Disability Duties
Disability Action Plan

for

Carrickfergus Borough Council

Model Disability Action Plan prepared for the District Councils by the Disability Action Plan Working Group

April 2007

This Disability Action Plan can be obtained from the Council on request in alternative formats, including in large print, in Braille, on audio cassette and on computer disc. It can also be downloaded from the Council's website. If you would like a copy in an alternative format, please contact:

Name: Lisa Adair

Phone number: 02893358003

Email: ladair.policy@carrickfergus.org

Website: www.carrickfergus.org

Foreword

This Disability Action Plan is an important document in that it is a statement of the Council's commitment to and proposals for fulfilling the statutory obligations in compliance with Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006). This Act places new duties on public authorities, when carrying out their functions to have regard to the need:

- to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- to encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

The Plan is also important because it outlines how disability issues can be more effectively mainstreamed within the Council, thus ensuring that they are central to the whole range of policy decision-making within the Council.

Mayor

Chief Executive

Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Purpose of the disability action plan	1
3.	The Council – its role and functions	1
4.	Public life positions over which the Council has responsibility	3
5.	Commitment to the effective implementation of the disability action plan	3
6.	Internal arrangements	4
7.	Effective engagement	5
8.	Annual Report	5
9.	Five Year Review	6
10.	Consultation	6
11.	Action measures	9
12.	Timescale for the implementation of the action measures	12
13.	Performance indicators	15
14.	Proposed Performance Indicators/Targets	15
15.	How the disability action plan will be published	18

Appendix 1 Organisation chart

1. Introduction

1.1 Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006 requires the Council, in carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the need:

- to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- to encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

1.2 The Council is committed to the fulfilment of its disability duties in all parts of its organisation and has set out how it intends to do this in this Disability Action Plan (the Plan).

1.3 The Council will undertake a planned programme of communication and training on the disability duties for all staff and elected members.

2. Purpose of the disability action plan

2.1 This Plan sets out how the Council proposes to fulfil the disability duties in relation to its functions.

3. The Council – its role and functions

3.1 The Council performs five principal roles within its local area and district:

- the direct provision of a number of services and facilities,
- the promotion of the arts, tourism, community and economic development,
- the regulation and licensing of certain activities relating to environmental health, consumer protection and public safety,
- a representative role on a number of bodies and Boards including Education and Health,
- a consultative role in relation to functions conducted by other Government bodies and agencies on issues such as planning, water, roads and housing.

3.2 In the performance of the above roles the Council carries out functions in the following areas:

- the provision of facilities for recreational, social and cultural activities including leisure centres, marina facilities, community centres, parks, open spaces, sports grounds and places of entertainment
- street cleansing
- waste collection and disposal
- the provision of burial grounds
- the provision of grant aid to support the Arts, community development and the promotion of tourism and economic development
- the administration and regulation of certain matters relating to the environment, public health and public safety including building control, food safety, statutory nuisance, dangerous buildings, air pollution, noise pollution, dog control, consumer protection and health and safety
- the licensing and regulation of street trading, places of entertainment, amusement centres, sex establishments, societies lotteries, cinemas and petroleum stations
- the making of bye-laws and regulation of same.

3.3 To enable the Council to provide the above services and perform its other functions, the Council must levy an annual rate and has the power to:

- acquire and dispose of land
- borrow money
- employ staff
- procure goods and services.

3.4 To support and implement the above statutory functions and provision of services and facilities, the Council has adopted a wide range of policies.

4. Public life positions over which the Council has responsibility

4.1 The Council has responsibility over the following public life positions:

Community Safety Partnership, Local Strategy Partnership, District Policing Partnership

5. The Council's commitment to the effective implementation of the disability action plan

5.1 The Council is committed to the effective implementation of all aspects of the Plan in all parts of its organisation. Overall responsibility for determining policy on how this will be achieved lies with the Elected Members. Day to day responsibility for carrying out the policy determined by the Elected Members lies with the Chief Executive and he/she will be responsible for the implementation of administrative arrangements to ensure that the disability duties are complied with by the Council in carrying out its functions.

5.2 As part of its corporate planning process, the Council will build objectives and targets relating to the disability duties into corporate and business plans. These will be reflected at all levels of strategic planning within the Council including individual staff objectives and annual plans. Progress on meeting objectives, including those relating to the disability duties will be monitored and reported upon at the most senior level within the organisation on a quarterly basis. Individual performance will be monitored and reviewed through performance review arrangements.

5.3 A formal report of progress on meeting the objectives relating to the disability duties will be included in the Council's annual report.

6. Internal arrangements

6.1 The Council consists of 17 elected representatives, elected for a four year period who meet monthly in full session and in five standing committees namely:

- Chief Executives
- Development
- Environmental Services
- Building Services
- Support Services

Supporting these committees are the various departments of the Council.

6.2 The Chief Executive oversees the work of the departments through the Senior Management Team, which together with the Councillors create the corporate body of the Council.

6.3 The Chief Executive is responsible for the strategic direction and advice to the Council, for the day to day management of services and the longer term planning and allocation of resources.

6.4 The Council has four departments, each of which is headed by a Director:

- The Support Services Department is responsible for finance, human resources, administration and registration and reports to the Support Services Standing Committee of Council

- The Development Department is responsible for economic development, tourism, leisure facilities, community development, good relations and the arts and reports to the Development Standing Committee of Council

- The Environmental Services Department is responsible for environmental health, the DSO (refuse and street cleaning), education awareness and the waste management strategy and reports to the Environmental Services Standing Committee of the Council

- The Building Services Department is responsible for Building Regulations, fire risk assessment, project management, estates management, building maintenance and entertainment licensing and reports to the Building Services Standing Committee of Council

6.5 The Disability Plan will be administered from within the Chief Executives department, with regular progress reports being delivered to the Corporate Strategy Sub Committee. Should you require any further information about the Plan, contact details are available on page 18 of this document. Furthermore, an organisation chart showing how the duties will be delivered in Council is detailed in Appendix 1 of this document.

7. Effective engagement

7.1 The Council is committed to engage effectively with disabled people in the drafting, implementation, monitoring and review of this Plan. Further information on how this will be done is outlined in Section 10 on Consultation.

8. Annual report

8.1 The Council will prepare an annual report on the implementation of its Plan. The annual report will be included as part of the Council's annual report to the Equality Commission on the implementation of our equality scheme.

8.2 A copy of the annual report will be made available on the Council's website.

9. Five year review

9.1 The Council will carry out a five year review of its plan, in consultation with the Equality Commission for NI.

10. Consultation

10.1 The Council is committed to carrying out consultation in a meaningful manner in the development of its disability duties. In doing so the Council is keen to bring about change for disabled people and we are therefore focussing on the issue of involvement and participation in preparing our Plan.

10.2 Specifically we are keen to seek the views of disabled people in relation to the development of the Plan. To do this the Council is actively engaged on a number of levels; firstly at a representative group level at the regional level and secondly, at the local level by holding an involvement day.

10.3 Our involvement day is designed to ensure that disabled people can assist the Council by:

- identifying barriers faced by disabled people in participating in public life in general and specifically any barriers they have encountered in relation to their dealings with the Council
- identifying circumstances in the past in which the Council has not promoted positive attitudes towards disabled people and by identifying opportunities in the future for the Council to promote such attitudes
- setting priorities and identifying solutions as regards the taking of remedial action
- monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of measures taken

10.4 At the regional level, in partnership with the Local Government Staff Commission, we will invite organisations as specified within the Councils Equality database who have specific interest in issues relevant to people with disabilities, to discuss their involvement in the development of our Disability Duties:

10.5 At the local level, we will invite local disability groups to our involvement day

on 14th June 2007

at 11am – 1pm, Jubilee Hall, Town Hall

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

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

10.7 As part of the involvement day, barriers to proper consultation will be removed by ensuring accessibility of documents in appropriate formats. Information will be made available on request in accessible formats including Braille, large print, disc and audio cassette. Information will also be made available in accessible formats in a timely fashion. It will also be important to establish with disabled people the basis for dialogue and engagement during the life of the Plan. Consideration will also be given to how best to communicate information to young disabled people as well as considering additional dimensions such as ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation and religious belief.

10.8 The Council is keen to ensure the highest level of inclusivity in our involvement day and therefore we will consider the following:

- the time of day, of the meeting;

- the appropriateness of the venue, and whether it could be accessed by those with disabilities;
- how the meeting will be run;
- the use of appropriate language;
- whether a signer or interpreter is necessary;
- the provision of childcare
- provision of expenses

10.9 The Council believes it is important that disabled people are involved in the monitoring and review of the Plan. Section 2 of this document lays out the initiatives the Council wishes to implement. We would seek your views and comments on these actions and will consider amending them or including additional ones following the comments we receive.

10.10 Following on from our involvement day we may wish to further discuss the implementation of the Plan by meeting with:

- individuals
- advisory groups
- consultative panels
- internet discussion group
- telephone focus groups
- surveys

and other innovative ways of involving disabled people.

10.11 The Council believes that by hosting an annual involvement day that this will allow for a two-way discussion; giving disabled people an opportunity to provide feedback in a constructive manner, as to how we are implementing the disability duties. Prior to the annual meeting the Council will allow adequate time for groups and individuals to consult amongst themselves as part of the process of forming a view on the implementation of this scheme. We will therefore aim to provide information at least one month in advance of the annual meeting.

10.12 Subject to discussions at the involvement day the Council will hold this annual event in the first week of June each year.

11 Action measures

11.1 The Council has already taken a number of measures to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage their participation in public life as a result of the duties under Section 75.

- Undertaking a programme of works to ensure that buildings are accessible
- Providing training for all staff on Section 75 responsibilities including the necessity of having regard for the specific needs of disability groupings
- Providing a Disability Etiquette booklet for all front line staff

11.2 The following are the measures which the Council intends to take in order to implement the disability duties:

Action Measure	Responsibility	Impact
Mainstreaming ***An additional question on screening to assess the significance of the disability duties will be added to the S75 screening proforma***	**Chief Executive**	**Better promotion of equality for disabled people**
Training and Guidance ***Provide training on the disability duties to all staff and elected members*** ***Provide specialist training for senior managers, recruitment and selection panels, HR officers and front line staff.***	**Chief Executive**	**Increased awareness of disability issues** **Promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people**
Encouraging participation in public life ***Encourage disabled people to apply for/participate in Community Safety Partnership, Local Strategy Partnership, District Policing Partnership*** ***Remove barriers to their selection/participation*** ***Provide appropriate training and support to disabled people in a public life position*** ***Create opportunities for involving disabled people*** ***Encourage others to promote the participation of disabled people in public life***	**Chief Executive**	**Better promotion of equality for disabled people** **Higher participation of disabled people in public life**

Action Measure	Responsibility	Impact
Provide measures to improve the confidence levels of disabled people ***Include a welcoming statement*** ***Remove barriers to the selection process***	**Chief Executive**	
Internal measures ***Conduct an audit of new policies, practices and procedures*** ***Conduct a confidential employee and elected member monitoring survey to determine the number of staff and elected members with a disability***	**Chief Executive**	**Increased awareness of disability issues** **Promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people**
Communication ***Review external and internal communication policies, practices and procedures*** ***Work with other organisations to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.*** ***Host events to encourage positive interaction between disabled and non-disabled people.***	**Chief Executive**	**Disabled people portrayed in a positive role** **Promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people**

12. Timescale for the Implementation of the Action Measures

12.1 The table below outlines the timescale for the implementation of the action measures detailed in Section 11. In line with the current timetable for RPA, the current 26 council structure will be replaced with a new council structure with effect from 1 April 2009. This timetable therefore outlines the actions which the council will take until 31 March 2009.

Year 1 July 2007 – June 2008	
Measure	**Action**
Mainstreaming	***Add disability screening to S75 screening proforma***
Training and Guidance	***Provide awareness training for senior staff, elected members and front line staff***
Encouraging participation in public life	***Map existing positions in Council eg working groups, consultation forum***
Communication	***Review communication policies and procedures*** ***Host an event to encourage positive interaction between disabled and non-disabled people***
Other measures	***Conduct an employee and elected member monitoring survey*** ***Prepare annual report on the implementation of the Plan***

Year 2 July 2008 – 31 March 2009	
Training and Guidance	***Provide awareness training for supervisors***
Encouraging participation in public life	***Audit policies and procedures for appointing to groups/bodies***
Communication	***Work with other organisations to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people***
Other measures	***Prepare annual report on the implementation of the Plan***

13. Performance Indicators or Targets

13.1 The Council is committed to monitoring and reviewing policies and practices to ensure that disability equality duties are being met. Monitoring the progress of this Plan itself is a significant element.

13.2 As part of this process, the Annual Review of the Plan will provide a part of the monitoring and review process and assist in drafting appropriate targets and Performance Indicators (PIs) for the next period, whilst reporting on the achievement, or otherwise, of those set for the period of the Annual Review.

13.3 The Council has included the following PIs and targets as an integral part of this Plan.

13.4 Some targets are very specific, whilst other are of a more general nature, thus ensuring the Plan is a realistic and proactive plan, not solely reactive. Some targets are not related to a specific time, as over the 5-year period, we want to ensure that the Council meets the practical needs of disabled persons and their carers on a timely basis.

13.5 The purpose of these PIs and targets is to provide a measure of how the Council is implementing their disability duties and to ensure we are focusing on their needs at a time when it is appropriate to have them addressed.

13.6 Some PIs will be measured against similar public authorities, whilst others are specific to an authority by addressing the needs of those receiving the service and/or its employees.

14. Proposed performance indicators/targets:

14.1 To monitor employees in post and prospective employees through the selection procedure to ensure the Council is aware of employees and potential employees needs by identifying the percentage of employees who have a disability. This data will be updated at least once during the five year period.

14.2 To ensure all employees, who require additional assistance to carry out their duties, are provided with adequate support.

14.3 To display positive attitudes towards disabled persons through Council publications and by using them in appropriate displays of Council activities and services, and in Council premises.

14.4 Identify individuals within the organisation who will assist Councillors, Members, employees and service providers in disability-related matters, including accessibility auditing, identifying training needs and sourcing advice on specific needs.

14.5 Monitor Council comments/complaints procedure to ensure appropriate corrective action is taken in consultation with service users and to measure improvement over a specific period of time.

14.6 Establish a local network that is appropriate for the community, service users, Councillors, Members and employees to whom the Plan relates.

14.7 Train all frontline staff in disability awareness within 3 months of taking up post. All staff in post who have not already received training, will be trained within 3 months of the Plan being in place.

14.8 To identify specific training needs for service providers and departments who interface with the public. To arrange to meet these needs through appropriate training methods.

14.9 Provide awareness training in the Disability Discrimination Act for all Councillors, Senior Management, Members and service providers within the organisation. This training must include the purpose and value of a Plan.

14.10 Screen all policies and practices in line with the Equality Scheme commitments and review all policies and practices, where adverse or potential adverse impact is identified.

14.11 Provide resources to train Councillors, Members and employees of the Council, provide signage and additional aids to ensure services are fully accessible to all.

14.12 Introduce systems to encourage work placements and return to work appointments for those with a disability.

15. How the disability action plan will be published

15.1 Following submission to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, this Plan will be available by contacting:

Mrs Lisa Adair

Carrickfergus Borough Council
Museum and Civic Centre
Antrim Street
BT38 7DG

Tel: 02893358003
Email: ladair.policy@carrickfergus.org

15.2 The availability of the Disability Action Plan will be advertised in the press and can be accessed on the Council's website at:

www.carrickfergus.org

15.3 The Council will, through our ongoing work with people with disabilities and people with learning disabilities, find appropriate ways of communicating the Plan. The Plan will be produced in clear print and plain language, will be available in alternative formats on request, including large print, Braille, audio cassette and computer disc.

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

15.5 In addition, all employees will receive a summary Plan and be provided with a full Plan on request.