



Equality Action Plan

2026 - 2028

Background

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires InterTradeIreland to comply with two statutory duties: the Equality of Opportunity Duty and the Good Relations Duty.

1. A public authority shall, in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

2. Without prejudice to its obligations under subsection **1**, a public authority shall, in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, or racial group.

InterTradeIreland has conducted an Audit of Inequalities to assess whether any of the Section 75 categories are, or could potentially be, adversely affected by its activities. Where actual or potential inequalities were identified, an Action Plan has been developed to address them.

While significant progress has been made in promoting equality and good relations, persistent inequalities remain in our society. This Action Plan aims to reduce these through the identification and implementation of key strategic actions, with the goal of improving outcomes over time.

Four themes have been identified:

1.Promoting Equality Awareness - Continue to promote awareness of the equality agenda among InterTradeIreland staff, with an emphasis on the importance of monitoring and data collection.

2.Inclusive Recruitment Practices - Continue to ensure all recruitment practices acknowledge and address underrepresentation in workforce composition.

3.Equality in Service Delivery - Continue to ensure that service delivery is assessed for adverse impacts, and where identified, steps are taken to remove or mitigate these impacts. Equality promotion across protected categories is a priority.

- Targets have been set for increasing the participation of women in enterprise programmes, where there has been historically low representation.
- Further targets include increasing applicants and appointees from the Protestant community and individuals with disabilities in graduate programmes and the wider workforce.

4. Accessible and Inclusive Services - Continue to ensure that services, facilities, and information provide a positive, inclusive, and engaging experience for all users. Additionally, continue to develop initiatives that attract, support, and facilitate the employment and participation of individuals with disabilities.

Responsibility for implementing, reviewing and evaluating the equality action plan and the point of contact within InterTradeIreland is:

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Should you require this plan in an alternative format (such a large print, in Braille, on audio cassette, easy read or on computer disc) and/or language, please contact the person named to discuss your requirements.

1.Promoting Equality Awareness

Equality Issue & Objective	Action Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Timescale	Monitoring
Collection of Section 75 equality data requires ongoing development.	Review existing Section 75 data collection and consider methods to improve the capture of information for monitoring purposes. Ensure that all current staff and appointees complete equality and diversity awareness training as part of the induction process, and that their participation is appropriately recorded.	Section 75 data collection systems fully updated, integrated and operational.	Ongoing	Systems Review Annual Progress Report
Increase staff awareness of Section 75 issues and foster an inclusive culture of belonging.	Continue to mainstream equality and good relations into InterTradeIreland’s core business activities through staff training, policy screening, and the completion of Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs). Provide equality and good relations training to all staff to ensure understanding and application of relevant principles in daily work. Deliver enhanced, role-specific training to key staff involved in policy screening, EQIAs, public consultation, and equality monitoring processes. Reinforce InterTradeIreland’s commitment to the equality and diversity agenda by engaging with and demonstrating leadership support among new senior appointees and leaders. Establish the previously planned staff forum—which was delayed due to unforeseen work pressures and structural changes—to explore and support ongoing efforts to meet equality obligations effectively.	All staff will have a robust understanding of equality and good relations and feel confident to apply the principles in their daily routine. Managers will have the skills to undertake their responsibilities in relation to the S75 duties. Improved communication in relation to equality issues and developments.	2026-2028	Training Records Annual Progress Report Annual Performance Reviews
Strengthen leadership accountability for equality and Section 75 implementation.	Integrate Section 75 awareness and diversity/inclusion responsibilities into the performance appraisal process for senior and line managers.	Evidence of equality-related objectives included in appraisals; Improved delivery of equality outcomes.	Roll Out 2026	HR Monitoring Annual Performance Reviews
Appoint Equality ‘Champion’ to drive programme delivery.	To lead, promote, and support the delivery of equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) objectives across InterTradeIreland. Lead on the integration of Section 75 duties into all planning and decision-making processes.	Successful delivery of Action Plan measures.	2026	HR Monitoring Annual Progress Report

2. Inclusive Recruitment Practices

Equality Issue & Objective	Action Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Timescale	Monitoring
To ensure all recruitment practices are inclusive, equitable, and actively address areas of underrepresentation, particularly in relation to the Protestant community and individuals with disabilities.	Continue to operate an Affirmative Action Programme to encourage increased applicant rates from under-represented groups, particularly members of the Protestant community and individuals with disabilities. Target under-represented groups through tailored recruitment and promotion campaigns, with strategic input and guidance from the Equality Commission. Partner with disability and community organisations to develop inclusive recruitment pipelines and support initiatives (e.g. job fairs, mentoring). Continue implementation of InterTradeIreland’s Disability Action Plan to encourage applications from people with a disability. Ensure flexible and inclusive working arrangements remain available and well-communicated, especially for disabled employees and those with caring responsibilities. Ensure that equality considerations for all Section 75 groups are fully integrated into ongoing workforce planning, including office-based, hybrid, and remote working models. Review job descriptions and adverts to ensure inclusivity and accessibility.	Increased number of applicants for posts within the Body from underrepresented groups. Retention of employees with a disability or with caring responsibilities for dependents. Greater awareness and confidence in recruitment teams to engage inclusively. Enhanced reputation of InterTradeIreland as an inclusive and welcoming employer.	Ongoing	Equality Monitoring Data Annual Monitoring Return Article 55 Review Hybrid Working Policy Disability Action Plan

3. Equality in Service Delivery

Equality Issue & Objective	Action Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Timescale	Monitoring
Ensure that all Section 75 categories are considered when reviewing policies.	Through training and communication, ensure that all staff involved in policy review are aware of their responsibilities and act in compliance with the S75 equality duties.	Quarterly publication of screening results. Integration of S75 duties into the policy review process.	2026-2028	Annual Progress Report
Improve on the low representation of women on enterprise programmes.	Continue to implement an affirmative action plan with specific positive measures to increase the participation of women in enterprise programmes, including targeted outreach, tailored programme content, and collaboration with women-focused business networks. Review and adapt programme materials and communication strategies to ensure they are accessible, culturally inclusive, and representative of all target groups.	Increased participation of women on enterprise programmes delivered by InterTradeIreland.	Ongoing	Equality Monitoring Data
Increase the number of applications from the Protestant Community on the InterTradeIreland graduate programmes.	Continue to operate an affirmative action plan. Review recent participation on graduate programmes, and seek to establish factors relating to comparative success rates for under-represented groups.	Increased numbers of applicants from the Protestant Community on InterTradeIreland graduate programmes.	2026-2028	Equality Monitoring Data

4. Accessible and Inclusive Services

Equality Issue & Objective	Action Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Timescale	Monitoring
Increase the number of applications from people with disabilities on InterTradeIreland graduate programmes.	Review participation trends and accessibility issues. Engage regularly with disability representative groups to seek advice, co-design initiatives, and ensure the needs of people with disabilities are fully understood and addressed. Ensure all digital platforms and communications comply with recognised digital accessibility standards (e.g., WCAG) to provide an inclusive user experience.	Increased participation from applicants with a disability on graduate programmes.	2026-2028	Equality Monitoring Data
Build on the momentum and achievement of the past five years in relation to participants with a disability.	Review and enhance recruitment sourcing and access processes to widen the pool of disabled applicants. Simplify and improve venue inspection and accessibility assessment procedures to ensure all physical locations used for programmes and events are fully accessible to people with disabilities.	Greater consistency in the level of support provided by line managers in relation to disability, caring responsibilities and beyond. Reduction in difficulties for venue providers in completing the paperwork resulting in increased access to people with disabilities.	2026-2028	Equality Monitoring Data