

Disability Action Plan 2023-2028



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Alternative Formats

This document is available in alternative formats including:

- Large font
- Braille
- Main minority ethnic languages
- DAISY
- Easy-read
- Electronic version.

Please see contact details of the relevant Equality Team in each Trust on Page 16.

Introduction

Welcome to our new draft Disability Action Plan. This plan sets out the actions the Health and Social Care Trusts will take forward collaboratively over the next five years.

There are six Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts in Northern Ireland. Five of whom provide integrated health and social care services. These are as follows:

- **Belfast HSC Trust,**
- **Northern HSC Trust**
- **South Eastern HSC Trust**
- **Southern HSC Trust**
- **Western HSC Trust**



The sixth Trust is the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service, is responsible for providing emergency, urgent and primary care services across all of Northern Ireland and safely transporting patients.

The six Trusts would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and invite you to engage in our consultation on our draft five year Disability Action Plan (2023-2028).

Our plan lays out the actions that we are proposing in response to our dual disability duties under **Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended)** which are to:

- promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability
and
- encourage their full participation in public life.

How we developed this action plan

The actions in the draft plan have been developed following feedback, which people with a disability gave us during an engagement event on 25th October 2022. This event was facilitated by Disability Action and through our ongoing collective and local engagement.

We remain committed to working in partnership with disabled people and their representative organisations and look forward to working collaboratively on our actions during the five-year plan.

This Plan is a live document. It is designed to be flexible and responsive to changing circumstances over the five year period. We will review it on an on-going basis and provide annual reports against progress. Thanks to everyone who helped to inform this plan – we value your expertise and your time in making this plan robust and meaningful.

What we propose to do in our Disability Action Plan

The draft action plan has been developed to progress our dual disability duties in promoting positive attitudes and encouraging full participation of disabled people in public life. Actions to specifically address inequalities experienced by people with disabilities are addressed specifically within our regional five year Equality Action Plan and have been informed by our engagement with disabled people and representative organisations. (Both the draft Disability Action Plan and the draft Equality Action Plan will be issued for formal consultation at the same time)

The following table outlines our proposed actions over the next five years to meet our dual disability duties.

Section 1 – Actions to promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability

What we were told	What we will do (<i>Actions</i>)	By When	How will we measure success
That there is a need for them to be listened to and inform the decision making process.	1. We will share opportunities for involvement to ensure the voice of disabled people is heard.	March 2025	• A Directory of Advocacy and Support Services produced and placed on each Trusts website (and in alternative formats). • Involvement section on websites/ set up links with the Public Health Agency (PHA) “Engage” website.
People with disabilities want more clarity on how	2. We will work in partnership with relevant stakeholders to identify advocacy services.	March 2024	

What we were told	What we will do (<i>Actions</i>)	By When	How will we measure success
they can get involved and be heard – lots going on but not well known	3. We will support staff with a disability to ensure they have a voice and are heard.		Improved links with PPI team's/involvement teams/and disabled people within the Trust and community and voluntary organisations to better publicise opportunities on what is going on and how to get involved.
That there is a need for visibility of people with disabilities	4. We will continue to develop our organisational culture to become more disability aware. 5. We will have an inclusive approach to the use of images which re-enforces a positive image of people with disabilities accessing our services. 6. We will mark and celebrate allocated days to raise awareness at a local and regional level thereby working to promote disability inclusion.	March 2028	- Increased visibility of disabled people in Trust publications, use of social media and online presence. - Use of alt text in our social media. - Promotion, evaluation, and feedback on the Disability Toolkit completed. - Ensure our disability equality training includes reference to myths, etiquette and language. - Calendar of events organised annually in relation to Disability such as International Day of Persons with a Disability.

What we were told	What we will do (<i>Actions</i>)	By When	How will we measure success
	7. We will take every opportunity to promote and advocate for the social model of disability. 8. We will continue to promote the regional sign language service.		• Increased promotion of disability related events on our local intranets, social media, Trust websites and news items. • UNCRPD guide for HSC staff updated. • Sign language service (remote and in person) promoted. • Our disability equality training will be based on the social model of disability. • Our staff Mandatory Equality Training 'Making a Difference' is reviewed to ensure the Section 49A duties are explicitly referenced. • Resources developed to promote good practice under the duties e.g. communication with d/Deaf person.
There is a need for greater partnership working	9. We will promote early involvement and co-production of disabled people in developments to services and changes.	Year 2-5	• Greater partnership and involvement opportunities for service user groups/advocacy

What we were told	What we will do (<i>Actions</i>)	By When	How will we measure success
			groups, Community and Voluntary sector and HSC • Development of a specific database of disabled people and organisations that wish to be involved in co-production. • Consultee database is reviewed and updated annually.
We need to raise awareness of our work on addressing the disability duties	10. We will work to enhance the profile and accessibility of the regional Disability Action Plan. 11. We will increase awareness by ensuring the documents are accessible, in Plain English and easy read.	Ongoing	• Increased awareness of the Disability Action Plan and the associated actions in the Trust and amongst our stakeholders. • Easy read version available. • Disability Action Plan available on Trust websites and internal intranets. • Signed version available. • Proactively disseminate the DAP to key stakeholders including community and voluntary sector.
Our policies needs to be kept up to date and relevant, to help support our	12. We will review our Disability Equality Policy for staff in line with best practice to ensure it remains fit for purpose and relevant.	March 2025	• Revised regional policy in place. • Updated Disability Toolkit in place.

What we were told	What we will do (<i>Actions</i>)	By When	How will we measure success
staff who have a disability to remain in the workplace	13. We will collaborate with Occupational Health colleagues. 14. We will update our Disability Toolkit. 15. We will work with relevant colleagues to ensure policy development and review promote the need for reasonable adjustments and S49A duties.		Disability Equality Training delivered to OH colleagues if required.
That there is a need for all HSC staff to be trained	16. We will review our training programmes for staff on disability, the two disability duties, and reasonable adjustments. 17. We will ensure that Training is co-produced and includes those who have first-hand experience (experts by experience) and include reference to the social model, myths, language and how this links to patient centred care.	Annually March 2026	- Evaluation of training provided. - Feedback on training – notably from staff with a disability. - Increased awareness of disability, legislative provision and reasonable adjustments. - Co- Production of resources detailing the correct terminology to use.

What we were told	What we will do (<i>Actions</i>)	By When	How will we measure success
That there is a need for more opportunities for those with disabilities to gain employment within HSCNI	18. We will work in collaboration with relevant stakeholders to review our Employability Schemes to enhance employment opportunities. 19. We will work to reduce barriers to recruitment to HSC for disabled people.	March 2024 scope April 2024-March 2028 development	• Opportunities and availability of our employability schemes scoped in year 1. • Development of actions, in line with the legislative provisions and supported by equality data, to improve access to employment for marginalised S75 groups. • We will make any reasonable adjustments required for anyone with a disability during any recruitment.

Section 2 – Actions to encourage participation by disabled people in public life

What we were told	What we will do (<i>Actions</i>)	By When	How will we measure success
There is a need to work with stakeholders to raise awareness of disability equality issues	20. We will invite representatives from the Regional Disabled People's Forum to partake and work alongside the Joint Regional Equality, Human Rights and Good Relations Forum and Joint Steering Group.	Ongoing	• Greater participation. • Promotion of the voice of disabled people. • Change in Terms of Reference and membership.
That the disability legislation in NI is very complex and not accessible	21. We will work with key stakeholders (Equality Commission NI) to co-develop versions of the Disability Discrimination Act, and its relevance to Health and Social Care, in plain English and easy read to ensure that the legislation and disabled people's rights within it are more easy to understand.	March 2028	• Resources produced and publicised. • Evaluation and Feedback from stakeholders.

What we were told	What we will do (<i>Actions</i>)	By When	How will we measure success
There is a need to improve visibility and awareness of jobs for anyone who is disabled	22. We will work towards Disability Positive Accreditation for all HSC organisations.	March 2028	• Disability Positive accreditation achieved.
We need to improve accessibility to services for people with a disability	23. We will work with colleagues in Capital Development and Estates and service areas to collaboratively promote accessible facilities. 24. Involvement of service users on capital development task groups so they are sharing their expertise from conceptual stage.	Ongoing	• Improved accessibility for our service users, patients, staff and visitors. • Feedback from service users via Care Opinion/Complaints. • AccessAble guides in place for selected facilities.
We need to make sure that carers can access support for their caring role.	25. We will work collaboratively to increase the visibility and awareness of the various supports available for carers. 26. We will promote the role of the Carers Co-ordinator in each Trust.	Ongoing	• Increase numbers on Carers Register. • Improved uptake of carers assessments. • Improved access to carer support programme. • Increased awareness of carers role. • Better involvement of carers in decision making.

What we were told	What we will do (<i>Actions</i>)	By When	How will we measure success
			• Increase in type of supports offered Talking Therapies. • Alternative Therapies. • Respite. • Young Carers.
That better data on who our service users and patients and their communication support needs will help to improve mutual communication	27. We will ensure that the new HSCNI digital integrated care record (ENCOMPASS) facilitates mandatory fields relating to the communication support of service users who are disabled. <i>(Encompass is a new Health and Social Care Northern Ireland (HSCNI) wide initiative that will introduce a digital integrated care record to Northern Ireland.)</i> 28. Ensure involvement in ENCOMPASS project. 29. We will work with ENCOMPASS to ensure that the communication support needs of service users are captured.	Ongoing March 2028	• Communication support needs are recorded on the Encompass system. • Engagement with disabled people. • Improved communication and access to services. • Development of robust population health plans, which seek to improve both physical and mental health outcomes and wellbeing of people within and across a defined local, regional or national population, while reduce health inequalities.

What we were told	What we will do (<i>Actions</i>)	By When	How will we measure success
That it is difficult to gain employment or work experience in health and social care	30. We will partner with the community sector to support disability placement schemes for people with disabilities who experience barriers to employment.	Ongoing	• Number of people in placements. • Placement evaluations. • Improved awareness of the Trust as a disability friendly employer.
	31. We will work with staff, schools and disability organisations to promote health and social care as a disability friendly employer	Ongoing	

Contact Details

For more details of our achievements in meeting our dual disability duties, please refer to our respective Annual Progress Reports which are available online or by contacting the relevant Equality team.

www.belfasttrust.hscni.net

nias.hscni.net

www.northerntrust.hscni.net

www.setrust.hscni.net

www.southerntrust.hscni.net

www.westerntrust.hscni.net

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