



DfC

Department
for Communities

www.communities-ni.gov.uk

Disability Action Plan

Department for Communities

2016-2017



ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

For information on obtaining this publication in large – print, disk, audio cassette, Braille format or in another language, please contact:

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This paper is also available to download from the Department's website

Website: www.communities-ni.gov.uk/dfc-equality



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Foreword

Welcome to the Department's Disability Action Plan 2016-2017.

This plan sets out what the Department will do to fulfil our obligations in respect of our disability duties under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act.

We are committed to fully implementing our disability duties and will allocate the resources necessary to ensure that this Plan can be effectively implemented. The plan will be communicated to all staff together with the provision of all necessary guidance and training.

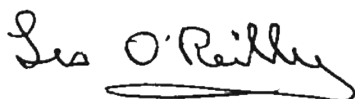
We will monitor progress through an annual report, which will be published on our website and also be given to the Equality Commission NI.

MINISTER:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Givan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Paul Givan MLA

PERMANENT SECRETARY:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leo O'Reilly". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Leo O'Reilly



Introduction

Under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) (as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006), the Department for Communities is required, when carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

These are collectively referred to as the ‘disability duties’ and the following Plan sets out the actions which the Department will take to meet these obligations.

Under Section 49B of the DDA 1995, the Department for Communities is also required to submit a Disability Action Plan to the Equality Commission, showing how it proposes to fulfil these duties in relation to its functions.

This plan reflects the new Department’s functions and brings together the relevant activities that were in agreed Disability Action Plans of the previous Departments namely:

- Department for Culture Arts and Leisure
- Department for Employment and Learning
- Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment
- Department for the Environment
- Department for Social Development

A new Disability Action Plan will be developed in 2017 and the Department will carry out consultation in a meaningful manner to help inform and improve the Plan.

The first point of contact for enquiries about this plan is:

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1-7 Bedford Street
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BT2 7EG

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Departmental Functions

The Department for Communities (DfC) was established on 9 May 2016. The main functions of the new Department are:

- the promotion of a healthy housing market and the provision of decent, affordable, sustainable homes and housing support services.
- a social welfare system including focused support to the most disadvantaged areas.
- providing training and support to jobseekers and employers.
- bringing divided communities together by creating urban centres which are sustainable, welcoming and accessible to live, work and relax in peace.
- supporting Local Government to deliver effective public services.
- maximising public benefits from the culture, arts and leisure sectors.
- tackling disadvantage and promoting equality of opportunity by reducing poverty, promoting and protecting the interests of children, older people, people with disabilities, and other socially excluded groups; addressing inequality and disadvantage.

The Department brings together many diverse functions supporting communities in Northern Ireland. It includes all of the functions of the previous Department for Social Development

(DSD) with most of the Department for Culture, Arts & Leisure (DCAL) functions, except for Inland Fisheries and Waterways.

It includes the Department for Employment and Learning's (DEL) Employment Service and Economic Inactivity Strategy, and the Department of the Environment's (DOE) responsibilities for Local Government and Built Heritage.

In addition, it includes a range of Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) delivery and operational functions including Disability, Poverty, Gender and Sexual Orientation, and Older People.

Furthermore, the Executive's Fresh Start Agreement confirmed that the Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment's (DETI) policy responsibility for Financial Capability and Debt Advice transferred to DfC.

DfC supports a wide range of statutory bodies (please see list below) which are also designated public authorities in their own right and are required to produce their own Equality Schemes.

- Armagh Observatory
- Armagh Planetarium
- Arts Council of Northern Ireland



- Charity Commission for Northern Ireland
- Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland
- Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland
- Libraries NI
- Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland
- National Museums Northern Ireland
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee
- Northern Ireland Museums Council
- Discretionary Support Commissioner
- Sport NI and
- Ulster Supported Employment and Learning

The Department sponsors one North/South body; the North South Language body (which includes Foras na Gaeilge and the

Ulster-Scots Agency). The Department has oversight of The Charities Advisory Committee and Vaughan's Charity Trustees and has statutory advisors: Historic Buildings Council and Historic Monuments Council. Working with these bodies provides opportunities for us to encourage participation by public appointment to the above boards.

More information on the work of the Department can be accessed on its website www.communities-ni.gov.uk

Public Life Positions

The Department's Ministerial appointments, where appropriate, are regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPANI). As well as appointments to the previously mentioned statutory bodies, the Department also makes appointments to the following bodies:

- Architecture and the Built Environment, Ministerial Advisory Group for Northern Ireland
- WhoWhatWhenWhereWhy(W5) Ltd

Involvement of working groups

The Department actively encourages participation in its working groups established for consultation and engagement purposes.

Examples of groups would include the Social Inclusion Group's Customer Representative

Group, Belfast City Centre Key Stakeholder Working Group for Belfast Streets Ahead, Child Maintenance Service Stakeholder Forum and the Disability Employment Stakeholder Forum.

Action Measures

Outlined in the following Plan are the actions which the Department proposes to take until 2017, with associated targets and timescales. As previously stated, this plan

collates activities which are reflective of the new Department's functions. It is intended to develop a new Disability Action Plan in 2017.

Disability Action Plan

May 2016 - March 2017

Measures to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in public life

THIS ACTION PLAN IS BROKEN DOWN INTO 3 CATEGORIES:

1. Staff training;
2. Communications; and
3. Outreach and Participation

Measures to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people

ACTION MEASURES	TIMESCALE	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	BRANCH
1.1 Completion of appropriate disability training	May 16 – March 17	The numbers of staff who have completed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity Now training (classroom based and e-learning) • Disability Awareness for frontline staff • Autism Spectrum Disorder awareness • Sign language training 	Human Resources
1.2 Awareness sessions delivered to managers in considering and putting in place reasonable adjustments under DDA/DDO.	May 16 – March 17	The numbers of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • education and awareness sessions delivered to managers • reasonable adjustments made • cases that require DLO advice and guidance 	Human Resources
1.3 Display positive messages and images of people with disabilities externally on the DfC website and communications with customers, stakeholders and the public and internally on the DfC intranet and communications with our own staff.	May 16 – March 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of external and internal publications that included positive messages and images of people with a disability. 	Communications and Engagement Unit

ACTION MEASURES	TIMESCALE	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	BRANCH
1.4 Department to ensure all publicity material is easily accessible to customers with a disability	May 16 – March 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of alternative format requests received and produced. 	Communications and Engagement Unit
1.5 To improve access to public services for members of the deaf community through the work of the Sign Language Partnership Group (SLPG)	May 16 – March 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of Deaf Awareness and BSL/ISL courses to voluntary and community sector service providers and schools. Provision of Family Sign Language Courses to parents/families of deaf children to promote better educational outcomes for deaf children Increased access to the arts for Deaf sign language users Analysis of the public consultation on the Sign Language Framework (which ran from 15 March – 4 July 2016) which contains policy proposals to promote BSL/ISL and improve access to all public services for Deaf sign language users, deaf children and their families. 	Language
1.7 To ensure the TBUC Cross Community Youth Sports Programme encourages participation from people with a disability; and engages in activity which will help promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.	May 16 – March 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The percentage of children with a disability participating. 	Together: Building United Community Branch

ACTION MEASURES	TIMESCALE	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	BRANCH
<p>1.8 Facilitate 'Active Living: No Limits 2016-2021 a plan to improve health and well-being for people with a disability through participation in sport and active recreation.</p> <p>1.9 To work with a range of key stakeholders and partners, including people with disabilities, to ensure that the Action Plan for Year One of the Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities is implemented.</p>	<p>Draft plan 2016 – 2021</p> <p>May 16 – March 17</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan has 17 key targets in total with delivery to be monitored by cross sector Active Living No Limits Forum Year One Report on Actions implemented Number of disabled people supported into employment Other positive outcomes for people with disabilities. 	<p>Sport</p> <p>Disability Employment Service</p>
<p>1.10 To improve State Care site infrastructure to facilitate access for people with a disability.</p>	<p>May 16 – March 17</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The numbers of improvements to State Care site infrastructure. 	<p>Historic Environment Division</p>

Measures to encourage the participation of disabled people in public life

ACTION MEASURES	TIMESCALE	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS/MEASUREMENTS	BRANCH
<p>2.1 Include disabled people in the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belfast City Centre Key Stakeholder Working Group for Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 3 Project • Child Maintenance Service Stakeholder Forum • Disability Employment Stakeholder Forum • any other stakeholder forums/working groups/forums etc. 	<p>May 16 – March 17</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods used to encourage involvement of people with a disability. • The number of disabled people recorded as being members of stakeholder groups. 	<p>Belfast Regeneration Directorate</p> <p>Child Maintenance Service</p> <p>Disability Employment Service</p>
<p>2.2 To encourage more disabled people to apply for public appointments.</p>	<p>May 16 – March 17</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify disability representative groups when the Department is seeking applications for public appointment positions. • Incorporate the Guaranteed Interview Scheme for those with a disability for all public appointment competitions. • Annual monitoring of the number of disabled people applying for public appointments and being appointed. 	<p>Public Appointments</p>

