

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon
Borough Council

**Disability Duties
and
Action Plan**

2015-2017

This Disability Action Plan can be obtained from the Council in alternative formats, including large print, Braille, easy read, audio alternative format and/or language. It can also be downloaded from the Council's website at: www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

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

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Foreword by Chair and Chief Executive

This Disability Action Plan is a statement of the Council's commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity for disabled people and complements its Equality Scheme under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

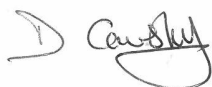
This is the first Disability Action Plan of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council and it has been designed to ensure that the Council fulfils its statutory obligations in compliance with section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006).

The Disability Discrimination Act places duties on public authorities, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

These are collectively referred to as 'the disability duties.'

The Council is committed to the fulfilment of its disability duties in all parts of its organisation and this plan sets out how it intends to do this.



Councillor Darryn Causby
Presiding Councillor



Roger Wilson
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.

These are collectively referred to as the 'disability duties'.

1.2 The Council is committed to the fulfilment of its disability duties in all parts of its organisation and as required Under Section 49B of the DDA 1995, the Council has set out in this plan how it proposes to fulfil these duties in relation to its functions.

This plan, in form and content, must conform to the guidelines contained within the Commission's guide for public authorities.

1.3 The Council will ensure the effective communication of the plan to staff and will undertake a planned programme of training and guidance 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 roles and functions of Local Government in Northern Ireland are set out in the Local Government Act (NI) 1972 , the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 and other Miscellaneous Acts and Regulations. As a result of Local Government Reform, the Council has acquired a range of transferring functions which includes elements of planning, roads, urban regeneration and community development, housing, local economic development, local tourism and Armagh County Museum.

The Council will also lead on a community planning process. This will be done in partnership with other public service providers in order to collectively address local problems.

The Council will also have a new General Power of Competence. This will allow the Council to act with similar freedom to an individual, unless there is a law to prevent it from doing so. It will allow the Council to act in its own interest and develop innovative approaches to addressing issues in its area.

3.2 Local Government responsibilities fall into three main areas:

- **Direct Service Provision** – Councils provide a range of local services
- **Representation** – Council nominees sit as representatives on various statutory bodies
- **Civic Leadership** – Councils reflect the views of their community in relation to the planning and delivery of certain regional services

3.3 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.

3.4 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, Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations, housing unfitness, food safety, statutory nuisance, dangerous buildings, air pollution, noise pollution, dog control, consumer protection and health and safety

3.5 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.

3.6 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 A Key duty is to encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

The Review Report on the Effectiveness of the Disability Duties (Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, December 2009) identified a misunderstanding among public authorities regarding the definition of public life with some authorities defining public life positions as public appointments. The Commission guide makes clear that the definition of public life is wider than this and includes participation in focus groups or working groups, community associations or fora, community police liaison committees; citizens' panels, Local Strategic Partnerships and user groups for services provided by the Local authority.

The Council itself does not have responsibility for the membership of many such groups. However, by promoting general awareness of the duties, the Council will encourage other bodies such as community associations and user groups to take more positive steps to include people with disabilities and take account of their views.

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 has 41 elected members, elected for four year periods meeting monthly at full Council. The Council has selected a traditional Committee Structure as its form of decision making.

The Council organises its business through 7 Standing Committees. These committees meet on a monthly basis and each of the Committees consists of 20 members. The Council also operates a Planning and Regulatory Services Committee which meets on a monthly basis and consists of 14 members. The Planning and Regulatory Services Committee has full decision making powers in planning matters that fall within its remit.

The Council has an Audit and Performance Committee which meets on a quarterly basis, the Committee consists of 7 elected members and 2 lay members.

The Council also has the power to establish Sub-Committees and working groups.

Committees

- Governance, Policy and Resources
- Performance and Audit
- Planning and Regulatory Services
- Strategic and Community Planning
- Economic Development and Regeneration
- Environmental Services
- Leisure and Community Services

- 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 providing advice to the Council, for the day-to-day management of services.

6.4 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 point of contact within the Council will be Mary Hanna and Stephanie Harte – contact details can be found on page 1.

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.

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 keen to bring about change for disabled people and is, therefore, focusing on involvement and participation in preparing the Action Plan.

To do this, the Council will seek to actively engage at both regional and local levels to obtain the views of disabled people in relation to the development of the plan.

- 10.2 The Council will formally consult on this plan with local groups representing a broad range of disabilities. The draft plan will also be

placed on our website and advertised in the local press, seeking views from individuals and organisations.

- 10.3 When consulting on any matter relating to the duties, the Council will strive to use a range of appropriate consultation methods which might include surveys, meetings, face to face meetings and focus groups. Consultees' comments and our response to them will be recorded and made available to all consultees.
- 10.4 The Council will strive to remove barriers by making sure consultation documents are available in alternative formats. When arranging meetings, the Council will work to ensure accessibility through the consideration of such issues as the time and venue of meetings, the use of appropriate language, the provision of signers, interpreters or other communications support and the provision of childcare. The Council will also bear in mind the additional dimensions which create multiple identity such as age, gender and ethnicity.

The anticipated outcomes of these consultation exercises are to:-

- Identify 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. This will cover the whole range of disability including physical disability, mental disability including autistic spectrum disorders and learning disability.
- Identify past examples where the Council has not promoted positive attitudes towards disabled people and identify future opportunities to do so.
- Set priorities and identify solutions with regard to the taking of remedial action.
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of the measures taken, particularly in light of feedback received.

11. Action measures

- 11.1 Armagh City & District Council, Banbridge District Council and Craigavon Borough Council completed a number of actions which helped promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and

encourage their participation in public life. Some of these included the following;

- Key information and documents are available in alternative formats on request
- Concession cards allow disabled people to use our leisure facilities at a reduced rate. The carers of disabled visitors to our centres can also obtain concessionary rates.
- A number of Council facilities have received the prestigious William Keown Access Award.
- Our leisure facilities provide a range of activities for people with different levels of ability and support a number of active local groups.

11.2 The table below outlines the additional measures which the Council intends to take in order to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in public life.

Action Measures

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	
Engage with the local disability sector and local disabled people in relation to the drafting, implementation and monitoring of the plan	Equality Officer	January-March 2016	Make initial contact with disability consultees	Improved engagement with the disability sector with the intention of devising new or revised targets.	Individual discussions and or meetings with the local disability sector 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
Review the plan and scope out issues relating to the Council's new functional areas and review any outstanding measures in the three legacy Council's Disability Action Plans	Equality Officer	January – March 2016	Revised Action Plan		
<p>Induction Training which is mandatory for all new employees</p> <p>Training covers:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Equality Scheme • the Disability Action Plan and DVD highlighting different types of disabilities • The Council's Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work policies and procedures 	<p>Equality Officer</p> <p>Training Officer</p>	Ongoing 2015-2017	All new starts will receive training.	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	<i>Evaluation Model/monitoring method</i>
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 Equality Officer	Minimum of two sessions per year.	Number of employees trained	Increased awareness of disability legislation and understanding of issues relating to service users	Evaluation sheets
Provide equality and disability training for elected members so that they are aware of their obligations in relation to the Equality Scheme, Disability Action Plan and associated legislation	Equality Officer	One session every two years	Number of elected members trained	Increased awareness of disability legislation and understanding of issues relating to service users	Evaluation Sheets
Ensure strapline advising that documents can be obtained from the Council in alternative formats is included in all external publications	Communications Section	On-going	Percentage of documents including strapline (target 100%)	Improved communications with Disabled customers	

Action Measure	Responsibility	Timeframe	Performance Indicator	Expected Outcome	Evaluation Model/monitoring method
Ensure new Council website is fully accessible, particularly for people with sensory impairments	I.T section	On-going	Feedback on website	Increased awareness of services available	
Review Diversity Champion initiative and reappoint Diversity Champions as necessary	Equality Officer	2015	Diversity Champions appointed	Sharing of good practice between diversity champions. Raising the profile of disability within the organisation. Point of contact for people with disabilities.	
Develop a work placement policy/strategy	Equality Officer HR service	2016-2017	The development of a work placement policy/strategy	The policy will be the basis for developing a target number of work placements for disabled people	
Prepare annual report on the implementation of the plan	Equality Officer	Annual (from August 2015)	Completion of the report in August	To monitor and report on progress	

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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E: mary.hanna@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

E: Stephanie.harte@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

12.2 The availability of the Disability Duties and Action Plan will be advertised in the following local papers:

Portadown Times
Lurgan Mail
Lurgan & Portadown Examiner
Ulster Gazette
Armagh Observer
Tyrone Courier

It may be accessed on the Council's website at
www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.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.