

# Disability Action Plan 2016-21: Final Six-Monthly Update November 2021

## Appendix 1

### 1. Staff Training

Action Measure	Planned outcome/measurement	Origin of Measure	Closure report outcome
1(a) Ensure staff receive training and guidance on disability equality legislation and disability awareness	Design or acquire online e-disability training for staff through the Assembly's Moodle system.	Builds upon a previous action with new measures added.	<p><b>Lead:</b> Learning and Development Team  <b>By when:</b> May 2017  <b>Status:</b> Not completed</p> <p>This action was not completed as the L&amp;D team were awaiting the development of a joint e-learning module between the NICS and CAL for delivery on the LinNks platform where it could be accessed by Secretariat staff. This module was to be designed to cover section 75 and DDA awareness training for staff and the Equality Unit has been involved in this work since 2018, when they redrafted the NICS section 75 and DDA training content to ensure it was up to date for Secretariat staff. Content revisions were issued to the NICS E-Learning working group in 2019. Presently CAL is working with partners to take the revised training forward, although system delays in the NICS and COVID-19 restrictions have delayed this work.</p> <p>However, to ensure compliance the L&amp;D team in collaboration with the Equality Manager updated a</p>

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			Section 75 E-Learning course on the Links platform for mandatory completion by all staff. In addition, the L&D team procured and launched a 'Dignity at Work' mandatory e-learning course to all staff which builds on disability discrimination awareness.
	Mandatory training provided to all staff following establishment of e-disability training programme.	Builds upon a previous measure	<b>Lead:</b> Learning and Development Team <b>By when:</b> Sept 2017 <b>Status: Not Completed</b>  The development of an e-learning module is included in the draft 2021-25 DAP.
	Monitoring of records to ensure that each member of staff receives training.	Builds upon a previous measure	<b>Lead:</b> Learning and Development Team <b>By when:</b> Sept-Dec 2016 <b>Status: Completed</b>  Although no bespoke training package was developed, the L&D team retain records of all completions of relevant training both on Moodle and the Links platforms. Records are regularly reviewed and reminders for completions issued to staff.
	All staff made aware of the revised Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan through e-learning training and direct communication to staff via intranet and email. Key awareness messages delivered through a range of information materials, e.g., leaflets, flyers and posters.	Builds upon a previous measure	<b>Lead:</b> Learning and Development Team and Equality and Good Relations Unit <b>By when:</b> Sept-Dec 2017 <b>Status: Completed</b>  Training on Section 75 duties and an introduction to screening was delivered to all Heads of Business in December 2018 and January 2019.

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			All staff have been issued with an e-learning course on Section 75 in 2021 through LInKS. Masterclasses on reasonable adjustments and autism awareness were delivered to staff in 2018. The L&D team continued to highlight disability issues through a range of mediums including the Well-being Wednesday E-zine. During the period of delivery of the Disability Action Plan, a new health & wellbeing framework was developed and associated resource pages created on AssiSt.
	Quality assurance of equality training packages and provision of feedback on any equality training courses.	Builds upon a previous measure	<b>Lead:</b> Learning and Development Team <b>By when:</b> Jan – March 2018 <b>Status: Completed</b>  The Equality Manager, L&D team and Head of HR provided quality assurance on all equality training courses. Evaluation data was collected from all courses to support further development.
	Evaluate training to determine if course objectives were met and staff knowledge of the disability duties has increased through the staff iTrent system, through, for example, completed questionnaires.	Builds upon a previous measure	<b>Lead:</b> Learning and Development Team <b>By when:</b> Jan – March 2018 <b>Status: Completed</b>
	Provide specific training sessions for staff on mental health issues. Examples of training programmes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Building Personal Resilience;</li> <li>○ Mood Matters; and</li> <li>○ Living Life to the Full.</li> </ul>	Builds upon a previous measure	<b>Lead:</b> Learning and Development Team <b>By when:</b> Ongoing <b>Status: Completed</b>  The Assembly Commission has seventeen staff trained as Mental Health First Aiders to recognise the symptoms and signs associated with mental health problems and signpost staff to the appropriate support. Additional training was

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			offered to all Mental Health First Aiders in relation to the psychological impact of COVID-19. Specific virtual training opportunities were also highlighted to staff as part of the Health & Wellbeing E-Zines. These have been across a range of well-being areas including physical, psychological and social.
	Provide auditory and visual awareness programmes to front-line staff <b>(2016-17)</b> Provide opportunities for staff to obtain Level 1 sign language training <b>(2016-17)</b> Consider scope for provision of level 2 sign language training <b>(2016-18)</b>	Builds upon a previous measure	<b>Lead:</b> Learning and Development Team <b>By when:</b> See target dates in 'Planned outcome/measurement' column <b>Status: Completed</b>
	Provide a masterclass for staff to improve their skills in working with people with communication difficulties, with a focus on the needs of people with acquired brain injury.	New measure	<b>Lead:</b> Learning and Development Team <b>By when:</b> 2016-17 <b>Status: Completed</b>  The Masterclass was delivered in 2017 by Brain Injury Matters and was aimed at staff who wished to improve their skills in working with people who have communication difficulties. The session focused on the needs of people with Acquired Brain Injury (ABI), reviewed a range of ways in which people communicate and raised awareness to improve the effectiveness of communication with individuals with ABI.
	Deaf awareness training to be provided to all frontline staff as required. Autism awareness training to be provided to relevant staff, including refresher training for the Assembly's appointed Autism Champions as required. (See Louder Than Words Charter Mark and Access Award (NAS) Standards and at annexes 2 and 3).	Builds upon a previous measure	<b>Lead:</b> Learning and Development Team <b>By when:</b> As required <b>Status: Completed</b>  Twenty-seven staff attended a masterclass on deaf awareness at the end of March 2017. The masterclass was open to all staff. Three staff

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			completed BSL Level 3 in 2019. All Assembly Autism Champions were offered virtual training on Autism through the FutureLearn site.

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### 2. Representation

Action Measure	Planned Outcome/Measurement	Origin of Measure	Closure report outcome
2(a) Continue to hold meetings of the external Disability Advisory Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to hold meetings twice a year, or as agreed by the group.</li> <li>Review current membership with a view to developing a list of additional representatives to be invited to participate on the group.</li> </ul>		<p><b>Lead:</b> Equality and Good Relations Unit  <b>By when:</b> Ongoing/September 2016  <b>Status:</b> <b>Completed</b></p> <p>Members of the group met in February 2021 as part of a pre-consultation on the draft Disability Action Plan 2021-2025. A meeting was also held in April 2021 to brief group members on recruitment to the Northern Ireland Youth Assembly.</p> <p>During the period when the Assembly was not sitting (2017-20), meetings did not take place. However, the Equality Unit continued to engage with individual group members on policy issues as required.</p> <p>Membership of the group was reviewed in September 2016, when a number of new bodies joined the group, bringing the total number of members to 14.</p>
2(b) Erasmus+ Application for future youth engagement project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply to Erasmus+ for funding for a second youth engagement project.</li> <li>If successful in securing funding, design recruitment process to promote the opportunity to people with a disability.</li> <li>If successful in securing funding, set target for number of participants with disabilities.</li> </ul>	New but builds on previous initiative	<p><b>Lead:</b> Education Service  <b>By when:</b> 2016  <b>Status:</b> <b>Completed</b></p> <p>Application was made but was unsuccessful.</p>

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Action Measure	Planned Outcome/Measurement	Origin of Measure	Closure report outcome
2(c) Explore concept of Parliament for People with Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop concept with Disability Groups.</li> <li>Hold regional Parliaments.</li> <li>Submit Paper to Speaker.</li> <li>Final Parliament to be held in Assembly Senate Chamber.</li> <li>Consider hosting yearly event.</li> </ul>	New	<p><b>Lead:</b> Engagement/Disability Groups  <b>By when:</b> December 2021  <b>Status:</b> <b>Completed</b></p> <p>Discussions with the disability sector took place in 2016 to establish a Disability Parliament. However, due to the political situation between early 2017 and January 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic and resultant closure of Parliament Buildings to the public from March 2020 until July 2021, the project was put on hold. Nonetheless, during 2021, consultation took place with Disability Action and the wider disability sector and a Disability Parliament will take place on International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December 2021.</p>

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### 3. Communication, Consultation and Engagement

Action Measure	Planned Outcome/Measurement	Origin of Measure	Closure report outcome
3(a) Provide guidance for visitors and staff on further disability access arrangements in relation to participation in Assembly business and events, e.g., Committees, Plenary Session, seminars.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver regular Committee Witness Training (4 per year).</li> <li>Incorporate familiarisation of Parliament Buildings access arrangements.</li> </ul>	New	<p><b>Lead:</b> Engagement  <b>By when:</b> Ongoing  <b>Status:</b> Action Suspended</p> <p>Committee Witness Training was delivered prior to March 2017. However, due to the political situation between then and January 2020 and then the public health situation, and the closure of Parliament Buildings to the public from March 2020 until July 2021, Committee witness training was not possible.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop Q&amp;A guide for disability arrangements for visitors to Parliament Buildings, covering events, Committee meetings, Plenary sittings, Gallery rules, etc.</li> <li>Issue guidance to Disability Advisory Group for feedback.</li> </ul>	New	<p><b>Lead:</b> Equality and Good Relations to lead, with input from Events, RalSe and Committees  <b>By when:</b> December 2016  <b>Status:</b> Completed</p> <p>The Inclusive Customer Service Policy, which was developed in consultation with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, was approved by SMG in December 2016.</p> <p>The policy highlights the facilities available at Parliament Buildings for customers with a disability, and includes a Q&amp;A section on how they can engage with the work of the Assembly, including Committees and Plenary sessions.</p> <p><a href="http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/policies/inclusive-customer-service-policy">http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/about-the-assembly/corporate-information/policies/inclusive-customer-service-policy</a></p>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop guidance for staff organising events, including Committee stakeholder events, seminars, receptions, etc.</li> <li>Include checklist of issues to consider, including signage, accessibility, presentation, etc.</li> <li>Issue guidance to Disability Advisory Group for feedback.</li> </ul>	New	<p><b>Lead:</b> Equality and Good Relations to lead, with input from Events, RalSe and Committees  <b>By when:</b> June 2017  <b>Status:</b> <b>Completed</b></p> <p>Following consideration of research and good practice locally and internationally, guidance, and a checklist, were developed in consultation with business areas and feedback was sought from the External Disability Advisory Group. A postmaster was issued to staff advising them of the availability of the approved guidance and checklist, which was published on AssIS, the Assembly intranet:  <a href="http://assist.assemblyni.gov.uk/business-areas/equality-and-good-relations-unit/">http://assist.assemblyni.gov.uk/business-areas/equality-and-good-relations-unit/</a></p>
3(b) Sign language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop proposals to progress a sign language policy, and include consideration of DCAL's work on sign language.</li> <li>Work with relevant agencies in the development of this policy and stakeholders.</li> <li>Present proposals to the Assembly Commission.</li> </ul>	New	<p><b>Lead:</b> Equality and Good Relations Unit  <b>By when:</b> 2016  <b>Status:</b> <b>Completed</b></p> <p>Sign language guidance was approved by SMG in 2016. Staff were informed of the availability of guidance by postmaster. The guidance, which includes details of how to book a sign language interpreter, is available on AssIS, the Assembly intranet:  <a href="http://assist.assemblyni.gov.uk/media/1872/sign-language-guidance.pdf">http://assist.assemblyni.gov.uk/media/1872/sign-language-guidance.pdf</a></p> <p>Following development and approval of the Sign Language Guidance, the Department of Finance's Construction and Procurement Delivery unit (CPD) put in place a framework for the provision of interpretation, translation and transcription services for the NI public</p>

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			sector, and the Northern Ireland Assembly secretariat has participated in the framework.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gather information on practice in other legislatures as regards sign language provision for Plenary debates and Committee meetings.</li> </ul>	New	<p><b>Lead:</b> Parliamentary Services  <b>By when:</b> 30 April 2016  <b>Status:</b> <b>Completed</b></p> <p>Colleagues from other legislatures were consulted via an inter-parliamentary network and feedback received was considered as part of a pilot on the provision of sign language.</p> <p>An internal stakeholder working group on sign language provision in the Assembly was recently established and that group also undertook a comparison study of the provision of sign language in other legislatures. The work of the internal stakeholder group has been superseded to an extent by a pilot project to have BSL &amp; ISL interpreters for First Minister and deputy First Minister Question Time.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to arrange, where appropriate and by prior arrangement, for a sign language interpreter to be in the Public Gallery to provide service during a relevant debate.</li> <li>Continue to arrange, where appropriate and by prior arrangement, for a sign language interpreter to attend relevant committee meetings.</li> <li>Develop guidance on when it is appropriate to arrange the services of</li> </ul>	Builds on an existing measure	<p><b>Lead:</b> Parliamentary Services  <b>By when:</b> Ongoing  <b>Status:</b> <b>Completed</b></p> <p>Points one and two on sign language provision in plenary and committee meetings is complete and continues to be provided as required. The sign language policy and any associated guidance will not be delivered during the timeframe of the current plan and will likely be developed in the new mandate.</p>

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	a sign language interpreter for use in the Public Gallery (in line with the scheduled development of a sign language policy).		
3(c) Provision of Braille business cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide the Speaker and Deputy Speakers with Braille business cards.</li> </ul>	Builds on an existing measure	<b>Lead:</b> Speaker's Office <b>By when:</b> For next mandate (2016-21) <b>Status: Completed</b> Action completed at the commencement of Mandate.
3(d) Committee Gallery Rules	In January 2016, rules for visitors to Committee Galleries were amended to enable building users with a disability to use electrical devices if required. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep rules under review.</li> </ul>	New	<b>Lead:</b> Committees <b>By when:</b> Annually <b>Status: Completed</b>
3(e) Continue Assembly Community Connect training to people with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver bespoke 'How the Assembly Works' sessions to disability groups on request.</li> <li>Deliver training regionally on request.</li> </ul>	Builds on an existing measure	<b>Lead:</b> Engagement <b>By when:</b> Ongoing <b>Status: Completed</b>  The Engagement Team delivered a series of tailored events to disability groups during the lifespan of the Disability Action Plan, including working with Mencap to make presentations more accessible for those with learning disabilities.

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3(f) Continue to use web-based material to promote positive attitudes towards disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to provide web-based videos showing how to access Parliament Buildings.</li> <li>Monitor/respond to any customer complaints/compliments in relation to access to information about services.</li> </ul>	Builds on an existing measure	<b>Lead:</b> Building Services <b>By when:</b> Ongoing <b>Status:</b> Completed
3(g) Employer-supported volunteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to work with Business in the Community to identify and offer volunteering opportunities to staff.</li> </ul>	Introduced in 2012	<b>Lead:</b> Human Resources Office <b>By when:</b> Continuous <b>Status:</b> Completed  The Human Resources Office worked with Business in the Community to identify and offer volunteering opportunities to staff. However, Covid-19 impacted the availability of opportunities.
3(h) Conduct annual exercise to encourage staff to provide anonymous information to assist with monitoring and reporting on disabilities in the workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual disability survey issued each year to collect statistical data in order to calculate numbers and percentages of staff who have a disability.</li> </ul>	Builds on an existing measure	<b>Lead:</b> Human Resources Office <b>By when:</b> March 2016 and annually thereafter <b>Status:</b> Completed  The Human Resources Office issued the annual disability survey and a number of completed forms were received from Secretariat Staff. None of the returns from staff requested follow up action or to meet with the Equal Opportunities Officer to discuss their disability or any reasonable adjustments.
3(i) Ensure that customer satisfaction surveys are carried out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visitor survey to include an additional question on access.</li> <li>Survey to be issued three times a year.</li> </ul>	Builds on an existing measure	<b>Lead:</b> Equality and Good Relations Unit, in conjunction with RaISe, Events and Engagement <b>By when:</b> Survey conducted three times a year

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that allow for a review of findings by disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor survey responses for compliments/complaints.</li> <li>Identify action points as required.</li> </ul>		<p><b>Status: Completed</b></p> <p>Additional questions were added to the visitor survey which asks respondents about physical access to and within Parliament Buildings. Any compliments/complaints on any issues raised in the survey responses were fed back to the relevant business areas.</p> <p>SMG agreed at its March 2018 meeting that the survey should be reduced in frequency from three times a year to an annual survey until the resumption of full Assembly business, at which point a full review of the survey would be carried out.</p> <p>While full Assembly business resumed in January 2020, the building was closed to the public in March due to the coronavirus pandemic. The survey will resume once Parliament Buildings reopens to the public. A review of the survey is scheduled to be carried out, in consultation with the relevant business areas, and a revised survey will be presented to SMG in May 2022.</p>
3(j) Increase the level of accessible/inclusive information so that users with a disability can access digital services and information as independently as possible and make informed choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Outcome:</u> Users with a disability are aware of the availability of accessible information and services and can make use of them (<b>Ongoing</b>).</li> <li>Develop and implement an accessible information guidance to improve access to information for users who have a disability. The guidance will accompany the Digital First Strategy. (<b>Sept 2016</b>).</li> </ul>	Builds on an existing measure	<p><b>Lead:</b> Communications Office / IS Office  <b>By when:</b> See target dates in 'Planned outcome/measurement' column  <b>Status: Completed</b></p> <p>The Accessibility Statement for the Assembly website was updated as site changes were made or as required by the regulations. This also included a work plan for any accessibility issues and how they would be resolved or mitigated.</p>

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Action Measure	Planned Outcome/Measurement	Origin of Measure	Closure report outcome
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Measurement:</u> Feedback from users via website feedback mechanisms, surveys, and feedback from other partnerships and networks.</li> <li>The above will be published in the NI Assembly Commission's (the Commission) annual Section 75 report to the Equality Commission.</li> </ul>		The statement includes information that users may find useful including how to adjust browser settings to navigate the Assembly website more comfortably and guidance on adapting devices for accessibility needs.
3(k) Digital First EQIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Outcome:</u> Improve our understanding of any issues and needs that may impact Digital First.</li> <li><u>Measurement:</u> Regular consultation with and feedback from partnerships, formal and informal networks that will assist us in assessing and monitoring products and services in relation to equality issues and their impact.</li> <li>Compliments and complaints received about services will also be used to help identify the impact of good practices and any adverse impact of existing practices.</li> <li>The above will be published in the NI Assembly Commission's (the</li> </ul>	Digital First EQIA undertaken from July to October 2015	<p><b>Lead:</b> Communications Office  <b>By when:</b> Ongoing  <b>Status: Action Suspended</b></p> <p>Superseded by 5(d to f)</p> <p>Monitoring was carried out against the standards in accessibility legislation and guidance.</p> <p>Feedback was sought from stakeholders and website users and from the Disability Advisory Group.</p> <p>Identified problems were addressed and reported on through six-monthly updates on the Disability Action Plan.</p>

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	Commission) annual Section 75 report to the Equality Commission.		

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### 4. Outreach and Education

Action Measure	Planned Outcome/Measurement	Origin of Measure	Closure report outcome
4(a) Education for Special Needs Schools	<p>The Education Service conducts focus groups on behalf of Assembly Committees. The Research and Information Service (RaISe) has developed a framework for selecting a broad cross-section of the youth population. The framework will continue to ensure that children who attend special schools participate in every focus group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to engage with special schools through focus groups. (At least one special school will always be included in the focus group sample).</li> </ul>	Builds on an existing measure	<p><b>Lead:</b> Education Service/RaISe  <b>By when:</b> Ongoing  <b>Status:</b> Completed</p> <p>The Education Service (ES) worked with the Ad Hoc Committee on a Bill of Rights to consult young people on the issue of a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. Three special schools were invited and two participated in focus group sessions. The ES also worked with the Committee for Education to consult young people on the Impact of lockdown and restart on the emotional well-being and mental health of children and young people. Senior pupils from two special schools participated in this consultation exercise. (The Assembly was not operational between January 2017 and January 2020 and no consultations took place during this time. In addition, the Assembly was dissolved in March 2016 for the May 2016 election.)</p>
	<p>The Education Service has a continued engagement with special schools, several of which make repeat bookings to visit the Assembly. Staff from the service also conduct outreach visits to several of these schools. Services are advertised to every special school in Northern Ireland.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to engage with special schools.</li> <li>Continue to advertise Education Service to every special school in Northern Ireland and encourage an</li> </ul>	Builds on an existing measure	<p><b>Lead:</b> Education Service  <b>By when:</b> Ongoing  <b>Status:</b> Complete</p> <p>At the start of every academic year, the ES sent out its annual mailshot to all schools, including special schools, inviting them to participate in the Education Programme. In December 2018, an additional mailshot was sent to special schools to encourage greater participation and highlight the bespoke service which is available to cater for different needs within the sector. The September 2021 mailshot informed all schools about the resumption of visits to Parliament</p>



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	<p>increase in the number of special schools participating in the Education programme each year. (12.5% of special schools participated in the Education programme in 2014-15 – 5 out of 40).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor the number of outreach and inward visits involving special schools.</li> </ul>		<p>Buildings for small groups; the availability of virtual sessions to all groups; and the new resources available on the ES website. The virtual programme has been available since Autumn 2020.</p> <p>The ES continued to promote its activities throughout the lifespan of the plan via social media, its website (under Latest News) and by email to an approved contact list. There is information on the website for groups, which includes children with autism. One of the Education Officers is an 'autism champion'.</p> <p>The ES sought to increase the numbers of special school groups participating in the programme during this period. In September 2016, the ES attended a meeting of the Assembly's External Disability Advisory Group at the Mencap office in Belfast to meet with representatives from disability organisations and to promote the Education Programme. Following this, the Education Service provided Mencap with information about the Assembly and the 2016 election, to support Mencap's youth education programme.</p> <p>In December 2018, a targeted mailshot was sent to all special schools to encourage participation in the programme.</p> <p>In 2017-18, 6 groups from 4 schools (101 participants) visited Parliament Buildings to take part in the programme, an increase of 72 participants on the previous year. In 2018-19, 14 special schools comprising a total of 207 participants took part in the Education Programme. In 2019-20, 4 schools with a total of 85 pupils participated in the Education Programme. In 2020-21, the Education Programme</p>

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			<p>was delivered to 2 groups participating in the Mencap Heroes projects and 4 special schools took part in Committee consultation exercises.</p> <p>A number of teachers from special schools attended teacher training conferences in Parliament Buildings (pre- Covid-19). The ES has committed to holding training events specifically for teachers from special schools, with the first one to take place by June 2022 (subject to any Covid-19 restrictions).</p> <p>Some special events were held during the period, including to mark the centenary of votes for women in 2018, and International Women's Day in 2019 and 2020. At least one special school participated at each event. Special schools also participated in the 'Let's Talk' programme which brought together young people from different schools to engage with their MLAs. Due to the political situation between January 2017 and January 2020, and the Covid-19 crisis from March 2020, only a small number of Let's Talk events took place. Invitations to all special events were advertised through a range of media, including the C2K Noticeboard, Twitter, the ES website (Latest News) and by email to the ES approved email contact list.</p> <p>In December 2016, to mark the International Day of People with Disabilities, the Education Service posted an article outlining the relevant disability legislation in Northern Ireland. In January and February 2017, an education officer attended C2K events for Primary School Principals, to promote the Education Programme. In June 2017, education officers attended an Education Training Inspectorate event to publicise</p>

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			<p>the Education Service to post-primary principals. Also in 2017-18, a youth engagement event was held in collaboration with the Ulster Wildlife Trust, which was attended by young people from 3 special schools.</p> <p>Education officers continue to undertake training programmes to improve their skills. In 2017-18, 2 education officers received "visual impairment" awareness training and refresher training in 'deaf awareness'. In 2018-19, an education officer participated in a National Children's Bureau course on "Mechanisms for Effective Engagement with Children and Young People" and two education officers completed a five-day "Building Change" training course on deliberative engagement strategies, run by Involve (a public participation charity). In 2019-20, Education officers took part in general social media training and, in 2020-21, they received specific training in online facilitation of group sessions. In Autumn 2021, an education officer attended a session with Mencap staff on how best to deliver a remote lesson to those with special educational needs.</p>
4(b) Youth Congress	<p>Approximately 90 young people took part in the annual sitting of the Northern Ireland Youth Congress in the Assembly Chamber on 25 November 2015. Participants came from across Northern Ireland and included young people with a range of special educational needs (ADHD, Asperger's syndrome, autism). Young people from Mencap also participated in the debate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore possibility of hosting another Youth Congress at Parliament</li> </ul>	New	<p><b>Lead:</b> Education Service  <b>By when:</b> 2016/17  <b>Status:</b> Complete</p> <p>ES worked with the Northern Ireland Youth Forum to facilitate a youth debate in the Assembly Chamber on 22 February 2018, chaired by the Speaker. This involved over 180 young people from a wide range of backgrounds, including pupils from a special school.</p> <p>Following the decision in July 2020 by the Assembly Commission to establish a Youth Assembly, two</p>

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	Buildings (subject to necessary approvals).		education officers and a newly recruited youth worker worked on this project to recruit a new Northern Ireland Youth Assembly, which sat virtually for the first time on 2 July 2021 and held its second sitting in Parliament Buildings on 6 November 2021. The membership of the Youth Assembly is fully representative of all Section 75+ groups in the 13 to 18 age range.
4(c) Films	<p>The Education Service has created a number of short films which aim to explain the work of the Assembly to young people and encourage them to engage with its work. Videos have been subtitled to broaden the appeal of the resources to young people who have hearing impairments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to make available subtitled short films.</li> <li>Subtitle any future short films.</li> </ul>	Builds on an existing measure	<p><b>Lead:</b> Education Service  <b>By when:</b> Ongoing/As required  <b>Status: Completed</b></p> <p>All Education Service videos (including animations) on the dedicated website are subtitled. Printable transcripts are also available. Subtitled videos are produced for different Key Stages and include 'Introduction to the Assembly' videos and recorded lessons for KS2 and KS3-4. A series of short animations has been produced, on topics such as 'Getting Involved' and 'Representation'. All text and activities have been converted to HTML to ensure accessibility on all devices. The ES website continues to adhere to WC3 usability standards</p>
4(d) Continue to provide support to Assembly Charity of the Year	<p>The Assembly's Charity Policy notes the charitable purposes listed in the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008, which include relief of those in need by reason of disability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate regular meetings of Charity Fundraising Group.</li> <li>Facilitate regular meetings with Charity of the Year.</li> </ul>	Builds on an existing measure	<p><b>Lead:</b> Engagement  <b>By when:</b> Ongoing.  New charity year begins September every year.  <b>Status: Action Suspended.</b></p> <p>While a nominated Charity was in place from 5 October 2016 until 2018, the political situation from 2017 to January 2020 and more recently the public health situation and associated Regulations and guidelines (including the closure of Parliament Buildings to the public from March 2020 to July 2021),</p>

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Action Measure	Planned Outcome/Measurement	Origin of Measure	Closure report outcome
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Host minimum of two events per year involving Assembly and Charity of the Year.</li> <li>Facilitate year-round collection points to raise money for charity.</li> </ul>		meant that no Charity of the Year could be put in place in place. However, miscellaneous charity activities have taken place annually during the reporting period.
4(e) Regular meetings with Section 75 groups to inform reviews of Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement Strategy reviewed with Disability Action Group.</li> </ul>	Builds on an existing measure	<p><b>Lead:</b> Engagement  <b>By when:</b> Annually  <b>Status:</b> Completed.</p> <p>Regular meetings have taken place with Section 75 groups to inform engagement activities. For example, 'An Accessible Assembly?' was held in partnership with Disability Action in 2020 and took the form of a virtual workshop via Zoom. Attendees were asked to consider how the Assembly and its Committees can better engage with disabled people and ensure legislation reflects their needs. A member of staff from the Assembly's Equality and Good Relations Unit attended the online event to draw upon session feedback when preparing the new draft Disability Action Plan 2021-2025.</p> <p>The Engagement Team met with disability organisations to tailor training and stakeholder events to ensure that they were accessible and delivered events in partnership with organisations such as RNIB, Mencap, Positive Futures, NOW Project and Disability Action.</p>
4(f) Continue to work with disability organisations through Assembly Community Connect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver accessible training within Parliament Buildings and around NI (Monthly 'How the Assembly Works' and 'Insight into' training during session, and four regional 'Get Involved' conferences across NI).</li> </ul>	Builds on an existing measure	<p><b>Lead:</b> Engagement  <b>By when:</b> Ongoing  <b>Status:</b> Completed</p> <p>The Engagement Team met with disability organisations to tailor training and stakeholder events</p>

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Action Measure	Planned Outcome/Measurement	Origin of Measure	Closure report outcome
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop bespoke programmes and projects for disability groups by working with disability groups to tailor training and resources to make them more accessible.</li> </ul>		to ensure that they were accessible and delivered events in partnership with organisations such as RNIB, Mencap, Positive Futures, NOW Project and Disability Action.
4(g) Mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3 December)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Host an event at Parliament Buildings to mark International Day of Persons with Disabilities.</li> </ul>	New measure	<p><b>Lead:</b> Engagement  <b>By when:</b> 2016  <b>Status:</b> Completed</p> <p>In 2016, an event was run with the Charity of the Year, the Cedar Foundation, to inform their user forum about how to engage with the Assembly and provided an overview of the Programme for Government from the Executive.</p> <p>Due to the political situation between early 2017 and January 2020 and then the public health situation and the closure of Parliament Buildings to the public from March 2020 until July 2021, activity was limited. However, to recognise International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) and the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Assembly ran an online event and social media campaign. The event was held via Zoom on 3 December 2020. The social media campaign was launched on the same date and comprised a series of videos featuring MLAs and people with disabilities highlighting the impact the disability legislation has had on their lives and how important it is for disabled people to participate in the legislative process. The event and campaign were very well received with good levels of attendance at the online event, substantial interaction through the social media campaign and positive feedback throughout.</p>

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Action Measure	Planned Outcome/Measurement	Origin of Measure	Closure report outcome
			A Disability Parliament will be held on International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December 2021.

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### 5. Structural changes to increase participation and accessibility

Action Measure	Planned Outcome/Measurement	Origin of Measure	Closure report outcome
5(a) Review of access audits as per standards 4, 5 and 8 of Access Award (NAS) Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review access audits as per standards 4, 5 and 8 of Access Award (NAS) Standards (see annexe 3).</li> <li>Continue to follow and review health and safety procedure.</li> </ul>	Builds on an existing measure.	<b>Lead:</b> Building Services <b>By when:</b> Ongoing <b>Status:</b> Completed  Was kept under review
5(b) Fire Evacuation - explore potential options to provide or upgrade lift(s).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial meetings with Architect and Fire Officer have taken place to explore options.</li> <li>Alternative proposals will be provided for consideration at a future meeting of the Commission.</li> </ul>	New	<b>Lead:</b> Building Services <b>By when:</b> Work to be completed during 2016, subject to approval <b>Status:</b> Completed  One fire lift was installed and staff trained in its use.
5(c) Maintain signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain quality of:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pictorial signage images;</li> <li>Braille signage and other signage in Parliament Buildings; and</li> <li>Tactile 'tour map' of Parliament Buildings;</li> </ul> </li> <li>Add additional signage as required (including at reception).</li> </ul>	Builds on an existing measure	<b>Lead:</b> Building Services <b>By when:</b> Ongoing <b>Status:</b> Completed  Appropriate signage is in place, tactile tour and signed tour are available for visitors upon request at Reception.
5(d) Web publishing training for staff - Training is provided to Assembly Staff on the use of the content management system used to publish to the Assembly website. Part of this training includes accessibility issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Outcome:</u> Improved accessibility of information/content on the Assembly website for all users.</li> <li><u>Measurement:</u> Monitor and assess accessibility of information/content on the Assembly website.</li></ul> <p>The above will be published in the NI Assembly Commission's (the</p>	Builds on an existing measure	<b>Lead:</b> Communications Office <b>By when:</b> Ongoing <b>Status:</b> Completed  All staff involved in web publishing were provided with training either virtually or in person.  Video guides, advice, and guidance were made available on the Assembly intranet for all staff and updated annually or as required.



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Action Measure	Planned Outcome/Measurement	Origin of Measure	Closure report outcome
	Commission) annual Section 75 report to the Equality Commission.		Staff were alerted to any new information through internal communications.
5(e) Accessibility web publishing guidance for staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Outcome:</u> Improved accessibility of information/content on the Assembly website for all users. <b>(Ongoing)</b></li> <li>Formal guidance will be developed by the Web Manager. <b>(Sept 2016)</b></li> <li><u>Measurement:</u> Monitor and assess accessibility on our website.</li> <li>The above will be published in the NI Assembly Commission's annual Section 75 report to the Equality Commission.</li> </ul>	Builds on an existing measure	<p><b>Lead:</b> Communications Office  <b>By when:</b> See target timelines in 'Planned outcome/measurement' column  <b>Status: Completed</b></p> <p>Video guides, advice, and guidance was made available on the Assembly intranet for all staff and updated annually or as required.</p> <p>Staff were alerted to any new information through internal communications.</p>
5(f) Monitor and assess accessibility of our website  Undertake assessment exercise and address issues of inaccessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Outcome:</u> Improved accessibility.</li> <li><u>Measurement:</u> Website accessibility of recognised standard. (Level AAA of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0).</li> <li>Monitor and assess accessibility on our website.</li> <li>The above will be published in the NI Assembly Commission's annual Section 75 report to the Equality Commission.</li> </ul>	Builds on a previous measure	<p><b>Lead:</b> Communications Office  <b>By when:</b> Ongoing  <b>Status: Completed</b></p> <p>Monitoring was carried out against the standards in accessibility legislation and guidance.</p> <p>Feedback was sought from stakeholders and website users and from the External Disability Advisory Group.</p> <p>Any identified problems were addressed and reported on through six-monthly updates on the Disability Action Plan</p>
5(g) Increase the number of disabled parking bays in upper car parks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the number of upper car park disabled parking bays above the required minimum under DDA. Extra</li> </ul>	Builds on an existing measure	<p><b>Lead:</b> Building Services  <b>By when:</b> Keep under review  <b>Status: Completed</b></p>

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Action Measure	Planned Outcome/Measurement	Origin of Measure	Closure report outcome
	spaces were provided in December 2015.		Was kept under review
5(h) Consideration of access/egress requirements from ground floor to lower ground floor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate potential options to provide ramped access from ground floor to lower ground floor level and removal of current lift.</li> </ul>	Builds on an existing measure	<b>Lead:</b> Building Services <b>By when:</b> Work to be undertaken in 2016, subject to approval <b>Status: Completed</b>  New ramped access was installed from the front entrance to Ground floor level.
5(i) Review existing layout of Assembly Chamber and previous options to improve accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential options provided for consideration by the Assembly Commission.</li> </ul>	Builds on an existing measure	<b>Lead:</b> Building Services <b>By when:</b> Keep under review <b>Status: Completed</b>
5(j) Consideration of options for provision of automatic opening of corridor doors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate options and clarify the requirements in relation to escape routes, potential for access control, etc. Option study to be provided for consideration by the Assembly Commission.</li> </ul>	New	<b>Lead:</b> Building Services <b>By when:</b> Work to be undertaken in 2016 (subject to approval) <b>Status: Completed</b>  Automatic door opening was provided on Basement, Ground and First floors.
5(k) Consideration of alterations to counter in Members' Bar to provide serving area for wheelchair users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential layout with provision for wheelchair users at low level to be provided for the Assembly Commission.</li> </ul>	New	<b>Lead:</b> Building Services <b>By when:</b> Work to be undertaken in 2016 (subject to approval) <b>Status: Completed</b>  Alterations were made to the counters in the Members Bar, the Business Office, Reception and Office Resources.
5(l) Maintenance of access items for members of the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular checks throughout the year on items, including iPad, Braille tour map and changing places facility.</li> </ul>	Builds on an existing measure	<b>Lead:</b> Events <b>By when:</b> As required <b>Status: Completed</b>

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Action Measure	Planned Outcome/Measurement	Origin of Measure	Closure report outcome
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to promote accessible tours and facilities (including at reception).</li> </ul>		Regular checks took place throughout the lifespan of the Disability Action Plan. This year, due to Covid-19 restrictions, tours have not taken place.
5(m) Continue to participate in Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS), which offers a guaranteed interview to applicants with a disability who meet the essential criteria for the post.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to offer scheme for internal and external recruitment exercises.</li> <li>Continued provision of disability section in application form whereby an applicant can indicate whether they wish to apply under the Guaranteed Interview Scheme for that particular role and the basis on which they qualify for the scheme. (NB, the scheme will only apply if there are shortlisting criteria for the post.)</li> </ul>	Introduced in December 2011	<b>Lead:</b> Human Resources Office <b>By when:</b> Continuous <b>Status: Completed</b> The Guaranteed Interview Scheme was offered in recruitment competitions.

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### 6. Awards and Accreditation

Action Measure	Planned Outcome/Measurement	Origin of Measure	Closure report outcome
6(a) Maintain Action on Hearing Loss Award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undergo assessment as required to indicate that standards have been met (See standards attached at annexe 2)</li> </ul>	Award first received in 2011	<b>Lead:</b> Building Services <b>By when:</b> As required <b>Status:</b> Completed
6(b) Maintain Autism Award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to meet standards as outlined at annexe 3)</li> </ul>	Award first received in 2012	<b>Lead:</b> Building Services <b>By when:</b> As required <b>Status:</b> Completed
6(c) Continue to proactively raise awareness of work of the Assembly through Equality Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued participation in speaking events, and contribution to any relevant articles/activity by Equality Commission</li> </ul>	Builds on an existing measure	<b>Lead:</b> Equality and Good Relations Unit <b>By when:</b> As required <b>Status:</b> Completed

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Reporting and Monitoring			
Issue Identified	Action	Planned outcome/measurement	Closure report outcome
7) Regular monitoring of progress against identified actions	7(a) Provide progress update to SMG and the Assembly Commission every year	Every year, following liaison with business areas, provide summary of directorate activity to SMG/Commission, charting progress against targets and including any additional actions.	<b>Lead:</b> Equality and Good Relations Unit <b>By when:</b> Annually <b>Status: Completed</b>  An annual progress update was provided to SMG and the Assembly Commission in the Annual Report to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.
	7(b) Report to the Equality Commission annually on progress	As part of annual report to the Equality Commission, provide full update of directorate activity against action plan targets.	<b>Lead:</b> Equality and Good Relations Unit <b>By when:</b> 31 August every year <b>Status: Completed</b>