

## Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (NI)



### Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report 2020-21

#### Contact:

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

<https://www.afbini.gov.uk/equality>

#### Signature:

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Fiona Campbell'.

**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 2020 and March 2021.**

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

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

#### **Commitment to Equality**

AFBI is committed to providing equality of opportunity. It is our policy that all eligible persons shall have equal opportunity for employment and advancement on the basis of their ability, qualifications and aptitude for the work. Everyone has a right to a considerate and harmonious working environment and atmosphere in which all workers are encouraged to apply their diverse talents.

We aim to foster a culture that encourages every member of staff to develop their full potential. Creating a working environment where individual differences are valued and respected to enable all staff to give of their best and helps us respond more effectively to the needs of our customers.

#### **AFBI Introduction and Context**

The Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) is Northern Ireland's largest provider of agri-food science. It provides vital support to an industry which is a key economic driver within Northern Ireland while delivering wider societal benefit in areas such as environmental protection and food safety.

As a non-departmental public body (NDPB) sponsored by the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs. AFBI science plays a crucial role in providing the underpinning statutory and analytical testing, research and development work, emergency response capability and expert scientific advice required to support the various work programmes of our sponsoring department and the wider requirements of our agri-food industry.

Against a backdrop of global and local challenges, the need for science has never been greater. AFBI is very well placed to contribute to meeting these challenges through our work which centres on our three key themes of:

- Leading improvements in the agri-food industry;
- Protecting animal, plant and human health; and
- Enhancing the natural and marine environments.

#### **Our Work**

AFBI's science focuses on leading improvements in the agri-food industry, enhancing the natural and marine environments and protecting animal, plant and human health. Our work enables the agri-food industry to trade nationally and internationally while also bringing forward innovations to improve production efficiency and environmental sustainability. In line with our Vision of "*Advancing the local and global agri-food sectors through scientific excellence*", AFBI collaborates extensively and increasingly with other scientific institutes nationally and internationally to ensure that our science remains visionary while seeking to meet the many local and global challenges that the agri-food sector faces.

These include the major challenge of simultaneously halting climate change, enhancing the health of society, animals and the environment. In addition the

challenge of positively impacting the economy, against a backdrop of the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union and emergence from a major pandemic.

AFBI's Corporate Plan for 2018-2022 sets out our aims to deliver for society, the economy and the environment, and to meet the needs of our customers and partners in an ever more efficient and effective manner. To achieve these aims, our Corporate Plan also outlines how we, with the support of our sponsoring Department, plan to invest in our people and infrastructure to provide innovative, efficient and effectively service delivery.

### Laying Strong Foundations for the future

AFBI have committed to investing in and develop its people and infrastructure to provide innovative, efficient and effective service delivery. With support from DAERA, strong progress has been made in this regard with major infrastructure projects including the new Animal Health Building and replacement Research Vessel projects. Approval from the Department of Finance has also been achieved for the business case for implementing a new project management system to support our scientists in delivering projects.



AFBI are also implementing a Communications and Engagement Strategy improving engagement and communicating the impact of AFBI's Science. Critically, investment in our people continues to be a priority with the implementation of AFBI's people strategy. This is designed to ensure effective talent management and the ability to attract, retain and develop our most important resource. This year will see the delivery of a leadership development programme to upskill and empower our managers to be leaders within the organisation.

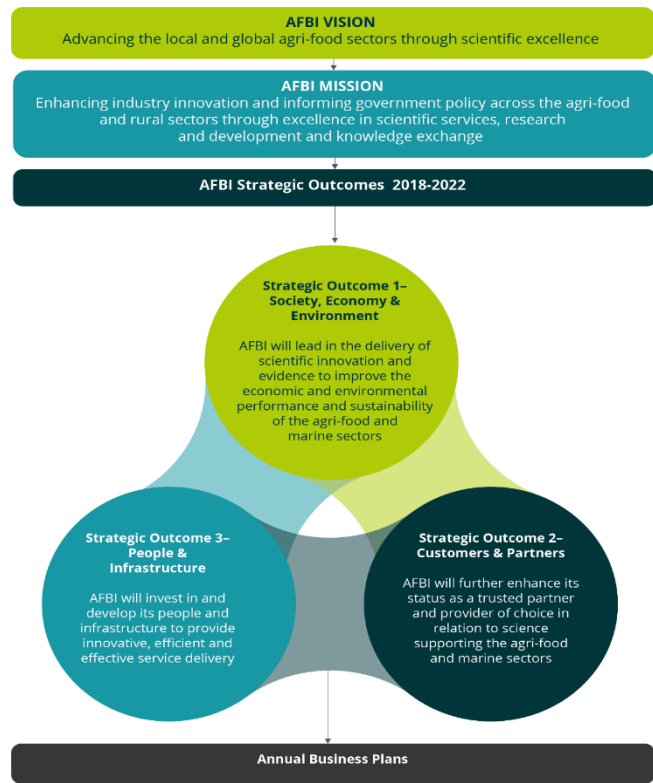
During 2020/2021 AFBI signed a memorandum of Agreement with Queen's University Belfast (QUB) and also agreed the terms and principles of working in partnership with the College of Agriculture, Food and rural Enterprise (CAFRE). These two initiatives represent important foundations to further develop with regard to key strategic alliances and partnerships in AFBI going forward. Our alliance with QUB will focus on research, education and enterprise advances to transform our food, environmental and agricultural systems. Our alliance with QUB will enable the development of solutions taken from fundamental design through to applied research and our partnership with CAFRE will ensure these solutions have an impact across food and farming systems in NI.

### AFBI Science Strategy 2030

As Northern Ireland's main provider of Agri Food, veterinary, fisheries and environmental sciences AFBI must deliver for government, society and industry through acting locally but impacting globally. During 20/21 the AFBI 2030 Science

Strategy was developed through active engagement with staff and AFBI’s key stakeholders. Six scientifically strategic themes have been identified which AFBI will deliver on over the coming decade. The strategy also outlines how we will enable ourselves as an organisation i.e. through the development of our excellent staff, designing key strategies aligned with funding, data and the measurement of impact as well initiatives to achieve our ambition of being an internationally recognised leader of science.

AFBI’s is unique with the UK and Ireland and plays a key role in the EU as an organisation which can deliver holistic solutions within the agri-food-environmental-health nexus. AFBI’s foundational platforms, expertise across a wide range of scientific disciplines and partnership working with its sponsor department DAERA as well as academics and industry locally, nationally and internationally, will be key to the delivery of this exciting Strategy.



Overall AFBI’s 2030 Science Strategy will be finalised in 21/22 and is specifically designed to contribute significantly to DAERA’s vision over the next thirty years (2020-2050) which is for the Northern Ireland economy to grow sustainably through innovation arising from the transition to low or zero carbon models.

**AFBI’s Vision, Mission and Outcomes**

AFBI’s Corporate Plan for 2018-22 sets out a future which builds on and maximises the potential of AFBI’s wide-ranging scientific expertise to deliver key outcomes for DAERA and the local agri food sector. It is focused on addressing shared future challenges, ever greater alignment with industry, strategic partnering with the University sector and College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) and closer relationships with key stakeholders.

AFBI’s vision, mission and 3 strategic outcomes for the period 2018-22 are underpinned by AFBI’s values and associated behaviours set out at Annex 2. This annual business plan sets out the targets and activities that will be undertaken, to move AFBI towards the achievement of these strategic outcomes.

AFBI’s strategic direction is aligned with that of DAERA and the NI Executive’s overall draft Programme for Government and is therefore aligned to the Department’s four draft strategic outcomes for the period 2016-2020 and delivery of DAERA’s Vision of ‘Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape, valued by everyone.’

Through its broad range of scientific work, AFBI will support the delivery of DAERA's outcomes and the wider needs of industry. AFBI will in turn assist in progress towards the Northern Ireland Economic Strategy, the Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government outcomes, and DAERA's 'Green Growth' strategic direction.



Good business planning is at the heart of strong governance, effective management and financial viability and requires understanding and ownership by all staff across AFBI.

As such, AFBI's Strategic Outcomes and business targets are effectively cascaded down through the organisation. Cascading represents translating and aligning AFBI's Outcomes and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) from the Corporate level down to Divisional and Branch level and finally, to the individual level through the Performance Management and Appraisal Process.

Good plans in turn need to be supported by effective monitoring and reporting of performance at each level of the organisation and this is assisting in the development of a strong performance culture where everyone understands where they fit into helping to achieve AFBI's objectives.

### **Partnership Working**

Following the launch of the 'Partnerships between Departments & ALBs - NI Code of Good Practice' and accompanying guidance, DAERA and AFBI have put in place a Partnership Agreement and Engagement plan. This is the start of a process which will see AFBI continue to work even more effectively with the Department to ensure

continuous improvement of these arrangements to maximise the positive contribution to the Programme for Government outcomes. This sets out the areas where partnership can be improved upon using examples such as both organisation's effective engagement in DAERA's Science Transformation Programme and Science Strategy as a foundation and blueprint for the way forward.

### **AFBI Staff**

AFBI has a core staff complement supplemented by agency workers of circa 750. This is made up of Non-Industrial (scientific & administrative) and Industrial with an annual budget of circa £60 million across its seven specialised sites throughout Northern Ireland.

- 1 In 2020-21, 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.*

### **Examples of key policy/service delivery developments in the reporting period.**

- Development of the annual Business Plan which sets out the targets and activities that will be undertaken in year to support the achievement of strategic goals. This plan also sets out how performance and progress against these targets will be measured and reported through a series of key performance indicators.
- Submission of annual Fair Employment monitoring return.
- Submission of annual Review of Progress to the Equality Commission.
- Year 1 action plan rolled out of the AFBI People Strategy which includes 6 work strands, one of which is titled Values, Diversity & Inclusion. This Strategy provides an overarching framework that will positively impact upon the people, culture work, practices and organisational structures.
- Rolling programme of training and e-learning interventions were carried out in year.
- Recruitment practices continue to promote equality of opportunity and good relations, embedding systematic procedures on best practice from statutory codes of practice and guidance from the Equality Commission.
- AFBI's commitment to equality of opportunity and to creating and sustaining a working environment where everyone is treated with respect and dignity, free from any form of inappropriate behaviour,

and one in which all employees can give of their best, is embodied in the Dignity at Work policy.

- Provision of information, guidance and support for staff via employee assistance programmes in place which include: Occupational Health Service; Welfare Support; Inspire Workplace Health and the Charity for Civil Servants.
- Member of the Equality Commission STEM Employers Network (Science Technology Engineering & Mathematics).
- We adhere to implementing the “Equality of Opportunity and Sustainable Development in Public Procurement” Guidance produced by the Equality Commission and the CPD.
- Provision of work experience opportunities for students was impacted in year by the Covid pandemic.

**2** Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2020-21 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

- AFBI continues to progress its equality scheme commitments which are reflected in its corporate and business planning processes.
- During the year AFBI was impacted by the Covid pandemic and all face-to-face meetings ceased and staff whose roles permitted, worked from home.
- The day to day delivery of equality functions is mainstreamed within the various business areas, with the human resources team provide additional support and guidance.
- During the year there was increased focus on mental health and wellbeing to support staff through the challenging period. This was achieved by raising awareness via staff newsletters, intranet articles, helping to create awareness of the impact of positive mental health for a diverse workforce.
- AFBI maintains a consultee list, which is periodically reviewed for effectiveness.
- Introduction of a new on-line/blended Induction programme.
- Staff can avail of a number of family friendly policies to ensure a work-life balance including: Adoptive Leave, Career Break, Dependant Leave including Bereavement Leave, Flexible working, Parental leave, Paternity leave (including Adoptive Paternity Leave) and Shared Parental leave. AFBI continues to provide generous leave entitlements for its staff which go beyond the statutory minimum. These provisions greatly help in creating a supportive working environment.

- Training was provided for all hiring managers and interview panel members on equal opportunity responsibilities. Interview panels are balanced in terms of gender and religion as far as reasonably practical. We promoted evidence-based decision making and continued to ensure interviews were conducted fairly and consistently. We continually review our advertising practices to advertise as widely as possible through our own website, online recruitment websites and social media channels.
- We provided equal opportunity and welcoming statements on job advertisements to promote equality of opportunity in line with Section 75 action plans.
- Reasonable adjustments are put in place for staff who have a disability and candidates as part of the recruitment and selection process.
- Skype/Web-Ex interviews were used this year in place of face-to-face interviews which offered flexibility for candidates and interview panel members.
- Equality screening is carried out re eligibility criteria for recruitment competitions in conjunction with line managers and trade unions.
- Links maintained with Home Office due to employment of foreign and migrant workers.
- To encourage young people into the STEM sector AFBI has 25 post graduate students, 5 of which commenced in year. In addition we have facilitated 12 requests for work experience and 2 applications for visiting workers.
- Information circulated to international staff re the implications of Brexit.
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups guidance adhered to by staff involved in public events.
- Special requirements for non-UK, vulnerable group visitors accommodated where feasible.
- We continue to explore best practice initiatives for promoting gender equality via the STEM network and best practice.
- In partnership with Inspire we issue quarterly staff wellbeing updates on a range of support topics.

**3** Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2020-21 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

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



During the reporting period revised policy guidance was put in place and included enhanced information in relation to equality screening.

**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:

N/A

**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*):

N/A

## 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 2020-21 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:

- Specific posts have direct responsibility for managing and monitoring equality throughout AFBI and where applicable, this is included in the job description. E.g “*To ensure the Institute fully complies with its statutory equality obligations outlined in the Equality Scheme*”.
- All Candidate Information Booklets (which includes the Job Description & Person Specification) have a comprehensive section outlining commitment to Equality and Section 75 legislation.

**5** Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2020-21 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:

- Compliance with equality duties is incorporated in the performance management process within some departments.

**6** In the 2020-21 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 2020-21 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

- AFBI’s commitment to equality is included in its Core Values and objectives are included in the annual Business Plan and the 3 year Corporate Plan. In addition there is a dedicated work stream titled: Values, Diversity & Inclusion in the AFBI People Strategy.

**Equality action plans/measures**

**7** Within the 2020-21 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:	11	Actions ongoing:	3	Actions to commence:	0
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Please provide any details and examples (in addition to question 2)

The majority of the actions in the Equality Action Plan were implemented at the introduction of the scheme. The ongoing actions are those that are time bound for annual completion each year. There are no actions outstanding.

- **Actions Completed:** Listed in Section 2.
- **Actions Ongoing:** Equality Commission FEC return; Annual Review of Progress Report and Policy Screening.

**8** Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2020-21 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

None identified.

**9** In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2020-21 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

- Which includes welcoming statements on our recruitment advertisements.

**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 2020-21 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:

N/A in reporting period.

**12** In the 2020-21 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)*:

- N/A in reporting period.

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:

- N/A in reporting period.

**13** Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2020-21 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes       No       Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples: N/A in reporting period.

**14** Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2020-21 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes       No       Not applicable

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

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

4	Policies were screened in the reporting period.
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**16** Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2020-21:

0	Policy consultations conducted with <b>screening</b> assessment presented.
0	Policy consultations conducted <b>with an equality impact assessment (EQIA)</b> presented.
0	Consultations for an <b>EQIA</b> alone.

No requirement for consultation on policies screened.

**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 in reporting period.

**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 2020-21 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 2020-21 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: N/A in reporting period.

**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 2020-21 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

None identified.

**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:

None in reporting period.

**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 2020-21, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

<b>e-Learning Training</b>	<b>Provider</b>	<b>Completed by</b>
Autism Spectrum Disorder	LInKS	10 staff
Disability Awareness for frontline staff	LInKS	3 staff
Diversity & Inclusion	Legal Island	576 staff
Positive Mental Health Toolkit for Staff	LInKS	419 staff
Positive Mental Health Toolkit for Line Managers	LInKS	242 staff
Unconscious Bias	Legal Island & LInKS	58 staff
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,308 staff</b>

<b>Classroom Based Training</b>	<b>Provider</b>	<b>Completed by</b>
Corporate Induction	AFBI	24 staff
Criteria Based Interview Training (includes Equality compliance)	AFBI	74 staff
Employment Law	Legal Island	1 staff
Mental Health First Aid	Health Matters	11 Staff
<b>Total</b>		<b>110 staff</b>

- AFBI's Corporate Induction has been revised to provide a blended approach to Induction in line with Covid requirements. An Induction Toolkit has been developed with an online PowerPoint presentation and Coffee Pot (Virtual) meetings with the CEO.
- Staff in Human Resources keep their specialist knowledge and skills up to date through a range of equality focused training and development events, seminars and conferences including events hosted by the Equality Commission.
- As necessary the Learning & Development unit considers supplementing the equality training with additional courses provided via the LINKS online platform.
- Training content is periodically reviewed and updated in line with legislation and best practice.
- We evaluate the extent to which all participants have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge via online evaluation questionnaires.
- The post course evaluation also informs the regular course reviews and courses/providers are revised accordingly.

- As part of the Performance Management framework, it is a requirement that line managers discuss training courses objectives with their staff, line managers are also responsible for ensuring that opportunities are in place to put the training into practice.
- Annual Personal Development Plans (PDPs) are discussed, agreed and monitored by line managers and the staff for whom they are responsible. These PDPs are feed into the annual training needs analysis exercise.
- Reports on training activity is regularly provided to EMT and the Board to monitor progress in this regard.

**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:

- Equality Screening and Recruiting Fairly training have resulted in increased staff awareness and updates to internal procedures.

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

**26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2020-21, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

- AFBI promotes its services via the internet, all online applications developed by AFBI 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 2020-21?

Insert number here:

0
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Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

- AFBI received no external complaints re its equality scheme, and continues to work with staff via internal dignity at work policies and procedures to address any equality related issues.



### Section 3: Looking Forward

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

- AFBI's Equality Scheme is due for renewal in 2023.

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

- The main focus will be on screening awareness/compliance.

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

- Continue to review the impact of EU exit on recruitment practices.
- Continue to monitor flexible working practices aligned to COVID best practice.

**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:

22

Fully achieved

0

Partially achieved

0

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 <sup>i</sup>	Outcomes / Impact <sup>ii</sup>
National <sup>iii</sup>	N/A		
Regional <sup>iv</sup>	N/A		
Local <sup>v</sup>	1. AFBI have established links with Ulster Sheltered Employment Ltd (USEL) to provide employment to persons with a registered disability.	One staff member employed.	Encourage and support persons with a disability into the workplace.

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
<b>Ensure all managers and staff are aware of their legislative responsibilities under DDA and Section 75.</b>			
2	Conduct a review of the online Equality & Diversity training, to ensure that it addresses the disability duties and raises awareness of disability related issues.	Diversity & Inclusion training provided to 576 staff.  Unconscious Bias training provided to 57 staff.	Increased awareness of equality legislation and best practice and communicates organisational commitment to Section 75.
3	All staff to undertake Equality and Diversity training as part of their Induction.	Within 3 months of joining, staff to have training completed. 24 staff completed this training in year.	Increased awareness of equality legislation and best practice and communicates organisational commitment to Section 75.
4	All staff to undertake refresher Equality and Diversity Training on a rolling 3 year basis.	Refresher topic launched annually.	To ensure increased awareness of topical themes.
5	All interview panel members trained in Criteria Based Interviewing techniques which includes an overview of legislation regarding reasonable adjustments for disabled candidates. One to one sessions can be facilitated by HR upon request.	Interview panels informed of the requirements and legislation around reasonable adjustments and disabled candidates during the year 74 staff completed this training.	Increased knowledge and awareness of legislation and best practice and requirements for panel members to be balanced in terms of gender and religion as far as reasonably practical.

PART B

6	A number of staff (10) attended Autism Spectrum Disorder e learning training to raise Autism awareness	LINKS have an extensive e-learning library, modules are available to staff throughout the year.	Increased knowledge and awareness of Autism.
7	Disability Awareness for frontline staff e learning attended by 3 staff.	This module is available to all staff through the LINKS portal which has an extensive e learning library.	To ensure increased knowledge of Disability awareness.
8	Positive Mental Health Toolkit training for staff and line managers.	661 staff in total availed of this training.	To provide staff and line managers with supportive tools and techniques to manager through Covid pandemic and new ways of remote working.
9	Mental Health First Aid Training	13 staff achieved accreditation.	To provide additional support and advice to staff and line managers dealing with mental health challenges.

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

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
<b>Provision of information that is easy-to-access and understand.</b>			
10	Provide written and web-based information in alternative/accessible formats as and when required.	AFBI Internet and Intranet have been updated and include dedicated sections for Equality.  Internet conforms to Accessibility Guidelines in web page design.	Provision of information that is easy to access and understood. Materials available in alternative formats, including easy read upon request.

PART B

11	Inform staff of AFBI's Disability Action Plan (DAP) and targets via the Intranet and Staff Newsletter.	DAP accessible to all staff on the Intranet.	Continue to keep staff and line managers informed of progress in this area and of AFBI's ongoing commitment to equality and disability action plans.
12	Select a topical area of focus and publish information and guidance for staff and line managers.	In partnership with Inspire we issue quarterly staff wellbeing updates. Topics have focused on mental health and wellbeing during the reporting period.	Raise awareness, reduce stigma and encourage colleagues to take time out to talk to their peers.

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
<b>Improve how we consult and engage with people with disabilities, this includes our own staff and those who use our services.</b>			
13	Further review our consultee list and ensure that it is representative of all relevant disability groups, and ask their preferred consultation methods for future policy reviews.	Consultee list kept under review for effectiveness.	Ensure we reach all representative groups and gain valuable feedback to policy reviews/decisions.
14	Maintain and further develop the links with USEL (and or similar organisations) for opportunities for inclusive employment for people with a disability.	Encourage and support people with disabilities into work.	One member of staff employed jointly in partnership with USEL. Additional opportunities to be explored.

PART B

15	Continue to provide applicants with an opportunity to indicate any reasonable adjustments which may be required to assist them during the recruitment process.	All job applicants are offered reasonable adjustments as part of the recruitment and selection process. All requests will be accommodated, as far as practical.	Reasonable adjustments offered and facilitated, provides applicants with support through the selection process.
16	Equip line managers with the knowledge and skills to effectively manage staff and identify potential welfare issues.	Line managers equipped with appropriate knowledge and skills.	Objectives incorporated into performance reviews and learning interventions coordinated by the Learning & Development Unit.
17	Provide health and wellbeing support for staff via the employee assistance programmes (EAPs).	All staff who require support which is either disability or ill health related will be offered a range of support provided by AFBI HR and our EAP partners which includes: Occupational Health; Welfare Support; Charity for Civil Servants and Inspire Workplace Health.	Where reasonably practical provide a range of reasonable adjustments e.g. transfers, role changes, phased returns, review of working hours/patterns, reduced duties and the need for specialised equipment.  AFBI continues to review its procedures in line with this measure.

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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
<b>Review and monitor the accessibility of AFBI facilities and explore opportunities for improving access.</b>			
18	Continue to review existing premises accessibility to ensure access compliance with legislation.	Any refurbishments planned/adjustments to premises are completed in line with legislation.	Compliance with legislation and best practice access requirements.
19	Ensure that any planned building projects outlined in the DAERA – AFBI Estate Strategy comply with and accessibility standards.	Procedures are built into the design specifications for all new build projects.	Compliance with legislation and best practice access requirements.
20	Review the nature of staff related cases being provided via the Employee Assistance Programmes and ensure support services are in place to address.	Review of quarterly reports and referrals by AFBI HR.	Improved range of services and support available for staff.
21	Work with the Department of Finance Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) to ensure all AFBI contracts with suppliers and contractors have a policy/commitment to equality and diversity.	We adhere to implementing the Equality of Opportunity and Sustainable Development in Public Procurement guidance produced by the Equality Commission and CPD	Equality and Human Rights compliance built into all contracts.
22	Review the AFBI website for accessibility and effectiveness.	A Website review has been conducted and will continue to	The new AFBI brand refresh and enhancing the user experience and

PART B

		evolve in line with accessibility best practice guidelines.	accessibility has been conducted and will be kept under review.
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3. Please outline what action measures have been **partly achieved** as follows:

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
0				

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
0		

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

- **AFBI Website:** Monitoring and testing website accessibility.
- **Training:** Training needs are assessed each year, and a training plan and budget implemented to meet these needs

(b) Quantitative

- Training is provided for staff, contents of which is monitored for relevance and evaluation carried out.



PART B

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?

No

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale

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?

No

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<sup>i</sup> **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.

<sup>ii</sup> **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.

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

<sup>iv</sup> **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level

<sup>v</sup> **Local** : Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.