

**Public Consultation on the Department of Health's
Draft Equality Action and Draft Disability Action Plan 2025-2030**

Date of issue: 28 March 2025

Responses by: 28 June 2025

Contents

1. Ministerial Foreword	3
2. Introduction	4
3. Audit of Inequality Process	4
4. Equality Action Plan (EAP)	5
5. Disability Action Plan (DAP)	5
6. What are we consulting on?	5
7. Get Involved.....	5
7.1. How to respond.....	5
7.2. Privacy, Confidentiality And Access To Consultation Responses	6
7.3. Privacy Notice	7
7.4. Purpose for processing	7
7.5. Lawful basis for processing.....	7
7.6. How will your information be used and shared.....	8
7.7. How long will we keep your information	8
7.8. What are your rights?	8
7.9. How to complain	8
7.10. Consultation response form	10

1. Ministerial Foreword

Addressing health inequalities must be at the heart of health reform and a priority across all parts of Government. Section 75 (S75) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations across the S75 categories. This obligation relates to the differences between the categories within the 9 groups set out in Section 75 of the NI Act.

This consultation gives you an opportunity to tell us what you think should be included in our Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plans for the next 5 years.

Everyone will be aware of the extremely difficult financial position we are in and this means that your feedback is even more important in shaping our actions so that we can make best use of the limited resources available to help us address Section 75 health inequalities and do more for people with disabilities.

Mike Nesbitt, Minister of Health

2. Introduction

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions as they relate to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations across a range of categories as outlined below.

Under Section 75 there is a requirement to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between:

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- men and women generally;
- persons with a disability and persons without; and
- persons with dependants and persons without.

In addition, without prejudice to the obligations above, in carrying out the functions, there is a requirement to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

The previous Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan 2019-2024 were consulted on for 12 weeks from November 2017 and published on the Department of Health (DoH) website and updated annually. The reports can be found here: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/doh-equality-annual-reports>. The new Plans, covering the period 2025 to 2030, will be updated as new priorities and targets are approved by the Minister and Executive in line with Departmental priorities and Programme for Government.

3. Audit of Inequality Process

The Equality Commission published guidance '[Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998: A Guide for Public Authorities](#)' that public authorities should undertake an Audit of Inequalities (AOI) by examining their functions and how these relate to the promotion of equality and good relations. Specific actions to address the inequalities identified should then be set out in an action plan, and these actions should be linked to the Public Authority's corporate planning cycle.

The Department carried out an [AOI](#) in preparation for the development of the Equality Action Plan during 2024 and the report is available on the Equality section of the Department's website. In conducting the AOI internal and external stakeholders were

invited to submit potential health inequalities with any qualitative and quantitative evidence.

The findings from the AOI were used to inform the draft Equality Action Plan (EAP) and Disability Action Plan (DAP) for implementation in 2025.

4. Equality Action Plan (EAP)

The draft EAP sets out the actions the Department proposes to take within the Departments' functions, budget and approved programmes of work to address the key health inequality issues identified from the AOI. We will review and publish an annual update on the EAP and DAP throughout its lifetime.

The full draft EAP can be viewed separately at **Annex A**.

5. Disability Action Plan (DAP)

Under Section 49 (A) of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, the Department of Health is required when carrying out its functions to have due regard to the need to:

- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

The full draft DAP can be viewed separately at **Annex B**.

6. What are we consulting on?

This consultation seeks your views on the draft 5-year Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan (**Annex A and B**). Please see Consultation Response form for applicable consultation questions at paragraph 7.10.

7. Get Involved

7.1. How to respond

This consultation has been launched using Citizen Space. Citizen Space is the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) recommended online Consultation tool and preferred surveying tool.

You can also share your views on this consultation in a number of other ways. Copies are available electronically and can be downloaded from <https://www.health->

[ni.gov.uk/consultations](https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations) and emailed to equality&humanrights@health-ni.gov.uk or posted to **Equality and Human Rights Unit, Castle Buildings, Stormont, Belfast, Northern Ireland, BT4 3SQ.**

You can also request a copy to be posted to you if you email or write to the Equality and Human Rights Unit. This document is also available in alternative formats on request. Please contact the Department, at the address above or email, to make your request.

The consultation will close on **28 June 2025**. Responses received after this date will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and with prior agreement from the Department.

Following this consultation, the Department will produce an analysis of the responses and the report will be published on the Department's website.

7.2. Privacy, Confidentiality And Access To Consultation Responses

The Department may publish a summary of responses following completion of the consultation process, except for those where the respondent indicates that they are an individual acting in a private capacity (e.g. a member of the public). All responses from organisations and individuals responding in a professional capacity will be published. We will remove email addresses and telephone numbers from these responses; but apart from this, we will publish them in full.

Responses to the consultation, may be published or disclosed on request in accordance with information legislation; these chiefly being the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR), the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679. The Department can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances. Before you submit your response, please read the paragraphs below on the confidentiality of consultations and they will give you guidance on the legal position about any information given by you in response to this consultation.

The FOIA gives the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority, namely, the Department in this case. This right of access to information includes information provided in response to a consultation.

If you do not wish information about your identity to be made public please include an explanation in your response regard the information you have provided as confidential, so that this may be considered if the Department should receive a request for the information under the FOIA or EIR.

7.3. Privacy Notice

Data Controller Name: Department of Health (DoH)
Address: Castle Buildings, Stormont, BELFAST, BT4 3SG
Email: equalityandhumanrights@health-ni.gov.uk

Data Protection Officer Name: Charlene McQuillan
Telephone: 028 90522353
Email: DPO@health-ni.gov.uk

Being transparent and providing accessible information to individuals about how we may use personal data is a key element of the Data Protection Act (DPA) and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). The Department of Health (DoH) is committed to building trust and confidence in our ability to process your personal information and protect your privacy.

7.4. Purpose for processing

We will process personal data provided in response to consultations for the purpose of informing the development of our policy, guidance, or other regulatory work in the subject area of the request for views. We will publish a summary of the consultation responses and, in some cases, the responses themselves but these will not contain any personal data. We will not publish the names or contact details of respondents but will include the names of organisations responding.

If you have indicated that you would be interested in contributing to further Department work on the subject matter covered by the consultation, then we might process your contact details to get in touch with you.

7.5. Lawful basis for processing

The lawful basis we are relying on to process your personal data is Article 6(1)(e) of the UK GDPR, which allows us to process personal data when this is necessary for the performance of our public tasks in our capacity as a Government Department.

We will only process any special category personal data you provide, which reveals racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious belief, health or sexual life/orientation when it is necessary for reasons of substantial public interest under Article 9(2)(g) of the UK GDPR, in the exercise of the function of the department, and to monitor equality.

7.6. How will your information be used and shared

We process the information internally for the above stated purpose. We don't intend to share your personal data with any third party. Any specific requests from a third party for us to share your personal data with them will be dealt with in accordance the provisions of the data protection laws.

7.7. How long will we keep your information

We will retain consultation response information until our work on the subject matter of the consultation is complete, and in line with the Department's approved Retention and Disposal Schedule [Good Management, Good Records](#) (GMGR).

7.8. What are your rights?

You have the right to obtain confirmation that your data is being [processed, and access to your personal data](#).

You are entitled to have personal data [rectified if it is inaccurate or incomplete](#).

You have a right to have personal data [erased and to prevent processing](#), in specific circumstances.

You have the right [to 'block' or suppress processing](#) of personal data, in specific circumstances.

You have the right to [data portability](#), in specific circumstances.

You have the right to [object to the processing](#), in specific circumstances.

You have rights in relation to [automated decision making and profiling](#).

7.9. How to complain

If you are not happy with how we process your personal information and if you wish to request access, object or raise a complaint about how we have handled your data, you can contact our Data Protection Officer using the details above.

If you are not satisfied with our response or believe we are not processing your personal data in accordance with the law, you can complain to the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire SK9 5AF

casework@ico.org.uk

7.10. Consultation response form

Title

The consultation on the Department of Health's, Draft Equality Action and Draft Disability Action Plan for 2025-2030

Consultation Dates

Consultation opened on **28 March 2025**

Closing Date **28 June 2025**

Consultee Details

Name (Optional)	
Organisation and job title (if applicable)	

Please provide details of your postal and / or e-mail address if you wish to be advised of any outcome of the consultation.

Postal Address (Optional)	
E-mail Address (Optional)	

I am responding: as an individual

on the behalf of an organisation as an

(please tick a box)

If replying as an individual, please select yes or no to indicate if you want your personal details to be kept confidential.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	(please tick a box)	

Whilst not essential, it would assist the Department in analysing responses if responding on behalf of an organisation, you could provide details of who your organisation represents and, where applicable, how the views of members were assembled?	
--	--

Q1. Do you agree or disagree on the draft Equality Action plan document?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

Q2. Do you think that the actions will be sufficient to make meaningful progress against the inequalities identified?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

Q3. To what extent to do you agree or disagree with the measures and outcomes listed in the Disability Action Plan to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people ?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

Q4. To what extent to do you agree or disagree with the actions listed in the Disability Action Plan to encourage participation by disabled people in public life?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Please give reasons for your answer

Q5. Do you have any further thoughts or comments which may be relevant to this consultation?

Yes No No views

Please give reasons for your answer

IMPACT SCREENING

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires the Department to “have due regard” to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, or sexual orientation; between men and women generally; between persons with a disability and persons without; and between persons with dependants and persons without. The Department is also required to “have regard” to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of a different religious belief, political opinion, or racial group.

The Department has also embarked on an equality screening exercise to determine if any of these recommendations are likely to have a differential impact on equality of opportunity for any of the section 75 groups. We invite you to consider the recommendations from a section 75 perspective by considering and answering the questions below. Answering these questions will contribute to the completion of the Department's Screening template and the screening outcome.

Q1. Are you aware of any indication or evidence – qualitative or quantitative – that the actions/proposals set out in this consultation document may have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity? If yes, please give details and comment on what you think should be added or removed to alleviate the adverse impact.

Yes

No

No views

Please give reasons for your answer

Q2. Are you aware of any indication or evidence – qualitative or quantitative – that the actions/proposals set out in this consultation document may have an adverse impact on good relations? If yes, please give details and comment on what you think should be added or removed to alleviate the adverse impact.

Yes

No

No views

Please give reasons for your answer

Q3. Is there an opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations? If yes, please give details as to how.

Yes

No

No views

Please give reasons for your answer

Q4. Are there any aspects of this action plan where potential human rights violations may occur?

Yes

No

No views

Please give reasons for your answer

RURAL IMPACT

The Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 places a duty on public authorities, including government departments, to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans and when designing and delivering public services.

Q1. Are the actions or proposals set out in this consultation document likely to have an adverse impact on rural areas?

Yes

No

No views

Please give reasons for your answer

Almost done

You are about to submit your response. After you click submit, you will no longer be able to go back and change any of your responses. By clicking 'Submit Response' you give us permission to analyse and include your responses in our results.

Information provide by respondents will be held and used for the purposes of the administration of this current exercise and subsequently disposed of in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation.

If you wish to have a receipt, Citizen Space will send your responses to the email address you provide. Please ensure that you are inserting/ have previously inserted the correct email address, as failure to do so may result in your responses being sent to a third party. Please note, if you have not been asked for your email address within the survey, the email address you input below will not be saved or stored and is used only by the system to automatically send you a receipt.

If you provide an email address you will be sent a receipt and link to a PDF copy of your response.

Email address:

