



Disability Duties

Disability Action Plan

2007-2009

JUNE 2007

This Disability Action Plan can be obtained from the 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: *Rachel Shaw*

Phone number: *028 9446 3113*

Textphone number: *028 9448 1343*

Email: *rachel.shaw@antrim.gov.uk*

Website: *www.antrim.gov.uk/consultationdisabilityplan*

Foreword

This Disability Action Plan is an important document in that it is a statement of the 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 people with disabilities; and
- to encourage participation by people with disabilities in public life.

The Plan is also important because it outlines how disability issues can be more effectively mainstreamed within the council, thus ensuring that they are central to the whole range of policy decision-making within the Council.

Adrian Cochrane Watson
Mayor

David McCammick
Chief Executive

Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Purpose of the disability action plan	1
3.	The Council – its role and functions	1
4.	Public life positions over which the Council has responsibility	3
5.	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	8
12.	Timescale for the implementation of the action measures	8
13.	Performance indicators	9
14.	Proposed Performance Indicators/Targets	10
15.	How the disability action plan will be published	12
Appendix 1	Organisation Chart	13
Appendix 2	Local Disability Groups	14
Appendix 3	Council Initiatives and Action Plan	17

1. Introduction

1.1 Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 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 people with disabilities; and
- to encourage participation by people with disabilities in public life.

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 Disability Action Plan (the Plan).

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

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, building regulations 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 postal naming and numbering and health and safety
- the licensing and regulation of street trading, places of entertainment, amusement centres, sex establishments, societies lotteries, cinemas and petroleum stations.

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 such as:

Community Safety Partnership
Rural Economic Action Partnership
Local Strategic Partnership
District Policing Partnership

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 who is 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 ensure that disability duties are mainstreamed into corporate and business plans, with specific responsibilities for these duties designated to a member of the Senior Management Team. Progress on meeting the disability duties will be monitored and reported upon at the most senior level within the organisation at regular meetings of the Senior Management Team.

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

6. Internal arrangements

6.1 The Council consists of 19 elected representatives, elected for a four year period who meet monthly in full session and more frequently in five committees namely:

- Resources Committee
- Development and Leisure Services Committee
- Environment and Borough Services Committee
- Community Planning Committee
- Public Services Committee

Supporting these committees are the various departments of the Council.

6.2 The Chief Executive oversees the work of the departments through the Chief Executive's 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, each of which is headed by a Director:

- The Corporate Services Department is responsible for finance, IT, human resources, administration and registration and reports to the Resources Committee of Council.
- The Development and Leisure Services Department is responsible for economic development, tourism, leisure and recreation, community development, community and good relations and the arts and reports to the Development and Leisure Services Committee of Council. This department also has responsibility for the following bodies:
 - Community Safety Partnership,
 - Rural Economic Action Partnership,
 - Local Strategic Partnership,
 - District Policing Partnership
- The Environmental Services Department is responsible for environmental health, refuse and street cleaning, building control, building services, parks, education awareness and

the waste management strategy and reports to the Environment and Borough Services Committee of the Council.

6.5 The Plan will be drawn up by the Policy Officer and the management including monitoring and reporting will be carried out by the Policy Officer who will report to the Managing Diversity Team.

(See organisation chart at Appendix 1 showing how the disability duties will be delivered.)

7. Effective engagement

7.1 The Council is committed to engage effectively with people with disabilities 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.

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 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 people with disabilities and has therefore focused on participation in preparing our final Plan.

- 10.2 Specifically Council is keen to seek the views of people with disabilities in relation to the development of the Plan. To do this the Council is actively engaged on a number of levels; firstly with representative groups at the regional level and secondly, with individuals and groups at the local level.
- 10.4 At regional level, in partnership with the Local Government Staff Commission, Council will invite the following organisations to discuss their involvement in the development of the Council's Disability Duties:
- Cedar Foundation
 - Disability Action
 - Mencap
 - PHAB (NI)
 - Royal National Institute for the Blind
 - Royal National Institute for the Deaf
- 10.5 At local level, Council will invite local disability groups (list attached at Appendix 2) to comment on our scheme, and will encourage a broader dialogue throughout the lifetime of the Plan. Throughout the consultation period for the Plan, the Council will actively encourage one-to-one dialogues with local individuals and groups as this is seen to be the most effective ways of gathering opinion in the Antrim area.

10.6 The Council believes it is important that people with disabilities are involved in the implementation, monitoring and review of the Plan. Appendix 3 of this document lays out the initiatives the Council wishes to implement. We would seek your views and comments on these actions and will consider amending them or including additional ones following the comments we receive.

10.7 Council may wish to further discuss the implementation of the Plan by meeting with:

- individuals
- advisory groups
- consultative panels
- internet discussion group
- telephone focus groups
- surveys

and other innovative ways of involving people with disabilities.

11. Action measures

11.1 The Council has already taken a number of measures to promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities and encourage their participation in public life as a result of the duties under Section 75.

These include:

- Disability Awareness Training for all staff;
- Sign Language training for key staff;
- Redeployment of staff with disabilities.

11.2 The actions which the Council intends to take in order to implement the disability duties are included at Appendix 3.

12. Timescale for the Implementation of the Action Measures

12.1 The table at Appendix 3 outlines the timescale for the implementation of the action measures detailed in Section 11. In line with the current timetable for RPA, the current 26 council structure will be replaced with a new council structure with effect from 1 April 2009. This timetable therefore outlines the actions which the Council will take until 31 March 2009.

13. Performance Indicators or Targets

- 13.1 The Council is committed to monitoring and reviewing its policies and practices to ensure that disability equality duties are being met. Monitoring the progress of this Plan itself is a significant element.
- 13.2 As part of this process and according to SMART principles, the Annual Review of the Plan will provide a part of the monitoring and review process and assist in drafting appropriate targets and Performance Indicators (PIs) for the next period, whilst reporting on the achievement, or otherwise, of those set for the period of the Annual Review.
- 13.3 The Council has included performance indicators and targets as an integral part of this Plan.
- 13.4 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 2-year period we want to ensure that the Council meets the practical needs of people with disabilities and their carers on a timely basis. However, all targets will be placed in the context of SMART principles to ensure effective implementation against agreed standards.
- 13.5 The purpose of these PIs and targets is to provide a measure of how the Council is implementing its disability duties and to ensure we are focusing on the needs of people with disabilities at a time when it is appropriate to have them addressed.
- 13.6 Some PIs will be measured against similar public authorities, whilst others are specific to an authority by addressing the needs of those receiving the service and/or its employees.

14. Proposed performance indicators/targets:

Operating according to SMART principles at all times, the Council is committed to the following indicators/targets.

- 14.1 To monitor employees already in post and prospective employees through the selection procedure, to ensure the Council is aware of employees and potential employees needs by identifying the percentage of employees who have a disability. This data will be updated at least once during the five year period.
- 14.2 To ensure all employees, who require additional assistance to carry out their duties, are provided with adequate support.
- 14.3 To display positive attitudes towards people with disabilities through Council publications and by using them where possible in appropriate displays of Council activities and services, and in Council premises.
- 14.4 To identify individuals within the organisation who will assist Councillors, employees and service providers in disability-related matters, including accessibility auditing, identifying training needs and sourcing advice on specific needs.
- 14.5 To monitor the Council's comments/complaints procedures to ensure appropriate corrective action is taken in consultation with service users and to measure improvement over a specific period of time.
- 14.6 To train all frontline staff in disability awareness within 6 months of taking up post. All staff in post who have not already received training, will be trained within 6 months of the Plan being in place.
- 14.7 To identify specific training needs for departments who interface with the public and to arrange to meet these needs through appropriate training methods.
- 14.8 to provide awareness and refresher training in the Disability Discrimination Act for Councillors, Senior Management and all staff across Council.
- 14.9 To screen all policies and practices in line with our Section 75 Equality Scheme commitments and review all policies

and practices, where adverse or potential adverse impact is identified.

- 14.10 To provide resources to train Councillors, and employees of the Council, to provide signage and additional aids to ensure services are fully accessible to all.
- 14.11 To continue to encourage work placements and return to work appointments for those with a disability.

15. How the disability action plan will be published

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

Rachel Shaw, Admin Officer at:

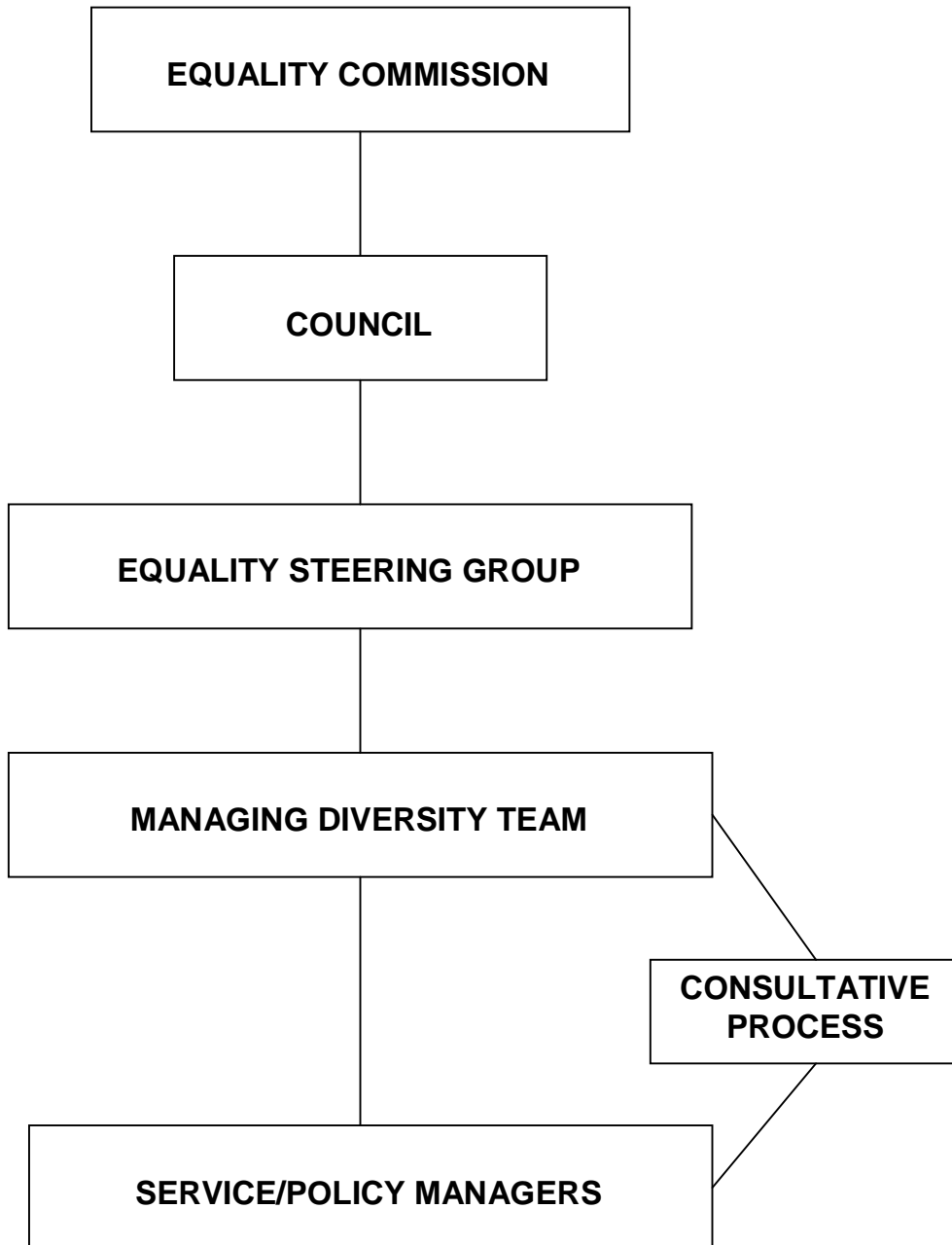
*Antrim Borough Council
Antrim Civic Centre
50 Stiles Way
Antrim BT41 2UB
Tel: 028 9446 3113
Email: rachel.shaw@antrim.gov.uk*

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

www.antrim.gov.uk/consultationdisabilityplan

- 15.3 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, audio cassette and computer disc.
- 15.4 The final Plan will be highlighted through press releases, advertisement and mail shots.
- 15.6 In addition, all employees will receive a summary Plan and be provided with a full Plan on request.

APPENDIX 1



APPENDIX 2- LOCAL DISABILITY GROUPS

Deleted:

Organisation	Address	Telephone
Age Concern	3 Lower Crescent Belfast BT7 1NR	028 9024 5729
Alzheimer's Disease Society	403 Lisburn Road Belfast BT9 7EW	028 9066 4100
Arthritis Care N Ireland	Ballymena Business Centre 62 Fenaghy Road Ballymena BT42 1FL	028 2563 2477
Royal National Institute for the Blind	Unit B 40 Linenhall Street Belfast BT2 8BG	028 9032 9373
Royal National Institute for the Deaf	Wilton House 5 College Sq North Belfast BT1 6AR	028 9023 9619
Carers National Association	NI Regional Office 11 Lower Crescent 12 Belfast BT7 1NR	028 9066 6188
The Cedar Foundation	Malcolm Sinclair House 31 Ulsterville Avenue Belfast BT9 7AS	028 9066 6188
Chest, Heart & Stroke Association NI	21 Dublin Road Belfast BT2 7HB	028 9032 0184
Disability Action	Portside Business Park 189 Airport Road West Belfast BT3 9ED	028 9029 7880
Disability Sport – NI	Unit 10 Ormeau Business Park 8 Cromac Street Belfast BT7 2JA	028 9050 8254
Down's Syndrome Association NI	Graham House Knockbracken Healthcare Park Saintfield Road Belfast BT8 8BH	028 9070 4606
Dyslexia Centre NI	17a Upper Newtownards Road 40 Linenhall Street Belfast BT4 3HT	028 9065 9212
Education Guidance Services Adult (EGSA)	4 th floor 40 Linenhall Street Belfast BT2 8BA	028 9024 4274
Epilepsy Association, British	Graham House Knockbracken Healthcare Park Saintfield Road Belfast BT8 8BH	028 9079 9355
Extra Care for Elderly People	Extra Care House 11 Wellington Park Belfast BT9	028 9068 3273

Organisation	Address	Telephone
Families in Contact	34 Garnerville Park Belfast BT4 2NY	028 9024 4401
Mencap N Ireland	Segal House 4 Annadale Avenue Belfast BT7 3HG	028 9069 1351
NI Association for Mental Health	80 University Street Belfast BT7 1HE	028 9032 8474
Multiple Sclerosis Society	34 Annadale Avenue Belfast BT7 3JJ	028 980 2802
N Ireland Huntingdon's Disease	8 Glenbank Close Belfast BT17 0SN	028 9026 3555
Phab Northern Ireland	Unit 25 Townsend Enterprise Park Townsend Street Belfast BT13 2ES	028 9050 4800
Polio Fellowship (NI)	198 Belvoir Drive Belfast BT8 7PJ	028 9024 7752
Shelter	1-5 Coyles Place Belfast BT7 1EL	028 9079 8878
The Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus	Graham House Knockbracken Healthcare Park Saintfield Road Belfast BT8 8BH	028 9079 8878
Re-think	34 Church Street Antrim BT41 4BA	028 9448 7745
Society of Parents and Friends of Muckamore Abbey	11 Bridge Park Ballyclare BT39 0AE	028 9443 2321
Restricted Growth Association	5 Roxhill Groggan Randalstown BT41 3ER	028 9447 9951
Rehability	7-8 Norfolk Court Rathenraw Antrim BT41 2SF	028 9446 7044
Arthritis Care	30 Kintyre Antrim BT41 2AN	028 9446 0246
Alzheimer's Society	Ferrard House 32 Station Road Antrim BT41 4AB	028 2563 8885

Organisation	Address	Telephone
Vicky Agnew Memorial Disablement Group	4 Roxhill Groggan Randalstown BT41 3ER	028 9447 9717
Antrim Independent Chest, Heart and Stroke Club	6 Fennell Road Townparks South Antrim BT41 4PB	028 9446 7827
Parkinsons Disease Society	Dunsilly Lodge Antrim BT41 2JH	028 9442 8928
Antrim Stroke Scheme	50 Maybrook Park Racecourse Road Londonderry BT38 7TP	028 7135 7018

APPENDIX 3

COUNCIL INITIATIVES AND ACTION PLAN

Year 1 July 2007 – June 2008	
Measure	Action
Mainstreaming	Add disability screening to S75 screening proforma
Training and Guidance	Continue to provide and update existing awareness training for senior staff, elected members and front line staff
Encouraging participation in public life	Map existing positions in Council eg working groups, and develop appropriate response.
Communication	Review communication policies and procedures in line with best practice
Other measures	Appoint a Disability Champion Establish a working group addressing disability issues, to be chaired by a senior member of management Conduct an employee and elected member monitoring survey Prepare annual report on the implementation of the Plan

Year 2 July 2008 – 31 March 2009	
Mainstreaming	
Training and Guidance	Provide awareness training for all new staff.
Encouraging participation in public life	Audit policies and procedures for appointing to groups/bodies
Communication	Work with other organisations within the Borough to promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities and including the business community
Other measures	Prepare annual report on the implementation of the Plan

Action Measure	Responsibility	Impact
<p><u>Mainstreaming</u></p> <p>An additional question on screening to assess the significance of the disability duties will be added to the S75 screening proforma</p>	Policy Officer	Better promotion of equality for people with disabilities
<p><u>Training and Guidance</u></p> <p>Provide training on the disability duties to all staff and elected members</p> <p>Provide specialist training for senior managers, recruitment and selection panels, HR officers and front line staff.</p>	Human Resources	<p>Increased awareness of disability issues.</p> <p>Promotion of positive attitudes towards people with disabilities</p>
<p><u>Encouraging participation in public life and within Council</u></p> <p>Encourage people with disabilities to apply for/participate in public life positions and Council positions</p> <p>Remove barriers to their selection/participation</p> <p>Provide appropriate training and support to people with disabilities in a public life position and a Council position</p> <p>Through working relationships, to encourage others to promote the participation of people with disabilities in public life</p> <p>Re-launch Disability in Employment Policy</p> <p>Implement and review Equality in Employment Action Plan</p>	Human Resources	<p>Better promotion of equality for people with disabilities</p> <p>Higher participation of people with disabilities in public life</p>

Action Measure	Responsibility	Impact
<p>Provide measures to improve the confidence levels of people with disabilities at work</p> <p>Remove barriers to the selection process</p>	Human Resources	Increase positive profile of people with disabilities in the workplace
<p><u>Internal measures</u></p> <p>Appoint a Disability Champion at officer level to progress the disability duties</p> <p>Appoint a disability working group of officers and elected members to progress the disability duties</p> <p>Conduct an audit of existing policies, practices and procedures</p> <p>Conduct a confidential employee and elected member monitoring survey to determine the number of staff and elected members with a disability</p>	Chief Executive	<p>Increased awareness of disability issues</p> <p>Promotion of positive attitudes towards people with disabilities</p>
<p><u>Communication</u></p> <p>Review external and internal communication policies, practices and procedures</p> <p>Through our work in partnership with other organisations to promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities.</p>	Chief Executive	<p>People with disabilities portrayed in a positive role</p> <p>Promotion of positive attitudes towards people with disabilities</p>