

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 15.

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 which 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, 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 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 Plan

We have developed the actions in this draft Plan following feedback from people with a disability during an engagement event on 25th October 2022, 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 lifetime of this 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. Thank you 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

We have developed this draft Plan to progress our dual disability duties to promote positive attitudes and encourage full participation of disabled people in public life. Actions to address inequalities experienced by people with disabilities are included in our regional five year Equality Action Plan, 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. People with disabilities want more clarity on how they can get involved and be	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We will share opportunities for involvement to ensure the voice of disabled people is heard. 2. We will work in partnership with relevant stakeholders to identify advocacy services. 	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Improved links with PPI teams/involvement teams/and

What we were told	What we will do (<i>Actions</i>)	By when	How will we measure success
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.		disabled people within the Trust and community and voluntary organisations to better publicise opportunities to be involved.
That there is a need for visibility of people with disabilities.	<p>4. We will continue to develop our organisational culture to promote disability equality.</p> <p>5. We will have an inclusive approach to the use of images, which re-enforce a positive image of people with disabilities accessing our services.</p> <p>6. We will mark and celebrate allocated days to raise awareness at a local and regional level thereby working to promote disability inclusion.</p> <p>7. We will take every opportunity to promote and advocate for the social model of disability.</p>	March 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Review of Disability Equality Training • Calendar of events organised annually in relation to Disability such as International Day of Persons with a Disability. • Increased promotion of disability related events on our local intranets, social media, Trust websites and news items.

What we were told	What we will do (<i>Actions</i>)	By when	How will we measure success
	8. We will continue to promote the regional sign language service.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) guide for HSC staff updated. • Review of staff Mandatory Equality Training 'Making a Difference' to ensure the disability duties are explicitly referenced. • Resources developed to promote good practice under the disability duties
There is a need for greater partnership working.	9. We will promote early involvement and co-production of disabled people in developments and changes to services.	Year 2-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater partnership and involvement opportunities for service user groups/advocacy 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 reviewed and updated annually.

What we were told	What we will do (<i>Actions</i>)	By when	How will we measure success
<p>We need to raise awareness of our work on addressing the disability duties.</p>	<p>10. We will work to enhance the profile and accessibility of the regional Disability Action Plan.</p> <p>11. We will increase awareness by ensuring the documents are accessible, in Plain English and easy read.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Disability Action Plan to key stakeholders.
<p>Our policies need to be kept up to date and relevant, to help support our staff who have a disability to remain in the workplace.</p>	<p>12. We will review our Disability Equality Policy for staff in line with best practice to ensure it remains fit for purpose and relevant.</p> <p>13. We will collaborate with Occupational Health (OH) colleagues to ensure support is available for staff with a disability.</p> <p>14. We will update our Disability Toolkit.</p>	<p>March 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised regional policy in place. • Updated Disability Toolkit in place. • Disability Equality Training delivered to OH colleagues if required.

What we were told	What we will do (<i>Actions</i>)	By when	How will we measure success
	15. We will work with relevant colleagues to ensure policy development and review promote the need for disability duties.		
That there is a need for all health and social care staff to be trained on disability duties.	<p>16. We will review our training programmes for staff on disability, the two disability duties, and reasonable adjustments.</p> <p>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.</p>	March 2026 Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
That there is a need for more opportunities for those with disabilities to gain employment within health and social care.	<p>18. We will work in collaboration with relevant stakeholders to review our employability schemes to enhance employment opportunities.</p> <p>19. We will work to reduce barriers to recruitment in health and social care for disabled people.</p>	March 2024 scope April 2024- March 2028 development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 people with a disability.

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.	December 2023 and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater participation. • Promotion of the voice of disabled people. • Change in Terms of Reference and membership.
That the disability legislation in Northern Ireland 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 easier to understand.	March 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<p>There is a need to improve visibility and awareness of jobs for anyone who is disabled.</p>	<p>22. We will work towards Disability Positive Accreditation for all health and social care organisations.</p>	<p>March 2028</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Positive accreditation achieved.
<p>We need to improve accessibility to services for people with a disability.</p>	<p>23. We will work with colleagues in Capital Development and Estates and service areas to collaboratively promote accessible facilities.</p> <p>24. We will involve service users in capital development projects, so they are sharing their expertise from conceptual stage.</p>	<p>January 2024 and ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<p>We need to make sure that carers can access support for their caring role.</p>	<p>25. We will work collaboratively to increase the visibility and awareness of the various supports available for carers.</p> <p>26. We will promote the role of the Carers Co-ordinator in each Trust.</p>	<p>September 2023 and ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase numbers on Carers Register. • Improved uptake of carers assessments. • Improved access to carer support programme. • Increased awareness of carer 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
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in type of supports offered
<p>That better data on service users and patient’s communication support needs will help to improve mutual communication.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p><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></p> <p>28. Ensure involvement in ENCOMPASS project.</p> <p>29. We will work with ENCOMPASS to ensure that the communication support needs of service users are captured.</p>	<p>March 2028 Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication support needs are recorded on the ENCOMPASS system. • Improved 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
<p>That it is difficult to gain employment or work experience in health and social care.</p>	<p>30. We will partner with the community sector to support disability placement schemes for people with disabilities who experience barriers to employment.</p> <p>31. We will work with schools and disability organisations to promote health and social care as a disability friendly employer</p>	<p>January 2024 and ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people in placements. • Placement evaluations. • Improved awareness of the Trust as a disability friendly employer.

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

Trust Equality Teams Contact Details

<p>Orla Barron Equality Lead</p>	<p>Belfast HSC Trust Tel: 028 9504 6567 Mobile / Text 0782 514 6432 Email: orla.barron@belfasttrust.hscni.net</p>
<p>Alison Irwin Head of Equality</p>	<p>Northern HSC Trust Tel: 028 276 61377 Mobile / Text: 0782 566 7154 E-mail: equality.unit@northerntrust.hscni.net</p>
<p>Cathy Lavery Head of Equality</p>	<p>Southern HSC Trust Tel: 028 3756 4151 Email: cathy.lavery@southerntrust.hscni.net</p>
<p>Susan Thompson Equality Manager</p>	<p>South Eastern HSC Trust Tel: 028 9263 3507 Ext 15807 Mobile/Text 0797 132 2028 Email: susan.thompson@setrust.hscni.net</p>
<p>Jennifer Mayse Equality Manager (Acting)</p>	<p>Western HSC Trust Tel: 028 8283 5834 Email: jennifer.mayse@westerntrust.hscni.net</p>
<p>John Gow Equality and Public Involvement Officer</p>	<p>Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Tel: 028 9040 0999 Email: john.gow@nias.hscni.net</p>