



**The Commission for
Victims & Survivors**

Disability Action Plan

Foreword

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

This is the second Disability Action Plan of the Commission and has been designed to ensure we fulfil our statutory obligations in compliance with Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (ODA 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.

These are collectively referred to as 'the disability duties'.

This Plan outlines the identified actions and processes which the Commission will undertake to fulfill these duties.

Andrew Sloan
Chief Executive Officer

August 2019

<p>1.1</p>	<p>Introduction</p> <p>Under section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) (as amended by article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006), the Commission for Victims and Survivors (the Commission) is required when carrying out its functions to have due regard to the need to ('the disability duties');</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and• Encourage participation by disabled people in public life <p>Under Section 49B of the DDA 1995, the Commission is also required to submit to the Equality Commission a disability action plan showing how it proposes to fulfil these duties in relation to its functions.</p>
<p>1.2</p>	<p>The Commission is committed to implementing effectively the disability duties and this Disability Action Plan. We will allocate sufficient resources in order to implement this plan effectively and, where appropriate, build objectives and targets relating to the disability duties into our Corporate Plan and annual Work Programme.</p> <p>We will also put in place appropriate internal arrangements to ensure that the disability duties are complied with and this disability action plan is effectively implemented. We will ensure the effective communication of the plan to staff and provide all necessary training and guidance for staff on the disability duties and implementation of the plan.</p>

1.3

Consultation

Following a consultation process of the Commission’s original Disability Action Plan the Commission considered the responses made by all parties and these were fully taken into account in developing a Disability Action Plan.

The comments and input of staff, the Equality and Good Relations external service provider, the Victims and Survivors Forum and members of the public have been noted in the review of this most current Disability Action Plan.

Responsibility for implementing, reviewing and evaluating this Disability Action Plan and the point of contact within the Commission is;

Stephen Moore
Corporate Services
Commission for Victims and Survivors
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Email: commission@cvsni.org

If you require this plan in an alternative format (such as in large print, in Braille, on audio cassette, easy read or on computer disc) and/or language, please contact the above person to discuss your requirements.

1.4

Communication to staff

The Commission will ensure effective communication of the Disability Action Plan to staff and will provide training and guidance. All staff will be provided with information on the Plan via staff meetings and e-mail.

1.5.	<p>Reporting Arrangements</p> <p>We confirm our commitment to submitting an annual progress report on the implementation of this plan to the Equality Commission. In 2018 the Commission completed a five year review of its Equality Scheme, and in August 2019 completed a five year review of the Equality Action Plan and the Disability Action Plan.</p> <p>Our annual progress report to the Equality Commission and the five year reviews will be made available on our website www.cvsni.org</p>
1.5	<p>Functions</p> <p>The Commission’s principal aim is to ‘promote the interests of victims and survivors of the conflict’. While the detailed powers are set out in legislation, they may be grouped under six statutory duties;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) To promote awareness of matters relating to the interests of victims and survivors and the need to safeguard those interests(ii) To keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of law and practice affecting the interests of victims and survivors(iii) To keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of services provided for victims and survivors(iv) To provide advice to government on matters affecting victims and survivors(v) To ensure that the views of victims and survivors are sought by the Commission in carrying out its work(vi) To make arrangements for a forum for consultation with victims and survivors

1.7

Public Life Positions

The Commission has one Commissioner supported by a governance committee, the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC). This committee is the only public life position open to adults within the organisation and has three external members.

With regard to victims and survivors the Commission has established the Victims and Survivors Forum. This is a representative group to facilitate consultation and discussion with victims and survivors of the conflict and to support the Commission in its work.

The Forum has three objectives, each of which reflects the three key themes of The Executive Office (formerly OFMDFM) Strategy for Victims and Survivors 2009:

- (i) To contribute to the Commission's assessment of the needs of victims and survivors; funding arrangements and the provision of services;
- (ii) To advise the Commission on dealing with the past;
- (iii) To advise the Commission on the contribution of victims and survivors to building a shared and better future.

The Forum's work, therefore, focuses on three key areas;

- 1) Services
- 2) Dealing with the past
- 3) Building for the future

The Commission is committed to recruiting and developing a diverse yet inclusive panel. Currently 10% of those on the Forum have declared some form of disability.

2.

Measures

Promoting Positive attitudes towards disabled people

Staff Training - The Commission will provide all staff with training in relation to our duties under Section 75 and will carry out additional Disability Awareness training and including reference to section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Accessibility - The Commission has developed an Accessible Information Policy (available on the Commission's website at www.cvsni.org) to reinforce our commitment to making information as accessible as possible and to ensure that thought is given to providing information in a format appropriate to meeting a range of information needs, including:

- People with hearing impairments
- People with sight impairments
- People with learning difficulties
- People with literacy difficulties
- People with physical disabilities

All our public documents can be made available in alternative formats – Braille, large print, computer disk, plain language, easy read and audio cassette.

In terms of information distribution, the Commission continually reviews and develops new methods of distribution to ensure that our information is accessible to everyone in Northern Ireland.

Commission staff are directed to the Accessible Information Policy when organising meetings and events involving members of the public, such as exhibitions, launches, seminars, conferences, focus groups etc to make sure that information is provided in an equitable and accessible manner.

Our staff and recruitment - The Commission is committed to ensuring that the composition of our workforce is representative of the wider population, with 8% of our workforce having declared some form of disability.

The Commission has in place a Managing Disability Policy (available on the Commission's website at www.cvsni.org) in order to maximise the contribution of disabled employees and to promote disability awareness, thus reducing stereotypical assumptions and attitudes towards disabled people.

The Managing Disability Policy emphasises the need to consider reasonable adjustments for disabled staff. This includes allowing disabled staff to consider taking a more flexible approach to their working hours in order to accommodate their individual needs.

Research - The Commission's Research and Policy Development Team have been actively seeking the views of disabled victims and survivors in the course of their work and engagement with victims and survivors. The team consults with disabled groups and NGOs in order to facilitate the participation of a wide range of disabled people in their work.

Encourage the participation of disabled people in public life

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Recruitment - As stated above, the Commission has a very limited number of public life positions for adults. However in terms of the recruitment process for our ARAC and staff, the Commission already has in place a robust open recruitment procedure with an emphasis on making these positions accessible to all.

All posts are advertised widely in the press and on the Commission website, which is fully accessible to all disabled people. In addition, all recruitment information can be requested in alternative formats and applicants with disabilities may submit their application in a format of their choice.

	<p>Forum - People with disabilities continue to be strongly represented on the Forum.</p> <p>Action Measures - Outlined in the attached plan are the measures which we propose to take over the next five years of this disability action plan ending in 2021, together with performance indicators and targets.</p> <p>Specifically, these are the key measures which the Commission for Victims and Survivors (the Commission) will undertake to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and to encourage the participation of disabled people in public life, and are over and above those positive action measures that the Commission takes to promote equality of opportunity generally for those with a disability.</p>
3.	<p>Monitoring</p> <p>The Commission will report annually on implementation of the Disability Plan and its action measures.</p> <p>Monitoring progress of the implementation of the action measures will take quarterly at SMT and Board.</p>

Disability Action Plan

The table below outlines measures to be taken by the Commission to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in public life.

Measures	Outcome/Impact	Responsible Team	Timescale	Performance indicators/targets	Current or Proposed Action
<p><u>Disability Awareness and Training</u></p> <p>Ensure the Commissioner, Chief Executive and all managers are aware of their responsibilities under relevant legislation and including section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.</p>	<p>All relevant employees will be kept informed about the Commission's disability and equality obligations, Disability Action Plan and Equality Scheme and Action Plan</p> <p>Organise specific disability training where a need is identified.</p>	<p>Accounting Officer</p> <p>Corporate Services Team</p> <p>All Teams to ensure employees are encouraged to attend trainings</p>	<p>Completion by 31 March annually</p> <p>Training to be provided on induction of new staff, or by end of Q3 annually for refresher training</p>	<p>Number and type of briefings delivered</p> <p>Number of trainings sourced</p> <p>Number of trainings delivered</p> <p>Attendance of employees at all disability related trainings to managers</p>	<p>Induction training to be provided to new staff</p> <p>Refresher training to be provided to existing staff on an ongoing basis</p> <p>Specific training needs to be addressed as they arise</p>

<p>Provide training on specific disabilities and equality training to all Commission staff and governing committees on disability duties.</p>	<p>All employees to attend mandatory disability awareness training on induction and thereafter every three years</p> <p>Officer with the responsibility for disability across the Commission will source and provide specific support for employees who identify themselves as having a disability</p>			<p>Reasonable adjustments requested in the workplace and how these were met</p> <p>100% of relevant identifiable staff to have received training</p>	
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	To provide Written Accessible Communication training to relevant key staff				
<u>Induction Training Programme Review</u> Induction programme to all new employees including permanent, temporary and agency to ensure that are made aware of statutory duties and the support available for employees with a disability	Commission will carry out a benchmarking exercise across the organisation to ensure all employees who have declared they have a disability are provided with support required. Develop best practice to ensure all employees are made aware of the support that is available	Accounting Officer Corporate Services Team	Benchmarking exercise to be completed by end of Q4 2019/20 To be completed on induction of new staff	Monitoring undertaken to identify and ensure all relevant employees receive required support Agree policy that identifies how Commission will ensure all employees who request support receive it within an agreed timeframe	Specific needs to be addressed as they arise

	Increase awareness amongst managers of their responsibilities during the induction of all employees				
<u>Screening</u> Screen 100% of all new and revised policies to ensure compliance with disability duties and S75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998	Compliance of Commission functions with disability duties	Accounting Officer All Teams	Ongoing	100% of policies screened for compliance with disability duties within 1 month of approval of policy by Board	Policies to be screened in groups of policy types
<u>Recruitment – Good practice</u> Ensure interview panels for recruitment	Compliance of Commission functions with disability duties	Accounting Officer Corporate Services Team Panel Members	To be implemented in all future recruitment drives	Interview Panels have greater understanding and awareness of roles and responsibilities regarding disability	Interview panels to be provided with refresher training which incorporate awareness of disability duties

competitions are aware of good practice and responsibilities to disability duties.	Increase understanding and awareness of panel members of their roles and responsibilities regarding disability duties			duties when undertaking interviews	prior to sitting on an interview panel
<u>Recruitment – reasonable adjustments</u> Monitor reasonable adjustments we have made for disabled interviewees during a recruitment competition.	Compliance of Commission functions with disability duties Increase understanding and awareness of panel members of their roles and responsibilities regarding disability duties	Accounting Officer Corporate Services Team Panel Members	To be implemented in all future recruitment drives	Report produced detailing results of monitoring.	Monitoring and reporting to be undertaken throughout recruitment competitions
<u>Complaints Procedure</u>	Ensure an explanation of how	Accounting Officer	To be available on website by end of	Number of complaints made	Review accessible formats of External

To ensure people with a disability can access the Commission's complaints procedure	to make a complaint is available in accessible formats and via the Commission's website	Corporate Services and Communications & Engagement Teams	Q3 2019/20 year and ongoing	through alternative formats	Complaints Procedure and access on website
<u>Annual monitoring</u> Extend scope of annual confidential monitoring survey to include ARAC and Victims and Survivors Forum	Undertake annual monitoring to determine the number of disabled staff and extend this monitoring to include ARAC and Forum members.	Accounting Officer Corporate Services and Communications & Engagement Teams	By end of January annually	Report detailing results of monitoring survey produced	Confidential Monitoring Survey to be developed and distributed by end December annually
<u>Website</u> Publications and website, where applicable, to use positive imagery of disabled people.	To ensure that all corporate publications and communications promote positivity and inclusion of diversity	Accounting Officer Corporate Services and Communications & Engagement Teams	Review annually	Commission publications and website, where applicable, include photography and other positive imagery of disabled people	Regular review of publications to ensure positive portrayal and avoid tokenistic inclusion of disabled people

<p><u>Panel and Victims and Survivors Forum</u></p> <p>Ensure information regarding the Replenishment of the Panel to sustain Forum Membership Project reaches a wide range of disabled people and representative groups.</p>	<p>Ensure all information on how to complete an Expression of Interest is available in accessible formats and via the Commission's website.</p> <p>To ensure the Commission engages with a broad range of stakeholders and individuals.</p>	<p>Accounting Officer</p> <p>Communications & Engagement Team</p>	<p>By end of 2019/20 year</p>	<p>The Commission will receive a positive response from disabled people once information regarding vacancies on the Panel has been disseminated.</p>	<p>Process to replenish the panel to be undertaken in 2019/20 to sustain Panel and Victims and Survivors Forum membership until end March 2022.</p>
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