

Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Public Authority 2021 - 2022 Annual Progress Report  
Section 75 of the NI Act 1998  
Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended)



**Habinteg**  
Housing Association (Ulster) Ltd

*Homes | Lives | Communities*

## Habinteg Housing Association (Ulster) Ltd



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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:

[www.habinteg-ulster.co.uk/equality-matters](http://www.habinteg-ulster.co.uk/equality-matters)

**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 2021 and March 2022**

## **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 2021-22, 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.*

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

Habinteg's Vision - 'Homes | Lives | Communities' 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 2021-22, Habinteg maintained a commitment to implementing its statutory equality and good relation duties in adherence to the Association's Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan.

During the period we conducted a full review of our Disability Action Plan and Easy Read including carrying out the required 12 consultation with all our stakeholders/consultees. The consultation period for our Draft Disability Action Plan (DAP) was launched on Monday 20 December 2021 for a 12-week period until 14 March 2022.

We were delighted that throughout the course of the Consultation period, no negative feedback was received and all interactions were positive.

There were no comments or suggestions of changes from partners or other stakeholder organisations and agencies, only expressions of congratulations and best wishes on the publication of the document. All individual responses via the online survey were shared with relevant staff for response and none required any changes to the document(s) which have now been fully approved and published online on our website.

Habinteg'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.

## **1. KEY POLICY AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE PERIOD**

### **1.1 IN RELATION TO TENANT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND GOOD RELATIONS**

Habinteg continued to follow government guidelines for the pandemic during the monitoring period. The Homes and Communities Team, have worked tirelessly to continue to promote, encourage, support and sustain a culture of tenant engagement, community services and good relations opportunities.

Habinteg recruited a Senior Community Services and Tenant Engagement Officer in March 2022. This Senior Officer is responsible for overseeing the team that includes Community Involvement Officers and Good Relations Officers who are responsible for delivering Habinteg Tenant & Community Engagement Strategy 2021-2026.

The Strategy sets out a genuine commitment to deliver on our vision of improving Homes, Lives and Communities. Whilst we remained committed to providing tenants with real opportunities to influence the decisions that affect them through a range of involvement opportunities and mechanisms to help support, develop and enable effective engagement. This work is overseen by the Director of Homes and Communities.

For this reporting period the pandemic did not hinder a number of new initiatives taking place. It should be noted that all initiatives were carried out while ensuring the safety of staff, tenants and their families at all times. Some initiatives included our Community Assistants leading on events to support tenants on their schemes, others involved a diverse range of tenants being encouraged to lead in creating and planning their own activities/events. It would be fair to highlight that the rolling out of these initiatives have enabled Habinteg to develop a presence within the wider community, whilst maintaining those existing connections.

Habinteg are committed to working with the wider community for the benefit of our tenants and support those community initiatives by signposting tenants to take part.

### **Habinteg Community News**

In May 2021, a group of Habinteg tenants and Community Officers came together to complete accessible training on “What makes a successful Newsletter”. This training was accessible for all tenants via zoom and included CANVA design training.

The group designed their first newsletter which was printed for distribution in September 2021. The newsletters are available online via Habinteg Website with printed copies available for all tenants and widely distributed at Habinteg events. The newsletter is printed quarterly and topics include Showcasing Habinteg Homes, kids' corner, showcasing council areas outlining services and amenities in each area, diary dates of upcoming events as well as welfare advice and signposting.

### **Capacity Building Training**

Building on the success of the previous period we have continued to offer an OCN level 2 in Community Capacity Building in conjunction with Empowering Communities. We worked in collaboration with Radius Housing Association and were able to offer it to nine tenants and one member of staff. Tenants came from across Northern Ireland as we were able to offer the programme over Zoom.

The course took place over 4 sessions with work being set and completed on Google Classrooms. The content of the training included

- Identify and plan a community project
- Develop a monitoring and evaluation process
- Design a marketing strategy for your project

Participants have not registered to complete the OCN level 3 in Community Capacity Building.

### **Together Building United Communities (TBUC) / Housing For All**

Habinteg have two ‘Housing for All’ schemes in Holywood and Portrush. The Holywood scheme was completed in January 2020 and the Portrush scheme in November 2020. There are plans for a second scheme in Portrush.

The Girona scheme now operates its Advisory Panel with Radius who deliver Housing for All scheme in Portstewart and Coleraine. This is good practice in promoting collaboration working and reduces duplication of services within the target audience and area of output.

The schemes signed up to the 5-year Good Relations plans which aim to:

- To promote and support a community where residents feel welcome and where everyone has opportunities to make positive contributions to their community; developing a sense of belonging, community ownership and shared identity.

- To enhance neighbourliness through building community spirit and encouraging involvement
- To develop partnership working that will support bridging and bonding among and between the shared scheme residents and residents from the surrounding communities (within a five-mile radius of the new shared scheme). This will be advanced through good relations and development programmes/projects/events and other opportunities.
- To encourage and provide investment/regeneration opportunities/activities, for the benefit of neighbouring communities, in order to support 'bridging' across and between neighbourhoods.
- To develop and encourage meaningful dialogue that accommodates and enables mutual understanding.
- To streamline good relations between communities and within our organisation, in order to contribute towards more shared sustainable communities.
- To work (in partnership) to support increased movement and interaction within and between shared housing schemes and neighbouring communities, some of which are single-identity communities.

In addition to the above a 6 monthly TBUC monitoring Report was completed in March 2022 and was submitted to the Department for Communities (DfC). This report outlined the delivery of the Housing for All programme to date.

Our 5 year Good Relations plans were agreed by the DfC and NIHE. The plans will allow us to continue to look at developing programmes that will encourage support for communities and cultures within the schemes and their 5 mile radius.

### **Bridging Programmes**

Funding was received in the period, through the Housing for All Scheme. This funding helps promote building of relationships with the Girona Close neighbourhood and the wider community. To ensure this we have engaged with local elected representatives, statutory and voluntary sector who have an interest in delivering Good Relations in Portrush through the Girona Close Advisory panel.

The Project in Portrush has brought together the four primary schools in Portrush to deliver four online workshops exploring the Chinese culture. This is a unique opportunity for the schools to come together online. We were also delighted to be able to offer programmes for Girona tenants and the wider community to come together and do window box planting, summer roadshow and afternoon tea. These opportunities were programmed to allow tenants to mix with the wider community, building relationships and developing lifelong friendships.

In the Church View the Advisory Panel established to deliver the Good Relations Plan have created a shared vision bringing groups together who traditionally would not work together. We have funded PSNI workshops with young people as well as drop-in clinics and festival themed packs celebrating St Patrick's Day and Pancake Tuesday therefore creating a shared community celebrating traditions.

We have also continued to work alongside ArtsEkta to deliver projects that look at the different cultures in our communities. They have supplied packs on different cultures for tenants during Lockdown. They have also organised a Mini-Mela for tenants to showcase cultures from around the world who have decided on Northern Ireland as their home. These events continue to promote the scheme as a welcoming and shared place to live.

### **Staying Connected/Courtesy Call Project**

To ensure we maintain our contact with tenants during the lockdown we continue to contact tenants with a 'Courtesy call'. Community Assistants, Community Involvement Officers and Housing Officers maintain regular contact with tenants providing support as require and normally a listening ear for those who are isolated or lonely in their home.

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 Habinteg home, checking in offering support & signposting..

### **Community Directory of services**

As mentioned earlier during lockdown restrictions staff contacted vulnerable tenants to "check-in" on how they were coping and to sign-post to support. As a direct result of this process staff developed a comprehensive Community Directory, broken down by each area where all of our housing schemes are located in.

This Directory contains contact information for a broad range of both statutory and voluntary support services as well as informal support services within the Community Sector. The Directory was positively received by tenants, as well as providing an invaluable resource for staff when tenants were at their most vulnerable during lockdown.

Establishing community roots is very important for tenants as it provides local support for tenants, opens them to further support and allows tenants to feel they belong in their local area. The directory included food banks, providers of free furniture, mental health supports and local community groups active in the area. We have recently focused on local support available in a recent edition of our Newsletter. This is to continue to find ways to tie tenants in with local support from organisations and their local communities.

This Directory was then shared throughout the Homes and Community team to ensure that everyone could provide this information. It meant tenants were more likely to get access to this information irrespective of whether they spoke to a Housing Officer, Community Assistant or Community Involvement Team member. This improved paths to access and opportunities to engage with different services. It also opened our paths of communication with community groups.

### **Covid-19 Recovery Packs**

As outlined above, staying in touch with tenants during COVID was a priority and while face-to-face contact was not possible during Lockdown and some tenants were unable to access online support, other ideas were incorporated. These took the forms of COVID recovery packs. Over the year we have produced;

- Delivery of Stew and recipe cards (70 portions and packs delivered)
- Community Safety Packs (12 packs in Girona)
- Christmas Scone packs- 341 packs
- Pancake Mix - 128 packs (contained mix for making pancakes)
- St. Patrick's Day multi-cultural packs – 175 packs delivered
- Easter activity packs – 200 packs

All the packs were aimed at different age groups. The idea was to make connections with a broad range of tenants and their families. Schemes were visited by our team and packs delivered across all our schemes. This provided support for isolated tenants through the provision of activities, resources and points of contact.

### **Online Programmes**

For many of our tenants, lockdown was a difficult period and was extremely isolating. To ensure these tenants did not feel isolated in their own homes we continue to co-ordinate weekly zoom to support them. Content of the sessions were varied and guest speakers providing information on mental health, cancer awareness and scam awareness as well as recreational activities. These subjects were decided by the tenants meeting regularly to identify key speakers who would join us informally to provide support and advice. Tenants have expressed how vital these sessions were for their mental health.

We have also co-ordinated a complementary health programme that looked at yoga, cognitive behavioural therapy, homeopathic medicines, and diet and how it can impact our physical and mental health.

### **Scrutiny Panel**

Despite lockdown restrictions groups of tenants continued to meet online using zoom. During these meetings tenants met staff from Housing and Community Services.

During lockdown we continued to recruit for the Tenant Scrutiny Panel and we have increased the database of interested tenants and secured funding to allow those tenants to complete training to ensure they have the skills and knowledge which is required to undertake. Tenants have agreed the Terms of Reference and code of conduct and are keen to undertake the next scrutiny exercise shortly.



### **Local Tenant Panels**

During lockdown tenant panels were struggling to meet face to face, however since restrictions eased tenants have been meeting regularly completing surveys of schemes to identify future community programmes and tenant engagement opportunities. During lockdown restrictions, we have established a comprehensive Interested Tenant Registrar of tenants who wish to become involved in regular scheme activities. This registrar outlines tenant preferred communication method to ensure communication is free flowing between Habinteg and our tenants.

### **Promotion of Tenant and Community Engagement, Good Relations opportunities/ activities and events**

We actively promoted every community event and interaction using a variety of methods including social media, flyers, calls and text messages. We have continued to utilize our Community Assistants and their local knowledge to ensure that we are listening to the different voices that make up the fabric of Habinteg communities. No scheme is the same, and our attempts to ensure that tenants are communicated to effectively and in a way that is most appropriate to them have reflected this diversity.

Facebook has also given tenants the opportunity to get involved and comment on activities available across the region, offering them a greater sense of inclusion and involvement in all Habinteg activities. This has had a positive impact by contributing towards the reduction of social isolation amongst those participants.

### **Environmental & Sustainability**

Homes and Communities team recognise the positive impact of the great outdoors to our tenants, the wider community and the environment that we live in. We are passionate about creating a friendly environment for our tenants and to ensure this we have piloted a number of raised beds on schemes where tenants have identified the need either because of mental health problems, physical health problems or cost of living crisis. Tenants received training on growing their own vegetables, fruit and herbs on two schemes, Harkness Gardens in Derry/Londonderry and Ardnaclooney in Belfast. Tenants are flourishing and growing incredible edible resources and are now on year two in growing and cultivating their own produce.

### **Tenant & Community Engagement Strategy 2021-2026**

The strategy outlines how the Homes and Communities team, will engage tenants across Northern Ireland and provides details of how staff will involve a diverse range of tenants with attention to engaging hard to reach groups, as well as historically less active regions.

Tenant consultation was key in developing Habinteg Tenant & Community Engagement easy read – a two page outline of the comprehensive strategy, with tenants meeting to agree the format and terminology of the document.

This strategy will ensure that the Habinteg Community continues to develop and to do so with our tenants at the center of our approach. Our whole organisation is willing to listen to our tenants. We want to make our communities more welcoming to everyone and our communities to respect people, both tenants and staff. We want to offer the best service we can and to look for feedback at every opportunity to improve. We will do this through the following Habinteg values which underpin all our work:

**Integrity** – Being honest, respectful, transparent and trustworthy in all that we do.

**Engagement-** Working to develop dynamic services both internally and externally, through teamwork, collaboration and partnership.

**Integration-** Embracing diversity, equality and opportunity.

**People-** Working for people, with people, through people.

**Quality-** Driving continuous improvement across all our services.

### **Celebrating History & Centenary**

In January 2022 Habinteg Community Involvement Team secured funding to mark the centenary in a thoughtful, inclusive, and engaging way by exploring the local history of Sion Mills and the cricket club.

The project piloted a new community initiative in partnership with Sion Mills Community Forum (SMCF) who support the needs of older people in the village. The project reduced social isolation amongst the elderly therefore improving physical health & wellbeing.

Participants completed 5 weekly workshops exploring The Sion Mills Cricket Project and celebration/commemoration of over 150 years of one of Ireland's most celebrated cricket clubs. Founded in 1864 by the Herdman family, it survived wars and Irish partition successfully, only to see it struggle when the iconic Mill closed in 2004.

The funding ensured we were able to deliver a project which may have been initially viewed as contentious due to the sensitive nature of the marking of the Centenary of NI, but because of the subject matter we choose to focus on it meant the project had very positive impact on community relations in Sion Mills.

## **1.2 IN THE RELATION TO OUR HUMAN RESOURCES (HR)**

### **Communication & Engagement**

Maintaining communication with employees has remained a key priority throughout the past year.

During the 2021/2022 period the Covid19 pandemic remained with the majority of staff working from home. HR continued to carry out regular check-in surveys with staff enabling us to monitor how staff were coping and establishing staff's varying degrees of confidence in returning to the work place.

As a result of this we put in place a simple 'green, amber, red' visual aid for those returning to the office which enabled them to identify where they were on their Covid journey as well as being able to respect where others were on theirs.

Our Healthy Habinteg bulletins continued to be focused on how to maintain both physical and mental health whilst working from home and building resilience for coming out of lock-down.

We continued to provide advice and information to line managers on how to manage and engage with their teams when working remotely.

Through our HR Managers Briefing we have provided awareness and advice to line managers on topics such as:

- Neurodiversity in the Workplace;
- How to... Deal with a Flexible Working Request;
- Death by Email – the do's and don'ts and potential impact of your actions;
- How to deal with Staff Failing to Adhere to Covid-19 Hygiene Rules; and
- Stress Management

Through the Staff Consultative Forum we have continued to consult on all employment related policies and procedures. Policies were reviewed to take onboard equality related best practice, for example making them gender neutral and ensuring they were inclusive in their approach.

Operational Managers met on a monthly basis to ensure consistency in management processes across the Association, in line with the IIP framework. As a result of this a Leadership and Management Charter was developed which all line managers committed to follow and to be accountable to.

The Association's Reward and Recognition Strategy was developed and consulted on with managers and staff representatives. This strategy is linked to the Association's Corporate Strategy and focuses on how we will build a culture where employees feel recognised and valued for the work they do.

Regular Covid19 up-dates from the Chief Executive, HR and Health & Safety were issued to staff advising them of any changes in localised restrictions and the impact on service provision.

Leading on from the initial competitions that we ran in the previous year we introduced a monthly Habintea to continue to encourage engagement and boost morale. This has proved to be popular with staff, with engagement figures rising.

To allow peers to publicly acknowledge the support offered by colleagues during this period we launched a Lockdown Hero's initiative which allowed staff to nominate someone who has helped them to cope during the pandemic and provided the opportunity for that Hero to be recognised. There were 23 nominations made and tokens of gratitude were issued to all those who had been nominated.

The Board and Management continued to convey their thanks and gratitude to staff through emails and personal letters of thanks and gift cards.

### **Recruitment and Selection**

All line managers and panel members undertook recruitment and selection training including refresher on equality legislation and best practice. This was facilitated on-line and enabled large numbers from across the Association to participate in this training.

During this period we also provided this training to Officer level staff to support them in the development of their line management skills.

As a result of feedback from recruitment panels and the benefits and effectiveness of interviews being carried out remotely, we revised our recruitment and selection procedure to accommodate this.

During the year 14 new employees' commenced employment with the Association, 12 of which were permanent positions and 2 were temporary positions.

### **Induction Programme for employees**

As part of the monitoring and review of our on-boarding processes we carried out a New Starter survey to measure the impact and effectiveness of the new Ready Set Go Induction. The findings of this were very positive with those who had commenced employment with the Association during the Covid19 pandemic complimenting the Association and its staff and how they were welcomed to the organisation. Some improvements around documentation have also been implemented because of this survey.

A key aspect of the induction process of all new employees involves a more in-depth awareness session to cover the Association's commitments to equality and good relations: Equality Scheme, Equality Screening, Charter and Customer Standards. This is delivered in arranged one to one induction meetings with the Quality and Performance Manager.

### **Annual Performance Reviews**

Following the 2021 Annual Performance Review cycle a survey was carried out with all staff on their perception of the process and how this could be improved.

As a result of the findings of the survey documentation was reviewed to make it more user friendly and an Expected Behaviours competency framework was developed to assist employees in understanding what behaviours were expected from them at the various levels across the Association.

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.

Consultation was carried out on this framework with both line managers and staff representatives to ensure the behaviours were achievable at every level.

We were able to report to our Board and Senior Management Team that, in comparison to 2020 annual performance reviews, the overall employee performance in 2021 increased by 18%.

### **Learning and Development**

As part of the Association's commitment to equality of opportunity and good relations, all staff are required to complete mandatory Equality and Diversity training and 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 2022 compliance for this training was 95.1% which is an increase on last year.

In addition to the above training, compliance for the mandatory online Unconscious Bias training was 96.1%.

With Covid19, classroom training remained not viable and training was provided remotely through either our e-learning platform or webinars and on-line training.

As part of our Habinteg in House Training we offered a number of training opportunities including Candidate Interview Skills which was open to all staff and Carrying out Effective 1-2-1 meetings for new line managers.

In conjunction with Menopause Awareness Week in October 2021 we ran Mindful of Menopause Awareness Sessions for all line managers, providing information and guidance on the symptoms and impact of the menopause, why this is a workplace issue and the support we as an organisation can provide to our staff, as well as signposting to other useful resources.

### **Absence Management and Reasonable Adjustments**

The Association actively promotes equality of opportunity for people with a disability, making reasonable adjustments to assist them whilst in work and for new employees who join the Association. The Association works in partnership with Disability Action to provide and sustain employment for those who have a disability and require support to continue to work. It also provides an Employee

Assistance Programme and Occupational Health service to help employees who may be experiencing health issues.

HR continue to support managers where there are difficult and complex absence cases such as stress or disability related absence. This has included more proactive discussions with employees and where necessary the assistance of Occupational Health and external agencies to enable employees to continue within their role or to be supported through ill health retirement.

Reasonable adjustments have included phased return to work, changes to working hours, adjustment to absence management triggers and provision of specialist office equipment including standing desks, specialist chairs, separate keyboards and screens, etc.

All staff completed a display screen equipment assessment to ensure, whilst working from home, they had a safe working environment and adopted good working practices.

Annual leave check-ins were carried out with staff to ensure they were managing a work life balance and utilising their leave entitlement.

As part of the Association's commitment to support the health and wellbeing of its staff the provision of Private Medical Insurance and Health Cash Back Plan is offered to all staff.

### **Equal Opportunities Monitoring**

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

To ensure information held on staff is accurate and up to date the Associations Employee Self Service Module was further developed to allow staff to view the equality information held on them. This facilitated the Annual Employee Equality Declaration being carried out electronically for the first time.

A review of grades requiring Access NI basic and enhanced checks was undertaken and enhanced checks renewed where necessary.

## **1.3 IN REALATION TO CUSTOMER SERVICES AND OTHER EXTERNAL QUALITY STANDARDS**

### **Customer Service Excellence (CSE) Standard 2021**

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 October 2021 with the Association successfully retaining the Standard and improving on overall performance.

In his Report the CSE Assessor commented; *'The CSE team has worked hard to develop their service using the Standard as a business improvement tool. Lots of new evidence was presented this year. There are now 20 elements that have been awarded a compliance plus, and the one partial from last year in element 5.3.2. has been resolved'.*

*The assessor's recommendation is that Habinteg Housing Association is well deserving of re-accreditation to the Standard.*

For this reporting period the Association achieved out of 57 criteria of the Customer Service Excellence Standard, 20 Compliance pluses and 37 full compliances.

### **Inclusive Housing Provision**

The core business of Habinteg, is to continue to fulfil its Vision of providing Homes, Lives and Communities throughout 2021-22.

142 new homes commenced during the period including house types No29 CAT1 and 5 wheelchair units.

78 individual adaptations were carried out to existing housing stock in the period to respond to specific needs, typically ranging from fitting of grab rails and 2<sup>nd</sup> 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. We have received 3 major adaptations during the period. 6 Major adaptations from the previous financial year have reached advanced approval stage.

## **1.4 IN RELATION TO OUR ONLINE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS AND ACCESSIBILITY**

### **Online Access and Promotion**

Habinteg 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 number 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.

Habinteg's ReachDeck accessibility toolbar is used, on average, 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 are the two most active centres of translation usage with the remainder spread across the region.



- 2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2021-22 (or append the plan with progress/examples identified).

Potential Inequalities	Proposed Actions	Annual Progress 2021/22
<b>1. AGE</b>		
1.1 Few play spaces for young people / children	Liaise with the appropriate local authority to encourage the inclusion of play areas in new developments.	During the period our new residential mixed-use development in Strabane was approved by Derry and Strabane District Council. 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.
1.2 Electronic communications can cause problems for older people	Continue to undertake a review of preferred methods of communication for tenants/other customers.	<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 a number 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.</p> <p>Written and verbal communication is also maintained where the customer/tenant prefers this method.</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>During the period plans were discussed and approved to install a textphone facility and hearing loop system in our new Laganwood Headquarter Offices.</p>
	<p>Explore and support opportunities for older people to learn to access services and/or information online.</p>	<p>During the period our Community Involvement Team continued to support tenants to meet via zoom. Zoom accounts were set up and tenants trained on how to use it to help with isolation and improve the use of online communication during lockdown</p>
	<p>Review digital forms of communication used by association to ensure maximum inclusivity.</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> <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 Habinteg home, checking in offering support &amp; 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>142 new homes commenced during the period including house types No29 CAT1 (Active Elderly) and 5 wheelchair units.</p> <p>78 individual adaptations were carried out to existing housing stock in the period to respond to specific needs, typically ranging from fitting of grab rails and 2<sup>nd</sup> 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. We have received 3 major adaptations during the period. 6 Major adaptations from the previous financial year have reached advanced approval stage.</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>Due to devolved government stalemate during the period no opportunities to lobby government could be availed of.</p>

	Monitor situation as Welfare Reform changes are introduced to determine impacts on tenants, in particular those between 25 and 35 who may be affected by the Shared Room Rate.	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.
<b>2. DEPENDENTS</b>		
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, in particular those between 25 and 35 who may be affected by the Shared Room Rate.</p>	<p>Due to devolved government stalemate during the period no opportunities to lobby government could be availed of.</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 areas in new developments.	See 1.1
2.3 Lack of 2 bed accommodation for Single parents	Monitor demand – highlight issue to Department for Communities and	See 1.4

Elderly and/or disabled people needing carers	Housing Executive as appropriate.	
<b>3. DISABILITY</b>		
3.1 Communications which do not meet differing needs of services users	<p>Undertake review of forms of communication used by association to ensure maximum inclusivity.</p> <p>Gather more comprehensive tenant profile to improve identification of preferred methods of communication.</p>	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	<p>All new social housing is built to Lifetime Homes standard.</p> <p>Continue work with NIHE in development of comprehensive property database to enable better matching of stock to individual need.</p> <p>Agree implementation programme based on Stock Condition Survey findings and recommendations.</p>	<p>All new Habinteg new build is built to Lifetime Homes standard.</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

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 Habinteg demonstrated its commitment to Mental Health by signing up to the Mental Health Charter. This will include the training of employee Mental First Aiders, planned in the coming year.</p> <p>Established since the pandemic, 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>Explore options for alternative funding.</p> <p>Continue to liaise with relevant authorities as necessary.</p>	<p>As required</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>As required</p>

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>	<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.</p>
<b>4. GENDER</b>		
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 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</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>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>Habinteg continues to work closely with the relevant voluntary and community sectors in delivering of services and/or activities. This well-established relationship allows us</p>

	studies / good practice.	to share good practice and benefit from the good practice of others
4.2 Gender imbalances in staff at all levels across the sector	<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>
<b>5. MARITAL STATUS</b>		
5.1 Couples in residential homes not always housed together	<p>Record all instances in our 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>Where applicable</p>



<b>6. POLITICAL OPINION</b>		
6.1 Possible inequalities due to perceptions of potential employees who have 'political convictions'.	Explore adoption of guidelines from OFM/DFM on employment of individuals with conflict related convictions.	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.
<b>7. RACE</b>		
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	Annually

	which meet the needs of Travellers.	
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

## 8. RELIGION

8.1 People of one community taking longer to get housed than another	<p>Where practical take action to minimise potential chill factors – for example develop / implement strategies relating to flags, emblems and/or sectional symbols.</p> <p>Training programmes as appropriate.</p>	<p>The Association continues to strictly adhere to the rules of the Housing Selection Scheme, and our equality duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, outlined in our</p> <p>Equality Scheme. These duties ensure we have policies and procedures in place on the erection or display of flags, emblems and/or sectional symbols that negatively impact and/or intimidate and/or discriminate and/or offend other persons or communities.</p> <p>The Association continues to ensure all employees receive relevant and up to date training or refresher training on Unconscious bias and equality and diversity from induction to the Association and at regular intervals throughout their employment with Habinteg.</p>
8.2 Imbalances due to housing schemes being (or perceived as) largely made up	Where practical take action to minimise potential chill factors – for example develop /	See 8.1 above

<p>of those from a specific religion</p>	<p>implement strategies relating to flags, emblems and/or sectional symbols.</p> <p>Promote Shared Future Living.</p> <p>Maintain Good Neighbour Agreements for all housing.</p> <p>Training programmes as appropriate.</p>	<p>Habinteg continues to be committed to Shared Future living (TBUC) and has several schemes completed during the period to demonstrate this commitment. One of the main responsibilities of our Community Involvement Team is to encourage and promote good relations through community involvement activities and opportunities</p> <p>We continue to promote and encourage all our tenants to sign up to Good Neighbour Agreements for all out Housing schemes at the sign up stage.</p> <p>See 8.1 above</p>
<p>8.3 Lack of 'shared neighbourhoods'</p>	<p>Continue development of Shared Future housing as opportunities arise.</p> <p>Maintain use Good Neighbour Agreements for all housing.</p> <p>Develop introduction of</p>	<p>See 8.2 above</p>

	shared neighbourhood schemes as suitable.	
<b>9. SEXUAL ORIENTATION</b>		
9.1 Attitudes to those of differing sexual orientation	<p>Further develop programmes of training.</p> <p>Work with staff to identify potential chill factors.</p> <p>Cross-sectoral sharing of case studies / good practice.</p>	See 8.1 above
9.2 Access to services	<p>Training and better links with LGBTTTQQIAAP (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, ally, pansexual) communities.</p> <p>Explore use of Advocacy service.</p>	<p>See 8.1 above</p> <p>As required</p>

10. CROSS CATEGORY		
10.1 Make up of Housing Association Boards – potentially relates to age, disability, gender religion/political opinion	<p>Gather more comprehensive baseline information.</p> <p>Review governance processes and make up of Board.</p> <p>Make use of NIFHA Board Member Register as appropriate during Board renewal.</p>	<p>As required</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>As required</p>
10.2 Impact of Anti-social behaviour (ASB) policies may be greater for certain groups – e.g., young males	<p>Monitor cases of ASB to identify trends – in particular where they may affect a specific group such as young men or people from a different racial background.</p> <p>Explore collaborative working to develop Good Practice Guide.</p>	<p>During the period the Association created a new post of a Senior Housing Officer for ASB. Amongst other duties this Officer oversees all matters related to ASB, including contributing to the review of related policies, procedures and other practices and reports to the Line Manager and others on trends and other patterns that may require further action.</p> <p>As required</p>
10.3 Accessibility of information and services has the potential to vary for different equality categories –	Gather more comprehensive tenant profile information to help tailor services to customer needs.	Annually

PART A

<p>whilst this has been subject to EQIA it continues to merit ongoing consideration</p>	<p>Continue to review and monitor association's approach to provision of information and services.</p> <p>Use information from previous EQIA and subsequent monitoring to inform the introduction of improvements.</p>	<p>Annually</p> <p>As required</p>
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- 3** Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2021-22 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

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

Please provide any details and examples:

See details contained in Section 2 above.

The work of the Community Involvement Team has continued to significantly contribute towards the further promotion of equal opportunity, good relations and resident engagement and involvement through the number of community-based activities and events during the period. Due to their success a number of these activities and events continued to be delivered virtually.

During the period the work of HR significantly contributed towards further promotion of equality, diversity and harmonious working environments through staff training, the review of existing policies and procedures and the introduction of new policies and procedures.

The equality screening of all new and revised policies and procedures by the Quality and Performance Manager/Equality Manager continued to take place with 27 policies and procedures equality screened in the period.

- 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:

The scope and frequency of 'events' or 'activities' at housing schemes continued to increase, particularly activities and events delivered virtually by the Association's Community Involvement Team. Additional funding streams were tapped into to invest in / prepare for projects, activities and events. The impact has been felt and fed back in numerous ways by both residents and also Community Assistants in terms of targeting funding for events.

The Association continues to see the difference the Community Involvement Team have made to the lives of individuals and groups by engaging and consulting with them. Significant work continues to be done to target hard to reach tenants who have previously felt isolated and not really part of the community giving them more of a sense of belonging and involvement in their community.

- 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)*:

The work of the Community Involvement Team continued to be largely driven by the Association's Tenant and Community Engagement Strategy and subsequent Operation Targets for residents, to promote equal opportunity and good relations and the requirements outlined by the Department for Communities, the Regulator of Housing Associations.

## 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 2021-22 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 period we had 27 new employees' commence employment with the Association, 21 of which were permanent positions, 5 were temporary positions and 1 was agency staff.



In relation to Section 75 there continues to be an expected behaviour from employees under 'Embracing equality and diversity'. This expectation is that;

*Habinteg employees will treat everyone with professional and personal respect, promoting fairness and recognising the value of diversity. For managers, as leaders, it is about creating a work culture and practices that recognise, respect, and value diversity for the benefit of the association.*

Our job descriptions also advise that;

*Habinteg is an equal opportunities employer*

- 5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2021-22 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 referred to above, our values-based Employee Expected Behaviours are now also well embedded in the performance management process and staff continue to be appraised against these during their 1-2-1 meetings with managers and their annual performance reviews. This continues to feed into the overall organisational performance report for Board.

The Ready Set Go Induction programme for new employees continues to be implemented complimented by the continuance of HR mentoring for new employees, introduced since the pandemic to help new employees, who had not yet been introduced to the office environment, to settle into the Association and develop working relationships outside of their teams more quickly.

The 'Welcome Booklet' continued to be provided to all new staff members setting out the culture of the organisation and expected performances standards including:

### A commitment to Equality

We are committed to treating all our customers (and staff members) fairly and to promoting good relations. We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. One of the ways in which we work towards this is through the production of an Equality Scheme (a copy is available on both our intranet and website and there is also an Easy Read version)

The Equality Scheme impacts on each Habinteg employee, affecting how individuals carry out their jobs and how they conduct themselves in their daily business. Raising and maintaining awareness of this initiative is a continuous process and staff members undergo regular training, with particular regard to the nine main equality categories listed below. Policy review and development is greatly influenced by the requirements of the Section 75 Duty.

It is Habinteg's policy to provide equality to all, irrespective of:

- ▶ Gender, including gender reassignment
- ▶ Marital or civil partnership status
- ▶ Having or not having dependants
- ▶ Religious belief or political opinion
- ▶ Race
- ▶ Having or not having a disability
- ▶ Sexual orientation
- ▶ Age



- 6 In the 2021-22 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 2021-22 report

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Habinteg's Vision, Mission Statement and Values all continue to mainstream a commitment to Section 75 statutory duties as embodied in the Equality Scheme (including Easy Read) and during the period our revised Disability Action Plan (including Easy Read).

Stemming from this Vision and Values base, Habinteg's Corporate Strategy 2018 - 2023 continues to include ongoing commitments to community involvement and to accessible housing. The Association's Operational Plan for the period 21/22 lists a series of measurable Operational targets in fulfilment of each Strategic Aim.



Progress against each operational target, to ensure fulfilment of the strategic aim, continues to be reported on quarterly.

### Equality action plans/measures

**7** Within the 2021-22 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:

12

Actions ongoing:

1

Actions to commence:

0

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

Twelve actions planned for the period were successfully met during the year and one is ongoing and with none yet to commence

**8** Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2021-22 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

As a full review of our Equality Scheme and Equality Action Plan was carried out in 18/19 there were no significant changes or amendments made to our Equality Action Plan in 2020/21. A full review of our Disability Action Plan and Easy Read

was carried out during the period though, which complemented our Equality Scheme.

- 9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2021-22 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 relevance: *(tick one box only)*

- ☒ All the time                      ☐ Sometimes                      ☐ Never

- 11 Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2021-22 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:

During the period a Staff Consultative Forum (SCF) comprising representative staff members continued to review all new and existing internal Corporate/Employee policies and procedures for fairness, transparency and accuracy.

Housing staff continued to receive regular briefings and updates from the Housing Managers and referred residents to the Welfare Advice Officer who were likely to be impacted by Welfare Reform. Consultation also continued to be carried out by the Welfare Advice Officer with residents directly who were likely to be impacted by the benefit cap as a consequence of the introduction of Universal Credit.

- 12 In the 2021-22 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*): Text, virtual meetings, email and website feedback forms.

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:

Since the pandemic there continues to be an increase in the uptake of tenants and others using Zoom or Microsoft Teams as a method of consultation.

With particular reference to Section 75 categories, the Equality sections of the Association's Charter and Standards of Customer Service continue to be reinforced to customers and staff members

### Equality

We will treat all our customers and staff members fairly, without prejudice or preference and will oppose discrimination. We will actively promote good relations and regularly train and develop all staff members in line with our Equality Scheme.

### Equality - We will:

- treat all people fairly and equally regardless of age, gender, religion, political opinion, race, marital status, dependent status, sexual orientation or ability / disability in accordance with our Equality duty under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

- 13** Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2021-22 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 virtual equality and

diversity sessions with the Association's Quality and Performance Manager on the Association's equality obligations and their responsibilities as employees.

Mandatory online Unconscious Bias training was also rolled out to all employees from March 2021.

- 14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2021-22 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☒

Yes

☐

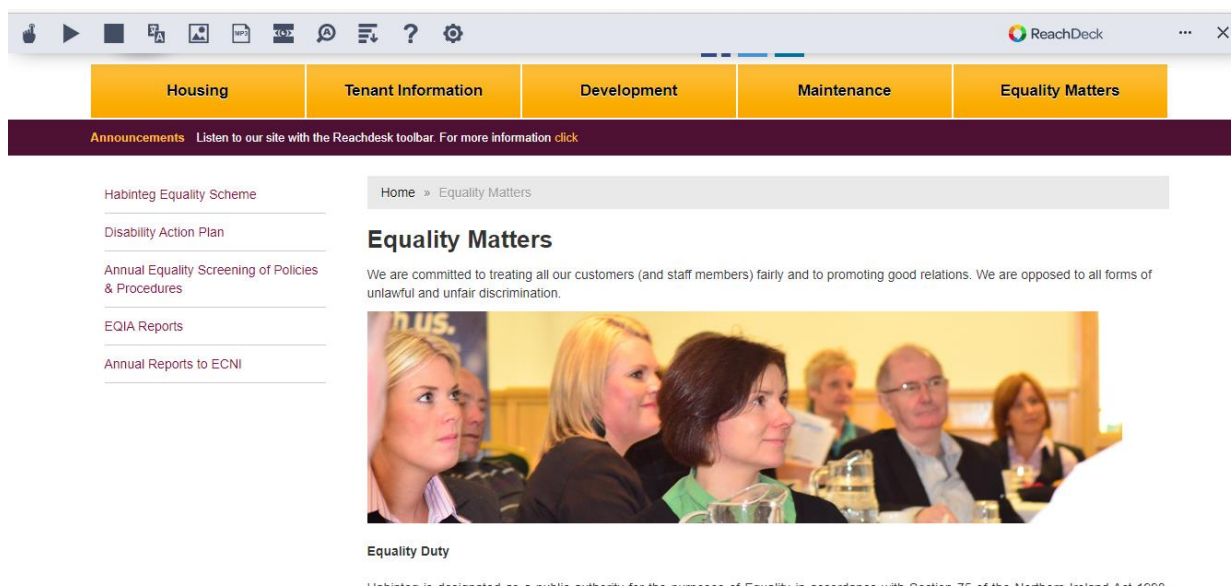
No

☐

Not applicable – no commitment to review

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

<http://www.habinteg-ulster.co.uk/equality-matters>



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

27

- 16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2021-22:

27

Policy consultations conducted with **screening** assessment presented.

0

Policy consultations conducted **with an equality impact assessment (EQIA)** presented.

0	Consultations for an <b>EQIA</b> alone.
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- 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:

**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 2021-22 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 2021-22 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes    ☒ No, already taken place  
☐ No, scheduled to take place later                      ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details:

- 21** In analysing monitoring information gathered, was any action taken to change/review any policies? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes                      ☒ No                      ☐ Not applicable

## PART A

Please provide any details and examples:

- 22** Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2021-22 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 2021-22, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

During the period all new staff as part of their induction completed the accredited Equality and Diversity in the Northern Ireland Workplace eLearning module. This training met objectives outlined in our revised Equality Scheme.

Mandatory online Unconscious Bias training was also rolled out to all employees from March 2021. This training was well received and staff found it helpful to be challenged on their unconscious biases

- 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 2021-22, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:



Monitoring and feedback from customers saw an increase in the number of tenants wishing to be contacted or to contact the Association via text message. This means of communication has significantly increased since the pandemic.

### Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

- 27** How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2021-22?

Insert number here:

0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

### Section 3: Looking Forward

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

The next time the Scheme is scheduled to be revised is in 2023/24 unless legislation or best practice requires this to take place earlier.

- 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. We will, however, amend our Equality Scheme arrangements 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)*

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

## 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:

**12**

Fully achieved

**1**

Partially achieved

**0**

Not achieved

**1.** 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>	NIFHA / Members	Participation in relevant consultation exercises.	Inform policies / strategies and promote equality.
Regional <sup>iv</sup>	None in the period		
Local <sup>v</sup>	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	<p>Equality and Diversity eLearning training module mandatory for all new staff to complete.</p> <p>Mandatory online Unconscious Bias training was also rolled out to all employees from March 2021.</p>	<p>All staff receive the training which includes an assessment at the end to ensure the training was understood.</p> <p>These eLearning modules continue to be part of induction of new staff to the organisation.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
2	<p>Liaising between the Association and the Equality Commission NI through the Association's Quality and Performance Manager particularly through equality updates and training facilitated by the Equality Commission</p>	<p>Updates filtered through to Board and all staff members</p>	<p>Awareness and equality agenda continuing to be embedded in the corporate strategy and actively promoted in the organisation.</p>

PART B

3	Quality and Performance Manager continuing to spearhead the equality agenda and ensure the Association is up to date with the latest initiatives and obligations expected of it.	Quality and Performance 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.
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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	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.	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.	Customers who have used the facility have been able to access information in their preferred language/format.

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2	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, most notably the introduction of Reachdeck in place of the previous Browse aloud feature on the Association website. ReachDeck is an all-in-one digital inclusion solution. It helps organisations make their online content accessible and usable to everyone.	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.	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.
3	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 Habinteg.  Promotes Habinteg's 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

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2	Provide news updates on disability on our internal staff communication platform	Create a culture of awareness and embracing of equality and diversity	Ongoing commitment to promote duties and encourage others to see that this is good practice
	Positive images of people with disabilities in our Habinteg literature, staff and Board structure, correspondence and other promotional materials	Habinteg's Corporate Strategy 2018 - 2023, published and promoted in the period, 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.

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		
2	N/A		

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

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestonesvi / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	N/A			
2	N/A			

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	N/A	
2	N/A	

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. During the period we carried out a full review of our Disability Action Plan and Easy Read version, including holding a 12 month consultation period for all our stakeholders/consultees to participate in. 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 Quality and Performance Manager who will continue to have day-to-day operational responsibility for implementation of the equality and disabilities duties for the Association. The Quality and Performance Manager will report to Senior Managers on a regular basis.

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Senior Managers will have ultimate responsibility for overseeing and implementing administrative arrangements to ensure that the Association complies with its Disability Duties. Evaluation forms are distributed to all staff to complete following all internal training. Feedback from the evaluation forms help to determine future training needs and requirements in these areas.

### (b) Quantitative

Integral to Habinteg's business planning process is the three yearly review 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 Balanced Scorecard business improvement tool also forms a key element of our business planning process. This is reflected at all levels of the strategic planning process. 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		
2	N/A		
3	N/A		



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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 the Association completed a full review of its Disability Action Plan (DAP), including revisions based on Disability legislation and best practice. We went out to consultation for 12 weeks and our DAP and Easy Read was received well with no adverse comments or feedback received. We were complimented on its content and in particular on our Easy Read version.

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 <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. <sup>vi</sup>  
**Milestones** – Please outline what part progress has been made towards the particular measures; even if full output or outcomes/ impact have not been achieved.