

Connswater Homes Ltd



Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report 2017-18

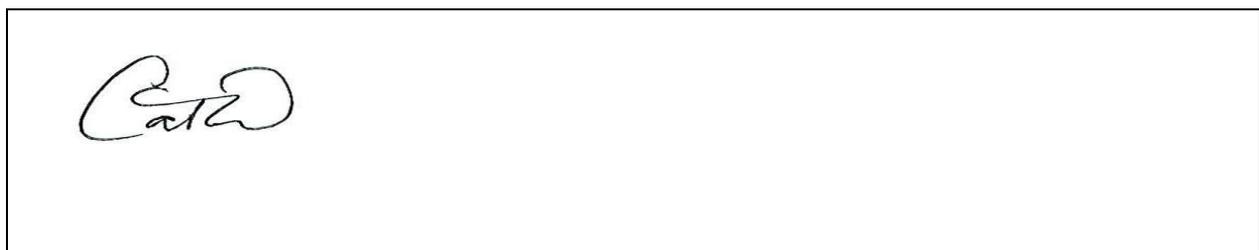
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan	As above X Name: Telephone: Email:

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

<http://www.connswater.org.uk/index.php/equality/equality-scheme>

Signature:



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

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

This report reflects progress made between April 2017 and March 2018

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 2017-18, 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.

For the period 1 April 2017 - 31 March 2018 Connswater Homes continues to promote equality of opportunity and good relations through all its policies and direct service provision to its customers, stakeholders and employees. In its Equality Scheme, the Association gave an undertaking to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on each policy, or group of related policies, where screening had indicated significant issues in relation to one or more of the nine equality dimensions.

The Association's Director of Corporate Assurance continues with her responsibility for Section 75 as well as promotion of the Association and its work.

The Association's Annual Report was published in line with RNIB Clear Print guidelines. Tenants are kept informed of policy changes and revisions via the tenants newsletter which was published three times in the past year and also via the Association's website where screening decisions are also published.

Tenants and customers are made aware that all documents can be made available in alternative formats, if required, and the Association had a contract with a translation service (Language Line) who provide translation and interpretation if required. During this reporting period the Association has also availed of the services of an interpreters to aid in communicating with customers whose first language is not English – this was a great help with regard to maximising benefit uptake to ensure that tenants who were in receipt of welfare benefits got everything they were entitled to.

The Association during the reporting period won the Chartered Institute of Housing's Excellence in Customer Service Award in February 2018.

During the reporting period the Association appointed a Welfare Advice Officer to the housing management team. We have worked to inform tenants about Welfare Reform and the mitigation measures, supported tenants to avail of mitigation payments and are working with these same tenants to raise awareness and provide support should these mitigation measures be removed.

We have provided support and help for new Universal Credit claimants; hold welfare advice surgeries to ensure all tenants maximise their uptake in benefits they are entitled to.

- 2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2016-17 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

Examples during the reporting period are:

Age: A play park has been provided at the Association's new build construction scheme in Dunmurry on the site of the former Dunmurry High School. This site has provided 98 new homes, green spaces and a play park which will now be managed by Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council.

The Association has also gifted land at this site to Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council and during the reporting period the construction of a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) took place and is due to be completed during 2018-19.

A Tenant Satisfaction Survey was carried out which completed a 100% survey of all tenants during a two year period. The results were published and shared with tenants and are available on the Association's website.

Consultations events were held with tenants in relation to the programme of planned maintenance works e.g. tenant choice to avail of the opportunity to take a heating upgrade to gas; tenant choice for the colour of kitchen cupboard doors and worktops; tenant choice in the colour of window and door replacements. CH actively uses social media as an engagement tool. CH has set up a text messaging service for tenants for matters such as appointment reminders.

Consultation/ drop-in events are hosted to keep prospective tenants and residents informed of new build proposals.

A tenants' service charge survey was conducted through the reporting period to ascertain satisfaction with service charges in communal schemes.

Tenant editorial group through the reporting period have looked at the tenants' newsletter and draft Tenant Participation Strategy

Welfare Reform - Universal Credit (UC) was being rolled out throughout the 2017 – 18 financial year and in preparation for same the Association has been actively working with its tenants to assess their readiness and to ascertain that their housing solutions are the correct ones for them so that there will be no detrimental consequences when their UC claim is processed.

Dependents: Welfare Reform and the impact the single room rate is having on single parents under 35 years old, especially males - the Association continues to ensure that its tenant profile information is up-to-date especially for this proportion of its tenants and in particular those tenants between 25 - 35 who are affected by the Shared Room Rate and Local Housing Allowance reductions which have been applied to new tenancies from 1st April 2016.

PART A

Lack of one & two bedroom accommodation had been monitored within the plans for all new build schemes to ensure a housing mix that meets the needs of single parents, elderly/disabled people needing carers. This is highlighted to the DfC and NIHE Development Programme Group to help aid in their support for a housing mix within new development schemes.

Disability: Connswater Homes works alongside the NIHE Complex Needs Team and OTs to be able to provide in its new build schemes, properties that are purpose built to suit families who require specifically adapted accommodation.

The Association strives to achieve DfC's wheelchair standard accommodation target applicable to new build schemes and demonstrated compliance with the 6% target during the 2017/18 period in design of its New Mossley development.

Minor & major disabled adaptations are also provided through the maintenance department in conjunction with OT's and the NIHE. During the reporting period 29 disabled adaptations were provided.

The Association has one member of staff specially trained in Child Protection and in Dealing with Vulnerable Adults. The Association also has a member of staff who has had Mental Health First Aid Training. A number of staff attended SafeTalk training to help them identify and communicate with tenants who may have suicidal thoughts. As well as a Communities Officer the Association has employed a full time Welfare Advice Officer whose remit is to maximize income for tenants, assist with appeals, navigate the welfare benefit system and help with arrears cases.

The Association appointed a Welfare Advisor (WA) in May 2017 to assist tenants with welfare queries, carry out benefit maximisation assessment and providing budgeting advice to tenants. The WA also supports and encourages tenants to shop around for electricity and service suppliers, to ensure they are getting the best deal possible.

From the 15th May 2017 until the 31st March 2018, the WA has assisted 89 tenants with the completion of welfare forms and/or benefit challenges which has resulted a collective annual financial gain for these cases of £39,245.41. In addition to these cases the WA has provided referrals to various charities and family hubs to successfully acquire starter packs and financial assistance for vulnerable tenants, this in turn has ensured tenants are able to sustain their tenancies.

The WA also facilitates outreach surgeries currently in East Belfast and Newtownards. The surgery in East Belfast is at evening time to allow everyone an opportunity to attend. In addition to these surgeries the WA has organised a number of pop up sessions for tenants and local residents in respect to welfare reform.

Staff also completed Dementia Awareness training.

Interpreter provided to enable deaf tenant to attend and participate in welfare information session

PART A

Tenant Wheelchair user referred to Disability Action for membership giving him access to free transport.

During the reporting period the Association has embraced the use of social media to ensure maximum inclusivity of communication with all service users and customers.

Race: The Association continues to provide translation and interpretation services for those tenants and customers whose first language is not English or who have visual or hearing impairments. Signing services in particular have been very useful for communicating with tenants over repair issues or planned maintenance programmes and choices for the tenants. The Association also employs a member of staff whose first language is not English who aids with translation services.

Religion: The Association continues to encourage tenants to sign Good Neighbour Agreements at their sign-up meeting and manages anti-social behaviour tightly to ensure that issues are resolved as quickly as possible.

Cross Category: while the Association aims to try and recruit Board members from a cross section of the community based on skills and experience, it should be noted that it is still difficult to get voluntary members who are willing to serve on Boards and therefore while the gender balance may seem unfair at times, the Association has to work with those who have the required skills and who are willing to give of their time, without pay or reward.

In the reporting period 933 tenants have engaged in a range of community initiatives.

PART A

3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2017 -18 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

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

Please provide any details and examples:

3a With regard to the change(s) made to policies, practices or procedures and/or service delivery areas, what **difference was made, or will be made, for individuals**, i.e. the impact on those according to Section 75 category?

Please provide any details and examples:

3b What aspect of the Equality Scheme prompted or led to the change(s)? *(tick all that apply)*

As a result of the organisation's screening of a policy *(please give details):*

As a result of what was identified through the EQIA and consultation exercise *(please give details):*

As a result of analysis from monitoring the impact *(please give details):*

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

Other *(please specify and give details):*

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

Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)

4 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2017-18 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

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

Please provide any details and examples:

In all job descriptions there is a statement under General Duties that reads: “ensure adherence to the policies and procedures of the Association, particularly those regarding equality of opportunity, health and safety and confidentiality.”

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2017-18 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

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

Please provide any details and examples:

Equality of treatment of all tenants and customers in relation to the provision of services is an inherent element of the duties of each and every member of staff and is core to the provision of good customer service.

In the 2017-18 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

PART A

- 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 2017-18 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2017-18 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed: Actions ongoing: Actions to commence:

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

Some actions become completed, but by their nature they are also ongoing eg while the Association has delivered a play park during this reporting period the identification of another has started for a different site and also the next stage for the Association will be to identify further opportunities to provide play spaces within its new build schemes, as we have during this stage by beginning the work to provide a MUGA. Also, while properties under construction can be identified and modified to provide purpose built complex needs accommodation, this is an ongoing process throughout our new build schemes to identify and incorporate the addition of purpose built complex needs accommodation where possible.

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2017-18 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

n/a

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2017-18 reporting period, the following have been identified: (*tick all that apply*)

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

- Measures to address a prioritised inequality have been completed

Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)

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

- All the time Sometimes Never

- 11** Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2017-18 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:

Development of the Association’s Strategic Plan 2018 – 21
Connswater Homes’ Customer Charter

- 12** In the 2017-18 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: *(tick all that apply)*

- Face to face meetings
- Focus groups
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- Questionnaires
- Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
- Internet discussions
- Telephone consultations
- Other *(please specify)*:

Please provide any details or examples of the uptake of these methods of consultation in relation to the consultees’ membership of particular Section 75 categories:

As Connswater Homes were approaching the end of the previous strategic plan, the Communities Officer met individually with a number of tenants to discuss a draft 3 year Strategic Plan, the 2018 -2021 plan clearly puts tenant engagement at the core of the Association’s work. Tenants were pleased to see the focus shifted to community/tenant engagement. A further 3 tenants participated in an armchair read and review activity of the Customer Charter. Tenants are happy with the charter and feel it is very clearly written and easy to understand.

PART A

13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2017-18 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2017-18 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes No Not applicable – no commitment to review

Arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

<http://www.connswater.org.uk/index.php/equality/equality-screening>

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

14

16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2017-18:

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

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

n/a

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

- 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:

n/a

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 2017-18, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

New staff have completed equality and diversity e-learning training as part of their induction. All staff have refresher equality and diversity e-learning training as part of the Association's ongoing learning and development platform.

- 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:

n/a

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

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2017-18, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

n/a

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

- 27** How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2017-18?

Insert number here:

0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

n/a

Section 3: Looking Forward

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

Reviewed & consulted on during May / June 2018 and submitted in August 2018

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)*

n/a

30 In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2018-19) reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

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

PART B - 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:

12

Fully achieved

0

Partially achieved

0

Not achieved

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

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

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs ⁱ	Outcomes / Impact ⁱⁱ
National ⁱⁱⁱ			
Regional ^{iv}			
Local ^v	Community Consultation on new build social housing schemes	10 consultations held via letter 3 public forum	2 schemes had revised planning 2 schemes on hold because of community uncertainty of site 9 specially designed new homes for complex needs families provided

PART B

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Equality & Diversity Training	6 new staff trained	Improved knowledge skills & awareness
2	SafeTalk	24 staff trained	Improved knowledge, skills & awareness
3	Dementia Awareness Training	16 staff trained	Improved knowledge, skills & awareness

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	Positive imagery in corporate documentation	Annual review & strategic plan include positive imagery	Positive proportionate imagery used in tenants newsletter and annual review
2	Diversity in communication methods	Using social media alongside traditional methods of communication to target a wider range of service users	Reaching sections of our tenant base who are younger and who use smart phone technology for communicating regularly alongside traditional methods for those who prefer them
3	Establishing tenants groups / fora	Better communication, reduction in anti-social behaviour, engaged tenants	Communities Officer appointed to drive community & resident engagement and help alleviate incidents of anti-social behaviour & build stronger communities

PART B

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1			
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	Adaptations made for tenants with disabilities	29 tenants had physical adaptations made to their homes	Ease of use or access to facilities within tenants homes to make living conditions more accessible and enjoyable
2			

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

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestonesvi / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1				

PART B

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

All tenants who have adaptation work carried out on their homes are surveyed and their comments recorded on the quality of the workmanship, the speed of the process and their satisfaction with the outcome and the positive impact that the adaptation has made to their lives and to them being about to remain in their home and enjoy living there. Enabling them to stay within their community and not to have to leave it.

Also since the formation of the tenant groups within two communal schemes the incidents and reporting of anti-social behaviour are being monitored as are the requests for transfers from existing tenants.

PART B

(b) Quantitative

Number of adaptations carried out.

Number of incidents of anti-social behaviour.

Number of mediation sessions held between neighbours to resolve neighbour nuisance issues.

Cost of remedial works to aid with reducing anti-social behaviour eg additional CCTV installations in communal schemes

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			

PART B

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?

n/a

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.