General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland



Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties

Annual Progress Report

Contact details:

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 Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan 	As above Name: Telephone: Email:	Click or tap here to enter text. Click or tap here to enter text. Click or tap here to enter text.
Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:		
Signature:	In Gally	'W .

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 2023 and March 2024

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

In 2023-24, 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.

The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI) is primarily concerned with the delivery of a legislatively compliant teacher registration service in support of the Department of Education's (DE) achievement of its educational and youth objectives.

GTCNI's Equality Scheme was approved by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) on 28 November 2018 and is published on the GTCNI website. Also on our website is our Disability Action Plan, which was published in June 2023, following ECNI's review. The 5-year Diversity Action Plan has also been reviewed by ECNI and, subject to a small number of recommended changes, is due to be published on our website imminently. The above were launched to GTCNI staff in 2023-24 to supplement formal training. We have submitted an updated Equality Scheme to ECNI for review on 3 September 2024. The Annual Progress Reports will also be published on the website, commencing in the 2024-25 period.

A staff re-organisation took place in 2023, following approval of a business case for same in mid-June 2023 by DE. The Agency workers who previously made up two thirds of GTCNI staff were transferred across to GTCNI contracts of employment, fixed term until 31 March 2026, to provide stability to GTCNI for this period. This approach to recruitment was reviewed and agreed by ECNI in advance of undertaking the recruitment process. Agency workers were, from day one, given the statutory equal treatment rights which normally apply after twelve weeks. Supervisory and Registration Lead roles were re-evaluated and these roles were filled, following an internal trawl, on a fixed term basis, again until 31 March 2026. Approval was also granted by DE for the appointment of a Human Resources (HR) Officer and an Information Management & Governance and Data Protection Officer – both these posts were filled with Agency workers in December 2023 (the HR Officer was subsequently transferred across to a GTCNI fixed term contract after the current period). This reorganisation allows for further developments to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations. During 2023-24 GTCNI reviewed and updated its recruitment policies and procedures, including job families and job descriptions, competency framework, shortlisting procedures and interview procedures.

As GTCNI is a small organisation (currently 14 staff) that does not offer services to the wider public as per the definition, each request received for information in an

alternative format is considered on an individual basis. During 2023-24, no such requests were received.

GTCNI is continuing to review its HR and corporate policies in line with DE, ACAS, LRA and trade unions and best practice. Any significant updates to policies or new policies continue to be formally screened for Section 75 issues. In 2023-24 GTCNI's Diversity Action Plan 2023-27 and Disability Action Plan 2023-27 have been reviewed by ECNI. Both plans will continue to be monitored and reviewed annually for continued suitability. Both plans have been circulated to GTCNI staff and feedback has been requested. In support of both plans, training has been undertaken by staff via LInKS and moving forward, a "Lead" will be appointed within GTCNI to support the live status of the plans.

A draft Learning and Development Plan was produced during this period (and subsequently finalised and implemented in May 2024), which incorporates training designed to promote positive attitudes by targeting areas that have previously been identified as needing improvement.

The Interim CEO/Registrar, the Head of Corporate Services and the HR Officer have all undertaken Section 75 e-learning training, during the period. Health and Safety, Defibrillator, GDPR and EIR Regulations training has taken place within GTCNI and will be ongoing, as well as Customer Support, Dealing with Difficult Situations, First Aid, Diversity Awareness, Disability Awareness and Mental Health Support training (with a dedicated Mental Health Support officer in place since March 2023). In addition, JAM (Just A Minute) Card training by the Now Group has been sourced (and was subsequently delivered in 2024-25). This will give all employees insight into, and awareness of, hidden disabilities. GTCNI will ensure that staff have the training they need to identify the support they can offer applicants and teachers with different needs and be aware of the support available to facilitate their interaction with them. GTCNI continues to be engaged in DE's "Learning Leaders: A Strategy for Teacher Professional Learning" which sets out a strategic vision for every teacher: "Every teacher is a learning leader, accomplished in working collaboratively with all partners in the interests of children and young people."

GTCNI are working in collaboration with educational partners to develop a new framework on leadership competencies and which will promote good relations with teachers. GTCNI also collects and publish data on the teaching profession each year in a "Digest of Statistics". The data GTCNI can collect is determined by Schedule One of the GTCNI (Regulation of Teachers) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004. Information is collected and collated relating to age and gender against school sector and school management type, for both teachers and Principals. Currently, this exercise remains paused, but it is planned to resume in 2024-25. (Data collection was hampered by industrial action short of strike by teachers in 2023-24).

Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2023-24 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

The Equality Action Plan timetable of proposed measures is set out below with progress noted.

Measure	Timetable	Status
Reflect Section 75 objectives and targets in Corporate and Business Plan and Business Areas' plans	Annually (April)	Ongoing
Section 75 Annual Progress	Annually (31	Completed: Prepared for
Report	August)	submission in August 2024
Reviewing and updating	Annually	To commence: GTCNI has no
consultation lists		plans to conduct any
		consultations until its future is
		known
Distribution of screening reports	Quarterly	Ongoing
Finalised scheme published	Annually	Completed: Available on
		GTCNI website
Annual review of monitoring	Annually	Completed: Submitted in May
information	(December)	2024
Publication of monitoring	Annually	To commence: To be
information	(31 August)	completed once new website
		is completed
Notify consultees of	Annually	To Commence: To be
publication of Annual Report	(31 August)	completed after Annual Report
		is published on GTCNI website
Development of overall	Annually	Ongoing: Staff have been
training programme	(31 August)	consulted about training needs
		as part of Performance
		Management process and
		associated Learning and
		Development Plan
Evaluation of training	Annually	To Commence: Starting in
	(31 August)	2024-25, training will be
		evaluated mid and end year as
		part of the new Performance
		Management Process and
		associated Learning and
Accessing access to	Appually	Development Plan
Assessing access to	Annually	Ongoing
information and services	(31 August)	

Notification of approved	Within 3 months of	To commence: To be
scheme to consultees	scheme approval	completed upon scheme
		approval.
Circulate summary of	Within 3 months of	Not applicable: As part of its
scheme to Section 75 groups	scheme approval	review of its Equality Scheme,
representing children and		GTCNI has identified that this
young people, people with		was not relevant in full, as we
disabilities and		are primarily concerned with
minority/ethnic people		the delivery of a legislatively
		compliant teachers' register
		for Northern Ireland. We do
		not offer services directly to
		children and young people or
		to the wider public.
Review of Equality Scheme	Within 5 years	Ongoing: A draft has been
		submitted to the Equality
		Commission in September
		2024 for review and comment
Action Plan	TBC	Ongoing
Arrangements for monitoring	TBC	Ongoing
Action Plan		
EQIA Timetable	As required	As required
Any other measures	As required	As required
proposed in Equality Scheme		

3	Has the application of the Equality Scheme commitments resulted in any changes to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2023-24 reporting period? (tick one box only)
	☐ Yes
	No (go to Q.4)
	☐ Not applicable (go to Q.4)
	Please provide any details and examples:
	Click or tap here to enter text.
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:
	Click or tap here to enter text.
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):
	Click or tap here to enter text.
	As a result of what was identified through the EQIA and consultation exercise (please give details):
	Click or tap here to enter text.
	As a result of analysis from monitoring the impact (please give details):
	Click or tap here to enter text.

	As a result of changes to access to information and services (please specify and give details):
	Click or tap here to enter text.
	Other (please specify and give details):
	Click or tap here to enter text.
	on 2: Progress on Equality Scheme commitments <u>and</u> action /measures
	Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)
4	Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2023-24 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:
	Section 75 duties are incorporated into job descriptions as and when they are updated and as and when job descriptions for new roles are created.
5	Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2023-24 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:
	A Performance Management Policy has been introduced to GTCNI, following the 2023-24 reporting period, which specifically references Section 75 considerations. This process will be implemented in the 2024-25 reporting period.
6	In the 2023-24 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 corporate plan
	No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2023-24 report
	☐ Not applicable
	Please provide any details and examples:
	Statutory duties were incorporated into the organisation wide annual business plan.
	Equality action plans/measures
7	Within the 2023-24 reporting period, please indicate the number of:
	Actions completed:
	3

	Actions ongoing:
	7
	Actions to commence:
	7
	Please provide any details and examples (in addition to question 2):
	Click or tap here to enter text.
8	Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2023-24 reporting period (points not identified in an appended plan):
	No changes or amendments were made during this period.
9	In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2023-24 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
	☐ Never

11	Please provide any details and examples of good practice in consultation during the 2023-24 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:
	During 2023-24, equality screening was conducted for the new Menopause Policy in May 2023, the new Complaints Policy for staff in April 2023 and the revised Health and Safety Policy in May 2023. In each case the policies were screened out.
12	In the 2023-24 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were most frequently <u>used</u> by consultees : (tick all that apply)
	☐ Focus groups
	Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
	Questionnaires
	Information by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
	☐ Internet discussions
	Telephone consultations
	Other (please specify): Click or tap here to enter text.
	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:
	Any new or significantly updated HR policies, as well as Disability and Diversity Action plans are consulted upon with staff and feedback taken and incorporated where relevant. Consultation is carried out via email with points picked up at weekly staff meetings. This was a process implemented in March 2023, gathering momentum into 2023-24.

13	the Equality Scheme, during the 2023-24 reporting period? (tick one box only)
	☐ Yes
	□ No
	Not applicable ■ Not applicable Not applicable
	Please provide any details and examples:
	Click or tap here to enter text.
14	Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2023-24 reporting period? (tick one box only)
	☐ Yes
	□ No
	Not applicable ■ Not applicable Not applicable
	In light of the existing uncertainty surrounding the future status of GTCNI, external consultations have not been undertaken during the 2023-24 period and none are currently planned for the 2024-25 period.

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

[Insert link to any web pages where screening templates and/or other reports associated with Equality Scheme commitments are published]

GTCNI's website has recently undergone some redevelopment. Content management is a key part of this and we are currently reviewing updated documentation across a number of areas including Publication Scheme, Privacy Notices, Corporate Documents and Equality and Diversity materials. This work is expected to be completed by the end of Q3 2024-25 and has resulted in some information being temporarily taken down during the refresh process.

15	Please provide the number of policies screened during the year (as recorded in screening reports):
	3
16	Please provide the number of assessments that were consulted upon during 2023-24:
	3 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:
	0
18	Were any screening decisions (or equivalent initial assessments of relevance) reviewed following concerns raised by consultees? (tick one box only)
	Yes
	No concerns were raised
	□ No
	☐ Not applicable
	Please provide any details and examples:
	Click or tap here to enter text.
	Arrangements for publishing the results of assessments (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)
19	Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2023-24 reporting period? (tick one box only)

	Yes
	□ No
	Not applicable ■ Not applicable Not applicable
	Please provide any details and examples:
	Click or tap here to enter text.
	Arrangements for monitoring and publishing the results of monitoring (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)
20	From the Equality Scheme monitoring arrangements, was there an audit of existing information systems during the 2023-24 reporting period? (tick one box only)
	☐ Yes
	No, already taken place
	☐ No, scheduled to take place at a later date
	☐ Not applicable
	Please provide any details:
	Click or tap here to enter text.
21	In analysing monitoring information gathered, was any action taken to change/review any policies? (tick one box only)
	Yes
	⊠ No
	☐ Not applicable
	Please provide any details and examples:
	Click or tap here to enter text.

Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2023-24 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

Not applicable for this period.

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:

Not applicable for this period.

Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)

Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2023-24, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

Diversity Essentials, Dealing with Difficult Situations, Customer care — Managing Expectations. Domestic Abuse — Context and Change. Assertiveness. Managing Personal Stress and Resilience. Managing Customer Service Performance. Problem-solving. Fire Safety Awareness. GDPR, Responsible for Information and defibrillator training has taken place and is ongoing. S75 training for the Interim CEO/Registrar, the Head of Corporate Services and the HR Officer has also taken place during the period.

Further training is planned in relation to the areas outlined below, reflective of the training plan outlined within the GTCNI Equality Scheme:

- The commitments within this equality scheme; and
- •The important role all staff have in implementing the scheme.
- Assessment of policies (screening and EQIA);
- Dealing with complaints in relation to compliance with this equality scheme;
- The consultation processes; and
- •The implementation and monitoring of effective implementation of the equality scheme.

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:

The roll-out of training has ensured that staff are aware of their rights and responsibilities in service delivery under section 75.

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

Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2023-24, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

GTCNI's website is still being developed with our external supplier, however it should be noted that in 2023-24 information was internally made available to staff on GTCNI's shared drives and externally to other potentially interested parties on our website. As noted in our Equality Scheme, we will make publications available in alternative formats upon request. GTCNI received no such requests during 2023-24.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

27 How many complaints in relation to the Equality Scheme have been received during 2023-24?

Insert number here: 0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Section 3: Looking Forward

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

November 2023 – review in progress. We have recently submitted an updated Equality Scheme to ECNI for review.

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)
	As listed under question 2 above.
30	In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what equality and good relations priorities are anticipated over the next reporting period? (please tick any that apply)
	☐ Goods, facilities and services
	□ Legislative changes
	☐ Organisational changes/ new functions
	Nothing specific, more of the same
	Other (please state):
	Click or tap here to enter text.

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:

9	2	3
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
	Website review	Reviewing accessibility of website.	New website published (though still under development)
	Alternative format availability	Making documents available in alternative formats.	Services more accessible
National ⁱⁱⁱ	Publishing and promoting Disability Action Plan	Full dissemination of GTCNI's commitment to disability duties.	GTCNI's commitment publicly disseminated.
	Complaints procedure published online.	Complaints procedure accessible online or via Telephone/Email.	Complaints procedure accessible.
	Service User registration process accessible.	Registration methods available online, in writing or by telephone.	Registration data continues to show diversity.

PART B

Regional ^{iv}	Review and report on progress of the Disability Action Plan	Annual Report produced	Will be submitted to the Equality Commission by 31 August 2024.
Local ^v	Equality Screening template updated to reflect disability duties	Equality Screening Template Updated	Policies under review will be screened and reflect Section 75 duties.

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	GTCNI staff training	Health and Safety, Defibrillator, GDPR and EIR Regulations training has taken place and will be ongoing, as well as Customer Support, Dealing with Difficult Situations, First Aid, Fire Safety, Diversity Awareness, Disability Awareness and Mental Health Support training, Assertiveness and Person Resilience, and Domestic Abuse Awareness training.	All employees attended and training will be ongoing for all staff.
2	Interim CEO/Registrar, Head of Corporate Services and HR Officer	S75 Screening training	Training completed by all three staff during 2023-24.
	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

PART B

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

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Website development.	Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan published on website.	Available for all online.
2	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Training delivered to all staff.	Health and Safety, Defibrillator, GDPR and EIR Regulations training has taken place and will be ongoing, as well as Customer Support, Dealing with Difficult Situations, First Aid, Fire Safety, Diversity Awareness, Disability Awareness and Mental Health Support training, Assertiveness and Person Resilience, and Domestic Abuse Awareness training.	Awareness by all staff.
2	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

PART B

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

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1	Not applicable for the period.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
2	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

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

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	GTCNI website accessible to all users.	Website reflects a service which is universally available to all.	Website visitors see an NDPB that values diversity.	Website is improved but requires further development. Website is now WACAG2-compliant
2	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	Review Performance Appraisal template to include prompt relating to disability.	Planned for 2024-25 (subsequently implemented as part of new Performance Management Policy in May 2024).
2	To ensure that as part of the induction process, employees, are asked if any reasonable adjustments are required.	Planned for 2024-25.
3	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

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

GTCNI will monitor any potential adverse impact of policies adopted on the promotion of equality of opportunity and will seek to monitor more broadly to identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations in line with Equality Commission guidance. For internal policies, this will involve gathering of evidence from internal staff surveys, performance system and appraisal feedback and staff surveys. For policies impacting on the wider stakeholder group, this will include monitoring of complaints, related information requests under FoIA / SAR and other feedback sources. (b) Quantitative

As above.

- 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?

PART B

Please select

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1	Not applicable for this period.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
2	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
3	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
4	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
5	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

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?

Yes – we intend to embed Section 75 requirements within our consultation processes so that it becomes integral in all activities within GTCNI.

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.

[&]quot;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.