



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission  
Revised Disability Action Plan  
1 July 2011 – 30 June 2012

In compliance with  
Section 49 of the  
Disability Discrimination Act 1995  
as amended by  
Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination  
(Northern Ireland) Order 2006

The Disability Action Plan will be made available on request in alternative formats (such as in large print, in Braille, on audio cassette, or on computer disc). Please contact the Assembly Commission and Corporate Support Unit on 028 90521762 to discuss your requirements.

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## 1. Introduction

Under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) (as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006), the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission is required to have due regard to the need to:

- promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities; and
- encourage participation by people with disabilities in public life

Under Section 49B of the DDA 1995, the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission is also required to submit to the Equality Commission a Disability Action Plan showing how it proposes to fulfil these duties in relation to the functions for which it is responsible.

## 2. Confirmation of Commitment

The Assembly Commission (the Commission) is fully committed to the effective implementation of this Disability Action Plan. All necessary resources in terms of people, time and finance will be made available for this purpose.

The Commission will ensure the effective communication of the Disability Action Plan to all staff and will provide training and guidance for staff in relation to their responsibilities.

The Commission is committed to engaging effectively with people with disabilities (including staff), and their representative groups, in the development, implementation and review of this plan.

The point of contact in relation to the implementation, review and evaluation of this Disability Action Plan is:

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The Commission's Disability Action Plan will be made available on request in alternative formats (such as in large print, in Braille, on audio cassette, or on computer disc). Please contact the Assembly Commission and Corporate Support Unit on 028 90418377 to discuss your requirements.

### 3 Functions of the Assembly Commission

The primary function of the Commission is to provide the Assembly, or ensure that the Assembly is provided, with the property, staff and services required for the Assembly to carry out its work.

The Commission's responsibilities do **not** include:

- The work of the Assembly as a legislature and scrutinising body
- The functions and work of the Northern Ireland Executive, Ministers or Departments.

The Commission is chaired by the Speaker and consists of five other Assembly members.

Chairperson, The Speaker: Mr William Hay

Mr Peter Weir DUP

Mr Barry McElduff SF

Mr Leslie Cree, MBE UUP

Mr Pat Ramsey SDLP

Mrs Judith Cochrane ALLIANCE

### 4 Staffing

The Assembly currently has in the region of 400 permanent staff. In the 2010 Disability Audit, 4.45% of staff declared that they have a disability, which has increased from 3.07% in 2009. An organisation chart is included at Appendix 1.

### 5 Consultation

The Commission is committed to carrying out all consultations in an open, timely and inclusive manner and in accordance with the guiding principles set out by the Equality Commission. When consulting on the draft Disability Action Plan, the Commission:

- Sent the consultation documents to all of the equality and disability organisations on the consultee list (included at Appendix 2).
- emailed all Secretariat staff details of the consultation.
- Made the consultation documents available on the Assembly's internet and intranet websites.
- Advertised the consultation in the 3 main regional newspapers.

The Commission included in the consultation documents details of various methods for submitting comments, including by telephone, in writing, electronically and through meetings.

The Commission will also continue to engage with disabled people and disability organisations whilst implementing and reviewing the plan.

## 6 Review

This plan sets out the actions that the Commission plans to take forward over the next year. Following a review of the plan in June 2012, a progress report will be sent to the Equality Commission. This report will be published on the Assembly's internet and intranet websites. A revised four year plan will then be implemented from July 2012, in line with the corporate plan.

## 7 Opportunities to Participate in Public Life

The Commission does not have control over any public appointments, however it is committed to maximising the opportunity to involve persons with a disability in public life. An external Disability Advisory Group comprising of representatives from various disability organisations was established in November 2009. The group meet quarterly, and provide advice on many issues affecting disabled people, particular with regards to improving access to Parliament Buildings and the services provided by the Commission. The Commission is also committed to ensuring that Parliament Buildings is a welcoming environment for persons with a disability to work in and to visit.

The Commission offers a work experience programme to interested young people, and disabled people are encouraged to participate.

A Youth Assembly will be established in 2012, following the completion of a public consultation exercise. Young people with a disability will have the opportunity to participate.

## 8 Action Measures

The following pages outline the action measures which the Commission proposes to take over the period to June 2012, together with targets and timescales. The Commission may vary or add to these measures as appropriate to meet changing needs, and will continue to engage with key organisations and individuals representing the interests of people with disabilities.

<b>Aim</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Measures of Success</b>
1. Staff receive mandatory induction training on equality.	Staff to receive information regarding DDA issues as they apply in the workplace.	Ongoing, all current staff have received mandatory training	HR	Monitoring of records to ensure that each member of staff receive the training.
2. To produce an Accessible Publications Policy.	Communications Office to work with the Commission and Corporate Support Unit in developing a draft policy.	Complete	Communications Office/CCSU	Draft policy developed.
	Disability Advisory Group to review the draft policy.	Complete	CCSU	Comments will be recorded and considered.
	Policy to be amended as appropriate and following approval the policy and guidance notes should be made available to all staff.	December 2011	Communications Office	Staff will be aware of the relevant procedures. Publications will be made available efficiently in an appropriate format.
3. Establish an Internal Disability Working Group comprising of Assembly staff.	Send postmaster to all staff inviting self-nominations from any person who considers that they have a disability, or to be the carer of a disabled person.	January 2012	CCSU	Group membership established.
	First meeting of group to establish the terms of reference, frequency of meetings and to begin developing a forward work programme.	March 2012	CCSU	First meeting held. Further meetings to be held regularly, as agreed by the members.

<b>Aim</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Measures of Success</b>
4. Review of DDA Training.	Development of an online questionnaire that staff will be asked to complete at a set period of time after their DDA training. This will provide an opportunity for staff to reflect on their understanding and knowledge of DDA.	May 2012	HR	Monitor the results of the questionnaire which should be considered when reviewing the success of the training.
5. Develop the Equality pages on the Assembly's Intranet site to include articles of interest and links to relevant outside organisations.	Internal and External Disability groups to provide input.	January 2012	CCSU	Staff will have access to disability information and contact details for outside groups. This information will be reviewed and updated regularly.
6. Provide briefing guides for staff on the practical day to day implementation of DDA.	Develop briefing guides in conjunction with the Disability Advisory Group and the internal Disability Working Group. Briefing guides to be made available to staff in relevant formats.	May 2012	CCSU	Guides will be available on the intranet and available in hardcopy and alternative formats on request.

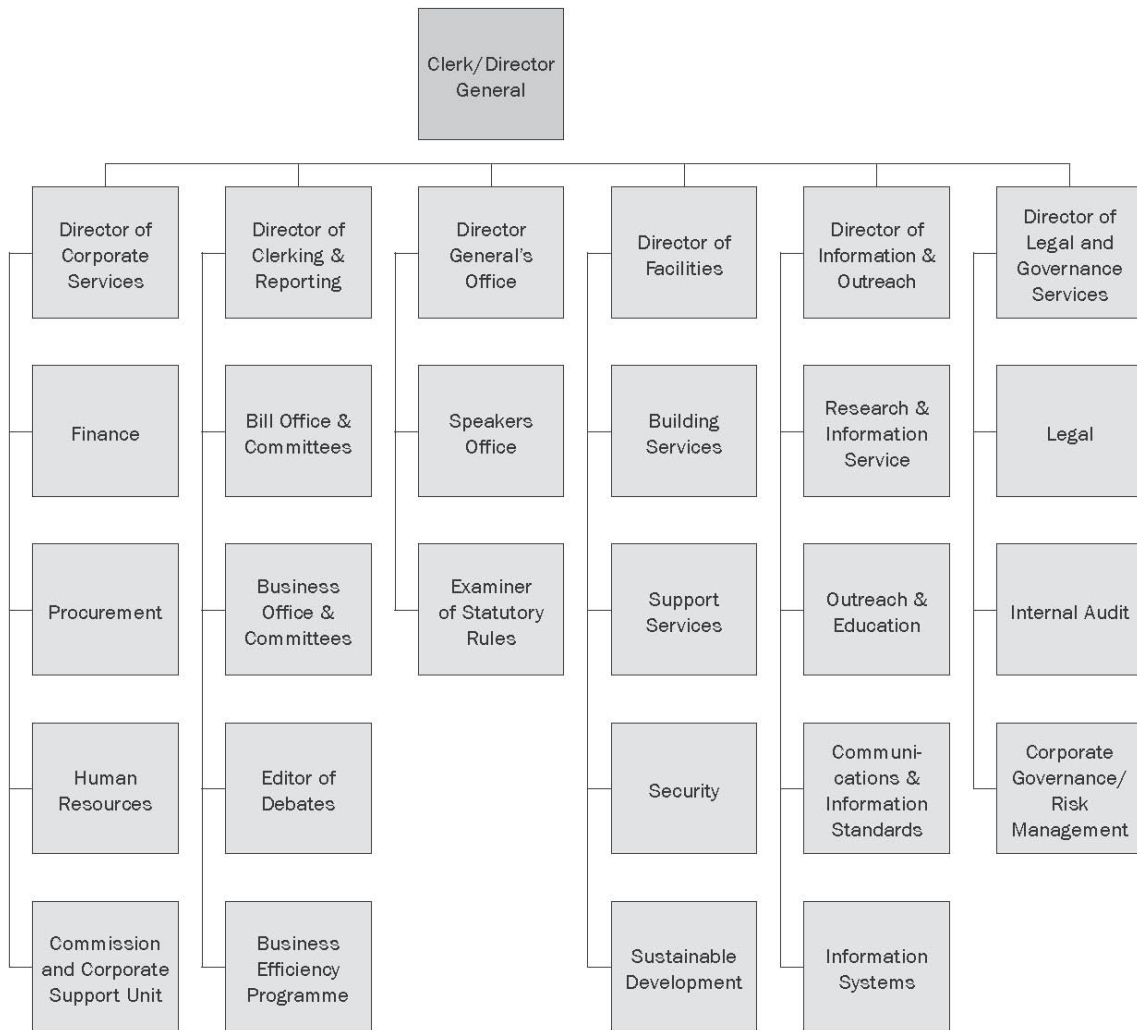


<b>Aim</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Measures of Success</b>
7. To continue the quarterly meetings of the external Disability Advisory Group and review the membership.	Develop a policy on the membership of the Advisory Group to include details on how organisations can nominate a participant, and how the CCSU will determine or rotate membership, should the group become oversubscribed.	March 2012	CCSU	Membership will be monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure that it is representative of a range of disabilities.
8. Ensure that the staff magazine 'Life in the Hill' contains positive imagery of persons with a disability.	Include a minimum of 1 article a year in the staff magazine regarding issues relating to persons with a disability.	June 2012	Communications Office	Ensure that an article is included, and that all staff with a disability are provided with the opportunity to contribute to an article.
9. To upgrade the Assembly website and to ensure that as a minimum it meets the minimum standard of accessibility for public sector websites (AA of the W3C Web content Accessibility Guidelines). Where possible, we will aim to go beyond this and achieve AAA compliance.	User testing to include involvement from the Disability Advisory Group.	Ongoing some user testing complete	Communications Office	Results of user testing will be considered when finalising the specification of the new website.
	Website to go live	December 2011	Communications Office	Website will be operational.
	Ongoing monitoring of feedback on the website, through a user friendly feedback form.	Ongoing	Communications Office	Feedback will be monitored and any appropriate adjustments will be made.

<b>Aim</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Measures of Success</b>
10. To develop the Equality pages on the Assembly's Internet site.	Include information on how individuals or groups can be added to or removed from the consultee database.	January 2012	CCSU	Consultee list will be comprehensive and up to date.
11. Provide clear details of how a person with a disability can access Parliament Buildings	Clear information on access to be included on the website.  Staff to be familiar with access procedures for persons with a disability - Postmaster to be sent to all staff with details.	January 2012	Communications Office/Buildings Management	Monitor feedback from visitors, schools, staff and MLAs.
12. Implement and review the Access Audit Action Plan that resulted from the 2010 access audits conducted by Disability Action and RNIB.	Ensure that the Action Plan is implemented on a timely basis.	Ongoing, some actions complete	Buildings Management	Visitors comments and feedback to be monitored.
	Ask Disability Advisory Group for advice, where appropriate, on the most efficient and appropriate implementation of the actions.	Ongoing, some advice taken at September 2011 meeting	Building Management	All actions will be implemented.
	Arrange a follow up access audit to ensure that all actions have been successfully implemented.	July 2012	Building Management	Use feedback for Disability Advisory Group to monitor the success of the action plan.
				Results from this follow up audit will measure the success of the implementation of the action plan.

<b>Aim</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Measures of Success</b>
13. Review RNID Louder than Words Charter Mark standards to ensure that the Assembly is remaining compliant.	<p>Compile a checklist to ensure that all standards are still being met.</p> <p>Complete the checklist annually.</p>	<p>April 2012</p> <p>April 2012</p>	<p>Building Management</p>	<p>Checklist will be completed to provide evidence that standards are being met.</p>
14. Review the amended tour script to ensure it is meeting the needs of disabled people.	<p>Ask the external Disability Advisory Group and Internal Disability Working Group to participate in a tour and provide feedback.</p>	<p>December 2011</p>	<p>Outreach</p>	<p>Groups will be asked to complete feedback forms. The results will be collated and comments will be taken into consideration by events staff.</p>
<p>15. To ensure that a supply of good quality Braille versions of certain publications are always maintained, eg:</p> <p>Tactile maps</p> <p>'Your Assembly, Working For You' leaflet</p> <p>Gallery Rules</p>	<p>Monitor supplies and quality of the condition, and order further copies as necessary. Ensure that relevant staff are aware of the existence of these publications, and know how to obtain them.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Building Management/ Central Committee Office/ Communications Office</p>	<p>Publications available when requested.</p>

## Appendix 1: The Northern Ireland Assembly Secretariat



## Appendix 2: List of Organisations Consulted

- Action on Hearing Loss
- Age NI
- Alliance Party
- Al-Nisa Association NI
- An Munia Tober
- Association for Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus
- Autism NI
- Aware Defeat Depression
- Baha’I Community of Belfast
- Bahai Council for NI
- Baha’I Council for NI
- Ballymena Inter-Ethnic Forum
- Barnardos
- Belfast Chinese Christian Church
- Belfast City Council Youth Forum
- Belfast Hebrew Congregation
- Belfast Islamic Centre
- Belfast Jewish Community
- Bulgarian Association NI
- Cara-Friend
- Care in NI
- Carers NI
- Carers Northern Ireland
- CCMS
- Children in Need NI
- Childrens Law Centre
- Chinese Chamber of Commerce
- Chinese Welfare Association
- Church of Ireland
- CO3
- Community Development & Health Network NI
- Craigavon Traveller Support Committee
- DARD
- DCAL
- DEL
- Department of Justice
- Derry Travellers Support Group
- Derry Well Woman
- DETI
- DFP
- DHSSPS
- Disability Action
- DOE
- Down’s Syndrome Association
- DRD
- DSD
- DUP
- Early Years
- East Belfast Community Development Agency
- Employers Forum on Disability
- Equality Coalition
- Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
- Equality Forum NI
- Falls Community Council
- FPA
- Gingerbread Northern Ireland
- GMB
- Green Party
- Guru Nanak Dev Ji Sikh Community Association

- Hare Krishna Community
- Hungarian Community Association
- Include Youth
- Indian Community Centre
- Lasi (Lesbian Advocacy Services Initiative)
- Latino America Unida
- Lesbian Line
- Mandarin Speakers Association
- MENCAP
- Methodist Church in Ireland
- Mid Ulster International Cultural Group
- Multi-Cultural Resource Centre
- Newry & Mourne Senior Citizens Consortium
- Newtownabbey Senior Citizens Forum
- NI Anti-Poverty Network
- NI Council for Integrated Schools
- NI Filipino Community in Action
- NI Human Rights Commission
- NI Mediation Service
- NI Multicultural Association
- NI Muslim Family Association
- NI Somali Community Association
- NI Women's Aid Federation
- NI Youth Forum
- NIACRO
- NICEM
- NIC-ICTU
- NICVA
- NIPSA
- NISRA
- NIWEP
- North West Community Network
- Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health
- NSPCC
- NUS USI
- OFMDFM
- Oi kwan Chinese Women's Group
- Oi Wah Chinese Women's Group
- Oi Yin Women's Group
- Older Peoples Advocate
- Omagh Access Forum
- Omagh Ethnic Minorities Community Association
- Opportunity Youth
- Pakistani Community Association
- Polish Association NI
- Presbyterian Church in Ireland
- Probation Board for Northern Ireland
- Public Achievement
- RNIB
- Roman Catholic Church
- Rural Community Network
- Sai Pak Chinese Community Project
- Save the Children
- SDLP
- Sense NI
- Sikh Cultural Centre
- Sikh Women & Children's Association
- Sinn Fein

- Staff Commission for Education & Library Boards
- Staff Commission for Local Government
- Strabane Ethnic Community Association
- The Cedar Foundation
- The Community Relations Council
- The Egyptian Society of NI
- The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association
- The Rainbow Project
- Trademark
- Tuar Ceatha
- Tuar/Barnardos
- Tuar/Barnardos
- Ulster Scots Agency
- Ulster Teachers Union
- Ulster Unionist Party
- UNISON
- VOYPIC
- Wah-Hip Chinese Community Association
- Women of the World
- Women's Forum NI
- Women's Information Group
- Women's Resource & Development Agency
- Women's Support Network
- Youth Action NI
- Youth Council for Northern Ireland
- Youth Link Northern Ireland
- Youthnet

