

The Disability Action Plan Comments Form

Confidentiality of Information

The Executive Office processes personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and in most circumstances this means that personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

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Do you agree with the actions that have been included in the draft Disability Action Plan?

Yes/No	Yes
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Are there any actions not included that you feel should be included? If so, please outline these below:

All of the stated action measures are to be welcomed. However, given the Executive Office's central co-ordinating function across all of government in Northern Ireland, it would be good to see that reflected in this Action Plan.

The following are suggestions to consider as additional Action Measures, which demonstrate leadership in implementing the Disability Duties. Council feels that consideration should be given to:

- Information or awareness sessions for people with disabilities to publicise the public appointment or participation opportunities that may be available in the organisations for which the Office is responsible.
- A Measure with a focus on promoting and sharing good practice across government in for example an annual workshop or seminar.
- A Measure around training specifically in the Disability Duties (as opposed to equality generally or Section 75). Those who have a role to play in complying with the duties may need role-specific training to ensure they recognise that 'participation in public life' is not limited to public appointments.

- A Measure around what the TEO will do to ensure that the Disability Duties feature in its strategies and plans and in the strategies and plans of bodies it oversees.
- A Measure that commits to producing information/communications relevant to the Disability Duties in appropriate formats.
- A Measure around developing (or facilitating the development of) a formal mechanism for engaging and consulting with the disability sector/disabled people on an ongoing basis, through for example a Disability Forum representing the disability sector

Any other general comments you wish to make?

All of the stated action measures are to be welcomed. However, some of the measures appear to be on general accessibility and should, perhaps be considered for inclusion in a more general Equality Action Plan. For example:

- Action Measure 2 appears to be about making information accessible to a range of groups covered by Section 75 and is not specific to the DDA Disability Duties. The DDA already requires such adjustments to be made for disabled people so measures in the DAP should be additional to these statutory requirements.
- Action Measure 4 is very general and should relate specifically to the Disability Duties. All public bodies are already required to ensure website accessibility under the DDA access provisions.
- Action Measure 6 is also very general and not specific to people with disabilities.
- Action Measure 7 – the council suggests that TEO work with a wider range of disability support organisations to promote opportunities for disabled people to apply for public appointments. Promotion should include other opportunities to participate in policy and decision making, for example, consultation events, focus groups, etc.
- Action Measure 8 – refers to obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act and not training specifically around the Disability Duties.
- Action Measure 12 - addressing staff issues relating to disability in the workplace is covered by the employment provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act and is not directly relevant to the Disability Duties.

Thank you for completing this comment form.

Please return your completed form on or before **14 February 2020**.

By Email:

EqualityandHumanRights@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk

or post to:

Equality Unit,
The Executive Office,
Block 2, Knockview Buildings,
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The
Executive Office
www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk

DRAFT

Disability Action Plan

2020 - 2025

January 2020

V1.1

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BACKGROUND

The Disability Duties

1. Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995¹ (DDA 1995) requires the Executive Office, as a public authority, when carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the need to:
 - a) promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
 - b) encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

These requirements are referred to as “the disability duties” in this document.

2. For the purposes of Article 49A of the DDA 1995, a public authority is defined in the same way as in section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The Executive Office is designated as a public authority for the purposes of section 75.

Disability Action Plan

3. Section 49B of the DDA 1995², requires those public authorities subject to section 49A to produce a disability action plan (DAP) showing how they propose to fulfil their disability duties. Public authorities are required to submit their DAP to the Equality Commission.
4. This DAP covers the period January 2020 to December 2025.

Due Regard

5. The term “due regard” means that a public authority must take their disability duties into account when carrying out their functions. It is established that the consideration must be given in advance of a final decision being made, not afterwards.

¹ Section 49A was inserted by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006

² Section 49B was inserted by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006

ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT

6. The overall aim of the Executive Office is to contribute to and oversee the co-ordination of Executive policies and programmes to deliver a peaceful, fair, equal and prosperous society.
7. The key interlinked objectives of the Department are:
 - Driving investment and sustainable development: through regeneration of strategic former military sites; promoting effective long-term capital planning and delivery; and, promoting the Executive's policy interests internationally
 - Tackling Disadvantage and Promoting Equality of Opportunity: By driving a programme across Government to reduce poverty; promoting and protecting the interests of children, older people, people with disabilities, victims and survivors, and other socially excluded groups; addressing inequality and disadvantage; and, drive the delivery of Government responsibilities in a sustainable manner
 - The effective operation of the institutions of government in the delivery of an agreed Programme for Government: By providing a central source of information, co-ordination and advice to departments on Executive, Assembly, and legislative procedures; co-ordinating and reviewing the Programme for Government; driving the more efficient and sustainable use of capital assets across Government; and, ensuring the structure of public administration is efficient, effective and sustainable

The Department works with these bodies

- Equality Commission for NI
- Northern Ireland Community Relations Council
- Maze/Long Kesh Development Corporation
- NI Judicial Appointments Commission
- Commission for Victims and Survivors for Northern Ireland
- Strategic Investment Board
- Victims and Survivors Service
- Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

The Northern Ireland Civil Service is one of Northern Ireland's largest employers with approximately 23,000 staff working across 9 Departments. The Executive Office may be one of the smaller departments with around 300 staff, but its central coordinating function means it has a key role to play in promoting equality of opportunity and social inclusion. In my role as Head of the Civil Service, I actively promote the importance of creating a positive, inclusive and welcoming environment for all. The Department is formally accredited by Employers for Disability NI (EFDNI) as a 'Disability Positive' employer and has recently been awarded Investor In People (IIP) Silver status accreditation.

Signing up to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's Mental Health Charter is another example of our commitment to provide a healthy, inclusive and open workplace both for staff and for the public who use our services. In addition the Department has recently implemented the JAM Card initiative which will help to reassure people with a learning difficulty, autism or communication barrier and who may need a little more patience and understanding, that they will receive the time they need when accessing our services.

The purpose of this Disability Action Plan is to set out what the Executive Office will do to fulfil our obligations in respect of our disability duties under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. We are committed to fully implementing the duties and will allocate the necessary resources to ensure that this Plan can be effectively implemented. All staff will be provided with the necessary

guidance and training to help them meet our objectives We will monitor our progress through an annual report, which will be published on our website and provided to the Equality Commission NI.

Signed

PERMANENT SECRETARY

Date February 2020

INTERNAL ARRANGEMENTS AND CONTACT DETAILS

8. Within the Executive Office, day-to-day responsibility for dealing with and reporting on the DAP lies with the Equality, Human Rights and Delivering Social Change Unit. Anyone seeking further information relating to the DAP and/or the disability duties should contact Peter Neill:-

Equality, Human Rights and Delivering Social Change Unit
The Executive Office
Block 2
Knockview Buildings
Stormont
BELFAST
BT4 3SR
Telephone: 028 9052 8370
E-mail: EqualityandHumanRights@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk

9. If you require this plan in an alternative format or language, please contact the above person to discuss your requirements.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

10. This DAP sets out the actions that the Executive Office plans to take forward over the 5 year period of the plan. It will be kept under review and will be treated as a fluid document to which other actions can be added throughout its lifespan.
11. We are committed to monitoring and reviewing our policies and practices through the process of equality screening to ensure that we continue to deliver an effective service to people with disabilities.

12. The Equality, Human Rights and Delivering Social Change Unit will be responsible for monitoring of the Executive Office's compliance with the disability duties and for the reporting on progress to the Equality Commission through its annual equality progress reports.
13. The Executive Office will carry out a review of this DAP in 2025 to coincide with the review of its Equality Scheme. The review will be submitted to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.
14. The Department will ensure the effective communication of the plan to staff and to providing all necessary training and guidance for staff on the disability duties and the implementation of this plan. The Department will consult with disabled people in the preparation and review of this plan. This plan will be published on the Department's website and issued to the Department's section 75 consultee list.

PUBLIC LIFE POSITIONS

15. The Executive Office believes that it is important that people from a wide range of backgrounds become engaged in all aspects of public life, from accessing services and participating in consultations, to taking up public appointments. It is important that the boards of public bodies reflect the rich diversity of our society and better understand the needs of the communities they serve. Appointments are made on merit, and applications are welcome from all sections of society.

Executive Office vacancies

16. All the latest Executive Office vacancies are published on the NI Direct website:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/government/public-appointments>

17. The Executive Office also produces the “All Aboard” news-sheet which provides advance information on forthcoming public appointment vacancies. The current issue of All Aboard can be downloaded from:

<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/all-aboard>

18. The following public appointments are regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPANI) and appointed by the First Minister and deputy First Minister:

- Commissioner for Children and Young People;
- Commissioner for Older People;
- Strategic Investment Board;
- Victims and Survivors Service
- Maze/Long Kesh Development Corporation;
- Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments (Lay members only);
and
- Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland.

19. The First Minister and deputy First Minister also appoint the following which, adhere to the spirit of the CPANI Code of Practice but are currently unregulated appointments:

- Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland;
- Commission for Victims and Survivors;
- Community Relations Council; and
- Attorney General for Northern Ireland.

PROMOTING POSITIVE ATTITUDES TOWARDS DISABLED PEOPLE

20. As part of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, the Executive Office is committed to promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people through a range of measures including recruitment, workforce mentoring and training as well as compliance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. TEO is now formally accredited as a 'Disability Positive' employer by Employers for Disability NI (EFDNI) and NICS has also signed up to the Mental Health Charter.

Mental Health Charter

21. The Northern Ireland Civil Service is one of Northern Ireland's largest employers and has a duty to protect the mental health of its 23,000 staff. Signing up to the Equality Commission's Mental Health Charter shows our commitment to provide a healthy, inclusive and open workplace both for staff and for the public who use our services.

JAM Card Initiative

22. The Executive Office has implemented the JAM Card initiative which will help to reassure people who need a little more patience and understanding that they will receive the time they need when accessing our services. The initiative will also help to raise awareness of autism and learning difficulties and help staff to ensure that they are meeting the needs of all colleagues and customers.

Delivering Social Change – Dementia Project

23. The Executive Office oversees the Delivering Social Change Programme. This Executive initiative is co-funded by Atlantic Philanthropies and aims to tackle poverty, improve health, well-being, educational and life opportunities. One of the projects

funded under this initiative focused on services for people with dementia, their families and carers, and in particular getting support to carers of people with dementia that is based around what they need to live their everyday lives. Following the success of the first phase of the project, the second phase has focused on using technology-enabled solutions to build on the investments made to date to improve the patient journey for people suffering from dementia. The second phase is also building the capacity to collect and use dementia data to improve the planning and commissioning of efficient, effective and value for money dementia services. The project aims to create a platform that can be used to enable data-driven care-planning solutions across the health and social care system.

Section 75 Duty

24. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 places a statutory obligation on all designated public authorities to ensure that they carry out their various functions relating to Northern Ireland having due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity across nine social categories, including:
- a) persons of different religious belief;
 - b) political opinion;
 - c) racial group;
 - d) age;
 - e) marital status;
 - f) sexual orientation;
 - g) men and women generally;
 - h) persons with dependants and persons without; and
 - i) persons with a disability and persons without.
25. The Executive Office is specifically responsible for the provision of strategic advice and support to policy makers in all NICS departments. The Equality, Human Rights and Delivering Social Change Unit has oversight responsibility for the Executive Office's statutory equality duties under Section 75. As one of nine social categories, disability warrants the same consideration as the other eight social categories.

Equal Opportunities Policy

26. The Northern Ireland Civil Service Equal Opportunities Policy, developed centrally through the Department of Finance, applies to all aspects of working life and is implemented fully within the Executive Office. Further information, including details of any actions taken or planned centrally in respect of the disability duties, is contained in the Department of Finance's Disability Action Plan.

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/disability-action-plan-0>

Recruitment Policy and Procedures

27. Recruitment policy for the Executive Office is undertaken centrally by the Department of Finance. NICS Recruitment Service participates in recruitment fairs to promote the Civil Service as an equal opportunities employer. Further information, including details of any actions taken or planned centrally in respect of the disability duties, is contained in the Department of Finance's Disability Action Plan.

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/disability-action-plan-0>

28. The use of the Guaranteed Interview Scheme is considered in Executive Office public appointments and has been used elsewhere in the NICS.³

Training

29. Equal Opportunities training for Northern Ireland Civil Servants is provided by the Centre for Applied Learning and supplemented by training from external providers when appropriate.
30. The Centre for Applied Learning also provides a "Disability Awareness for Frontline Staff" e-Learning course, which aims to

³ The aim of the Guaranteed Interview Scheme is to provide applicants with a disability, who demonstrate that they meet the criteria for the post, a guaranteed invitation to interview.

provide frontline staff with an introduction to disability awareness and increase their knowledge of disability. The training is available to staff at all grades who deal with the public. It aims to: define disability in relation to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995; state how disability discrimination can occur; list barriers for people with disabilities accessing services; and explain appropriate positive language and etiquette to be used when providing services to people with disabilities.

31. The Executive Office has previously provided training courses for its staff which raised awareness of the Disability Duties. The Department, in conjunction with the Department of Health and external specialists, also regularly runs “Lunchtime Seminars” intended to increase staff awareness of a range of issues, including autism, mental health issues, stress management and caring for carers.

Mentoring

32. TEO has a Disability Focus Group to help ensure that the needs of disabled staff are properly addressed and to consider solutions to more complex cases as necessary.
33. TEO has a dedicated Disability Liaison Officer (DLO) to help staff identify and address any issues relating to disability in the workplace. The Disability Liaison Officer successfully completed the Disability Positive Assessment by Employers for Disability NI (EFDNI) which means that TEO are now formally accredited by EFDNI as a ‘Disability Positive’ employer. The DLO will act as departmental disability contact officer, work with managers to identify solutions where required and seek advice from experts when needed e.g. from RNIB or Action for Deafness.
34. The work of the Disability Liaison Officer is supported by a biennial survey of all staff to identify issues and ensure reasonable adjustments are in place. To date the role is working effectively and all issues raised and requests for reasonable adjustments have been satisfactorily addressed.

35. TEO follows the Northern Ireland Civil Service principles of equality, diversity and inclusion and has its own Diversity Champion who, in conjunction with representatives from all Departments, looks at what the Northern Ireland Civil Service needs to do in overall terms to advance awareness, knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity issues. The objective is to ensure that diversity and inclusion are firmly embedded within the department and across the Civil Service in a way that embraces and values difference.
36. The Policy Champions Network is a group of senior civil servants, whose role it is to build capability in policy making across the Northern Ireland Civil Service. Every department, including the Executive Office, has a dedicated Policy Champion responsible for leading the work to grow policy capability and capacity across the NICS. The group provides a forum to consider all aspects of policy development, including the needs of Section 75 groups, and communicating best practice.
37. The Executive Office is a member of Employers for Disability NI. This is a network of employers drawn from the public, private, and voluntary sectors. It works to promote training and employment opportunities and accessibility for employees and customers with disabilities.

Workforce monitoring

38. Statistical information on disability within the Northern Ireland Civil Service workforce is collated centrally by the Department of Finance. Further information is contained in the Department of Finance's Disability Action Plan.

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/disability-action-plan-0>

39. The Executive Office carries out a People Survey every year. The survey encourages staff to declare a disability, if appropriate, and to suggest further ways of promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people.

Procurement

40. Procurement of goods and services for the Northern Ireland Civil Service is undertaken centrally. Further information, including details of any actions taken or planned centrally in respect of the disability duties, is contained in the Department of Finance's Disability Action Plan.

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/disability-action-plan-0>

Access to buildings

41. Properties Division within the Department of Finance manages buildings and property within the Northern Ireland Civil Service Estate. Further details of any actions taken or planned centrally in respect of the disability duties, are contained in the Department of Finance's Disability Action Plan.

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/disability-action-plan-0>

42. All buildings occupied by Executive Office staff are accessible to wheelchair users, and braille is used widely on public signage to assist people with visual impairments.
43. All Executive Office staff who need assistance evacuating their building, have completed a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) with their line managers. The completion of the PEEP determines the best escape plan for them in an emergency. Each PEEP is a bespoke 'escape plan' for individuals who may not be able to reach an ultimate place of safety unaided or within a satisfactory period of time in the event of any emergency.

44. All TEO staff have workstation assessments to ensure that their working environment is safe and suited to their needs. Should a staff member's circumstances change, they can request a further assessment and reasonable adjustments will be made to adapt their workstation to meet their specific needs.

Policy Consultation

45. TEO maintains a list of people who have expressed an interest in the department's policy development work. The list is used to inform them of forthcoming consultations on new policies and to encourage them to contribute suggestions to help shape the policies. The consultation list reflects our diverse society but we particularly welcome greater representation from people with disabilities and women. If you would like to have your contact details added to the consultation list please contact the Equality and Human Rights and Delivering Social Change Unit.

E-mail: EqualityandHumanRights@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk

46. To encourage maximum participation in consultations, officials arrange events on a series of dates, at different times of day and in a range of accessible venues. Additional arrangements can be made to facilitate the participation of people with specific needs, if officials are notified of them in sufficient time before the event.
47. All public consultation papers issued by the Executive Office may be made available in alternative formats on request and disabled people are encouraged to participate in consultation events arranged by TEO.
48. The Executive Office, as part of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, is committed to encouraging the participation of disabled people in public life.

Public Appointments Policy

49. Government policy states that appointments to the Boards of public bodies in Northern Ireland (public appointments) will be made on merit and, as far as practicable, in accordance with the Code of Practice for Ministerial Public Appointments in Northern Ireland, published by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland, who is a statutory office holder operationally independent of Government. The Commissioner is responsible for regulating, monitoring and reporting on the process for making Ministerial public appointments.

50. The Code of Practice on Public Appointments requires that equality principles inform the public appointments process and stipulates that all public appointments must be made in accordance with the seven key principles underpinning the Code:

- Merit;
- Diversity;
- Equality;
- Openness, Transparency and Independence;
- Integrity;
- Proportionality; and
- Respect.

51. The procedures drawn up by the Commissioner and set out in her Code of Practice lay considerable emphasis on the need for all public appointments to be governed by the over-riding principle of selection based on merit; the inclusion of an independent element in this selection process; the need for openness and transparency in the appointments process; and for information to be published about any appointments made. In particular, the guidance emphasises the need for all candidates for public appointments to have access to a role profile and a summary of the key qualities sought (a person specification), and the need for a wide field of candidates to be obtained by making use, where appropriate, of public advertising.

52. The Code of Practice makes it clear that the principles of equal opportunity and diversity must be inherent within the appointments process and that departments must take care not to unlawfully discriminate against any group. Further information is available on the Public Appointment's website:

<https://www.publicappointmentsni.org/>

Best Practice Guide

53. The Central Appointments Unit in the Executive Office has central policy responsibility for public appointments in Northern Ireland. To complement the CPA NI Code of Practice, the Central Appointments Unit has produced and maintains "Public Appointments Principles and Practices: Departmental Common Guidance Handbook". The Guidance recommends that "Departments should offer arrangements for candidates with a disability (at the application stage as well as at formal interview) such as providing information packs and application forms in alternative formats, e.g. Braille, audio readings etc. The provision of these or other adjustments for candidates with disabilities must be conveyed to candidates".
54. The Guide also recommends that when advertising public appointments, a general equal opportunities welcoming statement highlighting the Department's commitment to the principles of public appointments based on merit with independent assessment, openness and transparency of process should be included in the advertisement.
55. In addition to criteria based application forms, public appointment applicants are also asked to complete a voluntary equal opportunities monitoring form, which records information in relation to gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation, whether or not you have dependants, educational level, employment sector, ethnic origin, community background and disability. This information is collected for monitoring purposes only and forms no part of the selection process.

56. Equal opportunities monitoring data, including information on disability, is collated within each Department and forwarded once each year to Northern Ireland Statistics Research Agency (NISRA) staff within TEO for inclusion in the Public Appointments Annual Report. In line with normal practice this monitoring data is presented anonymously.

Publications

57. The Central Appointments Unit has also produced the “Public Appointments Guide – An overview of Public Appointments in Northern Ireland” and helpful information for those wishing to apply. The purpose of the Guide is to raise awareness and provide much of the information needed to understand what it means to be a member of the Board of a public body. It also explains the type of bodies currently in existence and the process of appointing people to these bodies. The Guide is available to all Departments and the general public from the Executive Office website:

<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/public-appointments-guide-overview-public-appointments-northern-ireland-and-helpful-information>.

58. NISRA also produces the Public Appointments Annual Report, which sets out details of the number of applications received and appointments made in any given financial year. All of Northern Ireland’s Government Departments contribute to the Report, which also includes statistical information on the number of disabled people who applied for positions and the number appointed. The reports are available on the Executive Office website:

<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/topics/public-appointments-reports>

All Aboard

59. The Central Appointments Unit maintains a mailing list of individuals and organisations interested in public appointments in Northern Ireland. It includes community/voluntary groups, political parties, pressure groups and disability organisations but anyone can have their details added to it. Everyone on the list receives a copy of “All Aboard” which is published approximately every six months.
60. Each edition of All Aboard contains a list of vacancies and the purpose of including this information is to provide early warning to those on the mailing list of the public appointments that Northern Ireland’s government departments intend to fill. The vacancy list provides an opportunity to see what vacancies will be coming up in the near future, to register an interest and find out more information about the vacancy from the designated official or contact point.
61. Being in receipt of All Aboard does not convey any unfair advantage. All appointments are made on merit following an open and transparent process and recipients of All Aboard are expected to apply and compete alongside all other applicants.

Website

62. The Executive Office maintains a public appointments page on its website, where copies of the Annual Report, the Public Appointments Guide, the latest edition of All Aboard and details of current TEO public appointments vacancies are available. The nidirect website is used to publicise all public appointment vacancies.

<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/articles/public-appointments>

UN Convention on Disability Rights

63. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) sets out what human rights mean in the context of disability. By ratifying UNCRPD in 2009, the UK is committed to promoting and protecting the full enjoyment of human rights by disabled people and ensuring they have full equality under the law.
64. The Executive Office provides sponsorship to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and works closely with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission. While the Department for Communities is responsible for monitoring compliance with UNCRPD in Northern Ireland, the Executive Office provides input on any of our work relevant to the convention

Outcomes Delivery Programme

65. The Executive Office has adopted an outcomes-based approach to business as a basis for making real improvements to the quality of life for citizens. The starting point is the draft Programme for Government framework which was consulted on extensively during 2016 and is designed to target areas of economic and societal wellbeing that people have said matter most to them. Taken together the desired outcomes provide strategic direction to the work of the department, and the following three, in particular, have helped shape the department's approach and actions to promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people and encouraging them to participate in public life:
- “We have a more equal society”;
 - “ We care for others and we help those in need; and,
 - “We are a shared, welcoming and confident society that respects diversity”.

NICS Work Experience Scheme for People with Disabilities

66. The Northern Ireland Civil Service has made a commitment to engage with external disability organisations to develop structured work placement programmes to make sure that people with disabilities have equal access to work opportunities. The scheme facilitates unpaid placements only and applications are accepted on an ongoing basis.
67. The Executive Office uses the Access to Work programme that aims to help more disabled people start or stay in work. It can provide practical and financial support for people who have a disability or long term physical or mental health condition. All recommendations identified in the Access to Work assessment are implemented and supplied to staff. Staff complete workplace Risk Assessments regularly and actions identified are addressed. This may include having an Access to Work assessment completed.
68. Work experience and work placement are excellent initiatives to provide opportunities for people with disabilities to gain experience and skills in work which may lead to employment in the future. The Executive Office has previously engaged people through the Access to Work scheme. The scheme has the additional benefit of increasing disability awareness of existing staff within the Northern Ireland Civil Service departments.
69. The Executive Office participated in International Job Shadow Day (IJSD) 2019. IJSD provides a person with a disability the opportunity to shadow a workplace mentor as they go about their normal working day. It also enables them to learn about job requirements and employer expectations. This year TEO was able to provide opportunities for two participants.

ACTION MEASURES

70. The following pages outline the action measures the Executive Office plans to take to contribute to one or both of the DDA disability duties. The Executive Office will regularly review and update this action plan, and will continue to engage with people with disabilities and their representatives.
71. The Executive Office is committed to monitoring and reviewing its policies and practices to ensure that it meets the disability duties.
72. Targets are clearly set out in this plan - some are continuous, while others reflect the nature of the challenges. The Equality, Human Rights and Delivering Social Change Unit will be responsible for the day-to-day monitoring of compliance with the disability duties and reporting on progress to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

ACTION MEASURES (DELIVERED BY TEO)

Outlined below are the measures which we propose to take over the period of this disability action plan, together with performance indicators or targets.

Measures to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in public life.

Measures	Timescale	Performance Indicators/target	Owner	Outcomes
1. To ensure the views of disabled people receive the same consideration as others by engaging more effectively and holding fully inclusive events and consultations.	Every time a policy is being developed or a stakeholder event is arranged	1. As per NICS Policy Making Guide (February 2017) adopting the models of co-production, co-design and co-create to ensure policies are developed in partnership with stakeholders, with voluntary and community groups, charities etc., as well as the people who are most likely to be impacted or otherwise affected by the implementation. 2. Where possible, pre-engagement prior to formal consultation and consideration of outreach pre-engagement with community based groups where relevant.	All TEO Branch Managers	More accessible and inclusive consultations and Stakeholder engagement. Better informed and more representative policies will be developed.

Measures	Timescale	Performance Indicators/target	Owner	Outcomes
		3. When organising meetings/ events, appropriate consideration will be given to the time of day, suitability / accessibility of the venue, how the meeting is to be conducted, the use of appropriate language, the need for a signer and/or interpreter, and the need for childcare provision / support for carers.		
2. To ensure information is available to everyone in a format that meets their needs, communications may be provided in alternative formats. Documents in alternative formats may be made available on request.	As requests are received	<p>1. Specific consideration will be given as to how best to communicate with children and young people, people with disabilities (in particular people with learning disabilities) and minority ethnic communities. Where appropriate Easy Read versions will be made available.</p> <p>2. Where possible information will be made available in alternative formats on request. Alternative formats, which may include Braille, audio formats (CD, mp3), large print, will be provided in a timely fashion, usually within 21 working days.</p>	All TEO Branch Managers	Better and more inclusive engagement, participation and information sharing.

Measures	Timescale	Performance Indicators/target	Owner	Outcomes
3. To display a more inclusive positive image of people with disabilities through the TEO website, communication with stakeholders and the public and internally on the TEO intranet and communications with staff.	To be considered when articles are being prepared.	External and internal publications and websites will, where possible, include more, positive images of people with disabilities participating in the work of the department and projects supported by it.	All divisions of TEO	Greater visibility of disabled people and an increased awareness of the positive contribution they make to our society.
4. To ensure that digital information is accessible to everyone by maintaining the TEO website to a high standard.	The website is regularly updated and checked for compliance	In line with NICS practice, TEO's website will be at least 'single A' compliant.	Executive Information Service.	Website will be more accessible for all.

Measures	Timescale	Performance Indicators/target	Owner	Outcomes
5. Create work placement/job-shadowing opportunities for people with disabilities.	Annually	TEO will provide job-shadowing and work placement opportunities for disabled people		To equip disabled employees with the necessary skills and knowledge required for public life positions and employment and enable disabled and non-disabled employees to work together, challenge negative stereotypes and promote positive attitudes.
6. To encourage more people to apply for public appointments by increasing the readership of “All Aboard” the public appointments newsletter.	Subject to vacancies becoming available	TEO will continue to expand the public appointments mailing list on request with a view to increasing the readership “All Aboard” to ensure that it reaches a wider and more diverse range of people.	Central Appointments Unit. https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/articles/public-appointments	Increase in the number and diversity of people applying for public appointments.

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Measures	Timescale	Performance Indicators/target	Owner	Outcomes
7. To encourage more people to apply for public appointments TEO will advertise public appointments in the Employers for Disability Bulletin Board.	Subject to vacancies becoming available	Increased awareness of TEO public appointment opportunities	Central Appointments Unit, https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/articles/public-appointments	More disabled people will apply for public appointments
8. To promote awareness and understanding of issues faced by people with a disability and to ensure staff have the necessary skills to help promote a culture of positive attitudes.	Annually	Staff awareness seminars on disability/ diversity related themes are organised on a regular basis throughout the year.	All TEO Staff and Corporate Human Resources	Staff will have a greater understanding of issues faced by people with a disability

Measures	Timescale	Performance Indicators/target	Owner	Outcomes
9. To ensure that TEO staff are well trained to meet their obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act, regarding the need to promote equality of opportunity for persons with a disability and duty regarding good relations.	Six monthly as part of in-year reviews in October and end of year reviews in April.	<p>Through the Centre For Applied Learning (CAL) the Department offers a number of courses which comply with ECNI revised Section 75 guidance. i.e. classroom based courses include Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Workshops and Public Consultation & Engagement, whilst e-learning packages include Introduction to Section 75, Disability Awareness for Frontline Staff, and Autism Spectrum Disorder Awareness.</p> <p>The courses are signposted to relevant Departmental policy makers and participants to the disability duties.</p> <p>Training and development needs for individual staff are identified, evaluated and reviewed as an integral part of the Department's Performance Management system.</p>	All TEO Staff and Corporate Human Resources	Any training requirements for staff are formally reviewed at the end and mid-point of the annual performance cycle.

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Measures	Timescale	Performance Indicators/target	Owner	Outcomes
10. JAM Card awareness training	All staff to complete training by March 2020	All colleagues will complete E-Learning to ensure they are aware of how they can provide that support to JAM Card users when it's needed.	Line Managers	Improved support for people with a communication difficulty
11. To monitor equality and diversity improvements across the department the TEO Diversity Champion will monitor and evaluate progress on delivery of the Diversity Strategy and Action Plan. The Equality Champion will monitor the Disability Action Plan (DAP) and any relevant reports to the Departmental Board.	Diversity Strategy and Action Plan will be reviewed quarterly.	Equality & Good Relations Forum and Disability Forum to fully participate and contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of the Diversity Strategy and Action Plan and DAP.	TEO's Diversity Steering Group. Equality & Good Relations Forum	Diversity Annual Progress Report submitted to the Board Annually.

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Measures	Timescale	Performance Indicators/target	Owner	Outcomes
12. Identify and address any staff issues relating to disability in the workplace.	On a case by case basis and supported by a biennial survey of staff	100% compliance/success rate in relation to issues raised.	Disability Liaison Officer	All issues raised are satisfactorily addressed.
13. To improve TEO staff attitudes a regular staff survey will be carried out. All staff are encouraged, if appropriate, to declare disabilities, and suggest further ways of promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people.	Every year	Findings of survey will be compared with baseline data and will inform future TEO Business Improvement Plan.	TEO Business Improvement & Staff Engagement Unit	Accurate statistical information will be maintained and suggestions for promoting positive attitudes will be collected and implemented where appropriate

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Measures	Timescale	Performance Indicators/target	Owner	Outcomes
14. Disability Liaison Officer will work to improve awareness of disability issues within the department.	Biennially	Consecutive staff surveys will show improving attitudes towards people with disabilities. More staff will feel able to declare any disabilities they may have previously not wish to disclose.	TEO Business Improvement & Staff Engagement Unit	Improvements in staff attitude towards disability issues.
15. To show progress TEO will prepare an annual report on the action points in this Disability Action Plan.	Annually by the end of August.	Annual Progress Report on Section 75 and disability measures will be sent to the Equality Commission for NI (ECNI).	TEO Equality Officer.	ECNI will receive Annual Progress Report highlighting the department's work to fulfil its statutory equality duties.