



Disability Action Plan

2020-2023



**Mid & East
Antrim**
Borough Council

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Foreword

As Mayor and Chief Executive of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, we are delighted to bring forward this **Disability Action Plan for 2020-2023**.

In combination with the Chief Executive’s roles as the Chair of the SOLACE NI Equality and Diversity Group and the SOLACE NI Disability Champion, we are excited to focus our efforts on making a real difference for people living with a disability in our Borough.

This Disability Action Plan is a statement of the Council’s commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity for disabled people. It complements the Council’s Equality Scheme under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The Plan has been designed to ensure that the Council fulfils its statutory obligations in compliance with Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) (as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006).

The Disability Discrimination Act places duties on public authorities, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

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

We are committed to proactively implementing measures to ensure that the Council is fulfilling the Disability Duties. We will allocate all necessary resources (in terms of people, time and money) in order to effectively implement this plan and where appropriate, build objectives and targets relating to the Disability Duties into corporate and annual operating plans.

We will ensure the effective communication of the plan to the public, the Elected Members and all council staff and provide all necessary training and guidance on the Disability Duties and the implementation of the plan.

We confirm our commitment to submitting an annual report to the Equality Commission on the implementation of this plan as well as carrying out a five yearly review.

A copy of this plan, our annual progress report to the Equality Commission and our five-year review of this plan will be made available on our website midandeastantrim.gov.uk



Councillor Maureen Morrow
Mayor of Mid and East Antrim
Borough Council, 2019-2020



Anne Donaghy,
Chief Executive of Mid and East
Antrim Borough Council

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1** Under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995)¹ as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006), Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is required, when carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the need to:
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
 - encourage participation by disabled people in public life ('the Disability Duties').
- 1.2** The Disability Action Plan, through a series of actionable measures, outlines the Council's proposals for fulfilling the duties in compliance with Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006).
- 1.3** This Plan, in form and content, must conform to the guidelines contained within the Commission's guide for public authorities.
- 1.4** Previously, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council has submitted Disability Action Plans which reflect annual measures. This Plan has been created to be implemented over 4 years in order to align with our Council term and aims to fully integrate with our key strategic plans together with the future planning cycles of our service areas.
- 1.5** The Council will ensure the effective communication of the Plan to staff and will undertake a planned programme of training and guidance for all staff and Elected Members as outlined in Section 9.
- 1.6** The Council will commit the necessary resources to deliver the actions within this Disability Action Plan.
- 1.7** As part of its corporate planning process, the Council will build objectives, target setting and monitoring into relevant business plans.
- 1.8** The objectives will be reflected at all levels of strategic planning within the Council including individual staff objectives and annual plans. Employees will be made aware of this Disability Action Plan and how their duties and responsibilities assist the Council to meet its obligations. Progress on meeting the objectives will be monitored and reported to relevant section managers and the Elected Members on an annual basis. Individual performance on these issues will be monitored and reviewed through internal performance review arrangements.
- 1.9** A formal report of progress on meeting the objectives relating to the Disability Duties will be included in the Council's Annual Report to the Equality Commission.

¹ What the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 means by disability: "A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities." - Definition of Disability, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, 2007





2.0 Annual report

- 2.1** The Council will prepare an annual report on the implementation of its Plan. This report will be included as part of the annual report to the Equality Commission which details the Council's progress on the implementation of its Equality Scheme.
- 2.2** A copy of the annual report will be made available on the Council's website.

3.0 Review of the Disability Action Plan

- 3.1** The Council will carry out a five-year review of its Plan, in consultation with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

4.0 Consultation

- 4.1** The Council is committed to carrying out meaningful and proactive consultation in the development and implementation of its Disability Action Plan. In doing so the Council is keen to bring about change for people with disabilities by taking measures in response to the Disability Duties. The Council would therefore like to ensure the involvement of people who have a range of disabilities and those who care for people with a disability, in the development of this Plan.
- 4.2** Consultation on the Disability Action Plan is on-going via engagement with key stakeholders and service users.
- 4.3** Comments and suggestions on the Plan are welcomed at any time, with public consultation of this Plan due to be advertised in local and social media, on the Council website and distributed widely to representatives and members of local disability groups.
- 4.4** The Council will seek to ensure the involvement of people with disabilities by consulting with representative groups at both regional and local levels, as well as talking to individuals with a disability.
- 4.5** Consultation with local disability groups is to ensure that people with disabilities can assist the Council by:
- Identifying barriers faced by disabled people in participating in public life and specifically how any barriers they have encountered in relation to their dealings with the Council can be overcome
 - identifying circumstances in the past in which the Council has not promoted positive attitudes towards disabled people and identify opportunities in the future for the Council to promote such attitudes
 - assist the Council in identifying key priorities and remedial actions to ensure the application of the disability duties
 - monitoring and making decisions on the revision of the plan as a result of these comments and reviewing the effectiveness of measures taken.
- 4.6** The Council believes it is important that people with disabilities are involved in the implementation, monitoring and review of the Plan. Consultees will be advised of any changes made.
- 4.7** The Council will arrange for translators and/or signers to be present at appropriate meetings, either where a need has been identified in advance, or where a need is anticipated.
- 4.8** Loop systems are installed in the Council Chamber and portable loop systems are available for use in some Council facilities.

5.0 Responsibility for the Disability Action Plan

- 5.1** Responsibility for implementing, reviewing and evaluating this Disability Action Plan and the point of contact within Mid and East Antrim Borough Council will be:
- Aaron McClelland, Head of Corporate Services The Braid, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena, Co. Antrim, BT43 5EJ**
T: 0300 124 5000
E: policy@midandeantrim.gov.uk
- 5.2** Following submission to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, this Plan will be published on the Council website at: midandeantrim.gov.uk
- 5.3** The Council will, through its work with people with disabilities, ensure appropriate ways of communicating the Plan. It acknowledges that disabled people may experience different barriers according to their type of impairment. The Plan will be produced in clear print and plain language and it will be made available in accessible formats on request, which may include braille, large print, disc and easy read.
- 5.4** If you require this Plan in an alternative format (such as in large print, in braille, audio, easy read or on computer disc) and/or language, please contact the Policy team as outlined at 5.1 to discuss your requirements.
- 5.5** Hard copies are also available upon request from the Policy team as detailed above.
- 5.6** Requests to produce the Plan in a minority language will be met where possible.



6.0 Functions

- 6.1** The roles and responsibilities of councils, established in the Local Government Act 2014 and in other legislation, fall into four types:
- Direct – councils are responsible for the provision and management of services
 - Development – councils have a role in facilitating economic and community development initiatives
 - Representative – council nominees sit on statutory bodies
 - Consultative – councils reflect community views and concerns, and provide a challenge function, in a range of issues including education, health and housing.
- 6.2** Mid and East Antrim Borough Council's responsibilities from April 2015 are outlined at Appendix A.
- 6.3** To support and implement the above statutory functions and provision of services, the Council has adopted, and will continually develop, a number of policies.

7.0 Internal arrangements

- 7.1** The Council consists of 40 elected representatives, each elected for a four-year period.
- 7.2** The Chief Executive oversees the work of the departments through the Senior Management Team which, together with the Elected Members, create the corporate body of the Council.
- 7.3** The Chief Executive is the principal advisor to the Council and responsible for the strategic management of the organisation, for the day-to-day management of services and the longer term planning and allocation of resources.
- 7.4** The organisational structure of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is available as part of the Council's constitution and is available at www.midandeantrim.gov.uk/constitution
- 7.5** The Disability Duties are the responsibility of every employee of the Council, Councillor and any member of a Council Body or Panel.

8.0 Public Life Positions

- 8.1** The Council has responsibility over a number of public life positions in which members of the public participate. A full list of these positions will be available on our website in due course.



9.0 Actions and Measures

In this section, we will outline the actions we propose to take and how we will measure our performance.



Action	Performance		
What we are going to do	How we are going to do it		
Training	2020-2021 (Year 1)	2021-2022 (Year 2)	2022-2023 (Year 3)
Provision of training and guidance on Equality and Diversity matters, including the relevant legislation, in order to raise awareness of the diverse needs of people living with a disability and to ensure effective service delivery.	Develop a core equality, disability and diversity training curriculum for Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Staff and Elected Members.		
	Incorporate awareness sessions into Council's corporate induction and training programs including departmental team days.		
	Implement the training regime across all staff and Elected Members, ensuring new staff receive training as soon as possible after employment commences.		
	Conduct a scoping exercise to procure a suitable system and/or provider. Council will use trainers who have disabilities when possible.		
	Incorporate EDI awareness training into departmental business plans and personal development plans.		
	Monitor and maintain a record of training and attendance.		
	Facilitate a skills development programme for tourism businesses, including one business which facilitates tours for disabled customers.	Mainstream equality and diversity awareness by delivering a refresher sessions to all Staff and Elected Members every 2 years.	Include Equality and diversity training in the new Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Corporate Plan (2023-2027).
		Evaluate the quality of all equality and diversity training received by staff and elected members every 2 years.	Offer tailored equality and diversity awareness information to key delivery partners, contractors and interested groups within the Borough.

Action	Performance		
What we are going to do	How we are going to do it		
Engagement	2020-2021 (Year 1)	2021-2022 (Year 2)	2022-2023 (Year 3)
Engagement with stakeholders to ensure Council are meeting the diverse needs of people with disabilities living in, and visiting, our Borough.	Create and maintain a centralised stakeholder database.	Establish an engagement forum and hold at least two meetings of the engagement forum, annually.	
	Conduct outreach visits to disability groups within the Borough to better understand their role, services and membership.	Develop a proposal in respect of a Parliament for People with Disabilities with the engagement forum.	Consult the engagement forum in the development of the Disability Action Plan 2023-2027.
	Undertake a communications audit to determine the most effective means of communicating with stakeholders.	Develop an equality and diversity newsletter to support the work of the forum, advertise accessible events and services, engagement opportunities and highlight matters of interest within the Borough.	
	Develop a proposal for an engagement forum in order to engage and build a consultative network to best allow Council to explore the barriers to participation in public life and learn the best ways to make a tangible difference to those living with a disability in our Borough.		



Action	Performance		
What we are going to do	How we are going to do it		
Participation	2020-2021 (Year 1)	2021-2022 (Year 2)	2022-2023 (Year 3)
Encourage and create opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in public, political and civic life. Work to remove barriers to the participation in public life.	Review the public life positions available through the Council, including the roles, terms of office, responsibilities, advertisement, promotion, recruitments and selection to best allow people with disabilities to participate.	Participate in careers events targeted towards people with disabilities.	
	Review Council's recruitment and selection procedures to create equal access to employment opportunities, taking into account advice from specialist organisations within the supported employment sector.	Implement any recommendations from the recruitment review.	
	Develop and deliver a bespoke 'How the Council Works' session for disability stakeholders.	Incorporate a training module into Council's recruitment and selection training for shortlisting and interview panels to better equip them to fairly recruit people with disabilities.	
	Work with various disability organisations to scope employment opportunities in the Borough for people with disabilities, both within Council and within local business.		

Action

What we are going to do

Accessibility

Strive to achieve equality of opportunity to Council services and facilities for those with a disability through enhanced accessibility and encouraged participation.

Performance

How we are going to do it

2020-2021
(Year 1)

2021-2022
(Year 2)

2022-2023
(Year 3)

Monitor and maintain the accessibility of Council operated websites, including compliance with Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.



Deliver sports/activity programs and services to facilitate access to physical activities for people of all ages who live with a disability.



Ensure the inclusion and consultation of disabled people in the design of new Council buildings or renovation of existing Council buildings.



Deliver at least one Sensory Play Workshop per year.



Deliver at least one accessible activity during Love Parks Week per year.



Conduct an annual analysis of customer complaints or compliments in relation to access to services and information about accessible services.



Review the current provision of accessibility measures across Council services and facilities.

Develop guidance in respect of Council signage for improvements in accessibility.

Achieve 'Every Customer Counts' accreditation in two more Council facilities.

Establish and conduct front of house audits to ensure our accessibility measures are fit for purpose.

Review the use of disclaimer or restricted access notices (at events, premises or activities) to facilitate access and participation.

Commission a mystery shopping exercise to determine progress made in respect of access to services

Pilot Every Customer Counts Scheme in at least one Council facility.

Achieve 'Every Customer Counts' accreditation in one more Council facilities.

Develop Tourism Access for All scheme to have 150 members.

Deliver two accessible theatre performances.

Deliver two accessible theatre performances.

Deliver three accessible theatre performances.

Apply for Department for Communities funding to upscale accessibility at the Larne museum.

Provide a mobile Changing Places facility (subject to availability) at all Council events where there is projected to be at least 1000 attendees.

Council to participate in Disabled Access Day on 16th March 2023 as a complimentary event to the Every Customer Counts Scheme.

Conduct a feasibility study into a Council owned mobile Changing Places unit.

Develop Tourism Access for All scheme to have 100 members

Roll out of Tourism Access for All booking scheme.

Replace current play provision in Ballymena People's Park with a range of inclusive equipment including a wheelchair swing.





Action

What we are going to do

Performance

How we are going to do it

Communication

2020-2021 (Year 1)	2021-2022 (Year 2)	2022-2023 (Year 3)
People with disabilities are more aware of Council services available to them and find accessing information quick and easy.	Mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3 December) each year.	
	Increase external and internal awareness of the location and availability of disabled facilities and services across the Borough, including radar keys, assisted bin lifts.	
	Develop a dedicated equality and disability area on the Council website to promote services, events, consultations, concessions.	
Council's external and internal communication practices, policies and procedures will be such that disabled people are portrayed in an inclusive and positive way.	Increase visibility of people with disabilities in Council promotional and branded material and social media.	
	Increase awareness of Disability Action Plan amongst local disability groups and representatives.	
Take measures to promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability amongst employees, Elected Members and the public.	Dedicated equality and diversity feature in every edition of the Council magazine.	
	Develop video content to promote services and to explain the processes and how to access Council services.	Promote partnerships with other businesses and organisations.

Action

What we are going to do

Reporting

Ongoing review of Council's actions to ensure learning, continual improvement and facilitate standard setting for the future.

Conduct ongoing research to identify ways to meet the increasing and diverse needs of people with a disability living in our Council area and take action towards securing funding and implementing the identified requirements.

Performance

How we are going to do it

**2020-2021
(Year 1)**

**2021-2022
(Year 2)**

**2022-2023
(Year 3)**

Report to Senior Management Team, Policy & Resources Committee and Council on the annual progress of the Disability Action Plan.

Incorporate equality and diversity training into departmental business plans and personal development plans.

Conduct annual exercise to encourage staff to provide information to assist with monitoring and reporting on disabilities in the workplace.

Update the Audit of Inequalities for use in equality screenings, to better inform policy development processes and to better understand the profile of the Borough.

Achieve the 'Diversity Charter Mark'.

Review Equality and Disability Action Plans based on the updated audit of inequalities.

Scope and define the role of Disability Champion within Council.

Appoint Disability Champions.

Report on the effectiveness of the Disability Champion role.



Appendix A

- Access to information
- Arts and Entertainment
- Biodiversity
- Building maintenance and contract management
- Building regulation
- Civic functions
- Community Development
- Community Safety
- Consumer Safety
- Control of communicable diseases and food poisoning
- Corporate Health and Safety
- Corporate Planning
- Corporate projects
- Dangerous buildings
- Dog and Pest Control
- Economic Development including local economic development, Start a Business Programme and Enterprise Shows, Youth Entrepreneurship
- Emergency Planning liaison
- Energy performance of buildings
- Environment and Countryside
- Environmental protection
- Equality legislation
- Estate management
- EU Rural Development Programme
- Financial Services
- Food control
- Good Relations
- Grounds maintenance – including horticulture, cemeteries, parks and play areas
- Health and Safety
- Home Safety
- Housing
- Registration of houses in multiple occupation, housing unfitness responsibilities including repair and demolition notices
- Information systems and technology
- Internal Audit
- Leisure Facilities
- Licensing
- Local Tourism including small scale tourism accommodation development; providing business support including business start up advice along with training and delivery of customer care schemes, and providing advice to developers on tourism policies and related issues
- Member services
- Museum Service
- Neighbourhood renewal – enterprise initiatives
- Off street carparking
- Parks and Open spaces
- PCSP – Policing and Community Safety Partnership
- Personnel, training and development
- Planning- to include: local development plan functions, development control and enforcement, postal naming and numbering;
- Property certificates
- Public Health
- Policy development
- Purchasing and Tendering
- Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages
- Sports Development
- Street cleansing – including public conveniences
- Sustainable Development
- Tourism and visitor attractions
- Town Hall facilities
- Urban regeneration and community development including functions associated with physical development
- Vehicle and plant maintenance
- Waste Management –including Recycling & Disposal



If you need this in an alternative format, such as large print or another language, please email **policy@midandeastantrim.gov.uk**

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