

Annual Equality Statement 2023/24

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 dependents and persons without.

In addition, without prejudice to its obligations above, NILGOSC shall, in carrying out its functions, have regards 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 2023/24 and the equality agenda continues to be promoted and supported by the most senior levels of the organisation.

The NILGOSC Corporate Plan for 2023/24 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 its duties in relation to the Equality Scheme throughout 2023/24 to ensure that its policies and procedures are fair and lawful. A number of the actions set out in the Equality Action Plan 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024 were progressed during the year, as set out below:

- At 31 March 2024 all Committee Members have completed the 'Equality and Diversity in the Northern Ireland workplace' e-learning training. All new staff continue to complete this training within one month of joining.
- There were 22 alternative communications issued between 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024. All requests for alternative communication were successfully completed.
- NILGOSC is committed to providing all its digital content in an accessible format. The NILGOSC website was reassessed in June 2023, following an initial assessment in November 2022, with some minor issues identified which have been actioned. This review and additional actions for improvement ensure compliance with the Public Sector Bodies Website & Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018.
- NILGOSC has continued with its reconnection programme and issued letters to its deferred members in 2023. The programme is linked to a corporate objective to encourage non-registered deferred members to register for Member Self Service (MSS) with a review of improving member engagement.
- Training for members and pensioners on the availability of electronic communications and the use of MSS continues to take place, with a number of in-person seminars and remote sessions held both for members, and employing authorities held during the period 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024. Instructional videos are available on the NILGOSC website.
- NILGOSC completed the ECNI's Accessible Business Checklist, ensuring that NILGOSC's premises and services are accessible. An action plan was developed following the identification of areas for improvement, this is currently being implemented.
- NILGOSC's Disability Action Plan was published following a consultation that closed in May 2023. Progress against the plan continues.

In line with its Equality Scheme, NILGOSC continues to carry out screening of any new or revised policies for equality impacts. Four policies were screened during 2023/24 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.

Address: NILGOSC, Templeton House, 411 Holywood 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

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