

# Libraries NI

## Disability Action Plan 2020-2025



# NORTHERN IRELAND LIBRARY AUTHORITY

## DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2020-2025

### Libraries NI

**Disability Action Plan 2020-2025 (In compliance with Section 49 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006)**

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

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 Northern Ireland Library Authority is required when carrying out its duties to have due regard to:

- The need to promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities; and
- The need to encourage participation by people with disabilities in public life ('the disability duties').

Under Section 49B of the DDA 1995, the Northern Ireland Library Authority is also required to submit to the Equality Commission a Disability Action Plan showing how it proposes to fulfil these duties in relation to the functions for which it is responsible.

The Northern Ireland Library Authority is for the remainder of this document referred to as Libraries NI.

#### 2. CONFIRMATION OF COMMITMENT

Libraries NI is fully committed to the effective implementation of this Disability Action Plan. Appropriate resources in terms of people, time and finance will be made available for this purpose. Objectives and targets pertaining to the Authorities' duties in relation to equality and disability discrimination are included in the Authorities' Corporate and Business Plans.

Libraries NI will ensure the effective communication of this Disability Action Plan to all staff and will, where necessary, provide training and guidance for staff in relation to their responsibilities and take suggestions from staff in support of this. We will put appropriate internal arrangements in place to monitor compliance with this Disability Action Plan and review this plan on a regular basis.

The contact in relation to the implementation, review and evaluation of this Disability Action Plan is the **Director of Business Support**.

Libraries NI Disability Action Plan will be made available in an alternative format (such as in large print, in Braille, easy read or on computer disc) and/or language other than English on request. Please contact the **Head of Strategic Marketing and Communications** via [enquiries@librariesni.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@librariesni.org.uk) or telephone 0345 450 4580 to discuss your requirements.

### **3. FUNCTIONS OF LIBRARIES NI**

The Northern Ireland Library Authority: Libraries NI is a statutory body set up under the Libraries Act (NI) 2008. It became responsible for the management and delivery of the public library service from 1 April 2009 and delivers a range of a range of high quality library and information services for everyone in Northern Ireland including:

- Access to public library buildings and mobile vehicles.
- Access to a variety of information sources including written word, visual and audio materials.
- Free public access computers.
- Access to collections of special interest material e.g. local history.
- Advice on information sources
- Reader development
- Access to cultural information
- Arts events.

### **4. CONSULTATION**

Libraries NI recognises the importance of consulting with interested parties and people with disabilities to ensure that our Disability Action Plan is relevant to their needs.

Building on feedback from earlier consultation exercises and experience gained in implementing our Disability Action Plans to date we have revised and updated our Action Plan accordingly to incorporate relevant comments, lessons learned and recommendations made to date.

Libraries NI will continue to develop good working partnerships with people with disabilities and those who work on their behalf. We will endeavour to establish relationships with organisations representing the wider disability sector.

Libraries NI is committed to carrying out all consultations in an open, timely and inclusive manner and in accordance with the guiding principles set by the Equality Commission and other bodies working in the field of disability.

### **5. REVIEW**

Libraries NI will produce an annual progress report on the implementation of this Action Plan and carry out a review of this Plan in line with any review of our Equality Scheme.

A copy of this Plan, as well as the annual progress reports and any review report will be made available on the Libraries NI website at: [www.librariesni.org.uk](http://www.librariesni.org.uk).

## **6. PREVIOUS MEASURES**

Libraries NI was established as a new organisation on 1 April 2009 and has developed its' approach to enhancing and improving disabled access to date and will continue to build on this.

Substantial efforts have been put in place to improve accessibility to both the physical estate and the services provided through public libraries. A range of disability access improvement schemes were undertaken at existing libraries to provide full accessibility by way of access ramps, passenger lifts, automated doors etc. New build projects and major refurbishment projects have had disabled access provisions incorporated as fundamental design requirements resulting in buildings which offer facilities to cater for a range of disabilities such as hearing and sight difficulties as well as physical access.

In addition to the physical estate adjustments to service delivery have been made with various materials being available in a range of formats (written, visual and audio), specialist equipment such as large font keyboards have been provided to allow full accessibility to IT services and partnerships have been developed with organisations providing specialist services to disabled customers e.g. RNIB talking books.

In support of these physically orientated measures further steps were taken as follows:

- Section 75 awareness training provided for staff
- Disability awareness training provided for staff
- Equal opportunities policy is in place and reviewed regularly
- Recruitment - Best practice is applied to all Recruitment and Selection procedures operated by Libraries NI. The options of receiving applications in alternative formats and the facilitation of special needs are available to all applicants. Additionally, as the assessment and selection process proceeds through the various stages, reasonable adjustments will be made to meet the needs of applicants with disabilities.
- Monitoring - While applicants are invited during the recruitment process to declare any disability they may have, Libraries NI is aware that current staff may develop disabilities, or wish to declare existing disabilities, during the course of their employment. For this reason, staff are facilitated to declare any disability so that reasonable adjustments can be made to facilitate them within the workplace.

## 7. ACTION MEASURES

Outlined below are the measures, which Libraries NI proposes to take over the period from April 2020 to March 2025 together with targets. It should be noted that Libraries NI may vary or add to these measures as appropriate to meet changing needs.

	<b>Measures</b>	<b>Time-scale</b>	<b>Performance Indicators/Targets</b>	<b>Owner</b>
<b>7.1</b>	<b>COMMITMENT</b>			
7.1.1	Libraries NI will establish relationships with groups consisting of representatives of people with disabilities, to identify, provide and promote opportunities which will improve engagement by people with a disability in key work areas.	Ongoing	Relationships to be established and maintained where they already exist.	Desi Miskelly
7.1.2	Identify and address barriers faced by people with disabilities in accessing and utilising public library services.	Annually	Feedback received or Consultation exercises undertaken in a range of mediums to ascertain the views of interested parties.	Desi Miskelly
7.1.3	Identify opportunities, including the use of images, for Libraries NI to promote good practice and help to address negative stereotypes of people who have a disability and I promote positive role models.	Annually	Feedback received or Consultation exercises undertaken in a range of mediums to ascertain the views of interested parties.	Desi Miskelly
<b>7.2</b>	<b>SERVICE DELIVERY</b>			
7.2.1	Consider the diversity of images used and potential for portraying a wider range of individuals when developing information materials including websites.	At design stage of material	Relationships to be established and maintained where they already exist.	Glenn Beattie

7.2.2	Ensure that new duties are taken into account when designing any future training / educational programmes, guidance and legislation.	On commission of project or programme	Training/educational programme and guidance revised in line with new duties and legislation	Jacqui McKinstry
<b>7.3 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT</b>				
7.3.1	Provide all staff with disability equality and legislation training.	On appointment/promotion and three yearly or as dictated by law.	Awareness training materials/providers sourced and training demand built into budget planning process/ training plans Training provided through online Centre Applied Learning portal to all staff. Staff with responsibilities for considering reasonable adjustments provided with specific DDA training.	Desi Miskelly
7.3.2	Raise awareness of specific barriers faced by people with disabilities including through linking in with National Awareness Days or Weeks (such as Mind your Health Day)	Ongoing	Increased staff awareness of a range of disabilities and needs	Trisha Ward
<b>7.4 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION</b>				
7.4.1	Promote use of employment support programmes, such as Workable NI, by staff and line managers.	Ongoing	People with a disability are supported to access employment opportunities and remain in employment. Line managers and staff draw on existing expertise and resources provided through government programmes.	Desi Miskelly / Jacqui McKinstry

7.4.2	Encourage people with a disability to apply for opportunities in Libraries NI and onto the Board of Libraries NI providing information in accessible formats both internal and external to Libraries NI.	On instigation of recruitment action	Internal and external Recruitment Campaigns continue to actively invite people with disabilities providing information for applicants in accessible formats on the staff Intranet and Libraries NI website. Provide training to Libraries NI Board.	Desi Miskelly/ Jacqui McKinstry/ Department for Communities
7.4.3	Ensure candidates booklets are available in accessible formats	Ongoing	People with disabilities are able to request and support to apply for job opportunities.	Desi Miskelly/ Jacqui McKinstry
<b>7.5 COMMUNICATION</b>				
7.5.1	Member of the Equality Commission's Mental Health Charter and to Every Customer Counts.	Annual review	Health and wellbeing initiatives promote good mental health which benefit employees and communities across NI. LNI will continue to develop and maintain partnerships, provide free information, events, and programme and employee assistance to support mental health.	Desi Miskelly / Jacqui McKinstry
7.5.2	Ensure accessibility of the Libraries NI website in line with current legislation/guidance	Annual review and appropriate action initiated	People with disabilities have access to information published on Libraries NI Website. Demonstration of compliance with Northern Ireland Equality Commission guidance on accessible website design.	Trisha Ward / Glenn Beattie

7.5.3	Review Intranet site(s) to ensure accessibility by internal staff.	Annual review and appropriate action initiated	Website review completed and actions implemented.	Trisha Ward / Glenn Beattie
7.5.4	Provide information for line managers for when a member of staff declares their disability <input type="checkbox"/> develop a flowchart detailing the process for managers to use when a member of staff declares their disability <input type="checkbox"/> update Guidance on Reasonable Adjustments <input type="checkbox"/> include the above in training for managers, such as absence management training.	By March 2022	Flowchart developed and shared with line managers Guidance on Reasonable Adjustments updated and shared with line managers  Feedback from staff who have a disability indicates satisfaction with support provided	Desi Miskelly / Jacqui McKinstry
7.5.6	Collate information on reasonable adjustments that have been made for staff, to use as a central source of information for other line managers	Quarterly	Database set up Agreed elements of database made available to line managers Feedback from staff who have a disability indicates satisfaction with support provided	Desi Miskelly / Jacqui McKinstry
<b>7.6 PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT</b>				
7.6.1	Ensure that all Libraries NI owned or managed premises and other infrastructure are accessible.	Annual review in line with review of estates	Audit or update audits of premises in line with DDA requirements.	Desi Miskelly / Tim Neeson



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<b>7.7 MONITORING AND REVIEWING</b>				
7.7.1	Review the operation of existing services in conjunction with people with disabilities and their representatives to identify any barriers to access for this group.	By March 2022 and bi-annually thereafter	Development and assessment of customer feedback systems.	Desi Miskelly Jacqui McKinstry
7.7.2	Ensure that, where possible, disability monitoring information is collected in respect of users of Libraries NI services and job applicants.	Annually	The collection of information is carried out using periodic surveys and questionnaires, analysing employee exit interviews or customer complaints or grievances.	Desi Miskelly
7.7.3	Measure Libraries NI performance against Action Plan targets and take appropriate action where these targets are not met.	Annually	Monitoring report produced quarterly use of information on goods, facilities and services provided by Libraries NI and actions taken.	Desi Miskelly

7.7.4	Encourage staff, job applicants and appointees to declare that they have a disability or care for a person with a disability through awareness raising and providing guidance to staff and applicants on the importance of monitoring.	Ongoing	More accurate data in place. Equal Opportunities form is a mandatory part of the job application process to encourage applicants to provide data to support the monitoring process. Greater number of staff feel comfortable declaring they have a disability.	Desi Miskelly / Jacqui McKinstry
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