**Invest Northern Ireland: Equality Action Plan**

Reviewed Annually

Invest NI’s business is to encourage economic development in Northern Ireland within the economic policy context determined by the Minister for the Economy and the framework of the Northern Ireland Executive’s Programme for Government and Economic Strategy.

 In line with our statutory equality duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the Equality Commission’s April 2010 revised Guide for Public Authorities, Invest NI has mainstreamed equality considerations fully into its corporate planning process. In the first instance, we have undertaken an audit of inequalities to identify the range of key inequalities upon which the work of Invest NI might impact. In doing so, we have carefully considered the organisation’s range of current and developing policies and programmes in order to highlight those priority areas where we are most likely to contribute to promoting better equality of opportunity and good relations.

As part of our role and working with the Department for the Economy (DfE), Invest NI monitors labour market and employment trends closely. The sections below outline what we consider to be the priority areas for attention. We have outlined the key information available on equality-related issues in those areas of work and provided a brief overview of action already being taken to address those issues together with future plans to tackle inequality and disadvantage.

This Action Plan is predicated on previous research following the numerous EQIA’s conducted by Invest NI, most recently the Business Strategy 24-27 EQIA.

Each of these EQIA’s is available to view on our website page: http://www.investni.com/equality.

We believe that these documents demonstrate Invest NI’s commitment to equality to date and provide a firm foundation for our work going forward. Data contained within these EQIA’s have been used to inform the Action Plan as presented below.

**Programme for Government / Economic Strategy**

The Department for the Economy has recently launched its Economic Mission aiming to position Northern Ireland as a leader amongst the small-advanced economies of the world whilst ensuring that the benefits of future economic growth are shared more equitably across NI and our people.

Invest NI will work collaboratively with the Department, business, stakeholders and partners to identify the opportunities and enhanced support needed to achieve these aims. We will be a convener to draw together, target and optimise available support across partners in a holistic way to maximise outcomes for the benefit of all our citizens.

The overarching goal of our approach is to improve the economic competitiveness and productivity of the NI economy through a focus on export led growth and targeting clusters, technologies and sectors that offer the best outcome opportunities.

Invest NI will continue to integrate Section 75 obligations within our business and strategic planning process. We have outlined our equality commitment in our new Business Strategy for 2024/27.

The measures outlined in the action plan below demonstrate our overarching goals going forward and give an indication of our intended timescales. These overarching goals, indicators, measures and timescales reflect on all core business of Invest NI in line with DfE economic strategy.

**Invest NI Equality Action Plan**

**Revised Annually**

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| **Overarching Goals** | **Key Indicators** | **Measures** | **Timescales** |
| **Embed equality and diversity within Invest NI’s Core Business**  | Raise awareness of equality obligations within Invest NI. | Induction training for all new staff when they join the organisation to include Section 75 and associated obligations. | Staff to complete induction training within 3 months of commencing employment. |
| 100% of Invest NI staff trained in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.  | Mandatory refresher training annually for existing staff. |
| Fully embed and integrate Section 75 and associated obligations (such as Rural Proofing) within Invest NI’s business planning process. | Formally review Invest NI’s Business Strategy EQIA on an annual basis as part of our business planning process. | Annual business planning process.  |
| Equality obligations to be addressed within business strategy and business plan. | Annual business planning process.  |
| Review and refresh all Section 75 and associated policies to reflect on new Business Strategy. | Completed over course of new Strategy period. |
| **Within Invest NI’s remit, contribute to addressing Inequalities within NI’s Labour Market:**1. **Gender Imbalance**
 | Enhance and improve Invest NI’s capability to impact Gender imbalance within NI’s Labour Market. | Review Invest NI’s current offering of gender specific initiatives and identify opportunities for new initiatives and / or enhancements. | Complete by 30th June 2025.  |
| Through our communications team, promote female participants within case studies and testimonials to provide the role models for future generations. | Continuous promotion through our regular communication channels. |
| 1. **People with disabilities**
 | In line with our Disability Action Plan, work with clients, customers, partners, and stakeholders, to deliver initiatives to further employment opportunities for the disabled.  | Review Invest NI’s current offering of disabled specific initiatives and identify opportunities for new initiatives and / or enhancements. | Complete by 30th June 2025. |
| In line with our Disability Action Plan, host a regular event, bringing together key partners and stakeholders to help contribute to reducing employment inequalities faced by disabled people. | Annual Event, rotated across Invest NI’s Regional offices. |
| 1. **Other Marginalised Groups & Minority Communities**
 | Implement positive steps and take action to reduce social inclusion of marginalised groups and communities.     | Review Invest NI’s current specific initiatives targeted at marginalised groups and minority communities and identify opportunities for new initiatives and / or enhancements. | Complete by 30th September 2025. |
| Widen the reach of our Regional Offices in order to drive improved economic opportunities for our most deprived communities | Host annual networking and information events across our Regional Office areas, using a range of community and partner hubs, to promote Invest NI and its services. |
| Implement a new Alternative Talent Pathways approach, placing collaboration with partners at the centre, to streamline pathways to sustainable employment for marginalised groups and minority communities. | 31st March 2026 |
| In line with our ESG Action Plan, cultivate and foster better relationships with our partners to enhance engagement and interaction with representative bodies and organisations in line with our Good Relations Strategy. | Improve consultation and engagement with key representative groups across the year. |