

Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (NI)



Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report 2014-15

Contact:

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

<http://www.afbini.gov.uk/index/about-us/corporate/equality.htm>

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Linda M. Gogarty', is written over a light blue horizontal line. The signature is enclosed within a rectangular box.

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 2014 and March 2015

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 2014-15, 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.

- AFBI's Equality Scheme implemented in AFBI Business Plan.
- Continual compliance with equal opportunity duties in AFBI procedures.
- Equality Scheme actively updated to reflect current status.
- Audit of Inequalities and Action Plan (Equality Scheme action) progressed.
- S75 Consultee list reviewed and updated.
- Completion and submission of reports for ECNI & publication for staff information (Annual Fair Employment Monitoring Report (2014); Annual Progress Report (13/14); Article 55 Review (09-12)).
- Involvement of senior staff in informing equality reports.
- Regular updates on equality issues & biannual progress reports on the Equality Scheme provided to Senior Management and AFBI Board.
- External audit of the Equality Unit/Equality Scheme completed.
- Staff Organisational and Improvement Plan progressed to address issues raised in Stress in the Workplace and Morale & Motivation reports which included concerns on equal opportunities and disabilities.
- Equality section on the AFBI Intranet regularly maintained and updated to raise staff awareness of equality issues, updates.
- Equality events/issues promoted, and staff awareness raised via Intranet, noticeboards e.g. ECNI newsletters, Disability Action Ezines, Age NI Newsletters, older LGBT guidance, Mental Health Awareness, COPNI news, STEM events, Carers, Autism, Community Relations Week.
- Staff made aware of information, help and guidance offered by, employer supported organizations, for example OHS, Carecall, Charity for Civil Servants, WELL in relation to e.g. disability, mental issues.
- Promotion of facilities offered by staff Help sources, e.g. Charity for Civil Servants, Welfare, NICS WELL; Health schemes.
- Staff guidance on behaviour and staff conduct, good & harmonious working environment, harassment officers disseminated to staff.

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- Equality section maintained and updated on AFBI internet website.
- Equality events & forums (training, webinars, seminars, talks, workshops) attended by Equality and HR staff and information dissipated to others.
- Equality Awareness training provided to staff through AFBI Corporate Induction programme and Criteria Based Interview training programme.
- Mandatory Equality & Diversity Awareness Training developed for delivery to all staff.
- Reasonable adjustments put in place for disabled candidates and staff.
- Staff whose community backgrounds were recorded as missing or unknown were resurveyed.
- Flexible working patterns/leave (reduced hours, term time, paternity, etc.) available to all staff.
- Equality screening for eligibility criteria in recruitment (internal, external, temporary promotions). Suggestions and advice acted on by relevant managers where feasible.
- Ensuring recruitment panels are balanced re gender and community background.
- Welcoming statement for RC applicants retained for external recruitment and arrangements made to extend this to welcome Female applicants for future recruitment.
- Links maintained with Home Office due to employment of foreign and migrant workers.
- Consideration of gender equality included in EU research applications.
- Internal policies equality screened, no EQIAs required.
- Equality networking links with ECNI, NICS departments and other organizations strengthened and developed.
- Staff engagement with S75 groups (nationalities, age, gender, disabilities), through various AFBI events and links.
- Schools and special events visited by AFBI STEM ambassadors to encourage young people to consider taking STEM subjects in school.
- AFBI provided work experience opportunities for students from various schools and colleges in Northern Ireland, and also provided opportunities for visiting workers from outside the UK and EU.
- AFBI Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups guidance adhered to by staff involved in public events.
- Special requirements for non-UK, vulnerable group visitors accommodated where feasible.
- Value of Equality Unit evident in the increased contact by staff to the unit for guidance and advice in regard to S75 and vulnerable groups, and Disability issues.

- 2** Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2014-15 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

Actions identified to promote good relations between Section 75 groups included carrying out an audit of inequalities, which was undertaken during the latter part of 2014. Comments were received from 2 x members of AFBI staff and Disability Action. This is being progressed.

Following the latest Article 55 Review, and findings from the audit of inequalities, it was noted that females were under-represented within the AFBI workforce. AFBI's external recruitment welcoming statement was amended to encourage females into the workforce.

Equality and Diversity Awareness training was developed for delivery to all AFBI staff to make staff aware of their responsibilities to equality. This was developed in March 2014 and, although the delivery commenced during the 15/16 period, the majority of staff have completed this.

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- 3** Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2014-15 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

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

Please provide any details and examples:

- 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:

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

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

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

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

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

☐ Other *(please specify and give details):*

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 2014-15 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:

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2014-15 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:

For staff in the Equality Unit and HR, S75 duties are applied through their performance plans. Duties of these key staff will include involvement in dignity at work/grievance cases, offering help and advice, liaison with USEL, OHS, Carecall, Disability Action and arranging reasonable adjustments for staff.

6 In the 2014-15 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 2013-14 report

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2014-15 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:

9

Actions ongoing:

7

Actions to commence:

2

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

It is difficult to quantify the completed/on-going/yet to commence actions for AFBI's equality actions.

During 2014/15 the primary actions were to develop the audit of inequalities and develop equality and diversity training for all staff. These have completed. However, i) the findings/actions arising from the audit of inequalities are yet to be progressed, and ii) delivery of training to all staff has not completed and will be an on-going action as new staff join AFBI.

Listed below are the main groupings of actions that have completed during 2014/15:

- (1) All reports for ECNI submitted as expected
- (2) Reports for AFBI Executive Management Team and Board submitted
- (3) Equality information received during 2014/15 communicated to staff via AFBI intranet/line management
- (4) Criteria Based Interviewing (CBI) & Corporate Induction (CI) training delivered to staff as required during 2014/15
- (5) Mandatory Equality & Diversity Training developed and delivered to staff.
- (6) Screening carried out on all policies as required
- (7) Screening carried out on all eligibility criteria as required
- (8) Audit of Inequalities (AoI) developed and out for consultation
- (9) Reasonable adjustments put in place as appropriate and required

On-going actions include: Screening of policies, job descriptions/eligibility criteria; review of and adaptation of welcoming statements; monitoring of staff; reasonable adjustments; provision of reports to senior management. These are carried out as

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required during the year. In addition the staff training (CBI & CI) are delivered as required, and delivery of the mandatory Equality & Diversity Training is in progress.

AFBI's next Article 55 review and the implementation of the AoI have yet to be commenced.

- 8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2014-15 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

None

- 9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2014-15 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 2014-15 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:

AFBI policies are internal and reviewed on a regular basis. AFBI policies screened during 2014/15 were screened out and not subject to an EQIA. Where necessary AFBI will contact relevant bodies for advice. This was not required during 2014/15.

- 12 In the 2014-15 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: (*tick all that apply*)

- ☐ Face to face meetings

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- ☐ 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:

AFBI's audit of inequalities was out for consultation during 2014/15. Disability Action and 2 AFBI employees responded to this.

- 13** Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2014-15 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

- 14** Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2014-15 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.afbini.gov.uk/index/about-us/corporate/equality.htm>]

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

| |
|---|
| 3 |
|---|

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16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2014-15:

| | |
|---|--|
| 0 | Policy consultations conducted with screening assessment presented. |
| 0 | Policy consultations conducted with an equality impact assessment (EQIA) presented. |
| 0 | Consultations for an EQIA alone. |

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

N/A

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

☐ Yes ☒ No concerns were raised ☐ No ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

N/A

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 2014-15 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

N/A

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 2014-15 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes ☐ No, already taken place

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☐ No, scheduled to take place at a later date

☒ Not applicable

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 2014-15 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

N/A

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

N/A

Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)

- 24** Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2014-15, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

Equality and Diversity Awareness training was developed for delivery to all AFBI staff to make staff aware of their responsibilities to equality. This was developed in March 2014 and, although the delivery commenced during the 15/16 period, the majority of staff (86%) have completed this to date.

Equality awareness training is embedded in Corporate Induction for new staff and Criteria Based Interview training for recruitment panels.

The training and its content was positively received by staff which was reflected in the feedback given and in the interest which followed.

Key staff in the equality unit & HR attended various seminars, webinars, workshops which included recruitment of disabled people & the impact of dyslexia in the workplace.

Information was shared with other in the team and where appropriate incorporated into

the equality awareness section of the intranet for all staff.

- 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, staff expressed interest and concern following their training. The panellists who received training for interviews acknowledged their equality responsibilities in all areas of the recruitment process, and sought further information and advice as a result.

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

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2014-15, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

No action/improvement was required during 2014/15. However, as AFBI promotes its services via the internet, all online applications developed by AFBI Biometrics & Information Systems Branch have conformed to accessibility guidelines specifically Double-A of the W3C's "Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0"; NICS Guidelines for Accessibility; NICS Corporate Identity and Layout for the Internet and NICS Style and Tone guidelines.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

- 27** How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2014-15?

Insert number here:

0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

N/A

Section 3: Looking Forward

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

2018

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

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Training will be on-going; guidance on screening and consultation will be developed for staff.

30 In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2015-16) 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:

17

Fully achieved

3

Partially achieved

2

Not achieved

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

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

| Level | Public Life Action Measures | Outputs ⁱ | Outcomes / Impact ⁱⁱ |
|-------------------------|--|------------------------|--|
| National ⁱⁱⁱ | | | |
| Regional ^{iv} | | | |
| Local ^v | AFBI have established links with Ulster Sheltered Employment Ltd (USEL) to provide employment to persons with a registered disability. | Staff member employed. | Potential opportunities for further staff to be employed through USEL. |

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

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| | Training Action Measures | Outputs | Outcome / Impact |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Criteria Based Interviewing Training included Reasonable Adjustment/Disability including Autism awareness. | Interview panels made aware of the requirements and legislation around reasonable adjustments and disabled candidates. | Panellist awareness. |
| 2 | Corporate Induction programme for new staff includes awareness of disabilities and reasonable adjustment. | New staff made aware of DDA, Autism Act, reasonable adjustments and disability discrimination. | Staff awareness. |
| | <p>3: HR staff attended disability-training on recruiting disabled people. Equality Officer attended webinar on understanding dyslexia.</p> <p>4: Alternatives to trainer-led training put in place to accomodate disabled staff.</p> <p>5: Mandatory Equality & Diversity Training developed for all staff which includes a section on disability.</p> | <p>Training served to increase awareness of disabilities in recruitment and the workplace.</p> <p>AFBI Learning and Development Unit co-ordinate one-to-one training as required.</p> <p>All staff made aware of DDA legislation, discrimination, reasonable adjustments, help available.</p> | <p>Increased awareness for key staff.</p> <p>Staff receive relevant training.</p> <p>Staff awareness.</p> |

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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 | Equality section, including area of disability/reasonable adjustments maintained on AFBI intranet. Separate section on autism included.. | Staff informed of information via Intranet and line management. | Staff awareness. |
| 2 | Information from Disability Action, Carecall posted on intranet for staff information. | Staff informed of Disability Action services and help available. | Staff awareness. |
| | 3: Equality Officer & HR available for staff seeking advice and information. 4: Web designers conform to Accessibility Guidelines in web page design. | Help and advice offered to staff. Consideration given to style and layout of pages for accessibility by disabled viewers. | Encourages harmonious workplace, benefits staff wellbeing. Enables practicable reading of content by all viewers. |

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

| | Encourage others Action Measures | Outputs | Outcome / Impact |
|--|----------------------------------|---------|------------------|
|--|----------------------------------|---------|------------------|

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|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Line managers encouraged to discuss staff needs at appraisal meetings, management of attendance, return to work after sick leave in relation to disability. | Reasonable adjustments identified for staff where appropriate. HR, H&S, OHS, Welfare involvement where necessary. | Staff accommodated for disability; Staff wellbeing. |
| 2 | Staff encouraged to avail of help services such as Carecall, OHS, Welfare, Charity for Civil Servants. | Confidential help and advice provided to staff. | Staff wellbeing. |
| | | | |

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 | All staff who declare a disability or long-term health condition will be assessed to determine their needs in relation to workplace assessment. | Managed through the Recruitment and Induction process for any cases identified/declared. | Appropriate adjustment made. AFBI continues to review its procedures in line with this measure. |
| 2 | All staff who declare a disability or long-term health condition will have their posts assessed to determine their needs in relation to their disability. | Managed through the Recruitment and Induction process for any cases identified/declared. Involvement of Disability Action where required. | Appropriate adjustment made, e.g. transfers, role changes, phased returns, working hours, reduced duties, specialised equipment. AFBI continue to review its procedures in line with this measure. |
| | 3: All staff who declare a disability or long- | Personal emergency evacuation plans | Appropriate adjustment made. AFBI |

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| | <p>term health condition will be assessed to determine their needs in relation to building evacuation.</p> <p>4: All job applicants who declare a disability or long-term health condition will be accommodated, as far as possible, in relation to application and interviews.</p> <p>5: Systems in place for disabled persons e.g. Loop system, Ramps, Lifts, automatic doors, flashing alarm lights, car parking spaces.</p> | <p>(PEEP) will provide individual support for all disabled staff.</p> <p>Managed through HR and H&S.</p> <p>Systems and aids in place in order to facilitate staff & visitors with disabilities. Managed by Estates.</p> | <p>continues to review its procedures in line with this measure.</p> <p>Reasonable adjustments made.</p> <p>To facilitate disabled staff and visitors.</p> |
|--|---|--|--|

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 | Review guidance for written communication policies, practices and procedures. | To ensure compliance with legislation and good practice. | To ensure compliance and promote awareness. | Under development. |
| 2 | Involvement with the Health works Programme. | Meetings held to discuss AFBI's involvement in the programme, draft plan developed. | Promote the health of the AFBI workforce. | Discussions not completed, budgetary constraints to be looked at. |
| | 3: Development of AFBI's Disability | Draft DAP currently being | To ensure compliance. | Under review - further |

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|--|-------------------|-----------|--|-----------------------|
| | Action Plan (DAP) | reviewed. | | development required. |
|--|-------------------|-----------|--|-----------------------|

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

| | Action Measures not met | Reasons |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | Survey of disabilities within AFBI. | AFBI did not have sufficient resources to progress this action during 2014/15. |
| 2 | Establishment of an AFBI Disability forum. | AFBI did not have sufficient resources to undertake this action during 2014/15. |
| | | |

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

To be defined and agreed.

(b) Quantitative

To be defined and agreed.

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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No

If yes please outline below:

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

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

Not at this time.

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

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

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

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^{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.