



Disability Duties and Action Plan

2012 – 2013

DRAFT

Foreword by Chair and Chief Executive

Welcome to Armagh City and District Council's Disability Duties and Action Plan for the period 2012 – 2013. The Disability Duties require the Council, 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 Council is adopting a proactive approach in mainstreaming the Disability Duties into all our decisions and activities. We have a key role in enabling all our people to play a full part in civic life and in tackling disadvantage and exclusion. The effective implementation of the Disability Duties is more than compliance with the Disability Discrimination legislation.

In preparing this Disability Duties and Action Plan, we have consulted widely with people with disabilities both at a regional and local level.

We are committed to portraying (and encourage others to portray) disabled people in a positive role, as well as taking steps to eliminate ignorance and prejudice towards disabled people in the wider community and the workplace. We also wish to encourage the participation of disabled people in public life including at a community, regional and national level, in citizens' panels, focus groups, as elected members, etc.

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 the Action Plan effectively implemented. We will ensure the effective communication of the plan to staff and to providing 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 it.

Responsibility for implementing, reviewing and evaluating this Disability Duties and Action Plan and the point of contact within the Council will be:

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If you require this plan in an alternative format (such as in large print, Braille, easy read, audio alternative format) and/or language, please contact the above person to discuss your requirements.	

A copy of this plan, our annual equality progress report to the Equality Commission and our five year review of it will be made available on our website www.armagh.gov.uk

The Disability Duties and Action Plan we believe will play a major part in tackling disadvantage whilst releasing the potential of all of the people of Armagh City and District.

Councillor Freda Donnelly
Mayor

Mr John Briggs
Clerk & Chief Executive

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1. Introduction

1.1 Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006 requires the 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.

Under Section 49B of the DDA 1995, Armagh City and District is also required to submit to the Equality Commission a Disability Action Plan (the Plan) showing how it proposes to fulfil these duties in relation to its functions.

1.2 The 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 Plan.

1.3 The Council will undertake a planned programme of communication and training on the Disability Duties and Action Plan for all staff and Elected Members (also known as Councillors).

2. Purpose of the disability action plan

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

3. The Council – its role and functions

3.1 The Council performs five principal roles within its local area and district:

- 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 the above roles the Council carries out functions 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.

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

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

3.4 To support and implement the above statutory functions and provision of services and facilities, the Council has adopted a wide range of policies.

4. Public life positions over which the Council has responsibility

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

Theatre Board, Sports Forum, and Keady Community Forum

5. The Council's commitment to the effective implementation of the Disability Action Plan

5.1 The 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 will be responsible for the implementation of administrative arrangements to ensure that the disability duties are complied with by the Council in carrying out its functions.

5.2 As part of its corporate planning process, the Council will build objectives and targets relating to the Disability Duties and Action Plan into corporate and business plans. These will be reflected at all levels of strategic planning within the Council including individual staff objectives and annual plans. Progress on meeting objectives, including those relating to the Disability Duties and Action Plan will be monitored and reported upon at the most senior level within the organisation on a biannual basis. Individual performance will be monitored and reviewed through performance review arrangements.

5.3 A formal report of progress on meeting the objectives relating to the Disability Duties and Action Plan will be included in the Council's annual report.

6. Internal arrangements

- 6.1 The Council consists of 22 elected representatives, elected for four year periods meeting monthly at Statutory Council. A new committee system was established in 1995 to enhance the delivery of efficient and effective decision-making, transparency, inclusiveness and accountability. These committees are:

- Executive Committee
- Public Services Scrutiny Committee
- Internal Scrutiny Committee
- Corporate Affairs Committee
- Audit Committee

Additional Scrutiny Panels meet on a regular basis.

Supporting these committees are the various departments of the Council.

- 6.2 The Chief Executive oversees the work of the departments through the Corporate Management Team, which together with the Elected Members create the corporate body of the Council.
- 6.3 The Chief Executive is responsible for the strategic direction and advice to the Council, for the day-to-day management of services and the longer term planning and allocation of resources.
- 6.4 The Council has three departments:
- Corporate Services and Governance Department is responsible for Human Resources, Information Computer Technology, Corporate Administration, Graphic Design, Estate Management, Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Democratic Services, Records Management, Finance, Policy and Planning, Communication, Equality/Diversity and Internal Audit and Scrutiny.

- Regeneration and Development Department is responsible for Economic Development, Tourism Development, Tourism Facilities, Arts – Market Place Theatre, Community Development / Good Relations, EU Funding, Rural Development, Local Strategy Partnership, Urban Regeneration and Cross Border Funding Partnerships, Community Safety and District Policing Partnership.
- Environmental Health and Recreation Department is responsible for Environmental Health and Protection, Operational Services (refuse and street cleaning), Building Control, Recreation (leisure centre, etc) Waste Management and Emergency Planning

6.5 Specific administrative arrangements

- The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Disability Duties and Action Plan
- For people seeking further information on the Plan, the Contact Officer is Mary Hanna

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7. Effective engagement

- 7.1 The Council is committed to engaging 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 The Council will prepare an annual report on the implementation of its Plan. The annual report will be included as part of the Council's annual report to the Equality Commission on the implementation of our equality scheme.
- 8.2 A copy of the annual report will be made available on the Council's website, www.armagh.gov.uk

9. Five year review

- 9.1 The Council will carry out a five year review of its plan, in consultation with the Equality Commission for NI.

10. Consultation

- 10.1 The Council was committed to carrying out consultation in a meaningful manner in the development of its Disability Duties and Action Plan. In doing so the Council was keen to bring about change for disabled people and we therefore focused on the issue of involvement and participation in preparing this Plan.
- 10.2 Specifically we were keen to seek the views of disabled people in relation to the development of the Plan. To do this the Council actively engaged on a number of levels; firstly at a representative group level at the regional (Northern Ireland) level and secondly, at the local level by holding an involvement day.
- 10.3 Our involvement day was designed to ensure that disabled people could assist the 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 the Council
- identifying circumstances in the past in which the Council has not promoted positive attitudes towards disabled people and by identifying opportunities in the future for the 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

- 10.4 At the regional level, in partnership with the Local Government Staff Commission, we invited a wide range of organisations to discuss their involvement in the development of our Disability Duties and Action Plan.
- 10.5 As part of the Council's continuing involvement with people with disabilities, barriers to proper consultation will be removed by ensuring accessibility of documents in appropriate formats. Information will be made available on request in accessible formats including Braille, large print, or audio alternative format. Information will also be made available in accessible formats in a timely fashion. It will also be important to establish with disabled people the basis for dialogue and engagement during the life of the Plan. Consideration will also be 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.
- 10.6 The Council is keen to ensure the highest level of inclusivity in our involvement with people with disabilities.
- 10.7 The 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 the Council wishes to implement.
- 10.8 The Council believes that by hosting an annual involvement day that this will allow for a two-way discussion; giving disabled people an opportunity to provide feedback in a

constructive manner, as to how we are implementing the Disability Duties and Action Plan. Prior to the annual meeting the Council will allow adequate time for groups and individuals to consult amongst themselves as part of the process of forming a view on the implementation of this scheme. We will therefore aim to provide information at least one month in advance of the annual meeting.

11. Action measures

11.1 The Council has already taken a number of measures to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage their participation in public life as a result of the duties under Section 75, for example producing documents in alternative formats. In addition the Council has:

- Provided disability awareness training for customer facing positions
- Implemented Type Talk phone training for customer facing positions
- Speech enabled the Council's website with Browsealoud
- Produced a Disability Etiquette Handbook for all staff
- Are members of Employers For Disability NI
- Disability working group on accessibility to Council facilities
- Equality Committee constantly consider 'disability' issues
- Actively involving people of all ages in our activities, e.g. young disabled people in our youth democracy day;

11.2 The following are the additional measures which the Council intends to take in order to implement the Disability Duties and Action Plan.

11.3 The tables below outline the timescale for the implementation of the action measures.

11.4 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 we want to ensure that the Council meets the practical needs of disabled persons and their carers on a timely basis.

- 11.5 The purpose of these Performance Indicators and targets is to provide a measure of how the Council is implementing its Disability Duties and Action Plan and to ensure we are focusing on relevant needs at a time when it is appropriate to have them addressed.
- 11.6 Some Performance Indicators will be measured against similar public authorities, whilst others are specific to the Council by addressing the needs of those receiving the service and/or our employees.

Action Measures revised November 2011

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

Action Measure	Responsibility	Timeframe	Performance Indicator	Expected Outcome	Evaluation Model/monitoring method
Policy screening – on going implementation of screening requirements in relation to new and amended policies (screening form includes questions relating to the disability duties)	All line managers	ongoing	The completed screening forms will address the disability duties	All new or amended policies will incorporate the disability duties where appropriate	
Induction Training which includes introduction to Equality Scheme, the Disability Action Plan and DVD highlighting different types of disabilities	Training Officer and Policy & Diversity Officer	Ongoing 2012-2013	All new starts will receive training within four months of commencing employment	Increased awareness of disability legislation and understanding of issues relating to service users	Quiz at end of training and evaluation sheets

Action Measure	Responsibility	Timeframe	Performance Indicator	Expected Outcome	Evaluation Model/monitoring method
Provide equality and disability training for all Council staff. In order to comply with the Council's Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan all staff will be required to do this training so that they are aware of their obligations in relation to the legislation.	Training Officer and Policy & Diversity Officer	One session every three months 2012-2013	153 staff have received this training. The Council employs 324 permanent staff. Frontline staff and managers were prioritised in the first plan. The priority now is to offer the training on ongoing basis for new starts and those who were unable to attend earlier sessions	Increased awareness of disability legislation and understanding of issues relating to service users	Evaluation sheets
Conduct annual survey to assess staff training needs and issue via Managers and the Council's intranet	Training Officer and Policy & Diversity Officer	Annual	Analysis of survey results	Identification of further training needs in the area of disability equality	Annual monitoring

Action Measure	Responsibility	Timeframe	Performance Indicator	Expected Outcome	Evaluation Model/monitoring method
Provide enhanced disability training to staff which will be provided by the disability sector	Training Officer and Policy & Diversity Officer	One session per year 2012-2013	Target is to encourage at least 15 members of staff to attend this session	Increased awareness among staff of the needs of service users with specific types of disabilities	Evaluation sheets
A consistent approach to be taken to ensure that all publications and events comply with disability access requirements. Relevant Officers to be advised of protocol when advertising events.	Policy & Diversity Officer Communications Officer Graphic Design Officer	2012-2013	Staff to be advised via e-mail and the Council's intranet	Improved communications with Disabled customers	
Local disability contacts to be kept up to date and forwarded to all departments in the Council so that groups can be advised of all new public life positions and Council events	Policy & Diversity Officer	ongoing	Staff to be e-mailed updated lists	Improved communications with disabled customers	

Action Measure	Responsibility	Timeframe	Performance Indicator	Expected Outcome	Evaluation Model/monitoring method
Raise awareness among staff of the role of the Diversity Champions. The Diversity Champions are currently the Policy & Diversity Officer and The Mayor	Policy & Diversity Officer The Mayor	February 2012	Target is to develop short profile of the role for the Council's Intranet.	Increased awareness of the role among staff with increased contact being made with the Diversity Champions.	
Organise an event or initiative which will promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.	Policy & Diversity Officer	June 2012	One initiative to be organised	Increased awareness among the community of the disability duties	
Engage with local disability sector and local disabled people to monitor the plan	Policy & Diversity Officer	August - November 2012	Letters and follow up phone calls to all contacts on the list	Improved engagement with the disability sector with the intention of devising new or revised targets	Individual discussions and or meetings with local disability organisations and local disabled people to assess the effectiveness of the Council's plan

Action Measure	Responsibility	Timeframe	Performance Indicator	Expected Outcome	Evaluation Model/monitoring method
Prepare annual report on the implementation of the plan	Policy & Diversity Officer	Annual (August)	Completion of the report in August	To monitor and report on progress	
Active Communities Investment Programme	Sports Development Officer	Annual	To increase participation on the programme by 13%	Improves the health of people with physical/sensor y disabilities by introducing participants to a range of new physical activity and leisure opportunities	Annual report produced by Disability NI and forwarded to local Steering Group
Specialist Exercise Programme at Orchard Leisure Centre	Special Exercise Referral Consultant	ongoing	A minimum of 10% of disabled people on the programme	Improves the health of disabled people through a planned exercise referral, catering for the health, social and physical activity needs of all the participants	An annual report is given to the Public Health Agency and tri-monthly reports are given to the management committee

Action Measure	Responsibility	Timeframe	Performance Indicator	Expected Outcome	Evaluation Model/monitoring method
PASS Community Leadership Project	Good Relations Officers	January – March 2012	PASS (Promoting Acceptance in Society through Sport) is a youth community Leadership Programme that uses sport as a way of tackling social exclusion & influencing community development within the Armagh City & District. Disability Sport NI deliver a module as part of the “Understanding Diversity in Society” training course	Young people within the Armagh City and District will have a greater appreciation and understanding of Diversity in Society	Programme will be evaluated following completion

Action Measure	Responsibility	Timeframe	Performance Indicator	Expected Outcome	Evaluation Model/monitoring method
All Sorts Project	Good Relations Officers	January – March 2012	The aim of this project is to provide people with the skills and information to challenge negative stereotypes by providing opportunities to meet and share experiences with others from different backgrounds and cultures. Barnardos Disabled Children and Young People's Participation project deliver a workshop in which the participants learn what it is like to live with a disability.	Adults within the Armagh City & District will be better skilled to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people	Programme will be evaluated following completion

12. How the disability action plan will be published

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

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Website:	<u>www.armagh.gov.uk</u>

12.2 The availability of the Disability Duties and Action Plan will be advertised in the press, including disability specialist press, and can be accessed on the Council's website at:

www.armagh.gov.uk

12.3 The Council 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 and audio alternative format.

12.4 The Plan will be highlighted through press releases, mail shots, meeting directly with disability organisations, representative groups and disabled people.

12.5 In accordance with the Council's Equality Scheme consideration will also be given to requests to produce the Plan or a summary Plan for people who speak a minority language.

12.6 In addition, all employees will receive a summary Plan and be provided with a full Plan on request.

**The closing date for responses is
27 February 2012**