

## **ANNUAL EQUALITY STATEMENT**

**Year end 31 March 2021**

NILGOSC's Equality Scheme states that it will report on the progress it has made in the delivery of its Section 75 statutory duties.

### **Our Commitment**

NILGOSC re-affirms its commitment to the fulfilment of its duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 in that it will 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.

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

### **Promotion of Equality of Opportunity**

NILGOSC has demonstrated its commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity during 2020/21 and the equality agenda continues to be promoted and supported by the most senior levels of the organisation.

The NILGOSC Corporate Plan for 2020/21 included objectives relating to equality and good relations. The Senior Management Team has monitored the implementation of these objectives on a quarterly basis.

### **Implementation of the Equality Scheme**

NILGOSC carried out a full review and consultation of its approved Equality Scheme in late 2016 and published an updated Scheme on 9 March 2017. The Equality Scheme was further reviewed in September 2018 in light of the proposed introduction of the *My NILGOSC Pension Online* system, which provides members and pensioners with online access to their pension records. There was a minor amendment to the Scheme to reflect that some member communications would be made available via this new system going forward. NILGOSC consulted with Equality Commission for Northern Ireland regarding this, who approved the change without the need for further consultation. The next review of the Scheme will be completed in 2021.

NILGOSC carried out its duties in relation to the Equality Scheme throughout 2020/21 to ensure that its policies and procedures are fair and lawful. A number of the actions set out in the Equality Action Plan 2018-2021 were progressed during the year, as set out below:

- Eight new members appointed during 2020/21 were appointed to the Committee during 2020/21 and all were required to complete "Equality and Diversity in the Northern Ireland Workplace" e-learning training. All new staff are also required to complete this training.
- Face to face staff training on equality related policies has been delayed due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis as the Staff Conference in 2020 was postponed until further notice. A virtual staff training day has been scheduled for 30 June 2021, which will include this equality training.
- As reported last year, an independent review of the website was completed in line with Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018. Following the recommendations made in the review report, NILGOSC redesigned its website during 2020/21 to improve accessibility and the new website was launched on 23 March 2021.
- The Equal Opportunities Policy was reviewed and updated in the first quarter of 2021 and was subsequently approved by the Staffing Committee in April 2021.

Following discussion and agreement with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, NILGOSC has carried forward any actions not implemented to date from the Equality Action Plan 2018 – 2021 into a new extended Equality Action Plan for 1 April – 31 December 2021. This is to allow the action plan to be aligned with the audit of inequalities and review of the Scheme due to be completed by the end of December 2021. The outcome of the audit and review will be used to inform a new Equality Action Plan for 2022-2025.

In line with its Equality Scheme, NILGOSC continues to carry out screening of any new or revised policies for equality impacts. One policy was screened out during 2020/21 and no equality impact assessment was required. No equality complaints were received during the year.

NILGOSC continues to provide its publications in alternative formats on request.

Those who require further information about the NILGOSC Equality Scheme or would prefer to receive this document in an alternative format (such as in large print, in Braille, on audio cassette or on computer disc) and/or language, please contact the Equality Officer at:

Address: NILGOSC, Templeton House, 411 Hollywood Road, Belfast, BT4 2LP

Telephone: 0345 3197 320

Typetalk: 18001 0345 3197 320 (for people using a textphone)

Fax: 0345 3197 321

Email: [equality@nilgosc.org.uk](mailto:equality@nilgosc.org.uk)

Copies of the Equality Scheme and this Annual Equality Statement are also available on the Internet at [www.nilgosc.org.uk/equality-scheme](http://www.nilgosc.org.uk/equality-scheme).