

# Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

## Five Year Review of Disability Action Plans Agreed Review Period 2023 - 2025



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Annex A Disability Action Plan 2022 – 2025: 5 Year Review/Closure Report

## 1. Background and Legal Basis

1.1 The Northern Ireland Assembly Commission ('the Assembly Commission'), as a designated public authority, is subject to two interrelated duties under Sections 49A and 49B of the Disability Discrimination Act ("DDA") 1995 (as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006). Section 49A places a duty on the Assembly Commission to have 'due regard' to the need to:

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

1.2 Section 49B places a duty on the Assembly Commission to prepare an action plan outlining how it proposes to fulfil the Section 49A duty. This plan is a description of procedural and practical arrangements that the Assembly Commission has committed itself to. This plan is referred to as a Disability Action Plan (DAP).

1.3 Since 2007, the Assembly Commission has submitted five DAPs to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI). The most recent DAP covers the period 2022 – 2025 and can be viewed via this link: [Disability Action Plan 2022-25](#).

1.4 DAPs can be changed throughout their lifespan which allows public authorities to update their action measures at any time.

1.5 Progress on the Assembly Commission's DAP is reported via the Annual Equality Progress Report return to the ECNI. These annual reports can be viewed via the following link: [Annual Progress Reports](#).

1.6 In accordance with ECNI Guidance (para 3.41-3.44)<sup>1</sup>, the Assembly Commission must carry out a review of its DAP every five years and a copy of the review report must be forwarded to the ECNI. The previous five-year review can be accessed via the following link: [5 Year Review of DAP 2018-2023](#).

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/DisabilitydutiesGuideforPAs2007.pdf>

- 1.7 The Assembly Commission's previous 5 year reviews of its DAPs, has taken account of actions contained across two DAP time periods.
- 1.8 In order to realign the 5 year review process, with the corresponding 5 year Disability Action Plan, the ECNI has agreed that **the current review will cover a two-year period from 1 April 2023 - 31 March 2025**. Thus, the next 5 year review, and DAP, will both cover the same time period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2030.
- 1.9 At the time of conducting the current review, public consultation on the Disability Action Plan for the period 2025-2030 concluded.

## **2. Purpose of the Review**

- 2.1 The purpose of this review is to report on whether the Assembly Commission has met its statutory requirements to encourage persons with a disability to participate in public life and promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities.
- 2.2 The recommended assessment criteria for the review is as follows:
- What outcomes have been achieved to date?
  - What were the challenges and what have we learned?
  - What remains to be completed?
  - Conclusions.
- 2.3 This review consisted of analysing a range of relevant data such as:
- outcomes from the Disability Action Plan 2022-2025;
  - information provided in the Annual Equality Progress Report;
  - six-monthly monitoring progress updates from business areas;
  - relevant papers to the Senior Management Team (SMT) and
  - feedback from relevant Heads of Business.

### **3. What has been achieved**

- 3.1 In this section we record the main achievements by the Assembly Commission in promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people and encouraging participation by disabled people in public life.
- 3.2 On 9 February 2022, the Assembly Commission approved the DAP 2022-2025 following a 12-week public consultation. The actions contained within the DAP 2022-2025 were grouped into 7 categories:
- Staff Training
  - Representation (Public Life)
  - Communication, Consultation and Engagement
  - Outreach and Education
  - Structural changes to increase participation and accessibility
  - Awards and Accreditation
  - Monitoring and Reporting
- 3.3 In total the DAP 2022-2025 contained 39 actions across the seven categories noted above.

### **Performance Against Actions**

- 3.4 Table 1 below summarises the number of actions completed and not completed. A status update for each action is attached at Annex A and provides the final status and narrative update for each of the individual actions.

**Table 1 – Final status of DAP actions**

Status	Number of Actions	Percentage of Actions
Complete	36	92%
Not Complete	3	8%
Total Actions	39	100%

- 3.5 Ninety-two percent of actions were completed within the DAP 2022-2025 period. Table 2 below details the outcomes achieved across the DAP categories. More detailed information on the achievement of a number of these actions, and their related outcomes, are set out in the 'Achievements' section of this report.

**Table 2 Outcomes achieved across DAP categories**

Category	Outcomes achieved	Total number of outcomes	Per cent (%) achieved by category
Staff Training	6	6	100%
Representation (Public Life)	4	4	100%
Communication, Consultation and Engagement	9	10	90%
Outreach and Education	7	9	78%
Structural Changes	4	4	100%
Awards and Accreditation	3	3	100%
Monitoring and Reporting	3	3	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>36 (92%)</b>	<b>39 (100%)</b>	

## Achievements

- 3.6 Thirty-six actions were completed, the following are of particular note:

- 3.6.1 DAP Category **Staff Training**. Action 1.1 relates to providing mandatory training for all staff. All staff are required to undertake, and have undertaken, mandatory eLearning courses on Section 75, Dignity at Work, and as part of our partnership with the NOW Group, JAM card awareness training. Each of the eLearning courses contains a requirement to test knowledge which staff have to pass to demonstrate understanding. Evaluations were completed for all classroom learning events. Monitoring is undertaken both biannually and

annually and information reported to the Assembly Commission Senior Management Team.

- 3.6.2 DAP Category **Representation**. Action 2.2 relates to having young people with disabilities as members of the Northern Ireland Youth Assembly. Recruitment for the second mandate of the Northern Ireland Youth Assembly commenced on 25 September 2023. The Northern Ireland Youth Assembly team commissioned research on the current youth demographic in Northern Ireland. A minimum of 10 young people with disabilities were sought in order to be representative of this data. The 90 young people appointed to the Northern Ireland Youth Assembly includes 12 young people with disabilities. These Members are fully supported to participate to share their views and directly influence decisions taken by the Assembly. This is achieved through additional support questionnaires, regular contact with young people and parents, provision of adjustments e.g. travel arrangements and creating accessible documents for face to face and online meetings, and providing staff members to assist in Parliament Buildings.
- 3.6.3 DAP Category **Communication, Consultation and Engagement**. Action 3.4 relates to offering an easy read version of '*Accessing Parliament Buildings*' web page. An easy read version of Accessing Parliament Buildings has been completed, published on the Assembly website and included in social media promotion of visiting arrangements.
- 3.6.4 DAP Category **Outreach and Education**. Action 4.7 relates to providing subtitles and transcripts for all Education Service short films and animations. All animations are subtitled and signed in both British Sign Language (BSL) and Irish Sign Language (ISL) and a supporting written transcript is provided. Subtitles and transcripts are provided for other video material e.g. recordings of conference presentations.
- 3.6.5 DAP Category **Structural Changes to increase participation and accessibility**. Action 5.1 relates to providing short-term supported

placements for people with a disability, under the Assembly Commission's Apprenticeship and Placement Framework. Two work placements have been completed and feedback from the business areas and the individuals was very positive. The volume and frequency of placements was considered and will be implemented as part of the Assembly Commission's new Disability Action Plan 2025-2030.

3.6.6 DAP Category **Awards and Accreditations**. Action 6.1 relates to the maintenance of the Autism Friendly Award. Accreditation to the National Autistic Society Autism Friendly Award was awarded in April 2023 and has been maintained. Further training for our Autism Champions has been carried out.

3.6.7 DAP Category **Monitoring and Reporting**. Action 7.3 relates to carrying out a five-year review of our Disability Action Plans. The report on the previous five-year review of our Disability Action Plans, covering the period 2018-2023, was noted by the Assembly Commission on 21 June 2023 and has been published on the Assembly website, with an email sent to staff and stakeholders advising them of the review report.

#### **4. What remains to be achieved**

4.1 Three actions were deemed as 'not complete' as they did not fully meet the performance indicator/target, or the agreed timescale for completion.

4.1.1 DAP Category **Communication, Consultation and Engagement**. Action 3.3 relates to considering feedback on disability issues via a visitor survey. This survey was to be conducted using updated methods of data collection. To achieve this a procurement exercise was completed awarded. However, the company subsequently did not accept the contract and withdrew from the procurement. Presently, alternative methods of conducting visitor feedback are under consideration. This action will be carried forward in the Disability Action Plan 2025-2030.



In the interim period, visitor feedback has been collected through other sources of visitor engagement and this feedback has been considered and actioned where appropriate. Sources of visitor feedback has included:

- Feedback and identified actions from meetings of the External Disability Advisory Group.
- Feedback from the Mystery Shopper questionnaire.
- Feedback received directly from customers with disabilities.
- Feedback from pre-consultation exercises with people with disabilities.
- Feedback from people with disabilities on policy issues where views have been sought.

4.1.2 DAP Category **Outreach and Education**. Action 4.2 sought to offer autism-friendly tours of Parliament Buildings by 31 December 2022 and once a year thereafter. However, due to the impact of staffing changes this action was not progressed immediately. In 2024 an autism friendly tour was offered for the first time. An 'ASD Teens' group attended an engagement session and received a tour of Parliament Buildings. Details were provided in advance, particularly regarding the security process and division bell sounds. On arrival the group spent some time in the quiet room and two Assembly Commission autism champions volunteered to attend to offer support. The Assembly Commission's Visitor Experience Team continue to offer autism-friendly tours of Parliament Buildings and they liaise with organisers in advance to identify any challenges and address any issues. Consideration is being given to the establishment of a regular, advertised 'quiet tour' on a Friday afternoon, when the building is generally less busy.

4.1.3 DAP Category **Outreach and Education**. Action 4.3 sought to offer dementia-friendly tours of Parliament Buildings by 31 December 2022 and once a year thereafter. Again, due to the impact of staffing changes this action was not progressed immediately. However, in 2024 a 'dementia-friendly' tour was offered for the first time. The tour was delivered to a group of people with Alzheimer's and Dementia. The Assembly Commission's Visitor Experience Team continue to offer these tours and have contacted several groups and

care-homes to invite people with Dementia to attend Parliament Buildings.

## **5. Challenges**

- 5.1 During the review period, a number of challenges to the delivery of actions occurred. However, staff worked collaboratively and focussed on the delivery of actions, which may have meant a time delay to action completion or delivery, or a re-consideration of the delivery mode.
- 5.2 For example, during the review period the establishment and staffing of a dedicated Visitor Experience Team occurred. This team provide a variety of well received services, such as, they provide a central point of contact for the Assembly, welcome visitors and help with groups, liaise with event organisers, manage/oversee the delivery of events, carry out visitor surveys, and provide a variety of tours in Parliament Buildings. The establishment of this team meant a time delay to the full implementation and delivery of actions 4.2 and 4.3 by the team. However, the team, still new in post, were able to partially deliver on the actions. Again, at action 3.3 when a successful tenderer withdrew from a contract to mainstream the collection of visitor data, staff considered alternative interim measures to gather visitor feedback.

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 The achievements outlined in this Report demonstrate the Assembly Commission's continued commitment to fulfilling the statutory duties relating to disability.
- 6.2 These duties continue to be mainstreamed and the Assembly Commission will continue to work with our staff and stakeholders to have due regard to the need to:
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
  - Encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

- 6.3 The Assembly Commission's Corporate Strategy 2023-2028, aims to make the work of the Assembly more accessible, and the DAP 2022-2025 has played an essential part in achieving this by helping to prioritise disability issues across the organisation.
- 6.4 Much has been achieved in terms of addressing disability related issues within the Assembly Commission, and for service users, through the implementation of the actions in the DAP 2022-2025. The Assembly Commission wish to maintain this focus and momentum going forward with the new DAP 2025-2030.

## Disability Action Plan 2022 – 2025: 5 Year Review and Closure Report

Status Key:

36	Complete	92%
3	Not Complete	8%
39	Total Actions	Percentage 100%

## Section 1: Staff Training:

Action	What we want to achieve	Performance indicator/target	Who will do it	By When	Closure Report Outcome
1.1 Provide mandatory disability training for all staff.	To ensure that all staff are aware of disability legislation and how it relates to their work and the importance of being treated with dignity, fairness, equality, and respect.	Monitoring records show training has been delivered to all staff.	Learning and Development Team.	31 December 2022 and every 3 years thereafter.	<p>Complete</p> <p>All staff are required to undertake mandatory eLearning courses on Section 75; Dignity at Work and as part of our partnership with the NOW Group, JAM card awareness training. Each of the eLearning courses contains a requirement to test knowledge which staff have to pass to demonstrate understanding. Evaluations were completed for all classroom learning events.</p> <p>Monitoring was undertaken both biannually and annually and information reported to the Senior Management Team.</p>
		Evaluation of training shows increase in staff knowledge of disability legislation and related issues.			
1.2 Provide auditory and visual awareness programmes to front-of-house staff.	To raise awareness among front-of-house staff of auditory and visual disabilities and to help them to feel confident in helping visitors who have sight or hearing loss.	Evaluation of training shows increase in staff awareness.	Learning and Development Team.	31 December 2022 and every 3 years thereafter.	<p>Complete</p> <p>Through both auditory and visual awareness raising programmes, front of house staff now have an increased level of confidence in assisting visitors with sight or hearing loss. Full details of courses, alongside registration statistics, have been reported in each annual Disability Action Plan report.</p>
1.3 Provide opportunities for staff to participate in introductory	To help staff to communicate better with people with hearing loss and to	Sign language training is offered to all staff.	Learning and Development Team.	31 December 2022.	<p>Complete</p> <p>British sign language courses were originally opened for all staff registration. Those staff who successfully completed level 1 were then</p>

Action	What we want to achieve	Performance indicator/target	Who will do it	By When	Closure Report Outcome
sign language courses.	feel confident in welcoming visitors to Parliament Buildings.				offered an opportunity to complete level 2, followed by a further opportunity to complete level 3. All of these opportunities have enhanced customer service and staff ability to communicate with people with hearing loss visiting Parliament Buildings.
1.4 Offer staff Masterclasses focusing on a range of conditions.	To raise awareness among staff of a range of conditions and how they impact on people's lives and that some disabilities are not visible and that everyone should be treated equally.	Evaluation of Masterclasses shows increase in staff awareness and knowledge.	Learning and Development Team.	Over the lifetime of the Action Plan.	Complete A wide range of awareness programmes have been delivered during the lifespan of this plan. Evaluation data indicated a positive impact from learning events. This data was used to formulate additional learning sessions on a range of conditions and how they impact on people's lives. Feedback quotes were also used within communications for events to increase staff participation. As part of the programme of events, specific sessions were delivered in relation to hidden disabilities to ensure customer services are delivered in a fair and equitable way.
1.5 Sign up to become a JAM (Just a Minute) Card Friendly organisation in year 1 of	To make Parliament Buildings a welcoming place for people with a learning difficulty, autism or a communication	Assembly Commission signs up to the JAM scheme.	Learning and Development with support from the Equality and Good Relations Unit.	Scheme signed up to by 31 March 2022.	Complete The Assembly Commission is now in the second year of the partnership with the NOW Group. All new staff are required to undertake the JAM Card awareness eLearning as part of their on-boarding process.
		Awareness training on the JAM card is offered		Awareness training to be	

Action	What we want to achieve	Performance indicator/target	Who will do it	By When	Closure Report Outcome
the Disability Action Plan 2022-25.	barrier.	to staff.		delivered to staff by 31 March 2023.	
1.6 Deliver web publishing training for staff on accessibility.	To ensure that staff are aware of the latest accessibility guidance and know how to apply it in their work.	<div>All staff involved in web publishing are provided with training.</div> <div>Video guides, advice, and guidance are made available on intranet for all staff and updated as required.</div>	Communications Office.	31 March 2022.	<div>Complete</div> <div>Web publishing training continues on a regular basis for staff involved in web publishing. A refreshed guide to publishing content with accessibility in mind for intranet editors has been placed on AsslSt.</div>

## Section 2: Representation (Public Life)

Action	What we want to achieve	Performance indicator/target	Who will do it	By When	Closure Report Outcome
2.1 Engage with our External Disability	To involve disability organisations in the work of the Assembly	Full meeting of the Group is held once or twice a year (or as agreed by the Group)	Equality and Good Relations Unit will Chair the group, with	Meetings arranged as required throughout the	Complete

Action	What we want to achieve	Performance indicator/target	Who will do it	By When	Closure Report Outcome
Advisory Group,	Commission by keeping them informed about what we are doing around disability and by seeking their input and advice, where appropriate.	<p>and separate meetings on particular initiatives/issues are held as required.</p> <p>Membership is reviewed every two years to ensure a full range of disability organisations are represented on the Group.</p>	support from business areas as required.	<p>lifetime of the Action Plan.</p> <p>Review of membership carried out every two years:</p> <p>30 June 2023 then 30 June 2025.</p>	<p>A meeting of the External Disability Advisory Group was held on 28 June 2024. The next meeting will take place in January 2025.</p> <p>Membership of the group was reviewed in 2023 and the Group's Terms of Reference was updated.</p>
2.2 Have young people with disabilities as members of the Youth Assembly.	To ensure that young people with disabilities are represented in the Youth Assembly; and have an opportunity to share their views and directly influence decisions taken by the Assembly.	Young people with disabilities participate in the Youth Assembly.	Education Service Youth Assembly Team.	Over the lifetime of the project.	<p>Complete</p> <p>Recruitment for the second mandate of the Northern Ireland Youth Assembly opened on 25 September 2023.</p> <p>The Youth Assembly team commissioned research on the current youth demographic in Northern Ireland. A minimum of 10 young people with disabilities were sought in order to be representative of this data. Of the 90 young people appointed to the new Youth Assembly, 12 have disabilities.</p> <p>These Members are fully supported to participate to share their views and directly influence decisions taken by the Assembly.</p> <p>This is achieved through additional support</p>



Action	What we want to achieve	Performance indicator/target	Who will do it	By When	Closure Report Outcome
					questionnaires, regular contact with young people and parents, provision of adjustments e.g. travel arrangements and creating accessible documents for face to face and online meetings, and providing staff Members on hand to assist in Parliament Buildings.
2.3 Review and build on the Parliament for People with Disabilities event held in Dec 21.	Provide an opportunity for people with disabilities to share their views.	Consideration will be given to holding a further Parliament for People with Disabilities in the 2022-27 Assembly mandate.	Engagement, Speaker's Office and Business Office.	31 Sept 2022.	<p>Complete</p> <p>The Assembly Commission's Engagement Team are working towards facilitating a Disabled People's Parliament in 2025. A Consultative Panel has been established (terms of reference still to be agreed) and the group have already met on two occasions.</p> <p>The Panel have decided that the Disabled Peoples' Parliament will sit in 2025 (date to be agreed).</p>
2.4 An accessible Chamber.	To provide an Assembly Chamber that is accessible to all.	Consider further improvements to accessibility in the Assembly Chamber.	Building Services with support from Equality and Good Relations Unit.	31 March 2023	<p>Complete</p> <p>The work to upgrade the Assembly Chamber with new microphones and speakers in all Member sitting areas, and better speakers and larger screens in the public gallery areas is complete.</p>

Action	What we want to achieve	Performance indicator/target	Who will do it	By When	Closure Report Outcome
					<p>As part of the new system installed for Members there is a “Request to Speak” option that, pending review and any procedural changes necessary for use by all Members, could also be used to support Members who are unable to rise from their seats. Work on a Green Screen Studio to facilitate sign language interpretation has been completed.</p> <p>Work on the Assembly Chamber is now complete.</p>

### Section 3: Communication, Consultation and Engagement

Action	What we want to achieve	Performance indicator/target	Who will do it	By when	Closure Report Outcome
3.1 Ensure staff are kept up to date on progress on	To raise staff awareness of the work the Assembly Commission is doing on disability and of	Once the Plan is approved by SMT, staff are kept informed on progress on:	Equality and Good Relations Unit.	2022  Progress emails are issued to staff	<p>Complete</p> <p>The six-monthly update reports on the Disability Action Plan were completed and</p>
		- the results of the			

Action	What we want to achieve	Performance indicator/target	Who will do it	By when	Closure Report Outcome
new Disability Action Plan.	wider disability issues.	consultation;		annually.	published on the staff intranet and Assembly website.
		- where to find the final agreed Plan;			
		- what the Plan contains.			
		Staff are notified annually by email of availability of six-monthly updates on the website.			
3.2 Organise for “mystery visitors” to give us feedback on services and facilities we provide for people with disabilities.	To gather information on the real-life experience of visitors with a disability to ensure that the services and facilities on offer at Parliament Buildings are accessible and fit for purpose.	Mystery visitors visit Parliament Buildings and complete a questionnaire about their visit.  Feedback from mystery visitors is reviewed and action is taken where appropriate.	Equality and Good Relations Unit with support from disability organisations.	Every two years beginning in: March 2022 then March 2024.	Complete  A mystery visitor survey was carried out between January 2024 and April 2024. The survey was distributed to individual mystery visitors through the External Disability Advisory Group (EDAG) member organisations. There was one response to the survey which was generally positive about the experience of visitors with disabilities to Parliament Buildings.
3.3 Consider feedback on disability issues from visitor survey.	To get a better picture of the visitor experience at Parliament Buildings from a disability	Visitor survey feedback considered and action taken as appropriate.	Equality and Good Relations Unit with distribution carried out by Events,	Distribution and analysis continue throughout the lifetime of	Not Complete  A procurement exercise was completed and the contract awarded to the successful tenderer. The company subsequently did not

Action	What we want to achieve	Performance indicator/target	Who will do it	By when	Closure Report Outcome
	perspective.		Engagement and Committees.	the Action Plan.	<p>accept the contract and withdrew from the procurement.</p> <p>Alternative methods of conducting visitor feedback are under consideration . This action will be carried forward in the Disability Action Plan 2025-2030.</p> <p>In the interim period, visitor feedback has been collected through other sources of visitor engagement and this feedback has been considered and actioned where appropriate.</p> <p>Sources of visitor feedback has included:</p> <p>Feedback and identified actions from External Disability Advisory Group meetings.</p> <p>Feedback from the Mystery Shopper questionnaire.</p> <p>Feedback received directly from customers with disabilities.</p> <p>Feedback from pre-consultation exercises with people with disabilities.</p> <p>Feedback from people with Disabilities on Policy where views were sought.</p>
			RaISe has responsibility for the analysis of the survey responses.		
3.4 Offer an easy read version of	We aim to provide visitor information in an easy to	Easy read version of web page published on the website and	Equality and Good Relations Unit with support	31 December 2022.	Complete

Action	What we want to achieve	Performance indicator/target	Who will do it	By when	Closure Report Outcome
'Accessing Parliament Buildings' web page.	understand format for the benefit of people who have difficulty reading and understanding written information.	included in social media promotion of visiting arrangements at Parliament Buildings.	from Communications Office.		The easy read version of Accessing Parliament Buildings has been completed, published on the Assembly website and included in social media promotion of visiting arrangements.
3.5 Develop an accessible meeting guide and checklist for Committee meetings.	To enable people with disabilities to fully participate in Committee meetings.	Relevant staff, including Committee staff, are consulted about the content of guide and checklist.	Equality and Good Relations Unit, in conjunction with staff from Parliamentary Services and Communications Office.	31 December 2022.	Complete
		Draft guidance and checklist are sent to the External Disability Advisory Group for review.			The new accessible meeting guide and checklist for Committee meetings was developed by CAMS Office in early 2023. Feedback was subsequently requested and received from Equality Unit, the External Disability Advisory Group and Clerk Assistants. The guide and checklist were revised to reflect feedback received and a final version forwarded to the Equality Unit in October 2023.
		Draft guidance and checklist are presented to SMT and, once approved, are circulated to all Committee staff.			The guidance and checklist have been incorporated into the Committee Staff Guide Portal.  In addition, the Gallery Rules that should be adhered to by all visitors at Committee meetings have been produced in Braille and will be available at all Committee meetings, both in Parliament Buildings and when Committees hold meetings at external venues.

Action	What we want to achieve	Performance indicator/target	Who will do it	By when	Closure Report Outcome
3.6 Ensure disability issues are considered in the review of the Committee staff guide.	To make the work of Committees more accessible to people with disabilities.	The consideration of disability issues is documented in the review of Committee procedure and processes.	Parliamentary Services.	31 December 2022.	<p>Complete</p> <p>The Committee Staff Guide project is complete. It is now a live, business-as-usual document and published internally for use by Committee staff. Permissions are managed by the Clerking and Member Support (CAMS) Office.</p> <p>Interactive materials and guides have been published.</p> <p>A clear version control document is in place and new additions/amendments to the guide will be screened for accessibility, as appropriate.</p> <p>Committees continue to work closely with the Web Manager to ensure all templates used for publishing official Committee documents adhere to the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations.</p>
3.7 Ensure that the review of Committee consultation methods looks at	To ensure that the consultation methods employed by Committees are as inclusive as possible and take account of the needs	More effective consultation takes place with people with disabilities.	Clerking and Member Support Office (CAMS), with support from Engagement.	31 May 2022.	<p>Complete</p> <p>An updated guide to submitting evidence to Assembly Committees in written or other formats has been completed. Written submissions should be provided to the</p>

Action	What we want to achieve	Performance indicator/target	Who will do it	By when	Closure Report Outcome
consultation from a disability perspective.	of people with disabilities.				<p>Committee as a Microsoft Word document. Written submissions may be provided in another language but should be accompanied by an English translation. Submissions can also be provided through other formats, such as pictures or short audio or video clips. Organisations and individuals wishing to submit evidence in an alternative format should advise the Committee office in advance.</p> <p>Witnesses providing oral evidence to a Committee are advised to contact the Committee office if they need to avail of interpretation or other forms of communication support services, or to advise of any additional adjustments that may be required to facilitate appearance before the Committee. Staff also signpost to the 'Planning Your Visit' page on the Assembly website which provides information on the facilities available at Parliament Buildings.</p> <p>Since a resumption of normal business, videoconferencing is utilised by Committees. Staff provide guidance on videoconferencing to witnesses wishing to utilise this facility. It is expected the Committee staff will use Citizen Space as their primary tool when calling for evidence.</p>

Action	What we want to achieve	Performance indicator/target	Who will do it	By when	Closure Report Outcome
3.8 Ensure accessibility of our website.	To take opportunities to create a website that addresses potential accessibility barriers and that allows all users to perceive, understand, navigate, and interact with and contribute to the site.	<p>Results of reviews will be checked against the relevant standards and legislation along with any feedback from users, for example the Disability Advisory Group.</p> <p>Plan will be put in place to prioritise any issues around what can be improved immediately such as frequently accessed content and content that is relevant to people with disabilities or tasks like search.</p> <p>Identified problems will be addressed and reported on through six-monthly updates on the Disability Action Plan 2022-25.</p>	Communications Office.	Ongoing over the lifetime of the Action Plan.	<p>Complete</p> <p>New content on the website and on social media is checked for accessibility prior to publication on a continuing basis. The Assembly Commission's Web Team regularly checks the most popular content on sites for accessibility and amends as appropriate.</p> <p>Work has taken place with the content management service support providers, Centric, to improve the accessibility of the website by fixing issues highlighted by the web-content manager as a result of manual accessibility audits. This has notably improved the accessibility of the website. The Assembly website accessibility statement will be updated to reflect the fixes.</p>
3.9 Identify opportunities to promote	To promote positive attitudes towards	Review of images used in Assembly communications to	Communications Office.	Ongoing over the lifetime of	Complete



Action	What we want to achieve	Performance indicator/target	Who will do it	By when	Closure Report Outcome
positive attitudes to disability through images on the Assembly website, on social media and in Assembly publications.	disability.	ensure they are representative of people in the community, including those with a disability.		the Action Plan.	<p>All material for the Northern Ireland Youth Assembly recruitment campaign was fully accessible and featured those with a disability who had previously engaged with the Youth Assembly.</p> <p>Appropriate images have been used in advertising for consultation for the Disability Action Plan 2025-2030. On a continuing basis, and in appropriate circumstances, images reflecting the community will be used.</p>
3.10 Raise awareness of facilities for disabled people at Parliament Buildings through social media	To make the Parliament Buildings visitor experience as inclusive as possible.	Facilities are highlighted through social media communications.	Communications Office.	Ongoing through the lifetime of the Action Plan.	<p>Complete</p> <p>Posts are placed on our social media platforms as and when necessary and linked, for instance, to times of high interest in tours of Parliament Buildings.</p>

## Section 4: Outreach and Education

Action	What we want to achieve	Performance indicator/target	Who will do it	By when	Closure Report Outcome
4.1 Promote 'Parliament Buildings' access video on website, following updates including changes to the Building and including tour accessibility.  <i>Note: Action amended and agreed by SMT in November 2022 to merge actions 4.1 and 4.2 as set out in original</i>	To raise awareness of facilities at Parliament Buildings for people with a disability and to highlight accessible tours of Parliament Buildings.	Video is updated and with new footage and information about how to book tours; and availability of signed tours; Braille tour script; hearing helper radio system; and facilities, for example the Quiet Room.  Video is promoted on website and through social media and is circulated to disability groups.  Subtitled and signed versions of the video made available, along with a transcript of the content.	Events Office and Building Services, with support from Communications Office and the Equality and Good Relations Unit.	November 2023.	Complete  Work on updating the accessing Parliament Buildings video was delayed by staff changes but was completed in June 2024.

Action	What we want to achieve	Performance indicator/target	Who will do it	By when	Closure Report Outcome
<i>DAP.</i>		Video is created with content that explains the Changing Places toilet.			
4.2 Offer autism-friendly tours of Parliament Buildings.	To encourage people with autism to visit Parliament Buildings	Tours offered once a year.	Events Office.	31 December 2022 and once a year thereafter.	<p>Not Complete</p> <p>Due to the impact of staffing changes this action was not progressed immediately. In 2024 an autism friendly tour was offered for the first time. An 'ASD Teens' group attended an engagement session and received a tour of Parliament Buildings. Details were provided in advance, particularly regarding the security process and division bell sounds. On arrival the group spent some time in the quiet room and two Assembly Commission autism champions volunteered to attend to offer support. The Assembly Commission's Visitor Experience Team continue to offer these autism-friendly tours of Parliament Buildings. They liaise with organisers in advance to identify any challenges and address any issues.</p> <p>Consideration is being given to establishment of a regular, advertised 'quiet tour' on a Friday afternoon, when the building is generally less</p>

Action	What we want to achieve	Performance indicator/target	Who will do it	By when	Closure Report Outcome
					busy. This will mean people who prefer a quieter tour will have an opportunity to book something that suits their needs.
4.3 Offer dementia-friendly tours of Parliament Buildings	To encourage people with dementia to visit Parliament Buildings	Tours offered once a year.	Events Office.	31 December 2022 and once a year thereafter.	<p>Not Complete</p> <p>Due to the impact of staffing changes this action was not progressed immediately. In 2024 a 'dementia-friendly' tour was offered for the first time. The tour was delivered to a group of people with Alzheimer's and Dementia. The Assembly Commission's Visitor Experience Team continue to offer these tours and have contacted several groups and care-homes to invite people with Dementia to attend Parliament Buildings. Uptake on these has been slow.</p> <p>Consideration is being given to establishment of a regular, advertised 'quiet tour' on a Friday afternoon, when the building is generally less busy. This will mean people who prefer a quieter tour will have an opportunity to book something that suits their needs.</p>

Action	What we want to achieve	Performance indicator/target	Who will do it	By when	Closure Report Outcome
4.4 Engage with special schools to ensure that young people's views are included.	To ensure that the views of young people with disabilities are included in Committee consultations, inquiries, etc.	Hold focus groups, as required, and in line with Assembly's Research and Information Service (RaISe) framework for selecting a broad cross-section of young people, which ensures that special schools participate in every group.	Education Service.	As required throughout the lifetime of the Action Plan.	<p>Complete</p> <p>There have been no requests from Committees for school consultations. The Assembly Commission's Education Service is ready to assist Committees when required.</p>
4.5 Engage with special schools to ensure that young people's views are included.	Design and deliver where required bespoke resources (e.g. textural or sensory models) for special schools.	<p>Discussions held with other legislatures and special schools to identify need and existing resource offering.</p> <p>Resources designed and delivered as required.</p>	Education Service.	By 30 June 2022 and thereafter throughout the lifetime of the Action Plan.	<p>Complete</p> <p>Before a visit by a special school, an Assembly Commission Education Officer contacts the teacher to discuss the programme and any particular requirements.</p> <p>The Education Service has been working to make educational resources more accessible. 'Recite Me' read aloud software was added to the education website on 1 December 2023. The Visits page of the website has been revamped to ensure clear presentation of information about visits.</p> <p>Post visit work booklets were reviewed in line with accessibility guidance (colours, fonts etc).</p>

Action	What we want to achieve	Performance indicator/target	Who will do it	By when	Closure Report Outcome
					Students from special schools receive a sensory toy model of Parliament Buildings. A new Assembly colouring book has been designed and printed.
4.6 Hold a conference for teachers from special schools every two years	To provide teachers with awareness and understanding of the Education Service's Assembly-related teaching resources, and to find out more about the needs of pupils in special schools.	Conference held every two years (with option for additional conferences as required).	Education Service.	First conference to be held by 30 June 2022 and every two years thereafter.	Complete The Assembly Commission's Education Service held a very successful conference for teachers from special schools November 2022. In March 2023 they held a second conference specifically for teachers with responsibility for SEN (Special Educational Needs) in mainstream schools. The next SEN conference is due to be held in June 2025, and will focus on providing teachers with an interactive, activity-based programme to help equip them to teach about the Northern Ireland Assembly in the classroom, and to promote the Assembly's Education Programme
4.7 Provide subtitles and transcripts for all Education Service short films and animations.	To make the work of the Education Service more accessible to young people with disabilities.	All films subtitled, transcribed and made available on Education Service website.	Education Service.	Ongoing throughout the lifetime of the Action Plan.	Complete  All animations are subtitled and signed in both BSL and ISL. A written transcript is also provided.

Action	What we want to achieve	Performance indicator/target	Who will do it	By when	Closure Report Outcome
					Subtitles and transcripts are provided for other video material, e.g., recordings of conference presentations.
4.8 Mark International Day of Persons with Disabilities.	To raise awareness and promote understanding of disability issues.	Hold an annual event to mark International Day of Persons with Disabilities.	Engagement.	Annually.	Complete The Assembly Commission's Engagement Team have marked International Day of Persons with Disabilities annually during the reporting period. This has taken a number of formats, including events and social media campaigns. Most recently, in 2024, the team promoted their on-going work on the Disabled People's Parliament which is due to take place in late 2025.
4.9 Hold events to mark disability awareness days or weeks over the lifetime of the Action Plan.	To raise awareness and promote understanding of disability issues.	Hold one to two events a year to mark awareness days/weeks for a range of disabilities e.g. Learning Disability Week, Deaf Awareness Week etc.	Engagement.	Throughout the lifetime of the Disability Action Plan 2022-25.	Complete The Assembly Commission's Engagement Team have marked at least one disability awareness day/week throughout the lifetime of this plan.  2022 – World Sight Day – the Engagement Team held a round table event to take feedback on the suitability of presentations and materials in order to be able to make changes and provide more accessible content for people who have full or partial sight loss.

Action	What we want to achieve	Performance indicator/target	Who will do it	By when	Closure Report Outcome
					<p>2023 – International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The Engagement Team engaged with the sector to encourage groups and individuals to book a training session. This generated a number of bookings from a variety of groups from the Disability sector.</p> <p>2024 - A virtual engagement session was held with Carers NI for their Carers' Policy Forum group to mark Carers' Week in June 2024.</p>

## Section 5: Structural changes to increase participation and accessibility

Action	What we want to achieve	Performance indicator/target	Who will do it	By when	Closure Report Outcome
5.1 Provide short-term	To provide	Following a review of	Human Resources	Initial	Complete



Action	What we want to achieve	Performance indicator/target	Who will do it	By when	Closure Report Outcome
supported placements for people with a disability under the Apprenticeship and Placement Framework.	opportunities for people with a disability to develop their skills and confidence in the workplace and gain meaningful work experience.	the placement we will consider future volume and frequency.	Office.	placement agreed by 31 March 2023.	Implementation of work placements was initially delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, two work placements have been completed and feedback from the business areas and the individuals was very positive. The volume and frequency of placements was considered and will be implemented as part of the Assembly Commission's new Disability Action Plan 2025-2030.
5.2 Consider disability issues relating to Committee rooms at Parliament Buildings.	To make the work of Assembly Committees more accessible.	Consideration of disability issues relating to broadcast and audio in Committee rooms.	Communications Office.	31 March 2024.	<p>Complete</p> <p>In-room elements were completed by 2024 and partial improvements for retrospective viewing of Committee meetings were made.</p> <p>In 2023, and concluding in August 2024, refurbishment work was carried out in all Committee rooms and the Senate chamber.</p> <p>Large screens were installed to assist those watching external contributions, the Deaf Loop system was upgraded in Committee rooms 21, 29 and 30 along with more sound absorbent features being incorporated in wall coverings.</p> <p><b>Broadcast material for external viewers.</b></p> <p>Since 2023 the Assembly YouTube channel</p>

Action	What we want to achieve	Performance indicator/target	Who will do it	By when	Closure Report Outcome
					<p>has been configured to generate automatic captions on Committee hearings viewed retrospectively once uploaded in full to YouTube. This automatic captioning is also available on live Plenary output but the present streaming contract does not extend this to live Committee output.</p> <p>Streaming of Committees on Assembly TV/stream alone (i.e. not YouTube hosted) does not have auto captioning.</p> <p>A green-screen studio facility has been installed in readiness for future expansion of signing of committees for the deaf community.</p>
5.3 Consider disability issues relating to Committee rooms at Parliament Buildings.	To make the work of Assembly Committees more accessible.	Consideration of disability issues relating to access to, and layout of, Committee rooms.	Building Services.	31 March 2024.	<p>Complete</p> <p>Work has been completed on Committee rooms including a new layout and furniture that will help provide better access for wheelchair users.</p>
5.4 Review signage at Parliament	To highlight the facilities and services available at	Review is carried out and additional signage is added as required.	Building Services.	31 December 2022.	Complete

Action	What we want to achieve	Performance indicator/target	Who will do it	By when	Closure Report Outcome
Buildings' reception and throughout parts of the building open to the public.	Parliament Buildings for visitors with a disability.				Signage has been reviewed to reflect current available services and facilities for visitors with a disability, including provision of additional signage in some areas of the Building. Signage will continue to be kept under review throughout the lifetime of the DAP.

## Section 6: Awards and Accreditation

Action	What we want to achieve	Performance indicator/target	Who will do it	By when	Closure Report Outcome
6.1 Maintain Autism	To show our commitment to ensuring that	Standards met as required.	Building Services.	Annually.	Complete

Action	What we want to achieve	Performance indicator/target	Who will do it	By when	Closure Report Outcome
Friendly Award.	Parliament Buildings is a welcoming place for autistic people and their families.				Accreditation to the NAS Autism Friendly Award was awarded in April 2023 and has been maintained. Further training for our Autism Champions has been carried out.
6.2 Maintain Louder than Words Charter accreditation.	To show commitment to improving access to Parliament Buildings for people with deafness, tinnitus and hearing loss.	Audits undertaken as required by RNID.	Building Services.	Annually.	Complete  Accreditation is no longer offered but the Assembly Commission's Building Services continues to work with partners including RNID to ensure that Parliament Buildings is accessible for service users who are deaf or suffering hearing loss.
6.3 Sign up to the Disability Confident Scheme.	To increase our understanding of disability issues and to ensure that, as an employer, we enable disabled people to have the opportunity to fulfil their potential.	Assembly Commission to sign up to the Scheme.	Human Resources Office.	31 March 2022	Complete  The Assembly Commission has signed up to the Disability Confident Scheme and the logo is on our recruitment website to highlight that we are a member of the Scheme.

## Section 7: Monitoring and Reporting

Number	What we want to achieve	Performance indicator/target	Who will do it	By when	Closure Report Outcome
7.1 Report on progress to SMG every six months and the Assembly Commission every year.	To ensure that we deliver on the targets in our plan and that we keep staff and the public informed of progress.	Following consultation with business areas, six-monthly updates are prepared for SMG and annual updates for the Assembly Commission.	Equality and Good Relations Unit.	Every six months (May and November each year).	<p>Complete</p> <p>A progress report was provided to the Assembly Commission's Senior Management Team every six-months, over the lifetime of the plan, and published on the staff intranet and Assembly Website.</p>
		Approved six-monthly updates are published on the Assembly website.			
7.2 Report on progress yearly to the Equality Commission.	To ensure that we deliver on the targets in our plan and that we keep the Equality Commission informed of progress.	Following consultation with business areas, annual progress reports are prepared and submitted to the Equality Commission.	Equality and Good Relations Unit.	Every year (to Equality Commission timetable).	<p>Complete</p> <p>Equality progress reports were submitted to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland annually throughout the lifetime of the plan. These reports have been published on the staff intranet and Assembly Website.</p>
		Approved annual reports are published on the Assembly website.			
7.3 Carry out a five-year review of our Disability Action Plans.	To review our plans to make sure that they are effective and achieve what they set out to do.	Review of Disability Action Plans for the period between 2019 and 2024 is carried out, in consultation with business areas, and presented to SMG. This will cover the Disability Action Plan 2016-21 and the Disability Action Plan 2022-25.	Equality and Good Relations Unit.	31 December 2024.	<p>Complete</p> <p>The report on the five-year review of our Disability Action Plans was noted by the Assembly Commission on 21 June 2023 and has been published on the Assembly website, with an email sent to staff and stakeholders to advise them of the Review Report.</p>

Number	What we want to achieve	Performance indicator/target	Who will do it	By when	Closure Report Outcome
		Once approved, the review is published online. Email is sent to staff and stakeholders to let them know that review is available.			