

Disability Discrimination Order (Northern Ireland)
2006

Disability Action Plan

For The Loughs Agency

October 2016



Foreword

This Disability Action Plan is a statement of The Loughs Agency's (hereafter referred to as the Agency) commitment to and proposals for fulfilling the statutory obligations in compliance with Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006). This Act places duties on public authorities, when carrying out their functions to have regard to the need:

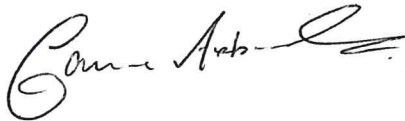
- to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- to encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

The Plan is also important because it outlines a plan for the more effective mainstreaming of disability issues, thus ensuring that they are central to the whole range of policy decision-making within the Agency. We are fully committed to fulfilling our statutory obligations in compliance with Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006) which places new duties on public authorities to:

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

The Agency's Disability Action Plan (hereinafter referred to as 'The Plan') sets out how we propose to positively meet these new duties.

We wish to ensure that the Disability Action Plan is implemented effectively in the true spirit of our commitment to the DDO duties.



Laurence Arbuckle
Chairman



John Pollock
Chief Executive

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1. Introduction

1.1 Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006 requires us, in carrying out our functions, to:

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

Under Section 49B of the DDA 1995, The Loughs Agency 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.

1.2 As Chairman and Chief Executive of The Loughs Agency, we are committed to the fulfilment of these disability duties in all parts of our organisation and have set out how we intend to do this in our Disability Action Plan.

We will allocate all necessary 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.

We will also put appropriate internal arrangements in place to ensure that the disability duties are complied with and this disability action plan effectively implemented. We will ensure the effective communication of the plan to staff and provide all necessary training and guidance for staff on the disability duties and the implementation of the plan.

We confirm our commitment to submitting an annual report to the Equality Commission on the implementation of this plan as well as carrying out a five yearly review of this plan.

We are committed to consulting with disabled people when implementing and reviewing the Agency's disability plans.

- 1.3 We will undertake a planned programme of communication and training on the disability duties for all staff and Board Members. Training timescales are evidenced in the Plan.

Responsibility for implementing, reviewing and evaluating 'the Plan' and the point of contact within the Loughs Agency will be:

Name: John Paul O'Doherty
Title: Corporate Services Manager
Phone number: 028 71 342100
Text phone number: 028 71 318000
Email: jp.odoherty@loughs-agency.org
Website: www.loughs-agency.org

This Disability Action Plan can be obtained from us in alternative formats, including large print, Braille, audio, easy read, or on computer disc, plain language, and and/or language, please contact the above person to discuss your requirements. You can also download it from our website. Our website is accessible and we are working towards level AA of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0).

- 1.4 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, or plans submitted to the Equality Commission over the five year review period.

A copy of 'the Plan', our annual progress to the Equality Commission and our five year review of this plan will be made available on our website www.loughs-agency.org

2. Our role and function

- 2.1 Outlined below is the range of functions of the Loughs Agency

The Agency performs four principal roles within its remit:

- the promotion of development of Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough for commercial and recreational purposes in respect of marine, fishery and aquaculture matters;
- the conservation, protection and development of the inland fisheries of Foyle and Carlingford Areas;
- the development and licensing of aquaculture; and
- the development of marine tourism.

2.2 In the performance of the above roles the Agency carries out functions in the following areas:

- *Conservation & Protection*
- *Development*
- *Aquaculture*
- *Corporate Services*

3. Public life positions

The Agency has responsibility over the following public life positions:

- Foyle Carlingford Area Advisory Forum (including Focus Groups for in depth discussion on specific topics); and
- Scientific Committees & working groups in relation to the conservation of Salmon and Aquaculture.

Advertisements for our public appointment vacancies include a welcoming statement to encourage underrepresented groups such as people with disabilities to apply.

4. Commitment to the effective implementation of the Disability Action Plan

4.1 We are committed to the effective implementation of all aspects of the Plan in all parts of the organisation. Overall responsibility for determining policy on how this will be achieved lies with our Board Members. Day-to-day responsibility for carrying out the policy lies with the Chief

Executive will be responsible for the oversight and implementation of administrative arrangements to ensure that the Agency complies with our disability duties.

- 4.2 Progress on meeting the objectives of 'the Plan', including those relating to the disability duties will be monitored and reported upon at the most senior level within the organisation. The Director of Corporate Services will ensure 'the Plan' will be monitored and reported on annually. All Disability Action Plan reports will proceed through the Agency's reporting mechanisms and to the Senior Management Team.
- 4.3 We will include a formal progress report on meeting the objectives in our annual report to the Equality Commission which is submitted through the standard Committee reporting procedure.

5. Internal arrangements

- 5.1 The Board of the Agency consists of 12 members appointed by Ministers. It meets 6 times per year in full session and 4 times per year in subcommittee namely:

- *Audit Sub Committee*

Supporting these committees are the various directorships of the Agency:

- *Conservation & Protection*
- *Development*
- *Aquaculture*
- *Corporate Services*

- 5.2 The Chief Executive oversees the work of the directorships through the Senior Management Team (SMT), which together with the Board Members create the corporate Agency.

5.3 The Chief Executive is responsible for the strategic direction and advice to the Agency, for the day to day management of services and the longer term planning and allocation of resources.

5.4 Statutory responsibility for the effective implementation of the Disability Duty lies with the Agency.

5.4.1 The Chief Executive and the Senior Management Team are responsible for ensuring that the Agency's decisions are implemented and for overseeing administrative arrangements to make sure 'the Plan' is implemented effectively.

5.4.2 Our Corporate Services Manager will support this work and act as our main point of contact. Currently, our Corporate Services Manager is JP O'Doherty.

5.4.3 Contact details:

EMAIL: jp.odoherty@loughs-agency.org
WEBSITE: www.loughagency.org

5.4.4 A formal report of progress on meeting the objectives relating to the disability duties will be included in the Agency's annual report to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

6. Annual report

A formal report of progress on meeting the objectives relating to the disability duties will be included in the Agency's annual report to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

7. Effective Engagement

A formal report of progress on meeting the objectives relating to the disability duties will be included in the Agency's annual report to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

8. Five year review

We will carry out a five year review of the Plan in accordance with guidelines from the Equality Commission for NI.

9 Consultation

9.1 We are committed to carrying out consultation in accordance with the guiding principles set out in the Equality Commission guidelines and recognise the need for such consultation to be timely, open and inclusive.

9.2 We are keen to seek the views of disabled people on this revised and updated Plan. We will:

- consult our list of consultees identified in our Equality Scheme;

9.3 The anticipated outcomes of this robust consultation exercise are to:

- identify barriers faced by disabled people in public life and specifically any barriers they've encountered when dealing with us;
- identify past examples where we have not promoted positive attitudes towards disabled people and identify future opportunities to promote positive attitudes;
- set priorities and identify solutions to take remedial action; and
- monitor and review how effective these measures have been.

9.4 When consulting on any matter relating to the duties, we will work with representative groups, individuals with disabilities and Section 75 groups on the best way to get their views. This may take the form of face to face meetings, advisory groups, surveys, consultative panels, internet discussions and other methodologies identified as best practice. Consultee responses to the consultations and our response will be recorded. All consultees will receive a copy of our response to their comments.

- 9.5 We will place 'the Plan' on our website asking for feedback from individuals and organisations.
- 9.6 As part of the consultative process, we will remove barriers by making sure documents are available in alternative formats, including large print, Braille, audio, computer disc, easy read, and plain language. This will be done in a timely fashion and we'll establish the basis for dialogue and engagement with disabled people during the life of 'the Plan'.
- 9.7 We'll develop best practice in communicating with young disabled people as well as looking at additional dimensions which create multiple identities such as ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation and religious belief.
- 9.8 We believe that it's important for disabled people to be involved in the implementation, monitoring and review of the Plan. Appendix 1 lays out the initiatives we want to implement. We are keen to hear your views and comments and will update our actions in line with your feedback.

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

Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people:

- A range of Equality and Disability Training programmes;
- Induction Programmes;
- Selection & Recruitment Training;
- Disability Awareness Training/emotional Health and Well-being Training;
- Developing our website;
- Workplace policies and reasonable adjustments;
- Targeted recruitment policies;

- Accessibility policies; and
- Equality screening exercises

Encourage the participation of disabled people in public life:

- Workplace policies
- Recruitment policies
- Accessibility policies
- Policy screening
- Consultation and Stakeholder groups

For further details of the full range of measures previously undertaken by the Agency, contact the Corporate Services Manager Email: jp.odoherty@loughs-agency.org

11. Action Measures

Outlined below are the measures which the Agency proposes to take over the period 2017-2020. The actions are outlined in the Action Plan table on Appendix 1. We have identified four objectives.

Objective one: Staff training and development

Objective two: Mainstreaming disability duties

Objective three: Promoting positive attitudes

Objective four: Encouraging participation in public life

12. Targets

- 12.1 The Agency is committed to monitoring and reviewing policies and practices to ensure that disability equality duties are being met. Monitoring the progress of this Plan itself is a significant element.
- 12.2 As part of this process, the Annual Review of the Plan will provide a part of the monitoring and review process and assist in drafting appropriate targets for the next period, whilst reporting on the achievement, or otherwise, of those set for the period of the Annual Review.
- 12.3 As indicated in Appendix 1, the Agency has included targets as an integral part of our Plan.
- 12.4 Some targets are very specific, whilst others are of a more general nature, thus ensuring the Plan is a realistic and proactive plan, not solely reactive. Some targets are not related to a specific time, as over the period, we want to ensure that the Agency meets the practical needs of disabled persons and their carers on a timely basis.
- 12.5 The purpose of these targets is to provide a measure of how the Agency is implementing their disability duties and to ensure we are focusing on their needs at a time when it is appropriate to have them addressed.

13. How the disability action plan will be published

- 13.1 Following submission to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, this Plan will be available by contacting:

John Paul O'Doherty

Title: Corporate Services Manager


Phone number: 028 71 342100

Text phone number: 028 71 318000

Email: jp.odoherty@loughs-agency.org

- 13.2 The availability of the Disability Action Plan will be advertised through our consultees and stakeholders and through our usual communications channels, and can be accessed on the Agency's website at: www.lough-agency.org
- 13.3 The Agency will, through our ongoing work with people with disabilities and people with learning disabilities, find appropriate ways of communicating the Plan. The Plan will be produced in clear print and plain language, will be available in alternative formats on request, including large print, Braille, audio and computer disc.
- 13.4 The Plan will be highlighted through press releases, advertisements, and meeting directly with people with disabilities, carers, disability organisations and representative groups.
- 13.5 Consideration will also be given to requests to produce the Plan for people who speak a minority language.
- 13.6 In addition, all employees will receive notification of the Plan and be provided with a full Plan on request.

Signed



John Pollock
Chief Executive