

Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Public Authority 2024 - 2025 Annual Progress Report

Section 75 of the NI Act 1998

Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended)



woven

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Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties

Annual Progress Report

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Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:	https://www.woven.org.uk/housing/equality-matters Click or tap here to enter text.
Signature:	

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 2024 and March 2025

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 2024-25, 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.

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Woven Housing Association, previously Habinteg Housing Association (Ulster) Ltd, founded in 1976, is a registered housing association in Northern Ireland. Woven plans, develops and manages 'integrated' housing schemes in both urban and rural areas throughout the region and works with several partner organisations in providing supported housing projects. The Association currently has over 2500 properties at more than 100 locations and 18 partnership schemes.

Woven's Vision – Homes, Lives and Communities; Woven as one - encapsulates the Association's central aim of providing housing which combines a range of dwelling types - family houses, apartments and bungalows - in order to appropriately meet the needs of the widest range of users, including older persons and persons with a disability. Quality, sustainable developments include large and medium sized suburban housing developments, inner city apartments, individual rural cottages, and specialised housing schemes. Partnership projects include sensitively designed housing with care schemes, temporary accommodation for people who are homeless, and housing initiatives for people with additional support needs.

Throughout 2024-25, Woven maintained a commitment to implementing its statutory equality, good relation, and disability duties in adherence to the Association's Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan.

Woven's core work continues to embody our duties and much of what is undertaken on a daily basis fulfils our duties - from consultation on new developments, promotion of services aimed at reaching the widest range of audiences, unbiased allocation of housing and service delivery, choice, partnership work to support additional needs, community involvement, good relations, fair treatment, equality and diversity awareness training for staff and equality screening of all new or revised policies.

For the purpose of this report, in order to annually demonstrate 'progress,' the information provided focusses predominantly on new initiatives and/or significant developments in this reporting period which demonstrate a renewed or enhanced endeavour to ensure equality and promote good relations.

2. Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2024-25 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

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1. KEY POLICY AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE PERIOD (01 April 2024 – 31 March 2025) IN THE AREA OF TENANT ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

We are pleased to report that we have continued to build on our commitment to promoting inclusion and tackling hate crime and discrimination within the communities we work in.

Over the past year, we delivered a range of training sessions for staff, tenants, and representatives from the community and voluntary sector, including:

- **September 2024** – *Community without Hate*, delivered to staff and residents in the Northwest area,
- **November 2024** – *Autism Awareness Training (OCN Level 2)*, delivered to staff and tenants in Strabane,
- **February–March 2025** – *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Training*, delivered to residents and community organisations across Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council.

These initiatives reflect our continued efforts to create safer, more inclusive communities, and support awareness, understanding, and engagement on equality issues.

KEY POLICY AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE PERIOD (01 April 2024 – 31 March 2025) IN THE AREA OF OUR HUMAN RESOURCES (HR)

Communication & Engagement

People and Engagement, working together through teamwork, collaboration and partnership are two of our Corporate Values. In 2024-2025 Employee engagement has continued to be a key priority.

We proactively continued with staff through our intranet Workplace and through a variety of events, face to face and digital meetings. We strengthened the work and employee voice through our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Forum (EDIF) and rebranded the Staff Consultation Forum to the Colleague & Culture Group where the focus is to look at all aspects across Woven that impact employees. From

policy through to organisational engagement and culture. To act as advocates for ensuring that actions and decisions align with Woven's core values and desired culture and take a lead in reviewing the Employee Pulse Survey results and developing and/or recommending changes.

Introduction of two new policies for staff – Time off for fertility treatment and the Gambling policy. The introduction of both is Woven working towards supporting all employee experiences and life events, with a focus to become an employer of choice.

During the period 7 new employees' commenced employment with the Association

1.3 IN RELATION TO CUSTOMER SERVICES AND OTHER EXTERNAL QUALITY STANDARDS

Customer Service Excellence (CSE) Standard 2025

During the reporting period the Association underwent its annual CSE reassessment in terms of its values and service delivery, with a bearing on performance in relation to equality and good relations. This is through an annual assessment against the National Customer Service Excellence Standard.

Assessment against the CSE Standard was conducted in January 2025 with the Association successfully retaining the Standard and improving on overall performance.

Out of 57 criteria, the Association achieved [last year's figures appear in brackets]:

23 [22] Compliance Plus/Best Practices

33 [34] Full Compliances

1 [1] Partial Compliance

0 Non Compliances

The assessor's recommendation was that Woven Housing Association was well deserving of re-accreditation to the Standard.

Inclusive Housing Provision

The core business of Woven, was to continue to fulfil its Vision of providing Homes, Lives and Communities throughout 2024/25.

154 new homes commenced during the period including 12 W/C units.

There were 112 approved applications on the list of disability adaptations at the start of the reporting year plus any new approved applications made during the reporting year. individual adaptations were completed to existing housing stock in the period to respond to specific needs, typically ranging from fitting of grab rails and 2nd stair rails, lever taps, level access showers and safe play areas. As well as this we have fitted stair lifts, food prep benches for wheelchair users, automatic

door openers and automatic WC installations and provided additional lighting for partially sighted tenants.

1.4 IN RELATION TO OUR ONLINE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS AND ACCESSIBILITY

Online Access and Promotion

Woven continues to promote its work online through its website and social media platforms - Twitter feed, Facebook, and LinkedIn - ensuring digital access and promotion and reporting of all community involvement in the period.

Online access to main services is provided mainly through the website with the ReachDeck accessibility toolbar helping to ensure digital inclusion. ReachDeck supports people with visual impairments and hidden disabilities, as well as those who lack basic digital skills and non-native speakers. The toolbar has a range of features for reducing barriers between content and audience - adding speech, reading, and translation, facilitating access and participation for people with Dyslexia, Low Literacy, English as a Second Language, and those with mild visual impairments. Online content can be translated onscreen into multiple languages or 'listened to' with the multiple language voice feature.

Woven's ReachDeck accessibility toolbar is used, on average, it continues to be accessed more than 35 times each week with more than 90% of customers accessing the website and using the accessibility tool via mobile phone. Approximately two thirds of those using the toolbar use the audio/visual accessibility features and one third for speech/translation. A range of languages are utilised via the translation tool, including Polish, Portuguese, Slovak, German, Spanish, Azerbaijani and Czech.

Customers in Belfast and Dungannon remain the two most active centres of translation usage with the remainder spread across the region.

1.5 EQUALITY SCREENING OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

During the period, all 28 revised and new policies and procedures were screened for equality purposes using the Equality Commission's equality screening form. This is required of all public authorities to ensure adherence to our equality, good relation and disabilities duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and our own Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan.

2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/ measures** in 2024/25 (or append the plan with progress/examples identified).

Potential Inequalities	Proposed Actions	Annual Progress 2024/25
1. AGE		
<p>1.1 Few play spaces for young people / children</p>	<p>Liaise with the appropriate local authority to encourage the inclusion of play areas in new developments.</p>	<p>During the period progress continued our new residential mixed-use development in Strabane. The £20 million development will comprise 158 homes as well as community facilities, small business units, a children’s Play Park and high-quality open space, and we are looking forward to commencing further phase handovers later this year. Our homes will include a mix of general needs, Cat 1, wheelchair accessible, complex needs, and affordable properties, ensuring inclusive housing options for all.</p>
<p>1.2 Electronic communications can cause problems for older people</p>	<p>Continue to undertake a review of preferred methods of communication for tenants/other customers.</p>	<p>During the period we continued to undertake a review of preferred methods of communication for tenants and customers.</p> <p>Online access to main services continues to be provided mainly through the website with the ReachDeck accessibility toolbar helping to ensure digital inclusion. ReachDeck supports people with visual impairments and hidden disabilities, as well as those who lack basic digital skills and non-native speakers. The toolbar has several features for reducing barriers between content and audience - adding speech, reading, and translation, facilitating access and participation for people with Dyslexia, Low Literacy, English as a Second Language, and those with</p>

<p>1.3 Digital divide as older people may not be able to use / access services which are available electronically for example through internet</p>	<p>Explore the introduction of a text phone to enable persons with hearing or speech difficulties the same access as those without.</p> <p>Explore and support opportunities for older people to learn to access services and/or information online.</p> <p>Review digital forms of communication used by association to ensure maximum inclusivity.</p>	<p>mild visual impairments. Online content can be translated onscreen into multiple languages or 'listened to' with the multiple language voice feature.</p> <p>Written and verbal communication is also maintained where the customer/tenant prefers this method. A hearing loop system was installed in our new Laganwood Headquarter Offices.</p> <p>During the period, our Community Involvement Team continued to support tenants to meet via Microsoft Teams following the success of meeting via Zoom during lockdown. Several new tenants are now engaging with us because we have continued to help set them up to meet with us digitally from the comfort of their homes</p> <p>We continued to maintain contact with some tenants since the lockdown via 'Courtesy calls. Community Assistants, Community Involvement Officers and Housing Officers maintain regular contact with tenants providing support as required and a listening ear for those who continued to isolated or lonely in their home.</p>
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		<p>Understanding that peoples' needs would be diverse, our database of support and service-based organisations was maintained and added to as the weeks went on. Having the database distributed allowed our team to efficiently sign-post tenants. This effort complimented our 'Courtesy Call' project, where calls were made to every Woven home, checking in offering support & signposting</p>
<p>1.4 Growing older population but accommodation to meet need not increasing therefore there is potentially less choice for older people</p>	<p>Monitor demand for housing for older people at association level – overall need determined by NIHE.</p> <p>Continue to highlight need to the Department for Communities, Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Planning departments.</p>	<p>154 new homes commenced during the period including 12 wheelchair units</p> <p>112 individual adaptations were completed to existing housing stock in the period to respond to specific needs, typically ranging from fitting of grab rails and 2nd stair rails, lever taps, level access showers and safe play areas. As well as this we have fitted stair lifts, food prep benches for wheelchair users, automatic door openers and automatic WC installations and provided additional lighting for partially sighted tenants.</p> <p>During the period we continued to liaise with the Department for Communities and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to discuss meeting identifying and meeting the needs of an ageing population. Outcomes of this collaborative working is identified above.</p>

<p>1.5 Social isolation of older people</p>	<p>Gather information to inform the development of suitable activities.</p> <p>Liaise with relevant authorities, as necessary.</p>	<p>See 1.3 above</p>
<p>1.6 Welfare Reform</p>	<p>Continue to lobby government on the impact of Welfare Reform.</p> <p>Monitor situation as Welfare Reform changes are introduced to determine impacts on tenants, particularly those between 25 and 35 who may be affected by the</p>	<p>During the period we continued to advocate that removing Welfare Supplementary Payments Schemes would significantly harm the most vulnerable populations, particularly women, disabled individuals, and social housing tenants. Therefore, there is a strong argument against withdrawing or tapering support. This will increase rent arrears and homelessness, especially since housing stock has not kept pace with demand and it will not 'save money' as the likely outcome is the spiralling of Discretionary Housing Payments and Temporary Housing budgets.</p> <p>During the period, our Housing staff continued to be involved in Forum meeting to discuss pertinent housing items, including welfare reform and the general cost of living crisis, with colleagues from other Housing Associations and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.</p>

	Shared Room Rate.	
2. DEPENDENTS		
2.1 Welfare Reform – single room rate will have adverse impact on single parents under 35: especially males	<p>Continue to lobby government on the impact of Welfare Reform.</p> <p>Monitor situation as Welfare Reform changes are introduced to determine impacts on tenants, particularly those between 25 and 35 who may be affected by the Shared Room Rate.</p>	<p>During the period we continued to advocate that removing Welfare Supplementary Payments Schemes would significantly harm the most vulnerable populations, particularly women, disabled individuals, and social housing tenants. Therefore, there is a strong argument against withdrawing or tapering support. This will increase rent arrears and homelessness, especially since housing stock has not kept pace with demand and it will not ‘save money’ as the likely outcome is the spiralling of Discretionary Housing Payments and Temporary Housing budgets.</p> <p>During the period, our Housing staff continued to be involved in Forum meeting to discuss pertinent housing items, including welfare reform and the general cost of living crisis, with colleagues from other Housing Associations and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.</p>
2.2 Lack of play space for children	Liaise with appropriate local authority to encourage the inclusion of play	See 1.1

	areas in new developments.	
2.3 Lack of 2 bed accommodation for Single parents Elderly and/or disabled people needing carers	Monitor demand – highlight issue to Department for Communities and Housing Executive as appropriate.	See 1.4
3. DISABILITY		
3.1 Communications which do not meet differing needs of services users	Undertake review of forms of communication used by association to ensure maximum inclusivity. Gather more comprehensive tenant profile to improve identification of preferred methods of communication.	See 1.2. A review is carried out annually or when changes in needs necessitate this
3.2 Lack of suitable (Lifetime homes) accommodation highlighted in ECNI statement of Key Inequalities	All new social housing is built to Lifetime Homes standard. Continue work with NIHE in development of comprehensive property database to enable better	All new Woven new build is built to Lifetime Homes standard. Ongoing

	<p>matching of stock to individual need.</p> <p>Agree implementation programme based on Stock Condition Survey findings and recommendations.</p>	Ongoing
3.3 Electronic communications / digital divide	Undertake review of digital forms of communication used by association to ensure maximum inclusivity.	See 1.2
3.4 People with mental ill-health may experience difficulty in accessing services and in relation to employment	<p>Continue to ensure compliance with legislation and keep abreast of best practice.</p> <p>Engage with representative groups identify / mitigate potential barriers.</p>	<p>During the period Woven demonstrated its continued commitment to the Mental Health Charter. This included the training of employee Mental First Aiders.</p> <p>our Community Involvement Team continued to engage with our various representative groups and individuals, particularly those tenants who were hard to reach and/or isolated</p>
3.5 Funding for adaptations is only available once, which may cause difficulties if needs change	<p>Gather baseline information to clarify the number of times where it is outside the Association control to assist.</p> <p>Lobby DfC on this issue.</p>	<p>As required</p> <p>Annually</p>

	<p>Explore options for alternative funding.</p> <p>Continue to liaise with relevant authorities, as necessary.</p>	As required
3.6 People with a learning disability may have to remain in long stay hospitals due to lack of suitable services	<p>Continue to liaise with relevant authorities, as necessary.</p> <p>Gather baseline information to clarify the number of instances where association is not in position to assist.</p>	We have a well-established joint management partnership with all-island charity and social enterprise INSPIRE. Their aim is wellbeing for all. They work together with people living with mental ill health, intellectual disability, autism, and addictions to ensure they live with dignity and realise their full potential. We have the landlord function of providing independent living housing and partnership with INSPIRE who provide the specialist services to those who reside in our properties.
4. GENDER		
4.1 Activities at (sheltered) schemes can be geared towards one gender only	<p>Gather more comprehensive tenant profile information to improve development of customer services.</p> <p>Gather baseline information on uptake of</p>	<p>We continue to have a dedicated Scheme Co-ordinator Service at our one Sheltered Scheme. Our Community Involvement Team work closely with the Scheme Co-Ordinator and the tenants of who live there to gather more comprehensive tenants' profiles on services required and to provide inclusive activities for all.</p> <p>See above</p>

	<p>activities, if relevant.</p> <p>Use tenant feedback to inform the development of activities in sheltered housing schemes.</p> <p>Cross-sectoral sharing of case studies / good practice.</p>	<p>Prior to and after activities have taken place tenants are surveyed on what activities they would like to get involved in and then feedback on the activities that have taken place for evaluation purposes.</p> <p>Woven continues to work closely with the relevant voluntary and community sectors in delivering of services and/or activities. This well-established relationship allows us to share good practice and benefit from the good practice of others</p>
<p>4.2 Gender imbalances in staff at all levels across the sector</p>	<p>Gather more comprehensive cross-sectoral data to clarify actual situation.</p> <p>Consider options for mitigation of impacts identified.</p> <p>Consider developing a strategy where necessary based on research.</p>	<p>Completed annually</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>As required</p>
<p>5. MARITAL STATUS</p>		
<p>5.1 Couples in residential homes not</p>	<p>Record all instances in our</p>	<p>Where applicable</p>

<p>always housed together</p>	<p>sheltered scheme to inform action.</p> <p>Highlight problem to relevant authorities</p> <p>Identify options for mitigating impact which are available to housing associations</p>	<p>Where applicable</p> <p>Where applicable</p>
<p>6. POLITICAL OPINION</p>		
<p>6.1 Possible inequalities due to perceptions of potential employees who have 'political convictions.'</p>	<p>Explore adoption of guidelines from OFM/DFM on employment of individuals with conflict related convictions.</p>	<p>The Association continues to have a Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy in place. Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders legislation and AccessNI Code of Practice it is a requirement that the organisation have this policy. The policy outlines the Association's commitment to equality of opportunity for all applicants including those with criminal convictions and outlines the process should an applicant with a conviction apply for a post. This policy is reviewed every 3 years or earlier of legislation and/or best practice necessitates this.</p>

7. RACE		
7.1 Communications and accessibility may be difficult for those whose first language is not English or who are unfamiliar with system	Gather more comprehensive tenant profile information to help tailor services to customer needs.	See 1.2 above
7.2 Electronic communications / digital divide	Review digital forms of communication used by association to ensure maximum inclusivity.	Annually
7.3 Lack of adequate housing and accommodation for Travellers	Through the Social Housing Development Programme work with NIHE to deliver housing schemes which meet the needs of Travellers.	Annually
7.4 Literacy of Travellers	Explore alternative options for engaging with Travellers.	As required
7.5 People from Black and Minority Ethnic communities are vulnerable to exploitation and discrimination	Develop improved cross-sectoral liaison with representatives of relevant stakeholder groups.	As required

3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures, and/or service delivery areas during the 2024-25 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes

No (go to Q.4)

Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

The Equality Diversity and Inclusion Forum (EDIF) continued to drive the equality agenda and ensure we are adhering to our equality and good relations duties.

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:

A more focussed group to drive our equality work as outlined above and deliver on our EDI Calendar of events.

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):*

The realisation that there is a lot of work to be done to be more focussed and proactive and involve better staff representation.

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

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 2024-25 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:

Yes, Section 75 statutory duties continued to be integrated in all job descriptions. During the year 7 new employees' commenced employment with the Association.

As part of our aim to increase our workforce demographic for under 25-year-olds we continued to support the NI Housing apprenticeship scheme along with a number of other Housing Associations and successfully appointed a Housing Apprentice and worked with schools.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2024-25 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:

As detailed above during the period Annual Performance Reviews continued to assess not only on how employees have performed against objectives for the year, but also how they have performed against the Association's Employee Expected Behaviours.

One of the five expected behaviours staff are required to demonstrate is Embracing equality and diversity where we require all our staff to treat everyone with professional and personal respect, promoting fairness and recognising the value of diversity.

In 2024, 89.1% staff who were eligible for an appraisal rated good or above in relation to their performance against the expected behaviours, this is a decrease by 8.9% on the previous year.

6 In the 2024-25 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 corporate plan

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No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2024-25 report

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The Annual Performance Reviews are supported by regular employee 121's with their line manager and objective setting that aligns to departmental plans which cascade from the Corporate Strategy's Strategic Aims and Values.

Two years on the Equality Diversity & Inclusion forum continues to play a key role in driving our EDI work. The purpose of this forum continues to be to support, promote and encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace, being mindful of the commitments outlined in all our Equality Scheme, Disability Action Plan, Mental Health Charter and other relevant policy documents, and to assist in developing an action plan which goes beyond legal compliance and will be seen as a key component to the core business strategy, because it's the right thing to do.

The Association's values are central to this forum as we strive to make them visible in all we do and create an inclusive culture that nurtures talent and allows all present and potential employees, regardless of differences, the opportunity to flourish and reach their potential within the Association.

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2024-25 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:

13

Actions ongoing:

1

Actions to commence:

3

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

Thirteen rolling actions for the period were successfully met during the period and one was ongoing and with three yet to commence.

- 8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2024-25 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

Due to our rebrand, a change in key personnel and under resourcing a full review of our Equality Scheme, including our Easy Read versions, have been postponed until 2025/26. This is now a key priority for the EDIF to drive forward, including the development of an overarching EDI Strategy, a review of our Disability Action Plan and Easy Read and Mental Health Charter Commitments. As a result of this planned significant piece of work taking place in 2025/26 there were no significant changes or amendments made to our Equality Action Plan in 2024/25.

- 9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2024-25 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 2024-25 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has

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been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

As outlined above in 2024-2025 we strengthened the work and membership of this new forum and developed a 2024-2025 activity plan of EDI Forum led promotions, with the aim of celebrating and increasing awareness, knowledge and understanding of a wide range of inclusion topics, across the organisation.

This included.

Month	EDI Focus	EDIF Recommended Activity	Health and Wellbeing Group Activities Agreed
April 24	Autism Acceptance Month 2 nd – 8 th	Link into Na-tional Autistic Society World Autism Acceptance Week 2 nd -8 th April Activities 2024 Neurodiversity Awareness Raising Training Promote Lived Experiences and Strengths based approaches – link to reasonable adjustments in recruitment processes and to support employees	Earth Day
May 24	Deaf Awareness Week 1 st - 7 th May	Learn the basics of Sign Language Session – Makaton Signs	National Walking Month Sun Awareness Week
June 24	Pride Month - whole month	Rainbow Corporate Woven Logo for month of June & use of Pronouns on signatures Promote only NI Pride Parades and provide a link to Pride Terminology/Pronouns	Volunteer Week World Blood Donor Day Healthy Eating Week
July 24	World Youth Skills Day – 15 th	Hear from our youngest colleagues. And/Or ‘my experience’ sound bites from our Generation Z colleagues (or family members) published on Workplace	None
Aug 24	None		
Sep 24	Colour Blindness Awareness Day 6 th	Colour blindness simulation video on Workplace Colour Blind Awareness Day - Colour Blind Awareness	World Suicide Prevention Day World Alzheimer’s Month

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Oct 24	Dyslexia, ADHD, OCD Awareness Week 2 nd – 8 th World Menopause Day – 18 th October	Promotion of interactive technologies to support & shared experiences on Workplace Promotion on Workplace and Hot and Bothered Café to meet on World Menopause Day – Holland and Barrats Menopause Chocolate Treats for attendance.	Back Care Awareness Week Flu Season Breast Cancer Awareness Month
Nov 24	None		Men's health and international stress awareness week
Dec 24	Purple Light up Day - 3 rd	Linked to the UN's international day of persons with disabilities IDPD – which promotes the global purple light up day movement - encourage staff to wear something purple. Spotlight article on Workplace re Making Reasonable Adjustments.	None
Jan 25	World Braille Day – 4 th	Learn some basic Braille – decode an Inclusion Commitment message - Beginner's Guide to Braille - Everyday Sight	Promotion of Dry January Blue Monday
Feb 25	Stand up to Bullying Day – 28 th	Anti Bullying and Harassment (focussed around protected characteristics) Training Sessions Roll Out	Time to Talk Day
March 25	Zero Discrimination Day – 1 st International Women's Day - 8 th	Avoiding Discrimination Training focussing on Direct and Indirect and the Protected Characteristics Wear Purple – Ms Teams temporary background	Sleep Smoking Private Medical

Also outline above was that we continued to consult with employees on the review and development of employment policies and procedures. The rebranding of the Staff Consultation Forum to the Colleague & Culture Group took place where the focus is to look at all aspects across Woven that impact employees. From policy through to organisational engagement and culture. To act as advocates for ensuring that actions and decisions align with Woven's core values and desired culture and take a lead in

reviewing the Employee Pulse Survey results and developing and/or recommending changes.

The introduction of both is Woven working towards supporting all employee experiences and life events, with a focus to become an employer of choice. through the Colleague & Culture Group (Staff Consultative Forum). Policies and Procedures all have an Equality Screening carried out. In 2024-2025 the Colleague & Culture Group (Staff Consultative Forum) reviewed, shaped, and approved the following employee policies and procedures.

- Time off for fertility treatment and the
- Gambling policy.

12 In the 2024-25 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 by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
- Internet discussions
- Telephone consultations
- Other (*please specify*): Click or tap here to enter text.

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:

We use several consultation methods, as outlined above on a variety of customers and employees who are representative of at least one or more of the Section 75 categories. Uptake depends on the consultation and can vary.

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- 13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2024-25 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes

No

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

New staff members continued to undertake the mandatory equality and diversity awareness e-learning as part of their induction, in addition to equality and diversity sessions with the Association's Corporate Assurance Manager on the Association's equality obligations and their responsibilities as employees.

- 14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2024-25 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes

No

Not applicable – no commitment to review

This will be reviewed as part of our 5-year Equality Scheme review

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

<https://www.woven.org.uk/housing/equality-matters/policy-screening>

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

As outlined above, 28 revised and new policies and procedures were screened for equality purposes using the Equality Commission's equality screening form in the period. This is required of all public authorities to ensure adherence to our equality, good relation and disabilities duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and our own Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan.

PART A

16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2024-25:

28 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:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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 2024-25 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes

No

PART A

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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 2024-25 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:

Click or tap here to enter text.

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:

Click or tap here to enter text.

- 22** Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2024-25 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:

The Association continues to gather, for NICORE monitoring purposes, details of the categories of tenants we are housing, through the Common Selection Scheme.

During the period, the Association carried out equal opportunities monitoring to ensure fairness and equal opportunity requirements are being met.

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 2024-25, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

As outlined above as part of Woven's commitment to equality of opportunity and good relations, all employees are required to complete mandatory Equality and Diversity training. Compliance is monitored monthly and reported to the Senior and Operational Management Team. This is also reported through to the appropriate Committee and Board. As at the 31 March 2024 completion compliance for this training was 99%.

In addition to the above training, completion compliance for the mandatory online Unconscious Bias training was 99%.

- 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:

See point 24 above

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

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2024-25, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

N/A

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

- 27** How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2024-25?

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:

Our Equality Scheme is due for review in 2025/26

- 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)*

We wish to remain committed to our Action Plan and report on our progress against our proposed actions annually. As part our requirement to carry out a 5 year review of our Equality Scheme arrangements we will be doing this including incorporating amendments where legislation and/or best practice necessitates this.

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

PART A

- Employment
- Goods, facilities, and services
- Legislative changes
- Organisational changes/ new functions
- Nothing specific, more of the same
- Other (please state):

Full review of Equality Scheme and action plan, identify any training needed and reflect any changes in legislation, best practice and priorities for 2025/26 and beyond.

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:

13	1	3
Fully achieved	Partially achieved	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	NIFHA / Members	Participation in relevant consultation exercises.	Inform policies / strategies and promote equality.
Regional ^{iv}	None in the period	N/A	N/A
Local ^v	NIFHA / Members	Participation in relevant consultation exercises.	Inform policies / strategies and promote equality.

PART B

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Equality and Diversity eLearning training module mandatory for all new staff to complete. Mandatory online Unconscious Bias training module for all new staff to complete. Mandatory online Unconscious Bias training module for all new staff to complete.	All staff receive the training which includes an assessment at the end to ensure the training was understood. These eLearning modules continue to be part of induction of new staff to the organisation.	Awareness of equality and diversity best practice and legislation; understand the impact of exclusion; and help staff in relation to building an inclusive working environment. Employees are equipped to identify their own unconscious biases and are trained on how to reduce the likelihood of these biases negatively affecting their decision making in their professional and personal lives.
2	Liaising between the Association and the Equality Commission NI through the Association's Corporate Assurance Manager particularly through equality updates and training facilitated by the Equality Commission	Updates filtered through to Board and all staff members	Awareness and equality agenda continuing to be embedded in the corporate strategy and actively promoted in the organisation.
	Corporate Assurance Manager continuing to spearhead the equality agenda and ensure the Association is up to date with the latest initiatives and obligations expected of it.	Corporate Assurance Manager to relay this information through continued training of staff members and liaising with the appropriate bodies to provide external support and awareness	Awareness and equality agenda continuing to be embedded in the corporate strategy and actively promoted in the organisation.

PART B

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	<p>The Association continues to have an arrangement with Language Line Services to provide translation and interpretation services in over 170 various languages. The Association also continues to utilise the services of local firm STEP for translating documents in different languages. The Association continues to provide information on its website that can be translated into various preferred languages there and then.</p>	<p>Interpretation and translation services remain an important facility to encourage equal accessibility of information to all who wish to use our services. An easy read version of the Association's Equality Scheme is available.</p>	<p>Customers who have used the facility have been able to access information in their preferred language/format.</p>
2	<p>The Association continues to promote a statement that information can be provided in Alternative Formats including Braille and other different languages as mentioned above. Continued use of accessibility software, Reachdeck. ReachDeck is an all-in-one digital inclusion solution. It helps</p>	<p>Equal accessibility of information to all who wish to use our services Reachdeck adds speech, reading, and translation to websites facilitating access and participation for people with Dyslexia, Low Literacy, English as a Second Language, and those with mild visual impairments.</p>	<p>Removal of barriers and enables users to access information and services. In the reporting period there was an average of 99 toolbar launches and 86 speech requests per month.</p>

PART B

	organisations make their online content accessible and usable to everyone.		
	Efforts to promote and communicate the commitment to section 75 and its importance to the Association	Section on our Website called 'Equality Matters' dedicated to equality and diversity related items with updates on activity and highlighting of equality duties.	Highlights importance and centrality of Equality and Diversity to Woven. Promotes our commitment to Equality and Diversity across all its business

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Continue to embed the disability duties into our consultation with customers processes through our tenant and community survey structures	Creating an awareness of our obligations of the disability duties internally to our staff and Board and externally to our customers, whilst promoting positive attitudes towards people with disabilities and encouraging participation by people with disabilities in public life.	Ongoing commitment to promote the two duties and encourage others to see that this is good practice
2	Provide news updates on disability on our internal staff communication platform	Create a culture of awareness and embracing of equality, diversity, and inclusion	Ongoing commitment to promote duties and encourage others to see that this is good practice

PART B

	Positive images of people with disabilities in our literature, staff and Board structure, correspondence, and other promotional materials	Our Corporate Strategy features positive imagery of people with disabilities, both staff and residents. Similar positive imagery continues to feature in our Community Involvement Strategy.	Promoted on our website, where these publications mentioned are available, we also featured throughout the period on social media which, additionally, regularly features images relevant to this theme from community events across NI.
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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
1	N/A	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
2	N/A	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

3. Please outline what action measures have been **partly achieved** as follows:

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	N/A	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
2	N/A	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
	Click or tap here to enter text.			

PART B

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	N/A	Click or tap here to enter text.
2	N/A	Click or tap here to enter text.
	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

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

The Association continues to be committed to the effective implementation of all aspects of the Disability Action Plan throughout our organisation. Whenever a full review of our Equality Scheme, Disability Action Plan and Easy Read versions is required every 5 years, we will adhere to our Equality Scheme and carry out a 12-month consultation period for all our stakeholders/consultees to participate in where necessary. Overall responsibility for effective implementation of the Equality Scheme and the Disability Action Plan will be overseen by our Board, led by the Chairperson. The Chief Executive will continue to provide direction and guidance to both the Board and staff team with the assistance of the Corporate Assurance Manager who will continue to have day-to-day operational responsibility for implementation of the equality and disabilities duties for the Association. The Corporate Assurance Manager will report to Senior Managers on a regular basis.

PART B

(b) Quantitative

Integral to our business planning process is the three yearly reviews of our Vision, Mission Statement Objectives and Values by Senior Managers and the Board. Continuing to adopt the Operational Plan approach, the Association continues to set 'SMART' objectives and KPIs, including target setting and monitoring using the KPI Quarterly reporting. How targets are met, and objectives are delivered is monitored and reported at the most senior level in the organisation.

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?

Please select

If yes, please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1	N/A	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

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?

As mentioned above when the Association is due to complete a full review of our Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan (DAP), every 5 years, including incorporating any revisions in Disability legislation and best practice earlier where this required, we will go out to consultation for 12 weeks with our consultees where this is necessary due to substantive changes to our Equality Scheme.

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

^{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.