

Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Public Authority 2019 - 2020 Annual Progress Report
Section 75 of the NI Act 1998
Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended)



Habinteg
Housing Association (Ulster) Ltd

Homes | Lives | Communities

Habinteg Housing Association (Ulster) Ltd



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Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report 2019-20

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<input type="checkbox"/> Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme	Name:	Ann McErlean
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Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:

www.habinteg-ulster.co.uk/equality-matters

Signature:

Ann McErlean

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 2019 and March 2020

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 2019-20, 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.

Habinteg Housing Association (Ulster) Ltd, founded in 1976, is a registered housing association in Northern Ireland. Habinteg plans, develops and manages 'integrated' housing schemes in both urban and rural areas throughout the region and works with a number of partner organisations in providing supported housing projects. The Association currently has over 2500 properties at more than 100 locations and 18 partnership schemes.

Habinteg's Vision - '**Homes | Lives | Communities**' encapsulates the Association's central aim of providing housing which combines a range of dwelling types - family houses, apartments and bungalows - in order to appropriately meet the needs of the widest range of users, including older persons and persons with a disability. Quality, sustainable developments include large and medium sized suburban housing developments, inner city apartments, individual rural cottages and specialised housing schemes. Partnership projects include sensitively designed housing with care schemes, temporary accommodation for people who are homeless, and housing initiatives for people with additional support needs.

It would be remiss not to highlight that this reporting period ended with enormous challenges of delivering our services within the series of measures put in place to protect staff, contractors and residents from COVID-19. While all of our services have been affected, we are delighted that our staff adapted quickly to new, necessary working arrangements developed by the Senior Management Team.

Throughout 2019-20, Habinteg maintained a commitment to implementing its statutory equality and good relation duties in adherence to the Association's Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan.

Habinteg's core work continues to embody our duties and much of what is undertaken on a daily basis fulfils our duties - from consultation on new developments, promotion of services aimed at reaching the widest range of audiences, unbiased allocation of housing and service delivery, choice, partnership work to support additional needs, community involvement, good relations, fair treatment, equality and diversity awareness training for staff and equality screening of all new or revised policies.

For the purpose of this report, in order to annually demonstrate 'progress', the information provided focusses predominantly on new initiatives and/or significant developments in this reporting period which demonstrate a renewed or enhanced endeavour to ensure equality and promote good relations.

Key policy and service developments for the period include:

Community Involvement

Habinteg Housing Association has been making steps to ensure that tenants are able to get involved in all aspects of community relations. Our two Community Engagement Officers have now been joined by a Tenant Engagement Officer and Good Relations Officer. These roles are to encourage and enable a culture of engagement across all our tenants in order to improve their experience within the Habinteg Community. This work is overseen by the Director of Homes and Communities.

For this reporting period a number of new initiatives have taken place. These have involved tenants taking a lead on new community activities through a more defined partnership approach. Tenants have been encouraged to take a lead in creating and planning activities on their schemes. These initiatives have enabled Habinteg to develop our presence within the wider community.

Achievement Ceremony

The achievements of tenants were recognised at Habinteg's 'Certificate Presentation Ceremony' held in Ballyronan in December 2019. This event brought tenants from different areas of Northern Ireland together and highlighted the hard work of our tenants who gave up their time to participate in various training programs. Feedback from the event revealed tenants wanted to have more mixed regional activities both formal and informal going forward.

Bridging Programmes

Several programmes have been developed to respond to local needs. This has included our new partnership with Ballynacraig Residents Association, where together with Habinteg staff, a group of young people and adults took part in 'World Pride 2019' held in Newry. We have created our own Ukulele group based in Johnson Way which has strengthened our relationship with one of our joint management partners, the Cedar Foundation.

A knitting group was established in Brianswell that saw both tenants and non-tenants meeting every week. We have also enabled other community groups to utilise our facilities for the benefit of the wider community, for example the Tower Street Residents Association to partner in supporting a Food Bank based in our Duke Street Community Hub. Other activities included arts and crafts, mindfulness sessions and den building workshops.

With social activities including networking opportunities, fun days, bingo nights and BBQs. These strong connections, created and maintained, allowed us to move swiftly to support tenants during the months of lockdown with groups moving to use Zoom to continue meeting.

Scrutiny Training

Habinteg commissioned Empowering Communities to assist and guide the ASPIRE 'Auditing Service Performance Improvement through Resident Empowerment' Group in its first "scrutiny" exercise. Initially tenants who were interested undertook training looking at:

PART A

- What is scrutiny?
- Why is scrutiny important?
- What makes scrutiny successful? and,
- How to carry out a scrutiny exercise?
- When training was completed the group agreed a terms of reference and code of conduct.

The group agreed to closely examine the text messaging service in relation to repairs. To collect evidence needed for the exercise, discussions resulted in creating a survey for tenants to partake in and to ask a member of the maintenance team to present information at the next meeting. The survey was designed by the residents who also agreed to organise community activities to complete the survey.

The results from the survey were discussed along with the wording of the automatically generated text messages received by residents. The group worked together to identify the key findings from the evidence and come up with recommendations.

Finally the group reported their findings to Director of Homes & Communities. Lockdown has restricted the opportunity to develop this into actions to improve the service but a meeting to do this is planned.

Capacity Building training

During September and October 2019, Empowering Communities delivered a suite of training to Habinteg Housing Association (Ulster) Ltd residents and staff. 13 participants from various areas, backgrounds and abilities completed training on –

- Teambuilding
- What is a housing association?
- Getting your message across
- What is a board meeting?

All participants improved their skills and knowledge so that they make more effective use of meetings, developed communication skills and identified tips in order to increase confidence in communication.

Good Neighbour Awards

The awards were open to all tenants and were established to recognise the work being done by tenants in their schemes. Nominations came in from across the Northern Ireland and many schemes were represented in the nominations. All participants were due to receive a certificate and small prize at an awards ceremony but due to COVID this had to be postponed. However we have continued to encourage the positive work being carried out by tenants on a daily basis.

TBUC/Housing For All

Habinteg has two “Housing For All” Schemes in Holywood and Portrush. These schemes are to promote shared housing among tenants and within the local community. The Holywood scheme was completed in January 2020. The Portrush

scheme will complete in October 2020. Work to develop an understanding of Shared housing within the respective communities started as the properties were developed.

Relevant Housing Officers have been meeting with local community representatives and tenants to begin the work of embedding the schemes within the local community. The Advisory Panels for these schemes have been established and are made up of political representatives, statutory groups, community groups, Resident's Associations and where possible, tenants.

The aim is to ensure that the schemes are engaging with the local communities and are providing equal opportunity for tenants to engage with their communities. The aim is for tenants to be able to participate in the work and for the work to be shaped by their needs and opinions.

COVID Lockdown

In February 2020, once it was realised that there was a very real possibility of Northern Ireland going into Lockdown, our Community Involvement Team began making preparations. We wanted to ensure that tenants were able to feel supported through a time of great uncertainty. Understanding that peoples' needs would be diverse, a database of support and service based organisations was drawn up. This data base was distributed to frontline staff such as Housing Officers and Community Assistants and shared with other organisations enabling them to provide quick signposting for tenants who needed that support.

Other Community Involvement team members were involved in local efforts, such as supporting platforms for organisations to share their services and co-ordinate to ensure gaps were covered.

Scrutiny and Maintenance

Through our regional panels and residents forum we have ensured that we have a range of communication vehicles for tenants ensuring that their views are heard. This has also included facilitating direct consultation with tenants on work being carried out in conjunction with our contractor. The contact was an interactive experience for both parties.

Tenants were able to make choices about colours and types of kitchen they had and discuss any questions or areas of concern directly with the contractor. This promoted a shared understanding of needs between the contractors and the tenants which made the process less stressful and helped create mutual understanding between all parties. Feedback following the consultation and upgrades was extremely positive.

Regional Panels and Resident's Forum

Our Tenant Engagement Officer has been working to ensure that there is a greater diversity of tenants on Regional Panels and on the Forum. Work had begun before lockdown to open membership across the province and to provide different methods of interaction such as using online services and more local panels.

The aim is to ensure there are no barriers to engagement and where training is needed it is provided, to ensure that all members can take part. This is a growing area for Habinteg and our 2021-2025 Engagement Strategy reflects our commitment to explore more diverse ways to engage with our tenants, thus enabling all tenants to have a say in their Housing Association in the way they want.

Promotion

All community events are widely promoted across our schemes with individual households receiving flyers, calls and text messages. This helped to encourage more social interaction between neighbours allowing them to build relationships and promote harmony within the schemes. During events neighbours were able to discuss the positive impact of social inclusion and bring forward new ideas for continued improvement and growth.

Staff Consultation Forum (SCF)

During the period 01 April 2019 – 31 March 2020 a staff consultation forum was set up as the staff group through which consultation and feedback on any policy review updates for the functional area would be carried out. The forum is chaired by the Quality and Performance Manager and is made up of representatives from every functional area and level of staff across the Association. During this period 11 consultation meetings were held and the following employment related policies were developed / reviewed and consulted on.

- Induction and Probationary Procedure (NEW)
Learning & Development Policy including
 - Applying for External Courses (Professional / Academic) Procedure
 - Applying for External Courses / Conferences Procedure (NEW)
 - Reimbursement of Professional Fees Policy
- Dignity at Work (Previously Harassment Policy)
- Flexi Time and Time Off In Lieu (Toil) Policy
- Disciplinary Policy & Procedures including
 - Capability Procedure (NEW)
- Health and Well-being - VDU eyesight Policy
- Grievance Policy & Procedures
- Redundancy Policy & Redundancy Procedures

All our policies and practices meet all legislative and best practice requirements in regard to equal opportunity and have been screened in line with our S75 requirements.

New Induction Programme for employees

The development of the new Induction and Probationary Procedure introduced a new induction programme for all new employees. The Ready Set Go programme is a three stage induction programme, starting before the new employee's first day and continuing through their first months. The purpose of the Ready Set Go induction program is to ensure that new employees:

- understand their role and what is expected of them
- build awareness of Habinteg's culture, values and strategic direction
- understand what the Association does and how it is structured

- know how to access and work with key policies and procedures
- understand their rights and responsibilities around equal opportunity, health and safety and GDPR/data protection
- begin to establish connections and networks across the Association

It also integrates the new employee into how Habinteg manages performance and reiterates the behaviours the organisation expects its employees to have.

All line managers underwent training on the Association's performance management process in between October and December 2019. This training covered not only the induction programme but also continuous performance management through one-to-one meetings and annual performance reviews as well as the do's and don'ts when having difficult conversations.

New Expected Behaviours from employees

As part of the review of the performance management process, in October 2019 the Association defined a number of generic expected behaviours it required all its employees to demonstrate. The expected behaviours stem from the Association's values and include:

Embracing Equality and Diversity: Habinteg employees will treat everyone with professional and personal respect, promoting fairness and recognising the value of diversity. For leaders it is about creating a work culture and practices that recognise, respect, and value diversity for the benefit of the association.

These behaviours are included in all job descriptions and applicant information and employees are assessed throughout the year against these as part of the one-to-one process and annual performance reviews.

The Association's Recruitment Policy and Procedures provides advice and guidance on the application of the Merit Principle and is mandatory for everyone involved in the recruitment process for the Association. The Association firmly believes that adhering to the policy and procedures will promote equality and good relations, ensure appointments are made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition and will help to achieve a workforce that reflects the diversity of Northern Ireland and the areas we provide a service to.

New Starts

During the reporting period 17 new employees commenced employment with the Association, 10 of which were permanent positions and 2 were agency staff. Included in these was the recruitment of a new Senior HR Business Partner position to work in partnership with the Senior Management Team, and other key stakeholders and colleagues across the Association, delivering HR plans and solutions in line with the needs and priorities of the organisation.

Equality and Diversity Training

As part of the Association's commitment to equality of opportunity and good relations, all staff are required to complete mandatory Equality and Diversity training and JAM awareness. Compliance is monitored on a monthly basis and reported to the Senior

and Operational Management Team. This is also reported through to the appropriate Committee and Board. As at the 31 March 2020 compliance for this training was 96.9% with only 3 employees outstanding this training.

A key aspect of the induction process of all new employees also involves a more in-depth awareness session to cover the Association's commitments to equality and good relations: Equality Scheme, Equality Screening, Charter and Customer Standards. This is delivered in arranged one to one induction meetings with the Quality and Performance Manager.

Mental Health and Well Being Training

As a result of the increase in mental health related absence, in January 2020 the Association also undertook to put all employees through Mental Health & Wellbeing training. As at the 31 March 2020 compliance was sitting at 69.1%.

We continue to support and promote health and wellbeing amongst all employees through monthly bulletins providing advice, guidance and signposting where support can be found.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Association actively promotes equality of opportunity for people with a disability, making reasonable adjustments to assist them whilst in work and for new employees who join the Association. The Association works in partnership with Disability Action to provide and sustain employment for those who have a disability and require support to continue to work. It also provides an Employee Assistance Programme and Occupational Health service to help employees who may be experiencing health issues.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring

During the period the Association carried out equal opportunities monitoring to ensure fairness and equal opportunity requirements are being met and compiled its Equality Commissions Article 55 Review.

The Association continues to promote our work-life balance package for staff, facilitating a number of flexible working arrangements for staff under our flexible working policy including part-time working, flexi-time scheme and home working.

Customer Service Excellence (CSE) Standard 2019

During the reporting period the Association underwent its annual CSE reassessment in terms of its values and service delivery, with a bearing on performance in relation to equality and good relations. This is through an annual assessment against the National Customer Service Excellence Standard.

Assessment against the CSE Standard was conducted in August 2019 with the Association successfully retaining the Standard and improving on overall performance. A further 'compliant' area was raised to 'compliance plus' (best practice) as a result of improvements.

In relation to Equality of Opportunity the Assessor commented that; *'The Association has developed policies that ensure that its customers receive fair and equitable treatment from staff. The Equality Scheme and Equality Screening of your policies are the mainstay of this. A recent development has been the introduction of the 'Just a Minute' (JAM) card'*, whereby staff have been trained to recognise and allow someone with a learning difficulty or speech impairment more time to communicate a message.

For this reporting period the Association achieved out of 57 criteria of the Customer Service Excellence Standard, 19 Compliance pluses and 38 full compliances with no areas of partial or no compliance.

Inclusive Housing Provision

The core business of Habinteg, is to continue to fulfil its Vision of providing Homes, Lives and Communities throughout 2019-20.

92 individual adaptations were carried out to existing housing stock in the period to respond to specific needs, typically ranging from repositioning of sockets, to fitting of grab rails and lever taps, to level access showers. 3 major adaptations were requested during the period and are ongoing.

Online Access and Promotion

Habinteg continues to promote its work online through its website, Twitter feed, Facebook and JustGiving site (for the staff nominated charity) ensuring digital access and promotion and reporting of all community involvement in the period.

Online access to main services is provided mainly through the website with Browsealoud Texthelp software providing the key accessibility tool helping to ensure digital inclusion. Browsealoud reduces barriers between content and audience - adding speech, reading, and translation, facilitating access and participation for people with Dyslexia, Low Literacy, English as a Second Language, and those with mild visual impairments. Online content can be translated onscreen into multiple languages or 'listened to' with the multiple language voice feature.

Habinteg's browsealoud accessibility toolbar is used, on average, more than 30 times each week with 90% of customers accessing the website and using the accessibility tool via mobile phone. Approximately two thirds of those using the toolbar use the audio/visual accessibility features and one third for speech/translation. Around half of those using speech/translation services access the information in Polish, with the remainder an even split between Portuguese, Slovak, German, Spanish and Czech. Customers in Belfast and Derry account for roughly 20% each of the total, with the remaining 60% spread across the region.

During the period the Association also participated for a third time as an employer in the training option available to young people with a learning disability, who are enrolled on the Transition programme at NW Regional College.

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The training is designed to help the young person build skills and confidence to help get a job. When on placement the young person is supported by a key worker from MENCAP.

Part of the course at NWRC is designed to assist the transition from children's services to adults' services which is often very challenging for young people with a learning disability and their families - it combines a change of services and professionals at the very time when they are also negotiating wider changes to their life.

Young people with complex needs continue to need significant levels of support from adult services. One of the aims of the Transition Programme is to assist in the meticulous planning and gradual transition to new services that is required for a young person with a disability involving a complexity of needs.

	<p><i>Continue to develop housing which meets the needs of all age groups, and target, where possible, specific housing for older residents (Cat 1)</i></p> <p><i>Continue to grant use of a Common facility owned by the Association to Citizens of Senior Years (COSY) club</i></p> <p><i>Explore and support opportunities for older people to learn to access services and/or information online.</i></p>	<p>The Welfare Advice Officer continued to make arrangements to meet with tenants referred to assess their circumstances and to support and advise them on their entitlements.</p> <p>Information continued to be provided in a number of formats on Welfare Reform for tenants at various opportunities including at sign up, sending with rent statements, with offer letters and via text.</p> <p>During the period the Association completed 12 x 3 person/2 bedroom Cat 1 apartments, including inner city and close to amenities.</p> <p>During the period the Association continued to support the COSY club by providing one of our common rooms as a base for the club and through the provision of a community grant. This agreement has been in place since 2003 and allows the COSY club to meet up with peers, share experiences and participate in the range of activities organised - flower arranging, gardening programmes, craft programmes, education and training programmes, to name a few.</p> <p>Many of these residents were previously socially isolated, often following bereavement or due to poor health, and COSY has opened up a whole new life to them. Not only offering support and advice but also increasing self-confidence and improving their wellbeing.</p> <p>During the period the Community Involvement Team facilitated the Introduction to iPad and Advanced use of iPad sessions. Although these sessions were not targeted at any particular age group the uptake was primarily older people.</p>
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Dependents	<i>Monitor Welfare Reform changes and likely impact for tenants with dependents including keeping tenants informed</i>	During the period some tenants with dependents were referred to the Welfare Advice Officer for advice and support on their entitlements and the likely impact of Welfare Reform. Where this was the case advice and support was provided to ensure maximisation of the entitlements and other support.
Disabilities and without disabilities	<p><i>Remain committed to building new housing to Lifetime homes standard and, where possible provide specially designed housing for people with disabilities.</i></p> <p><i>Work with partners to provide specially adapted / designed properties / services for people with disabilities.</i></p> <p><i>Staff Equality and Diversity Training</i></p>	<p>During the period the Association completed 92 new homes combining a range of dwelling types - family houses, apartments and bungalows – including 6 No. 3 person/2 bedroom wheelchair apartments for persons with a disability and 12 No. 3 person/2 bedroom apartments for active elderly.</p> <p>167 minor and 3 major adaptations were carried out during the period including grab rails, stair rails, door entry, external lighting, comfort height WCs, wash/dry automatic WC, stair lifts and level access showers</p> <p>Habinteg continued to promote the accessibility features of its website particularly the browse aloud software – which facilitates access and participation for people with Dyslexia and with mild visual impairments.</p> <p>All new employees continue to be required to complete Equality and Diversity training, which has specific emphasis on people with disabilities with JAM card awareness. This training forms part of their induction.</p>

Gender	<i>Gather gender baseline information on uptake of activities at schemes and promote inclusion</i>	Community Involvement Officers continued to gather information on schemes on activities residents wanted to get involved in. This information was used to draw up a schedule of activities residents were most interested, outlined in more detail earlier in section 1 of this report. Activities rolled out resulted in more gender inclusion.
Marital Status	<i>Ensure housing available to meet the needs of all irrespective of marital status.</i>	Continued to abide by the rules of the Housing Selection Scheme and allocate accommodation appropriate to applicant's housing needs, irrespective of marital status.
Political Opinion	<i>Ensure the Association continues to abide by current equality legislation through its Equality Scheme, including demonstrating that it is an equal opportunities employer</i>	At job application stage the Association continues to ask potential employees to disclose any convictions including conflict related on their application. If appointed a position, the Association will require the new employee to abide by its equality scheme, including completing equality and diversity training, as required of all employees as part of their induction to the Association.
Race	<i>Ensure accessibility of information and services and provide translation / interpretation services where appropriate</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continued to promote our accessibility features of website in particular our browse aloud software which adds speech and translation to our website facilitating access and participation for people English as a Second Language. 2. Continued to use Language Line and STEP for its translation and interpretation services, where requested. 3. Where applicable the Welfare Advice Officer continues to signpost EU tenants regarding resettlement status as a consequence of BREXIT.

Religion	<i>Provide housing to meet needs in all in areas, regardless of the religious orientation in any one location and promote a shared future agenda.</i>	The Association continued to abide by the rules of the Housing Selection Scheme and allocates accommodation appropriate to applicant's housing needs, irrespective of religion. Habinteg has two "Housing For All" Schemes in Holywood and Portrush. These schemes are to promote shared housing among tenants and within the local community. The Holywood scheme was completed in January 2020. The Portrush scheme will complete in October 2020. Work to develop an understanding of Shared housing within the respective communities started as the properties were developed.
Sexual Orientation	<i>Cross sectoral sharing of case studies/good practice</i>	The Association continues to have a zero tolerance for any homophobic hate crime and continued to commit to protocols of contacting/working with the PSNI and other agencies where there has been a suggestion or evidence of targeted hate crime.

- 3** Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2019-20 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

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

Please provide any details and examples:

The work of the Community Involvement Team, particularly since the recruitment of the Good Relations Officers and Tenant Engagement Officer, has significantly contributed towards the further promotion of equal opportunity, good relations and resident engagement and involvement through the number of community based activities and events during the period.

The Establishment of the new Staff Consultation Forum (SCF) saw the review of a number of existing and new employee policies to ensure openness, transparency and fairness for existing and potential employees. All revised and new policies were also all screened for equality purposes.

- 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:

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The scope and frequency of 'events' or 'activities' at housing schemes continued to increase, especially driven by the Association's Community Involvement Team. Additional funding has been used to invest in / prepare for projects, activities and events. The impact has been felt and fed back in numerous ways by both residents and also Community Assistants in terms of targeting funding for events. It has also continues to be accessible to staff members for charity events which meet the application criteria.

The Association continues to see the difference the Community Involvement Team have made to the lives of individuals and groups by engaging and consulting with them. Significant work continues to be done to target hard to reach tenants who have previously felt isolated and not really part of the community giving them more of a sense of belonging and involvement in their community.

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

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

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

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

Community Involvement Evaluations from residents following community events and/or activities

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

Other *(please specify and give details):*

The work of the Community Involvement Officers continues to be largely driven by the Association's Community Involvement Strategy and subsequent Operation Targets for residents, to promote equal opportunity and good relations and the requirements outlined by the Department for Communities, who are also the Regulator of Housing Associations.

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

Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)

- 4 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2019-20 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*
- Yes, organisation wide
 - Yes, some departments/jobs
 - No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
 - No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme/ has already been done
 - Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Job Descriptions now include expected behaviours of potential and existing employees. In relation to Section 75 there is an expected behaviour under 'Embracing equality and diversity'. This includes;

Habinteg employees will treat everyone with professional and personal respect, promoting fairness and recognising the value of diversity. For managers, as leaders, it is about creating a work culture and practices that recognise, respect, and value diversity for the benefit of the association.

Our job descriptions also advise that;

Habinteg is an equal opportunities employer

- 5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2019-20 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*
- Yes, organisation wide
 - Yes, some departments/jobs
 - No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
 - No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme/ has already been done
 - Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The 'Welcome Booklet' continued to be provided to all new staff members setting out the culture of the organisation and expected performances standards including:

A COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY

We are committed to treating all our customers (and staff members) fairly and to promoting good relations. We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. One of the ways in which we work towards this is through the production of an Equality Scheme (a copy is available on our website and there is also an Easy Read version)

The Equality Scheme impacts on each Habinteg employee, affecting how individuals carry out their jobs and how they conduct themselves in their daily business. Raising and maintaining awareness of this initiative is a continuous process and staff members undergo regular training, with particular regard to the nine main equality categories listed below. Policy review and development is greatly influenced by the requirements of the Section 75 Duty.

It is Habinteg's policy to provide equality to all, irrespective of:

- ▶ Gender, including gender reassignment
- ▶ Marital or civil partnership status
- ▶ Having or not having dependants
- ▶ Religious belief or political opinion
- ▶ Race
- ▶ Having or not having a disability
- ▶ Sexual orientation
- ▶ Age



During the period the Senior HR Business Partner introduced the new Staff Induction Process to all Line Managers. The new induction guide introduced a three stage process, launched in December 2019, called 'Ready, Steady Go'. The key benefits of the new process is that it forms a mandatory organisation wide approach for all Line Managers to ensure that all new employees are fairly, appropriately and efficiently inducted prior to and during their employment with the Association.

VALUES and EXPECTED BEHAVIOURS

PEOPLE Customer focused: Habinteg employees will establish the needs of customers and strive to ensure that these are met. They will understand the needs and expectations of customers to enable the effective delivery and development of an appropriate quality service which exceeds customer expectations. For leaders, it is about seeking feedback, involving customers and consulting directly on customer needs.

QUALITY Continuous improvement: Habinteg, through innovation and the effective change, worked on well as change and its "smoother" more so. For leaders, it is about creating and en and allowing people to consider and

INTEGRITY Trustworthy: Habinteg employ and relate to go before efficacy a outside role. For leaders, it is about demonstrating accountability, honesty and, respect customers / clients, managing ethics

INDUCTION TRAINING PLAN

TRAINING	BY WHOM	COMPLETED
Equality & Diversity in the Workplace	E Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
GDPR Compliance in the Workplace	E Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
JAM Care Awareness	E Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health & Safety Induction*	H&S Comp Business P	<input type="checkbox"/>
GDPR Compliance in the Workplace	Quality & IP Manager	<input type="checkbox"/>
Customer Services, CSE, IP, Section 75	Quality & IP Manager	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communications Induction	Continuing	<input type="checkbox"/>

* Please check the Mandatory H&S 1 for the required training modules rate

INDUCTION - KEY WORK AND DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES FOR COMING YEAR

Key Objective	How does this fit with Habinteg's Business Plan / Targets? How will it be measured?

TO DO LIST

Go Three Month Introductory Period
New Staff Member: _____
Start Date: _____

TO DO LIST

Ensure all required mandatory training is completed

Support and suggest meetings with key contacts

Have work-planning meetings

Have the final induction/induction meeting at end of first month

PART A

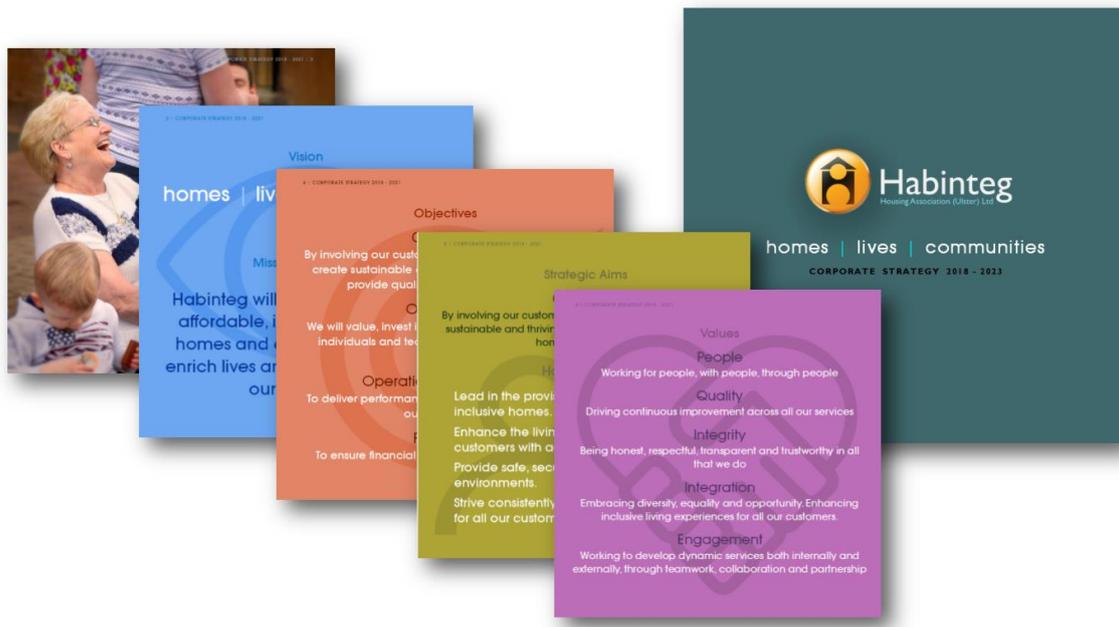
6 In the 2019-20 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? *(tick all that apply)*

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

Please provide any details and examples:

Habinteg's Vision, Mission Statement and Values all continue to mainstream a commitment to Section 75 statutory duties as embodied in the Equality Scheme (including Easy Read) and Disability Action Plan

Stemming from this Vision and Values base, Habinteg's Corporate Strategy 2018 - 2021 continues to include ongoing commitments to community involvement and to accessible housing. The Association's Operational Plan for the period 19/20 lists a series of measurable Operational targets in fulfilment of each Strategic Aim.



Progress against each operational target, to ensure fulfilment of the strategic aim, continues to be reported on quarterly.

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2019-20 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed **7** Actions ongoing **1** Actions to commence **3**

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

Seven actions planned for the period were successfully met during the year and one is ongoing and three are yet to commence.

PART A

- 8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan / measures during the 2019-20 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

As a full review of our Equality Scheme and Equality Action Plan was carried out in 18/19 there were no significant changes or amendments made to our Equality Action Plan in 2019/20.

- 9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2019-20 reporting period, the following have been identified: (*tick all that apply*)
- Continuing action(s) to progress the next stage addressing the known inequality
 - Action(s) to address the known inequality in a different way
 - Action(s) to address newly identified inequalities/recently prioritised inequalities
 - Measures to address a prioritised inequality have been completed

Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)

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

All the time Sometimes Never

- 11 Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2019-20 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:

During the period a Staff Consultative Forum (SCF) was established comprising representative staff members to review all new and existing internal policies and procedures for fairness, transparency and accuracy.

Housing staff continued to receive regular briefings and updates from the Housing Managers and referred residents to the Welfare Advice Officer who were likely to be impacted by Welfare Reform. Consultation was also carried out by the Welfare Advice Officer with residents directly who were likely to be impacted by the benefit cap as a consequence of the introduction of Universal Credit.

- 12 In the 2019-20 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: (*tick all that apply*)

Face to face Focus groups Questionnaires
 Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
 Internet discussions Telephone consultations
 Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
 Other (*please specify*): via Text, email and feedback forms on website

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:

There continues to be an increased uptake from consultees via texting.

With particular reference to Section 75 categories, the Equality sections of the Association's Charter and Standards of Customer Service continue to be reinforced to customers and staff members.

Charter: We will treat all our customers and staff members fairly, without prejudice or preference and will oppose discrimination. We will actively promote good relations and regularly train and develop all staff members in line with our Equality Scheme

Equality - We will:

- treat all people fairly and equally regardless of age, gender, religion, political opinion, race, marital status, dependent status, sexual orientation or ability / disability in accordance with our Equality duty under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

- 13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2019-20 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

New staff members continued to undertake the mandatory equality and diversity awareness e-learning as part of their induction, in addition to a face to face or virtual equality and diversity sessions with the Association's Quality and Performance Manager on the Association's equality obligations and their responsibilities as employees.

All existing staff members and all new staff members complete online e-learning disability awareness with JAM card - Habinteg is a JAM friendly business, promoting excellence of customer service for people who need Just A Minute (JAM) to process information. Compliance is displayed at our offices and online.

- 14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2019-20 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes No Not applicable - no commitment to review

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

<http://www.habinteg-ulster.co.uk/equality-matters>



- 15 Please provide the **number** of policies screened during the year (as recorded in screening reports): **13**

- 16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2019-20:
 - 13** Policy consultations conducted with **screening** assessment presented.
 - 0** Policy consultations conducted **with an equality impact assessment (EQIA)** presented.
 - 0** Consultations for an **EQIA** alone.

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

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

Yes
 No
 No concerns were raised
 Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

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 2019-20 reporting period? (tick one box only)

Yes
 No
 Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

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 2019-20 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes No, already taken place Not applicable
 No, scheduled to take place

Please provide any details:

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

- Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

22 Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2019-20 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

N/A

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

The Association continues to gather, for NICORE monitoring purposes, details of the categories of tenants we are housing, through the Common Selection Scheme.

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 2019-20, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

During the period all new staff as part of their induction completed the accredited Equality and Diversity in the Northern Ireland Workplace eLearning module and JAM e-learning. This training met objectives outlined in our revised Equality Scheme.

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

As above.

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

- 26 Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2019-20, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

Monitoring continued but none that have resulted in action or improvement for this period.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

- 27 How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2019-20?

Insert number here: **0**

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

Section 3: Looking Forward

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

The next time the Scheme is scheduled to be revised is in 2023/24 unless legislation or best practice requires this to take place earlier.

- 29 Are there areas of the Equality Scheme arrangement (screening / consultation / training) your organisation anticipates will be focused upon in the next reporting period? *(provide details)*

No specific areas identified at present.

- 30 In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2020/21) reporting period?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employment | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goods, facilities and services |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Legislative changes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Organisational changes/new functions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nothing specific, more of the same | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(please specify)</i> : |

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

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



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

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

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs ⁱ	Outcomes / Impact ⁱⁱ
National ⁱⁱⁱ	NIFHA / Members	Participation in relevant consultation exercises.	Inform policies / strategies and promote equality.
Regional ^{iv}	The Chair of Habinteg’s Residents Forum, continues to be an advocate of Disability Awareness. She is also a member of the Association’s Housing Management Committee.	The RF Chair is an extremely important role in the organisation and this input demonstrates a recognition by the association of the need to involve and promote the voice of people with disabilities.	Ensures that Disability awareness and positive promotion remains imperative to the Association’s vision and ethos
Local ^v	NIFHA / Members	Participation in relevant consultation exercises.	Inform policies / strategies and promote equality.

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Equality and Diversity eLearning training module mandatory for all new staff to complete.	All staff receive the training which includes an assessment at the end to ensure the training was understood. This eLearning module continues to be part of induction of new staff to the organisation.	Awareness of equality and diversity best practice and legislation; understand the impact of exclusion; and help staff in relation to building an inclusive working environment.
2	Liaising between the Association and the Equality Commission NI through the Association's Quality and Performance Manager particularly through equality updates and training facilitated by the Equality Commission	Updates filtered through to Board and all staff members	Awareness and equality agenda continuing to be embedded in the corporate strategy and actively promoted in the organisation as a whole.
3	Quality and Performance Manager continuing to spearhead the equality agenda and ensure the Association is up to date with the latest initiatives and obligations expected of it.	Quality and Performance Manager to relay this information through continued training of staff members and liaising with the appropriate bodies to provide external support and awareness	Awareness and equality agenda continuing to be embedded in the corporate strategy and actively promoted in the organisation as a whole.

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

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	The Association continues to have an arrangement with Language Line Services to provide translation and interpretation services in over 170 various languages. The Association also continues to utilise the services of local firm STEP for translating documents in different languages. The Association continues to provide information on its website that can be translated into various preferred languages there and then.	Interpretation and translation services remain an important facility to encourage equal accessibility of information to all who wish to use our services. An easy read version of the Association's Equality Scheme was produced.	Customers who have used the facility have been able to access information in their preferred language/format.
2	The Association continues to promote a statement that information can be provided in Alternative Formats including Braille and other different languages as mentioned above. Continued use of accessibility software, most notably the Browse aloud feature on the Association website.	Equal accessibility of information to all who wish to use our services Browse aloud adds speech, reading, and translation to websites facilitating access and participation for people with Dyslexia, Low Literacy, English as a Second Language, and those with mild visual impairments.	Removal of barriers and enables users to access information and services. In the reporting period there was an average of 99 toolbar launches and 86 speech requests per month.
3	Efforts to promote and communicate the commitment to section 75 and its importance to the Association	Section on our Website called 'Equality Matters' dedicated to equality and diversity related items with updates on activity and highlighting of equality duties.	Highlights importance and centrality of Equality and Diversity to Habinteg. Promotes Habinteg's commitment to Equality and Diversity across all its business

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Continue to embed the disability duties into our consultation with customers processes through our Residents Forum and tenant survey structures	Creating an awareness of our obligations of the disability duties internally to our staff and Board and externally to our customers, whilst promoting positive attitudes towards people with disabilities and encouraging participation by people with disabilities in public life.	Ongoing commitment to promote the two duties and encourage others to see that this is good practice
2	Provide news updates on disability on our internal staff communication platform	Create a culture of awareness and embracing of equality and diversity	Ongoing commitment to promote duties and encourage others to see that this is good practice

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	<p>Positive images of people with disabilities in our Habinteg literature, staff and Board structure, correspondence and other promotional materials</p>	<p>Habinteg’s Corporate Strategy 2018 - 2023, published and promoted in the period, features positive imagery of people with disabilities, both staff and residents. Similar positive imagery continues to feature in our Community Involvement Strategy.</p>	<p>Promoted on our website, where these publications mentioned are available, we also featured throughout the period on social media which, additionally, regularly features images relevant to this theme from community events across NI.</p>
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2 (e) Please outline **any additional action measures** that were fully achieved other than those listed in the tables above:

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1	N/A		
2	N/A		

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

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestonesvi / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	N/A			
2	N/A			

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	N/A	
2	N/A	

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

(a) Qualitative

The Association continues to be committed to the effective implementation of all aspects of the Disability Action Plan throughout our organisation. Overall responsibility for effective implementation of the Equality Scheme and the Disability Action Plan will be overseen by our Board, led by the Chairperson. The Chief Executive will continue to provide direction and guidance to both the Board and staff team with the assistance of the Quality and Performance Manager who will continue to have day-to-day operational responsibility for implementation of the equality and disabilities duties for the Association. The Quality and Performance Manager will report to Senior Managers on a regular basis. Senior Managers will have ultimate responsibility for overseeing and implementing administrative

PART B

arrangements to ensure that the Association complies with its Disability Duties. Evaluation forms are distributed to all staff to complete following all internal training. Feedback from the evaluation forms help to determine future training needs and requirements in these areas.

(b) Quantitative

Integral to Habinteg’s business planning process is the three yearly review of our Vision, Mission Statement Objectives and Values by Senior Managers and the Board. Continuing to adopt the Operational Plan approach, the Association continues to set ‘SMART’ objectives and KPIs, including target setting and monitoring using the Balanced Scorecard business improvement tool also forms a key element of our business planning process. This is reflected at all levels of the strategic planning process. How targets are met and objectives are delivered is monitored and reported at the most senior level in the organisation.

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

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

Please select

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1	N/A		
2	N/A		
3	N/A		

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

The Association is in the process of conducting a full review of its Disability Action Plan, with the aim of making revisions based on Disability legislation and best practice. Progress on this will be reported in the next reporting period 2020/21

- i **Outputs** – defined as act of producing, amount of something produced over a period, processes undertaken to implement the action measure e.g. Undertook 10 training sessions with 100 people at customer service level.
- ii **Outcome / Impact** – what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action? Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training.
- iii **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments ^{iv} **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level ^v **Local** : Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora. ^{vi}
Milestones – Please outline what part progress has been made towards the particular measures; even if full output or outcomes/ impact have not been achieved.