

Disability Discrimination Order
(Northern Ireland) 2006

Coleraine Borough Council

Disability Action Plan

Foreword

This Disability Action Plan is an important document in that it is a statement of Council's 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 new 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 how disability issues will be mainstreamed within Council, thus ensuring that they are central to the whole range of policy decision-making.

Mayor/Chairman

Chief Executive

The Disability Action Plan can be obtained from Council in alternative formats, including in large print, in Braille, on audio cassette and on computer disc. It can also be downloaded from the Council's website.

If you would like a copy in an alternative format, please contact:

Name: Paul Snelling

Phone number: (028) 7034 7034

Textphone number: (028) 7034 7056

Email: paul.snelling@colerainebc.gov.uk

Website: www.colerainebc.gov.uk

The website offers a Browsealoud facility.

Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Purpose of the disability action plan	1
3.	Coleraine Borough Council – its role and functions	1
4.	Public life positions over which Council has responsibility	3
5.	Council's Commitment to the effective implementation of the disability action plan	3
6.	Internal arrangements	4
7.	Effective engagement	5
8.	Annual Report	5
9.	Five Year Review	6
10.	Consultation	6
11.	Action measures	10
12.	Performance indicators	13
13.	How the disability action plan will be published	14

1. Introduction

1.1 Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006 requires Council, in carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the need:

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

1.2 Council is committed to the fulfilment of its disability duties in all parts of its organisation and has set out how it intends to do this in this Disability Action Plan (the Plan).

1.3 Council will undertake a planned programme of communication and training on the disability duties for staff and elected members.

2. Purpose of the disability action plan

2.1 This Plan sets out how Council proposes to fulfil the disability duties in relation to its functions.

3. Coleraine Borough Council– its role and functions

3.1 Council performs five principal roles;

- the direct provision of a number of services and facilities,
- the promotion of the arts, tourism, community and economic development,
- the regulation and licensing of certain activities relating to environmental health, consumer protection and public safety,
- a representative role on a number of bodies and Boards including Education and Health,
- a consultative role in relation to functions conducted by other Government bodies and agencies on issues such as planning, water, roads and housing.

3.2 In the performance of these roles Council delivers services in the following areas:

- the provision of facilities for recreational, social and cultural activities including leisure centres, community centres, parks, open spaces, sports grounds and places of entertainment
- street cleansing
- waste collection and disposal
- the provision of burial grounds
- the provision of grant aid to support the Arts, community development and the promotion of tourism and economic development
- the administration and regulation of certain matters relating to the environment, public health and public safety including building control, food safety, statutory nuisance, dangerous buildings, air pollution, noise pollution, dog control, consumer protection and health and safety
- the licensing and regulation of street trading, places of entertainment, amusement centres, sex establishments, societies lotteries, cinemas and petroleum stations
- the making of bye-laws and regulation of same.

Staff are guided by policies, procedures and work practices in the delivery of these services.

3.3 To enable Council to provide the above services and perform its other functions, Council levies an annual rate and has the power to:

- acquire and dispose of land
- borrow money
- employ staff
- procure goods and services.

4. Public life positions over which the Council has responsibility

4.1 The Council has responsibility over the following public life positions:

- Coleraine Harbour Commissioners; Six members of the Commission are selected, following public advertisement, by Coleraine Borough Council. Thereafter the Harbour Commission operates as an autonomous body.

Most Council nominations are of Councillors themselves to other bodies; these range from public bodies in the fields of Health and Housing to informal bodies such as Community Management Committees, some 60+ in total. However Councillors exercise influence within these bodies, rather than Council having responsibility over the bodies.

5. Council's commitment to the effective implementation of the disability action plan

5.1 Council is committed to the effective implementation of all aspects of the Plan in all parts of its organisation. Overall responsibility for determining policy on how this will be achieved lies with the Elected Members. Day to day responsibility for carrying out the policy determined by the Elected Members lies with the Chief Executive and he/she will be responsible for the implementation of administrative arrangements to ensure that the disability duties are complied with by Council in carrying out its functions.

5.2 As part of its corporate planning process, Council will build objectives and targets relating to the disability duties into corporate and business plans. These will be reflected at all levels of strategic planning within Council including individual staff objectives and annual plans. Progress on meeting objectives, including those relating to the disability duties, will be monitored and reported upon at the most senior level within the organisation as stated in the plans.

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

6. Internal arrangements

6.1 Council consists of 22 elected representatives, elected for a four year period. They meet monthly in full session; also in three standing committees, namely:

- The Leisure and Environment Committee
- The Planning Committee
- The Policy and Development Committee.

6.2 The Chief Executive oversees the work of the departments through the Corporate Management Team, which together with the Councillors create the corporate body of the Council.

6.3 The Chief Executive is responsible for advising Council, implementing its strategic plan and for the day to day management of services and the longer term planning and allocation of resources.

6.4 Council services are provided by five departments, which report to Committees on a monthly basis. These Standing Committees consider relevant issues before making recommendations for approval at the meeting of Council on the 4th Tuesday of each month:

- The Chief Executive's department is responsible for administration, policy development and development services. It reports to the Policy and Development Committee.
- The Leisure Services Department is responsible for recreation, parks and cemeteries, arts/museums, event management, twinning, marinas, caravan parks and town halls. It reports to the Leisure and Environment Committee.

- The Corporate Services Department is responsible for human resources, finance and IT services. It reports to the Policy and Development Committee.
- The Technical Services Department is responsible for refuse collection, street cleansing, environmental management, public toilets, building maintenance, waste management, building control and licensing. It reports to the Leisure and Environment Committee.
- The Environmental Health Department is responsible for food hygiene, dog control, health & safety, consumer protection and safety and pollution control. It reports to the Leisure and Environment Committee.

6.5 Oversight of the Plan is the responsibility of Council's Equality Working Group, as an addition to the Group's Equality Scheme (Section 75) oversight. The Working Group reports to the Policy and Development Committee.

7. Effective engagement

7.1 Council is committed to engage effectively with disabled people in the drafting, implementation, monitoring and review of this Plan. Further information on how this will be done is outlined in Section 10 on Consultation.

8. Annual report

8.1 Council will prepare an annual report on the implementation of its Plan. The annual report will be included as part of Council's annual report to the Equality Commission on the implementation of its equality scheme.

8.2 A copy of the annual report will be made available on the Council's website.

8.3 The report will comment on the year past's activities and outline the proposals for the year to come.

9. Five year review

- 9.1 Council will carry out a five year review of its plan, in consultation with the Equality Commission for NI. This commitment is subject to the outworking of the Review of Public Administration, also referred to in 11.5

10. Consultation

- 10.1 Council is committed to carrying out consultation in a meaningful manner in the development of its disability duties. In doing so the Council is keen to bring about change for disabled people through involvement and participation in preparing the Plan.
- 10.2 Specifically Council sought the views of disabled people in relation to the development of the Plan. To do this Council actively engaged with representative groups at regional level and at local level.
- 10.3 At regional level, in partnership with the Local Government Staff Commission, the following organisations were invited to an involvement day in Lisburn on 15th March 2007 to assist in the development of Councils' disability plans:
- Action Mental Health;
 - Age Concern NI;
 - Alzheimer's Society NI;
 - Arts and Disability Forum;
 - Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus;
 - Autism NI (PAPA)
 - Blind Centre;
 - British Deaf Association;
 - British Dyslexia Association;
 - Carers N I;
 - Cedar Foundation;
 - Centre for Independent Living;
 - Circles Network;
 - Crossroads;
 - Disability Action;
 - Down's Syndrome Association;
 - Employers' Forum on Disability;

- Equality Commission for NI;
- Help the Aged;
- Mencap;
- MS Society NI;
- Newry & Mourne Senior Citizens' Consortium;
- Newtownabbey Senior Citizens' Forum;
- NI Association for Mental Health;
- NI Union of Supported Employment;
- North West Forum for People with Disabilities;
- Now Project;
- Orchardville Society;
- PHAB (NI);
- Praxis;
- RETHINK;
- RNIB;
- RNID;
- Sense NI;
- Sign Community;
- Steer Mental Health;
- U3A;

10.4 At local level the following organisations were invited to an involvement day in Portstewart to assist in the development of Councils' disability plans:

- Coleraine Disability Forum
- Fibromyalgia NI
- Rethink
- Riding for the Disabled
- Coleraine Visually Impaired Club
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Coleraine & District Arthritis Care
- Multiple Sclerosis Society
- Portrush Hospice Support Group
- Ulster Cancer Foundation
- Portstewart Tai Chi Community
- Cruse Bereavement Care
- Diabetes UK- Coleraine Branch
- Action MS
- Coleraine Dyslexia Association
- Portstewart Hospice Support Group
- The Pavestone centre

- North West ME Support group
- Causeway Bereavement Support Group
- Causeway Branch Alzheimer's Society
- Causeway ADHD Support group
- CHSST (Pavestone Centre)
- Unlimited Survivor
- Blind Centre
- Speechmatters
- Red Cross Medical Loan
- Coleraine Disabled Christians' fellowship
- Association for Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus
- Fibromyalgia NW Support Group
- Compass Advocacy Network Ltd
- Coleraine Shopmobility

Advertisements were placed in the local press to encourage individuals to attend and/or express comment, as well as organisations.

Council's website also extended the invitation to participate in the local involvement day.

- 10.5 Council's involvement day was designed to ensure that disabled people can assist Council by:
- identifying barriers faced by disabled people in participating in public life in general and specifically any barriers they have encountered in relation to their dealings with Council
 - identifying circumstances in the past in which Council has not promoted positive attitudes towards disabled people and by identifying opportunities in the future for Council to promote such attitudes
 - setting priorities and identifying solutions as regards the taking of remedial action
 - monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of measures taken
- 10.6 To help ensure that Council is responsive to the needs of disabled people, representative Councillors, Directors and senior managers of Council attended the local involvement day.

- 10.7 Accessibility to the Plan was emphasised by facilitating, on request, formats including Braille, large print, disc and audio cassette. Continuing dialogue and engagement during the life of this and future Plans was considered. Consideration was also given to how best to communicate information to young disabled people as well as considering additional dimensions such as ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation and religious belief.
- 10.8 Council ensured the highest level of inclusivity in the involvement day by considering the following:
- the time of day, of the meeting;
 - the appropriateness of the venue, and whether it could be accessed by those with disabilities;
 - how the meeting would be run;
 - the use of appropriate language;
 - whether a signer or interpreter was necessary;
- Alternative means of involvement were offered where disability or availability meant that some persons could not attend the involvement day.
- 10.9 Following on from the regional and local involvement days, Council may wish to further discuss the implementation of the Plan by meeting with:
- individuals
 - advisory groups
- to explore further innovative ways of involving disabled people and their carers.
- 10.10 Council believes it is important that disabled people are involved in the implementation, monitoring and review of the Plan. Section 11 of this document lays out the initiatives that Council will implement. Views and comments on these actions were sought and amendments made as a result of the comments received.
- 10.11 During the 5 year lifetime of this Disability Action Plan, groups and individuals will have opportunities to consult amongst themselves and form views on the implementation of the Plan. Council will address any issues raised through further consultation.

11. Action measures

- 11.1 Council has already taken a number of measures which have the effect of promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people and encouraging their participation in public life. These measures arise from Council's Section 75 duties and under the access responsibilities arising from the Disability Discrimination Act. The measures also include actions flowing from Council's Community Development Strategy.
- 11.2 Training on the general Section 75 duties, which includes a duty to disabled persons, was provided to all staff and to Councillors; training has subsequently been provided as necessary for new staff and Councillors and for specialised posts.
The training for managers included the process of screening policies. All new policies are screened, including screening for adverse effects on disabled people. Training in equality impact assessment was and continues to be provided to a range of managers.
- 11.3 Specialist training on disabled access under the DDA was provided for a number of Council's technical staff. Under their direction an audit of all Council buildings and other relevant property was completed and a programme of remedial works initiated to ensure that disabled access responsibilities are met.
- 11.4 Council's Community Development Strategy provides for outreach and capacity building for a wide range of groups, including disability groups. A number of forums have been created to help give voice to their members, including a Disability Forum. The forums are facilitated by officers; Councillors participate in the forums and undertake an advocacy role.
- 11.5 The measures outlined above precede the Disability Action Plan. The Plan adds to these measures as outlined in the following section. The section includes time targets for the implementation of the action measures and performance indicators. The Review of Public Administration is unlikely to change any of the specific target dates in the next two years;

thereafter it is less clear what changes may be necessary as Councils are restructured.

11.6

Action/ Measure	Impact	Timeframe	Performance indicator
<p>Mainstreaming The screening criteria for Council policies, in addition to considering S 75 duties (equality of opportunity) for the 9 categories, will include an additional criterion on the scope to promote positive attitudes for disabled people and for their participation in public life. (all managers)</p>	<p>Policies will be given more consideration at an earlier stage in their development in relation to promoting positive attitudes and participation for disabled people</p>	<p>Commence June 2007 and then ongoing</p>	<p>Screening format extended to include additional disability requirements</p>
<p>Complete an Annual Report on the implementation of the Disability Action Plan (Equality Officer)</p>	<p>Progress on the Disability Plan will be monitored and reported on</p>	<p>August 2008</p>	<p>Report completed</p>
<p>Review recruitment procedures (HR Manager)</p>	<p>Posts may be identified that can be offered to a range of disabled persons</p>	<p>February 2008</p>	<p>Review completed</p>
<p>Review the provision of workplace support to staff with a disability (HR Manager)</p>	<p>Disabled staff may be better supported in the workplace</p>	<p>December 2007</p>	<p>Review completed</p>

Extend the brief of the Community Development Group to include a review of the potential to promote positive attitudes and participation for disabled people through the community development remit (Community Development Officer)	Greater participation by disabled people in community activities. A borough directory supportive of disabled residents and visitors	July 2008	Review completed
Include positive images of people with disabilities in Council sponsored publications (PR Manager and Community Development Manager/ Disability Forum)	People with disabilities portrayed in a positive light	Ongoing	Monitor publications
Publicise the Disability Action Plan; hard copy and website (Equality Manager)	Greater awareness of disability rights	Ongoing	Plan on website
Proactively address legal access duties (Technical Services Manager)	A supportive, positive response to disability access	Ongoing	Monitor complaints
Training Provide training on the disability duties to elected members (Equality Officer)	Increased awareness of disability responsibilities	October 2007	Training completed
Provide targeted training for managers, recruitment and	Promotion of positive attitudes towards	Ongoing	Training records completed

selection panels, HR officers and front line staff. (HR Manager)	disabled people		
Participation Review public life positions under Council's influence (Equality Officer)	Promotional information on these positions circulated to disabled representatives	December 2007	Review completed and information circulated
Encourage Councillors, disabled persons and carers to participate in the Coleraine Disability Forum (Community Development Officer)	Greater participation by disabled people and more proactive and informed outcomes from the Forum; capacity building programmes	December 2007	A larger and more active disability forum

12. Performance Indicators

12.1 Council is committed to monitoring and reviewing policies and practices to ensure that disability duties are being met. Monitoring the progress of this Plan itself is a significant element in ensuring its delivery.

12.2 As part of this process, the Annual Review of the Plan will be an integral part of the monitoring and review process and assist in drafting appropriate targets and performance indicators for the next period, whilst reporting on the achievement, or otherwise, of those set for the period of the Annual Review.

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:

**Paul Snelling
Coleraine Borough Council
Cloonavin
66 Portstewart Road
Coleraine
BT52 1EY**

**Phone number: (028) 7034 7034
Textphone number: (028) 7034 7056
Email: paul.snelling@colerainebc.gov.uk**

- 13.2 The availability of the Disability Action Plan will be advertised in the press and can be accessed on the Council's website at:

www.colerainebc.gov.uk
The website offers a Browsealoud facility.

- 13.3 The Council will, through its ongoing work with people with disabilities and people with learning disabilities, use appropriate ways of communicating the Plan. The Plan is produced in clear print and plain language; it will be available in alternative formats on request, including large print, Braille, audio cassette and computer disc.
- 13.4 In addition, all employees will receive a summary Plan and be provided with a full Plan on request.