



Disability Duties

Disability Action Plan

for

**Limavady Borough
Council**

2007 - 2009

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:

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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 disabled people; and
- to encourage participation by disabled people 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.

Mayor of the Borough

Chief Executive

Date

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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 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.

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 provision of indoor and outdoor leisure and recreational facilities;
- the promotion of the arts, tourism, community development, good relations, sports development 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, opportunities and support for participation in recreational, social and cultural activities including leisure centres, community centres, parks, open spaces, sports grounds tourism facilities, visitor servicing 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, good relations, festivals and events, sport 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, 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:

- Danny Boy Festival Sub Committee
- Tourism Network
- Cultural and Arts Steering Group

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/she 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 target setting and monitoring relating to the disability duties 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 will be monitored and reported upon at the most senior level within the organisation on a quarterly basis. Individual performance on these issues 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 will be included in the Council's annual report.

6. Internal Arrangements

6.1 The Council consists of 15 elected representatives, elected for a four year period, who meet monthly in full session and in four Committees namely:

- Support Services Committee
- Planning and Services Committee
- Development Committee
- Environmental Services Committee

6.2 The Chief Executive oversees the work of the departments through the Senior Management Team, which together with the Councillors 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 for the longer term planning and allocation of resources.

6.4 The Council has three Directorates, each of which is headed by a Director:

- The **Support Services Directorate** is responsible for finance, human resources, administration and IT and reports to the Support Services Committee of the Council.
- The **Development Directorate** is responsible for economic development, tourism, community development, leisure centres, sports development, countryside recreation, good relations and the arts and reports to the Development Committee of the Council. The Directorate also assists in the implementation and delivery of external funding programmes such as PEACE II, LEADER and Neighbourhood Renewal.
- The **Environmental Services Directorate** is responsible for environmental health, building control, street cleansing, grounds maintenance and the waste management strategy and reports to the Environmental Services Committee of the Council.

- 6.5 Progress in relation to the Plan will be monitored on a regular basis by the Chief Executive and the Senior Management Team. Progress will be reported on annually to the Council.

7. Effective Engagement

- 7.1 The 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 The Council will prepare an annual report on the implementation of its Plan for submission to the Equality Commission. This 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 and in alternative formats on request.

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 disabled people and we are therefore focussing on the issue of involvement and participation in preparing our Plan.
- 10.2 Specifically we are keen to seek the views of disabled people in relation to the development of the Plan. To do this the Council is actively engaged on a number of levels; firstly at a representative group level at the regional level and secondly, at the local level by holding a consultation session for local groups.

10.3 This consultation session is designed to ensure that disabled people can 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, making decisions on the revision of the Plan as a result of these comments and reviewing the effectiveness of measures taken.

10.4 At the regional level, in partnership with the Local Government Staff Commission, we will invite a range of organisations to discuss their involvement in the development of our Disability Duties.

10.5 At the local level, we will circulate copies of the draft Disability Action Plan to local disability groups (list attached at **Appendix 1**) and invite them to participate in a consultation session.

We will also place press advertisements in local papers to enable individuals the opportunity to attend. In addition this draft Plan will be placed on our website, seeking views from individuals and organisations.

10.6 To ensure that we as a Council are responsive to the needs of disabled people, Councillors, Directors and senior managers of the Council will attend the consultation session.

10.7 As part of the consultation session, 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, disc and audio cassette. 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 and interact with them as well as considering additional dimensions such as ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation and religious belief.

10.8 The Council is keen to ensure the highest level of inclusivity in our consultation session and therefore we will consider 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 will be run;
- the use of appropriate language;
- whether a signer or interpreter or other communication support is necessary;

10.9 The Council believes it is important that disabled people are involved in the implementation, monitoring and review of the Plan. Section 11.3 of this document outlines 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.

10.10 The Council believes that by hosting an annual consultation session 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. 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 (two months in advance for the provision of information in Signed format).

10.11 Subject to discussions at the consultation session the Council will hold this annual event in the first week of May each year.

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:

- Improved accessibility for the disabled in accessing Council services and facilities, eg loop system, text phones, push pads, appropriate signage, tactile paved areas, flashing beacon alarm systems, height adjusted reception desks, etc.
- Use of Sign Language interpreters at a range of events organised by the Council.
- Provision of disability awareness training for all staff.
- Facilitating particular arrangements required by disabled people to enable them to attend interviews and assessment centres for posts with the Council.
- Offering reasonable adjustments for employees who may become disabled while in the employ of the Council.
- Providing grant aid and funding opportunities for a range of groups representing the disabled to assist them with specific projects and activities.

11.2 The Council is currently preparing a strategy for the employment of persons with a disability.

11.3 The following are the measures which the Council intends to take in order to implement the new disability duties.

ACTION MEASURES

July 2007 to March 2009

Action Measure	Responsibility	Timescale	Performance Indicators	Impact
<p><u>Mainstreaming</u></p> <p>Include two additional questions on S75 screening pro forma to assess the significance of the disability duties.</p>	<p>Chief Executive Corporate Policy Officer</p>	<p>July 2007- June 2008</p>	<p>All new or revised policies screened for impact on disability duties.</p>	<p>Better promotion of equality for disabled people</p>
<p><u>Training and Guidance</u></p> <p>Provide awareness training on the disability duties for all staff and Councillors.</p> <p>Provide specific disability awareness training for frontline staff.</p>	<p>Chief Executive Human Resources</p>	<p>July 2007- June 2008</p> <p>July 2007- June 2008</p>	<p>Identify individuals within the Council who can assist in disability related matters, eg training needs and advice on specific needs.</p> <p>All frontline staff to be trained in disability awareness within 3 months.</p> <p>All newly appointed frontline staff to be trained in disability awareness within 3 months of</p>	<p>Increased awareness of disability issues</p> <p>Promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people</p>

<p>Offer opportunities to staff to undertake further training, for example in Basic Sign Language</p> <p>Provide specialist training for senior managers, recruitment and selection panels, HR officers and front line staff.</p>		<p>On-Going</p> <p>July 2008 - March 2009</p>	<p>taking up post.</p> <p>Identify and monitor number of staff with further training on disability issues.</p> <p>Identify and monitor specialist training provided.</p>	
<p><u>Encouraging Participation in Public Life</u></p> <p>Encourage disabled people to apply for/participate in the following public life positions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Danny Boy Festival Sub Committee</i> • <i>Tourism Network</i> • <i>Cultural and Arts Steering Group</i> <p>Remove barriers to their selection to these public life positions and create opportunities for participation</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p> <p>Senior Management Team</p>	<p>On-Going</p> <p>July 2008 - March 2009</p>	<p>Identify and monitor number of disabled people participating in these committees.</p> <p>Map existing positions in Council.</p> <p>Audit policies and procedures</p>	<p>Better promotion of equality for disabled people</p> <p>Higher participation of disabled people in public life</p>

<p>and involvement by disabled people.</p> <p>Provide appropriate support to disabled people in a public life position</p> <p>Encourage others to promote the participation of disabled people in public life</p>		<p>On-Going</p> <p>On-Going</p>	<p>for Council appointments to groups and bodies.</p> <p>Monitor number of requests for appropriate support.</p> <p>Map other organisations working with or associated with Council.</p>	
<p><u>Internal measures</u></p> <p>Appoint a Disability Working Group of officers and elected members to progress the disability duties.</p> <p>The Working Group to appoint Disability Champions at officer and elected member level to progress the disability duties.</p> <p>Conduct an audit of existing policies, practices and procedures</p> <p>Conduct a confidential employee and elected</p>	<p>Council</p> <p>Chief Executive</p> <p>Senior Management Team</p> <p>Corporate Policy Officer</p> <p>Human Resources</p>	<p>July 2007- June 2008</p> <p>December 2007</p> <p>July 2007- June 2008</p> <p>July 2007 – June 2008</p>	<p>Monitor Council comments and complaints system re disability issues.</p> <p>Appointment of Disability Champions by December 2007</p> <p>Identify and monitor changes needed to existing policies, practices and procedures.</p> <p>Identify and monitor percentage of employees and</p>	<p>Increased awareness of disability issues</p> <p>Promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people</p>

<p>member monitoring survey to determine the number of staff and elected members with a disability</p> <p>Provide advice to disabled Councillors and staff on reasonable adjustments which can be provided by the Council.</p> <p>Provide measures to improve the confidence levels of disabled people</p> <p>Include a welcoming statement for disabled people in Council's Recruitment Advertisements.</p> <p>Remove barriers to the Council's selection and recruitment process.</p>		<p>On-Going</p> <p>On-Going</p> <p>On-Going</p> <p>July 2007 - June 2008</p>	<p>elected members who have a disability.</p> <p>Identify and monitor number of requests for additional assistance from disabled employees to enable them to carry out their duties.</p> <p>Identify and monitor percentage of applicants for vacant posts who have a disability.</p> <p>Identify and monitor percentage of applicants appointed to posts who have a disability.</p> <p>Identify and monitor number of requests for additional assistance from disabled applicants to enable them to participate in selection and</p>	
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<p>Conduct physical, environmental and access audits as appropriate.</p> <p>Review and Report on progress on the Disability Action Plan annually.</p>		<p>On-Going</p> <p>May 2008</p>	<p>recruitment exercises.</p> <p>Monitor number of audits undertaken and actions taken.</p> <p>Publication of Annual Report. Submission of Annual Report to Equality Commission</p>	
<p><u>Communication</u></p> <p>Review external and internal communication policies, practices and procedures.</p> <p>Review use made of alternative formats for the provision documents produced by Council.</p> <p>Work with other organisations to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p> <p>Senior Management Team</p>	<p>July 2007- June 2008</p> <p>July 2007 to June 2008</p> <p>On-Going</p>	<p>Identify and monitor the number of opportunities used in Council publications where positive attitudes towards disabled people have been displayed.</p> <p>Identify and monitor the number of requests for provision of documents in alternative types of format.</p> <p>Map other organisations working with or associated with Council.</p>	<p>Promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people.</p> <p>Increased awareness of disability issues</p>

12. How the Disability Action Plan Will be Published

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

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7 Connell Street
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12.2 The availability of the Disability Action Plan will be advertised in the local press and can be accessed on the Council's website at:

www.limavady.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 Disability Action Plan. The Plan will be produced in clear print and plain language and will be available in alternative formats on request, including large print, Braille, audio cassette and computer disc.

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

12.5 In accordance with Council Policy, the Plan will be made available in the Irish Language on request. Consideration will also be given to requests to produce the Plan for people who speak a minority language.

12.6 All employees of the Council will have access to a copy of the Plan and be provided with a full copy of the Plan on request.

LIST OF LOCAL GROUPS CONSULTED ON THE THE DISABILITY ACTION PLAN

- Ballykelly Youth Club for the Handicapped
- Blind Centre for NI (Coleraine)
- Cedar Foundation (Foyle)
- Cheshire House
- Deaf Club (Glenbrook)
- Disability Action (North West)
- Dungiven Community Resource Centre
- Foyle Downs Syndrome Trust
- Foyle New Horizons
- Glenshane Care Association
- Hands That Talk
- Headway Foyle
- Limavady Disability Access Group
- MENCAP (Western Area)
- Mullagh House
- Multiple Sclerosis Society (Foyle)
- North West Association of Hearing Concern
- NI Association for Mental Health (North West)
- NI Chest, Heart and Stroke Association (North West)
- North West Forum of People with Disabilities
- North West Visually Impaired Group
- PAPA (North West)
- PHAB NI (Foyle)
- Praxis
- Riding for the Disabled
- Sense NI (North West)
- STEER
- Western Learning Disability Action Group