

British Council Northern Ireland



Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report 2019-20

Contact:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme	Name: Sarah Brisbane Telephone: 02890 192201 Email: sarah.brisbane@britishcouncil.org
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan	As above X Name: Sarah Brisbane Telephone: 02890 192201 Email: sarah.brisbane@britishcouncil.org

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

<http://nireland.britishcouncil.org/about/equal-opportunities-diversity>

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "S Brisbane" inside a rectangular box.

**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 1 April 2019 and 31 March
2020**

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 2019-20, 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.

NOTE: BRITISH COUNCIL NORTHERN IRELAND IS PART OF A GLOBAL ORGANISATION. THROUGHOUT THE REPORT, WE REFER TO OUR GLOBAL EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI) POLICIES WHICH ARE ADHERED TO BY THE NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE. SEVERAL SECTIONS OF THE REPORT ARE NORTHERN IRELAND SPECIFIC.

British Council overview:

The British Council's cultural relations work aims to develop trust and understanding between different nations and cultures, drawing on a hugely diverse workforce and set of contacts. It therefore needs strong alignment to principles and practices of equality, diversity and inclusion as well as our core values; these include valuing people, integrity, mutuality, professionalism and creativity. The [British Council's EDI Policy](#) forms the foundation of our approach to EDI and is embedded into all our programmes and practices as an organisation.

British Council Northern Ireland Senior Management Structure:

Responsibility for the effective implementation of our equal opportunities and good relations lies with Director Northern Ireland. Director Northern Ireland is accountable to the British Council for the development, implementation, maintenance and review of the equality scheme in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, including any good practice or guidance that has been or may be issued by the Equality Commission.

The Director Northern Ireland works in partnership with the Northern Ireland Advisory Committee (NIAC) which meets three times a year with senior managers and this forum provides the opportunity to discuss and provide updates on our programmes and activities which aim to build trust with a diverse range of people, including those from the 9 categories covered by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (the Act). Our activities in our programme areas ensure we comply with the requirements of the Act.

British Council Northern Ireland premises:

An independent disability access audit was carried out by Disability Action in 2014. Several recommendations were made, all of which have been actioned. As per last year's report, these include:

- More robust bollards in place outside the building (to protect against illegal parking on the footpath/pedestrian area adjacent to the building, thus also offering easier access and further protection to wheelchair users or those with disabilities)
- A bicycle store provided in the building basement for staff
- Promotion of Belfast Bicycle Scheme for visiting staff (bike rack adjacent to office)
- Cycle2Work is continuing. This government-backed scheme aims to encourage commuters to use bicycles for all or part of the journey to work. It enables employees to lease a bicycle and related equipment (up to a value of £1000) through a salary sacrifice agreement which is exempt from Income Tax and National Insurance during the lease period, affording a tax-free benefit to staff.
- An Evacuation Chair lift has been fitted for use throughout the premises and training provided to staff
- Personal Emergency Evacuation procedures are in place to facilitate safe egress for persons with restricted mobility
- Display screen equipment assessments have taken place to promote good ergonomics and healthy environment
- Telephones are fitted with inductive couplers to assist those with hearing difficulties. Additionally, a text relay service/text phone is available upon request.
- The front door of the building has been fitted with automatic opening to enable ease of access for visitors with disabilities. A security officer has also been employed to reside in the main foyer area and can provide assistance to visitors.
- A defibrillator has been installed in the office. A selection of staff has undertaken training to enable them to use the defibrillator.

British Council Northern Ireland Work

The British Council builds connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language.

We work in two ways – directly with individuals to transform their lives, and with governments and partners to make a bigger difference for the longer term, creating benefit for millions of people all over the world.

We help young people to gain the skills, confidence and connections they are looking for to realise their potential and to participate in strong and inclusive communities. We support them to learn English, to get a high-quality education and to gain internationally recognised qualifications. Our work in arts and culture stimulates creative expression and exchange and nurtures creative enterprise.

We connect the best of the UK with the world and the best of the world with the UK. These connections lead to an understanding of each other's strengths and of the challenges and values that we share. This builds trust between people in the UK and other nations which endures even when official relations may be strained.

We work on the ground in more than 100 countries. In 2019-20 we connected with 80 million people directly and with 791 million overall, including online and through our broadcasts and publications.

1) EDUCATION, YOUTH and SKILLS

Education - Schools

We bring an international dimension to teaching and learning in schools with international links, professional development opportunities, curriculum resources, classroom support and awards.

Through our global network and portfolio of schools' programmes, we connect our school sector to others throughout the world to achieve two outcomes:

- 'Enriched education' - Sustained collaboration between us and other countries on professional development, curricula and system reform, and policy dialogue, which provides improved educational outcomes for young people
- 'Global citizenship increased' – Young people and educators demonstrate an increased capacity in the skills, understanding and outlook required to work in a global economy and contribute responsibly to society, locally and globally.

Both of these outcomes contribute to a more prosperous and secure society.

These endeavours are supported by many of our programmes some of which are summarised below: -

Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning - a fully funded learning journey that includes face-to-face and online courses, international professional partnerships and visit funding opportunities based around the core skills.

eTwinning - a free and secure online network, creating an online community for schools across Europe, where teachers from more than 40 countries can find partners, share ideas, exchange best practice and work on projects to enable pupil collaboration.

Schools Online - a one stop global portal for teachers around the world to find school partners, explore teaching resources and establish international links for professional development. In Northern Ireland we have a specific Schools Online ezine with content more relevant to NI teachers.

Language Assistants - work in primary and secondary schools, including sixth form and further education colleges to support language learning and inter-cultural understanding.

Mandarin Speaking competition - an annual competition, which provides an opportunity to give secondary schools and students the chance to test their Mandarin speaking skills in front of a panel of judges and schools from all over the UK. The third Northern Ireland heat of the Mandarin speaking competition was held at the end of 2019 and resulted in a number of pupils from Northern Ireland going forward to the UK heats. This in turn resulted in a pupil from Northern Ireland winning the UK intermediate category.

Erasmus+ - The Erasmus+ programme provides opportunities for student and staff mobility in schools as well as institutional partnerships. Erasmus+ is an integrated programme, based around key actions rather than sectors of education. The three key actions funded by the programme include: Learning mobility of individuals; co-operation for innovation and good practices; and support for policy reform.

International School Award - a globally recognised accreditation which helps schools to enrich learning and improve teaching by guiding international learning activities, from introducing international education into the curriculum to embedding it within a school's culture.

Education - Higher/Further Education

As an international cultural relations organisation, the British Council promotes and supports the exchange and mobility of students, scholars and academics around the world. We use our expertise in higher education to build trust and understanding with other countries by:

- supporting the development of policy and practice in the UK and internationally
- building partnerships between institutions
- promoting the mobility of academics and students

Supporting the development of policy and practice in the UK and internationally

We contribute to the development of a global academic community by providing platforms to discuss higher education globally and promoting innovative research.

We believe that engaging the UK sector in working with policy makers and practitioners and their counterparts in other countries strengthens both nations.:

We contribute to the development of a global academic community by providing platforms to discuss higher education globally and promoting innovative research.

[Going Global Conference](#): More than 950 leaders in higher education, business and government attended the British Council's 13th annual Going Global conference, taking place in Berlin from the 13th to the 15th

May 2019. Over 85 countries were represented by delegates, including vice-chancellors, pro vice-chancellors, and government ministers.

Education Dialogues: is a series of events happening around the world which brings together policymakers and influencers to debate the challenges and opportunities facing international higher education.

[Events](#): forums, inward missions, outward missions, study visits, roundtables, workshops, seminars. Our events aim to develop international collaborations and to be mutually beneficial.

Research and publications: we publish research and analysis that is publicly available within our [knowledge centre](#).

Building partnerships between institutions

We focus on developing education partnerships with institutions between the UK and their counterparts in other countries. Partnerships are a powerful mechanism to engage the UK internationally and to build connections, understanding and trust.

We help UK institutions to internationalise by providing market analysis and intelligence, developing research partnerships, and providing on the ground support for higher education partnerships.

We provide opportunities for higher education leaders to exchange knowledge and establish collaborations, and list them under the [events](#) and [opportunities](#) pages.

Our partnership programmes include:

[Newton Fund](#) - Aiming to strengthen science and innovation capacity and unlock further funding to support poverty alleviation in partnering countries.

[UK India Education and Research Initiative](#) (UKIERI) - Aiming to strengthen educational links between India and the UK.

[Research and Education Network for Knowledge Economy Initiatives](#) (RENKEI) - Platform for partnerships between the UK and Japan in industry and higher education.

Promoting the mobility of academics and students

We encourage international study and support the exchange and mobility of students, scholars and academics around the world because we believe that experiencing another country first-hand provides an unparalleled opportunity for individuals to understand and engage with people from different cultures, share ideas and work to solve global challenges.

We manage a number of mobility grants and scholarships aimed at UK academics, scholars and students, details of which can be found on our [International Mobility](#) page.

Our work aims to support the capacity and capability of governments, institutions and individuals in the UK and other countries to take an active role in developing their country, their community and themselves.

Some of the more popular outward mobility programmes open to higher education students in Northern Ireland are:

Study USA

The Study USA Programme offers undergraduate students an opportunity to study business and management for one academic year at universities and colleges in the USA with the purpose of producing graduates with an international, business-oriented perspective.

IAESTE

The International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience (IAESTE) provides paid, course-related work experience abroad to students of technical degrees (primarily Science, Engineering and the Applied Arts).

Erasmus+

The Erasmus+ programme provides opportunities for student and staff mobility in higher education and further education institutions as well as institutional partnerships. Erasmus+ is an integrated programme, based around key actions rather than sectors of education. The three key actions funded by the programme include: Learning mobility of individuals; co-operation for innovation and good practices; and support for policy reform.

Science

We work in partnership with the NI Science Festival to help internationalise the festival and enhance its global connections and reach.

Youth and Skills

Our work in youth and skills helps citizens and institutions contribute to a more inclusive, open and prosperous world and connects local issues to global themes, ranging from social action to diversity and youth issues.

We work in the following key areas:

Social enterprise

Our global social enterprise programme supports the development of social enterprise and social investment around the world drawing on UK expertise to share best practice and create opportunities for international connections.

Governance and civil society

Our work promotes social change and voice and accountability for all. Key areas include institutional development, justice and the rule of law, civil society and economic development.

Women's and girls' empowerment

We facilitate dialogues and networks to raise awareness and support initiatives that address the continuing inequalities that women face in society such as discrimination in the workplace.

Justice, security and conflict resolution

We seek to assist in the design, development and evaluation of justice and security initiatives that promote and protect universally agreed standards of human rights.

Sport

We build sport partnerships between the UK and countries around the world, enabling young people to fulfill their potential through the power of sport.

In Northern Ireland we have been exploring the international dimensions of peacebuilding and share the experience of Northern Ireland with other post-conflict societies.

2) ARTS

Our work in arts aims to promote the UK's diverse culture, creativity and innovation overseas. We work across various art forms and with the best of UK talent to develop artistic programmes and opportunities for collaboration in Northern Ireland.

Working jointly with the Arts Council of Northern Ireland through international work, we support and promote Northern Ireland's creative output.

The Artists' International Development Fund is an annual programme jointly funded by the British Council and Arts Council Northern Ireland. The aim of the programme is to support individual international developmental opportunities for talent and artistic excellence from Northern Ireland and, thereby, enhance Northern Ireland's international artistic development, reputation and standing.

The Creative Europe Desk UK is run jointly by the British Council and the British Film Institute with partners across the UK.

British Council is a major partner in a number of festivals that occur in Northern Ireland throughout the year such as the Belfast International Arts Festival, and Outburst Queer Arts Festival.

3) ENGLISH and EXAMS

English teaching has been at the heart of the British Council's cultural relations work since 1943. What we do in English creates opportunities for millions of people around the world through education, mobility and international engagement. In Northern Ireland there are seven British Council accredited English language centres.

PART A

- 2** Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2019-20 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

General:

- **JAM Card (Impact: Disability & Social awareness raising)**

British Council Northern Ireland is a JAM Card Friendly Organisation <https://jamcard.org/>. The JAM Card is a social innovation from the NOW Group (an organisation that supports people with learning difficulties and autism into employment). We are committed to showing people with learning difficulties and communication barriers that as a JAM Card friendly organisation we will give them a little extra time and patience in customer service situations. We used our website and social media channels to widely promote our membership of this initiative.

Refresher online training was provided in November 2019 for all Northern Ireland staff to ensure they are equipped to provide excellent customer service to people with learning difficulties and communication barriers. Our membership of the initiative is promoted on the JAM card website and App and social media channels.

- **Time to Talk Day (6 February 2020)**

[Time to Talk Day](#) is one of the biggest days in the mental health calendar and provides a chance for all of us to be more open about mental health – to talk, to listen, to change lives. Time to Talk Days took place in each UK office which were linked up by webinar. During the talk, staff were given a presentation about the tools available to us in supporting our own and our colleagues' well-being, including the Employee Assistance Programme which is a 24/7 confidential counselling and support service for staff and their immediate family members, and covers topics like general health and well-being, family and relationships as well as legal and financial advice. Staff shared resources from [Mind UK](#) on mental health issues and [tips from Time to Talk](#) on talking about mental health.

Time to Talk day forms part of the British Council's Keep Well Campaign which operates under 5 themes of Physical health, Mental health, Work/life balance and Healthy work environments.

As part of staff wellbeing, staff can make use of the Employee Savings scheme which offers discounts at over 400 retailers.

We have a dedicated Health and Wellbeing sharepoint site for staff which contains policies on the following:

- Managing health and attendance
- HIV and AIDS policy
- Managing problem drinking and/or taking illegal substances
- Healthy Lifestyle Advice
- Managing Stress At Work
- Domestic violence

- Adjustments for staff with disabilities
- Mental well-being
- Mental ill health

- **Staff Engagement Working Group**

As a result of British Council staff survey consultations, the Northern Ireland office created a Staff Engagement Working Group. The purpose of the group is to:

- Value colleagues' wellbeing
- Value different ways of thinking, opinions, working and ideas
- Provide colleagues with opportunities to contribute views and ideas to the leadership team
- Improve communication amongst colleagues
- Mainstream equality, diversity and inclusion across the Northern Ireland office.

The group meets monthly and communicates outcomes to all Northern Ireland staff.

- **British Council EDI Awards**

This staff awards programme recognises teams or individuals who deliver innovative work in the area of equality, diversity and inclusion internally in the British Council or externally through our work in cultural relations.

***Agile** – A team/individual that has led an innovative approach to challenging discrimination and marginalisation

***Values** – A team/individual who has engaged, supported and inspired others to take action in support of inclusion that has achieved positive results

***Impact-led** – A team/individual that has contributed to the British Council's aim of making a leading contribution to international aspects of diversity, as part of achieving cultural relations impact

***Values** – A team that has incorporated the [British Council's values](#) in their work to promote inclusion

- **LGBTQIA+ community for British Council colleagues**

The British Council prides itself on both its cultural relations and inclusion agenda, and one of the ways to incorporate this into our working life is the setting up a new voluntary led Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Other (LGBTQIA+) group. **LGBTQIA+ Community** aims to support colleagues identifying as LGBTQIA+ no matter where they live and work

by fostering a support network and by raising a voice for LGBTQIA+ issues within the British Council. The group welcomes participation from all British Council LGBTQIA+ colleagues and allies. Each region has a regional lead who organises events and social meet-ups locally. The Northern Ireland office distributed LGBTQIA+ pins to staff to be worn on our work lanyards to show support for all LGBTQIA+ colleagues.

- **Disability Advisory Panel**

The British Council Disability Advisory Panel is made up of people with significant personal and professional experience of disability and act as a 'critical friend' to the Diversity Unit and other teams on request.

Two representatives from Northern Ireland sit on the panel: Equality Manager for Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and Employment Advocacy Officer at Disability Action. Both have great direct and indirect experience with disability and their areas of expertise are really broad. Further information about the Disability Advisory Panel can be found on our internal intranet.

- **Disability Confident Employer**

The British Council has a badge and a certificate which qualified our organisation as a **Disability Confident Employer** for two years (up to January 2020). The scheme provides a step towards increasing the low numbers of disabled people within the organisation.

The Disability Confident Employer Scheme is a government scheme which has taken over from the previous Two Ticks Positive About Disabled People Scheme, and is designed to help organisations recruit and retain disabled people and people with health conditions for their skills and talent.

A self-assessment template and a matrix have been completed by colleagues in the Diversity Unit and HR with the support of the Disability Working Group.

- **EDI Toolkit & Microsoft Teams EDI page (Impact: Training and Awareness raising)**

An EDI toolkit has been written for all Northern Ireland staff and visitors to access as and when necessary. The Toolkit contains all corporate and Northern Ireland specific EDI documents. There is also a range of documents on event management and ideas on how to mainstream EDI into everyday work. There is also a section on useful resources including accessibility guides for venues across Northern Ireland, links to interfaith calendars and international diversity days, lists of nearby places of worship for staff and visitors, and links to EDI training courses. Feedback from staff suggests this is a very useful tool and helps keep all important EDI documents in one accessible place. The Toolkit continues to be updated on an ad hoc basis. All EDI related documents are also saved in a dedicated folder of the newly created EDI Teams group for easy

access by all Northern Ireland staff. EDI notices and important announcements are also posted to this page for the benefit of all Northern Ireland staff.

- **Cultural Engagement EDI Steering Group**

The Northern Ireland office hosted the Cultural Engagement EDI Steering Group meeting, 8-9 October 2019 with emphasis on the unique external operating context in Northern Ireland including the political context, the specific equality legislation in Northern Ireland and our statutory duties as a public body, as well as the educational and arts contexts in relation to EDI. The group reviewed its work plan and the work of the Steering Group from April 2019 and progress made, deepened understanding of equality areas; and in particular learning about the context of gender, race, youth and LGBT, co-designed its mainstreaming guide, EDI festival and SKE and developed an action plan for the remainder of 2019- 2020 and look ahead to 20/21

During the course of the workshop, Belfast staff attended interactive session on *Working Families* - there was a discussion on how we can recognise and support parents or carers of other family members in the British Council. The session was based on the theme of Working Parents in recognition of Working Families week and staff shared their experiences as working parents, or as people who are carers for other family members. It was a combined session with British Council Cardiff and Edinburgh.

- **Formation of EDI working Group**

To ensure a co-ordinated and joined up approach to EDI across the Northern Ireland office, an EDI Working group was created. 7 representatives from across a range of departmental units sit on the working group, which meets monthly. An EDI action plan and wellbeing plan has been devised and the group is responsible for highlighting and celebrating international diversity days.

The main objectives of the group are to:

- Further develop an inclusive organisational culture and facilities, based on the corporate EDI Strategy
- Feed into teams' Diversity Assessment Framework (DAF) submissions
- Offer professional development opportunities in capability and leadership through EDI related training

- **Mental Health Charter & Every Customer Counts**

In November 2019 the British Council NI signed up to the *Mental Health Charter* for Northern Ireland employers and service providers. The Charter, jointly produced by the Equality Commission, Action Mental Health, Disability Action, Mindwise, Mental Health Foundation and Inspire provides a framework for working towards mentally healthy workplaces. As signatory to the Charter and its 5 commitments we undertake to promote positive mental health initiatives which will be beneficial to the organisation, employees and the whole community in

Northern Ireland. As part of the Charter is it our intention to arrange for disability work shadowing opportunities in 2020.

As a direct result of the charter, British Council Northern Ireland have begun to introduce several initiatives to address the issue of staff wellbeing, including nomination of mental health champions, physical health assessments, planning to refurbish a meeting room to become a wellbeing/prayer room and we are in the process of arranging mental health awareness training for staff.

British Council Northern Ireland has also signed up to the Equality Commission's '*Every Customer Counts*' *Commitment* which demonstrates our commitment to promoting accessible services to our customers and that we welcome reasonable adjustment requests. We completed a self-assessment tool to establish how open our services currently are to disabled people and identify how we could make improvements.

- **Marking of International Days:**

LGBT History month

To mark LGBT history month, the EDI Working Group highlighted the following:

- #FiveFilms4Freedom 2020 – this is our global celebration in support of LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer) rights. Working in partnership with [BFI Flare: London LGBTQ+ Film Festival](#), the British Council made five LGBTQ+ themed short films available for the world to watch online, for free, for a 12-day period. The line-up of films, featuring work by emerging filmmakers from across the world, is selected from BFI Flare's programme. A coordinated effort from our global network in over 100 countries encourages people to watch the films in solidarity with LGBTQ+ communities in places where freedom and equal rights are limited. The campaign asks audiences to share the films using the hashtag #FiveFilms4Freedom in recognition of the fact that 'Love is a Human Right'. Over the last five years, almost 10 million viewers have watched at least one of the films, in over 200 different countries or principalities, including seven where homosexuality is punishable by the death penalty. British Council colleagues are invited to participate each year in a variety of different ways, acknowledging the sensitivities of this focus in different environments. On 26th February we invited staff to watch the films and have a short discussion afterwards.
- An LGBT update was circulated from EDI Working Group member about the historic first same-sex marriage which took place in Northern Ireland
- LGBTQ+ activist Shannon Yee in 2020 contributed an inspirational piece to the most recent publication of Britain and Ireland: Lives Entwined: Tectonic Plates and Pressure Cookers. Shannon Sickels (Yee) is an award-winning playwright and producer whose perspectives as an immigrant, ethnic minority, queer artist–parent with a disability living

in Northern Ireland are deeply embedded in her work. Shannon is also an LGBTQ+ activist; in 2005 she and her partner were the first public civil partnership in the UK.

- We circulated the British Council's *Corporate Policy on Sexual Orientation* which includes guidance on acceptable language and terminology, our approach to Sexual Orientation as an organisation, and examples of discrimination.

IDAHOT (International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia) (17 May).

Staff were invited to commemorate the annual IDAHOT day with a reminder that the issue of sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) matters deeply for sustainable development because it is about fighting discrimination and promoting social inclusion and is key to ending poverty and building shared prosperity. Staff were invited to:

- Watch this video to understand more about diversity at work and this video on why LGBTI inclusion matters
- Refresh their knowledge about our EDI strategy and resources on EDI (shared on our sharepoint)
- Enjoy some book reviews shared by our Literature team

Black History Month (October 2019)

Black History Month is an important recognition of the contribution made to the UK by people of African descent. We produced a resource pack (see Appendices) help encourage discussion about race equality within British Council teams.

International Day of People with a Disability 2019 (3 December) was marked by sharing disability facts with Northern Ireland staff. This year's theme was '*The Future is Accessible*'. We shared links to the IDPWD website which includes a range of free downloadable branded resources here which could be used to recognise the theme of IDPWD. We asked staff to follow British Council brand guidelines on accessible communications and to follow IDPWD by using #idpwd #TheFutureIsAccessible. British Council Uganda announced their The Future is Accessible event on 3rd December 2019 called The Case for Creative Innovation, Disability Arts and the Creative Industries, on facebook and twitter

In many of our programmes, we are working with disabled people and with connected groups to challenge perceptions, change attitudes and support more inclusive practices which benefit. Our internal Disability Sharepoint Site contains more information. Some British Council colleagues also made a video to mark International day of Disabilities.

We also shared resources on how to best support disabled artists & audiences (<http://bit.ly/34nDJCK>) & encouraged staff to sign up to the [@DisArtsInt](https://twitter.com/DisArtsInt) newsletter: <http://bit.ly/2qQperY> [#disabilityartsinternational](https://twitter.com/disabilityartsinternational) [#IDPWD](https://twitter.com/IDPWD)

World AIDS Day (1 December) - to mark the day, the British Council re-launched its HIV/AIDS policy. HIV/AIDS is recognised from the point of diagnosis as a disability under the GB Equality Act 2010 and therefore is covered as one of our six priority areas.

International Day of Older Persons (1 October) - as age is one of our 6 EDI focus areas, we have produced a resource pack (see Appendices) to support colleagues across the organisation to engage with this EDI area and prepare in due course to mark IDOP. This resource is also available on our intranet site).

International Womens' Day (8 March 2020)

The Gender and Inclusion team, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) team and the global Gender Champions Network held an interactive webinar. Highlighting that [this is an important year](#) for the rights of women and girls, the objectives of this interactive webinar were to:

- build on the momentum from the IWD global campaigns to continue discussions on the British Council's gender equality agenda
- build capacity around issues affecting gender equality globally and raise awareness of British Council's approach to addressing inequalities and empowering women and girls
- create a global platform for colleagues to connect with and hear from the global Gender Champions Network and gender practitioners, and stories and examples of good practice
- connect with the corporate EDI message to promote gender equality within our organisational culture.

We also shared content which had been developed for International Women's Day on our [BrandHub](#) including a social media toolkit, images and [video clips](#) from dozens of programmes and projects. The toolkit has information about hashtags, suggested content to accompany the video and sample social media posts. We also displayed IWD posters around the office. Staff also attended a global webinar on 12 March called "International Women's Day webinar – Connect, Inspire, Learn" – see agenda in Appendices.

World Mental Health Day – October 2019

To coincide with Mental Health Day, the British Council disseminated a Mental Health Toolkit for line Managers (see appendices).

- **Living Library**

The British Council's Living Library was developed as a means of promoting inclusion within the British Council. It is an online catalogue designed to promote dialogue between staff and encourage them to learn from and understand each other and engage directly in our rich diversity in a very direct way, led by what we are curious about and interested in. The library provides an

excellent opportunity for intercultural learning and understanding of our incredible diversity. Staff may never have spoken in any detail to someone with particular experiences, or from a particular cultural or linguistic group. 'Living books' are given by members of staff who relay stories or accounts of their lives and backgrounds (or aspects of them). This includes their experiences, knowledge, struggles, achievements, interests, perspectives and aspects of their identity.

- **Staff Training**

Section 75 Training for Northern Ireland Staff

On 11 December 2019, the Equality Commission provided training for 23 staff (58%) in the Northern Ireland office on Northern Ireland specific equality legislation, our statutory obligations and examples of good practise. Staff who were not able to attend were provided with full training notes and further reading links after the session. Also in attendance was Robert McChesney, our Senior HR Business partner, to learn more about our specific requirements and the main legislative differences to the rest of the UK (covered by the Equality Act 2010) which he can feed back to central HR.

As a result of the training, Northern Ireland staff are now fully informed of our legal requirements under Section 75 and the part that they play in ensuring we fulfil our statutory duties. As a result of the training we have 3 main areas for focus:

- Embed procedures whereby we request and collate monitoring data of grant beneficiaries across all Northern Ireland based programmes at the beginning of each project lifecycle, in order to identify and address under-representation across the 9 protected characteristics
- Staff to take more responsibility for screening their projects and programmes if changes occur, and were given full details on how to do so
- We will pursue opportunities to support skills development of disabled people by implementing a variety of measures in the coming months, including the possibility of work shadowing opportunities.

Disability Awareness Staff Training

On 5 March 2020, a member of Disability Action NI provided Northern Ireland staff with a staff talk on the overview of work as an ambassador for disabled people in Northern Ireland.

Staff were also provided with the following:

- an overview of his work as an ambassador for disabled people in Northern Ireland and his work with British Council within the Disability Advisory Group (and with British Council Pakistan)
- practical suggestions for action we can take locally to better mainstream people with disabilities into the workforce, possibly through work shadowing opportunities
- how we can make our programmes more accessible to disabled people
- how we as staff can take deliberate action to support the involvement of disabled people in our work and wider society eg through local volunteering opportunities

We will continue to work with Disability Action to find opportunities to work with disabled people in our programme delivery.

Unconscious Bias Training

On 4 October 2019, a number of staff undertook training on Unconscious bias and its relevance to equality, diversity and inclusion. The training explored how to recognise and avoid unconscious bias and how to challenge it in ourselves and others. Staff also explored tools/techniques that can help mitigate unconscious bias at work.

Diversity Assessment Framework (DAF) webinar

A Diversity Assessment Framework webinar was delivered for teams on 6 December 2019 by members of the British Council Diversity unit. Staff were trained on the 10 DAF indicators and why it is important that we comply with the Essential level and aspire to the Good Practices in alignment with our organisational commitment to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy.

The following additional training sessions were also available to all UK staff throughout the period:

- Disability and Inclusion (aligned to our organisational Equality Guide)
- Global panel discussion focused on the topic of race and culture in the British Council 15 May 2019. The discussion included:
 - The importance of giving internal and external attention to the area of race in our cultural relations work.
 - Key issues and challenges including the impact of Britain's history on our work.
 - How race plays out in our organisational culture.
 - Relevant data and targets to improve the representation of people of different ethnicities in our workforce.
- Discussing Religion and Belief in the British Council (aligned to our Equality Guide and Guide to Promote Religion and Belief Equality)

- Creating inclusive working environments: examples and discussion (UK Wide webinar) 23 January 2020
- Webinar on hosting inclusive meetings and presentations (online and face-to-face) 11 December 2019. In recognition of Disability awareness and inclusion in the month of December, and in line with this year's International Day for the Rights of People with Disabilities theme 'The Future is Accessible' the session focused primarily on disability inclusion but also incorporated other dimensions of diversity and inclusion. The session included:
 - ✓ Why inclusive meetings and presentations
 - ✓ Some do's and don'ts
 - ✓ Tips to make meetings and presentations inclusive
 - ✓ Recommended platforms to be used for meetings
 - ✓ Recommended software and formats for presentations
- Designing Participatory and Inclusive Events (global webinar) 16 December 2019
- At the beginning of Covid-19 lockdown on 26 March 2019 around the topic of Well-being, global staff attended a Zoom meeting as part of a series sponsored by our Senior Leadership Team to give staff the opportunity to hear and learn from each other in solidarity and support through what was a challenging time.

- **External Monitoring**

We conduct monitoring of customers from the protected characteristic groups who take active part in programmes and activities offered by the British Council Northern Ireland (Language Assistants, eTwinning, IAESTE, Connecting Classrooms, Study USA, Mock Council of the European Union)

A questionnaire covering all section 75 protected groups is sent to all external customers across a number of programmes on an annual basis.

Findings:

- Greater participation rate in our education programmes amongst grammar schools over secondary schools
- More female than male participants, and fewer males than national average, providing an opportunity to find ways to target boys in our programmes.
- Mainly 16-25 single with no dependents (due to nature of programmes)
- Mainly white

We will continue to monitor our customers on an annual basis and take action to find ways to address any inequalities.

ARTS:

- **Taking the Stage: Mexico: Northern Ireland (Theatre making for LGBTQI+ artists and audiences)**

In September 2019, Literary Manager & Dramaturg with the Lyric Theatre, Belfast travelled to Mexico to work with La Teatreria in Mexico City to provide lectures and mentoring to assist in a LGBTQI+ theatre in translation project. *Scorch* by Prime Cut Theatre was translated into Spanish and workshopped for performances taking place in Mexico between September 2019 to March 2020. The text of the play which had previously been presented by Prime Cut Theatre Company as part of the British Council Theatre & Dance Showcase at the Edinburgh Fringe and Outburst Queer Arts Festival, confronts the ideological norms which have for so long shaped our understanding and beliefs surrounding sexuality and gender.

- **Outburst Queer Arts Festival (Impact: Sexual Orientation awareness raising and promoting diversity)**

The British Council has been working in partnership with the Outburst Queer Arts Festival in Northern Ireland over the past five years as part of our Arts & EDI portfolio. During this time, we have hosted over 100 LGBTQ+ performers, writers, curators and practitioners at the festival which is playing a leading role in building international conversations with artists and creative networks to support and advance equality, representation and collaboration for LGBTQ+ artists. Our focus is largely between Northern Ireland and countries in the Americas and now in the Middle East and North Africa.

Now in its fourteenth year, Outburst has grown from a small, unfunded, grassroots LGBTQ+ community event into a festival of international importance for queer arts, culture and ideas. The organisation is run by Artistic Director, and arts activist, Ruth McCarthy and has been co-developing a dynamic network with queer arts and activist peers who are creating space for new queer work and arts projects in Jamaica, Brazil, Venezuela, Peru, Mexico, Lebanon, Egypt and many other countries.

The idea of the network and our annual international gathering in Belfast is to share ideas, gain insight from each other's experience and develop collaborations and pathways to create and share work, given the many challenges across the world right now for LGBTQ+ people.

From 06-12 November 2019, 44 new LGBTQI+ artists from Argentina, Mexico, Brazil to Egypt, Syria and Lebanon spent time in Belfast exploring, challenging, questioning and celebrating all kinds of experiences relating to gender and sexuality through cutting edge arts and queer work. In 2019, we attracted twice as many international delegates than in previous years, bringing our queer arts network to well over 100 strong.

In 2019, we co-created our first queer arts magazine with British Council Americas and Outburst – *El Alto* magazine, a new publication which has provided a similar focus in celebrating some of the most exciting LGBTQI+ cultural practitioners working at the intersection between gender, sexuality and

the arts; including fashion designers, illustrators, visual artists, poets, curators, musicians, theatre directors, filmmakers, actors and activists. The magazine is published in English-Spanish.

In 2019, we published our first queer English-Arabic bilingual collection of queer Arab texts commissioned by Outburst in partnership with al-Jumhuriya. *Encounter*, brings together contemporary Arabic writing that reflects on the lives and experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals in the Arab-speaking world. The publication aims to amplify the voices of those experiences but also to expand the possibilities of exchange and partnership.

By highlighting the issues that LGBTQI individuals face in their respective communities, the publication presents a nuanced look on queer communities but also to affirm the universality of such struggle and the need for global solidarity and support.

Outburst published *Encounter* with Al-Jumhuriya, a web founded group of Syrian writers and academics, both inside and outside the country, as a platform for Syrians to speak in their own voice about the myriad political, social, cultural, and other questions thrown up by the revolution and ensuing conflict in their country. Designed by Belfast illustrators, Usfolk and edited by Egyptian writer, Ismail Fayed, the publication is a unique project for Outburst, bringing together contemporary Arabic writing that reflects on issues pertaining to the lives and experiences of LGBTQI individuals in the Arab-speaking world.

The British Council's collaboration with Outburst fulfils the British Council Arts Strategy aims for personal, professional and skills development for queer arts practitioners. Within Northern Ireland, audiences were extremely positive about the standard and content of the local and international work, topics and performances and we have improved perceptions around LGBTQ+ creative work and created positive engagement by also reaching 40% of Outburst's non-LGBTQ audiences.

We have increased local partnerships by working with Queer at Queen's University, the Queen Film Theatre, Lyric Theatre, the Golden Thread Gallery, the Black Box, the Brian Friel Theatre and due to us having established strong connections with Northern Ireland's queer arts sector we are being seen as a positive supporter of its work and international capacity building.

We have challenged discrimination of LGBTQ+ artists and audiences through:

- working in partnership with Outburst Festival widely in Northern Ireland,
- working at key venues and
- sharing the British Council's values in our press and communications

Local and international audiences and delegates now recognise that LGBTQ+ art should be more visible in our theatres and venues as they do not find work like this outside Outburst.

The idea of the network and the international gathering is to share ideas, gain insight from each other's experiences and develop collaborations and pathways to develop and share work locally and internationally.

The Creative Director of Outburst was part of a virtual roundtable/ panel discussion with a diverse group of LGBTQI+ festival practitioners, leaders and artists from across India to exchange, discuss, and share issues relevant to the LGBTQI+ festival sector, as an informal mechanism for learning and knowledge sharing.. You can watch the session here:

<https://www.facebook.com/thequeermuslimproject/videos/2937791412998261/>

- **Shannon Yee: *See also British Council Lives Entwined**

Writer, producer and theatre maker, Shannon Yee describes herself as a queer artist with a disability, and a bi-racial artist with US-Asian roots now living and working in Northern Ireland. Shannon and her partner were the first same sex civil partnership in NI and are ongoing advocates for marriage equality in NI and have also recently become new parents. Shannon contributed to the British Council Northern Ireland publication Britain and Ireland: Lives Entwined. You can read her article [here](#).

- **Inclusive Arts programme**

Inclusion, diversity and equality are at the core of the British Council's cultural relations aims and part of building trust, respect and understanding between the UK and other countries.

With a strategic programme of research, awareness raising events and projects, our work in the arts focusses on the area of arts and disability and inclusive design with a view to contributing to a dynamic and inclusive cultural scene where disabled artists and patrons are able to access equal opportunities to participate in the arts.

Our programmes on [Inclusive Arts](#) aim to utilise world-leading innovation and creativity to make a positive contribution to society, institutions and government policy. We are continuing to grow research, open calls and scope opportunities and development in the area of arts and disability.

Three organisations from Northern Ireland partner and inform much of our expertise and programme development in this area including **University of Atypical**, a disabled-led arts charity, taking an empowerment based approach towards supporting disabled and D/deaf people's involvement in the arts. **Open Arts**, an organisation with a twenty-five year track record that actively values and promotes the creativity and artistic contribution of disabled people and inspires and supports the creativity and artistic development of disabled people and Shannon Yee, a biracial queer immigrant playwright with a disability living in Northern Ireland who collaborates with people who do not traditionally work in the arts, such as professionals working in science and health.

See British Council [Inclusive Arts](#) for details on a range of programmes.

<https://www.disabilityartsinternational.org/>

- **Europe Beyond Access**

Across the performing arts and across Europe disabled artists are pushing the boundaries of form, and are presenting audiences, fellow artists and arts professionals with one of the creative opportunities of our time.

Europe Beyond Access supports disabled artists to break the glass ceilings of the contemporary theatre & dance sectors. The project is co-funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Commission.

British Council China Arts colleagues visited Belfast as part of UK wide creative sector briefings being held in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland aimed to develop new connections between the UK and China. Belfast was a very well attended briefing and we are continuing to stay in touch ahead of the staging of a digital festival.

- **Arts and Social Transformation**

In 2019, we expanded our aims to develop and support partnerships with diverse communities including Syrian refugees now living in Northern Ireland.

The Music Schools for Refugees project by Action for Hope is one of the 51 projects currently supported by the Cultural Protection Fund. The project aims to preserve and promote traditional Syrian music and musical instrument making among refugee communities in Lebanon and Jordan.

As part of our arts and social transformation work, we are continuing to grow links between Northern Ireland and Colombia.

British Council Northern Ireland Arts participated in Belfast City Council's Resilient Cities Study Visit when Colombia contacts and British Council staff came to Northern Ireland in May. The Arts visit concentrated on the city's murals in making visible Belfast's different cultural identities to the changing imagery of the Cathedral Quarter's contemporary street art and contribution that art in the public realm is making to cultural tourism and representation of new narratives across the city.

- **Five Films for Freedom Campaign**

#FiveFilms4Freedom is the world's widest-reaching LGBTQ+ digital campaign. The British Council in partnership with [BFI Flare: London LGBTQ+ Film Festival](#) made five LGBTQ+ themed short films available for the world to watch online for free, over a 12-day period.

The British Film Institute and the British Council promoted the programme through a digital campaign taking place in Spring 2019.

The programme, which featured work by emerging filmmakers from across the world, were selected from and coincided with BFI Flare.

In 2019, the films were viewed 1.8 million times by people in 202 countries and principalities, including parts of the world where homosexuality is criminalised, and in some cases, punishable by the death penalty.

In the Northern Ireland office, all staff were invited to the conference rooms to watch the five films (which can be viewed here: [#FiveFilms4Freedom](#)).

Afterwards, to celebrate the screening in Belfast, we invited Marie Quiery, an LGBTQ+ activist to address the office with her own experience of growing up as a lesbian in Belfast during the 1970s and address how the LGBT+ community has grown over the years.

About the programme

The British Council, in partnership with BFI Flare: London LGBTQ+ Film Festival, makes five LGBTQ+ themed short films available for the world to watch online for free, over an 11-day period each year.

The programme, which features work by emerging filmmakers from across the world, is selected from and coincides with BFI Flare. Through our global network in more than 100 countries, we encourage people to watch the films in solidarity with LGBTQ+ communities in places where freedom and equal rights are limited. We ask audiences to share the films using the hashtag #FiveFilms4Freedom in recognition of the fact that Love is a Human Right.

Running since 2015, the programme has seen more than ten million people viewing one of the films in more than 200 countries and principalities, including many parts of the world where homosexuality is criminalised, and in some cases, punishable by the death penalty.

- **Disability Arts International**

[Disability Arts International](#) promotes increased access to the arts for disabled artists and audiences around the globe. We are supporting the improved profile of artists with a disability by developing links with the Arts and Disability Forum and Bounce Festival Northern Ireland. There is both a video and blog.

The Disability Arts International platform is designed for international arts programmers, venue managers and policymakers, to:

- Browse our growing directory of disabled [Artists](#) and disabled-led companies with work ready to tour or exhibit internationally
- Read more in our [Blogs](#) and [Case Studies](#) about how artists and arts organisations are working together to make excellent work and grow and develop this vibrant arts sector
- View our growing collection of [Films](#) introducing the work of disabled artists and exploring ways in which arts organisations are improving access to the arts for disabled audiences and visitors.

- **Arts and Disability**

British Council Northern Ireland supported five young people with learning disabilities to link up with their peers in Europe in a project to improve digital skills and produce new artistic performances.

The University of Atypical coordinated 'Yes We Are In', which paired the young ambassadors with counterparts in Belgium, Croatia, Finland and England to explore similarities and differences between their lives in Belfast and those of disabled ambassadors from the other countries, build new friendships and grow digital skills while supporting experimentation to devise and co-produce performances with younger people with learning disabilities.

The project will provide an enormous opportunity for Northern Ireland's arts and disability sector.

Delegates from the other countries visited Belfast in June 2019 and the University of Atypical invited local arts and disability practitioners to meet them and share experiences. At the end of the project, there will be a live performance as part of Bounce Festival 2021, with live web streaming from project partners in other countries.

- **Unlimited**

British Council annually supports the Unlimited project which is a ground-breaking initiative that commissions work by deaf and disabled artists from the UK in international collaborations. UNLIMITED INTERNATIONAL is an area in which the British Council provides active support in the building of collaboration, inter-cultural learning and exchange between disabled artists in the UK and other countries. The programme was designed to support artists through:

- ✓ the commissioning and funding of new artworks;
- ✓ the provision of mentoring and training tailored specifically to suit the needs of each artist or partnership;
- ✓ the showcasing of commissioned works in London and across the UK, including the Unlimited Festival at the Southbank Centre during the Paralympic Games; and
- ✓ the building of collaboration, inter-cultural learning and exchange between disabled artists in the UK and other countries.
- ✓ Unlimited generated a substantial amount of interest both nationally and internationally, raising the profile of disabled artists and contributing to the growth in the scale and range of their work.
- ✓ Unlimited gives artists the opportunity to develop new skills and collaborate with international partners.
- ✓ Unlimited is principally funded by the National Lottery through the Olympic Lottery Distributor, and delivered in partnership between London 2012, Arts Council England, Creative Scotland, Arts Council of Wales and the British Council.

- **INTERSECT 2019**

This a new initiative led by the British Council and Diversity Arts Australia which launched in September 2018. The project aims to promote international collaboration between cultural programmers to encourage greater cultural diversity and inclusion. Both the UK and Australia have multi-ethnic societies, but diverse voices are still underrepresented in the arts, especially in senior leadership roles. INTERSECT aims to rebalance representation on stage, in art galleries, and on screen by supporting a broad spectrum of programming decision-makers with training and opportunities – to help them to widen their professional networks, make connections, and develop and collaborate on best practice.

Six experienced and talented UK and Australian curators, producers, and artistic directors have been selected as the first intake for the programme. The Australian participants travelled to the UK in September to take part in a knowledge exchange programme, partly designed by their UK partners to introduce their working context, key colleagues and collaborators. The full group travelled to Wales to meet with members of the creative community in Cardiff.

The INTERSECT participants continued to work together on their individual and shared goals in a peer mentoring programme until summer 2019. In February 2020 they came together again to share what they learned on an Australian trip. The group are working towards a digital online resource to host their research and case studies and a touring platform that will support British artists from minority ethnic backgrounds to tour their work in Australia.

- **With One Voice (WOV)**

The British Council supported [With One Voice](#) (WOV), the international arts and homelessness movement in its global activity in 2019-20, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals of reduced inequalities (SDG 10) and sustainable cities and communities (SDG11). These included:

- Review of Cultural Spaces' Responses to Homelessness to explore what different approaches, practices and programmes exist, and encourage an exchange on how cultural spaces can be open spaces to welcome people who are experiencing homelessness.
- Literature Review of arts and homelessness research and documentation - the world's first critical analysis of the literature on this topic. This review will provide a valuable resource to help the sector make the case more strongly about the impact of their work
- International Arts and Homelessness Summit and Festival (Manchester, November 2018) to help to inform the development of a set of resources and a training package for cultural spaces involving homeless people themselves delivering training (launched April 2019).

EDUCATION:

- **Inclusive Education Practices**

In the Education team, the British Council is working to mainstream principles of inclusive education in programmes and projects across our schools' work and in our Continuous Professional Development Framework approach. Our aim in implementing inclusive practices in education is to contribute to supporting more inclusive education systems through transformational approaches that can make positive change based on a belief that every classroom and learning situation should be an inclusive one enabling and ensuring quality education for all.

We have a range of courses, resources and materials created for education projects for colleagues to use in supporting inclusive education. These include:

- A system level inclusion audit tool, completed by our publications: [Unlocking a World of Potential - Core Skills for All](#), and [Creating an inclusive learning experience for English language learners with specific needs](#);
 - The [SEN \(Special Educational Needs\) Policy Toolkit](#), which outlines the British Council's key messaging around the education of children and young people with additional needs and includes a range of materials that facilitate understanding and discussion of access and engagement, enablement and empowerment, and the social versus medical model;
 - [the inclusive pedagogies course](#);
 - Our [Teaching English Special Educational Needs modules](#), with self-access versions free for all British Council staff;
 - The dedicated page on [inclusive practices](#) available on our Teaching English website.
- **eTwinning recruitment (Impact: Inclusion and Diversity)**

The recruitment practices for teachers who apply for places at eTwinning professional development events are always inclusive and we remove barriers to participation whenever possible. Erasmus+, in which eTwinning is an integral part, encourages inclusive education as one of its ten key priorities in school education. The eTwinning theme in 2019 was Democratic Participation. Mostly it focussed on pupil participation and pupil voice, including topics like race, religion and equality.

Five teachers from Northern Ireland attended the eTwinning Annual Conference in Cannes, France in October 2019. This conference brings together approx. 400 teachers from 44 eTwinning countries. The theme of the conference was "Democratic Participation" and aimed to support teachers to develop students; values, attitudes, skills and understanding that would enable them to participate

in democratic life. Workshops topics included; “Stories that Move -Discussing Diversity and Discrimination”, “Empower Young People to Disrupt Hate Speech”, “Democratic Participation in Making Plans for the Community”.

The following special schools in Northern Ireland are active eTwinning participants: Clarawood Special School, Cedar Lodge Special School, Park Education Resource Centre, Riverside Special School and Thornfield House School

- **Mandarin Speaking Competition (Impact: Ethnic minorities language learning)**

2019 marked the 3rd year in a row of Northern Ireland’s participation in the UK-wide British Council Mandarin Speaking competition. Established in 2003, the competition seeks to find the UK’s best young Mandarin speakers through a series of regional heats, followed by a grand final in London. Since joining the competition, Northern Ireland has had a highly successful track rate of finalists and winners, and this year was no exception. Of the 17 pupils competing on 20th November in Belfast, 7 were selected to go through to the final in London, and all 7 were pupils of Lumen Christi College. Competing against 42 other post-primary schools from the rest of the UK, a pupil from Lumen Christi College won 1st prize overall in the Intermediate category. This year also saw the first ever Northern Ireland entrant from a Further Education student (South West College); something we hope to see grow in the future. The Northern Ireland heat was held in partnership with the Confucius Institute at Ulster University and this year’s finalists were also presented with their certificates at the annual Confucius Institute at Ulster University Chinese New Year celebration at the ICC on 18 January.

- **Language Trends Northern Ireland (Impact: Ethnic minorities language learning)**

On 21st May 2019, British Council Northern Ireland officially launched the first-ever Language Trends Northern Ireland report, which surveyed over 300 primary and post-primary schools on language teaching and provision. The event attracted over 70 senior education stakeholders as well as school Principals from across Northern Ireland and featured a presentation of the key findings from report author, Teresa Tinsley (Director, Alcantara Communications), followed by a panel discussion chaired by Jonathan Stewart (Director, British Council Northern Ireland). The panel, which included Professor Janice Carruthers (Professor of French Linguistics at Queen’s University Belfast) and Lynne Rainey (Partner, and Head of Student Recruitment, PwC), discussed the barriers to language learning; similarities between this report and its counterparts elsewhere in the UK; and the increasing need for language skills in the global workplace, before opening the floor to a wide range of informed and thought-provoking questions. Pupils from Millburn Primary School opened the event with a song performance in Mandarin. The launch received a total of 28 media mentions, with [#LanguageTrendsNI](#) trending on Twitter.

- **Schools Think China (Impact: Ethnic minorities language learning)**

In October, British Council Northern Ireland in partnership with the Confucius Institute at Ulster University welcomed 230 pupils and a range of stakeholders to St. Anne's Cathedral, Belfast for an event showcasing Chinese language and culture. Throughout the day, primary and post-primary schools and their teachers enjoyed workshops such as penning calligraphy; mastering chopsticks; painting lanterns; trying on traditional Chinese dress; and learning the dragon dance. Schools and stakeholders were also treated to live performances of face changing opera; bamboo lute; and Peking opera, while sampling some traditional Chinese dishes. Schools in attendance were: St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School, Belfast; St. Joseph's Primary School, Carryduff; Ligoniel Primary School; St. Columba's Primary School, Draperstown; St. Thérèse of Lisieux Primary School; St. Malachy's Primary School; St. Joseph's Primary School, Crumlin; Knockahollet Primary School, Campbell College Prep Department; and Carrickfergus Academy. The event was attended by new British Council Chairman, Stevie Spring CBE, during her first visit to Northern Ireland in her new role.

- **Britain and Ireland: Lives Entwined book launch (Impact: good relations)**

On 13 February 2020 we launched the fifth volume of Britain & Ireland: Lives Entwined, a series of essays exploring the complex web of relations that exist between Britain and Ireland. This edition focuses on the theme of 'shifting borders, shifting identities' and is made up of a collection of 10 essays reflecting on the current context of change and flux on the islands.

The book was launched in the Duncairn Centre in Belfast with a short panel Q&A. Several follow-up events were organised including a CEO dinner in London with a number of organisations and stakeholders interested in British-Irish relations and a further launch event in the Irish Embassy in London with the Irish Ambassador to the UK opening the event. Further events are planned in Dublin with the Irish Embassy and in Brussels in partnership with the NI Bureau.

- **Schools Think Arabic (Impact: Ethnic minorities language learning)**

In February, over 120 primary and post-primary pupils joined us in the Crescent Arts Centre, Belfast for Schools Think Arabic. The event, in partnership with Arts Ekta and Yallaa, raised awareness of Arabic language and culture, through a variety of interactive workshops, complemented by traditional dance performances, music and food from the Arab world. Pupils were grouped according to Arab countries, learning about the flags and demography of their country in advance of the day. Workshops included Calligraphy; Traditional Arabic Tea Tasting; Henna; Traditional Clothing of the Arab World; and the ancient Arab art of Storytelling. Pupils and stakeholders enjoyed traditional Tunisian dance performances, and traditional Arab fare for lunch. The event was

particularly welcomed by schools with high numbers of EAL and Syrian refugee pupils, one of whom commented that it was “the best day [he had] had since [he] moved to Northern Ireland”.

- **International Study Visit on Special Educational Needs - Vancouver, Canada**

Participants – 11 Teaching Professionals from both mainstream and special schools, including principals, SENco and Learning Support Teachers. They were joined by a Managing Inspector from the Education and Training Inspectorate for Department of Education Northern Ireland.

The main aim of the visit was to conduct an appreciative enquiry into the provision for pupils with special educational needs and, in particular, to investigate the ‘Inclusion’ model that Vancouver Educational Districts had adopted.

- **International Study Visit on LGBTQ+ Inclusion – San Mateo, California, USA**

Participants - 7 post-primary teaching professionals, 1 Managing Inspector from ETI and 1 representative from Pupil Support for the Dept of Education. The main aim of the visit was to explore the development and implementation of LGBTQ+ curriculum, learning from San Mateo and San Francisco school districts in California (the first state to make the teaching of this curriculum mandatory).

- **Irish Language Assistants (Impact: Good relations)**

Irish Language Assistants (ILAs) has been on the decline for a number of years due to funding and other issues. We had set a target of 5 ILAs in the International Education Programme contract for 2019/20.

The British Council was very keen to increase numbers of schools applying for an ILA as well as the number of candidates applying. We ensured that the information on the programme was translated into Irish by working with an Irish speaker and developed with the Communications Manager a marketing plan to promote the initiative using social media.

As a result, 10 applications were received and 3 requests from schools resulted in 3 allocations.

- **Study USA Programme (Impact: Inclusion and Diversity)**

For the 2019-20 Study USA Cohort who travelled to the US over the period of August 2018-May 2019, we have the following declarations:

- 1 student with Scoliosis. Accounted for in the matching process and accommodated by the college.

PART A

- 1 student with Asperger's Syndrome. No additional support required. College informed.
- 2 students with Dyslexia. Appropriate support from colleges provided.
- 1 student identified as being a member of the LGBT community.

3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2019-20 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes X No (go to Q4) Not applicable (go to Q4)

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 2019-20 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)
- Yes, organisation wide
 - Yes, some departments/jobs
 - No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
 - X No, has already been done
 - Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The job descriptions and person specifications for advertised vacancies contain a statement of British Council Northern Ireland's commitment to its equal opportunity and good relations obligations under Section 75.

The following text appears in the role profile of all advertised vacancies: -

OUR EQUALITY COMMITMENT:

Valuing diversity is essential to the British Council's work. We aim to abide by and promote equality legislation by following both the letter and the spirit of it to try and avoid unjustified discrimination, recognising discrimination as a barrier to equality of opportunity, inclusion and human rights.

As an Equal Opportunities Employer, all job applicants are required to complete an Equal Opportunity and Diversity Monitoring Form. Provision of this information is voluntary and assists the British Council in its commitment to a policy of equal opportunity and the development of positive policies to promote equal opportunity in employment. The British Council welcomes applications from all sections of the community as we believe that a diverse workforce gives added depth to our work. We aim to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on the basis of gender including transgender, marital status or civil partnership, sexual identity, religion and belief, political opinion, race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin, work pattern, age, disability or HIV/AIDS status, socio-economic background, spent convictions, trade union activity or membership, on the basis of having or not having dependants, or any other irrelevant grounds.

The British Council monitors all stages of our recruitment and selection process to ensure there is no potential for unjustified discrimination on irrelevant grounds. Our monitoring data is externally analysed each year, and recommendations are published and acted upon. All information supplied is treated in strict confidence and no identifying details are attached to it. It helps us to monitor and evaluate the success and application of our equal opportunity policy and diversity strategy and to compile anonymised statistics which are included within our formal reporting structures.

A specific requirement relating to Community Background is requested within the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Monitoring Form for applicants applying for posts that have the potential to be based in the Northern Ireland office whereby applicants are encouraged to declare their Community Background, regardless of which location they are applying from. We monitor the Community Background of our job applicants and employees in order to demonstrate our commitment to promoting equality of opportunity in employment and to comply with our duties under the Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998.

An additional section is attached to the British Council application form for internal and external vacancies. This section states that the British Council operates a Guaranteed Interview Scheme for disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria for a vacancy. All disabled applicants are asked to confirm whether reasonable adjustments are required (and to specify the nature of those adjustments) at application stage.

The British Council has a Core Skills dictionary which sets out the skills which are required most often in roles throughout the British Council. They include a requirement for team leaders to coordinate a diverse team with awareness of equality and diversity impact as part of project specifications. The Dictionary also specifies that in all communications with internal and external audiences, staff must demonstrate an awareness of a diverse audience in speaking and writing.

Likewise, our British Council behaviours were designed in consultation with staff and based on the attributes identified as essential to the Council's ongoing success. The Behaviours are intended to be used as an integral part of all recruitment and selection across the British Council. There are 6 behaviours, each with three requirement levels used to identify the degree of knowledge, skills and experience that is necessary to enable effective performance in the role. The 6 Behaviours are: Creating Shared Purpose, Connecting with Others, Working Together, Being Accountable, Making it Happen and Shaping the Future. Within the Connecting with Others Behaviour, applicants must demonstrate how they achieve understanding and trust in a culturally sensitive way, showing how they take steps to learn about other people, cultures and organisations and adjust their behaviour to respond to how other people think and behave in different cultures or environments.

All staff worldwide are required to ensure their behaviour is consistent with our policies.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2019-20 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The British Council Behaviours form a core part of the formal performance planning and evaluation cycle. Within the Connecting with Others Behaviour, applicants must demonstrate how they achieve understanding and trust in a culturally sensitive way, showing how they take steps to learn about other people, cultures and organisations and adjust their behaviour to respond to how other people think and behave in different cultures or environments.

Senior Managers' leadership role is critical to embedding our EDI principles by becoming involved in diversity initiatives and projects. They ensure that Equality Impact Assessments of key policies, programmes and services are carried out as required. In general, senior managers champion EDI, promote the merits of a good work-life balance and initiate activities to back this up. SLT must have an EDI deliverable in the performance plans.

All staff are also encouraged to dedicate a performance management deliverable to Equality Diversity and Inclusion and spend time thinking about what EDI means to them, their experiences and how they can improve their knowledge of EDI as well as how to put this into practice in the workplace. Staff are also encouraged to commit time to looking in detail on the intranet at our EDI Policy, Diversity Strategy and the British Council's approach to equality and diversity as well as discrimination legislation.

Marketing and Communications staff play a pivotal role in communicating our EDI commitment to our audiences by ensuring all images used in communications reflect diversity. They also must ensure access to our communications for disabled people and speakers of minority languages and implement changes to address inequalities.

Facilities staff must create the environment in which all customers and colleagues can feel safe and secure by ensuring all refurbishment projects incorporate communication of a clear message of inclusion and accessibility to a wide range of people, for example, disabled people and people with young children. In the Northern Ireland office, Disability Action have supported us in addressing access issues and ensuring personal evacuation plans are in place for anyone who might need additional support in the event of an emergency.

The British Council Disability Working Group comprises of seven staff from across the UK who give 5% of their time to the group. They meet about six times a year and help us to take forward the disability related action points in our Integrated Equality Scheme and to generally keep disability on the corporate agenda.

Programme staff ensure that every participant attending our events feel welcomed and valued by checking all venues for accessibility issues. We also ensure that equality monitoring data (as a minimum in the areas of gender and age) for customers is carried out to identify under- and over-represented groups and results are discussed and acted upon in relation to the local context and local demographics. Programme staff also provide catering at all events that meets the diversity of participants.

For all Northern Ireland staff, if they have a particular examples of how they have promoted equal opportunities and good relations in an aspect of their work, this is championed throughout the Northern Ireland office and fed to our UK Diversity Team.

6 In the 2019-20 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? *(tick all that apply)*

- Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
- Yes, in some departments/jobs
- No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's ongoing corporate plan
- No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2019-20 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The British Council's five corporate values are at the heart of what we do and how we work. They are: Valuing People (specifically how we value diversity and respect), Integrity, Mutuality, Creativity and Professionalism.

The British Council's Corporate Plan outlines the organisation's commitment to continue to enable the people of the UK to share their culture and way of life with over 600 million people and partners throughout the world, through the programme areas of Arts, Cultural Engagement, and English. Promoting equality of opportunity and good relations is integrated into this intention. We set diversity targets in our Corporate Plan through the Diversity Assessment Framework (DAF). The UK target for 2020 is eight out of ten (an increase from our 2019 score of four out of ten).

We run mentoring programmes for women and have taken steps towards more flexible deployment to help colleagues appointed locally to develop and progress into more senior roles.

We have adopted more flexible deployment to broaden opportunities for locally appointed staff and maximise the diversity of our workforce. This included a transition for all staff at senior management level to a single SMT payband to give greater flexibility to redeploy senior management staff at any time across all geographical locations without the barrier of grade and payband.

EDI is mainstreamed into our Northern Ireland Country Plan. The Annual Corporate Plan outlines targets, successes to date and proposed outcomes against targets. Part of the remit to 'inspire, educate and teach is to be achieved by-

- Continuing to develop the professional expertise of our staff across all areas
- Investing to develop our staff and attract talented new people to work with us globally.
- Continuing to be a diverse organisation that strives to reflect our society today – is skilled in engaging with different cultures and follows best practice in equal opportunities and diversity

- Upholding the British Council values of valuing people, integrity, mutuality, creativity and professionalism.

We contribute to the UK government’s commitment to international development support for stability, economic development, reduced inequalities and good governance in developing, fragile and conflict-affected countries around the world, including those vital to the UK’s strategic interests. Our work will continue to align with the emerging post 2015 Development Agenda, in particular around poverty eradication, quality education, gender equality and sustainable development.

We are aware that globalisation affects every part of the UK touching the lives of citizens, changing communities and shaping our economic futures. At the same time, the UK context is changing, with an increasing focus on the diversity of the UK and embracing the cultural strengths and involving people from across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, their regions and major cities. In order to make the greatest impact, we tailor our programmes to contribute to the policy objectives of the UK as a whole and to meet the priorities of the four nations of the UK. We value the opportunity to make greater use of the diversity of the contemporary UK as an asset in itself.

In arts we promote our innovative digital offer including the continued development of unique digital projects using our disability arts and diversity expertise.

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2019-20 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:	3	Actions ongoing:	10	Actions to commence:	
--------------------	---	------------------	----	----------------------	--

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

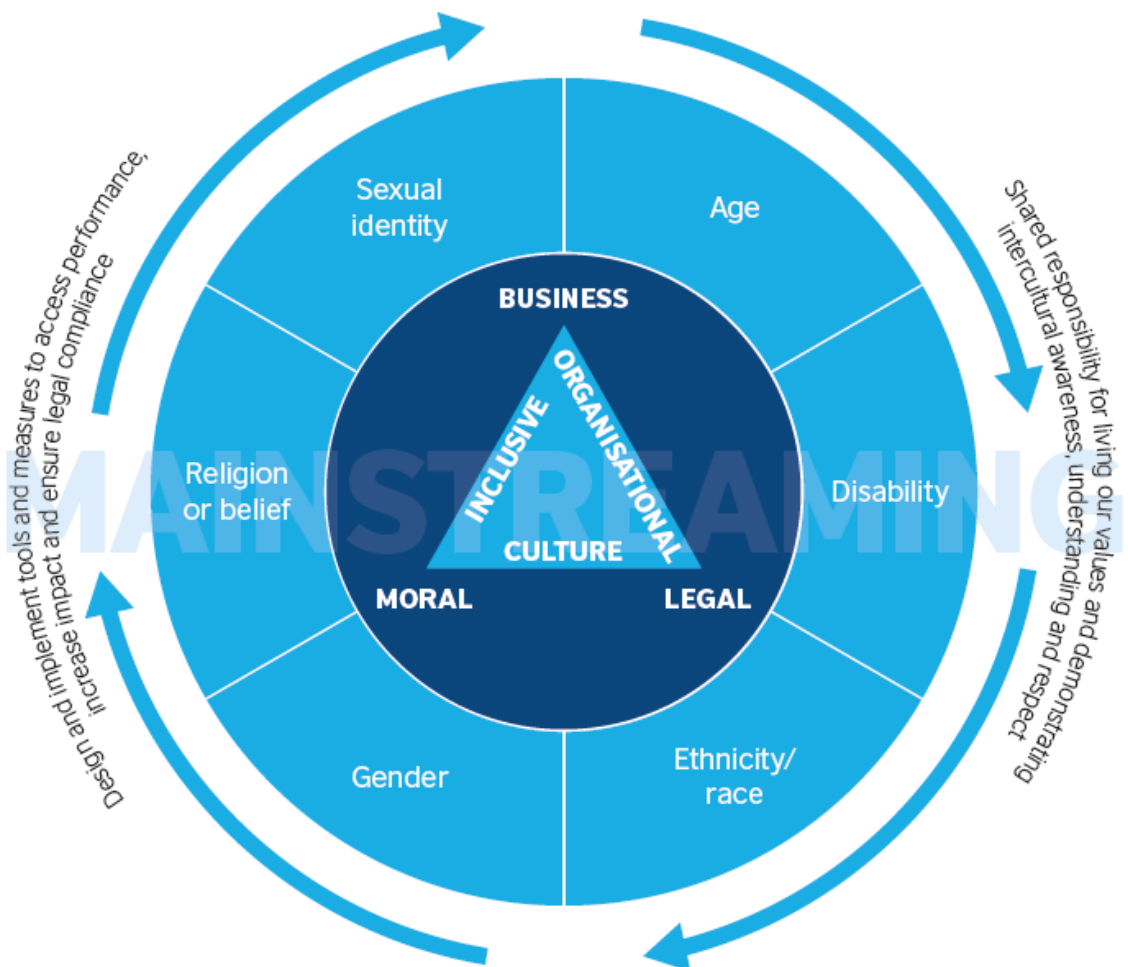
1) Ensure Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is mainstreamed into our current practices (ongoing)

- Celebration of key diversity days throughout the year
- A document entitled “Building EDI into your work” is used by all staff to integrate EDI into everyday work, split by job type. See appendices
- A “Guide to Mainstreaming Equality and Diversity in Project Development and Delivery” is used by all staff. This is a checklist for staff to use as guidance about how to mainstream equality and diversity principles and issues into the development, delivery and review of programme work in a more systematic and comprehensive way (see appendices)
- For smaller one-off events, we use the checklist entitled “Questions to Support Inclusive Activities” (see appendices)
- EDI is further mainstreamed into event management using an accessibility checklist (see Appendices). All venues for British Council events are checked for accessibility and related services. The British Council policy clearly mandates they will react to specific needs which includes those requiring or requesting Personal Readers, Infra-red or induction loops, Guiders, Braille, Lip Speakers, Temporary wheelchair access lifts, and Sign

Language Interpreter. In addition, there is an anticipatory duty across the following categories: Mobility, Hearing impairment, Visual impairment, Learning disabilities and difficulties, mental health and severe disfigurement. Consideration is made for religious or cultural request such as the availability of rooms for prayer and special dietary needs.

- Brand guidelines ensure documents and formats are fully accessible.
- Staff are encouraged to have an EDI deliverable in their performance portfolios (this has become mandatory for SLT) and a bank of example deliverables has been circulated to all Northern Ireland staff together with a self-assessment checklist
- Ongoing EDI training is rolled out annually
- Screening of all new or significantly amended policies and case studies are circulated
- Web accessibility guidelines in use: [Web Accessibility Guidelines](#)

Our mainstreaming chart which forms part of our EDI strategy is as follows:



2) Monitor data and data accuracy across all protected characteristics for staff within British Council Northern Ireland (ongoing)

The British Council's global people data system **MyHR** was launched in the UK and Kenya in December 2017 and was rolled out to all staff globally by the end of 2018. It is a centralised, global database for all of our HR information and includes instant access to accurate and up-to-date information supported by simplified and standardised processes. MyHR also gives us a clear picture of our global workforce and ensure all our HR work is delivered in a secure, compliant and risk-controlled manner. The new system enables users to:

- access, update and manage personal data securely
- book and manage leave easily
- search for colleagues, see the organisational structure and access accurate, up-to-date data in real time
- access the Employee Service Centre (AskHR) for HR advice and system issues
- receive timely automated reminders and guidance relating to specific global processes
- any time access via the MyHR mobile app

Steps are continually taken to encourage staff to complete their personal data on the myHR system via a series of email reminders. Improvements were made to the system as a whole for assessing equality monitoring data for staff across all job bands. This has ensured that equality monitoring data is appropriately collected, kept up to date with as much consistency as possible, held as confidential sensitive data, and easily retrieved in a format for reporting purposes. We will continue to encourage staff to update this data on an ongoing basis. **NOTE: The MyHR database does NOT contain data on community background for Northern Ireland staff. Community background data is requested on an adhoc basis from our HR department and stored securely in a protected file. Only the Equality Manager has access to this data and therefore staff are unable to view or change it.**

3) Continue communication with HR team to improve system for obtaining external and internal job applicant data – to be obtained for full analysis and inclusion in annual and periodic monitoring reports (complete)

We have worked closely with our central HR department to clarify our specific monitoring requirements for Northern Ireland. All recruited posts which are (or have the potential to be) based in Northern Ireland are encouraged to complete an Equality Monitoring form which contains a specific question on community background. Our central HR department must retain all HR records for a minimum of 3 years of appointment date to ensure data is available for the 3 yearly periodic review. Monitoring data is requested from HR for new starts or promotees twice yearly and is recorded locally on a protected spreadsheet. We apply the residuary method to staff using the formalised approach and again this data is recorded locally. This process does not require any further action at present.

4) Improve communication on EDI updates, news and best practice to all British Council Northern Ireland staff (complete)

A dedicated Equality Manager in the Northern Ireland office communicates with staff to increase awareness of EDI issues. Staff are kept up to date with key EDI issues and dates on an ongoing basis mainly via the physical EDI Toolkit and electronically via the newly created EDI specific Microsoft Teams page for colleagues in the Northern Ireland office. The Teams folder contains all corporate and Northern Ireland specific EDI documents. There is also a range of documents on event management and ideas on how to mainstream EDI into everyday work. There is also a section on useful resources including accessibility guides for venues across Northern Ireland, links to interfaith calendars and international diversity days, lists of nearby places of worship for staff and visitors, and links to EDI training courses. Feedback from staff suggests this is a very useful tool and helps keep all important EDI documents in one accessible place. The Teams folder will continue to be updated on an ad hoc basis.

Colleagues subscribing to the British Council global EDI mailbase are kept informed of ongoing issues and there are staff Bulletin notices and global staff talks around a range of EDI topics throughout the year. Further communication and training schedules are planned in 2019-20.

An EDI Working group has been created with 7 representatives from across the office to develop an action plan and disseminate EDI related information to staff. No further action is required at present – EDI comms is working well.

5) Revise EDI training plan for all British Council Northern Ireland staff (ongoing)

Aside from the various EDI related webinars throughout the year, face to face training sessions took place in the Northern Ireland office this year (see Q2 for more details):

The training plan is being revised for 2020-21 with a move to more webinar based training in light of the Covid-19 working from home policy.

6) Reasonable Adjustments - record and monitor annual data on number of reasonable adjustment requests received and actioned (internally and externally). Remain vigilant of issues affecting disabled staff and customers and ensure an accessible environment (ongoing)

Staff are encouraged to use the corporate Accessibility checklists when planning small and large scale events. A template to record reasonable adjustments requests is attached to our Global Reasonable Adjustments Policy and a good practice form linked to our Disability Assessment Framework that is used in various offices.

The EDI Working Group is looking at ways to log these requests centrally in our own office and keep a record of how they are addressed in order to help deal with future requests. This is ongoing.

We have a formal global Reasonable Adjustments Policy (see Appendices) for staff with disabilities.

We have a contact with a senior member of staff at Disability Action whom we use as a reference point and we also receive Disability Action's monthly Ezine which helps us keep abreast of issues affecting disabled people across Northern Ireland.

We continue to ensure all external communication is as accessible as possible. The Northern Ireland website is built for accessibility and usability with a clear visual hierarchy – making it easy for the user to navigate through the website content - this includes making text readable and understandable and having content appear and operate in predictable ways. We use good font size and colour contrast combinations, which is helpful for users with colour-blindness and other visual impairments and have included captions and alternatives for our audio and visual content, for those with hearing/vision difficulties.

We use inclusive language throughout the website – for example, we use ‘people first’ language which keeps the individual as the most essential element. Characteristics such as gender, sexual orientation, religion, racial group or ability are only used when relevant. We avoid idioms, jargons, and acronyms: which can exclude people who may not have specialised knowledge of a particular subject and impede effective communication as a result.

We also have a webpage dedicated to visitors to British Council Northern Ireland who may have accessibility needs - <https://nireland.britishcouncil.org/about/access-british-council-northern-ireland>

We will find ways to work with disabled people through internships or work shadowing opportunities to obtain feedback on the barriers to reaching disability groups and this will enable us to gain feedback from disabled people regarding the level of accessibility of our physical and online environments.

7) Action to help make progress towards the protected characteristics targets, particularly in senior management (ongoing)

We run mentoring programmes for women and have taken first steps towards more flexible deployment to help colleagues appointed locally to develop and progress into more senior roles.

We have adopted more flexible deployment to broaden opportunities for locally appointed staff and maximise the diversity of our workforce. We have transitioned all staff at senior management level to a single SMT payband to give greater flexibility to redeploy senior management staff at any time across all geographical locations without the barrier of grade and payband.

As a means of increasing the number of disabled staff across the organisation, recruitment teams have specifically addressed the issue of broadening access to those with disability by establishing contracts with specialist diversity recruiters (such as Employability, Equal Approach, Diversity Jobs) using accredited diverse talent specialists, working across a range of diverse strands including; Disability, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Race, Religion, Generational, Transgender, Obesity, Education, Class, Working Parents and Carers. This has broadened access not only to those with disability but groups across the range of protected characteristics. In line with the British Council EDI strategy these efforts shall continue until targets have been met to address areas of under representation and remove any possible barriers to equality of opportunity. By respecting and valuing diversity we are more likely to attract talent and fresh perspectives, nurture creativity, innovation and flexibility and new

opportunities and sources of support, so we remain relevant and dynamic and achieve greater reach and impact.

All staff are encouraged to declare their disability on the online HR portal and as a result there has been an increase in the response rate.

When advertising for vacancies, British Council recruitment processes ensure reasonable adjustment is actioned for candidates with disability or special needs. We also display the 'positive about disabled people' logo on all recruitment advertisements and our web pages, and offer a guaranteed interview to all disabled applicants meeting our recruitment criteria.

We also consider opportunities for disabled people to work for the British Council Northern Ireland for example through work experience or internship programmes. The EDI Working group is seeking to find ways to roll this out locally in consultation with Disability Action NI.

Across the organisation, although there have been increases in progress towards the disability and gender targets there has been some progress towards the ethnicity targets. Research was conducted that led to focus groups and we ran a series of masterclasses targeted at minority ethnic staff in the UK, recognising their under-representation at senior levels and organisational cultural issues that seem to be preventing their progression, and it is hoped that increased attention will be given to this and other areas of under-representation in the coming year, supported by refreshed equality targets.

Within the Northern Ireland office specifically, we seek ways to increase the percentage of ethnic minority staff which is currently low (although this most likely reflect the low percentage in the local population) but this is a group which we could target when recruiting.

The age profile of staff will continue to be regularly monitored to ensure there are no barriers to staff in the 51+ age group. Only 339 staff globally are 60 or older and the EU Region and the UK appear to be employing the largest number of people over 60, which seems to be in line with the ageing trends in their societies (Eurostat reports nearly one fifth i.e. 19% of the EU population was aged 65 and over). An age-related information and resource pack was produced in 2018 (see Appendices for full report) to encourage staff to reflect on how age-inclusive we are as an organisation.

The British Council published a case study in CIPD's publication on "Addressing Barriers on employee career progression to the top". This included research into barriers to career progression facing staff from ethnic minority backgrounds and ran masterclasses to provide information on how to help address them.

8) External Monitoring – monitoring of customers from the protected characteristic groups taking active part in programmes and activities offered by the British Council Northern Ireland (ongoing)

A questionnaire covering all section 75 protected groups is sent to all external customers across a number of programmes. The data has been recorded on a central spreadsheet and patterns and trends identified. Some underrepresentation was identified among boys, with a higher uptake of girls participating in many of our programmes, thus presenting an opportunity for us to target boys. We have also seen

a greater participation rate in our education programmes amongst grammar schools over secondary schools which we will find ways to address. We will continue to monitor our customers throughout 2020-21 and will address any underrepresentation as it arises. The EDI Working group will find a way of addressing this in a more structured way this year.

9) Recruitment and induction – encourage job applications from a diverse audience and an understanding of EDI from the outset (ongoing)

The Disability Advisory Forum offers a recruitment audit service that will assess the accessibility recruitment processes and procedures offering support and guidance where needs have been identified. This is also an avenue which should be further explored and disseminated to staff. As part of the general HR process, all line managers are required to perform exit interviews on all staff who leave the organisation. This highlights any EDI related issues that may be raised and action taken.

All new staff- both permanent and temporary receive comprehensive induction training which includes an explanation of duties/responsibilities as they apply under Section 75. All new staff are given a copy of our Equality Scheme and EDI training is carried out during induction process as part of the general HR procedures. All new staff are also given a copy of the booklet “Welcome to the British Council” which contains full information on our EDI Policy.

We will seek to establish contact with specialist diversity recruiters in Northern Ireland using accredited diverse talent specialists, working across a range of diverse strands including; Disability, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Race, Religion, Generational, Transgender, Obesity, Education, Class, Working Parents and Carers. This will broaden access not only to those with disability but groups across the range of protected characteristics. More work needs to be achieved here to address underrepresentation as it arises.

10) Support the British Council global inclusive communities work (complete)

The British Council will continue to strengthen our support for growth in developing countries by promoting the rule of law and through programmes which deliver access to justice, equality and a reduction in violence against women and girls. We aim to develop the skills, confidence and life chances of women and girls through personal development opportunities and training for female community leaders. We will provide access to skills in social entrepreneurship, the creative economy and the English language, support professional skills and career development for female scientists and amplify women and girls’ voices and engagement through creative experiences. Build the UK’s global reputation as a world leader in social enterprise, engaging with governments around the world to influence policy and embed the teaching of social enterprise into education systems. We will seek to support social and creative enterprises to grow and access social investment in order to enhance impact and demonstrate the UK’s leadership in this area.

No immediate action will be taken in this area in the foreseeable future, but will be revisited in due course.

11) Ensure all suppliers are aware of our EDI policy and they too have similar policies. Ensure the diversity clause appears in the main body of contracts. (ongoing)

In addition to building in reference to diversity to the supply of contracted goods and services across the reporting period, the British Council's standard contract template has been commissioned and overseen by the Legal team. The team has ensured that the contract includes specific reference to Equality Legislation and the British Council's own policies - including a link to our Policies website, which includes the Equality Policy. This template is used by colleagues across the organisation for procurement of goods and services. The template itself can be found on the contracts portal, with a copy uploaded to the departmental EDI SharePoint site for ease of reference.

The two specific clauses are:

"British Council Requirements" means the instructions, requirements, policies, codes of conduct, guidelines, forms and other documents notified to the Partner in writing or set out on the British Council's website at [Policies for Consultants](#) or such other web address as may be notified to the Partner from time to time (as such documents may be amended, updated or supplemented from time to time during the Term);"

"Equality Legislation" means any and all legislation, applicable guidance and statutory codes of practice relating to diversity, equality, non-discrimination and human rights as may be in force from time to time in England and Wales or in any other territory in which, or in respect of which, the Partner performs its obligations in this Agreement;"

12) Promote British Council EDI strategy externally to stakeholders (customers, audiences, students, candidates, alumni, partners, programme participants, etc) (ongoing)

Our dedicated [EDI Webpage](#) explains our approach that EDI is central to everything we do.

Marketing and Communications staff play a pivotal role in communicating our EDI commitment to our audiences by ensuring all images used in communications reflect diversity. They also must ensure access to our communications for disabled people and speakers of minority languages and implement changes to address inequalities

To improve our EDI performance internally and externally, we have appointed senior level **Diversity Champions**. Diversity Champions usually occupy a board or executive level position and take on this role in addition to their existing senior leadership role. Diversity Champions have a range of formal, structured and specific responsibilities with the expressed aim of driving improvements in organisational diversity performance generally, or in a specific area and operate in the Champion role in the context of the corporate strategy.

Diversity Champion activities are consistently aligned with the needs and strategic objectives of the British Council and require the Champion to develop a deep understanding of the relevance of EDI to our core work and stakeholders - and the varying ways in which it impacts our people and service delivery. They help to promote EDI and raise awareness of related issues and drive the changes required to

embed EDI across the British Council: to engage staff and customers. Another benefit is that they leverage EDI benefits in terms of employee engagement, enhanced reputation and support our ambition to become a market leader in the services we deliver worldwide.

Locally, we disseminate our commitment to EDI, and the measures we take to address it, at promotional/information events to key stakeholders and customers and also through consultation. We are a JAM Card Friendly Organisation (see Q2) and champion diversity by creating diverse teams and flexing our style to appropriately match others in an inclusive way. EDI Group to seek ways of using our local Accredited Diversity Facilitator to promote our EDI message externally.

13) Monitoring of Selection Panels, Working Groups and Monitoring Committees to ensure representation of as many S75 categories as possible (complete)

- An annual review of the Board of Trustees is carried out every year, including a request for feedback put to all Board and Executive members on “The mix of skills, experience, knowledge and diversity on the Board and the use made of those skills”.
- Equality monitoring reports are run on the Northern Ireland Advisory Committee which provide valuable insight into the profiles of our committees and country offices.
- A review of the diversity of the Boards of Directors of the British Council’s subsidiary companies was conducted by an external consultant, which led to a change in advertised role profiles
- A review of recruitment to Country Committees and Sector Advisory Groups was carried out by the Governance team, resulting in standardised recruitment for all roles, making recruitment fairer and more transparent and creating the opportunity for these groups to become more diverse. This is routinely completed and no further action required at present.

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2019-20 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

None

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2019-20 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)*

X All the time

Sometimes

Never

- 11 Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2019-20 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:

In accordance with the commitments made in our Equality Scheme we recognise the importance of consultation in all aspects of the implementation of our statutory equality duties. We consult as a matter of form on our equality scheme, equality impact assessments action measures and any other matters deemed relevant to Section 75 Statutory duties.

We carry out our consultation in accordance with the principles contained in the Equality Commissions' guidance Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities (2010). All consultations will seek the views of those directly affected by the matter/policy, the Equality Commission, representative groups of Section 75 categories, other public authorities, voluntary and community groups, our staff and such other groups who have a legitimate interest in the matter, whether or not they have a direct economic or personal interest. We consider the accessibility and format of consultation we use in order to remove barriers to the consultation process.

Specific consideration is given to how best to communicate with people with disabilities, including people with learning disabilities and minority ethnic communities. Information is made available, on request, in alternative formats in a timely manner. We ensure that such consultees have equal time to respond.

We provide feedback to consultees in a timely manner. A feedback report is prepared which includes summary information on the policy consulted upon, a summary of consultees' comments and a summary of our consideration of and response to consultees' input. The feedback is provided in formats suitable to consultees.

Internally, HR visit each region and conduct climate surveys on staff 'wellbeing'. This provides a forum for staff to meet face-to-face with a HR colleague, share viewpoints and outline what 'wellbeing' in its broadest context meant to them as a British Council employee. Follow up communication is circulated to staff outlining next steps and action measures.

Externally, feedback is sought from service users on all our programmes many of which are schools or college programs. The views of participants (children, teenagers and young adults) are taken into consideration directly and indirectly via teachers and program directors and help shape development and direction of future programmes and services.

The British Council Northern Ireland offers a number of internships each year to enable a group of interns to see and experience the work of the British Council at first hand and champion the value of cultural relations.

The objectives of the internship scheme is as follows:

- To offer structured work experience placements within a specific business area to a group of interns
- To give a real introduction to the field of cultural relations to a group of interns
- To enable British Council departments to get support and benefit from a different perspective on their work

As part of the Internship programme, interns attend a three day corporate induction before joining a specific department for twelve weeks. They have a line manager and are set specific deliverables during their stay. In addition, they also undertake a group project which they present to staff and stakeholders at the end of the programme.

Work experience programmes are also managed for approximately ten school students a year and approximately five for higher education students. This scheme is co-ordinated by a local manager affording students the opportunity to gain insights into the broad remit of learning and development opportunities available according to their interests.

The Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan reports were reviewed in 2020 and forwarded to our Northern Ireland Advisory Committee and staff for consultation prior to wider consultation and submission to the Equality Commission.

12 In the 2019-20 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:

We have an extensive list of consultees from across a wide range of organisations across all the Section 75 groups. See Appendices for full list.

We ensure accessibility of all documentation by making all documents available in alternative formats on request. All documentation is also accessible on our website.

13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2019-20 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes X No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

We informed the general public about the availability of this material through press releases where appropriate

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2019-20 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

X 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://nireland.britishcouncil.org/about/equal-opportunities-diversity>

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

10

16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2019-20:

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

We monitor our progress on the delivery of our action measures annually and update the action plan as necessary to ensure that it remains effective and relevant to our functions, internal processes, staff and customers. We also monitor participation in our programmes via monitoring questionnaires and we also monitor complaints if they arise.

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

Yes X No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

- 22** Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2019-20 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

No changes were made to the Equality Action Plan. Please see Q7 for full details on action measures and current progress.

- 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:

None

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 2019-20, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

See Q2 for training undertaken in 2019-20.

We have in place a communication and training programme for all staff and continued to ensure that our commitment to the Section 75 statutory duties was made clear in all relevant publications.

We ensure that staff are informed of interesting and relevant stories or case study examples of particular issues affecting people across the range of Section 75 categories, to ensure that our staff fully understand their role in implementing the scheme.

Our training plan for staff achieves the following objectives:

- raised awareness of the provisions of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, our equality scheme commitments and the particular issues likely to affect people across the range of Section 75 categories, to ensure that our staff fully understand their role in implementing the scheme
- provided those staff involved in the assessment of policies (screening and Equality Impact Assessment) with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
- provided those staff who deal with complaints in relation to compliance with our equality scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to investigate and monitor complaints effectively
- provided those staff involved in consultation processes with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
- provided those staff involved in the implementation and monitoring of the British Council Northern Ireland's equality scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively.

All British Council Northern Ireland staff and the Northern Ireland Advisory Committee have a copy of the Equality Scheme and were invited to comment on it. All new staff - both permanent and temporary have receive comprehensive induction training which included explanation of duties/responsibilities as they apply under Section 75.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training is incorporated into local Induction Training programmes which covers all legal requirements under the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Section 75 statutory duties.

EDI is an inherent component of regular British Council online training which is a mandatory requirement and which all staff must complete on an annual basis.

The Diversity Unit has created a document which includes tips to help anyone that designs or modifies websites to have web accessibility in mind. When designing a website it is important to realise how people with disabilities use the Web, what difficulties they may face and how to assist them in overcoming those difficulties.

In an attempt to raise office awareness of Diversity, we marked and celebrated some key international diversity days throughout the year and organised regional diversity weeks across our global network that have helped staff and external audiences engage with diversity issues in a new way.

Also, as the British Council offer so many courses and programmes via web links, they are constantly growing and being updated. Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) is available for those designing a website which outlined advice on making the site more easily accessible to older people. Included also is a template for accessibility evaluation reports to assess if needs are being met.

We have produced a document with information for Intranet users who are visually impaired and/or who would prefer to change the appearance of the intranet pages to make them more accessible.

The Northern Ireland office has a dedicated Equality Manager who is specifically responsible for ensuring that staff are aware of their obligations in meeting the requirements of/developments within Section 75 and the commitments of our equality scheme. The Equality Manager is our direct link to other parts of the UK to ensure that our legislative requirements specific to Northern Ireland are incorporated into all policies and processes.

As a means of raising awareness of LGBT issues the British Council created the Five Films for Freedom Campaign. This was the world's first global, digital LGBT film festival initiated by the British Council and the British Film Institute and runs annually in March. The campaign seeks to promote freedom, equality and LGBT rights in 135 countries across the social media network and all staff are invited to a screening of the films annually.

Our Global Diversity Network is made up of two or more representatives from each region, who work with the Diversity Unit in a formalised way. They support their management teams in each region to mainstream equality and diversity in all our practices. They have expertise and understanding of the different cultures and contexts in which they work, so they can ensure our corporate diversity initiatives are meaningful and relevant and can be applied in each region. The GDN share ideas and good practice using a GDN mailbase. This is a mailing list that all staff interested in finding out more about equality and diversity can subscribe to. It is a place for sharing good practice, asking for advice from other colleagues and joining in debates and discussions about topical issues related to global equality and diversity so that we can all learn from each other around equality and diversity.

- 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:

Feedback from staff showed that the online mandatory EDI training is clear and informative.

Unconscious bias training was well received by staff and in 2021 will form part of our mandatory training package along with anti-racism training. This will be supported by the promotion of our Race Equality Guide 2020 and a revised Diversity Strategy for 2021.

The Section 75 training delivered by the Equality Commission has enabled Northern Ireland staff to become fully informed of our legal requirements under Section 75 and the part that they play in ensuring we fulfil our statutory duties.

26 Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2019-20, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

The Communications team on an ongoing basis prioritise links to specific platforms to meet identified demand thus increasing accessibility to relevant programmes and information eg a 'Frontier room' link existed for the C2K teachers online platform to ensure relevant British Council programme information is more easily accessible to all primary and secondary teachers across Northern Ireland.

An alerts communication is emailed to schools outlining upcoming events or programme opportunities, thus capturing a broader audience and increasing participation levels

We measure how people view the quality of our work in three main ways:

- Scores from a customer satisfaction survey distributed both at face-to-face events and online.
- The percentage of people we work with who report gaining new knowledge or skills
- A net recommendation score, which is a measure of the willingness of participants to recommend others to work with us or use our services. The net percentage is calculated from advocates minus detractors, in line with standard international practice.

We focussed solely on those customers who have paid for our services, rather than aggregating fee-paying customers with those receiving services for free. We feel this provides a clearer picture and avoids potential distortion of the results. Our customer satisfaction scores showed that a significant majority of our customers agree or strongly agree that our programmes are of high quality. Our net recommendation score (47 in line with target) reflects the extent to which our customers would recommend our work to others. Overall our results continue to benchmark well against industry averages.

The percentage of customers reporting gaining new knowledge or skills is high at 82 per cent. Although the customer satisfaction and net promoter scores are high, there has been a minor drop against these indicators compared to last year. We are analysing customer feedback and conducting research to find out where we might not be meeting expectations. We are, for example, improving payment and refund processes, improving test day experiences for our exams customers, providing more support to enable customers to prepare for tests, improving access to and quality of customer services, and improving the availability of accurate and up-to-date online information.

Source: Annual Report 2018-19:

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/2018-2019-annual-report-final.pdf>

See also our Customer Management Framework (in Appendices)

While programmes are open to all sections of the community, the uptake and participation rates are monitored to determine if positive action can be taken to increase participation amongst those from disadvantaged areas or those from minority groups. We plan to formalise this process in more detail in 2020 (see Question 29).

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

- 27 How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2019-20?

Insert number here:

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

No complaints were raised this year.

Section 3: Looking Forward

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

The Equality Scheme was reviewed in January 2020 and will run until 2025.

- 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*)

- **Monitoring**

1) External: In 2019-20 we conducted an equality audit of our beneficiaries through the use of a Monitoring Questionnaire based around the nine Section 75 groups. This allowed us to gain a better insight into what groups taking active part in all programmes and activities offered by the British Council. The results were collated and analysed we identified that there was a slight underrepresentation of customers throughout our programmes from the protestant community. We also established that there was an overrepresentation of grammar schools participating in our programmes over secondary schools and fewer boys participating also. We will continue to monitor our beneficiaries in 2020-21 to see if and how the pattern changes. We intend to work with relevant programme managers to seek opportunities to promote greater equality of opportunity and will look at our current policies.

2) Internal: UK wide we are making efforts to reach a target of 100% response rate on online HR portal for staff as well as Northern Ireland Advisory Committee (NIAC) and Board of Trustees to record their personal monitoring data.

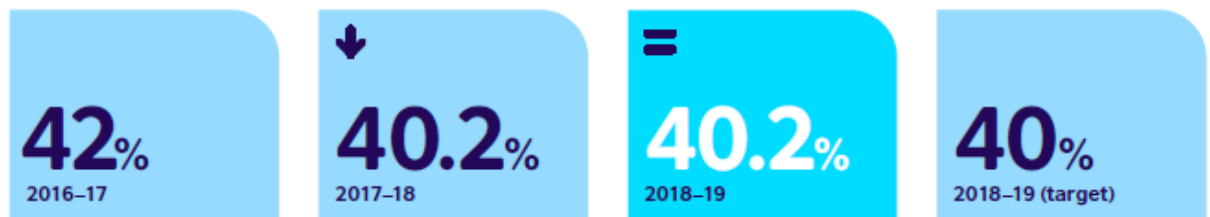
With regards to **global staff monitoring**, there are several areas in our organisation where there is diversity and good representation. There is a wide age range of staff and good diversity in relation to religion or belief, with staff from the six main religions or beliefs and of no religion or belief.

The chart below shows that we have met our target for women in senior roles but have fallen short of our target for minority ethnic and disabled staff in senior roles. We are taking action to address this by running a series of masterclasses targeted at minority ethnic staff in the UK, recognising their under-representation at senior levels and organisational cultural issues that seem to be preventing their progression.

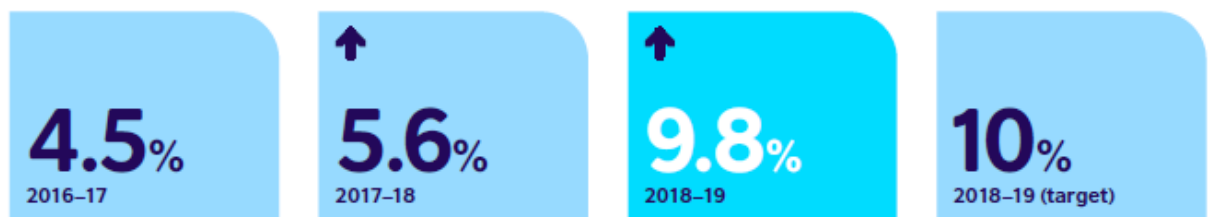
We aim to increase the number of staff with disabilities via our guaranteed interview scheme for disabled applicants.

From next year we will be monitoring progress towards new targets for 2021: 50 per cent women; 15 per cent minority ethnic staff and 7 per cent disabled staff in senior roles.

Women in senior roles



Minority ethnic staff in senior roles



Disabled staff in senior roles



The Equality Monitoring intranet site has been revised. The site contains a new animation about how and why we carry out equality monitoring at the British Council, plus guidance on carrying out equality monitoring, our 12 top tips to consider before

embarking on equality monitoring, and links to the latest UK equality monitoring reports and some of the good examples of equality monitoring carried out in different country offices. See all guides here: www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/how-we-work/equality-diversity-inclusion/resources

- **Underrepresentation within protected characteristics**

We will continue to seek to find ways to further increase the underrepresented groups in senior management (women, ethnic minorities and disabled staff).

We will seek to establish contacts with specialist diversity recruiters in Northern Ireland using accredited diverse talent specialists, working across a range of diverse strands including; Disability, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Race, Religion, Generational, Transgender, Obesity, Education, Class, Working Parents and Carers. This will broaden access not only to those with disability but groups across the range of protected characteristics.

The Disability Advisory Forum offers a recruitment audit service that will assess the accessibility recruitment processes and procedures offering support and guidance where needs have been identified. This is also an avenue which should be further explored and disseminated to staff.

We have developed mentoring programmes for women and have taken first steps towards more flexible deployment to help colleagues appointed locally to develop and progress into more senior roles.

We have adopted a more flexible deployment to broaden opportunities for locally appointed staff and maximise the diversity of our workforce. Staff at senior management level are now within a single SMT payband to give greater flexibility to redeploy senior management staff at any time across all geographical locations without the barrier of grade and payband.

Within the Northern Ireland office specifically, we will seek ways to increase the percentage of ethnic minority staff which is currently low (although this most likely reflect the low percentage in the local population) but this is a group which we could target when recruiting. The age profile of staff should continue to be regularly monitored and ensure there are no barriers to staff in the 51+ age group. We also will consider opportunities for disabled people to work for the British Council Northern Ireland for example through work experience or internship programmes.

As a means of increasing the number of disabled staff across the organisation, recruitment teams have specifically addressed the issue of broadening access to those with disability by establishing contracts with specialist diversity recruiters (such as Employability, Equal Approach, Diversity Jobs) using accredited diverse talent specialists, working across a range of diverse strands including; Disability, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Race, Religion, Generational, Transgender, Obesity, Education, Class, Working Parents and Carers. This has broadened access not only to those with disability but groups across the range of protected characteristics. In line with the British Council EDI strategy these efforts shall continue until targets have been met to address areas of under representation and remove any possible barriers to equality

of opportunity. By respecting and valuing diversity we are more likely to attract talent and fresh perspectives, nurture creativity, innovation and flexibility and new opportunities and sources of support, so we remain relevant and dynamic and achieve greater reach and impact.

All staff are encouraged to declare their disability on the online HR portal and as a result there has been an increase in the response rate.

When advertising for vacancies, British Council recruitment processes ensure reasonable adjustment is actioned for candidates with disability or special needs. We also display the 'positive about disabled people' logo on all recruitment advertisements and our web pages, and offer a guaranteed interview to all disabled applicants meeting our recruitment criteria.

We also consider opportunities for disabled people to work for the British Council Northern Ireland for example through work experience or internship programmes.

- **Reasonable Adjustments**

We will record and monitor annual data on number of reasonable adjustment requests actioned (internally and externally) and in 2019-20 will look to find the most efficient way of achieving this in collaboration with the British Council Disability Working Group. We will also assess the effectiveness of reasonable adjustments made using a formalised approach.

- **Gender & Inclusion**

To address our slightly widened gender pay gap due to fewer women proportionally in senior management and more women proportionally in junior management, the action we will take in the next year is as follows:

- Implement the next phase of talent management and succession planning
- Implement business unit specific action planning in Cultural Engagement and English and Exams
- Investigate why women left senior management in higher numbers and whether this was a one off or part of a wider trend
- Investigate whether there are any issues with the way we recruit at junior levels – i.e. why do we not attract more men and why is it that those who do apply are less likely to be recruited than a female applicant.

- **Diversity Strategy**

1) We will focus our efforts on increasing the Diversity Assessment Framework score target from 4 out of 10 indicators to 8 out of 10. The next deadline for submissions is February 2019.

2) In British Council Northern Ireland we plan to support the British Council global society agenda work by identifying opportunities from the Northern Ireland equality sector expertise and knowledge which could be of interest to an international audience.

- **Training & Communications**

- 1) Further staff training has been planned throughout 2020-21 throughout the UK.
- 2) We will encourage all staff to create an EDI deliverable in their performance portfolio for 2020-21 and find ways to ensure EDI is mainstreamed across the office.
- 3) We will seek ways of further improving communications with staff on EDI updates. As well as the Annual Report, Corporate Plan, dedicated EDI web pages, we intend to meet more regularly with leaders of all SBUs in the Northern Ireland office regarding the impact of EDI on their work programmes in order to re-affirm our commitment to and awareness of EDI responsibilities and Section 75 duties.

- **Consultation**

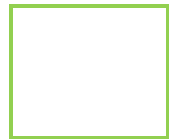
We will consider a more focussed consultation strategy through the use of press releases, direct mail shots and possibly focus groups to groups representing the various categories in Section 75 and will continue to revise our consultation list on a regular basis.

30 In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2019-20) reporting period?
(please tick any that apply)

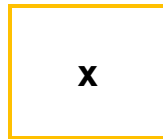
- X Employment
- Goods, facilities and services
- Legislative changes
- X Organisational changes/ new functions
- Nothing specific, more of the same
- Other (please state):

PART B - Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Disability Action Plans

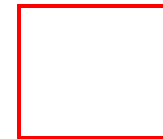
1. Number of action measures for this reporting period that have been:



Fully achieved



Partially achieved



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	Establish an EDI working group with representatives from across various SBUs in the Northern Ireland office.	Increased communication and tighter monitoring of desired outcomes against targets	Facilitate training, communication, mainstreaming and adherence to EDI principles, providing feedback to teams locally on disability and EDI organisational and local issues. Also conduct direct consultation with disabled organisations/disabled people to obtain meaningful feedback.

PART B

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
	<p>Provision of Disability Awareness training for staff covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e-learning modules at induction stage (within Health and Safety Training) • Disability Action Plan • Use of disability guides and organisational resources • Internal and external customer equality monitoring and disability targets • Use of contracts which reference EDI • Disability language and etiquette • JAM Card 		<p>Increased awareness of issues facing those with disabilities and how we as an organization can help recognize and address these issues. Increased awareness of measures which can be taken to facilitate participation in events by those with disability</p>
	<p>Further develop our relationship with Disability Action NI, links with British Council Pakistan and explore opportunities for further collaboration and training sessions for staff</p>		<p>Mutual opportunities for future collaboration and learning</p>
	<p>As signatory to the Mental Health Charter, promote positive mental health initiatives which will be beneficial to Northern Ireland staff and wider community. This will include a</p>		<p>Increased awareness of issues facing those with disabilities and how we as an organisation can help recognize and address these issues</p>

PART B

	<p>consultation to staff by Disability Action NI representative and member of our Disability Advisory Panel, and initiatives to address the issue of staff wellbeing, including nomination of mental health champions, physical health assessments, quiet/prayer room and mental health awareness training for staff</p>		
--	--	--	--

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	Time to Talk' days held annually for staff to discuss, share and reflect about mental health and wellbeing and share organisational resources		Increased awareness of organisation's Keep Well Campaign and support offered to staff
2	Celebrate the annual International Day for people with Disabilities		Increased awareness of issues facing those with disabilities and how we as an organisation can help recognize and address these issues
3			
4			

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			
2			

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	Ensure the Disability Symbol is displayed on all job advertisements to show commitment to employment and retention of those with disability.		Evidenced via recruitment records
2	Ensure EDI Toolkit for staff contains up-to-date resources and information on reasonable adjustments, accessible venues, disability guides and local places of worship etc for staff and visitors. Microsoft Teams folder created for all Northern Ireland staff to access information and documentation on all EDI issues including disability and reasonable adjustments		Staff to be equipped with knowledge and information to provide customer service excellence to disabled customers and visitors

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

PART B

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestonesvi / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	Further develop disability related arts projects such as Unlimited Disability Arts Festival, Bounce Festival and University of Atypical to support disabled and deaf people's involvement in the arts and facilitate the dissemination of artists' work to reach UK and international audiences.		Promote positive attitudes towards disabled artists and their work	This is an ongoing arts related activity and dependent on outside agencies and funding.
2				

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

Feedback from staff, Business Disability Forum, recruiting managers, Diversity Unit and HR department.

PART B

(b) Quantitative

Feedback from customers using event evaluation forms.

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?

No

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?

PART B

The Disability Action plan was revised, consulted and submitted to the Equality Commission at the end of 2019.

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.

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