

**Equality Commission**

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

**EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**

**Corporate Plan 2019-2022  
Consultative Draft**

**October 2018**

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## Foreword

Equality matters to people in Northern Ireland, and it matters for society as a whole. For our society to flourish and succeed Northern Ireland has to be, and be seen to be, a welcoming place - a society which accommodates difference and diversity, where all our people feel secure and know they have equal access to education, a house and a job.

The Equality Commission plays a vital role in working to secure greater equality of opportunity and in challenging discrimination. We are currently planning what we will prioritise over the coming three year period and look forward to engaging widely on this over the next months.

There is no doubt that, in the twenty years since the Northern Ireland Act 1998 made provision for the establishment of the Equality Commission, there have been some substantial improvements. For example, the scope of legislative protections against discrimination has broadened to include grounds of age and sexual orientation; attitudes to various equality groups are more positive; employment policies and practices have improved and important changes have been made to the way policies are developed and implemented by public authorities.

There is also no doubt that there is much still to be done to secure greater equality for all – across many public policy domains there are both enduring inequalities and in some cases emerging ones. Too often behaviours in the workplace and elsewhere are not conducive to building a more equal and shared society.

The Commission is as committed as ever to use its powers and duties strategically to secure change, as Northern Ireland's equality body. We know we have a central role in the architecture of the protections against unlawful discrimination and support for the promotion of equality of opportunity. We recognise the scope this gives us to challenge discrimination and to champion equality; we are determined to do this independently and robustly, particularly in the current political and economic context. We also recognise the need for us to be creative and innovative about how we work, proactively identifying issues to be tackled and using our powers and duties in a coordinated, integrated way to best effect.

We have identified a number of areas where we think focused attention by the Commission in the coming period may have the greatest impact – and we want to know what you think and where we might create partnerships and synergies going forward.

## **Introduction**

This draft Corporate Plan is a framework document which we will use to guide our work for the next three years.

It will be the first Corporate Plan for which the Commission has explicitly taken an Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) approach to the development of performance measures. We welcomed the adoption of this approach to the Executive's Draft Programme for Government (PfG) with its focus on achieving outcomes that make a positive impact on people's lives and the potential this offers across the public sector to advance equality of opportunity for those who live with and experience inequalities, discrimination and the absence of good relations.

Our objective is to focus the organisation more clearly on the difference that is being made in improving the lives of those we serve, on identifying and measuring those actions which are most likely to effect and sustain change in the longer term.

This will help us to address persistent and deep-rooted inequalities that have been identified over the past decade through the work we have done on mapping the key inequalities and developing policy recommendations across areas such as employment, education, housing and communities and participation in public life.

Central to the development of this plan and our contribution to the delivery of equality outcomes will be the partnerships we maintain and develop with those in the best position to effect change, as well as those individuals and their representative organisations who can also make common cause with us in identifying and working for the changes required.

The final text of our plan, particularly the strategic outcomes and robust performance measures we will focus on, as well as our ongoing reflection on the underlying causes of these key inequalities and evaluating what will work best to tackle them, will reflect the responses and dialogue resulting from this stakeholder consultation and engagement.

This draft Plan sets out a high level framework. It will need further development throughout the period of its existence April 2019 to March 2022 and to be supported by more detailed annual business plans, evaluation, review and communication. Further development of our approach to OBA and our annual business plans will reflect and take account of new developments and changes in the wider environment.

## **Current context**

Ten successive years of budget reductions and consequent reduced staffing levels requires us to prioritise the areas that we can work on to achieve change. Difficult choices have to be made and one of the objectives of consulting on this plan is to review the choices we have made in light of the views of our key stakeholders and potential partners for change over the coming years.

The financial environment is not the only factor that is detrimental to the delivery of our objectives. Even the most cursory scanning of the horizon indicates that the wider political and policy environment within which we are setting out to deliver the new plan is not an easy one.

At present, there is still great uncertainty as to what form the UK's exit from the European Union will take, including as to the impact of this on Northern Ireland. Irrespective of the outcome, the Commission will continue to play an important role in relation to the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations, in terms of the delivery of our statutory responsibilities, and also in relation to the challenge role we will want to play to seeking to ensure the commitment to no regression of hard won equality law/equality rights is delivered in practice by the Government. We will also want to see that any negative effects of Brexit can be mitigated, particularly in respect of – withdrawal of funding, potential for increased racism/racial profiling, and uncertainty for EU workers and their employers in key sectors of the economy.

The situation is, of course, exacerbated by the absence of an Executive, for such a long period since early 2017 and the resultant impact on decision making. Whereas once key aspects of equality legislation in Northern Ireland were leading the way in securing protections, over recent years, particularly with the development of the 2010 Equality Act in the rest of the UK, Northern Ireland's legislation has failed to keep pace with newer developments.

Despite the lack of a functioning devolved administration we will continue to create whatever opportunities we can to press for the legal reform and proactive policy initiatives that are essential to affecting change in the wellbeing outcomes of the most disadvantaged in our society and building a fairer and more equal and shared society that is a key focus of the Executive's draft Programme for Government.

As an Arm's Length Body, operating with specific powers and duties derived from statute, we seek both to support the delivery of the PfG and to exercise our challenge function in relation to achievement of the PfG outcomes. It is positive to note that the experiment with results based accountability and a more outcomes based approach to the Programme for Government is continuing in the absence of an Executive.

It is anticipated, at present, that the political, financial and administrative uncertainty that has marked the past few years will continue into the period of the new Corporate Plan. The economic and political uncertainty surrounding the UK's exit from the European Union is likely to carry on post-Brexit and the uncertainty around the governance of the devolved administration and the impact of this on public finances also seems set to continue.

## **About the Commission**

### **Our commitment**

We are committed to carrying out our functions in a way which will contribute to a more equal society.

### **Our Vision**

Our vision is of a society in Northern Ireland where there is equality for all and a common understanding of the benefits of a more equal society.

### **Our Mission**

Our mission is to improve people's lives through the effective implementation of our statutory responsibilities.

### **Values**

In addition to setting out what we want to achieve, it is also important to say how we want to achieve it. In carrying out our work with and for others, we adhere to the following values:

- we are open, honest and trustworthy;
- we act with integrity, with courage and with impartiality;
- we listen.

### **Principles**

Our work is founded on a number of principles – we ensure that we:

- are accountable for our decisions and actions
- act on a strong evidence base
- provide an expert, relevant and responsive service to all
- respect all those who have dealings with us
- strive for excellence in all we do
- challenge inequalities actively
- are both leaders and partners in driving positive change on equality and good relations.

## **Our powers and duties**

Our powers and duties come from a number of statutes which have been enacted over the last decades, providing protection against discrimination in employment and in the provision of goods, facilities and services on the grounds of age (in employment matters), disability, race, religion and political opinion, sex and sexual orientation. We also have responsibilities arising from the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in respect of the statutory equality and good relations duties which apply to public authorities.

The Commission, with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, has been designated under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons (UNCRC) as the independent mechanism tasked with promoting, protecting and monitoring implementation of UNCRC in Northern Ireland

In general terms, our statutory remit provides that we are to:

- promote equality of opportunity and affirmative action
- work towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination and harassment
- keep relevant legislation under review
- promote good relations between persons of different racial groups and good disability practice
- oversee the effectiveness of statutory equality and good relations duties on public authorities.

This statutory framework enables us to advance equality through a range of mechanisms, for example by providing direct advice and support to individuals and assisting organisations to meet the requirements of equality law; producing publications and running conferences and seminars; undertaking research and education activities; influencing policy makers; assisting individuals with complaints of discrimination under the law; considering complaints alleging failures to comply with an approved Equality Scheme and conducting investigations.

We use a combination of our powers to encourage and to enforce changes to policy, practices and procedures in favour of greater equality and good relations and we will continue to do so. We will consider the increased use of our enforcement powers in the coming period, to tackle persistent inequalities.



## Twenty years on

October 2019 will mark the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, one of the institutions created by the Northern Ireland Act 1998 as a consequence of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement<sup>1</sup> and the preceding White Paper Partnerships for Equality<sup>2</sup>

Although it is clear that Northern Ireland remains a society scarred by political difference and social exclusion and where social disadvantage, inequality and prejudice remains a central fact of too many people's lives, since the Commission's establishment in October 1999, there have been significant achievements across the equality framework:

- extension of protection from unlawful discrimination to the grounds of age and sexual orientation;
- additional powers under disability legislation for the Commission;
- high levels of public awareness in Northern Ireland of the importance of equality issues and having legislation to address discrimination, as well as a high level of recognition of the benefit of having a more equal society;
- while more work needs to be done, there are more positive attitudes to vulnerable and minority groups in our society;
- improved working practices across the public and private sector and important changes to the way policies are developed by public authorities;
- a commitment to placing equality, sharing and respect for diversity at the centre of successive Programmes for Government.

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<sup>1</sup> The Belfast Agreement: Agreement reached in the multi-party talks on Northern Ireland, Cm 3883, HMSO, 1998

<sup>2</sup> White Paper: Partnership for Equality: The Government's proposals for future legislation and policies on Employment Equality in Northern Ireland, Cm 3890, March 1998

In respect of the Commission, there exists:

- a high level of awareness of the protections and responsibilities provided under the current legal framework;
- a high public profile for equality and key areas of the Commission's remit;
- high levels of client/customer awareness of and satisfaction with the services provided by the Commission.

That said, more needs to be done to improve awareness of the Commission and its work, and to increase understanding and confidence in the work we do.

Over the period of our Corporate Plan 2016 -19, we have:

- completed research and developed a series of policy recommendations to address key inequalities in education, employment, housing and communities and public participation;
- obtained a high profile for important legal casework dealing with age discrimination in employment, associative disability discrimination, providing reasonable accommodations for disabled people, sexual orientation and the provision of goods and services, pregnancy and maternity rights, sexual and other harassment;
- developed initiatives and strong engagement around major themes such as 'Expecting Equality', following our pregnancy and maternity at work investigation; 'Every Customer Counts', focusing on disabled people's access to goods and services; and jointly developing a Mental Health Charter addressing mental health in the workplace in partnership with prominent mental health NGOs;
- ensured that scrutiny of the UK under international frameworks such as UNCRPD, CEDAW, and CERD resulted in recommendations to advance equality in Northern Ireland;
- completed and published the results of public and stakeholder surveys into attitudes to minorities and recognised equality groups, attitudes to equality and satisfaction with the Commission and the services it provides;

- given advice to more than 3,300 people each year who believe they may have been discriminated against;
- ensured high levels of compliance with legislative duties on public authorities and registered employers and provided a training and advisory service to assist them to develop good equality processes and procedures;
- determined the issues and recommendations for public authorities to address so that they ensure the effective implementation of their statutory equality and good relations duties in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998
- used our enforcement powers under the statutory equality and good relations duties to challenge a number of public authorities on their compliance with the commitments made in their equality schemes;
- demonstrated high levels of assurance of good corporate governance and attained the Investors in People Gold award.

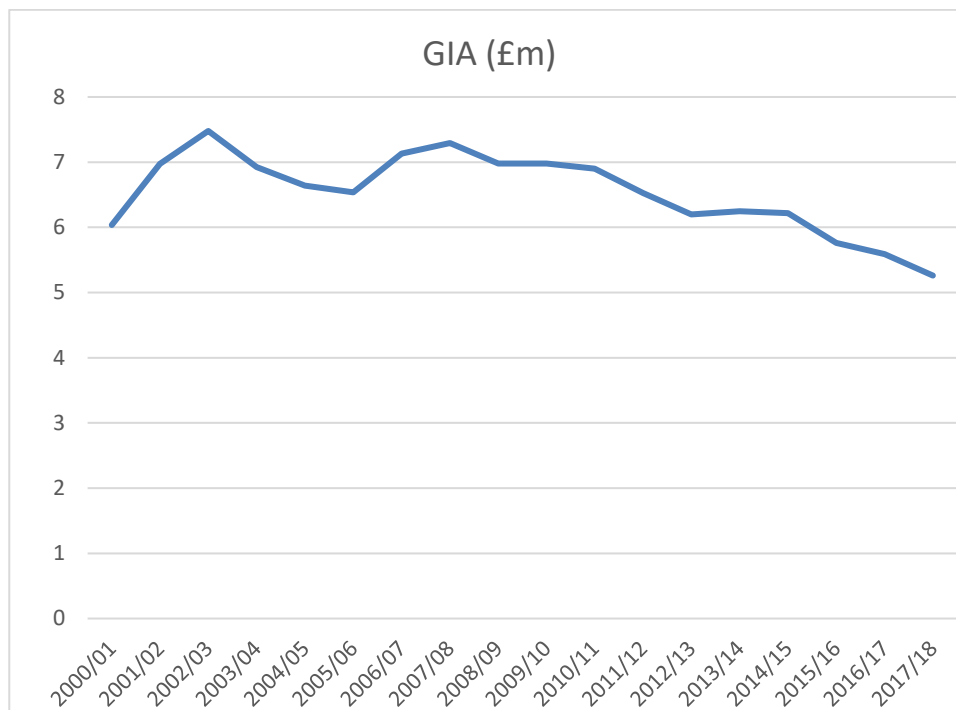
## **Financial context**

It is clear that the last three years has been the most difficult financial period in the Commission's existence. Over the period of the previous Corporate Plan 2015 – 2018 the Commission's total budget allocation fell from £5,755k to £5,041k, a reduction of 12.4%.

Over the period since it was established the Commission's grant-in –aid has fallen by more than one million pounds, from £6,035k, in 2000/1 to the current figure of £4,956k; a reduction of nearly 20%. Ten years ago our budget was £7.3 million; this year it is just over £5m, a decline of 31%.

This reduction has occurred against the background of the extension, largely driven by developments in the European Union, of the Commission's statutory responsibilities under anti-discrimination legislation on grounds of age, disability and sexual orientation. It has also occurred within a context of increasing demand for our services promoting equality, combating discrimination and addressing key inequalities in our society.

The charts below provide an illustration of the scale of budget reductions since 2000-01.



The Commission has worked hard to mitigate the impact of such a scale of reduction, through increasing its efficiency and through sharing its accommodation and sharing its services with other smaller public bodies. This year we anticipate income of £432k from such sharing.

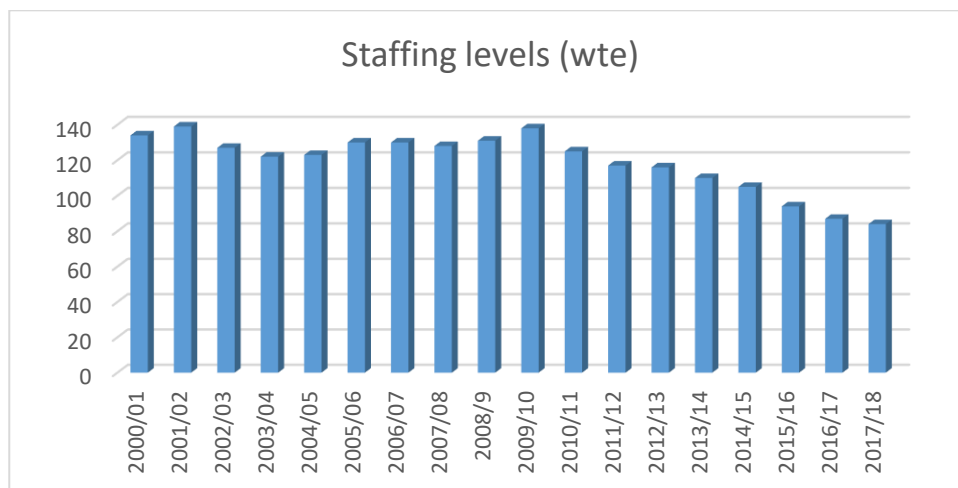
Over the period that we have been sharing our accommodation and services, in most years, the Sponsoring Department has provided for the Commission to retain the benefit of this. Without this flexibility the Commission's operational difficulties would have been even more difficult.

It is clear, however, that the scope for further sharing has reached its limit. During the course of this Plan, in 2021, the Commission will be required to terminate its lease and move to other accommodation and the assumption is that the sharing accommodation and services will no longer be possible. It is unclear at present what the cost of the new accommodation will be. The Commission has been advised to make a planning assumption that it will not be less than the current cost. After staffing, accommodation is the largest area of expenditure for the Commission.

Given the dependence of the Commission on its staffing levels – two-thirds of the Commission’s expenditure goes on staffing – it is no surprise that the budget reductions have had a major impact on the Commission’s staffing levels.

Since 2015, the Commission has had to facilitate the Voluntary Exit of 33 of its staff, in order to live within its reduced budget allocations

At 31 March 2018, the staffing level (full-time equivalent) stood at 85. This is 57 (40.0%) staff less than the staffing complement of 143 that was allocated when the Commission was established.



## **Our strategic priorities 2019 – 2022**

We have identified four Strategic Outcome areas as priorities for our work in the period 2019 to 2022:

- Employment
- Education
- Access and participation
- Mainstreaming and championing equality

Each of these will be linked both to draft Programme for Government (PfG) population outcomes and to our statutory responsibilities, ongoing work programmes and core business objectives.

These priority areas have been identified based on our statutory remit, from evidence of inequality/discrimination arising through our work over recent years on key inequalities and evidence from our day to day work - across legal, advice, policy, research, investigations, communications. In identifying the outcome areas we have also attempted to focus on areas where we believe that, with the use of our powers and in partnership in others, we have the potential to make a difference.

Building agreement on these areas and how refining how progress can be measured will be a crucial task, as we continue to develop the Plan over the coming months. The Commission anticipates further budget reductions over the period. Although difficult choices will have to be made we need to remain ambitious for what can be achieved.

Given the breadth and scope of the Commission's statutory remit, covering multiple equality grounds and duties ranging from the provision of advice, consideration of assistance for complainants to processing fair employment monitoring returns, not all of our work easily falls within the four areas. We have, however, in the following pages set out why we have identified each area and provided some more detail in relation to our thinking to date on what we need to focus on to effect change.

## **Employment**

The drive to improve participation in and progression within employment for everyone in our society is at the heart of our work. Employment equality laws dealing with religion, gender, disability, race, sexual orientation and age and provisions for flexible working and leave have had a considerable effect over the decades since they were introduced and we have seen progress in terms of both access to and participation in employment. However, we know that there remain inequalities in employment that affect disabled people, women, carers, lone parents, those under 24 and those over 50, migrant workers and Irish Travellers. There are also prejudicial attitudes within the workplace affecting these groups as well as LGB and T people and those of different religious beliefs.

Getting a job and progressing within employment is a key driver for both economic and social wellbeing and a key route to improve social mobility and inclusion as well as a route out of poverty. It is important that employment opportunities are open to everyone and the barriers faced by particular groups are reduced.

## **Education**

Education is central to determining an individual's life chances. It provides individuals with opportunities for social and economic mobility and is key to the provision of equality of opportunity. We also know that there are a number of key inequalities in education. This has been an area of focus for us over the recent period, particularly with the publication of Key Inequalities in Education in Northern Ireland identifying inequalities relating to prejudice-based bullying, attainment levels for different equality groups and progression to further and higher education.

Following engagement with stakeholders over the recent period, on priorities for policy recommendations on equality in education, the Commission considers that there is a particular pressing need to secure change in relation to tackling prejudice-based bullying; and to address inequalities in attainment and access experienced by Traveller, Roma and Newcomer children.

We also consider it important to secure progress on a number of areas that we consider have the potential to deliver benefits to children and young people from across the equality categories, including disabled children or those with SEN requirements, and particularly those entitled to free school meals and boys, particularly those from disadvantaged Protestant backgrounds.

There is a need for actions to meet the diverse needs of all children; to put in place a system for learning from successful interventions; and to drive attainment via collaborative approaches involving family and the wider community.

### **Access and participation**

The ability and opportunity to participate fully in public life is key to ensuring more diverse, representative and informed decision making. Inequalities in participation in public life are evident for a number of equality groups, - women, disabled people and individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds - and need to be addressed.

There are issues relating to the built environment, and shared, safe communities and accessible services, particularly for disabled people, older people and those from minority ethnic groups, we wish to see addressed, as well as ensuring equal access to information and digital services for all.

### **Mainstreaming and championing equality**

We aim to build on our work over recent years to encourage more effective implementation of the statutory equality and good relations duties by public authorities, including through the implementation of the PfG by Departments and others and through encouraging adoption of our policy recommendations and recommendations for equality law reform. We will also continue to champion equality and highlight inequalities and to work towards securing higher levels of public support for equality and for law reform.



The next few pages sets out the alignment of our four priority areas with the draft PfG population outcomes and sets out a number of specific strategic outcomes under each area, along with indicators and performance measures that could help us keep a focus on what needs to be achieved.

In doing so, we have used language and approaches derived from the outcomes based accountability process, which is driving the Executive's Programme for Government and being rolled out across the wider public sector.

In the following sections, a **Strategic Outcome** is a condition of wellbeing for one or more equality groups. We have identified a number linked to the outcomes of the PfG. An overall objective is to see similar strategic equality outcomes linked to every PfG outcome across all equality groups; all supported by data development plans and indicators to measure progress.

In this plan we have identified outcomes for some of the most persistent and challenging inequalities; those that, based on our remit, resources and opportunities for effecting change, we believe we should focus on over the next three years.

As can readily be seen these are not outcomes that can be achieved solely, or even mainly, by the Equality Commission. It will be through encouraging others to focus on these and through working in partnership with others that progress can be made.

“By their very nature, these outcomes will be quite broad and multi-faceted in nature, and cannot be achieved by a single organisation, service or programme working in isolation. Rather, its achievement will take sustained and concerted action from many organisations, services and programmes and can only be delivered through effective partnership working across key stakeholders”<sup>3</sup>.

We use **indicators** to describe measures that will help to quantify a change in the strategic outcome over time and provide an insight into what progress is being made. We have suggested indicators that could be used to illustrate where we think change should occur. Change, or the lack of change, in an indicator will help us to review and reassess what needs to be done to effect the outcome.

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<sup>3</sup> Performance Management for Outcomes (NIAO,2018)

**Performance measures** are indications, more directly within our control, of how well we are doing to effect improvements in the conditions of those who, in the course of our daily work, we serve. Throughout the course of the planning period, and beyond, we will be further developing our thinking on identifying those measures that best illustrate where anyone is better off as a direct result of our work.

For each of our four key areas we give an indication of what key strategic outcomes, indicators and performance measures for 2019 – 22 could look like.

Over the coming weeks we will continue to review and refine the indicators and measures. We will also be working on identifying those actions best placed to have a positive effect, including the more traditional action plan approach, as well as developing report cards to demonstrate and communicate progress.

Where we need new or better data to develop our indicators and measures or new information to inform discussion about the causes of inequalities or to assist in identifying solutions, data development and research agendas will be developed.

A key aspect of the overall outcomes based approach is the identification of the partners we will need to work with and support to effect change. These are our first steps in this process and this consultation period will be our first important milestone.

## Outcomes and Indicators 2019 – 2022

<p>Strategic Outcome Area</p> <p>Alignment with Programme for Government Outcomes</p>	<p><b>Employment</b></p> <p>Outcome 3: We have a more equal society</p> <p>Outcome 6: We have more people working in better jobs</p> <p>Outcome 10: We have created a place where people want to live and work, invest and visit.</p>
<p>Strategic outcome</p> <p>Potential indicators</p>	<p><b>More and Better jobs for disabled people</b></p> <p><b>Gap between employment rate for disabled people and others</b></p> <p><b>Gap between economic activity rates for disabled people and others</b></p> <p><b>Percentage of those with a disability in 'better jobs' than five years previously</b></p> <p><b>Positive outcomes from the PfG Better Jobs Index</b></p> <p><b>Numbers/percentages of disabled people in higher level occupations</b></p> <p><b>The numbers of disabled people in part-time employment who would like to work more hours</b></p> <p><b>Disabled people in work's satisfaction with support from Government and employers</b></p>

	<b>Employment levels of disabled people in target workplaces</b>
Possible areas for Performance Measurement	<p>Actions taken by employers in target workplaces to support and retain disabled people in the workplace</p> <p>Legislative and policy changes secured</p> <p>Levels of compliance with Disability (DDA) duties</p> <p>Profile and level of engagement with issue in media and across key decision-takers and opinion formers</p>

Strategic outcome	<b>Increased choice for women in employment</b>
Potential indicators	<p><b>Levels of occupational/industrial segregation by gender</b></p> <p><b>Pay levels of men and women and relative percentages in low-paid work</b></p> <p><b>Numbers / percentages of women in STEM employment and apprenticeships and girls in STEM education</b></p> <p><b>Levels of gender segregation levels in key private and public sector workplaces</b></p>

Possible areas for Performance Measurement	<p>Employers with action plans and initiatives in place in targeted workplaces/sectors and actions to address barriers taken</p> <p>Numbers and percentages of individuals reporting that contact with the Commission helped.</p> <p>Legislative and policy changes secured</p> <p>Evidence of utilisation of Commission-generated research</p> <p>Profile and level of engagement with issue in media and across key decision-takers and opinion formers</p>
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<p>Strategic outcome</p> <p>Potential indicators</p>	<p><b>Freedom from prejudice and harassment at work</b></p> <p><b>Levels of prejudice and harassment in workplaces</b></p> <p><b>Incidences of reported harassment</b></p> <p><b>Levels of prejudicial attitudes in surveyed workplaces</b></p>
Possible areas for Performance Measurement	<p>Profile and level of engagement with issue in media and across key decision-takers and opinion formers</p> <p>Employers with policies for bullying and harassment and positive inclusion in place</p>

	<p>Complainants obtaining or reporting satisfactory outcomes from contact with the Commission</p> <p>Legislative and policy changes secured</p>
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## Key actions and approaches to delivery

- **building networks for change** with partners and other change agents to identify and deliver improvements in the wellbeing of target groups;
- **advisory and enforcement** work with employers/public authorities focusing on encouraging employer practices which facilitate:
  - disabled people’s access to employment and on reasonable adjustments when disabled people access employment;
  - equality for women in the workplace – STEM, tackling low pay, flexible working, managing pregnancy and maternity in workplace;
  - inclusive workplaces for all through policies and practices that effectively address prejudicial attitudes and behaviours.
- **support high levels of compliance** amongst those with responsibilities under the legislation and encourage the extension of good practice, deploying our powers appropriately – from advice and guidance through to compliance and enforcement.
- **providing legal assistance and advice to individuals**, with a particular focus on complaints with the potential to impact on strategic employment indicators, including access to work for disabled people, occupational segregation and combatting harassment.
- **using compliance and enforcement mechanisms** available through Section 75 Northern Ireland Act 1998, Disability Discrimination Act and other relevant legislative provisions, including the strategic use of investigations, for maximum impact, to encourage changes in employer and public authority practices and behaviours.

- **encouraging law reform and policy change:** working with partners and decision makers to develop and secure adoption of recommendations to advance equality and good relations.
- **communicating the importance of equal opportunities in employment** – maintaining awareness and acceptance among employers and service providers of not only what is required but also the importance of equality and good relations to enhance organisational performance.
- **undertaking research** that contributes to our understanding of the issues and provides evidence for addressing gaps in equality data and to facilitate the identification of appropriate interventions.

<p>Strategic Outcome Area</p> <p>Alignment with Programme for Government</p>	<p><b>Education</b></p> <p>Outcome 3: We have a more equal society</p> <p>Outcome 5: We are an innovative, creative society, where people can fulfil their potential;</p> <p>Outcome 12: We give our children and young people the best start in life.</p>
<p>Strategic outcome</p> <p>Potential indicators</p>	<p><b>Tackling educational inequalities</b></p> <p><b>Gaps in attainment levels of target groups narrowed</b></p> <p><b>Improved transitions, evidenced through Year 7 and Year 8 enrolment figures of Traveller and Roma children.</b></p> <p><b>Attainment levels of Traveller, Roma and Newcomer children at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4</b></p> <p><b>% of eligible families / children with access to appropriate, accessible and affordable childcare (by equality group and socio-economic status)</b></p> <p><b>% of eligible families / children with access to early-years provision (by equality group and socio-economic status)</b></p> <p><b>Changes in funding levels and arrangements</b></p>



Possible areas for Performance Measurement	<p>Evidence of influence on outcomes delivered for Traveller, Roma and Newcomer children reported in Intercultural Education Service (IES) reports and on sharing and adoption of successful interventions</p> <p>Level of adoption of Commission and partner recommendations</p> <p>Profile and level of engagement with issue in media and across key decision-takers and opinion formers</p>
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Strategic outcome	<b>Freedom from prejudice based bullying at school</b>
Potential indicators	<p><b>Incidence of prejudice based bullying at school (by equality group)</b></p> <p><b>Pupil willingness to report prejudice based bullying</b></p> <p><b>Level of pupil satisfaction with school's handling of incidents</b></p>
Possible areas for Performance Measurement	<p>Education Training Inspectorate (ETI) reports on school level compliance with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act 2016</p> <p>Numbers of preventative / anti-bullying measures promoted/delivered by Education Authority and others</p>

	<p>Level of adoption of Commission and partner recommendations for changes in policy and to legislation</p> <p>Outcomes from advice, compliance, investigative work and strategic litigation</p> <p>Profile and level of engagement with issue in media and across key decision-takers and opinion formers</p>
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## Key actions and approaches to delivery

- **building networks for change** with partners and other change agents to identify and deliver improvements in the wellbeing of target groups;
- **policy and research initiatives** to build an evidence base and promote and support awareness, understanding, acceptance and adoption of priority recommendations, good practice and interventions for change in equality in education;
- **advisory work** – to support public authorities consideration of the equality issues in the development and implementation of policies relating to key areas identified as priority equality issues;
- **strategic use of section 75 and other investigatory powers;** to intervene in a number of areas of strategic importance where, through deploying the range of our powers, we are likely to secure change and/or challenge practices.
- **providing legal assistance and advice to individuals**, with a particular focus on complaints with the potential to impact on strategic education indicators.
- **delivering high levels of compliance** amongst those with responsibilities under the legislation and encourage the extension of good practice, deploying our powers appropriately – from advice and guidance through to compliance and enforcement.

- **communicating the importance of equal opportunities in education** – maintaining awareness and acceptance among policy makers and education providers of not only what is required but also the importance of equality and good relations to enhance equality in education.

<p>Strategic Outcome Area</p> <p>Alignment with Programme for Government</p>	<p><b>Access and Participation</b></p> <p>Outcome 3: We have a more equal society</p> <p>Outcome 7: We have a safe community where we respect the law, and each other</p> <p>Outcome 8: We care for each other and those in need</p> <p>Outcome 9: We are a shared, welcoming and confident society that respects diversity</p> <p>Outcome 10: We have created a place where people want to live and work, invest and visit</p>
<p>Strategic outcome</p> <p>Potential indicators</p>	<p><b>Participation in Public and Political Life</b></p> <p><b>Participation rates of women, disabled people and minority ethnic communities as candidates/elected representatives and/or in public appointments</b></p>
<p>Possible areas for Performance Measurement</p>	<p>Numbers of Government Departments and other public bodies with responsibilities with action plans and targets in place</p> <p>Achievements against public authority action plan targets</p> <p>Level of adoption of Commission and partner recommendations</p> <p>Profile and level of engagement with issue in media and across key decision-takers and opinion formers</p>

<p>Strategic outcome</p> <p>Potential indicators</p>	<p><b>Shared, safe communities and accessible services and public space</b></p> <p><b>Life satisfaction scores of disabled people</b></p> <p><b>Disabled people’s perceptions of equal access, choice and physical safety</b></p> <p><b>Impact of transition to Personal Independence Payments (PIPS) on access and independence</b></p> <p><b>Relative cost of living for disabled and non-disabled people</b></p> <p><b>Available and appropriate housing for disabled people, Travellers and older people</b></p> <p><b>Numbers in target groups with unmet accommodation needs</b></p> <p><b>Levels of satisfaction of Travellers and disabled people with existing accommodation provision</b></p> <p><b>Reported incidents of hate crime, physical assault and harassment and outcome rates against disabled people, ethnic minorities, LGB&amp;T individuals and older people</b></p>
<p>Possible areas for Performance Measurement</p>	<p>Improvements to scope of the legal framework</p> <p>Level of adoption of Commission recommendations</p>

	Profile and level of engagement with issue in media and across key decision-takers and opinion formers
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<p>Strategic outcome</p> <p>Potential indicators</p>	<p><b>Access to Information and digital services</b></p> <p><b>Levels of web accessibility</b></p> <p><b>Percentage public sector websites meeting accessibility standards</b></p> <p><b>Levels of internet usage by disabled people and older people</b></p> <p><b>Numbers of BSL and ISL interpreters per head of deaf people</b></p> <p><b>Choice in engagement methods for disabled users</b></p>
<p>Possible areas for Performance Measurement</p>	<p>Improvements to scope of legal framework</p> <p>Level of adoption of Commission recommendations</p> <p>Profile and level of engagement with issue in media and across key decision-takers and opinion formers</p>

## Key actions and approaches to delivery

- **building networks for change** with partners and other change agents to identify and deliver improvements in the wellbeing of target groups;
- **policy and research initiatives** to build an evidence base and promote and support awareness, understanding, acceptance and adoption of priority recommendations, good practice and interventions to deliver the strategic outcomes in this area;

- **delivering high levels of compliance** from public authorities with statutory disability duties, ensuring they have a plan in place and that measures are directed effectively to the duties, and amongst those with other responsibilities under the legislation.
- **encouraging the extension of good practice**, deploying our powers appropriately – from advice and guidance through to compliance and enforcement;
- **advisory work** – to support public authorities consideration of the equality issues in the development and implementation of policies, relating to key areas identified as priority equality issues and encouraging improvements in organisational practice;
- **strategic use of section 75 and other investigatory powers**; to intervene in a number of areas of strategic importance where, through deploying the range of our powers, we are likely to secure change and/or challenge practices.
- **providing legal assistance and advice to individuals**, with a particular focus on complaints in strategic outcome areas
- **communicating the importance of equal opportunities in access and participation** – maintaining awareness and acceptance among policy makers and service providers of not only what is required but also the importance of equality and good relations to enhance access and participation.



<p>Strategic Outcome Area</p> <p>Alignment with Programme for Government</p>	<p><b>Mainstreaming and Championing equality</b></p> <p>Outcome 3: We have a more equal society</p> <p>Outcome 9: We are a shared, welcoming and confident society that respects diversity</p> <p>and contributes to other PfG outcomes, subject to the particular performance measures focusing on specific customer groups or equality groups.</p>
<p>Strategic outcome</p>	<p><b>Mainstreaming equality and good relations</b></p>
<p>Possible performance measures</p>	<p>Programme for Government equality indicators developed</p> <p>Addressing data gaps and need for disaggregation by section 75 groups</p> <p>Senior level public support for equality</p> <p>Evidence of equality outcomes influence on resource allocation</p> <p>Level of public support for equality</p> <p>Improvements to scope of legal framework</p> <p>Level of adoption of Commission policy recommendations</p> <p>Profile and level of engagement with issue in media and across key decision-takers and opinion formers</p>

## Key actions and approaches to delivery

- **strategic engagement in research and policy** to encourage further disaggregation, by equality ground, of Programme for Government indicators and address gaps in evidence and data development issues;
- **engagement and influencing** of those in key leadership roles to build senior level support for a more equal society;
- **building networks for change** with partners and other change agents to deliver law reform and mainstreaming of equality in key public policy initiatives;
- **policy and research initiatives** to build the evidence base and promote and support awareness, understanding, acceptance and adoption of priority recommendations and good practice;
- **strategic use of section 75 and other investigation powers** to intervene in a number of areas of strategic importance where, through deploying the range of our powers, we are likely to secure change and/or challenge practices.
- **use the leverage of obligations set out in key international frameworks** to advance key Commission policy positions, including fulfilling our remit with NIHRC, as the independent mechanism under the UNCRPD.
- **advisory work** – to support public authorities effective consideration of the equality issues in the development and implementation of policies relating to key areas identified as priority equality issues;
- **communications and public engagement strategies** to highlight and promote equality for all and support the Commission’s policy and research objectives and initiatives.

## Resourcing the Plan

The Commission is committed to maintain a modern, professional, fit for purpose organisation which provides value for money, while meeting the challenge of reduced funding.

We will:

- maintain effective corporate governance and risk management;
- demonstrate best practice as an employer and, as best we can, invest in our staff to ensure excellent service delivery;
- meet the challenges of financial constraint through continuous improvement and innovation;
- continue to build the Commission's digital platforms.

We will measure how efficient and effective we are as an organisation by measuring our performance in relation to:

- percentage of headline performance measures heading in right direction
- public confidence in the Commission
- levels of public support for equality
- stakeholder and customer satisfaction
- meeting our financial targets
- delivering high standards of governance and internal control.

## Financial Review and forecast

In our planning assumptions we have recognised that the economic climate in relation to public finances will continue to be difficult.

It is not clear what our budget allocation over the period of this Corporate Plan will be. Unlike other parts of the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland Departments have not recently undertaken comprehensive spending reviews, which can forecast funding allocations for future years. The Commission has however been asked to work on the basis of further cuts in 2019/20 and beyond, most recently to estimate the impact of a 4% reduction on the 2018/19 allocation next year. This is shown below:

### Forecast opening budget allocations 2018/20

<b>Budget</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
<b>Resource</b>	5,302	5,090
<b>(receipts)</b>	(346)	(346)
<b>Capital</b>	0	0
<b>Depreciation</b>	85	85
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,041</b>	<b>4,829</b>

This will have a serious and adverse effect on what the Commission can deliver in the coming year and, if reductions continue, on our future work. Although the Commission will strive to mitigate the impact of any further reductions on its service delivery and core responsibilities, it is inevitable that reductions of the scale we have experienced over the last decade will result in further significant reductions in the Commission's staffing levels and impact on our service delivery and ability to fulfil our statutory obligations under the legislation over the course of this planning period.

We will be discussing this Plan and the need for an adequate level of resources to deliver our statutory obligations with our Sponsor Department in the coming period as well as the need to ensure sustainability of work to promote equality and good relations and tackle discrimination in Northern Ireland.