

Monday 5 June 2023

Dear consultee,

The Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts across Northern Ireland have worked collaboratively to produce a draft 5 year regional Equality Action Plan and a draft 5 year regional Disability Action Plan. It is important we ensure that there is regional consistency in how we provide services, how we employ our staff and how we go beyond compliance to promote best practice.

The draft Disability Action Plan outlines the measures, which we collectively will take to fulfil the dual disability duties under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) which are to promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability and, to encourage their full participation in public life.

The draft Equality Action Plan, which is in addition to our Equality Scheme, outlines proactive measures that we will take to address the inequalities identified in a recently conducted audit of Section 75 inequalities in health and social care.

The Trust Equality Leads also convened various engagement sessions during 2022 to ensure that stakeholders were involved from an early stage in the content of the plans. Plans have been produced in Easyread and British Sign Language and Irish Sign Language.

In line with our strategic commitment to these important plans, our respective Executive Teams and Trust Boards have reviewed and approved the draft documents prior to engaging in a formal public consultation process. This consultation commences on Monday 5 June 2023 (finishing on 25 September 2023) for a period of 16 weeks.

We commend these plans to you and would welcome your feedback, to ensure that they are meaningful, relevant and will make a tangible difference to people protected by the S75 legislation and people with a disability. The consultation will be conducted online on Citizenspace (<https://consultations2.nidirect.gov.uk/hsc/hscni-equality-and-disability-action-plans>) or should you wish to seek further information, please contact the Equality Team in your Trust area as detailed in each Plan.

Yours Faithfully

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