

**The Northern Ireland Council for the
Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)**



**Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties
Annual Progress Report 2020-21**

Contact:

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Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:

www.ccea.org.uk

Signature:

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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 2020 and March 2021

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CCEA is a unique educational body in the UK, bringing together the three areas of curriculum, examinations and assessment.

CCEA advises Government on what should be taught in Northern Ireland's schools and monitors standards ensuring that the qualifications and examinations offered by awarding bodies in Northern Ireland are of an appropriate quality and standard.

As a result of the COVID 19 pandemic, public examinations have been cancelled for the last two years. In the absence of examinations, CCEA developed and implemented alternative awarding arrangements in summer 2020 and 2021.

As Northern Ireland's leading awarding body we offer a diverse range of qualifications, such as GCSEs, Entry Level Qualifications and vocationally related qualifications.

CCEA remains committed to actively recognising equality of opportunity, good relations and human rights and it is the organisation's intention that all staff and individuals who use our service be treated fairly and with dignity and respect.

During this reporting period, we have continued to demonstrate our commitment to the promotion of equality and good relations through actions taken forward by our business areas in:

1. Qualifications Development
2. Question Paper Production
3. Exams and Assessment Administration
4. Data Science, Statistics and Research
5. Curriculum and Assessment
6. Human Resources
7. Marketing and Communications and
8. CCEA Regulation.

In summary, CCEA's progress in 2020-21 has been as follows:

1. Qualifications

CCEA Qualifications team has the responsibility for the design, development and delivery of qualifications. In all aspects of this work the Qualifications team operate to ensure equality of opportunity and good relations with all stakeholders. CCEA Qualifications team

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also collaborates with the CCEA Curriculum team to deliver on a number of projects which take into consideration Section 75 and the Equality Scheme. These include Shared Education and links with external agencies such as the NI Hospice, NICCY and NICIE. There were no new qualifications offered in summer 2021.

The COVID-19 virus, subsequent school closures and the cancellation of examinations had a significant impact on the delivery of qualifications in 2020-21. CCEA was required to put in place alternative awarding arrangements and assessment adaptations.

a) Summer 2020: Cancellation of Exams and Alternative Awarding Arrangements

On 19 March 2020, the Minister of Education, Peter Weir MLA, announced that the summer 2020 examination series would be cancelled and that grades would be based on a range of evidence and data, including prior attainment and centre estimated grades. This unprecedented change to examinations required us to adapt the way grades were awarded in summer 2020. Following consultation by the Department of Education with representatives of the teaching profession, CCEA received instruction from the Minister of Education about how to proceed. CCEA advanced work on identification and evaluation of options in light of the Minister's instruction. Options were assessed separately for GCSE, AS and A level examinations but against the same set of principles:

1. *Fairness*: Ensure that candidates receive fair results that enable judgements to be made about progression to further or higher education, employment or other avenues.
2. *Reduced Burden*: Balance the inherent delivery risks with the opportunities afforded by other arrangements, particularly in consideration of the burden on resources.
3. *Future Impact Limitation*: Limit the impact, as far as possible, to the summer 2020 cohorts, to avoid knock-on effects on future examinations and qualifications arrangements; and
4. *Minimize Uncertainty*: Minimize uncertainty for candidates and school leaders, maintaining their confidence in the system.

CCEA provided initial advice to DE and a range of options. The education minister decided on alternative examination awarding, to implement 'Centre assessment and statistical standardization' as per advice from CCEA.

CCEA issued Head of Centre guidance for schools on 20 May 2020 which asked schools to generate, for each subject at GCSE, AS and A level, centre assessment grades for their students, and then to rank order the students within each of those grades. These two key pieces of information were to enable CCEA to issue the fairest possible results. This

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guidance highlighted the requirement that schools exercise objectivity in their decisions to ensure fairness and equality. It also stated that *“other factors should not affect this judgement, including characteristics as set out under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.”*

The Minister of Education subsequently decided in August 2020 to award GCSE, A Level, Vocational and Entry level results in line with the Centre Assessment Grades. Following this the Department of Education requested Deloitte to carry out an independent review of the alternative awarding of CCEA’s 2020 summer GCSE, AS and A level examinations. The review, which was carried out over a six-week period in autumn 2020, analysed CCEA’s awarding methodology including design, implementation, management and communication of the arrangements.

The review acknowledged that without examinations it was always going to be "extremely difficult" to find a balance of maintaining standards and arriving at grade outcomes accepted as fair by teachers, parents and students. In fact, the report states that there was "no perfect solution" and the conclusion was that with no alternative approaches to those identified by CCEA and approved by DE that all involved recognized the need to move forward on the basis of the "least worst" option.

The report also noted CCEA’s "determination and dedication" to provide an approach which would include "fairness, reducing the burden, future impact limitation, minimizing uncertainty, standardization and alignment across UK jurisdictions."

b) Adaptations to Assessments for Summer 2021

In August 2020 the Department of Education commissioned CCEA to look at how best to adapt GCSE, AS and A level qualifications in 2020/21 to take account of current public health requirements, lost learning time and potential further disruption, and to reduce the burden of assessment on students.

To ensure these adaptations were fair and did not adversely impact on equality of opportunity CCEA carried out a number of activities.

(i) During May and June 2020 early ideas for contingency planning for 2020/21 academic year were collated and presented to various stakeholder groups. These included exploring subject specific options with our Subject Advisory Groups (SAGs) The contingency plan mitigations were presented against a number of speculative scenarios. The role of SAGs is to provide advice and guidance to CCEA on subject areas. The membership consists of practicing teachers, industry reps and further/ higher education. The terms of reference include that the membership will have due regard for the need to promote equality of

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opportunity between people of different religious beliefs, political opinions and racial groups.

(ii) On 24 August 2020, CCEA launched a consultation on initial proposals to adapt and/or reduce the assessments students would be required to take in CCEA qualifications for summer 2021. Respondents were asked to outline any potential equality impacts which they felt that CCEA should consider. In total, 3,392 respondents (47.8%) commented on this question. On completion of the exercise, the findings and the associated advice were subsequently shared with the Department of Education for consideration.

(iii) These proposals were also subject to an Equality Screening exercise to ascertain if they could introduce new and/or additional bias to the system of awarding to the normal trends experienced in previous typical examination series. The following questions were recorded as having no or minor impact:

- What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy for each of the Section 75 equality categories? (minor/major/none)
- Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?
- To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? (minor/major/none)
- Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

c) Summer 2021: Cancellation of Exams and Alternative Awarding Arrangements

On 6 January 2021, the Minister of Education, Peter Weir MLA, cancelled all CCEA GCSE, AS and A2 examinations scheduled for 2021. Instead, CCEA was instructed to award grades in summer 2021 based on teacher professional judgements, with moderation.

To ensure this alternative awarding process was fair and did not adversely impact on equality of opportunity CCEA carried out a number of activities:

(i) On 5 March 2021 CCEA published detailed guidance for schools on the process for awarding centre determined grades. This included an overview of the process, the support available for schools and how to use evidence of students' performance to inform Centre Determined Grades. One of the requirements of this process was that centres should produce a centre policy for awarding Centre Determined Grades, summer 2021 and this should include a section on Bias and Discrimination.

The CCEA guidance advised schools that each Centre Determined Grade must be an objective decision based on evidence of "a student's knowledge, understanding and skills

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in relation to the subject. Other factors should not affect this judgement. The law protects people from discrimination on a number of specified characteristics including age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, political opinion, or sexual orientation.” The guidance also reaffirmed that where students have agreed access arrangements or reasonable adjustments (for example a reader or scribe), the centre must make every effort to ensure that these arrangements were in place when assessments were being taken.

(ii) This guidance and message were further disseminated by CCEA through bi-monthly Principal meetings (with an average of 180 principals attending each fortnight) and at an individual subject level through subject guidance documents and subject webinars made available on the CCEA website.

(iii) CCEA provided an optional support package for school leaders through Chartered Institute of Educational Assessors (CIEA) training. The training incorporated modules and supporting materials including guidance on determining the validity of assessments. One relevant module focused on the idea of the validity chain and the importance of applying principles of fairness and avoiding bias, as well as other aspects of validity. It included an exploration of:

- sources of unfairness and bias (situations/contexts, difficulty, presentation and format, language, conditions for assessment, marker preconceptions).
- minimizing bias (how to minimize bias in questions and marking, hidden forms of bias); and
- bias in teacher assessments.

(iv) The alternative awarding process put in place for summer 2021 was also subject to an Equality Screening exercise to ascertain if it could introduce new and/or additional bias to the system of awarding to the normal trends experienced in previous typical examination series. The following questions were recorded as having no or minor impact:

- What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this process for each of the Section 75 equality categories? (minor/major/none)
- Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?
- To what extent is the process likely to impact on good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? (minor/major/none)
- Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

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2.Question Paper Production

Question Paper Production (QPP) carry out a range of modifications to examination material to suit candidates and learners that have special educational needs, visual impairment, and hearing difficulty.

QPP follow JCQ Guidance on the appropriate considerations that are required to ensure examination materials are adapted to suit candidate needs. QPP use registered companies such as BATOD (British Association of Teachers of the Deaf) and Jordanstown School – the Northern Ireland Centre of Excellence for Children who are deaf or visually impaired to review examination material and make recommendations to suit candidate’s needs.

The range of modifications to examination papers for 2020-2021 included:

Modified 18pt (MV18) Modified 24pt (MV24), Modified A3 36pt (MV36) Modified Language (ML), Tactile Diagrams, Braille, Transcripts, Non-interactive PDFs.

QPP also provide translated Irish Medium versions of examination material based on previous entries or on request by Irish Language Centres.

The assessment resources for summer 2021 detailed below were accessed by Centres through a secure portal or available for print on request.

| Resource | Total no assessments provided to Centre |
|----------------------|---|
| Modified Visual 18pt | 363 Assessment Resources (GCE/GCSE) |
| Modified Language | 73 Assessment Resources required |
| A3 36pt | 1 candidate request – delivered to Centre (23 assessment resources) |
| Tactile Diagrams | 1 candidate request – delivered to Centre |
| Braille Resources | 1 candidate request – delivered to Centre |
| Irish Medium | 156 Assessment Resources |

3.Exams and Assessment Administration

CCEA employs six staff within the Centre Support team to manage special requirements for examinations, in line with the Joint Council for Qualifications. This ensures that all candidates are treated fairly. All candidates for examinations who have a disability are given suitable access arrangements, reasonable adjustment and/or special consideration

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to ensure that they can sit the exam and do not have any unnecessary barriers to accessing the qualification or aspects of it.

4.Data Science, Statistics and Research

All aspects of CCEA research are designed and implemented with the principles of good relations and equality of opportunity in mind. This includes the design of the consultation, gathering of data and in the analysis and use of the collected data.

The Data Science, Statistics & Research team adhere to a Research Code of Practice which includes the Key Principle:

Research participants must be respected. Planning, conducting, and reporting of research takes account of cultural, religious, racial, gender, age, and other relevant differences amongst those participating in the research.

The research principles involve the following research practice:

Inclusiveness

- Consultation will encourage the participation of people affected by or interested in a policy or decision proposed by CCEA.
- Affected and interested parties will be given equal opportunity to participate in the consultation.
- Affected groups and interested parties can select their own representative to work with CCEA.
- Consultation will be sensitive to the needs of groups to maximize their ability to contribute.

CCEA will actively seek out stakeholders for consultation. When engaging in research with external stakeholders, in particular schools, all primary and post-primary centres (depending on the focus of the research) are approached to take part; this includes all Integrated Schools in Northern Ireland.

Additionally, research/evaluation/consultations ask for the demographic breakdown of respondents to help identify and understand differences in responses.

CCEA includes the following common demographic questions (where appropriate) in all research to ensure data is representative:

- Respondent type.
- Management type.

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- School type; and
- School size.

In 2020/21, CCEA carried out fewer consultations than usual due to the pandemic. Research in schools was limited due to school closures but where it did take place, it was essential that all sectors were given the opportunity to participate.

A total of four research projects were conducted in 2020/21, providing opportunities for stakeholders to participate with CCEA decisions and share their views. CCEA received 7,120 individual responses to research consultations in 2020/21. A breakdown is included in the table below, which illustrates that feedback was obtained from a diverse range of stakeholders during the year.

| Respondent type | Frequency | Percent |
|---|-----------|---------|
| Civil Servant / Public Sector Staff | 11 | 0.2% |
| College of Further Education Staff | 17 | 0.2% |
| Employer | 7 | 0.1% |
| Head of Department | 1033 | 14.5% |
| Other | 74 | 1.0% |
| Parent | 1516 | 21.3% |
| Principal / Vice Principal | 69 | 1.0% |
| Student | 2889 | 40.6% |
| Teacher | 1494 | 21.0% |
| Training Organization Staff | 3 | 0.0% |
| University / Higher Education Institute Staff | 7 | 0.1% |
| Total | 7120 | 100.0% |

Source: CCEA Internal Statistics (2020/2021)

5. Curriculum and Assessment

The Curriculum and Assessment business unit continue to ensure good relations and equality of opportunity are considered across all workstreams.

We are committed to ensuring that all pupils have access to the curriculum and assessment arrangements. The advice we give and support we develop recognises the needs of all young people, including in relation to Special Educational Needs, Irish Medium and Shared Education.

Specifically for 2020/21 examples of core activities which demonstrate this include:

Special Educational Needs

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CCEA have carried out a review of the Quest¹ and Q Skills² assessment frameworks and published the report of the consultation, <https://ccea.org.uk/learning-resources/prerequisite-skills-q-skills>. Updates have been undertaken to the recording software for both frameworks and will be completed by August 2021. An expanded online training course for Q Skills has also been developed in accordance with the feedback received from teachers.

A review of CCEA's curriculum resources for Learning for Life and Work has been carried out. A planned update of these resources has begun and will be rolled out over 2020/21. CCEA also collaborated with the Education Authority and other bodies to provide resources for home schooling during lockdown and also for blended learning approaches. This approach has expanded to ensure a joined-up approach to CCEA's educational provision for SEN.

Irish Medium

In line with its statutory remit CCEA have a significant programme of work underway in relation to Irish Medium.

CCEA ensure that the needs of the sector are known through ongoing engagement with the sector on individual basis and also through the CCEA Irish Medium Programme Board, which includes representation from across the IM education sector.

In addition to translating examination materials and translating and adapting curricular resources for use in IM schools, The Irish Medium programme develops more bespoke curricular resources based on needs analysis with the sector. Examples include the COGG interactive maths project, the KS4 Gaeilge project and the woyork which has commenced on the development of the Irish medium Language framework.

During the Covid pandemic, CCEA produced a suite of resources for schools to support home learning which focused on preserving the core curriculum and on providing support for language development which was affected by the series of lockdowns.

¹ *Quest for learning* is a guidance and assessment resource to support teachers and classroom assistants of learners with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), providing ideas for and pathways to learning.

² The Prerequisite Skills, or more commonly known as Q Skills, are an assessment resource to support teachers and classroom assistants. The skills described in the resource build towards Level 1 in the Cross-Curricular Skills of Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT. The

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CCEA has made 2020 and 2021 alternative assessment arrangement messages targetted at students available in Irish. This includes a student resource relating to well-being, targetted at but not exclusively for examination age students.

CCEA appointed a senior professional associate as specified link for the IM sector to support their development of a policy for centre determined grades for 2021 and to seek feedback on any specific IM sector issues from the disruption to schools as a result of the pandemic.

CCEA provide a translation service for BTEC qualifications to support the IM sector access to a broader range of qualifications. The future availability of these qualifications to the IM sector is coming to an end and CCEA have been proactive in working with IM schools, CCEA Regulation and other AOs to confirm alternative suitable provision.

Irish Medium Curriculum projects delivered during 2020/21 include:

Cogg Interactive maths project: this project comprises development of a bank of online Low Threshold High Ceiling Maths activities which engage primary pupils in suitably challenging mathematical problem-solving and investigative work. These activities are tailored to address needs of IM settings with emphasis not only on application of mathematical skills but with a focus to develop pupils' mathematical language through the medium of Irish and ability to communicate about their work.

Irish-Medium Primary Language Framework (Lines of Development). Irish-Medium primary schools currently function with no specific language framework to guide language planning and promote consistency in language and literacy development throughout the sector. The need for such a structured and comprehensive approach to language planning has been consistently highlighted.

Key Stage 4 Gaeilge Textbook

CCEA has recruited a supplier to develop the textbook. The key deliverables to schools will be as follows:

- Textbook for IM schools for each of years 11 and 12, accompanied by a course website holding supporting audio, video and other assets, and teacher guides.
- The writer(s) will be guided by the extension from the *Snas agus Blas* KS3 Language framework into KS4. The framework is derived from the Irish language structures listed in the GCSE Gaeilge specification.
- Literature, literary appreciation, themes, and skills will be included in the material.

All of the support provided by CCEA supports equality and capacity building across the education sector, ensuring that Irish medium schools have access to essential resources. This contributes to better relations between Irish medium, government bodies and the wider educational arena.

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Shared Education

The range of CCEA support materials for Shared Education is available at the following link: <https://ccea.org.uk/learning-resources/supporting-shared-education>

Primary

Due to Covid-19 school closures, CCEA was not able to carry out some of its planned work to support Shared Education, for example, CCEA was not able to carry out its planned training workshops for primary teachers in the Shared Education Partnership. However, as planned, the work to develop shared education resources for Key Stage 2 continued and a new resource called Placenames in Northern Ireland will be published in 2021. The original lessons have also been adapted to offer opportunities for shared learning which can be delivered either face-to-face or online.

Two new multimedia case studies were developed and published in relation to post-primary partnership in North Belfast and a primary partnership in a small rural town.

There is now a specific section on the CCEA website showing how existing CCEA resources can be used to promote an understanding of different cultural traditions in Northern Ireland through shared education partnership working.

Post-Primary

Due to the significant disruption to schools because of COVID-19 and the cancellation of all examinations on 6 January 2021, CCEA has produced a significant amount of support for schools to arrive at centre determined grades for all qualifications in Summer 2021. This has been underpinned by ongoing feedback from school leaders, Subject Advisory Groups and the conduct of equality impact assessments to ensure this process and support meets the needs of the following aspects of Shared Education:

- meeting the needs of learners from all Section 75 categories and socio-economic status;
- involving schools and other education providers of differing ownership etc; and
- delivering educational benefits to learners, promotes efficient and effective use of resources, and promotes equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion.

Curriculum Resources/Projects

In line with its remit, CCEA continued to provide timely resources to support the Curriculum in 2021/2021. A range of examples are provided below.

Publication of Your Money Matters textbook for NI (endorsed by CCEA). This resource was first released in England and endorsed by Martin Lewis

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Online resources developed and published to ‘Help your child with Maths’ . The first resource on subtraction was well received by schools (acknowledged by e-mails)

CCEA has developed a ***Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)*** ‘hub’ in response to a request from the Department of Education to support the delivery of RSE in schools. It will facilitate easy access to a range of new resources which will provide age-appropriate support and guidance to schools in their delivery of RSE specifically in relation to the following topics:

- consent, what it means and its importance.
- developments in contraception.
- domestic and sexual violence and abuse.
- healthy positive sexual expression and relationships.
- LGBTQ+ matters.
- Safe use of the Internet.
- Social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem.
- Menstrual wellbeing the RSE resources.
- Team parenting.

The above resources have been piloted in schools and shared with stakeholders. When published later this year, the resources will help children and young people acquire knowledge, understanding and skills, and develop attitudes, beliefs and values about sexual identity, relationships and intimacy. They will support the delivery of effective RSE, taught in a sensitive and inclusive manner, which will encourage children and young people to value themselves as individuals and respect others and to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives.

In addition, CCEA has produced a progression framework for RSE which sets out what must be covered at each key stage. This has the potential to introduce consistency and clarity for RSE in NI schools.

NI@100 Centenary Project

This provides a unique suite of educational resources to support teaching and learning about the period leading up to Partition and the creation of Northern Ireland in 1921.

The project was funded by the Department of Education and its aim is to educate and inform, to promote a greater understanding of our shared history, generating debate on and analysis of all the contributory factors and outcomes. There are 2 aspects to the project. Firstly, it features an exciting suite of 6 units for Key Stage 3 pupils. These explore events from the Plantation of Ulster in the 1600s, through to the Home Rule crisis in 1914, the Easter Rising, elections in 1918, the Government of Ireland Act and the creation of Northern Ireland in 1921, and finally the disbandment of the Boundary Commission in 1925. The site

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depicts the rise of unionism and nationalism in Ireland during the 19th and early 20th centuries, and the roles and policies of politicians of the day, providing a wealth of learning opportunities for young people in Northern Ireland.

Secondly, it provides a superbly illustrated timeline of Northern Ireland's 100 "Greats", drawn from Science, the Arts, Music, Literature, Sports, Culture, Society, Innovation, and Industry, reflecting Northern Ireland's major contributions to the global stage since 1921.

The resource is designed to serve shared education and build deeper mutual understanding of our shared history in Northern Ireland, with a view to promoting good relations.

Active Citizenship

CCEA have developed a suite of resources to support teaching and learning as follows:

- A video of scripted monologues based on the teenage characters in the film "Pushed" in collaboration with Cinemagic.
- A training video for non-specialist drama teachers has also been created which looks at how to use drama strategies to explore sensitive issues.
- The writer/director created scripted versions of the monologues and a stage version of the film 'Pushed' which will accompany the film footage to be placed on the Active Citizenship Using film site.
- An accompanying lesson has been created to help teachers deliver the sensitive issues in the monologue version of 'Pushed.'
- The final version of the SEN (Inclusion) resources
- Teachers were asked to evaluate the resources and all agreed that the resources provide effective support for young people in understanding the impact of illegal activities such as drugs, paramilitarism and the importance of self esteem and resilience in addressing life's problems. The resources continue the theme of active citizenship and promote understanding of democracy, good citizenship, with a particular emphasis on the difficulties experienced during Covid 19.

Emotional Health and Wellbeing

CCEA have developed guidance on Wellbeing for both primary and post-primary schools and have developed a website as a repository of support for schools. The resource will be launched later this year and will include webinars and support events designed to enable schools to establish successful wellbeing policy across schools.

Supporting Curriculum and Assessment 2020/21: the Covid Pandemic

At the beginning of remote learning, CCEA created a bespoke section of the CCEA website called *Supporting Curriculum and Assessment*, available at the following link:

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<https://ccea.org.uk/learning-resources/supporting-curriculum-and-assessment-202021> .

The purpose of the section was to provide support for parents, teachers and pupils on the curriculum and assessment by providing links and information to useful materials. A Marketing and Communication strategy was launched to share and publicize these resources via social media and through the Primary E-Newsletter. CCEA also used the information from web analytics to monitor the traffic and use of the web area to inform areas for future support.

CCEA collaborated with the Education Authority (EA) in their development of the DENI *Supporting Learning* programme. CCEA supported the development of the EA *Supporting Learning* area of their website, including:

- developing of a leaflet for parents of pupils in KS3;
- participating in the EA webinar *Outdoor Learning* which was developed to support learning and teaching outside; and
- providing advice and guidance to BBCNI on their regional support programmes for home learning.

In response to Covid 19, CCEA engaged in specific projects to address emerging needs of schools following disruption due to Covid 19. CCEA developed a suite of resources to support core learning and key curriculum areas. These focused on global themes such as Black Lives Matter, and contemporary themes including Living History, Fast Fashion and Social Media. The resources served to promote connected learning and addressed the core curriculum during the disruption. The contemporary themes are significant for young people and the resources encouraged learners to consider the impact of the pandemic locally and also globally.

Special Educational Needs

The report of the Quest and Q Skills assessment frameworks was shared with stakeholders this year. Following this review, CCEA updated the Quest and Q Skills recording software in line with stakeholder feedback.

CCEA have also developed an in-depth online teacher professional training course on Assessment and Q Skills. The course has four modules: Thinking about Assessment; What are the Q Skills? Q Skills Recording Software; and Reviewing your Assessment Practice.

A review of the LLW teaching units for learners with severe and moderate learning difficulties has also been undertaken. Teacher feedback will be sought on the updated units. These units will be published on the CCEA website next financial year.

6. Human Resources

Human Resources continue to ensure equality of opportunity and good relations across the organization.

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A key theme in CCEA's People Strategy is the promotion of equality and diversity including the aim to promote equality inclusion and diversity as priority in all CCEA's services.

During this period, Human Resources continued to:

- Implement CCEA's Equality Scheme, Audit of Inequalities and Associated Action Plan.
- Review/develop policies in line with the Equality Scheme. Adoption, Child Protection, Code of Ethics, Disciplinary, Dress Code, Grievance, Maternity, Paternity and Redundancy policies reviewed and screened.
- Perform Equality monitoring for all staff.
- Review staff exit questionnaires/interviews.
- Provide Article 55 returns.
- Deliver an Employee Wellbeing Programme of events, which enables staff to avail themselves of support/advice for welfare issues they may be facing inside and outside of work.
- Employed a Safe Resourcing Manager to deal with COVID related issues.
- Deliver training through the Equality/Diversity and Disability in the Workplace eLearning course to all staff.

7. Marketing and Communications

Our learners are central to everything that we do. Therefore, when the education minister announced the cancellation of examinations in 2020 and 2021, it was important that CCEA's communications were easily accessible and promoted a clear understanding for all audiences, in particular students and parents.

Throughout CCEA's summer 2020 and summer 2021 communication campaigns, we used a multi-channel approach to reach our audience, which included:

- Dedicated web areas, easily accessible from the homepage of CCEA's website.
- 2 Videos on the summer 2020 and summer 2021 awarding processes translated into British and Irish sign language, accompanied by English and Irish translated transcripts.
- 7 Podcasts, translated into British and Irish sign language, accompanied by English and Irish translated transcripts, taking learners through 2020 awarding arrangements for A2, AS, GCSE, Entry Level, Vocational, Year 11 and the Post-Results Service.
- 5 English and Irish translated Student and Parent online (downloadable) information guides.

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- 2 English and Irish translated infographics; and
- A social media campaign with English and Irish translations.

This key activity will continue throughout our communications approach in 2021/22.

8. CCEA Regulation

CCEA Regulation is responsible for the regulation of qualifications taken by learners in Northern Ireland (NI), as set out in the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998. In fulfilling this responsibility, CCEA Regulation provides advice and guidance to the Department of Education (DE) on general qualifications and to the Department for the Economy (DfE) on vocational (professional and technical) qualifications. CCEA Regulation also works with its fellow regulators in England and Wales (Ofqual and Qualifications Wales respectively) to ensure comparability of GCE A/AS level and GCSE standards across jurisdictions and to ensure portability of qualifications taken by learners in Northern Ireland.

Regulatory activities relating to the equality scheme and disability action plan: 2020-2021

1. Recognition of awarding organisations

CCEA Regulation is responsible for granting recognition to awarding organisations offering general and vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland, and for monitoring the compliance of recognised awarding organisations with criteria and conditions published in a key regulatory document: The *General Conditions of Recognition*. Conditions set out in the *General Conditions of Recognition* which relate to equality legislation include:

Condition A1: Suitability for continuing recognition

A1.1 An awarding organisation must not, by means of any act or omission which has or is likely to have an Adverse Effect, render itself unsuitable to continue to be recognised for the award of a relevant qualification.

A1.2 For the purposes of Condition A1.1 an act or omission may include one which results in the awarding organisation –

(b) being held by a court or any professional, regulatory, or government body to have breached any provision of current legislation in Northern Ireland regarding Competition Law, Equalities Law, or Data Protection Law

Condition B1: The role of the Responsible Officer

PART A – Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Scheme

Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice

B1.3 An awarding organisation must ensure that its Responsible Officer serves as the authoritative point of contact for CCEA Regulation in relation to all activities undertaken by the awarding organisation which are of interest to CCEA Regulation in accordance with the Order, including in particular –

(e) the accessibility of qualifications it makes available, including its compliance with Equalities Law.

Condition D2: Accessibility of qualifications

D2.1 An awarding organisation must ensure that it complies with the requirements of Equalities Law in relation to each of the qualifications which it makes available.

D2.2 An awarding organisation must monitor qualifications which it makes available for any feature which could disadvantage a group of Learners who share a particular Characteristic.

D2.3 Where an awarding organisation has identified such a feature, it must –

- (a) remove any disadvantage which is unjustifiable, and
- (b) maintain a record of any disadvantage which it believes to be justifiable, setting out the reasons why in its opinion the disadvantage is justifiable.

Condition G6: Arrangements for Reasonable Adjustments

G6.1 An awarding organisation must, in accordance with Equalities Law, have in place clear arrangements for making Reasonable Adjustments in relation to qualifications which it makes available.

G6.2 An awarding organisation must publish details of its arrangements for making Reasonable Adjustments, which must include details as to –

- (a) how a Learner qualifies for a Reasonable Adjustment, and
- (b) what Reasonable Adjustment will be made.

In the period April 2020 – 2021, CCEA Regulation granted recognition to three awarding organisations and monitored all eighty-nine already recognised awarding organisations for ongoing compliance with the *General Conditions of Regulations*.

2. Screening of CCEA policies

During the period April 2020-2021, the education and qualifications systems were subject to changes in government policy in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These changes to government policy required CCEA to undertake adaptations to existing CCEA policies, the creation of new CCEA policies and public consultations. Where such undertakings have been required, CCEA Regulation has conducted equalities screening exercises to assess the impact on Section 75 groups. The screening exercises conducted during the period April 2020-2021 were:

PART A – Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Scheme

Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice

- Outcomes of consultation on assessment arrangements for GCSE, AS and A level qualifications in summer 2021
- Outcomes of consultation on proposed changes to CCEA Entry Level, vocationally related and Occupational Studies qualifications for January and summer 2021.
- Centre professional judgement – implementation proposal and guidance for summer 2021.
- CCEA GCSE, AS and A level awarding summer 2021: alternative arrangements – process for heads of centre.
- Equality screening exercise: proposed CCEA post results framework.
- Equality screening exercise: CCEA advice to the Department of Education on 2022 awarding.

The reports associated with each of these screening exercises are available at:

<https://ccea.org.uk/about/policies/equality/screening-exercises#section-13342>

3. European related work

European qualifications development work is undertaken by CCEA Regulation on behalf of DfE. CCEA Regulation is the designated NI National Co-ordination Point (NCP) for the implementation of several related European initiatives to support lifelong learning and mobility. Work in this area is undertaken jointly with designated NCPs in England, Scotland and Wales.

4. Irish medium education

CCEA Regulation has engaged with awarding organisations in an ongoing effort to secure provision of vocational and technical qualifications in the medium of Irish for use by the Irish medium sector.

PART A

- 2** Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2020-21 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

Please refer to appendix.

PART A

3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2020-21 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

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

Please provide any details and examples:

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:

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):*

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 2020-21 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:

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2020-21 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:

6 In the 2020-21 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

PART A

- No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2020-21 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2020-21 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed: Actions ongoing: Actions to commence:

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

Equality Action Plan 2021/22-following establishment of Equality Forum full review to be progressed before the end of the year in consultation with our representative from the EC.

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2020-21 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2020-21 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)

PART A

- 10** Following the initial notification of consultations, a targeted approach was taken – and consultation with those for whom the issue was of particular relevance: *(tick one box only)*

All the time Sometimes Never

- 11** Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2020-21 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:

Refer Part A -4 Research & Statistics

- 12** In the 2020-21 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)*:

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:

As per question 11

- 13** Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2020-21 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

PART A

Refer Part A- 5. Curriculum and Assessment

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2020-21 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)

[Insert link to any web pages where screening templates and/or other reports associated with Equality Scheme commitments are published]

<https://ceea.org.uk/about/policies/equality/screening-exercises>

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

| |
|----|
| 12 |
|----|

16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2020-21:

| | |
|---|--|
| 0 | Policy consultations conducted with screening assessment presented. |
| 0 | Policy consultations conducted with an equality impact assessment (EQIA) presented. |
| 0 | Consultations for an EQIA alone. |

17 Please provide details of the **main consultations** conducted on an assessment (as described above) or other matters relevant to the Section 75 duties:

N/A

18 Were any screening decisions (or equivalent initial assessments of relevance) reviewed following concerns raised by consultees? (*tick one box only*)

PART A

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 2020-21 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 2020-21 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes No, already taken place
 No, scheduled to take place at a later date Not applicable

Please provide any details:

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

Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

22 Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2020-21 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:

As detailed in section 1

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 2020-21, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

All members of the R&S staff are trained in respect of consultation with children and young people and Hard to Reach/Engage groups and regularly attend training. The R&S manager is accredited with Certificate of Professional Development in Consultation from the Consultation Institute and remaining members are undertaking regular training to achieve this certification.

Accreditation involves

The Institute's Certificate of Professional Development recognises an individual's commitment to enhancing his/her skills and knowledge in consultation services and techniques and includes Equality Law for public engagement.

- 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:

- CCEA maintained IIP silver status in 2019 which recognised for the continuous improvement of staff through personal and professional development.
- Training is delivered through a number of avenues. Mandatory Equality/Diversity and Disability training was delivered in November 2020 through eLearning platform.

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

26

CCEA monitors the uptake of services for Special Needs as a standard procedure for the academic year.

The JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments Regulations; and the JCQ Guide to the Special Consideration Process are available on both the JCQ website and the CCEA website. Centres are advised by JCQ (acting on behalf of CCEA) when these are updated.

CCEA's Centre Support Team provide advice and guidance on disability (whether temporary at the time of the examination or long term) to centres. The team provide this by phone (direct lines by staff) and email: centresupport@ccea.org.uk.

Face to face updates is also provided annually at the Examination Officer roadshows held in the autumn/ winter term.

Requests for Access Arrangements during the reporting period were completed accurately and on time.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

27 How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2020-21?

Insert number here:

| |
|---|
| 1 |
|---|

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

- Equality training and awareness for all employees facilitated through eLearning.
- Screening of new and revised policies.
- Providing advice and support to managers.

Section 3: Looking Forward

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

2021/22

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)*

Possible changes in examining/awarding due to the impact of COVID.

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

PART A

- 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:

16

Fully achieved

0

Partially achieved

1

Not achieved

2. Please outline below details on all actions that have been fully achieved in the reporting period.

2 (a) Please highlight what **public life measures** have been achieved to encourage disabled people to participate in public life at National, Regional and Local levels:

| Level | Public Life Action Measures | Outputs ⁱ | Outcomes / Impact ⁱⁱ |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|
| National ⁱⁱⁱ | CCEA is a non-departmental public body and therefore has limited involvement in public life appointments. CCEA has no power to appoint board members to its board. | SEN is covered in the development of the curriculum and assessment in schools | SEN is incorporated into the NI Curriculum as an integral part of the curriculum and assessment arrangements. All curriculums can be accessed by learners. |
| Regional ^{iv} | CCEA employs 2 Special Education Needs (SEN) managers within the Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting teams. CCEA employs 1 Special Education | CCEA develop examinations which are suitable for all levels of ability, range of candidate and with different types of assessment that can be accessed by all (including SEN candidates). | All learners can achieve a qualification. All candidates for examinations who have a disability are given suitable access arrangements, reasonable adjustment and/or special consideration to ensure |

PART B

| Level | Public Life Action Measures | Outputs ⁱ | Outcomes / Impact ⁱⁱ |
|--------------------|--|---|---|
| | <p>Manager within Qualifications Team</p> <p>CCEA employs 6 staff within the Centre and Examiner Support Department to deal with Special requirements for examinations.</p> | <p>All candidates are treated fairly and in accordance with the CCEA Regulator Guideline and JCQ and SENDO regulations.</p> | <p>that they can sit the exam and are not put at a disadvantage.</p> |
| Local ^v | <p>CCEA adheres to the regulations laid down by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order with respect to applicants and employees.</p> <p>CCEA continues to be a member of the Employers for Disability.</p> | <p>CCEA consults with applicants, individual employees with disabilities and their line managers to ensure that the appropriate reasonable adjustments are carried out.</p> <p>CCEA provides information and asks for advice where necessary.</p> | <p>Recruitment processes will be fair and applicants with a disability will not be at a disadvantage; current employees are facilitated to ensure they can continue to work for CCEA. CCEA has a professional network of over 400 employers within NI to share and receive ideas on best practice as well as gain access to training and advice. CCEA staff can increase their expertise, knowledge and skills.</p> |

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

| | Training Action Measures | Outputs | Outcome / Impact |
|---|--------------------------|---------|------------------|
| 1 | Refer Section A 24 & 25 | | |

PART B

| | Training Action Measures | Outputs | Outcome / Impact |
|---|--------------------------|---------|------------------|
| | | | |
| 2 | | | |
| | | | |

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 | CCEA consults with applicants to determine if any reasonable adjustments are required through the recruitment process | Individual measures are taken to ensure that candidates can take part in the recruitment process on a case-by-case basis. | Reasonable adjustments are carried out as appropriate and to ensure candidates could participate in the application and interview process. |
| 2 | New employees provided with a Disability Questionnaire | Reasonable adjustments can be discussed and recorded, and action taken to facilitate as appropriate. Pre-employment OH questionnaire with new employee provides advice on reasonable adjustments required | All staff can confidentially report a disability which can be catered for to allow them to carry out the duties of the post in an equitable way to a person with no disability and that staff |
| 3 | CCEA Disability Action Plan and Policy-reviewed and supported by the EC. | Available to read on CCEA website | All interested parties can review and read as necessary. |

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

PART B

| | Encourage others Action Measures | Outputs | Outcome / Impact |
|---|--|--|---|
| 1 | Equality/Diversity and Disability in the Workplace eLearning course to all staff. | This training is compulsory. Currently provided in November 2020 through CAL eLearning. | General requirements throughout the organisation of the requirements to ensure equality for all, including people with disabilities |
| 2 | CCEA staff that are required to sit on panels must undergo training to include equal opportunities and disability discrimination is covered. | Recruitment panels are trained in Equal Opportunities. | Minimise the risk of unfair treatment. |
| 3 | All staff briefed on CCEA equality procedures and policies. | New employees are aware of the culture of the organisation from the day they start. | New employees in their working environment are aware of issues regarding equality |
| 4 | Review short- and long-term absences. | Absence reported on a monthly basis. Return to work and absence review meetings with staff are conducted in line with policy. | Staff with long term and short-term illnesses who develop disabilities are offered flexible working, reasonable adjustments, completion of PEEPs and Occupational Health referrals. CCEA also offers Inspire confidentiality to all employees |
| 5 | Opportunities for work for disabled persons. | Several admin assistants carried out short term temporary posts. | Greater awareness in the organisation and employees gained confidence and experience |

2 (e) Please outline **any additional action measures** that were fully achieved other than those listed in the tables above:

PART B

| | Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures) | Outputs | Outcomes / Impact |
|---|---|--|---|
| 6 | Monitoring of all employees | CCEA can respond effectively to employees' needs. | Reasonable adjustments are carried out as appropriate |
| 7 | Monitoring of all applicants | Prospective employees are surveyed from application forms for disabilities that may require reasonable adjustment at interview | Reasonable adjustments are carried out as appropriate |
| 8 | Wellbeing Programme developed and rolled out in 2019/20 with plans underway for 2020/21. | | Fully achieved. |
| 9 | Disability Forum created | CCEA can respond effectively to employees' needs. | Ongoing |

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

| | Action Measures partly achieved | Milestones/ Outputs | Outcomes/Impacts | Reasons not fully achieved |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | . | | | |

PART B

| | Action Measures partly achieved | Milestones/ Outputs | Outcomes/Impacts | Reasons not fully achieved |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| 2 | | | | |
| | | | | |

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

| | Action Measures not met | Reasons |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | Facilitation of 2 placements for work experience for people with disabilities. | No requests received. However, would have been unable to facilitate due to requirement to work from home due to pandemic. |
| 2 | | |
| | | |

5. What **monitoring tools** have been put in place to evaluate the degree to which actions have been effective / develop new opportunities for action?

PART B

(a) Qualitative

Individual consultations with disabled applicants/employees in order to make reasonable adjustments.

Disability questionnaire

(b) Quantitative

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

Permanent FTC and Temporary staff exit interviews

Training evaluations

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 | Plans in progress to review the Disability Action Plan with the newly created Disability Forum. | | Prior to end Mar 2022 |
| 2 | | | |
| 3 | | | |

PART B

| | Revised/Additional Action Measures | Performance Indicator | Timescale |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| 4 | | | |
| 5 | | | |

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?

-
- ⁱ **Outputs** – defined as act of producing, amount of something produced over a period, processes undertaken to implement the action measure e.g. Undertook 10 training sessions with 100 people at customer service level.
 - ⁱⁱ **Outcome / Impact** – what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action? Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training.
 - ⁱⁱⁱ **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments
 - ^{iv} **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level
 - ^v **Local** : Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.