

Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority



Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report

Contact details:

• Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme	Name:	Rosemary Scott
	Telephone:	028 4461 3844
	Email:	equality@nifha.co.uk
• Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan	As above	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (double click to open)
	Name:	
	Telephone:	
	Email:	

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

www.nifha.net

Signature:

This report has been prepared using a template circulated by the Equality Commission.

It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties, and implementing Equality Scheme commitments and Disability Action Plans.

This report reflects progress made between April 2024 and March 2025

PART A – Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Scheme
Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice

- 1 In 2024-25, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.

Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.

NIFHA is a very small organisation with only 20 full time equivalents (FTE). However, despite its small size we are committed to delivering Section 75, both in terms of its legal requirements and in terms of meeting the spirit of the scheme therefore our Equality Scheme is generally implemented well throughout the organisation.

NIFHA Corporate and Business Plans have actions, targets, outcomes, and measures applied throughout, identified from the inequalities audit.

Quarterly reports are made to the NIFHA Board committee, ensuring their commitment to activities carried out by NIFHA, to better promote equality and good relations.

Section 75 training is provided to all employees and board members with follow up refresher training delivered as required, information is also provided during induction for new employees.

An Equality checklist is in place to assess the implications of Section 75 statutory duties for all NIFHA Policies and reports of policies screened are published on our website.

Monitoring of NIFHA workforce in relation to age, community background, disability, gender, marital status, caring responsibilities, and racial origin is carried out annually, monitoring for every recruitment exercise is also carried out. Good practice is well implemented in this area, and policies continue to be reviewed and updated as required.

Ardglass, Kilkeel and Portavogie Stakeholder meetings, continue to be used for consultation on Equality, Good Relations, and Disability issues, also to promote good practice, helping us to achieve better outcomes.

PART A

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

Action	Outcome
To ensure pictogram signage at all harbours is adequate, to provide information to migrant workers if English is not their native language.	Pictogram signs are now used as standard for harbour signage and are updated as required.
To ensure the Annual Return is made to the Equality Commission in accordance with the timeframe set by the Commission.	Annual return submitted within timeframe.
Provide updates on Section 75 to NIFHA Board	Updates on Section 75 are provided at quarterly Board meetings.
To use the public Stakeholder meetings in Ardglass, Kilkeel and Portavogie as a forum for consultation on Equality to promote Good Practice and achieve positive outcomes.	Stakeholder meetings were held at all 3 of our harbours during 2024/2025 when consultation with stakeholders on disability and equality issues was conducted.
To liaise with the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and other relevant stakeholders to ensure a “joined up approach” to Equality, Good Relations and Disability issues, in particular, any synergies in terms of the action plans.	Meetings continue to be held six monthly, at which this topic is a standing agenda item.
To implement the recommendations on mitigating actions identified through the EQIA’s of the Recruitment Policy.	No mitigating actions were identified for recruitment exercises during this reporting period.
To communicate more effectively with our harbour communities by increasing use of social media, i.e. NIFHA Facebook page	Postings on our Facebook page were less frequent over the reporting period, communicating directly has proved more effective, so instead we plan to communicate with stakeholders through an engagement plan which will be updated annually.
To upgrade welfare facilities at Ardglass Harbour for fishing vessel crews.	Welfare facilities have been improved to support crew members and will continue to be maintained to a high standard.

PART A

<p>To implement outreach measures in the local communities in Ardglass, Kilkeel and Portavogie, to help raise the profile of Equality and Good Relations</p>	<p>NIFHA is pro-active in ensuring our commitment to community working is fulfilled by assisting and facilitating local community events when possible, e.g. North Down & Ards Council, Sea Food Festival Portavogie, Ardglass Community Groups, RNLI Carnival day Kilkeel, Water & Fishing safety talks to local community group in Kilkeel and supporting local Christmas community events.</p> <p>We continue to offer support and assistance at the Harbours to all migrant workers and those involved with the fishing industry, in conjunction with the Fishermen’s Mission.</p>
<p>To undertake activities involving local Primary school pupils and youth associations.</p>	<p>Beach Cleans continue to be carried out at our 3 Harbour locations involving local schools and community groups.</p> <p>This initiative enables people to work together as well as highlighting the role the children and their families can play in taking care of their local environment and sustainability of the harbour.</p>

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

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

Please provide any details and examples:

Although no major changes were implemented during the period NIFHA continues with the commitment to develop best practice in the workplace in this area by implementing reasonable adjustments for employees in their workplace or job role, where possible. We have comprehensive policies for illness prevention and employee support and having signed the Mental Health Charter, we remain committed to upholding our responsibilities in this area.

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:

Promotion of the importance of good Mental Health and provision of relevant training and information for all employees.

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):*

Annual monitoring of the NIFHA workforce in relation to age, community background, disability, gender, marital status, caring responsibilities, and racial origin enables reasonable adjustments to be offered, following review of the data returned.

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

Other *(please specify and give details):*

Commitment to the ethos of our organisation and to our Equality Scheme.

Section 2: Progress on Equality Scheme commitments and action plans/measures

Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)

4 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2024-25 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Responsibilities are clearly set out in the Job Descriptions for the CEO and HR employee. Other job description include reference to NIFHA's Equal Opportunities Policy.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2024-25 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Responsibilities are included in the Personal Development Plan (PDP) for the CEO and HR employee. Line Managers, through Section 75 training, are made aware of the importance of implementing Section 75 statutory duties when reviewing and implementing their PDPs and employee PDPs.

6 In the 2024-25 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? *(tick all that apply)*

- Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan

PART A

- Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
- Yes, in some departments/jobs
- No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation’s ongoing corporate plan
- No, the organisation’s planning cycle does not coincide with this 2024-25 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

NIFHA aligns its corporate objectives with Section 75 equality duties, enabling the duties to be more easily integrated into the day to day running of the harbours.

Our Corporate Plan objectives include a commitment to implementing Equality and Good Relations:

“NIFHA is committed to fostering inclusivity and ensuring those affected by its work can influence its functions. Its Equality Scheme outlines how it will fulfill Section 75 duties under the Northern Ireland Act 1998, which requires public bodies to promote equality of opportunity and good relations across various groups. NIFHA fully embraces these responsibilities and will allocate the necessary resources to ensure effective and timely implementation of its Equality Scheme.”

Meeting the Section 75 plan requirements is also a specific objective of NIFHA’s Business Plan. This is advocated by one of NIFHA’s 6 core values

“We value our people and equality matters. We will deliver a culture of continuous improvement through supporting, learning and innovating.”

Performance of the Business Plan and Section 75 plan is regularly reviewed by the NIFHA Board.

Equality action plans/measures

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

Actions completed:	5	Actions ongoing:	4	Actions to commence:	1
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Please provide any details and examples (*in addition to question 2*):

Actions described as on-going relate to those being delivered now and in future years, e.g. providing updates on Section 75 to the NIFHA Board.

Actions completed for example, include improvement of Welfare facilities at Ardglass Harbour to support fishing crew members.

PART A

Actions ongoing - NIFHA continues to help raise the profile of Equality and Good Relations by maintaining and developing its community links through working with local bodies to assist the fishing community in particular, by supporting charities and seasonal festivals at all of our harbours and also by assisting staff engaged in voluntary and outreach work.

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

Our schools programme 'Happy Harbours' is no longer operational due to limited resources however beach cleans, educational talks and primary school initiatives are still supported by NIFHA, as the role children and their families play in taking care of their local environment and the long-term sustainability of our harbours is very important to us.

- 9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2024-25 reporting period, the following have been identified: (*tick all that apply*)

- Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the known inequality
- Action(s) to address the known inequality in a different way
- Action(s) to address newly identified inequalities/recently prioritised inequalities
- Measures to address a prioritised inequality have been completed

Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)

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

- All the time Sometimes Never

- 11 Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2024-25 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

Discussions with employees as part of their review process on their well-being enables us to provide the appropriate support if necessary, especially in matters around mental health.

- 12 In the 2024-25 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: (*tick all that apply*)

- Face to face meetings
- Focus groups
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- Questionnaires

PART A

- Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
- Internet discussions
- Telephone consultations
- Other (*please specify*): Consultation with Stakeholders during meetings at the harbours

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:

NIFHA's engages positively with a wide range of customers and stakeholders and acknowledges the need to understand and meet their evolving needs, particularly within the fishing industry. Effective communication is essential to achieving this. Our approach is to actively listen and prioritise accountability by any of the above methods of consultation, seeking to improve both our people and services, to help fulfil our promise of excellence. Going forward we plan to communicate with stakeholders through an engagement plan which will be updated annually.

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

- Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2024-25 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)

<https://nifha.net/wp-content/uploads/NIFHAScreeningReportJantoJune25.pdf>

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

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

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

PART A

0
0

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

Consultations for an **EQIA** alone.

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

N/A

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

Yes No concerns were raised No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Arrangements for publishing the results of assessments (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

19 Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2024-25 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes No 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 2024-25 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

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

Please provide any details:

This is reviewed annually to ensure the information being sought remains relevant and still meets requirements.

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

Yes No Not applicable

PART A

Please provide any details and examples:

- 22** Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2024-25 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:
n/a

- 23** Please provide any details or examples of monitoring that has contributed to the availability of equality and good relations information/data for service delivery planning or policy development:

NIFHA works with its employees to offer family supportive working hours when possible, this enables them to have time off for family appointments, events or unexpected absences when required, sometimes at short notice. We also make reasonable adjustments, as necessary and particularly when an employee returns to work following a long absence.

Our policy is also to assist staff engaged in voluntary and outreach work.

Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)

- 24** Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2024-25, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

NIFHA has comprehensive training systems in place to aid our personnel.

Induction training is provided for all new employees and Board Members which includes information on our Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan. Employees are made aware of the need to proactively implement these duties into their day-to-day activities.

- 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:

NIFHA continues to implement a focused approach to training.

Section 75 training was provided to NIFHA employees across all 4 locations by an external consultant and included an update on NIFHA's Equality Scheme 5-year review. The session also focused on disability duties and our Positive Work Environment and Raising a Concern Policies.

NIFHA Board members also completed Section 75 Equality and Disability Duties training delivered by an external consultant.

Employees participated in sessions provided by the Equality Commission on Recruiting Fairly, Promoting Equality for People with Disabilities, and Preventing Sexual Harassment at Work.

PART A

Domestic Abuse Awareness for Managers training was completed by all Line Managers and HR person to support the introduction of our new Domestic & Sexual Abuse Policy.

Domestic Abuse Awareness training was also undertaken by NIFHA employees with positive feedback received for highlighting this issue and providing guidance and support.

Other relevant staff training included: People Management Skills, Preventing Harassment at Work, Managing Staff Absences due to Mental Health, Having a Mental Health Chat with Employees, Supporting New & Expectant Mothers in the Workplace, Managing Staff off work with a Disability and Woman's Health in the Workplace.

The variety of training offered enables participants to understand how to deal with issues that may affect their mental and physical health; the implications for our workforce, and how to support employees and customers better.

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

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

NIFHA has systems in place to support our workforce, we provides access to an Employee Assistance Programme for all employees. This has been well received and offers help in a wide range of areas. Feedback from employees advises they have found it particularly useful in supporting their mental health.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

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

Insert number here:

0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

n/a

Section 3: Looking Forward

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

Our Equality Scheme was last reviewed in 2023, the next review is due 2028

- 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*)

Training that supports equality, disability awareness, staff development, performance and well-being will continue in the same way as above with a commitment to refresh Mental Health Awareness training for Line Managers during 2025/2026. There will be more attention given to policy screening also.

PART A

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

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

PART B

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:

18

Fully achieved

0

Partially achieved

0

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			
Regional ^{iv}			
Local ^v	When advertising for new Board Members our sponsoring body, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) encourages applications from people with disabilities, as well as women, and people from minority ethnic groups	Ongoing support and collaboration with DAERA	People from under represented backgrounds can feel more encouraged to apply for and to take up positions in public life

PART B

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	All new employees and Board Members receive Induction training which includes information on our disability duties and how NIFHA has committed to implementing them	New employees and Board members understand the importance of considering and acting on the needs of people with a disability	They are better equipped to assist all stakeholders and members of the public, including people with a disability
2	The training needs of our employees are identified through Personal Development Plans, now in place for every employee. Any additional training needs that arise outside of this are addressed and implemented as necessary	NIFHA employees understand better that Equality and Good Relations are embedded in the way in which NIFHA conducts its business. They are also able to provide an improved service as they know how to respond to the needs of a person with a disability for example	No complaints were received during this period from people with a disability. Positive responses to training sessions from participants
3	Mental Health awareness training is provided to managerial and HR staff in order to help them recognise the common mental health issues that can affect workers	The importance of mental wellbeing will be promoted within our organisation	Managers and HR staff will have received accredited mental health awareness training Managers and HR staff will be better able to decide appropriate action to take to support employees, work colleagues and customers
4	To provide Policy Screening training to relevant staff members	To enable more effective screening of current and new policies	To promote equality of opportunity and good relations. To enable us to develop better policies.

PART B

2(c) What Positive attitudes **action measures** in the area of **Communications** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Disability duties are explained and promoted at NIFHA stakeholder meetings (one meeting is held in each of the 3 harbours per year)	Where expressed, Stakeholder views on disability matters are recorded and included in NIFHA's planning procedures	Provides outlet for direct communication. Disability access issues are effectively addressed on all capital works projects
2	Equality, Good Relations and Disability duties are reported in our Annual Report	Better communication with our key consultees	Raised awareness for our stakeholders in these areas
3	NIFHA reviews Health and Safety issues to ensure appropriate communication where linguistic barriers exist	Pictorial signage is provided across all our harbours	All stakeholders are able to understand signage
4	Documents can be provided in alternative formats where required.	Documents are more accessible for everyone	No requests for documents in alternative formats were received during this reporting period
5	NIFHA's website	Provides information on our organisation and provides access for potential candidates during recruitment exercises	Increased accessibility for all including easier communication with stakeholders and employees
6	NIFHA's Facebook page	NIFHA can communicate more easily, issues affecting the fishing and wider harbour communities	Increased accessibility for all Provides information about NIFHA activities
7	A text phone facility is provided in Head Office	Ability to communicate with people with a hearing or speech disability	The phone is maintained and available but remains unused since installation

PART B

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Promotion of disability issues with employees through discussion at internal meetings and training	Raised awareness of the need for our organisation to comply with its disability duties.	Our employees are more aware of the issues that people with a disability face and are not only showing a more positive and understanding attitude to their needs but are also more enabled to pre-empt their needs
2	Promotion of disability issues with Stakeholders through discussion at Stakeholder meetings	Stakeholders are now more familiar with NIFHA’s duties in respect of people with a disability	Increased awareness of disability issues by the local fishing industry and related businesses
3	NIFHA provides support to employees with disabilities in respect of learning and development needs, career development opportunities; and reasonable adjustments at work	Employee questionnaire	Effective, reasonable adjustments implemented as required, in the workplace. Improved self-esteem and job performance. Continued support to employees with adult literacy and computer learning
4	Welfare facilities at Ardglass harbour were upgraded	Crew welfare is improved and will be maintained	Crew members benefit from having access to increased and more modern welfare facilities

PART B

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

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1	To keep under review any employment opportunities for people with a disability	NIFHA continues to offer employment opportunities for people with a disability when possible	Full consideration is given to people with a disability during recruitment exercises

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	To ensure disability duties are taken into account when proposing new or revising existing policies	Considering disability duties when devising new policies or reviewing existing policies is now normal practice throughout our organisation	New and existing policies are screened	Screening of new and existing policies continues

PART B

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1		
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?

(a) Qualitative

- Consultative – feedback to Line Managers and CEO

(b) Quantitative

- Annual Monitoring arrangements are in place for NIFHA’s workforce. The responses are reviewed, and action taken where necessary
- Our training plan is reviewed annually, as well as during employee reviews.
- Specific training needs are identified and addressed appropriately
- All training courses are evaluated and revised accordingly

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

PART B

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1			
2			
3			
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?

No

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.