strategy, increasing and enhancing life opportunities. This will run for a ten-year period from 2025 to 2035. The Anti-Poverty Strategy has also been developed and is aimed at reducing, ultimately eradicating poverty and is running from 2025 - 2035. The Departmental Equality Working Group, comprising representatives from all business areas has continued to meet regularly. Subject specific meetings have included Rural Needs and Budget screening requirements.

Dfl is represented on various Cross Departmental Working Groups (CDWG) including the Autism Strategy which runs until 2028. This Strategy sets out the key commitments and actions needed to enhance and improve support for autistic people and their families. Since April 2025, the Autism Strategy has moved from initial implementation to more structured delivery and oversight, with clear actions and governance improvements in place; however, system-level challenges continue to limit the pace of real-world impact for autistic people and their families. Departments and arm's-length bodies (ALBs) are actively contributing and reporting on actions, showing sustained commitment despite constraints.

Northern Ireland Civil Service received a highly commended award at the NI Hummingbird Awards, which is an initiative recognising excellence in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) across workplaces launched in 2025. This award acknowledges leadership in promoting EDI, particularly in supporting neurodiverse staff and creating an inclusive workplace.

ii. Diversity

The NICS Diversity Champion Network (DCN) was established in 2015 to promote and encourage diversity throughout the NICS. The DCN has four thematic leads for Disability, Ethnic Minorities, LGBT and Gender. Dfl continues to be represented on the group with the Dfl Diversity Champion attending quarterly meetings throughout the year.

The Department provided input to the 2024-25 NICS Diversity Action Plan which included a range of actions to support each diversity theme.

Dfl supports the NICS diversity agenda by actively promoting diversity themes. We do this by publishing articles on the Department's intranet site, promoting and encouraging staff to become members of the various NICS staff networks, for example, the Disability, LGBTQI+, Race and Ethnicity and Gender staff networks. The Dfl intranet site also publishes supporting articles and events on key diversity occasions, activities and celebrations that includes Pride month,

International Women's Day, Belfast Mela, United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities and International Men's Day.

To promote World Hearing Day in March 2025, the Department promoted awareness about hearing loss and hearing care for all, there was also information on the new Sign Language Bill.

iii. Racial Equality Strategy

The Department's Race and Equality Champion represents DfI in relation to the NICS Racial Equality Strategy. In fulfilling this role, the Champion collaborates with The Executive Office (TEO) Equality Unit, fellow NICS Champions and members of the Racial Equality Subgroup. The subgroup brings together NICS officials and representatives from organisations supporting minority ethnic communities and migrants, working in partnership to identify barriers and advance measures to address racial inequality.

The DfI Race & Equality Champion also sits on the Racial Equality Cross Departmental Working Group (CDWG) on Ethnic Monitoring. The Champion works collaboratively with the DfI Equality Unit and departmental statisticians to enhance the collection and quality of ethnicity data within DfI through the provision of updates on ethnic identity in NI from the Census 2011 and Census 2021 Outputs and Ethnic Equality Monitoring (EEM) Questions in Citizens Space. The DfI Race & Equality Champion continued to attend meetings regarding Ethnicity statistics within this reporting period

During Race Quality Week 2-8 February 2026, the Department internally promoted the Race Equality Matters (REM) campaign to unite organisations / individuals to address the barriers to race equality in the workplace. During the week, the Department particularly highlighted Racial Equality related e-Learning courses. The DfI intranet site publishes articles and personal stories to promote racial and ethnic awareness

Monitoring Minority Ethnic in the Public Sector

Ethnic monitoring is an important step in addressing ethnic inequalities. The CDWG conducted a detailed data scoping exercise to determine the ethnicity data being collected by departments and to determine the additional data that could potentially be captured. To address the lack of ethnic monitoring/data across the NICS, TEO have worked alongside Racial Equality Champions, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) and other bodies to develop a monitoring guide. The [Guidance for Ethnic Equality Monitoring in the Public Sector](#) was last updated on 30 October 2024.

During the latter stages of this reporting period Department officials from the Equality Unit and

statisticians met with TEO to discuss expanding the focus on EEM and to broaden the areas where data is captured and to enhance systems and processes. This work is continuing..

iii. Children's Issues

The Department's Children's Champion acts as the senior point of contact for any issues relating to the impact of the Department's functions on children and young people. This includes input to the Children and Young People's Strategy and related draft Programme for Government outcomes.

The Department funds a number of concessions which assist children and young people when using public transport. We also have a number of road safety initiatives that specifically target this group. Further details of our initiatives or services affecting children and young people are set out within this report.

Safer Journeys to School

Large numbers of children and young people travel to and from school by bus. Evidence indicates that children face heightened risk immediately before boarding and immediately after alighting, especially where they must cross the road and where traffic speed, visibility or road layout increase the potential for harm. While buses are widely recognised as a safe mode of transport, these moments represent a period of particular vulnerability. For example, when children get off a bus, stepping out in front of it puts them at serious risk of being hit by a car overtaking the bus. Stepping out from behind the bus is also dangerous, as they may face moving traffic.

The Department has proposed measures to improving safety for children and other vulnerable passengers during the period when they are boarding or alighting from buses and immediately afterwards, when risk is known to be highest. Having considered the available evidence, operational realities and legal advice, the Department's preferred approach is a two-pillar framework:

- Pillar 1 sets out a legislative proposal to prohibit overtaking a stationary bus in clearly defined dangerous circumstances, focused on situations where passengers may be exposed to harm.
- Pillar 2 considers wider risks associated with vehicles passing buses during boarding and alighting, including from the opposite direction, and presents a number of options for further development, some of which would require additional powers or targeted pilots.

Together, these elements are intended to complement existing road traffic offences and sit alongside education, behaviour-change activity, engineering measures and enforcement readiness as part of the wider Safer Journeys to School programme.

A consultation was launched on 26 March 2026 for 12 weeks focusing on the legislative strand of the Safer Journeys to School programme seeking views on how the proposed approach should be refined and applied in practice. Responses will be considered alongside further analysis, legal advice and engagement with operational partners before decisions are made on whether and how to proceed.

United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

DfI supports UNCRC by making roads and school journeys safer, helping children access education, stay healthy and be protected from harm.

During this reporting period the Department's Children's Champion participated in the review of drafts of the UNCRC Report on 'List of Issues Prior to Report'. He also participated in the NI exercise to inform the periodic report to the United Nations (UN) Committee about the UK's progress in implementing the UNCRC.

v. Mental Health Charter

The NICS, including DfI, remains committed to the ECNI Mental Health Charter and its duty to protect the mental health of its staff. Awareness raising and support for mental health, especially in recent years, has been promoted in the Department with intranet articles and online seminars. Staff can avail of hybrid working which supports a mix of office and home working.

The Department is also committed to the ECNI's "every customer counts" guidance, which provides recommendations and advise on the provision of accessible services.

All staff have access to and receive regular updates from the NICS Health and Wellbeing Programme / NICS Well, overseen by the Occupational Health Service (OHS). During the reporting period, DfI continued to publish articles in support of Mental Health and general health and wellbeing. This also included promoting specific events such as World Mental Health Day with Mental Health Drop-in sessions and Mental Health Awareness Week.

vi. Women and Girls

The Department continues to regulate NI Water (NIW) and Translink as Public Services Bodies for the purposes of the Period Products (Free Provision) Act (NI) 2022 Act. The provisions require

these ALBs to provide free period products within their premises for service users, visitors and staff. A key aim of this legislation is to address period poverty. Articles regarding free period products was promoted online by the Department within this reporting period.

vii. Ending Violence against Women and Girls Strategy

The Department supports the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) Strategy. In particular, it uses all available communication channels to promote positive attitudes and behaviours to prevent violence against women and girls on the transport network and, where possible, supports colleagues in other departments in delivering their commitments.

Translink developed a multi-agency approach working collaboratively to create a safe environment for women and girls. They implemented a range of initiatives to maintain safety and a high level of service. This includes collaborative working in a multi-agency approach to create a safe environment for women and girls using public spaces, including public transport services, ensuring everyone can travel with confidence. This includes the provision of Translink's free travel for those fleeing domestic abuse. Translink's front line staff promote a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of antisocial behaviour, including gender-based harassment.

viii. NI Water (NIW)

During 2025/26, NIW continued to embed EDI across its core business processes. This included further development of early-career pathways, with the Entry Level Academy supporting 176 apprentices, higher level apprentices and graduates, alongside an expanded work experience programme reaching 77 students across 43 schools, in partnership with the leading social mobility charity, Futures for All. Plans were also progressed to extend work experience opportunities to students with Special Educational Needs.

Inclusive leadership capability was also strengthened, with 89% of people managers completing Inclusive Leadership training and the continued delivery of the Values programme. EDI considerations were also embedded within NI Water's Policy Development Framework.

NIW maintained engagement with external partners and benchmarking organisations, including Diversity Mark and Business in the Community and retained Silver Diversity Mark accreditation. New partnerships were developed to support inclusive pathways into employment.

Employee engagement activity continued, including the involvement of frontline representatives in shaping actions to improve employee experience and the introduction of a peer nomination pilot scheme recognising behaviours aligned to organisational values.

NIW also supported community initiatives and inclusive recruitment practices, with a focus on improving access to employment opportunities and promoting diversity within its workforce

NIW continued to operate its Customer Care Register, which provides free additional services to customers who may require extra support. The register remains open to all customers without qualifying criteria and customers on the register are prioritised during unplanned events. NIW also continued to apply the JAM (Just a Minute) card initiative which supports customers with communication barriers by enabling them to discreetly request additional time and assistance.

NIW built on previous consultation outcomes regarding the provision of free period products. Products continue to be available across approximately 60 sites, including in female, unisex and accessible toilets, with stock supplied, monitored and replenished through the cleaning contract.

1.2 Public Transport, including the Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC)

Access to Transport

Many of the transport programmes funded by the Department are designed to remove barriers to travel that people, especially those with a disability, older people and dependants (including dependants who may have a disability), may face. It is also worth noting that a fare freeze was announced during this reporting period 2025/2026, to the benefit of all users of public transport, including S75 groups. Initiatives and transport related programmes aimed at creating an inclusive, accessible transport system during this period include:

- i. Translink issued a revised Outline Business Case in September 2025 a £13.3m business to replace and upgrade over 200 bus shelters across the network.

The key elements of this project include:

- the provision of over 100 new bus shelters at locations based on assessment of requests received;
- the replacement/refurbishment of 110 bus shelters reaching end of life span / those beyond economic lifespan; and

- the replacement of 250 advertising lightbox replacements for those beyond economic lifespan. (An advertising lightbox is a type of illuminated display panel commonly installed in or beside bus shelters to hold and showcase advertisements.)
- ii. A new Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant pedestrian access route between Marino /Station Road and Marino Railway halt has been delivered. The scope of the project included 8 DDA compliant ramps with handrails, ramp lighting, boundary walls, fencing and gates plus drainage, signage and landscaping.

Translink has recently completed the installation of new cycle storage facilities at Belfast Grand Central Station. The new cycle storage facilities are designed to encourage the integration of cycling and public transport journeys. The new cycle storage facilities include both standard stands and access-controlled shelters including partitioned access and priority for disabled users and non-standard bikes. The design followed engagement and consultation with key stakeholders including, IMTAC, Walk Wheel Cycle Trust NI and CyclingUK to ensure commitment to an inclusive and equitable approach. Translink intend to deliver this facility across 18 sites across its network by 2027.

Translink has continued to engage with the Department on the development of emerging schemes as part of the NI Active Delivery Plan and Belfast Cycling Network, to ensure the adoption of best practice for bus stop infrastructure on cycling routes and the prioritisation of linkages to public transport interchanges.

Translink, along with IMTAC, is a key stakeholder in relation to DfI's NI Active Travel Delivery Plan which will prioritise the design and delivery of inclusive active travel routes to key public transport interchanges and commit that all new developments/refurbishments (stations, park & rides etc) should consider inclusive active travel provision during the design as per ESJ recommendations.

- iii. The delivery of phase one of new Belfast Grand Central Station, included the following key accessible features co designed directly with people with lived experience of disabilities and the organisations that support them. This includes co-designed using inclusive design standards and a new priority seating sticker developed with IMTAC input.
- A full internal tactile path for wayfinding which is complemented by Navilens, an innovative wayfinding tool recommended by RNIB for blind and visually impaired customers. It also provides access to all service information

- A state of the art sensory pod, a certified Autism product.
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) & Dementia sensory packs for children, teenagers and adults.
- A Changing Places Facility.
- Accessible toilets.
- Baby Changing room facilities.

Phase 2, which is due to be completed by Autumn 2026, deliverables include a dog spend area, accessible cycle storage, accessible car parking including electric charging facilities and wheelchair accessible vehicle spaces, designed with key stakeholders.

The wider enhanced public realm plan will see enhancements to the surrounding areas including the widening of footways for greater levels of pedestrian priority, step free access to and from the station to cater for pedestrians with restricted mobility and visual impairments. The project has adopted the new Social Value legislation released by the NI Executive which gives even more opportunity to create true and lasting benefits to the local area through commitments during the construction of this project. There has been continuous ongoing engagement with stakeholders and community representatives throughout the planning process and construction stages to date. This engagement will continue with stakeholders throughout the duration of the project.

a. Accessible Transport

One of the DfI's strategic priorities, outlined in the Draft Transport Strategy, is that Transport supports connected and inclusive communities and the Department continues to engage with Translink about improving accessibility on services.

At the beginning of the reporting period, all 1,420 buses were wheelchair accessible, of these 1,234 were low-floor buses (86.9%), 152 were Goldline and the remaining 34 were Gliders. All fleet is compliant with Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations.

All 164 rail carriages in Translink's active fleet were wheelchair accessible and equipped with audio visual information boards. These statistics highlight compliance with accessibility regulations for the Translink fleet. At the beginning of the reporting period there were 15.0% of the buses were zero emission vehicles, 2.4% were diesel hybrid and the remaining 82.6% were diesel vehicles.

b. Enterprise Train Replacement Project

The train technical specification for the new Enterprise trains includes compliance with Technical Specifications for Interoperability for Persons with Reduced Mobility (TSI PRM) as a minimum, but also the provision of unaided boarding for all passengers, and the provision of wheelchair spaces in both first and standard class passenger areas of the trains.

c. Transport Programme for People with Disabilities (TPPD)

The aim of this Programme is to improve accessibility to transport for those in urban areas with a disability who find it difficult to or cannot access mainstream services. Users of the programmes associated with the TPPD are those with a disability and / or those who are older.

The programmes included in TPPD and their respective usage during 2025-26 are shown in the following table:

Programme	Members	Data/usage
Disability Action Transport Scheme (DATS) is a specialised transport service for people operating in towns or cities with a population more than 10,000 who find it difficult or impossible to use public transport.	13,621 Active Users 2,399	Number of trips delivered 76,041
Shopmobility helps people who consider themselves to have mobility problems (whether through disability, illness or injury) to continue to get around city and town centres independently, with freedom, confidence and dignity by the provision of mobility equipment, e.g. motorised scooters, wheelchairs etc.	14,322 Active Users 1,995	Number of equipment loans to individuals 62,402

The total amount of funding provided to these organisations, through TPPD, in 2025-26 was just under £2.85m.

d. Dial-a-Lift (DAL)/Rural Transport Fund

DAL was originally set up with the primary objective of reducing social isolation for rural dwellers. It provides transport options for individuals living in rural areas who are unable to access, or have

difficulty accessing, public transport. The main users of this scheme are those aged 65+ and / or those with a disability.

During 2025-26 funding of almost £3.187m was provided by DfI to Rural Community Transport Partnerships in 11 operational areas to help deliver DAL services.

The number of trips on DAL services in 2025-26 was 195,437.

e. Community Transport Review

During the 2024/25 reporting period, further work was undertaken to inform an ongoing review of community transport; the Dial-a-Lift (DAL) Rural Transport Scheme and the Disability Action Transport Scheme (DATS). Work on Phase 2 of the Community Transport Review commenced towards the end of March 2025 and the original timeline was 6-9 months. Completion of the review has been delayed beyond the revised timeline due to resourcing pressures in the wider team and the need to prioritise urgent issues.

The Phase 2 team is still in place and intends to complete the review as soon as possible within the first quarter of 2026/27. A more realistic completion target would be end of June 2026, which pending clearance by the Minister, would allow sharing of the final Phase 2 report with stakeholders and Committee in September 2026. That timeline, however, will still be dependent on the availability of resources.

f. Concessionary Fares

The Concessionary Fares Scheme supports those most at risk of social isolation to access public transport through discounted bus and rail fares. It provides free travel for people over aged 60, those who are registered blind and war disablement pensioners. There are also half fare concessions for people with a disability (who satisfy the relevant criteria) and children up to 16 yrs. The total cost for the Scheme during the reporting period was £54.85m (reimbursed by DfI) and over 16.3m concessionary journeys (claimed by Translink and other participating operators) were taken as detailed in the table below.

Category	Cost £(000)	Journey numbers(k)
60+, Blind & War Disabled (full fare)	41,940	11,481
Half Fare Categories	1,146	593
Children	11,055	4,272
Administration Costs – overall	709	-

Total	54,850	16.346
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Translink continues to provide a number of discounts to assist children and young people when using public transport; the YLink travel card for all 16-23 year olds and the Translink Proof of Age card for all under 16 year olds and the 24+ Student Railcard. These cards offer concession ranging from 1/3 to 50% off bus and rail journeys (Rules apply).

g. Free Transport Pilot for Asylum Seekers

On 1 November 2023, through dispersal funding provided by the Home Office, the Department launched a free public transport pilot for asylum seekers. To date, over 3,000 travel cards have been provided to asylum seekers under the pilot with 28 travel cards issued between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026. These cards provide free unlimited travel anywhere in NI for a period of six months. A formal evaluation of the pilot scheme was undertaken in May 2024. The survey results demonstrated that the pilot delivered significant improvements in health and well-being outcomes, ability to access services and feelings of belonging to the wider community. Feedback on the pilot from key stakeholders, including councils and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) providers, was also positive with stakeholders highlighting the positive impacts on asylum seekers, service provision and the local community.

h. Inclusive Mobility Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC)

i. The role of IMTAC is to advise the Government and other relevant parties in NI on issues that may affect the mobility of older people and / or people with a disability. IMTAC continues to be one of DfI's primary sources for obtaining advice about issues that affect people with disabilities and how they use infrastructure and services.

IMTAC has provided advice on number of wider policy issues throughout government, including:

- Continuing development of a policy paper highlighting the key role access to transport should play in the modernisation of health services across NI which has included a survey of over 400 people.

- Involving broader groups of deaf, disabled and older people in the development of projects as well as evaluating the impact of recent investment to them.
- Working with the Department to ensure that the new transport strategy and suite of transport reflect the changes in culture outlined in New Decade, New Approach.
- Encouraging the wider adoption of Disability Equality Training amongst service providers and policy makers. This training has been undertaken by a number of Translink senior management and has been completed by all Senior Civil Servants within DfI and is being further rolled out to DfI staff with roles in areas linked to inclusive transport.

Working with Transport Policy Branch to inform thinking around the introduction of secondary legislation designed to address problematic pavement parking.

- Providing advice to local councils and the Department for Communities to ensure that public realm schemes meet the highest standards including ongoing engagement around Belfast City Centre public realm and the proposed Derry Riverfront Scheme.
- Ongoing work with Translink and the Department to ensure that new and upgraded bus and train stations meet the needs of all.
- Ongoing work with Translink and the Department to ensure that investment in buses and rolling stock meets the needs of all.
- Working with the Department to ensure the Active Travel Plan for NI makes walking, wheeling and cycling an option for all.
- Continuing to provide input to the ongoing reviews of taxi provision and community transport licensing and service provisions in NI.

The actions above have made a significant contribution to the development of policy and services making travel more inclusive and accessible, especially for older people and people with a disability.

1.3 Policy Area – Management of Flood Risk and Roads and Footways

The Department is responsible for the management of all publicly adopted roads and footways. Its main responsibilities include ensuring streets are maintained and are safe to use. It also plays an important role in ensuring that new works are completed to the appropriate standards and as far as possible the needs of those with a disability are considered within the design and development of a

project.

I. Rivers Infrastructure

In 2025–26, Rivers Directorates continued to progress a number of Flood Alleviation Schemes (FAS), identified in the Northern Ireland Flood Risk Management Plans as being located within Significant Flood Risk Areas (SFRAs). These included schemes in the Newry and Portadown SFRAs.

Equality and Good Relations Impact: These schemes are designed not only to reduce flood risk but also to improve the safety and accessibility of roads, footpaths and public spaces in affected areas. The schemes have a positive differential impact on individuals with disabilities, older people and those with dependants, groups who may be disproportionately affected by flooding and poor infrastructure. The planning and delivery of these schemes included screening for equality impacts and engagement with local communities to ensure inclusive design and communication.

Outcomes and Improvements: Improved infrastructure in flood-prone areas may enhance access and mobility for vulnerable groups. Community engagement activities have helped raise awareness of flood risk and resilience, particularly among those less likely to access digital information channels

II. Roads Infrastructure

DfI Transport and Road Asset Management (TRAM) is responsible for the management of all publicly adopted roads and footways. Its main responsibilities include ensuring streets are maintained and are safe for all road users. It also plays an important role in seeing that any new works are completed to the appropriate standards and as far as possible the needs of those with a disability are considered within the design and development of a project.

The Department has launched a new Road Maintenance Strategy, soon to be published, that presents a set of commitments for improving the condition of the road network including footway improvement to support accessibility for those with disabilities and the elderly.

1.4 Policy Area – 20 mph Speed Limit Scheme

This Scheme aims to improve road safety around schools when pupils are arriving in the morning and leaving in the afternoon. Since 2020/21, the Department has delivered three tranches of part time 20 mph speed limits at 256 schools. Works associated with Tranche 3 are currently underway, and it is anticipated that these will be completed by the start of the 2026/27 school year.

Community Engagement

The Department continues to deliver road safety behavioural change interventions and educational messages through its 'Share the Road to Zero' website and its associated Facebook, X and Instagram social media channels.

Throughout the year these messages regularly address the main causes of road casualties, with drivers continuously reminded to give extra consideration to more vulnerable road users, especially pedestrians - particularly children and older people, motorcyclists, child and adult cyclists and people with mobility issues, vision impairment, older people, wheelchair users and horse-riders.

Campaigns designed for social media include subtitling to improve the messaging for those with hearing difficulties. In addition to social media activity, the Department also delivered 3 new hard hitting campaigns, addressing anti-drug driving, general road user behaviour speeding. Additionally, various outdoor (bus advertising) road safety campaigns that specifically referenced older road users and children, namely in the pedestrian safety, distraction and anti-speeding campaigns.

In August 2025, advice on the use of mobility scooters was promoted via social media.

The campaign to raise awareness with drivers on the dangers of parking on the pavement continued running on social media during 2025/26. The campaign aims to show drivers how parking on the pavement can endanger all pavement users forcing them into oncoming traffic, with a specific focus on people with disabilities, older people, children and people pushing prams. A new campaign on safety around school buses was launched in May 2025, which emphasises a collective responsibility to protect children at their most vulnerable moments on their school commute, with messages promoting safe driving around schools. The social media campaign has been issued at various times throughout the year.

New Campaigns

Statistics tell us that 95% of collisions are caused by human error, this statement refers to the five-year period 2020-2024. This being the case, the Department's road safety campaigns play a significant role in influencing road user behaviour contributing to a reduction of death and serious

injuries on our roads. The Department has launched three new road safety campaigns across all TV streaming and digital channels aimed at changing road user behaviours.

Anti-Drug Driving

In November 2025, the Department launched a new public information campaign to address the rise in drug driving. In line with its Equality Scheme commitments, the campaign was developed to ensure that messaging is accessible, inclusive and reflective of the needs of all S75 groups. The campaign responds to initial findings from a 12-month roadside DrugWipes pilot, which showed that around half of those tested by police were positive for cannabis and/or cocaine. It aims to raise awareness of the risks and consequences of drug driving and to promote safer behaviour across all sections of the community, supporting the Department's commitment to equality of opportunity and good relations.

General Road User Behaviour – Priority List

On 5th March 2026 the Department launched a new road user behaviour campaign to address poor road user behaviour as it continues to be the leading cause of road traffic collisions here. Behaviours such as inattention, driving too close and momentary distractions may seem minor in the moment but they can have devastating, life-changing consequences for individuals, families and communities.

The 'Priority List' campaign has been developed to raise awareness of these risks and to encourage all motorists to reflect on their driving behaviour. It recognises that everyone, across all sections of society can be affected by road traffic collisions and promotes shared responsibility for safer journeys.

The campaign highlights how everyday habits, a glance at a phone, adjusting the radio, or even a quick sip of contribute to danger. By challenging these behaviours, it aims to influence attitudes and behaviours in an inclusive and accessible way, helping to reduce harm and improve safety outcomes for all road users. The campaign is subtitled to assist those with hearing difficulties.

Anti Speeding – Control or Speed

Excessive speed, particularly when inappropriate for the road or prevailing conditions, remains a significant contributory factor in road deaths and serious injuries, especially on rural roads where higher speed limits apply. Evidence shows that travelling at higher speeds reduces reaction

times and increases stopping distances, limiting a driver's ability to respond safely to unexpected hazards.

Rural roads account for a disproportionate number of fatalities and serious injuries. In 2024 a total of 69 people were killed on our roads, with 51 (74%) of these being on rural roads, with far-reaching impacts on individuals, families and communities. The 'Control or Speed' campaign has been developed to address these risks and to encourage behavioural change among drivers.

In line with the Department's Equality Scheme commitments, the campaign has been designed to ensure that its messaging is clear, accessible and inclusive, and that it effectively reaches a wide range of audiences. By promoting safer driving behaviours, the campaign seeks to improve safety outcomes and support the wellbeing of all road users. The campaign is subtitled to assist those with hearing difficulties to fully understand the lifesaving messages.

Be Bold Be Seen

The Department launched the 'Be Bold. Be Seen' road safety campaign to encourage greater visibility among road users as the darker winter months approach. The campaign targets pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users, promoting the use of bright or high-visibility clothing to reduce risk.

The campaign features three striking visuals displayed across a range of formats including bus rears, posters and social media, ensuring wide reach across diverse audiences. In line with the Department's Equality Scheme commitments, the campaign has been designed to be accessible and inclusive, with clear messaging intended to resonate across all S75 groups.

You wouldn't be seen dead in this

This visual delivers a hard-hitting message that being invisible on the road is a risk not worth taking. The slogan plays on the double meaning of being seen both in terms of fashion and survival, using impactful messaging to engage a broad audience and encourage safer behaviour.

Take a fashion risk not a safety risk

This creative approach is designed to capture attention quickly, particularly in high-visibility formats such as bus rears, by linking fashion choices with personal safety. The messaging is simple and direct, supporting accessibility and ensuring it can be easily understood by a wide range of audiences.

If he could he would

The message is clear, while wildlife has no control over its visibility on our roads, people do. Whether walking, cycling or working near traffic, choosing to wear high-visibility clothing can be the difference between being seen and not. By using a relatable and emotive image, the campaign aims to encourage behavioural change across all communities, particularly when daylight hours shorten.

Be Safe Be Seen – Hi Viz Harry

Building on the ‘If he could he would’ campaign, Hi-Viz Harry was developed as a character-driven extension to further engage audiences. The character, a hedgehog named through public engagement via an online competition, helps to increase relatability and community connection. Visibility during the hours of darkness is particularly important for those walking in rural areas.

This campaign was delivered through a short animation on television and social platforms, designed to reach a broad audience, particularly children and families. Using a simple, emotive and story-led approach, the animation presents an everyday scenario in a dramatic and accessible way, centred on the idea that if given the choice, everyone would choose to be seen.

In line with Equality Scheme commitments, the use of animation and character-based storytelling supports inclusive communication by making the message accessible to audiences of different ages and abilities. The campaign promotes equality of opportunity in road safety by encouraging behaviours that help all road users to travel more safely and confidently.

Teaching Aid Calendar

Road Safety teaching aid calendars which are tailored to primary school children feature weekly road safety themes and important messages which teachers can highlight to their classes each week. They are available in Foundation Stage, Key Stage One and Key Stage Two formats and are now downloadable from NI Direct. Previously issued in printed format only, the Department has expanded access by making them available online, supporting greater accessibility for a wider range of users.

In this financial year, the calendars have also been made available in Irish as a downloadable resource. These developments demonstrate the Department’s commitment to its Equality

Scheme by improving accessibility, supporting linguistic diversity, and ensuring that road safety information is available to a broad and inclusive audience across all S75 groups.

In addition, by embedding simple and consistent road safety messages within the education system at an early stage, the initiative supports the development of safe behaviours among children and young people, helping to promote equality of opportunity in road safety awareness and outcomes.

Safety Around School Buses

The Department delivered a school bus safety campaign which aired on radio and across bus rears and outdoor advertising sites in May, September and, most recently, in November 2025. There was a further burst of radio advertising in March 2026. The campaign was designed to raise awareness of the risks faced by children when getting on and off buses, with messaging targeted at drivers and the wider public.

By utilising a range of communication channels, including outdoor media and radio, the campaign ensured broad reach and accessibility across different audiences. This approach supports the Department's Equality Scheme commitments by promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Key road safety messages are communicated in an inclusive and accessible manner to all sections of the community.

The Department is also considering legislation regarding the overtaking and passing of buses when stopped for boarding and alighting - the Safer Journeys to School Programme (SJS). The aim of this is primarily to improve safety for pupils (and therefore young people); although this could also potentially benefit other bus users depending on the outcome and therefore, other vulnerable members of society.

A consultation was launched in March 2026, supported by an Equality Impact Assessment and Rural Need Impact Assessment and the provision of an Easy Read version to enhance accessibility.

1.5 Policy Area – Blue Badge Scheme

The Blue Badge Scheme provides a range of parking concessions for people with severe mobility problems. A blue badge must be displayed to avail of the concessions. Use of the concessions associated with the blue badge scheme makes it easier for those with a severe mobility issue to

park closer to their destination, therefore, making it easier to access facilities within the community.

Within this reporting period 62,047 blue badges were issued. A further 182 multiple badges were issued to support organisations.

The Department Blue Badge Not for Reassessment Project was shortlisted in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion section of the Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation Awards 2026. This project was a collaboration between the Blue Badge Unit, Digital Services Branch and external stakeholders and led to a digital-first approach providing rapid delivery, sustainability and value for money. DfI were awarded Highly Commended for the Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation Awards in May 2026.

1.6 Policy Area – Driving Theory Test

For Driving Theory Test candidates with a hearing/speech/visual impairment, the Department's Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) continues to allow extra time, provides reader/recorder assistance, and/or provides information in accessible formats (e.g. British Sign Language on-screen video, Lip Speaker, Sign Language Interpreter etc).

Where English is not a candidate's first language, question and answer options can be read through headphones in Portuguese, Turkish, Farsi, Cantonese, Arabic and Polish. Video clips have replaced written scenarios in the car theory test, bringing the test up to date and making it more accessible to everyone. Research involving candidates with reading difficulties and disabilities showed that these learners felt more comfortable and confident with video scenarios as they were better able to process the information on screen.

The theory test online booking system has been subject to a comprehensive review and development to increase compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

DVA continues to work in partnership with the Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) in Great Britain to engage with groups that represent those with learning difficulties and disabilities to facilitate these candidates when completing their driving theory test.

Liaison with representative groups has resulted in DVA adjusting tests to assist people with certain disabilities to allow them to take their tests in a manner more accessible to them.

1.7 Policy Area – Safe and Accessible Travel

ii. Cycling Proficiency Scheme (CPS)

Cycling Proficiency continues to play an important role in preparing children for a safer, active lifestyle and encourages them to continue cycling as they progress into adulthood. Cycling is also fun and contributes to children's recommended 60 minutes daily physical activity.

Officials from the Department worked with 231 schools in this period to deliver the annual Cycling Proficiency Scheme with most schools running the scheme from Easter onwards.

Schools have confirmed that the scheme has been delivered to pupils as follows:

- No of children who participated in CPS training – 3966 pupils
- No of children who attained CPS standard – 3717 pupils (94%)
- No of children who wore helmet during training – 3959 pupils (99.8%)
- 87 new instructors at 66 schools were trained to deliver the programme in their schools

A pupil evaluation survey issued to schools in May 2025 found:

- 98% of children surveyed reported their cycling safety knowledge had increased.
- 84% of children surveyed now wear a helmet whilst cycling (compared to 44% before participating in the scheme).
- 93% of children surveyed conduct a shoulder check for traffic whilst cycling (compared to 23% before training).

These statistics demonstrate a heightened awareness of safety, keeping children safer when cycling on our roads.

i. Practical Child Pedestrian Safety Training

This training is offered to select primary schools to help children in primary years three, four and five gain and develop pedestrian skills, observe dangers and practice crossing roads via training walks in their area.

The 3-year intensive supported scheme rolled out a new cohort of 20 primary schools in Autumn 2025. All 20 participating schools completed Stage 1 within the period of this report and will move to Stage 2 in Autumn 2026.

An assessment showed that in the 20 schools:

- 638 pupils participated in Stage 1 of the scheme
- 18% overall increase in pupil knowledge between pre and post Stage 1 of the scheme.

- children gained knowledge to help them be more alert to dangers when walking along the roadside, with the overall aim of reducing road incidents involving child pedestrians.

- **Development of Active Travel Infrastructure**

DfI's Director of A5WTC and Active Travel has responsibility for taking forward and delivering the commitment within the Climate Change Act to increase investment in active travel with the aim of increasing the percentage of journeys made by walking, wheeling and cycling.

An Active Travel Stakeholder Engagement Forum has been established to advise the Department on strategic issues related to active travel. This group includes a number of members who represent the interests of various s75 groups, including IMTAC and the Consumer Council.

The Department also engages regularly with IMTAC and other groups who represent certain s75 groups on specific elements of cycling infrastructure that are known to present challenges to some people. The Department's aim in this regard is to create and maintain streets that are inclusive and accessible to all. During the reporting period, further progress was made on the Belfast Cycling Network Delivery Plan 2022-31 and on the delivery of active travel schemes. Progression of schemes in development include key steps to engage the public at a project level at both the preliminary design, and statutory consultation stage of introducing new cycle routes. This engagement helps the Department to deliver schemes that are welcomed by the community and users.

iii. Publication of Transport Accessibility Statistics, NI

The Department published a compendium report on transport accessibility in March 2024 which brings together a range of information from various sources on transport accessibility. The report was developed following the Office for Statistics Regulation Systemic Review of Transport Accessibility Statistics. The useful links section of the report is regularly reviewed and updated as required.

1.8 Policy Area – Communication with Customers

The DfI Guide to Making Information Accessible supports staff in their communications with the public. It outlines practical guidance information and recommendations for engaging effectively with a range of S75 groups, ensuring everyone has the opportunity to fully participate in decision making. The guide was last updated online on 15 October 2025.

The Department also has Irish and Ulster Scots Language policies which are reviewed annually. Links are circulated to staff for their information and are also accessible on the Department's intranet site.

The Department is committed to making its website accessible, in line with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018. The DfI website's Accessibility Statement is regularly updated to reflect progress on actions identified from the 2020 website Accessibility Audit. Ongoing improvements are addressing issues such as document structure, tables and images and all new content is reviewed to prevent these issues from reoccurring.

DVA Services

In partnership with Age NI, DVA has developed arrangements to support older people who wish to engage on a range of services. DVA has provided Age NI with background information relating to its services, mostly on licensing and vehicle test bookings, and briefed their case officer on how to access relevant online information. This has, for example, enabled Age NI to assist those wishing to check their MOT status online (Age NI provides a free telephone advice service).

This partnership has been positively received by Age NI. The establishment of points of contact with Age NI supports DVA and customers particularly during times when there are high volumes of queries on any specific matter. Age NI has also shared DVA's social media messages on its platforms to provide current information for older people who use the internet.

Promotion of Regional Community Resilience Groups (RCRGs)

In 2025-26, Rivers Directorates actively supported continued expansion of Regional Community Resilience Groups (RCRGs) across NI. These groups play a vital role in preparing for and responding to localised flooding and other emergencies, particularly in rural and hard-to-reach communities. Equality and Good Relations Impacts include:

- i. Inclusive Participation: The promotion of RCRGs has empowered local communities, which may include older people, carers, and those with disabilities. This aligns with the Department's commitment to inclusive engagement under its Equality Scheme.
- ii. Targeted Support: RCRGs have helped identify and support vulnerable individuals during flood events, which may include those with limited mobility or without access to digital alerts.

- iii. Community Cohesion: By bringing together residents to collaborate on resilience planning, RCRGs have fostered stronger community relations and mutual understanding supporting the good relations duty under S75.

Outcomes and Improvements:

The establishment of a strengthened partnership approach, supported by a concordat framework, to underpin the development of RCRGs.

- i. The resourcing of two dedicated Community Resilience Officers to support coordination, engagement and ongoing development of the groups.
- ii. The number of active RCRGs remains at 50 with the exception that new groups will be established in areas previously underrepresented.
- iii. Feedback from community members indicated increased confidence in local emergency preparedness.

1.9 Policy Area – Public Appointments

All public appointment recruitment is completed in accordance with the Commissioner for Public Appointments NI Code of Practice (2016). There were four open public appointment competitions completed during 2025-26. The Department continues to encourage underrepresented groups to apply for public appointment opportunities. The Department's policy is that all public appointments are made via an open competition with the aim of improving diversity on boards.

1.10 Good Relations

i. 'Together: Building a United Community Strategy' (TBUC)

Although DfI does not take lead any of the seven TBUC headline actions, the Departments work supports the Urban Villages Programme and contributes, through planning policies, to the development of shared spaces for all. Our public transport system is also crucial in helping people and communities connect with each other and with employment and other opportunities.

ii. Shared Space and Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) 'Planning for Sustainable Development'

The SPPS recognises that the planning system has an important role supporting Government in relation to creating and enhancing shared spaces, specifically through its influence on the type, location, siting and design of developments.

Councils are responsible for taking forward the development of local operational policy through new Local Development Plans (LDPs) and for the majority of planning decisions. These Plans contribute to the promotion of physical and social environments that support everyone, including children, older people and people with disabilities to have easy access to open space and the opportunity to participate in sport and outdoor recreational activity or simply enjoy being in contact with nature.

The Department continues to engage, advise and support councils in the delivery of their local planning functions and to seek to ensure the two-tier planning system can operate as efficiently and effectively as possible for all stakeholders. Councils must take account of the Regional Development Strategy 2035, the SPPS and any other policies or advice in guidance issued by the Department.

iii. Working with partners to develop guidance

Departmental officials are currently working in conjunction with the Police Service of Northern Ireland and other partners to develop operational guidance and a joint memorandum of understanding to help deal with this issue regarding the attachment of racist posters and expressions of hate on the Department's property.

PART A – Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice.

2. Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans** / measures in 2025-26 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

The detail of this Annual Report outlines the outcomes and impact of the equality actions outlined in the [DfI Equality Action Plan 23-24](#) or available in Annex 1

The Plan was developed after an Audit of Inequalities highlighted 14 key issues. The plan details a number of actions through which the Department could influence these inequalities.

3. Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2025-26 reporting period?

Yes.

Please provide any details and examples:

Equality Processes:

The Department's Equality Unit actively encourages business areas to involve the Unit at an early stage. This aims to ensure equality considerations are addressed at the earliest stage, enhances the quality of content and guides business areas towards a broad range of relevant data. Collectively, this strengthens the evidence base for assessing potential impacts and promotes a better understanding of the specific needs of the various S75 groups within the policy development process.

The Department's intranet provides links to general information relevant to the organisation and, where appropriate, signposts staff to specific data.

All staff can access the "NISRA Data Portal" for statistics and the DfI screening template which includes a link to the Equality Commission's signposting guidance. A 'Useful Links' Spreadsheet was developed during this period by the Equality Unit and is also available on the Equality page of the intranet, providing a range of links to support staff dealing with S75 queries.

The Department has also been working with TEO to develop a method for collecting relevant ethnic data. The Audit of Inequalities highlighted a general lack of S75 data within DfI, and addressing this gap is included as an action in the draft EAP. The Department's submission template to the Minister and senior management includes a S75 statement to ensure equality implications are identified, considered and recorded.

In line with our Equality Scheme commitment to take account of good practice and guidance issued by ECNI, the Equality Unit circulates relevant information to all staff, including ECNI e-newsletters and updates from the Employers for Disability NI.

Age and Disability category:

Officials continue to take into account the needs of people with learning difficulties and older people when reviewing the removal of paper-based options and/or telephone numbers from DfI external communications. Annual and quarterly audits and reviews of website accessibility enable the Department to identify and implement any necessary improvements.

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:

Disability category:

Research with Driving Theory Test candidates who have reading difficulties and disabilities found that these learners felt more comfortable and confident with video scenarios as these made it easier to process information on screen. As a result, the Driver Theory Test now uses video clips instead of written scenarios, improving accessibility for all candidates.

The theory test online booking system was subject to a comprehensive review and redevelopment to improve compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. An Accessibility Statement, in compliance with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018, was published in September 2020 and most recently updated on 16 October 2025. Enhancements enable some candidates who require additional support to book online, reducing the reliance on the telephone booking service, aligning more closely with the arrangements available for standard bookings. The Department's online systems continue to be reviewed to ensure accessibility is optimal.

As part of the NICS drive to promote the JAM Card, DfI staff were reminded on 18 September 2025 to complete the awareness e-learning, available on NICS Learning and Development portal. Jam Card training is soon to be relaunched as the JAM Card training platform licence has been received. A programme of awareness is to roll out through the DfI Diversity Champion who is the JAM Card co-ordinator.

“The Director of Engineering Memorandum (DEM) 187/21 – Accessible Parking Bays for longer Vehicles”

This DEM memorandum considers some disabled people use larger or adapted vehicles which may not fit within standard accessible parking bays.

The memorandum was developed following a request from a member of the public who owned a wheelchair-accessible vehicle with a rear lift that required more space than a standard accessible parking bay could provide. Standard accessible parking bays are typically 6.6 metres long, which may be insufficient for larger wheelchair-accessible vehicles. To address this, the DEM recommends providing bays of at least 7.0 metres in length, along with additional clear space for the safe loading and unloading of wheelchairs or mobility aids.

Where longer dedicated bays are not practical, alternative solutions include locating bays adjacent to footway build-outs, providing additional road markings behind the bay, and installing dropped kerbs to improve accessibility. An example of such provision is located on Ridgeway Street, Belfast, outside the Lyric Theatre.

Age and Disability category:

People with learning difficulties and older people who may be less confident using technology, can access DfI services through alternative contact methods, including speaking directly with staff by telephone or receiving information in paper format. These aid the independence of customers when availing of DfI services. Age NI also offer assistance to older people seeking to avail of DVA services (see 1.8 above).

Graduated Driving Licence

On 27 January 2026 the Department announced its plan to introduce Graduated Driving Licence (GDL) launching 1 October 2026. Graduated Driving Licence is a road safety initiative designed to reduce deaths and serious injuries among young people and newly qualified drivers and motorcyclists, who are disproportionately involved in serious collisions.

The fundamental goal of learning to drive and the licensing process should be to create drivers and motorcyclists who are safe and not just technically competent, by the time they are permitted to drive or ride unsupervised. The introduction of GDL plans to achieve this through a structured approach to learning to drive, including the completion of a Programme of Training and Logbook. This will better prepare drivers for both the driving test and initial post-test driving period by helping learners understand how human factors such as their attitude, personality, behaviour and feelings affect their driving style.

Graduated Driver Licensing will introduce a restricted period for newly qualified drivers and motorcyclists, including limits on carrying young passengers, restrictions on late-night driving, enhanced learner requirements and revised testing arrangements. The measures aim to reduce the over-representation of young and inexperienced drivers in fatal and serious road traffic collisions.

New drivers, up to age 24, will be restricted to carrying one passenger for the initial six months post-test period between the hours of 23:00 and 06:00 hours. This will apply to passengers aged 14-20, with an exemption for immediate family members. Additionally, the passenger restrictions

will not apply if there is an accompanying person in the front seat who is aged 21 years or older, and who has held a full driving licence for three years.

GDL is not about limiting independence, it is about saving lives. Protections are temporary and designed to reduce risk during the highest-risk period for new drivers. These restrictions are being introduced for newly qualified drivers only, they do not include motorcyclists. There is compelling evidence of the heightened collision risk when new young drivers carry teenage passengers.

In 2024, there were 164 casualties (killed or seriously injured) in NI from collisions where a car driver aged 17-23 was responsible. This age group of drivers accounts for 24% of fatal or serious collisions despite holding just 8% of licences. Also in 2024, there were 12 casualties (killed or seriously injured) from collisions where a motor cyclist aged 17-23 was responsible. Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) is a road safety reform aimed at reducing fatalities and serious injuries among young and newly qualified drivers through enhanced training, testing and post-test restrictions

The scheme will:

- Reform the learner and restricted driver system;
- Introduce a revised training and testing regime;
- Apply to both car drivers and motorcyclists; and
- Introduce post-test restrictions for newly qualified drivers and riders.

Race/Intersectional

In November 2023, the Department launched a public transport pilot scheme providing asylum seekers with six months free travel on Translink services. The scheme was funded by the Home Office and distributed by TEO. To date over 3,000 cards have been distributed to asylum seekers with 28 travel cards issued between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026.

A formal evaluation of the scheme was carried out. Survey results demonstrated the pilot delivered significant improvements in health and well-being outcomes, the ability to access services and feelings of belonging to the wider community. Feedback from key stakeholders, including councils and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) providers, was also

positive with stakeholders highlighting the positive impacts on asylum seekers, service provision and the local community.

Extending the validity period of Ukrainian driving licences in NI

Current legislation enabling Ukrainian driving licence holders, temporarily resident in NI, to drive on their existing licence remains in place. This legislation is due to be reviewed in the next reporting year.

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

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

The Accessibility Audit of the Department's website identified issues and remedial work required to bring the website up to WCAG 2.1 accessibility standards. This work is ongoing.

Section 2: Progress on Equality Scheme commitments and action plans/measures Arrangements for assessing compliance (Equality Scheme Chapter 2)

4. Were the section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2025-26 reporting period? *(choose one option only)*

Yes - some posts.

~~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 line with Paragraph 2.05 of the DfI Equality Scheme and given its responsibilities in relation to S75, relevant staff within the Department's Corporate Strategy and Performance Directorate

(CSPD) have equality duties incorporated into their job descriptions. Where appropriate, this is also reflected across other business areas across the Department.

- S75 duties are also reflected as objectives in the personal performance plans of relevant staff within CSPD, particularly within the Equality Unit. These objectives are subject to review biannually to highlight any new training requirements in particular.

5. Were the section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 202-26 reporting period? (*choose one option only*)

Yes - some posts

~~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:

- [Reply to Question 4 above refers.](#)

6. In the 2025-26 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? (*keep in all that apply*)

Yes - preparation and development of the DfI corporate plan.

~~Yes - through organisation wide annual business planning.~~

~~Yes - in some departments/jobs.~~

~~No - these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's corporate
—— plan.~~

~~No - the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2023-24
—— report.~~

~~Not applicable~~

Please provide any details and examples:

The Department's annual [DfI Business Plan 2025-26](#) contains a commitment to S75.

S75 considerations are also reported during the business plan monitoring periods throughout the year.

Equality action plans/measures

7. Within the 2025-26 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:	0
Actions ongoing:	14
Actions to commence:	0

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

The DfI EAP 2023-2026 includes 14 issues and associated remedial measures to be taken by the Department (Annex 1).

8. Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2025-26 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

The DfI EAP was published in December 2024 [DfI Audit of Inequalities Action Plan 2023-2026 | Department for Infrastructure](#) and no changes or amendments have been made. The EAP is due to be reviewed in Autumn 2026.

9. In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2025-26 reporting period, the following have been identified: (*tick all that apply*)

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

The DfI EAP was published in December 2024. No new issues have been identified since then. The EAP is due to be reviewed in Autumn 2026.

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

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

~~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: (*choose one option*)

[Sometimes.](#)

~~All the time~~

~~Never~~

11. Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2025-26 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

The Department carried out a number of consultations during this period. All consultations included a section on s75 identity to assist in data collection. The consultations also sought views on any potential s75 impacts to the proposed policies/services being consulted on. The following are those proposed policies/services consulted on

- A Developer Contributions for Wastewater Infrastructure 14 week consultation was held from 21 March to 27 June 2025. The consultation sought views on whether and, if so, how DfI should introduce developer contributions to help fund necessary improvements to our wastewater infrastructure. The consultation proposed two potential options: A) Voluntary Developer Contributions for Wastewater Infrastructure – developers could voluntarily pay to offset the costs of upgrading or replacing the wastewater infrastructure preventing new connections in the specific areas where they are unable to build. B) Compulsory Developer Wastewater Contribution Levy – introduction of a compulsory wastewater levy, requiring a financial contribution from developers which would be used on prioritised needs basis across the whole of the NI, not just in the areas where they would directly benefit.

The consultation provided an opportunity for everyone, including s75 groups, to express their views regarding developer contributions and on their potential to help bridge the funding gap which currently exists. The [Summary Report on Consultation Responses: Developer Contributions for Wastewater Infrastructure](#) provides a strategic analysis of the responses to public consultation.

- During this reporting period the Department undertook a public consultation on the draft Resource and Capital Budget 2024-25. The consultation was accessible on Citizen Space (the NI Government's on-line consultation hub) and also featured on the Department's website, for a period of 12 weeks from 6 March 2025 to 6 June 2025. Individuals and groups could respond to the consultation in a variety of ways: the survey on Citizen Space or email the dedicated Budget Consultation mailbox.

- **Road Maintenance and Safety:** the Department will prioritise health and safety, through business-critical projects, which should provide mitigation to the continued limited level of service. In addition, the Department is developing a new road maintenance approach which focuses on the quality of road improvement rather than just the quantity, to obtain maximum benefit from available resources. This will seek to improve our roads through a more focused approach using intelligent maintenance, new technologies and partnership working.
- **Water and Wastewater Treatment:** DfI provided NI Water with just under 40% of the total non-ring-fenced budget for the Department, reflecting the central importance of water and sewerage services to society. DfI also continues to bid for additional funding in-year to further protect these essential services. Transformational projects are also being progressed. These include the development and delivery of a pilot project that will use nature-based solutions to help transform urban drainage systems. Nature based solutions are cleaner, greener, can help to slow the flow of water and to reduce the risk of out of sewer flooding.
- **Revenue Raising;** blue badge charge / controlled parking zones / traffic offences enforcement cameras. Any potential increase to fees, such as on-street parking charges, blue badge costs, will include a screening of the impact on all S75 groups including age and disability, to further inform the decision and possible mitigations. In addition, where appropriate, any decision will be subject to public consultation.
- **Future Monitoring Arrangements:** where service reductions have been implemented, the Department will monitor the impact on S75 groups. Work is ongoing business areas to implement a standardised routine monitoring and reporting process. This process will also seek to capture readily updated data to better assess equality impacts on those areas where better qualitative and quantitative information needs to be sourced or reported, including engaging with service providers, as required.

12. In the 2025-26 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees:** *(keep all that apply)*

- Focus groups (inc virtual)
- Questionnaires/Surveys
- Internet discussions
- Leaflet drops, advertisement in national and/or local newspapers and online publications

- Face to face meetings
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- Information by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
- Telephone consultations

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:

- In relation to the Developer Contributions consultation, an event was held with a stakeholder roundtable discussion.
- The key documents on the website achieved the following downloads:
 - Consultation document – 321 downloads
 - Developer Contributions S75 Screening form – 50 downloads
- The Department's social media pages were also used to engage with the public and encourage participation in the consultation. During the consultation period, the following engagement was achieved on the main launch posts:
 - Twitter / X - 13,492 impressions and 148 engagements, including 22 shares
 - Facebook – 6,435 reach and 6,537 impressions, 12 engagements and 8 shares

Consultees were invited to respond to the consultation either via a link in the consultation document to the digital platform Citizen Space, or by email to a dedicated email address. A total of 293 consultation responses were received from a mix of organisations and individuals. Approximately one-third of the responses were from individuals. Of the 293 responses, 164 were received via the Citizen Space online survey and 129 were received by email as longer-form written responses.

13. Were any awareness-raising activities for **consultees** undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2025-26 reporting period? (*choose one option only*)

No - As is standard practice, the quarterly screening report was circulated and consultations emailed to all those on our S75 consultee list.

~~Yes.~~

~~Not applicable.~~

14. Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2025-26 reporting period? (*choose one option only*)

Yes – It is reviewed annually.

No

~~Not applicable—no commitment to review~~

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

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

60 screenings were carried out during this period and of those, 34 were published and can be viewed at [Section 75 Consultation Information - Dfl Screening Forms](#)

The Equality Unit has been following up with the relevant business area regarding those still to be finalised.

16. Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2025-26:

- Policy consultations conducted with **screening** assessment presented: 11
- Policy consultations conducted **with an equality impact assessment** (EQIA) presented. 0
- Consultations for an **EQIA** alone. 1

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

- As detailed above, a 14-week consultation on The **Developer Contributions for Wastewater Infrastructure** consultation was held from 21 March to 27 June 2025. This consultation sought the views on whether and, if so, how Dfl should introduce developer contributions to help fund necessary improvements to our wastewater infrastructure. The consultation proposed two potential options where: A) Voluntary Developer Contributions for Wastewater Infrastructure, and B) Compulsory Developer Wastewater Contribution Levy.

- The Department published a draft consultation document on the new **Road Maintenance Strategy (RMS)**, followed by a S75 Equality Screening analysis. The draft strategy recognises longstanding pressures on the road network, including uncertain funding levels, maintenance backlogs and the need for resilient and sustainable infrastructure. It aims to introduce an operational delivery model to improve road condition, quality and safety.

The draft focuses on three key objectives: delivering higher quality maintenance, targeting investment effectively and achieving long-term environmental and financial sustainability. The RMS consultation period which took place between 2 December 2025 and 30 January 2026, invited input from stakeholders and the public. Responses showed support for the strategic direction, while emphasising the need for durable repairs and improved routine maintenance. Concerns were raised about the current condition of the network, particularly in rural areas. Respondents also highlighted potential impacts on disabled people, older people, pedestrians and active travel users, noting that poor footways and crossings can disproportionately affect these groups.

Overall, the feedback reinforces the new strategy's direction. The insights gathered are being used to refine priorities to deliver a balanced, evidence-based future approach that improves road safety, connectivity and the wider economy.

- Currently the testing of all vehicles that use public roads in NI is the responsibility of DVA through vehicle inspection at its test centres. Currently, private cars and motorcycles are first MOT tested at 4 years old and light goods vehicles under 3,500kg are first tested at 3 years. Each of those vehicle categories are tested annually thereafter.

A consultation to explore the potential for **Biennial Vehicle Testing** in NI was launched 22 January 2025 to 16 April 2025, for a period of 12 weeks, following a call for evidence gathered in 2021. It is thought that Age and Men and Women Generally would be the S75 categories most impacted by the implementation of a biannual MOT. The consultation outcome is yet to be publicised.

- The Department carried out a S75 screening assessment on the **Living With Water in the Derry/Londonderry Draft Plan** which was included in the public consultation which took place from 16 December 2024 to 7 April 2025. The consultation report, which was published on 25

February 2026, demonstrated widespread support for its strategic direction and objectives. Respondents across sectors including government bodies, environmental organisations, industry representatives and private individuals, acknowledged the urgent need to address significant flooding, drainage and wastewater management challenges in the area.

- On 22 September 2025, DfI consulted on **Sustainable Drainage Systems** (SuDS) in New Housing Developments which sought views from stakeholders and the wider public on the development of future policy relating to the regulation and use of SuDS in NI. This aimed to outline the key considerations involved and to gather essential information and opinions on priority policy areas, potential implementation challenges and opportunities to encourage the wider use of nature-based SuDS solutions.

The consultation closed on 19 December 2025 and during this period, the Department actively encouraged all interested parties to share their views to help shape modern, robust and forward-thinking SuDS policy. The [Sustainable Drainage Systems \(SuDS\) in New Housing Developments – Consultation Report | Department for Infrastructure](#) was published on 6 May 2026.

- The Department carried out a public consultation on a **Grant Scheme** to Support Reservoir Managers with the Initial Supervision and Inspection Requirements of the Reservoirs Act (NI) 2015. The consultation ran for 12 weeks from 23 June 2025 to 16 September 2025. The consultation welcomed views on how the Department proposes to introduce a grant scheme. The scheme was intended to support compliance with the reservoir safety regime and reduce public safety risks associated with reservoir failure. An equality screening for the implementation of the grant was completed and published alongside the consultation document.

The consultation demonstrated broad stakeholder support for a grant scheme to help reservoir managers meet the initial supervision and inspection requirements of the Reservoirs Act (NI) 2015. Respondents generally welcomed financial assistance for these upfront compliance costs, while also highlighting concerns regarding potentially significant future capital expenditure arising from inspection reports. The Department indicated the consultation feedback would inform the final design of the grant scheme.

- The Department published a **draft Transport Strategy**, alongside a Se75 Equality Screening analysis, setting out a vision for transport up to 2035. The strategy marks the start of a

necessary shift to ensure the transport system can meet future demands while reflecting current values and priorities of our community today.

The consultation ran from 24 June to 30 September 2026 and invited views from stakeholders and the public, with an Engagement Report published on 20 May 2026. Feedback was largely positive, with strong support for the vision of a more sustainable, inclusive and well-connected system.

Overall, the engagement demonstrates a clear mandate of support for the draft Transport Strategy and its ambition to deliver a more sustainable, inclusive, safe and resilient transport system for NI.

- A consultation for **Safer Journey to Schools** began on 26 March 2026 for 8 weeks. The consultation sought views on the proposed approach to improving safety when passengers, particularly children, are boarding or alighting from buses. Evidence considered to date indicates that children face heightened risk immediately before boarding and immediately after alighting, especially where they must cross the road and where traffic speed, visibility or road layout increase the potential for harm.

While buses are widely recognised as a safe mode of transport, these moments represent a period of particular vulnerability. For example, when children get off a bus, stepping out in front of it puts them at serious risk of being hit by a car overtaking the bus. Stepping out from behind the bus is also dangerous, as they may face moving traffic. The Department therefore considers that clearer, more targeted rules on driver behaviour at bus stops, focused on defined dangerous circumstances, could help reduce risk and improve safety while remaining proportionate, practical and enforceable.

This consultation focuses on the legislative strand of the Safer Journeys to School programme. It seeks views on how the proposed approach should be refined and applied in practice, including:

- the Department's preferred legislative proposal under Pillar 1 to prohibit overtaking a stationary bus in clearly defined dangerous circumstances;
- a range of options for further development under Pillar 2 to address wider risks associated with vehicles passing buses (in both directions) during boarding and alighting;

- how dangerous circumstances should be described in a clear, objective and observable way;
- whether the proposed scope and application are appropriate, including across urban and rural road environments; and
- the potential impacts, including behavioural, rural and equality considerations.

Responses will be considered alongside further analysis, legal advice and engagement with operational partners before decisions are made on whether and how to proceed.

- **Zero Electric Goods Vehicles (ZEGVs)** consultation launched on 10 March 2026 for 4 weeks. Current driving licence categories mean that category B licence holders are not entitled to drive ZEGVs, due to the additional weight of battery systems which results in the maximum authorised mass (MAM) exceeding 3,500kg. The increased weight of the powertrain may not necessarily bring the weight of the vehicle over the 3,500kg max, but it would severely reduce the payload of the vehicle, thereby making it commercially less favourable. Increasing the weight to 4,250kg allows for this.

Drivers wishing to drive such a vehicle instead require a category C or C1 licence which increases costs for the user, including upfront licence acquisition. For such vehicles intended to be driven for commercial use, there are further additional costs resulting from the need for medical examinations and training for a driver certificate of professional competence to be completed.

This consultation is sought views on proposed changes to the licensing entitlement to allow category B licence holders to drive ZEGVs with a MAM up to 4,250kg. A synopsis of responses was published on 15 May 2026. Following consideration of the responses, the Department will bring forward amending legislation at the earliest opportunity to:

- Increase the category B ZEGV weight limit to 4,250kg
- Introduce a two-year licence-holding requirement
- Provide a 5,000kg allowance for ZEGVs adapted for disabled users
- Permit towing under defined conditions

The Department will continue to monitor road safety outcomes and operational impacts as these changes are implemented.

- The Department launched a consultation on 6 March 2025 until 5 June 2025 seeking comments on the equality implications of its **Draft 2025-26 Budget EQIA**. The Department's

draft 2025-26 budget outcome, for both resource and capital was an improved position in comparison to previous years, however, the draft budget outcome does not provide funding for everything that the Department wants to do and therefore prioritisation needed.

This EQIA focused on the spending areas where the draft budget outcome may not allow the Department to deliver at the level it wanted to and seeks comments on the equality impacts of those. The 2025-26 Draft Budget EQIA Consultation Report, (June 2025) was published on the DfI website.

The consultation responses broadly emphasised the risk that budget pressures could have disproportionate impacts on vulnerable and Section 75 groups, particularly through reduced transport, road maintenance, street lighting, flood management and infrastructure investment. Respondents called for these services to be protected where possible. DfI acknowledged these concerns, stated that the 2025/26 budget position was improved compared with previous years but remained constrained, and committed to considering consultation feedback in its prioritisation and monitoring arrangements.

- DfI consulted on the **Review of Planning Fees** from 1 October 2025 until 23 December 2025 inviting views from the public and stakeholders on potential changes to The Planning (Fees) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 (the Fees Regulations).

These potential changes focus on the introduction of set fees for non-material changes and discharge of conditions planning applications. The Department produced an Easy Read version of and companion to this public consultation. The consultation report following the consultation is not published as yet.

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

No

Not applicable

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 2025-2026 reporting period? *(choose one option only)*

Yes

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The Department Draft Budget 2025/26 Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) consultation [EQIA Consultation - Draft Budget 2025-2026](#) examined the equality implications of DfI's proposed 2025/26 Resource and Capital Budget. The consultation began 6 March 2025 until 5 June 2025, focusing on areas where budget constraints could affect service delivery and sought views on the potential impact across the s75 categories.

The Department's draft 2025-26 budget outcome, for both resource and capital was an improved position in comparison to previous years, however, the draft budget outcome had not provided funding for everything that the Department hoped to do, and therefore prioritisation was required. This EQIA focused on the spending areas where the draft budget outcome may not have allowed the Department to deliver at the level it wanted to and sought comments on the equality impacts of those.

The DfI Draft Budget 2025/26 EQIA Consultation Outcomes Report [EQIA Consultation - Draft Budget 2025-2026](#) concluded that respondents were generally concerned that budget constraints could disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, particularly older people, disabled people, people on low incomes, rural communities and those who rely on public transport services. DfI acknowledged these concerns and stated that the 2025/26 budget position was improved compared with previous years but remained constrained and committed to considering consultation feedback in its prioritisation and monitoring arrangements.

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 2025-2026 reporting period? *(choose one option only)*

~~No – already taken place.~~

~~No – scheduled to take place at a later date.~~

~~Not applicable.~~

Yes.

Please provide any details:

- The Department routinely reviews all areas of its websites to confirm compliance with accessibility standards and continues to address improvements identified in its Accessibility Statement.

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

~~Yes~~

No

~~Not Applicable~~

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

None.

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

The Department has carried out various surveys linked to services, all of which assisted and informed decision making and when carrying out equality screening analysis.

DfI currently has a number of question modules included in the Continuous Household Survey (CHS) which provide a regular source of information on a wide range of issues relevant to NI. Where possible, results for all CHS reports are broken down by gender, age group, urban/rural and by local government district.

Disability breakdowns are also published in the accompanying tables for several of the reports. Any requests for breakdowns by religion and dependents can be considered on an individual basis but availability is limited. While EEM data is collected from this survey, the achieved sample is insufficient to report results by ethnicity.

In 2025/26 the following reports were published from the survey results:

- Attitudes towards e-Cars [Attitudes towards electric vehicles in Northern Ireland 2024/25](#) - Department for Infrastructure - Published 4 December 2025
- Public Transport Journey Planning [Public Transport and Journey Planning in Northern Ireland 2024/25](#) – Department for Infrastructure – Published 19 February 2026
- Walking and Cycling [Walking and Cycling in Northern Ireland 2024/25](#) - Department for Infrastructure – Published 20 October 2025
- Travel To/From Schools [Travel To/From Schools by Pupils in NI 2024/25](#) – Department for Infrastructure – Published 24 March 2026
- Road Safety [Road Safety Issues in Northern Ireland 2024/25](#) – Department for Infrastructure – Published 12 February 2026
- Water Usage - [Household Water Usage in Northern Ireland 2024/25](#) - Department for Infrastructure – Published 30 September 2025

In addition, the [DfI Draft Budget 2025-26 Equality Impact Assessment Consultation | Department for Infrastructure](#) was published on 19 August 2025.

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 2025-26 and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

A range of S75 training continued during the period:

- Further training using the ECNI video on S75 Screening was sent to staff twice during the reporting period (issued biannually).
- Equality Unit issued two reminders to Grade 5s on 20 January 2025 and 18 September to ensure staff enrol for the Introduction to Section 75 and Section 75 duties (A Focus on screening) refreshers.
- S75 training is not mandatory in DfI though the staff induction pack advises of our Equality duties and recommends that all new staff complete the Induction to Section 75 e-eLearning and are currently exploring the potential to making S75 training mandatory to all staff.
- The Department continues to circulate links to webinars, including those delivered by ECNI and Employers for Disability.
- All staff have access to various e-learning courses on mental health/resilience (personal and of others); disability; ASD awareness; and vulnerable users.

- The Dfl Staff Induction package includes a section on equality and S75, with relevant links to information and training.

Dfl staff participated on the following courses during the reporting period;

Mandatory Training -

Equality & Diversity Essentials – 2078

Introduction to Diversity & Inclusion – 2103

Optional Recommended Training (e-learning and virtual classroom)

Section 75 Duties (A Focus on screening) – 21

Section 75 The Monitoring Requirements – 17

Section 75 Duties (Section 75 Duties and Equality Assessments) – 17

Introduction to Section 75 – 28

Introduction to Human Rights – 8

LGBTQ+ Inclusion (Manager) – 1

LGBTQ+ Inclusion (Team Member) – 1

Trans & Non-Binary Inclusion (Team Member) – 2

Supporting Autistic People – 8

Unconscious Bias – 22

Racial Equality – 2

- NISRA colleagues delivered a training seminar to Dfl staff on the NISRA Data Portal which enables staff using official statistics to identify and analyse outcomes for equality groups.

25. Please provide **any examples** of relevant training shown to have worked well, in that participants have achieved the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve the stated objectives:

- The DVA staff induction for new staff includes a presentation on Diversity and Inclusion.
- 'Introduction to Human Rights e-learning' course has benefitted staff by raising awareness and understanding of human rights in the delivery of their duties and the work of the Department generally.
- Unconscious Bias e-learning course has promoted positive attitudes towards people with a disability.
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) e-course has given a good foundation to understanding the communication difficulties encountered by people on the autism spectrum.
- As staff were reminded to refresh their JAM Card online training, the training has provided useful information for staff, particularly frontline staff to understand the needs of people with a disability when accessing public transport and other public facing services.

- Accessibility training for websites has been introduced across the NICS. However, this training is not mandatory. Further communications were issued to encourage staff to complete this training.
- A member of DVA staff has attained Disability Positive accreditation following relevant training.

Inclusion Conference

The Department organised an Inclusion Conference which was delivered as a Round Table Event on 7 May 2025 entitled 'Inclusive Transport & Travel – what does good look like?'

The event brought together a diverse range of perspective and expertise from across public sector, local government, local transport providers and users with a lived experience. The aim was to gather insights and promote dialogue and collaboration with a wider stakeholder group around some of the key challenges and opportunities with regards to making transport & travel more inclusive to all, particularly for those in our communities who are deaf, disabled or elderly.

Following this conference DfI senior management undertook Disability Equality Training delivered in partnership with IMTAC. The training provided officials with first-hand experience of the accessibility challenges encountered by disabled people when using transport services and public infrastructure. The initiative supports DfI's wider equality and inclusion objectives and aims to improve the consideration of disability issues in future policy and service delivery.

Imtac and Inclusion London - Disability Equality Training

Following the above conference, the Department has continued to deliver Disability Equality Training for staff in partnership with Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC) and Inclusion London. Four training sessions were delivered, providing development opportunities for 44 members of staff.

The programme is designed to build meaningful awareness of the barriers and challenges experienced by deaf, disabled and older people when interacting with the transport and wider infrastructure that the Department is responsible for delivering and overseeing. A key element of the training involves a half-day, guided, experiential session across Belfast, during which participants use various modes of transport alongside a disabled person. This practical experience enables colleagues to gain first-hand insight into the accessibility issues and real-world obstacles faced by service users.

Inclusion London focuses on the Social Model of Disability, supporting participants to better understand how policy, design and decision making can unintentionally create barriers and how these can be reduced or removed through inclusive and considered approaches.

Overall, the training is specifically targeted at colleagues involved in policy development, infrastructure planning and decision-making processes. This equips them with the knowledge and perspective needed to ensure that the needs and experiences of disabled people are proactively considered, supporting more inclusive outcomes and helping the Department to meet its equality obligations and deliver infrastructure that is accessible and responsive to all users.

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

26. Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2025-26, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

The surveys listed at 23 will assist the Department in its prioritising and planning decisions.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

27. How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2025-26?

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

- The following “Paragraph 10” equality complaints were received within this reporting period –
 - Abandonment of Crocknaboy Road (Dalradian Gold Exploration Project) complaint. The complaint did not progress.
 - ETSU-R-97 and SPPS (Renewable Energy) complaint which was not upheld. The complaint was subsequently referred to the Commission for consideration.
 - Owenreagh / Craignagapple Windfarm complaint alleging that the Department failed to comply with its Equality Scheme. This was not upheld. The complaint was subsequently referred to the Commission for consideration.
 - Irish Signage at Grand Central Station – failure to carry out a full EQIA in line with the Departments Equality Scheme regarding the erection of dual language signage at Belfast Grand Central Station. .
- DVA received 8 complaints during the year relating to S75 characteristics. These complaints were handled under the Agency’s standard complaints procedure as opposed to the DfI Equality Scheme. 4 complaints related to Disability, 3 to Race and 1 to Age. Of the 8

complaints received, 1 was partially upheld (relating to disability), and 7 were not upheld. None of the 8 complaints relating to S75 characteristics were referred to the NI Public Services Ombudsman.

- A complaint was received by was in relation to Disability Discrimination in Accessible parking Bay application, this Equality complaint was not upheld.
- A complaint regarding a blocked driveway due to parking on a dropped kerb and blocked footpath providing (Disabled) pedestrian access was forwarded to the Departments Roads Serviced Division for their consideration.
- Two complaints regarding the Irish translation of a Newsletter, summer and winter versions were received. These newsletters are currently in the process of being issued in Irish language and the weblinks will be issued to the Complainant.
- The Department received a number of communications from the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) regarding the responsibility for the removal of racist and sectarian flags and emblems during the reporting period.

Section 3: Looking Forward

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

- The Equality Scheme is now due for review. It is planned the review will begin in Autum 2026.

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)*

The Department will continue to focus on the 14 actions outlined in the EAP.

These actions and current progress can be found in Annex 1.

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 keep any that apply)*

~~Employment~~

~~Goods, facilities and services~~

~~Legislative changes~~

~~Organisational changes/ new functions~~

~~Nothing specific, more of the same~~

Other (please state):

- Advice on the progression of the EAP objectives.
- Guidance on reviewing and developing a new DAP
- Advice on reviewing the current Equality Scheme and developing the next scheme
- We will also continue to seek advice on various issues encountered when screening and developing guidance and policies as necessary
- Continue promoting S75 training with assistance from DEWG;
- Reinforcing the need for S75 data to be included in all screenings and for DfI research/surveys to include questions on S75
- Review the current DAP and subject to Board and Ministerial approval, launch a public consultation on a new DfI DAP
- Continue to support DfI input to the development of the cross-cutting strategies mentioned in this report
- Arrange a programme of meetings with Grade 5s and their Heads of Branches to reinforce Equality and Rural Needs obligations
- Ensuring any new legislation, policy and/or amendments to existing legislation or policy, are considered under Article 2 of the Windsor Framework.

Alternative versions of this document can be requested from the DfI Equality Unit by:

Email: equality@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Telephone: 02890540934 (for text relay service start with 18001)

Post: Floor 1, James House, The Gasworks, 2-4 Cromac Avenue, Belfast BT7 2JA.



Department for Infrastructure (NI) Disability Action Plan

1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

This plan is reviewed biannually and updates on Action Measures are included in the Equality Unit's progress reports to the Departmental Board.

MEASURES TO PROMOTE POSITIVE ATTITUDES TOWARDS DISABLED PEOPLE

Action Measures	Timescale	Performance Indicators/ target	Staff Contact	Events & Status as of 31 March 2026
1. Development of a new Accessible Transport Strategy Action Plan .	2018-19	A new Accessible Transport Strategy (ATS) and action plan to address accessibility issues experienced by older people and people with a disability across the transport system. Engagement with disability organisations and groups in relation to the development and implementation of the ATS and action plan.	Stuart Gilmore	Improvements in transport accessibility are being considered under the Transport Strategy 2035.
2. To consider how to meet the transport needs of disabled people in the future.	Annually	Annual monitoring of the number of complaints received on interim service delivered by Disability Action.	Leona Lees	Disability Action formal complaints procedure is detailed on their website. No complaints were received during this period.
	Complete – now a DoH action	A review of the Integrated Passenger Transport Project.	N/A	DoH are now the lead in this action.
3. Development of the detailed design and implementation for Belfast Rapid Transit to ensure the system is accessible to all.	Complete	Engagement with disability organisations and groups in relation to detailed design and implementation of Belfast Rapid Transit (phase 1), in particular accessibility issues around the	Stuart Gilmore	Belfast Rapid Transit Phase 1 / Glider came into operation on 3 September 2018. The accessibility of the Glider service has led to an increase in patronage by older people and people with disabilities when

		design of the halts and vehicles used continued up until system go-live. Regular meetings took place of the Belfast Rapid Transit Key Stakeholders Forum which included IMTAC. Belfast Rapid Transit Glider information sessions arranged through IMTAC.		compared to previous Metro services for the same routes. Further engagement with the Belfast Rapid Transit Key Stakeholders Forum will take place as the BRT Phase 2 is developed.
4. The Department will support IMTAC as a source of independent advice on the transport needs of disabled and older people to secure engagement with these groups in the design and development of policies.	Annually (March)	Work programme agreed annually with IMTAC which reflects Government priorities and provides funding.	Linda Buick	The IMTAC Work Programme was formally agreed after final funding allocations were confirmed and was published on 30 July 2025. The work programme identifies core tasks such as responding to consultations and providing ad-hoc advice and information to key transport stakeholders as well as more substantial priority work areas as identified by the Committee. Priority work areas for 2025/26 include: •Continuing development of a policy paper highlighting the key role equitable transport will play in modernising health services in NI; •providing input to regional transport plans which reflects the needs of older, Deaf, and disabled people; encouraging wider adoption of Disability Equality

				Training amongst service providers and policy-makers; •working with the Department and others to identify and implement ways to tackle problematic pavement parking; •continuing to provide input into Active Travel project delivery to ensure that schemes are reflective of the needs of all in society; continuing to work with Translink and the Department for Infrastructure to ensure that new and upgraded bus and train stations meet the highest design standards; •working to ensure that the new suite of Transport Plans reflect the changes in culture outlined in New Approach; •working with the Electric Vehicle Task Force to ensure that it delivers infrastructure which is inclusive and accessible to all, amongst others. Additionally, the Committee has identified continuing work towards embedding IMTAC's "New Approach" principles in design and implementation of strategies, plans and policies, and major projects relating to transport and travel as a continuing priority.
	Quarterly	IMTAC work programme monitored through quarterly updates.	Linda Buick	Updates have been provided for each quarter of 2024/25.
	2017	Relevant legislation amended to take account of any agreed	Laura Irvine	The date for completion of the final action, to make legislation for the second staged

5.	Implementation of changes identified during the 2013 Review of Blue Badge scheme.		changes to the Blue Badge Scheme.		fee increase, was 2017. This was not taken forward by the Department.
			Changes to the Blue Badge scheme as a result of the 2013 review to be implemented and monitored.	Laura Irvine	All changes implemented bar the second staged fee increase. This was not taken forward by the Department.
6.	A review of the Blue Badge Scheme re-application process for citizens with lifelong disabilities affecting their mobility.	2017	Proposal(s) made to the Minister on the findings of the 2017 review.	Declan Murphy	Completed - November 2023.
7.	DVA will help improve the mobility of 16 year old applicants who are in receipt of PIPs by allowing them to apply for a driving licence up to two months prior to their 16 th birthday. Availability of this scheme is advertised on NIDirect and on the DL1 application form.	Annual	Bi-annual uptake figures are provided for the Equality Report to the Departmental Board.	Alison McLaughlin	182 licences were issued in this period to young people under the age of 17 who are in receipt of PIP mobility element.
8.	To provide road safety and active travel advice and guidance to all special schools in the north of Ireland on a yearly basis.	2018	To provide road safety and active travel advice and guidance to all special schools using 'show and tell' demonstrations and fun activities in keeping with the pupils' ability to learn.	Karen Fullerton	Pupils attending special schools have a better understanding of how to be safe on and around roads and the benefits of travelling actively or sustainably when possible. There are 36 special schools in Northern Ireland. The Department wants to honour its commitment to visit all special schools at least once a year. Post Covid 19 there has been a slight increase in the number of special schools opening their doors to visitors. However,

				staffing and budget pressures have prevented pro-active visits to special schools as initially planned. A new plan continues to be developed but this will be dependent on the staffing and financial resources available. Special schools retain the right to refuse a visit should circumstances change. Officials will continue to contact special schools via telephone and email. Budget permitting, further resources will be developed.
9. Promote and encourage the planning of well-designed places which are accessible and inclusive places for all.	Ongoing	As a member of the Strategic Design Group work with members to promote inclusive, successful, sustainable, well designed places which will have a positive impact on people's lives.	Kathryn McFerran	The Strategic Design Group (SDG) enables the sharing of knowledge, best practice and making connections etc. with the aim of promoting successful place making and promoting well designed places which are accessible and inclusive to all.
10. To promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability within the Department.	Ongoing	'Unconscious Bias' and 'Introduction to Diversity & Inclusion' e-Learning is mandatory and all staff are expected to complete this course. A series of S75 training:- 1. Senior Leadership Training	NICS HR² Equality	Most NICS staff from EO2 upwards have been trained. Introduction to S75, and Section 75 duties courses are available as an e-learning on LInKS. Equality Unit contacted G5s on 18

		2. Introduction to Section 75 e-Learning. 3. S75 – A focus on screening.		September 2025, asking them to ensure that staff enrolled for refresher training. The email included a reminder to complete the JAM card awareness e-learning also available on the NICS Learning and development portal. In August 2024 the NICS achieved JAM card accreditation.
	Ongoing	Investigate training options and sources of guidance on best practice. Business as Usual. Training information/opportunities, from ECNI and Section 75 organisations, are disseminated widely across the Department.	Helen McAlister Robert Preshaw	Training information/ opportunities from ECNI and other Section 75 organisations continued to be disseminated across the Department. Staff have been sent regular reminders to carry out online Section 75 course. Staff are also encouraged to enrol on relevant internal NICS courses to ensure they are up to date with Section 75 guidance. Organisations mentioned in the Department's Guide to Making Information Accessible also provide courses. The Guide is available to all staff.
	By Sept 2020/Ongoing	Staff informed on disability issues at least twice a year through the Department's intranet site by Equality Unit and other NICS sources, i.e. DfI Diversity Champion, DfI Well	Comms Unit	DfI Comms publish global news articles/stories issued by the NICS Disability Champion on the staff intranet. Articles continue to be published on the intranet which raise awareness of

		Champion, and NICS Disability Champion. Business as Usual. This includes promoting disability related events and articles on current disability issues.		particular disabilities, as well as promoting Mental Health and Resilience, and Wellbeing seminars. Links to newsletters from S75 organisations are published on the intranet.
	No activity	Information available on Intranet site which provides staff with a disability, and their line managers, with some practical advice and guidance.	NICS HR ²	Information continues to be available on the intranet. Dfl is represented on the NICS Disability Staff Network.
11. The Department will review ways of ensuring that information on services is both inclusive and accessible.	Annually (Nov)	The Guide to Making Information Accessible is reviewed and updated annually to ensure it reflects best practice is part of a jobholders normal duties. The updated Guide is circulated annually to staff and Disability representative organisations	Helen McAlister	The guide was published in 2017 and last updated on 15 October 2025.
	Annually	Complete an accessibility audit of the intranet & internet to ensure they comply with best practice with regard to accessibility.	Frank McNally	In order to meet statutory obligations, an Accessibility Statement was produced and published on the Department's website in September 2020. It was last updated 16 October 2025. The statement identifies areas that still need to be addressed. A continual review of Dfl website documents and content pages is undertaken to

				ensure we meet accessibility regulations as much as possible. Accessibility Training is now available for all staff via Links and this is highlighted in the monthly staff newsletter. The Department uses Alternative Text in all graphics and photographs posted across social media channels for accessibility purposes. Subtitles are also used in all videos posted on social media and uploaded to the departmental websites.
	Annually by March	Monitor number of customer complaints in relation to accessibility of information on Dfl services. Business as Usual.⁽¹⁾	Comms	There were no complaints during this period.
12. To nominate staff to represent the Department on relevant disability representative groups.	Annually	Dfl is represented on the following groups: ▪ Sign Language Partnership Group. ▪ IMTAC ▪ Disability Staff Network ▪ NICS Autism Working Group ▪ Disability Strategy Group	Angela Starkey	All such groups are attended and feedback on best practice shared.

		(This is not an exhaustive list of organisations DfI is represented on). Business as Usual. ⁽¹⁾		
	Ongoing	Representatives to provide feedback on best practice to Equality Unit and business areas.	All reps.	Ongoing.
13. Demonstrate evidence of monitoring of this Plan and the Department's ongoing commitment to the Disability Duties.	Biannually	DAP is reviewed biannually and status on progress of Action Measures updated and included in the Equality Bi-annual Report to the Departmental Board and Minister in line with requirements of the Equality Scheme.	Helen McAlister / Robert Preshaw	Business As Usual ¹ . The Plan is under review with a new DAP being developed for public consultation.
	Annually	Report progress to Equality Commission. Business as Usual ¹	Helen McAlister / Robert Preshaw	DfI report issued to ECNI on 3 September 2025 after clearance by the Board.
	Biannually/ Annually	Consult with Equality Working Group & Equality Forum	Robert Preshaw	The EWG group has meetings regularly throughout the year and meetings with the Equality Forum are held annually. (Business as Usual ¹).

	Annually	Monitor number of formal complaints on disability issues, including those satisfactorily resolved, to review effectiveness of DAP and identify potential further action points.	Equality Unit	One complaint were received on Disability which was considered through the formal procedure and a final response issued on 20 November 2025. This has since been referred to the NIPSO. To meet the ECNI Investigation Report recommendations S75 training will continue to be delivered. Officials continue to liaise with ECNI, RNIB and GDNI on various issues.
14. To encourage more disabled people to apply for public appointments. (Business as Usual)	Ongoing	Reflect best practice on Diversity in departmental Public Appointment Procedures & training.	Barry McCourt	Four open Public Appointment competitions were completed between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026.
	Ongoing	Notify disability representative groups when the Department is advertising for public appointments.	Barry McCourt	Action included in appointment plans for all competitions.
	Annually	Annual meetings with Sponsor Divisions to review disability duties in the context of Public Appointments.	Barry McCourt	Discussed at all Competition Initiation Meetings with the Sponsor Divisions.
	Ongoing	Monitor numbers of people with a disability applying for and appointed to Public Life appointments.	Barry McCourt	Details captured during internal review completed at the end of all competitions.
	Ongoing	Provide input into the composition of a Diversity Strategic Action Plan being	Barry McCourt	The Strategic Approach to Public Appointments Policy and Board Effectiveness document is due to replace

		drafted by TEO to take forward and report on progress on the Executive's commitments to Equality in Public Appointments.		the draft Diversity Strategic Action Plan. The Document is currently on hold with TEO.
15. Increase awareness of the Disability Duties and disability legislation of those who hold a public life position.	Ongoing	Encourage and deliver training on disability legislation and disability duties awareness to those in public life positions and involved with public appointments. Business as Usual ¹ .	Barry McCourt	Public Appointments Unit share the training package with all Panel Members and specific training can be arranged if necessary.
16. Encourage arm's length bodies and other partner bodies to promote positive attitudes and encourage participation in public life.	Ongoing	Ministerial letter to encourage fulfilment of disability duties to be sent to relevant DfI bodies with a weblink to DAP.	Helen McAlister / Robert Preshaw	To be arranged once the new DAP is developed.

**Department for Infrastructure
Equality Action Plan
2023 – 2026
Update as at 31 March 2026**

Action Plan for DfI Audit of Inequalities 2023 – 2026

1. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations across the nine equality categories outlined in the Act.
2. As part of this approach, in line with its Equality Scheme commitments, and based on its functions, the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) has developed an action plan to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.
3. To develop this action plan, DfI has:
 - undertaken an audit of inequalities;
 - developed action measures based on functions and key inequalities identified;
 - developed performance indicators for delivery of action measures;
 - developed timescales for implementation of action measures; and
 - developed an action plan.
4. In its guidance, 'Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998: A Guide for Public Authorities', the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) recommends that public authorities should review and update action plans over the lifetime of their equality scheme to ensure that they remain effective and relevant to their functions and work and to report of progress on their delivery. This is reflected in Department's Equality Scheme.
A copy of this Plan and our annual progress report to the Equality Commission will be made available on our [website](#).
5. This document sets out the Department's response to our Audit of Inequalities, aligned to our current Business Plan objectives. The audit gathers and analyses information across the Section 75 categories to identify the inequalities that exist for service users and are listed under the "Issues to Address" column in the Plan.

Equality Action Plan for Dfl 2023-2026

Issue to Address	Action Needed	Intended Outcomes	Update as at 31.3.26	By when
1. Integration of Section 75 duties into all planning and decision-making processes	1.1 Departmental Board (DB) and senior managers committed to incorporating equality and good relations targets across all aspects of Departmental business, both externally and internally.	- Equality and good relations considered as part of all future corporate and strategic plans, staffing and financial planning processes. - Completion of timely and thorough Equality Screenings and EQIA assessments.	The Equality Unit received 60 screening analysis between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026. Of those received, 34 were published. The Equality Unit is following up with relevant business areas on those not yet finalised. It remains a concern that the screening documents received does not reflect the number of policies carried out in Dfl within this period. Business areas are regularly reminded of their commitment to the Dfl Equality Scheme.	2023
	1.2 Staff trained in S75 and equality screening.		The Equality Unit emailed all Grade 5s 18 September 2025 to remind them to ensure staff enrol for refresher training on The Introduction to Section 75 and Section 75 duties (A Focus on screening) e-learning courses which are available on LInKS. The staff induction pack advises of our Equality duties and recommends that all new staff	2023

Issue to Address	Action Needed	Intended Outcomes	Update as at 31.3.26	By when
			complete the Introduction to Section 75 e-learning.	
2. Tackle persistent inequalities	2.1 DB commitment to tackling persistent inequalities and to monitoring progress to achieving equality outcomes. 2.2 DB to be provided with progress reports. 2.3 This Action Plan to be monitored during each reporting year.	- Achievement of all actions in this Action Plan by the appropriate target dates. - Inequalities and under-representation levels eliminated.	Dfl continues to play its part in the cross departmental working groups for the four Social Inclusion Strategies – Disability, Anti-Poverty, Sexual Orientation, and Gender. Progress has been made on the Disability Strategy and the draft Anti-Poverty Strategy has moved to discussion at The Executive. Dfl also contributes to the development and implementation of other cross cutting strategies including: the Irish Language and Ulster Scots Language Strategies (led by DfC); the Active Aging Strategy (led by DfC); Violence against Women and Girls Strategy (led by TEO); Autism Strategy (led by DoH); and the Sign Language Framework (led by DfC).	2026 2026
3. Engagement with customers across Section 75 groups	3.1 Establishment of Dfl S75 Equality Forum with key representatives from S75 groups. 3.2 Business areas to actively engage with customers and	Improve engagement with S75 groups that will better inform, raise awareness and where possible address equality issues related to Dfl.	The Dfl Equality Working Group (EWG) meets regularly throughout the year, and our Equality Forum meets annually before EWG to allow section 75 groups to liaise directly with officials on various matters.	2023 2023

Issue to Address	Action Needed	Intended Outcomes	Update as at 31.3.26	By when
	consultees across S75 categories early in the policy development process.	• Policymakers have a better understanding of the issues impacting the different S75 groups. • Customers actively contributing to decision making processes.	DfI is represented at the quarterly meetings of TEO's Equality Practitioners Group. A variety of methods were used to include our customers and consultees in policy making. These included community meetings, online citizen space surveys, focus groups, advertisements in local newspapers and online publications. The Section 75 consultee list used to circulate consultations is kept updated to ensure all relevant S75 stakeholder groups are included.	2023
4. Diversity within DfI Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs)	4.1 Ensure best practice in our public appointment procedures to remove barriers to participation in public life for all S75 groups. 4.2 Review existing ALB equality monitoring to standardise with S75 requirements.	• In partnership with others introduce a coordinated annual programme of interest raising measures. • To increase the number of applications received by S75 groups currently underrepresented across all Non-Departmental Public		2023 2023 2023 - 2026

Issue to Address	Action Needed	Intended Outcomes	Update as at 31.3.26	By when
	4.3 Continue to take outreach measures to raise interest levels amongst S75 candidates.	Bodies (NDPBs) by 2023. To increase the number of expressions of interest by S75 groups in DfI public appointments by 2026.		
5. Equality monitoring and data co-ordination	5.1 Establish a methodology for the collection and co-ordination of Section 75 equality monitoring data across all business functions. 5.2 Develop new methods to record and analyse data on the equality categories. 5.3 Develop staff to be able to use information to inform policy and decision-making processes. 5.4 Outcomes from equality monitoring to inform future screening and decision-making processes.	- A localised equality database for each business area and a standardised approach to Section 75 monitoring across all business functions. - Agreed programme or equality monitoring undertaken by business area. - Equality monitoring outcomes reviewed and published on an annual basis. - Improved data will better inform policy development by understanding equality issues related to DfI.	Equality Unit and Analysis, Statistics and Research Branch continue to work together to address the need for better S75 equality statistical data relevant to the Department's functions. There has been some improvement in capturing Section 75 information through recent consultations. The Equality Unit manages a database of useful data links. This is available to all staff on the Equality intranet page. A guidance document with useful tips for carrying out consultations is now available on the Department's Intranet site with contact points in relevant branches and links to NICS Consultation Guidance, as well as NISRA's guidance on collecting S75 data.	2023 2023 2023 2023

Issue to Address	Action Needed	Intended Outcomes	Update as at 31.3.26	By when
6. Accessibility of our communication services	6.1 In partnerships with others, improve the accessibility of our communication channels to suit the specific needs of different customer groups. 6.2 Our information both written and web-based will be developed in accessible formats to suit the needs of all equality groups. 6.3 Conduct an annual review of our minorities language policy.	- Customers can communicate with us using a range of accessible communication methods. - Customers are made aware of the availability of accessible services and how to access them. - More accessible information services for customers. - Website accessibility and technology enhanced to suit needs of different groups of customers. - On request will provide translation of documents into other languages.	On request, the Department will provide information in a range of alternative and accessible formats – these are progressed through the Equality Unit who monitor translations carried out within the Department. Accessibility training for websites was introduced across the NICS in April 2024 for anyone contributing content to or managing a website. The Department’s Guide to Making Information Accessible, Irish Language Policy and Ulster Scots Language Policy, are reviewed and published annually on the Department’s website. During this reporting period, DfI carried out 6 language translations, 6 audio transcriptions, 0 Braille translation and 1 Easyread documents. The Driver and Vehicle Agency have provided 503 Interpreter assisted Driving Theory Tests; 18317 Driving Theory Tests with voiceovers in English; 3288	2023 2023 2023 Ongoing Ongoing

Issue to Address	Action Needed	Intended Outcomes	Update as at 31.3.26	By when
			Driving Theory Test voiceovers in foreign languages; and 956 Interpreter assisted Practical Driving Tests.	
7. Access to public transport	7.1 Through the Public Service Agreement with Translink: • Work with Translink and our stakeholders through the Accessibility Advisory Group to consider the needs of older passengers and passengers with disabilities when using public transport services. • Work with Translink to increase the proportion of services operated by low-floor access vehicles. • Work with Translink to increase the percentage of the fleet with audio-visual announcements, etc. • Work with Translink to ensure the sustainability of services.	• Improving the travel experience and access to public transport services for older people and those with a disability. • Increase in the proportion of services operated by low floor access vehicles. • Improving accessibility to audio/visual announcements and accessible information on journey planning. • Continued free travel provision for those fleeing domestic abuse.		Ongoing Ongoing 2024 Ongoing

Issue to Address	Action Needed	Intended Outcomes	Update as at 31.3.26	By when
	Introduce Changing Places facilities through a programme of accessibility improvements in new/refurbished stations.	Introducing Changing Places facilities into new or redeveloped stations or hubs, where possible, to improve customer experience for those with dependents, older people and people with a disability, subject to the required funding being made available.		Ongoing
8. Support to Concessionary travel	8.1 Provide funding to support discounted travel for accessible public transport for older people and people with disabilities.	Promote social inclusion by providing access to public transport for older people and people with disabilities.	The Concessionary Fares Scheme supports those most at risk of social isolation to access public transport through discounted bus and rail fares. It provides free travel for people over aged 60, those who are registered blind and war disablement pensioners. There are also half fare concessions for people with a disability (who satisfy the relevant criteria) and children up to 16 yrs. Smart Passes also entitle a holder who meets the relevant criteria to the relevant concessionary fare. The total cost for the scheme during the reporting period was just over £50m (reimbursed by DfI) and over 15.5m	Ongoing

Issue to Address	Action Needed	Intended Outcomes	Update as at 31.3.26	By when
			concessionary journeys (claimed by Translink and other participating operators) were taken.	
9. Access to rural transport services	9.1 Working in partnership with maximise available accessible rural transport services within resource available to benefit rural people including women, younger and older people or those who have a disability.	- Through a funding arrangement facilitate the provision of services for S75 groups in rural areas to access local amenities, public transport and reducing social exclusion by providing a bespoke discounted travel scheme. - Enabling those who hold a SmartPass to avail of a discounted fares on Dial-a-Lift rural transport service.	Under Assisted Rural Travel, there were approximately 177k trips which qualified for travel subsidy totaling nearly £608k.	Ongoing
10. Road safety measures	10.1 Develop a new Road Safety Strategy to continue our effort in addressing important road safety issues. 10.2 Engage with disability organisations to explore options to resolve the issue of inconsiderate parking on pavements that forces pavement users onto oncoming traffic.	- Reducing the number of children and young people killed or seriously injured (KSI) on our roads. - Reduce the number of people aged over 70 killed or seriously injured in road collisions. - Ensure safe and accessible footways for S75 groups in	The Road Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2030 was published on the 12 September 2024. It reflects the continuing commitment to working in partnership to reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries across the roads network and to the ongoing development of a safe and sustainable transport network that meets the needs of all road users.	Annually Annually Ongoing

Issue to Address	Action Needed	Intended Outcomes	Update as at 31.3.26	By when
	10.3 Develop advice for using parking bays.	particular people with a disability and dependent carers. To assist people with disabilities, particularly wheelchair users to park and access their rear loading wheelchair accessible vehicles when parked.		Ongoing
11. Hate crime	11.1 Continue to work with our strategic partners to remove hate expression from our street furniture where it presents a risk to road safety or it is offensive, racist, or sectarian in nature.	Removing offensive material to promote a neutral environment for all S75 groups.	The Department received a number of communications from the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) regarding the responsibility for the removal of racist and sectarian flags and emblems during the reporting period.	Ongoing
12. Specific S75 training for staff	12.1 Develop a S75 training plan for all DfI staff. 12.2 Increase awareness of gender budgeting. 12.3 Ensure provision of disability awareness training for front line staff.	- Staff can effectively carry out equality screening, equality consultations and EQIA. - Frontline staff better able to assist customers who may need additional assistance.	Regular reminders are issued to DfI staff on the availability of Section 75 courses. The Introduction to Section 75, and Section 75 duties (A Focus on screening) e-learning courses are available on LinkS. This training was promoted throughout the NICS on 2 September 2024. The DfI staff induction pack advises of our Equality duties and recommends that all new staff	2023 2024

Issue to Address	Action Needed	Intended Outcomes	Update as at 31.3.26	By when
			complete the Introduction to Section 75 e-learning.	
13. NICS Diversity and Inclusion	13.1 Support and promote the NICS Disability Staff Network within Dfl. 13.2 Support and promote the NICS LGBTQ+ Staff Network within Dfl.	- Develop a Dfl Diversity Action Plan. - Take forward and support any Dfl related objectives from both the Disability and LGBTQ+ Staff Networks.		Annually Ongoing
14. Disability Equality	14.1 Review current Dfl Disability Action Plan (DAP) progress to inform the development of a new Dfl DAP.	- Successfully complete all actions of current Dfl DAP. - Develop a new Dfl DAP.	The majority of actions on the current Dfl DAP have been completed, however some are still ongoing due to budgetary/staffing and may be carried through to the new DAP. Development of the new Dfl DAP has been prioritised and should be completed by Autumn 2025.	2023 2025

Timetable for Measures to check compliance with the DfI Equality Scheme

Annex 2

Para #	Measure	Lead responsibility	Timetable	Action status
2.7	Objectives and targets relating to the statutory duties will be integrated into the Department's corporate and operational business plans.	Equality Officer, All Directors.	Annually	To date (2025) lines have been provided for the DfI Plans.
2.9	S75 Annual Progress Report	Equality Officer/ Permanent Secretary	31 August (annually)	Ongoing.
2.13	Biannual progress reports to the Departmental Board, and Minister	Equality Officer	Biannually	Complete
3.4	Review consultation list of S75 contacts annually	Equality Unit	Annually	Complete
4.20	Quarterly publication of Screening Reports	Equality Officer	Quarterly	Complete
4.34	Review of existing information systems to address, where possible, any gaps identified in monitoring.	Equality Officer ASRB	Within one year of Equality Commission approval of scheme.	DfI Equality Scheme published in 2021.
4.37	Notify consultees of publication of Annual Report.	Equality Officer	Annually by 30 September	Complete
5.4	Check availability/ suitability of focussed training for key staff	Equality Officer	Annually	EQIA & section 75 courses. Following the para 10 investigation at DfI's request ECNI have been facilitating section 75 training for the Department. Ongoing.
5.5/6	Review/ organise /update training	Equality Officer	Annually	
5.10	Evaluation of Training	Equality Officer in conjunction with Human Resources.	Annually	
6.7	Review and update DfI Guide to Making Information Accessible	Equality Officer	Annually, November	Achieved.
6.14	Assessing access to public information and services	Equality Working Group	Annually	Ongoing - updates are requested for biannual

		and Equality Forum		reports to the Board and this Report.
10.1	Review of Equality Scheme	Equality Officer	Within 5 years of Scheme approval.	Scheme published 2021.

Abbreviations

ATS	Accessible Transport Strategy
A5WTC	A5 Western Transport Corridor
ALB	Arm's Length Bodies
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
ASRB	Analysis Statistics and Research
AOI	Audit of Inequalities
BRT	Belfast Rapid Transit
BSL	British Sign Language
CAJ	Committee on the Administration of Justice
CHS	Continuous Household Survey
DEWG	Departmental Equality Working Group
CDWG	Cross Departmental Working Group
CTA	Community Transport Association
CSPD	Corporate Strategy and Performance Directorate
CPS	Cycling Proficiency Scheme
DAL	Dial-a-Lift
DAP	Disability Action Plan
DATS	Disability Action Transport Scheme
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DfC	Department for Communities
DfI	Department for Infrastructure
DoH	Department of Health
DE	Department of Education

DEM	Director of Engineering Memorandum
DoJ	Department of Justice
DVA	Driver & Vehicle Agency
DVSA	Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency
EAP	Equality Action Plan
ECNI	Equality Commission Northern Ireland
EEM	Ethnic Equality Monitoring
EDI	Equality Diversity and Inclusion
EIAR	Environmental Impact Assessment Report
EQIA	Equality Impact Assessment
ESJ	Enabling Sustainable Journeys
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
EWG	Equality Working Group
EVAWG	Ending Violence against Women and Girls
FAS	Flood Alleviation Scheme
GRPB	Good Relations Programme Board
IMTAC	Inclusive Mobility Transport Advisory Committee
ISL	Irish Sign Language
KSI	Killed or Seriously Injured
LDPs	Local Development Plans
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex Individuals
NI	Northern Ireland
NDPB	Non-Departmental Public Body
NICS	Northern Ireland Civil Service

NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
NITHC	Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company
NIW	Northern Ireland Water
OHS	Occupational Health Service
PEPU	Parking Enforcement Processing Unit
PN	Particular Number (Testing)
NIW	Northern Ireland Water
RNIB	Royal Nations Institution of Blind People
RCTP	Rural Community Transport Partnership
RCRG	Regional Community Resilience Groups
REM	Race Equality Matters
RMS	Road Maintenance Strategy
SDG	Strategic Design Group
SEUPB	Special EU Programmes Body
SFRAs	Significant Flood Risk Areas
SIB	Strategic Investment Board
SPPS	Strategic Planning Policy Statement
SuDS	Sustainable Drainage Systems
S75	Section 75
TBUC	Together: Building a United Community Strategy
TEO	The Executive Office
TPPD	Transport Programme for People with Disabilities
TSI PRM	Technical Specifications for Interoperability for Persons with Reduced Mobility
TBUC	Together Building a United Community Strategy
UN	United Nations

UNCRC	United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child
WCAG	Web Content Accessibility Guidelines