

Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Public Authority 2015 - 2016 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

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

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

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

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 2015 and March 2016

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

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

- 1 In 2015-16, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.

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

Habinteg Housing Association [Ulster] Ltd (henceforth referred to as Habinteg or the Association) is a registered housing association in Northern Ireland committed to providing good quality accommodation and supporting communities across Northern Ireland. The organisation's Vision, **Homes for All**, seeks to encapsulate in as few a words as possible the Association's ethos and remains true to the foundations of Habinteg which stretch back to the 1970s: to recognise and respond to the wide range of housing needs in the community in order that all people receive a fair and equal service. Inclusivity and barrier free environments are at the heart of the Association's values; It is for this reason that Habinteg feels a natural, organic 'fit' with the work of the Equality Commission.

Throughout 2015 - 2016, Habinteg maintained a commitment to implementing all 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 this approach and much of what is undertaken on a daily basis fulfils this commitment - 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, fair treatment, equality awareness and training for staff. For the purpose of this report, in order to 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:

Resident Involvement

In January 2016, the Department of Social Development (now Department for Communities) published a Tenant Participation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2015 - 2020. The Association was actively engaged in consultation with the Department prior to the document's publication and supplying examples of best practice and inviting members of the Social Housing Reform Programme (SHRP) Project Team to attend Habinteg's Resident Forum. The final strategy document, which was produced along with an accompanying Action plan and Easy Read version, *details selected examples of good practice in regard to resident participation meaningful tenant relations in Northern Ireland. The example provided on pp13/14 is that of Habinteg's model of resident involvement.*

The Association's own Resident Involvement Strategy was produced in May 2015 and the accompanying Resident Involvement Policy was screened for

Equality purposes in December 2015. A new Resident Involvement 'Menu' leaflet outlining the enhanced methods for participation and consultation was published in March 2016. *The document explains and enhanced range of consultation and involvement methods, broadening the scope of access channels and increasing inclusivity.* All of these documents represent *positive action on behalf of the Association in this reporting period to continue to drive improvements in the area of good relations and are built upon the ethos of providing opportunities for all.*

Community involvement activities continued to take place at Habinteg housing schemes across Northern Ireland, largely led by the Association's scheme based staff members in tandem with office based Housing Management staff. A new 'Our Community' Grant Programme was introduced, providing small grants to community, voluntary or resident groups to support Community Involvement initiatives. Grants, available for activities and projects which **promote inclusion, equality, participation** have been awarded to assist with fun days such as 'The Big Lunch' at a number of our housing schemes. *The Association's desire to nurture communities through events and collective projects is explained to all new tenants at the time of signing for a Habinteg property. An understanding of the housing scheme being a shared space; a community; is further emphasised with the signing by all new tenants of the Association's Good Neighbourhood Agreement.*

In December 2015 the Association hosted a Public Representative Engagement event as part of the Residents' Forum Christmas Lunch. Invited guests from political groups and public bodies joined Resident Forum members for lunch, before which the Association's key resident involvement work were highlighted - the Residents' Forum, Habinteg's Involvement Strategy and the 'Your Voice' initiative to maximise involvement mechanisms were all explained to guests.

Launch of Charter, Principles of Customer Care and Customer Standards

The formulation and publication of a new Habinteg Charter, launched in August 2015, represented the culmination of a successful consultation exercise involving our Residents Forum, Board and Staff Members and seeking to embody the 'reasonable expectations' of all those parties in their relations one with another.

The document was built upon the Association's revised set of six Values, of which - pertinent to this report - the fifth reads: **Equality - embracing diversity and demonstrating equality and opportunity for all.** The new Charter, under this Value heading, reads: **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.**

Two complimentary documents to the charter were subsequently published in the reporting period to complete the 'Golden thread' from the broad brush Values to the more nuanced principles which they support and through to the detailed measurable standards of service delivery. Of particular note in the promotion of equality and good relations, the Principles of Customer Care begins with: **We will treat you with respect - courteously, fairly and equally - and provide you with choice.** This theme is expanded in the new Standards of Customer Service which reads, under the heading of **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.

In August 2015 a Building on Success 2015 day was organised for both offices involving all staff, along with resident and public representatives. Under the subheadings of Focus on Customers, Focus on Staff and Focus on People, the day reflected on recent customer training, performance outcomes from Customer Service Excellence and Mystery Shopper, preparation for Investors in People and culminated with the Launch of the Charter. Going live online at the event, the Charter was soon after displayed in office reception areas and distributed in leaflet form to all housing schemes where office / common room facilities exist. Along with the Principles and Standards, it was added to the Tenant Handbook and incorporated in the Welcome Booklet for all new staff members.

Staff Training

The Association invested significantly in staff training, during the reporting period, in the area of equality of opportunity and good relations.

In April 2015 all staff members undertook 'World Host' Customer Service Training facilitated by Customer Sense. Aimed primarily at the raising awareness of the needs of customers, the training set out to demonstrate how best to 'listen in a way that shows you care about them and their needs'. The stated aims included raising awareness of our 'attitude to our customers - whether from around the world, across the country or across the street'.

Customer training was closely followed in May 2015 with Diversity Awareness in the Workplace, facilitated by Business in the Community NI - again for all staff members. The stated aims of the training are **'to increase awareness of diversity in the workplace and the value in creating an inclusive workplace; understand the relationship between equality and diversity; understand the impact of exclusion; and help staff & managers recognise personal prejudice and organisational responsibilities in relation to building an inclusive working environment.'**

In 2016 Habinteg became the first Housing Association in Northern Ireland to undertake Supporting Communities' OCN Level 2 accredited Tenant Participation and Community Development Course for all frontline staff. Between November 2015 and February 2016, twenty nine staff members including Community Assistants, Housing Officers, Housing Managers and Quality Performance Manager completed this fully accredited course. Laura O'Dowd of Supporting Communities NI attended Habinteg's Staff Away Day to present the course certificates.

In addition to training undertaken collectively, individual staff members and team delegates completed courses in 15/16 which serve to enhance equality awareness. Most notably in the period, *Human Resources personnel attended Employment Rights of Migrant Workers; Shared Parental Leave; Fair Recruitment and Selection; and Review of Employment Law. Housing Team members attended Human Rights and Possession Proceedings; Customer Care Skills and Challenging Customers; and Handling Difficult Conversations.*

10 new employee starts in the period underwent induction including time with the Association's appointed Welcome Officer. This first day aspect of the induction

addresses the Associations commitments to equality and good relations: Charter, Customer Standards, Quality and Equality including Section 75. This introductory awareness session is followed by a more in depth coverage of the topics in an arranged one to one meeting with the Quality and Performance Manager.

External Assessment

Three external examinations of the Association in terms of its values and service delivery were carried out in the reporting period with a bearing on performance in relation to equality and good relations:

Customer Service Excellence 2015

Assessment against the Customer Service Excellence Standard was conducted in May 2015 with the Association successfully retaining the Standard and improving on overall performance. Two formerly 'non compliant' areas of practice were judged to be 'compliant' and two 'compliant' areas were raised to 'compliance plus' (best practice) as a result of improvements.

Of pertinence to the areas of equality and good relations in this period, the Assessment Report, commenting specifically on improvements, noted 'staff go to great lengths to ensure that as far as possible a bespoke service is provided to those who are disadvantaged...' ...efforts to develop new strategies and policies such as the Resident Involvement Strategy which has introduced the use of Scrutiny Panels, ...' has led to elements being '...upgraded to compliance plus.

Mystery Shopper

A Mystery Shopping exercise was undertaken in May and June 2015, facilitated by Supporting Communities NI. The aim of the exercise is to 'measure quality of service from a customer perspective' and 'examine how organisational policies and procedures are translated into actual customer service provision'.

Along with SCNI staff, members of Habinteg's Resident Forum participated in the exercise - attending training workshops and subsequently posing as members of the public for written, telephone and email enquiries across a number of service areas. 70 interactions, including the above and also visits to offices/schemes, were conducted with staff members being unaware of the Mystery Shopper involvement. 80% of these interactions were judged as providing Excellent, Good or Fair customer service. Alongside the largely positive outcome for the Association and the opportunity to drive improvements in areas which scored less favourably, *the exercises provided excellent opportunity for full engagement by Habinteg residents in driving key service improvements.*

Investors in People

Assessment against Investors In People took place in September 2015 with an improved outcome on the previous assessment, adjudged to from an IIP Bronze to IIP Silver organisation. The Assessment Report particularly commended the Association's strong Value base and its resonance among staff comments in the anonymous surveys undertaken in preparation for the Assessment. The summary findings made specific mention of a number of these comments and, in reference to the value of Equality, noted the endeavour to 'treat people with respect ...everybody deserves to be treated the same' and a 'system fair for everyone ...everyone treated equally ...that people are valued, tenants and staff'.

Inclusive Housing Provision

The core business of Habinteg, to fulfil its Vision of providing Homes for All, continued unabated in the reporting period. Of particular note in regards to this Progress Report, among the 107 new properties acquired or completed in this period, a *bespoke wheelchair user Bungalow with carport was developed for a family with significant complex needs.* The seven person, four bedroom property in Omagh was completed in February 2016 and demonstrates the Association's continued *efforts to provide specialised accommodation to meet the specific requirements of all those in housing need.*

Similarly demonstrating a commitment to inclusive accommodation, in October 2015, the then Social Development Minister Mervyn Storey MLA official unveiled the new look Utility St Hostel in Belfast, following a £950,000 refurbishment programme. Initially established in the 1890s, Utility St is one of Belfast's oldest hostels for homeless men. It is managed by our partner - the Northern Ireland Institute for the Disabled (NIID).

50 individual adaptations to existing housing stock were carried out in the period to respond to specific needs, typically ranging repositioning of sockets, to grab rails and lever taps, to level access showers. Notable among the work orders in 2015/2016 was more substantial alteration work to meet additional tenant needs, including the removal of a wall in one property to accommodate specialist equipment, extensive shower and kitchen adaptation work for wheelchair access in another and a highly specialised bespoke bath replacement in yet another.

Online Access and Promotion

Habinteg continues to promote its work online through its website, twitter feed 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 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.* In the reporting period there was an average of 99 toolbar launches and 86 speech requests per month. The 'toolbar launch' refers to somebody actively clicking to operate the Browsealoud feature on our website, for any purpose. The 'speech request' is where those accessing the tool subsequently opt for the audio feature (whether in English or any other language).

In September 2015, Habinteg commissioned a short promotional video focusing largely on housing for people with disabilities. *Habinteg Homes for All* highlighted partnership work for tenants with mental health issues and adaptation work at our housing developments to remove barriers for people with physical disabilities. The film was shown at the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations conference in November 2015 and was extremely well received by delegates.

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

CATEGORY	PROPOSED ACTIONS	ACTION TAKEN 2015/16
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to review preferred methods of communication for tenants • Lobby government on Welfare Reform and prepare for potential impact and raise awareness. • Continue to develop housing which meets the needs of all age groups, and target, where possible, specific housing for older residents (Cat 1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenant Satisfaction Survey questions preferred communication method/s to contact and be contacted. Preferred communication noted and implemented. • Digital Inclusion presentation delivered to Residents Forum by Healy King, Supporting Communities NI Oct 15 (of particular note due to welfare reform bringing about online benefit applications). • Contributed, through collaboration with NIFHA to lobby government on the impact of Welfare Reform • Continued, where possible, to acquire or develop Cat 1 properties, including inner city apartments close to amenities.
Dependents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor Welfare Reform changes and keep tenants informed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributed to lobbying government on the impact of Welfare Reform through NIFHA • Regularly updated website and tenant information relative to benefit changes
Disabilities and without disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commit to building all new housing to Lifetime homes standard and, where possible provide specially designed housing for people with disabilities. • Work with partners to provide specially adapted / designed properties for people with disabilities • Ensure access to information and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued to provide housing combining a range of dwelling types - family houses, apartments and bungalows - including properties for persons with a disability. • Major refurbishment work - £950,000 - carried out Utility St hostel for NI Institute for the Disabled (NIID). • Adaptation work carried out at 50 properties. • Bespoke wheelchair user bungalow developed for family with complex needs. • Continued to develop accessibility features of website with enhanced browsealoud software adds speech - facilitating access and participation for people with Dyslexia... ..and those with mild visual impairments..

Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather gender baseline information on uptake of activities at schemes and promote inclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoted gender inclusion to address imbalance (historical larger % female/child involvement). Further work to target male uptake undertaken - ie Pink Panthers male support group to compliment Pink Ladies female support group in Derry.
Marital Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure housing available to meet the needs of all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore adoption of new guidelines from OFM/DFM on employment of individuals with conflict related convictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 diversity training, as required of all employees.
Race	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure accessibility of information and services and provide translation / interpretation services where appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued to develop accessibility features of website with enhanced browsealoud software adds speech and translation to websites facilitating access and participation for people English as a Second Language. • Continued to use Language Line and STEP for its translation and interpretation services, where requested.
Religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide housing to meet needs in all in areas, regardless of the religious orientation in any one location and promote a shared future agenda. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. The Association remains committed to a 'Shared Future' Agenda and shared community
Sexual Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross sectoral sharing of case studies/good practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Association has 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.

PART A

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

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

Please provide any details and examples:

A. The Association introduced a small grants initiative in 2015/16 - Our Community - to support and increase the type and number of activities based at housing schemes which promote a community spirit. The stated aim is to *promote inclusion, equality, participation and change which is of real benefit to residents.*

B. A change to Planned Maintenance practice was implemented in the period, following consultation with residents regarding kitchen replacement for wheelchair user properties in the previous year. Comments concerning space requirements, particularly in instances where a 'carer' was identified as the main/only person using the kitchen, challenged the 'assumption' of the wheelchair user's needs and the Association's specified kitchen design. Change was introduced and subsequently approved at Committee level for ongoing and future major refurbishment programmes.

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:

A. The scope and frequency of 'events' or 'activities' at housing schemes has increased. The funding has been used to invest in / prepare for projects. The impact has been felt by both residents and also Community Assistants in terms of targeting funding for events. It has also been accessed by staff members for charity events which meet the application criteria.

B. The change in approach to kitchen replacement (above) provides a greater level of choice and flexibility for persons with/without a disability. Whilst the accessibility features of the kitchens for wheelchair users are maintained, additional adaptable storage units respond to the individual's specific requirements and increases choice.

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):*

PART A

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

The Our Community initiative has been largely driven by the new Resident Involvement Strategy and subsequent Operation Targets for resident activities to promote good relations.

The changes to Planned Maintenance has been led primarily by client insight, ahead of any works.

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

Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)

- 4 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2015-16 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)
- Yes, organisation wide
 - Yes, some departments/jobs
 - No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
 - No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
 - Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Job Descriptions include the line: *Ensure that no religious, political or sexual discrimination, intimidation or harassment occurs within the Association*

Job adverts display the line:

Habinteg is an equal opportunities employer:

We offer a competitive remuneration package, generous annual leave entitlement and a final salary pension scheme.

Further information including detailed job requirements and application pack can be downloaded from www.habinteg-ulster.co.uk or email recruitment@habinteg-ulster.co.uk / telephone 028 9044 0299 to request a pack. Completed applications must be returned by **4pm on Monday 1 June 2015.**

Habinteg is an equal opportunities employer.



5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2015-16 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

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

Please provide any details and examples:

The 'Welcome Booklet' provided to all new staff members sets 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 both our intranet and 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

Staff members are appraised on an annual basis by their Line Manager. The Appraisal Form includes a specific question relating to fair treatment, referencing the Association's Equality commitment.

PERSONAL WELLBEING

Overall, would you describe yourself as generally happy in your job? YES / NO

Do you feel you are treated fairly and in line with Habinteg's commitment to Equality? YES / NO

Are there any factors in your job which are causing you to feel stressed at work? YES / NO
(*difficult customer/colleague relationships, bullying, heavy workload etc*)

6 In the 2015-16 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? *(tick all that apply)*

- Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
- Yes, in some departments/jobs
- No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation’s ongoing corporate plan
- No, the organisation’s planning cycle does not coincide with this 2015-16 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:



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

Our Vision is to provide

Homes for all



Our Mission Statement reads

Habinteg aims to deliver high quality homes and services to enhance the lives of our residents and strengthen communities.

We Value

- People ...always putting them at the heart of what we do
- Quality ...being committed to excellence
- Integrity ...being honest, respectful, transparent and trustworthy in all that we do
- Equality ...embracing diversity and demonstrating equality and opportunity for all
- Innovation ...adopting a progressive approach

Stemming from this Vision and Values base, Habinteg’s Corporate Strategy 2015 - 2018 was produced in the period, developing a series of three year strategic aims. These aims include ongoing commitments to community involvement and to accessible housing. The Association’s Operational Plan for the period 15/16 (the first year of the strategic cycle) lists a series of measurable Operational targets in fulfilment of each Strategic Aim. The following examples, show headline aims from the strategy, in the areas mentioned, followed by the relevant operational target(s).

1.3 ...a Community Involvement Strategy with residents and communities over a three year period.

1.3.1 Community Involvement
 Target: Implement year 1 activities - Resident Involvement Action Plan

3.2 ...accessible housing solutions for tenants through a quality adaptations service

3.2.1 Adaptations Minor
 Target: 100% response rate / 8 weeks urgent cases; 26 weeks routine

3.2.2 Adaptations Major
 Internal Target: After receiving all statutory approval
 External Target: Up to 52 weeks

Progress against each operational target, to ensure fulfilment of the strategic aim, is reported on quarterly beneath the relevant Business Objective it serves. Example:



Objective 1: Customer
 To provide quality services to all our customers and place a strong emphasis on community involvement

Team / Area	Comm.	KPI	External Target	Internal Target	4 th Quarter update	Year End Update	Lead	A/N
Housing	HMC	1.3.1 Community Involvement Activities	N/A	Implement year 1 activities	Tenant Participation & Community Development Training completed for all Housing Team	Activities completed as per Response Plan	HMs	A

NB Target date for all KPI / objectives is end of financial year unless otherwise indicated

Equality action plans/measures

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

Actions completed: Actions ongoing: Actions to commence:

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

PART A

All proposed actions for 2015/16 are operational objectives in line with Equality commitments. All were successfully met during the year and are ongoing.

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

Equality measures are now set independently of a joint NIFHA approach and are based on Equality themed objectives.

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

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

Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)

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

- All the time Sometimes Never

- 11 Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2015-16 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

Habinteg continued, through the period, to work closely and productively with the Residents' Forum.

Notably, Forum members, Board members and staff members were involved in consultation to produce the new Habinteg Charter, embedding a commitment to Equality and Respect for all.

Residents and staff were involved in consultation with DSD (DfC) regarding the Tenant Participation Strategy for Northern Ireland.

Senior staff members continued to attend the and participate in the NI Accessible Housing Register Project Board (NIHE) at the request of NIFHA due to Habinteg's large % of wheelchair user housing.

Staff and Resident Forum members hosted a Public Representative Engagement event in Dec 2015 to highlight the Associations tenant participation mechanisms.

12 In the 2015-16 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: (*tick all that apply*)

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

Please provide any details or examples of the uptake of these methods of consultation in relation to the consultees' membership of particular Section 75 categories:

Screening documents were sent to consultee groups.

With particular reference to Section 75 categories, the Equality sections of the Association's new Charter and Standards of Customer Service were drawn up based directly on feedback from Residents Forum, Staff and Board:

Equality

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.

PART A

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

- Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Events were arranged for staff, Residents Forum and Board to engage in a consultation exercise aimed at forming the wording for the Charter and Standards of Customer Service (as illustrated above in 12).

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2015-16 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes No Not applicable – no commitment to review

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

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



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

4

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

PART A

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

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

Yes No concerns were raised No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

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 2015-16 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 2015-16 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes No, already taken place
 No, scheduled to take place at a later date Not applicable

Please provide any details:

PART A

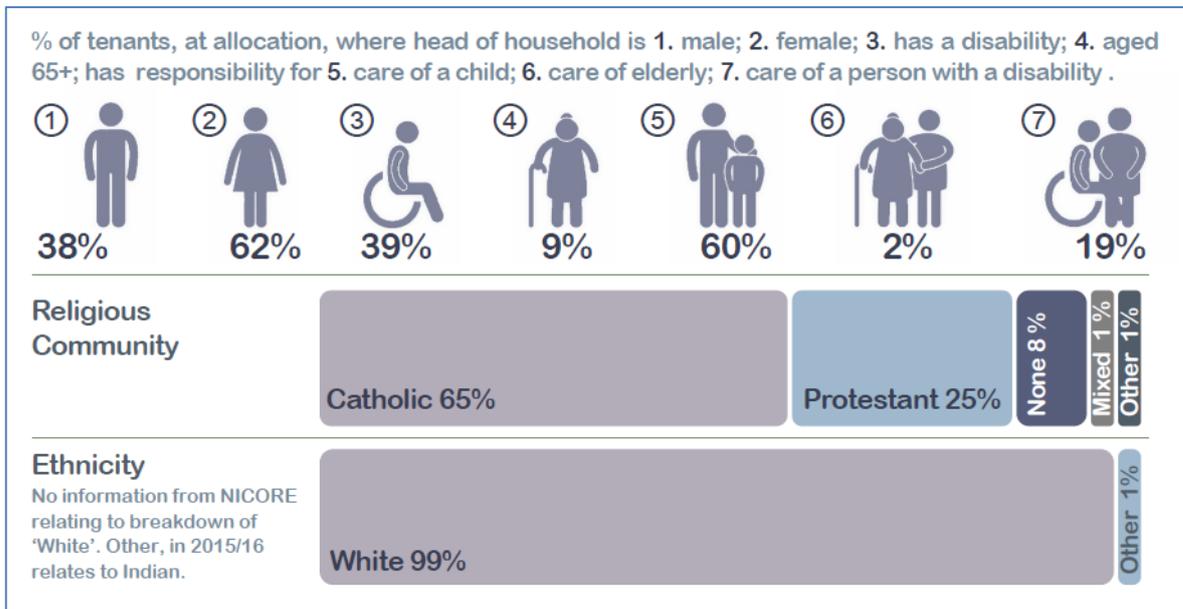
21 In analysing monitoring information gathered, was any action taken to change/review any policies? (*tick one box only*)

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 2015-16 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

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



Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)

24 Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2015-16, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

Diversity Awareness in the Workplace, facilitated by Business in the Community NI - was undertaken by all staff members. The stated aims of the training are 'to

increase awareness of diversity in the workplace and the value in creating an inclusive workplace; understand the relationship between equality and diversity; understand the impact of exclusion; and help staff & managers recognise personal prejudice and organisational responsibilities in relation to building an inclusive working environment.'

- 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:

In April 2015 all staff members undertook 'World Host' Customer Service Training facilitated by Customer Sense. The stated aims included raising awareness of our 'attitude to our customers - whether from around the world, across the country or across the street'. Whilst payment for all staff was met by Habinteg, a significant proportion of staff members were sufficiently enthused to undertake additional, accredited, training in the area of customer service offered by World Host, for which those participating had to meet their own costs.

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

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

NA

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

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

Insert number here:

0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

Section 3: Looking Forward

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

2017

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- 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)*

Not 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 (2016-17) reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

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

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:

Fully achieved

Partially achieved

Not achieved

NB Measures and outcomes for this reporting period are noted below. However, due to the current absence of the Quality & Performance Manager, there is likely to be additional information regarding progress and outputs which have not here been reported on. The above boxes have thus been left incomplete and will be addressed, subject to additional information on the return of Q&PM in October 2016.

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 Housing Management Committee and Board	The RF Chair an extremely important role in the organisation and this input demonstrates a recognition by the association of	Ensures that Disability awareness and positive promotion remains imperative to the Association's vision and

PART B

	member and has previously sat on one of the Association's Service Review Panels.	the need to involve and promote the voice of people with disabilities.	ethos
Local ^v	NIFHA / Members	Participation in relevant consultation exercises.	Inform policies / strategies and promote equality.

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Regular Equality Training - internal and external - and Equality Duty commitment awareness for all as well as all new staff, as part of their induction,	Diversity Awareness in the Workplace, facilitated by Business in the Community NI was undertaken by all staff members.	Awareness of equality and diversity; understand the impact of exclusion; and help staff in relation to building an inclusive working environment.
2	Liaising between the Association and NIFHA through the Association's Quality and Performance Manager and NIFHA, particularly through equality updates and through joint working with NIFHA and other Housing Associations	Updates and joint working activities filtered through from Board to staff members	Awareness and equality agenda continuing to be embedded in the corporate strategy and actively promoted in the organisation as a whole.
	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 subscribe to 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 Browsealoud feature on the Association website.	Equal accessibility of information to all who wish to use our services Browsealoud 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	Feature in new format Annual Report entitled Equality Matters with updates on activity and highlighting of equality duties.	Raised awareness of the importance and centrality of Equality to Habinteg and its role in forming the new Habinteg Charter.

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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	Include regular features about disability in Publications	Feature in new format Annual Report entitled Equality Matters with updates on activity and highlighting of equality duties.	Ongoing commitment to promote duties and encourage others to see that this is good practice
	Positive images of people with disabilities in our Habinteg literature, staff and Board structure, correspondence and other promotional materials	Habinteg produced a promotional video during the reporting period - Homes for All, highlighting the Association’s specially adapted housing and partnership projects for tenants with disabilities and additional support needs.	Ongoing commitment to promote the two duties and encourage others to see that this is good practice

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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			
2			

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				
2				

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1		
2		

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 the determining the policy on how effective implementation is achieved will be determined by our Board, led by the Chairman. 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 responsibility for implementation of the policy relating to this area. 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 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 annual review of our Vision, Mission Statement Objectives and Values by Senior Managers. 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. The progress on the Disability Action Plan will be monitored and reported on through the Senior Management Team, Sub-Committees and ultimately to the Board.

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?

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Please select

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1			
2			
3			

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

While no further changes are planned to date the Association will continue to look at how we could further improve on the outcomes of our Disability Plan and will continue to adhere to DDA legislation and the guidance of relevant agencies and other bodies in this area.

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.