



Department of
Finance

An Roinn
Airgeadais

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Department of Finance
Disability Action Plan 2018 – 2023

Alternative Formats

You can access and read this document on our website: <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/disability-action-plan-0>.

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Disability Duties - 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 of Finance 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 ('the disability duties').

1.2 Under Section 49B of the DDA 1995, the Department of Finance is also required to submit to the Equality Commission a disability action plan showing how it proposes to fulfil these duties in relation to its functions.

2. Previous Disability Action Plans

2.1 The Department of Finance (formerly the Department of Finance and Personnel) has previously submitted three DAPs to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland to show how it planned to fulfil these duties. These have been made available on our website: <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/dof-departmental-equality-scheme>. Progress on all DAPs has been detailed in the Annual Reviews to the Equality Commission which are also published on our website.

2.2 A five-year review of our Disability Action Plans was carried out for the period 1 April 2007 – 31 March 2013 and can be accessed on our website: [Review of Disability Action Plan - 2013](#). A further review took place to cover the DAP in place for the period 1 April 2013 – 31 March 2017 which was detailed in our consultation document on our draft plan: <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-dof-draft-section-75-action-plan-and-disability-action-plan>.

3. Disability Action Plan 2018 – 23

3.1 The DAP has been informed by the report and recommendations of the NICS Disability Working Group. This group was set up by the NICS Diversity Champions' Network to develop proposals and recommendations to address

issues for NICS staff with disabilities in the specific areas of recruitment, career development and management support. The Group is chaired by a Senior Civil Servant and consists of members of staff from across the NICS and volunteers with an interest or remit in disability. The group was also supported in its recommendations by representatives from Disability Action and Action Mental Health. Recommendations from the group are still being worked through and further measures may be added during the lifetime of the plan as appropriate.

- 3.2 The draft DAP was published for consultation on our website (link at 2.2 above) and details of the consultation were issued to our list of Equality Consultees. NICS staff were also notified of the consultation through a service-wide communication.
- 3.3 The Department is committed to implementing effectively the disability duties and this disability action plan. We will allocate appropriate resources (in terms of people, time and money) in order to implement effectively this plan and, where appropriate, build objectives and targets relating to the disability duties into corporate and annual operating plans.
- 3.4 We will also put appropriate internal arrangements in place to ensure that the disability duties are complied with and that this disability action plan is effectively implemented. We will ensure the effective communication of the plan to staff and provide appropriate training and guidance for staff on the disability duties and the implementation of the plan.
- 3.5 We confirm our commitment to submitting an annual progress report on the implementation of this plan to the Equality Commission and carrying out a five year review of this plan. This information will be made available on our website – <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/dof-departmental-equality-scheme>. We are committed to engaging effectively with people with disabilities and their representative groups in the development, implementation and review of this plan.

3.6 The point of contact in relation to the consultation, implementation, review and evaluation of this disability action plan is Strategic Equality Branch (contact details on page 2).

4. Monitoring and Review

4.1 The action plan sets out the actions that the Department plans to take forward over the next number of years. This plan will be kept under review and will be treated as a fluid document to which other actions can be added throughout its lifespan.

4.2 The DAP includes a column to show where responsibility for each measure lies. Strategic Equality Branch will maintain an oversight role and will report on progress through, but not limited to, the Annual Progress Report to the Equality Commission by 31st August each year.

5. Departmental Functions

5.1 The Department of Finance (DoF) has a wide range of functions but primarily administers the financial business of the Northern Ireland Executive and provides a support service to the rest of the Northern Ireland departments.

5.2 Outlined below are the Department's range of functions:

- The strategic oversight of the expenditure managed by Northern Ireland departments;
- Providing Human Resource (HR) services and policies to support the management of the NI Civil Service (NICS) workforce;
- A range of common corporate services, primarily to NICS departments, in the areas of HR, training, finance, ICT, property management, legal and statistical services, and procurement;
- Providing momentum, focus and structure to public sector reform;
- The policy and operational delivery of the Northern Ireland rating system;
- Delivery of the NI Direct programme; and
- Land and Property Services (LPS). LPS functions are to:
 1. Maintain a domestic rating assessment system.

2. Collect rates on behalf of central government and district councils.
3. Maintain a domestic and non-domestic rating assessment
4. Record legal interests in land and provision of land registration and mapping services in Northern Ireland.
5. Provide land information service for conveyancing purposes.
6. Collect and manage spatial data in Northern Ireland for use by the public and private sectors.
7. Deliver a valuation, estate management and property data service to the public sector.

5.3 The Department also has one Agency, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), which:

- Provides a statistics and social research service to NI Departments, Agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies to assist in policy making, monitoring and evaluation.
- Administers the system for the civil registration of births, marriages and civil partnerships, adoptions and deaths in Northern Ireland and production of summary statistics and population estimates.
- Administers marriage laws.
- Plans, undertakes and reports on the decennial census of population.

6 **Public Life Positions**

6.1 All public appointments in the Department are made, as far as practicable, in accordance with the Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies, published by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (Northern Ireland). Further information, including details of actions taken or planned centrally in respect of the two disability duties, is contained in the Disability Action Plan for The Executive Office.

6.2 The public life positions that the Department of Finance has responsibility for, are:

- Statistics Advisory Committee;
- Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation;

- Northern Ireland Building Regulations Advisory Committee; and
- The Legal Services Oversight Commissioner for Northern Ireland.

7 Action Measures

7.1 As our previous Disability Action Plans show, the Department is committed to taking action to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and to encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

7.2 In addition to continuing with the already established actions which are detailed in our previous Disability Action Plans, the measures outlined below detail the actions which we propose to take over the period of this disability action plan, together with performance indicators or targets, responsibility, and the intended outcomes.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sue Gray". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Sue Gray

DoF Permanent Secretary

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

Measure	Performance Indicators/Target	Timescale	Intended Outcome	Responsibility
Awareness Raising and Training				
DoF Diversity Network to work with people with disabilities to raise awareness of disability e.g. showcase and promote the positive contribution of DoF staff with disabilities to the department.	Promotion articles/activities. Staff survey results.	31 st March 2019.	Promotion of positive attitudes towards people with a disability within the department.	DoF Diversity Network.
NICS Diversity Training (Diversity Now, classroom-based) to be completed by all new staff. Unconscious bias (e-learning) training to be completed by all new managers (EO2 and analogous and above).	Number of new staff trained.	Priority 1 training – within 0-4 months of appointment.	All new staff to know about the NICS Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy and their responsibilities, including the disability duties.	Line managers and NICS HR

Revise Form and Guidance on Reasonable Adjustments	New Form and Guidance available to staff.	By 31 st March 2019.	Clearer process and guidance for staff on the reasonable adjustments process.	NICS HR
Front-line staff to be trained to deal with customers with a disability through completion of the following e-learning courses: Disability Awareness for front-line staff; Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) awareness; Supporting Vulnerable People Induction for front-line staff to include 'Every Customer Counts'.	Number of staff trained. Customer surveys/feedback.	Priority 1 training (0-4 months) Complaints dealt with within customer service standards timescales. Customer surveys carried out every year.	Improved service for customers with disabilities.	Line managers and customer service teams.
Provision of advice and support to staff on health related matters, including promoting positive mental health,	Publication of the NICS Well Newsletter 'Well Times'.	Quarterly.	Increase awareness of health conditions	NICS HR.

through NICS Well and in line with the NICS Mental Health Strategy (strategy under development).	Well Champions Conference	Annually	and how to manage them.	
Recruitment and Development				
Promote and develop the work experience programme, providing meaningful placements for people with disabilities with a wide range of disability organisations.	Number of participants by work area. Number of participating disability organisations. Feedback from participants and hosting managers.	Annually.	Encourage more disabled people to apply for NICS jobs and promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability within the department.	NICS HR.
Review and implement the NICS Policy on reasonable adjustments in the recruitment and selection process in collaboration with people with a disability.	Monitoring information on applications from people with a disability and	31 st March 2019.	NICS' recruitment and selection procedures to provide equality of opportunity to	NICS HR.

	feedback on the reasonable adjustment process.		people with disabilities so that they are encouraged to apply and compete for employment opportunities.	
Participation and Engagement				
Development of a NICS-wide Mental Health Strategy.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish Mental Health forum (internal partners) to connect all NICS mental health activities. 2. Connected links developed with external partners (Inspire/Charity for Civil Service Servants) 3. Mental Health 	31 st March 2019	NICS has a cohesive approach to the delivery of mental health initiatives, and support services, from both internal and external partners.	NICS HR.

	Strategy developed and implemented.			
Complete appointment plan for each new public appointment competition, focusing on diversity and steps to encourage applications from disabled people, and taking on board any recommendations or actions emanating from the TEO strategic diversity plan for public appointments.	Numbers of people with a disability applying for and being appointed to public life positions.	Plan to be completed at the time draft competition is being developed.	Encourage more disabled people to apply for public appointments.	Sponsor Branch (monitored by Strategic Equality Branch).
Digital Inclusion Programme activities specifically targeted at disabled people and their carers and developed in conjunction with disability organisations.	Number of activities and evaluation results.	Annually	Encourage people with disabilities to make use more online services.	Digital Transformation Service.