



Fermanagh & Omagh
District Council

Comhairle Ceantair
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí

Disability Action Plan 2015-2017

July 2014

This Disability Action Plan (the Plan) can be obtained from the Council in alternative formats and it can also be downloaded from the Council's website. If you would like a copy in an alternative format, please contact:

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Foreword

Welcome to Fermanagh and Omagh District Council's Disability Action Plan (the Plan) for 2015 - 2017 which sets out how we as a Council intend to improve the quality of life for all people with disabilities who live in, work in or visit our district.

As a Council, we have a duty to tackle discrimination and disadvantage so that people feel safe from harassment and everyone has access to high quality services. Our aim is not just to meet our legal duties, but to make disability equality a reality, by putting it at the centre of policy-making, service delivery and employment practice.

Finally as Chief Executive and Presiding Councillor of the Council, we would like to express our personal commitment to the objectives set out in the Plan. We, along with our employees, will work to meet the challenging targets that we will set ourselves, and will provide the support and leadership required to deliver success.

Cllr Thomas O'Reilly
Presiding Councillor

Brendan Hegarty
Chief Executive

Date: 07 July 2014

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1. Purpose of the Disability Action Plan

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 Under Section 49B of the DDA 1995, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council 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.

1.3 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 so in this Plan.

2. The Council – its role and functions

2.1 The Council performs four principal roles within its local area and district:

- ❖ **Direct service provision** in response to community needs and legislative requirements – setting priorities for the area and for the Council and being accountable for the choices made.
- ❖ **A development role** as enabler/facilitator on economic and community development initiatives –

enabling and empowering local people; setting out the vision for local strategies in partnership with other agencies.

- ❖ **A representative role** on boards such as health and education – championing the district.
- ❖ **A consultative role** on issues such as water, roads and housing, by providing a challenge to the performance of all of the delivery agencies in the district.

2.2 From 1 April 2015, in the performance of the above roles the Council will carry out functions in the following areas:

Arts and Entertainment

Bio-Diversity

Building maintenance and Contract Management

Building regulation

Civic Functions

Community Development

Community Planning

Community Safety

Consumer Safety

Control of communicable diseases and Food Poisoning

Corporate Health & Safety

Corporate Planning

Corporate Projects

Dangerous buildings

District Policing Partnership

Dog control services

Economic Development

Local Economic Development:

Start a Business Programme and Enterprise Shows;
Youth Entrepreneurship (such as Prince's Trust and Shell Livewire);
Social Entrepreneurship;
Investing for Women,
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 – inc Horticulture, Cemeteries,
Parks and Play areas
Health and Safety
Home Safety
Housing:
 Registration of houses in multiple occupation, and
 Housing unfitness responsibilities, including repair
 and demolition notices
Information Systems & Technology
Internal Audit
Leisure Facilities
Licensing
Local Tourism:
 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.

Local water recreational facilities

Member Services

Museum Services

Neighbourhood Renewal - enterprises initiatives

Off Street Car Parking

Parks and Open Spaces

Personnel, Training & Development

Planning to include:

Local development plan functions, and
Development control and enforcement.

Postal naming and numbering

Property certificates

Public Health

Purchasing & Tendering

Registration of Births, Deaths & Marriages

Sports Development

Street Cleansing – including Public Conveniences

Sustainable Development

Tourism and Visitor Attractions

Townhall Facilities

Urban regeneration and community development
including:

Functions associated with physical development
(e.g. environmental improvement schemes);

Area based regeneration (such as Neighbourhood
Renewal), and

Some community development programmes for the
voluntary and community sectors

Vehicle and plant maintenance

Waste Management –including Recycling & Disposal

2.3 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

2.4 To support and implement the above statutory functions and provision of services and facilities, the Council will adopt a wide range of policies.

3. Public life positions over which the Council has responsibility

3.1 Fermanagh and Omagh District Council have not made a final decision on public life positions during the Shadow period until 1 April 2015.

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

4.1 Fermanagh and Omagh District Council is committed to implementing effectively the disability duties and this Disability Action Plan. We will allocate all necessary resources (in terms of people, time and money) in order to effectively implement this plan, subject to budgetary restraints, and where appropriate, build objectives

and targets relating to the disability duties into corporate and annual business plans.

- 4.2 We will also put appropriate internal arrangements in place to ensure that the disability duties are complied with and this Disability Action Plan is effectively implemented.
- 4.3 We will ensure the effective communication of the Plan to employees and provide all necessary training and guidance for employees and elected members on the disability duties and the implementation of the Plan.

Overall responsibility for determining policy on how this will be achieved lies with the Elected Members, and day to day responsibility for carrying out the policy with the Chief Executive.

As part of its corporate planning process, the Council will set objectives and targets relating to the disability duties. These will be reflected at all levels of planning within the Council including individual staff objectives.

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

Internal arrangements

The Council consists of 40 Elected Representatives, elected for a Shadow Period until April 2015, and then for a further four year period.

The work of the Council is conducted through a system of committees which are open to the public:

- Environmental Services Committee
- Planning Committee
- Policy and Resources Committee
- Regeneration and Community Committee

The Council meets in full session on the first Tuesday of every month when it receives and decides on reports and recommendations from the various committees.

The work of the Council operates under the leadership of the Chief Executive, Mr Brendan Hegarty. He is responsible for giving the strategic direction and advice to the Council and oversees the preparatory work to ensure it is ready to deliver services, currently the responsibility of Fermanagh District Council and Omagh District Council and a number of government departments, from 1 April 2015.

The Council's departmental structure has been agreed as follows:

- Chief Executive's Department
- Directorate of Corporate Services and Governance
- Directorate of Regeneration and Planning
- Directorate of Community, Health and Leisure
- Directorate of Environment and Place

The Chief Executive will be the point of contact for the Equality Commission. The central point of contact for complainants and for those seeking further information on the Action Plan, as well as the person who will take specific responsibility for co-ordinating the day to day requirements for the delivery of the Action plan is the Head of Policy and Strategic Services.

5. Effective engagement and Consultation

- 5.1 Fermanagh and Omagh District Council is committed to engage effectively with disabled people in the drafting, implementation, monitoring and review of this Plan.

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 with and for people with disabilities and will therefore be focussing on the issue of involvement and participation in preparing and reviewing its Plan.

The Council's consultation process will be designed to ensure that people with disabilities are consulted at as early a stage as possible so that they can assist and inform the development of the Plan.

The Council will make every effort to remove any potential barriers to proper consultation by ensuring accessibility of documents in appropriate

formats and in a timely fashion. Information will be made available on request in alternative formats including Braille, large print, disc and audio cassette. It will also be important to establish with people with a disability, the basis for dialogue and engagement during the life of the Plan. A variety of methods of discussion will be used such as meetings, one to one discussions, telephone and textphone discussions. Consideration will also be given to how best to communicate information to young people with a disability, as well as considering additional dimensions such as ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation and religious belief.

The Council believes it is important that people with disabilities are involved in the implementation, monitoring and review of the Plan. The Council will seek views and comments on the specific actions when they are developed and will consider amending them or including additional ones following the comments received.

6. Annual report and 5 Year Review

- 6.1 The Council will prepare an annual report on the implementation of its Plan and undertake a 5 year review of the 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.

- 6.2 A copy of the annual report and the 5 year review will be made available on the Council's website www.fermanaghomagh.com

7. Action measures

As the Shadow Council only came into being following the election on 22 May 2014, it is not possible to list any action measures taken to date. However, examples of some of the recent action measures taken by the predecessor Councils i.e. Omagh District Council and Fermanagh District Council, are given below to give some indication of the nature of the actions which may be taken in the future:

- Hosted events to encourage positive interaction between people with disabilities and those without.
- Provided training on the disability duties to employees and elected members
- Reviewed and promoted the provision of the Assisted Bin Lift Scheme
- Worked with Volunteering Organisations to promote volunteering opportunities for people with disabilities.
- Administered Funding Schemes to deliver specific funding/events/programmes

- 7.2 The measures which Fermanagh and Omagh District Council intends to take in order to implement the disability duties will be formalised into an Action Plan which will be developed by 30 June 2015 and

will be subject to consultation. Appendix A details actions which are carried forward from Omagh and Fermanagh District Councils' Action Plans and which will form the basis for actions within the first year of operation.

8. How the disability action plan will be published

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

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Name of Council: Fermanagh and Omagh
District Council

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7BA
The Grange, Mountjoy
Road, Omagh, BT79 7BL

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margaret.mcmahon@fermanaghomagh.com

8.2 The availability of the Disability Action Plan will be advertised in the press, including disability

specialist press, and can be accessed on the Council's website at:

www.fermanaghomagh.com

- 8.3 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, and will be available in alternative formats on request, including largeprint, Braille, audio cassette and computer disc.
- 8.4 The contents of the Disability Action Plan will be highlighted through press releases, advertisements, Council literature and by meeting directly with disability organisations, representative groups and individuals.
- 8.5 In addition, all employees will receive a summary Plan, and a full Plan will be available on the intranet or alternative format on request.

Disability Action Plan 2015 - 2016

Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Timescale
Leadership and Commitment			
Publish and promote the Disability Action Plan	The Plan reflects the priorities of people with disabilities and is widely publicised	Chief Executive	April 2015
Review and report on progress made on the Plan on an annual basis.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate that the outcomes set out in the Plan have been achieved. 2. Annual Performance Report submitted to Council, to the Equality Commission and is published. 	Chief Executive	Annually in August

Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Timescale
Leadership and Commitment			
Provide training on the disability duties to all employees and elected members	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased awareness of disability issues 2. Promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people 	Lead Officer – Human Resources	Ongoing
Host events to encourage positive interaction between people with disabilities and those without.	Promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people	Head of Community, Health and Leisure	Ongoing

Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Timescale
Access to Public Life Positions			
Promote opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in civic life.	People with Disabilities being seen as contributing to society and participating in civic life.	Director of Community, Health and Leisure	Ongoing
Service Delivery and Customer Care			
Improve accessibility and usability of the council website for disabled people.	Improved accessibility for all	Director of Corporate Services	Ongoing
Review access for people with disabilities to Council facilities	Built environment more accessible.	All Directors	Ongoing

Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Timescale
Continue to monitor the funding allocated to voluntary organisations to ensure that there is equity amongst organisations run by/for people with disabilities.	Support development of voluntary sector organisations run by/for people with disabilities.	Director of Community, Health and Leisure	Ongoing
Work with Volunteering Organisations to promote volunteering opportunities for people with disabilities.	Evidence of an increase in the number of people with disabilities participating as volunteers.	Director of Community, Health and Leisure	Ongoing

Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Timescale
Employment and Training			
Continue to provide training for employees on the harassment policy	A safe working environment for people with disabilities that is free from discrimination and harassment	Lead Officer – Human Resources	Ongoing
Continue to provide supported work experience placements within the Council.	1.Encourage people with disabilities to apply for jobs within the Council. 2.Increase in numbers of applicants for jobs within the Council.	Lead Officer – Human Resources	Ongoing
Deliver awareness sessions to people with disabilities about job opportunities with the council, including the application process.			

Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Timescale
Provide advice to both managers and employees about any necessary reasonable adjustments which may be required.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All employees, who require additional assistance to carry out their duties, are provided with adequate support. 2. Managers are aware of their legal responsibilities. 	Lead Officer – Human Resources	Ongoing
Access to the Environment			
Maximise use of statutory powers available in the Building Regulations to secure best practice in the provision of facilities for people with disabilities.	Secure wherever possible a barrier free built environment for new, altered buildings and public areas.	Director of Environment and Place	Ongoing.

Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Timescale
Work with local disability groups to identify how to improve access to the countryside and specifically the main walks.	A rolling programme of improvements to accessibility of existing walks and the development of new walks.	Director of Community, Health and Leisure	Ongoing
Involvement in Community Activities			
Continue to implement the Inclusive Fitness Initiative	Improvements to the health and well-being of people with people with disabilities through participation in sport.	Director of Community, Health and Leisure	Ongoing
Provide opportunities for children and young people with disabilities to enjoy sporting activities.	Yearly programme will be provided.	Director of Community, Health and Leisure	Ongoing