

**DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ORDER
(NORTHERN IRELAND) 2006**

DISABILITY ACTION PLAN – DRAFT

FOR

NORTH AND WEST HOUSING ASSOCIATION

APRIL 2007

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DISABILITY ACTION PLAN - DRAFT

North and West Housing Association

1	<p><u>Introduction</u></p> <p>1.1 Under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) (as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006), North and West Housing is required when carrying out its functions to have due regard to the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and• encourage participation by disabled people in public life ('the disability duties'). <p>1.2 Under Section 49B of the DDA 1995, North and West Housing 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>
2	<p><u>Commitment to the effective implementation of the Disability Action Plan</u></p> <p>2.1 As Chief Executive of North and West Housing, I confirm that we are 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 implement effectively this plan and where appropriate, build objectives and targets relating to the disability duties into corporate and annual operating plans.</p> <p>2.2 We will also put appropriate internal arrangements in place to ensure that the disability duties are complied with and this disability action plan effectively implemented. We will ensure the effective communication of the plan to staff and to providing all necessary training and guidance for staff on the disability duties and the implementation of the plan.</p> <p>2.3 We confirm our commitment to submitting an annual report to the Equality Commission on the implementation of this plan as well as carrying out a five yearly review of this plan.</p>

2.4	We also confirm our commitment to ensuring ongoing dialogue between the Association and disabled people as regards the implementation and the review of the Associations plan
2.5	<p>Responsibility for implementing, reviewing and evaluating this disability action plan and the point of contact within North and West Housing the will be:-</p> <p>Name: Elaine Taylor Title: Director of Personnel and Training Address: North and West Housing 18 Magazine Street L/Derry BT48 6HH Telephone number: 02871263819 Fax number: 02871263362 Email: e.taylor@nwh-group.com</p>
2.6	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.
3	<p><u>Annual Report and Five Year Review</u></p> <p>3.1 We confirm our commitment to submitting an annual progress report on the implementation of this plan to the Equality Commission and carrying out a five year review of this plan, or plans submitted to the Equality Commission over the five year review period.</p> <p>3.2 A copy of this plan, our annual progress to the Equality Commission and our five year review of this plan will be made available on our website (<i>www.northandwest.org</i>)</p>

4	<p><u>Functions</u></p> <p>North and West Housing is a primary provider of high quality homes and associated support services at the lowest possible economic rent for everyone in housing need. It is committed to providing an open and professional service, which is all embracing and sensitive to the needs of the individual. The following are to be regarded as the primary functions of North and West Housing: Provision of a range of housing, support and care services.</p>
5	<p><u>Public Life Positions</u></p> <p>The range of public life positions over which North and West Housing has responsibility for, are as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board members • Tenants group
6	<p><u>Consultation</u></p> <p>6.1 We are committed to carrying out consultation in accordance with the guiding principles set out in the Equality Commission guidelines and recognise the need for such consultation to be timely, open and inclusive.</p> <p>6.2 The Association will place press advertisements in local papers to allow individuals and organisations the opportunity to respond to this draft Disability Action Plan. In addition, this draft Plan will be placed on our website, seeking views from individuals and organisations</p>

6.3	<p>The anticipated outcomes of this consultation exercise are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify barriers faced by disabled people in public life and specifically any barriers they have encountered when dealing with North and West Housing. • Identify past examples where we have not promoted positive attitudes towards disabled people and identify future opportunities to promote positive attitudes • Set priorities and identify solutions to take remedial action and • Monitor and review how effective these measures have been
6.4	<p>We are keen to hear your views and comments and will update our actions in line with your feedback</p>
7	<p><u>Previous Measures</u></p> <p>7.1 Outlined below are the key measures which North and West Housing has already taken to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in public life. Please note whilst the primary focus is on people with a disability, consideration has also been given to all Equality Groups.</p> <p>7.2 Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor complaints • No mandatory retirement age policy • Provision of services for disabled people • Association policies take account of disability considerations • Reasonable adjustments made as necessary • DDA audits actioned on an ongoing basis • Association scheme buildings readily facilitate use by disabled people • Accessibility issues addressed • Association policies are screened to ensure they comply with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act, 1998 • Provision of placements for people with disabilities • Harassment training • Tenant Satisfaction Surveys conducted in special needs Schemes • Disability Awareness training sessions • Positive photography in Corporate literature

<p>7.3</p>	<p>Encourage the participation of disabled people in public life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment policies that encourage/support disabled staff • Provision of translators or interpreters on request • New office plans include a lift and other access measures to facilitate use by disabled people • Introduction of language line • Ongoing implementation of action findings as a result of DDA Audits • The Association works closely with Building Control to ensure that all Building Regulations are complied with. • Flexible working in place for all staff • It is the Associations policy to provide employment equality to all existing and potential employees, irrespective of disability. • Development of Access and Communication Policy (?) • Positions advertised on the Associations internet • Hosting events for tenants and residents • Text only option • Service Reviews • Best Value Reviews
<p>8</p>	<p><u>Action Measures</u></p> <p>Outlined below are the measures which we propose to take over the next 18 months of this disability action plan, together with expected outcomes, milestones, responsibilities and timescales.</p>

Measures to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in public life

Duty 1: to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people

Action	Outcome	Milestone	Responsibility	Timescale
Establish an Equality Working Group	Ensure duties under Section 75 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 are being met during the review and development of policies and procedures	Evidence in minutes and Association policies and procedures which have been reviewed or developed	One representative from each of the following Departments: - Personnel & Training - Property Services - Housing & Care Services - Finance - Development	June 2007
Continue to review external and internal communication policies, practices and procedures to ensure disabled people are portrayed in a positive role	More positive images of disabled people	Evidenced in communication policies, practices and procedures	Equality Working Group	April 2008

Action	Outcome	Milestone	Responsibility	Timescale
<p>Include regular features about disability in North & West Natters (Staff Newsletter), News and Views (Tenants Newsletter) and Team Briefs. Produce a Lawletter focusing on the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and issue to line managers</p>	<p>Better informed staff and tenants</p>	<p>An article to be included in every newsletter (x3 per year) and in at least 3 Team Briefs. One Lawletter to cover the Disability Discrimination Act 1995</p>	<p>Personnel and Training Department and Housing and Care Services Department</p>	<p>May 2007 and oning</p>
<p>Review exit interview strategy</p>	<p>Obtain feedback from disabled and non-disabled staff on whether or not they have encountered positive attitudes</p>	<p>Information available for monitoring/reporting processes in terms of measuring the effectiveness of measures to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people</p>	<p>Personnel and Training Department</p>	<p>April 2008</p>

Action	Outcome	Milestone	Responsibility	Timescale
Provide specialist training for Directors, senior manager and line managers	Increased awareness of disability issues amongst senior staff	Training to be delivered by April 2008	Personnel and Training Department	April 2008 and annual refresher training thereafter
Prepare and deliver disability awareness training for staff .To include new duties under the Disability Discrimination Act	All employees aware of legislative requirements	Training to be delivered by April 2008	Personnel and Training Department	April 2008
Prepare and deliver disability awareness training including new duties under the Disability Discrimination Act as part of the induction process	Increased awareness amongst new staff	Update of induction programme	Personnel and Training Department	June 2007

Duty 2: to encourage participation by disabled people in public life

Action	Outcome	Milestone	Responsibility	Timescale
Embed the disability duties into our corporate consultation processes	Disabled peoples views taken on board in the Associations decision making process	Evidence of engagement and influence in minutes and reports	Department Directors and Tenant Participation Officer	January 2008 and ongoing
Ensure measures/systems in place to provide literature in alternative formats	Association can respond quickly to such requests	Monitor requests and response time	Personnel and Training Department	August 07
Establish the need for interview skills training and office/scheme visits to promote job opportunities for people with disabilities	Increased awareness of range of jobs within the Association and the qualifications/experience required. Improved interview techniques for people with disabilities	Increased number of disabled applicants and appointees	Personnel and Training Department	April 2008 and ongoing
Monitor the reasonable adjustments made for disabled employees	Managers aware of issues which may impact an employees attendance and ability to carry out duties	Creation of a monitoring system	Personnel and Training Department	May 2007 and ongoing

Action	Outcome	Milestone	Responsibility	Timescale
Collect data from employees relating to disability and relevant Section 75 categories	Accurate quantitative data	Conduct voluntary monitoring survey	Personnel and Training Department	April 2008
Review where and how positions are advertised	Ensure disabled people are aware of vacancies	Increased number of disabled applicants and appointees	Personnel and Training Department	April 2008
Review documentation relating to posts	Identify and remove barriers to disabled people applying	Increased number of disabled applicants and appointees	Personnel and Training Department	April 2008
Review selection criteria to ensure people with a disability can successfully participate in the selection process	Remove barriers in the recruitment process	Increased number of disabled applicants and appointees	Personnel and Training Department	April 2008

Action	Outcome	Milestone	Responsibility	Timescale
Review existing recruitment and selection practices and ensure support is available to disabled applicants during various stages of the process as well as after they are appointed. Provide information to applicants in respect of same	More accessible interview processes	Increased number of disabled applicants and employees	Personnel and Training Department	April 2008
Monitor applicants, shortlisted applicants and appointees with different types of disabilities as well as across the range of other equality groups	Accurate quantitative data	Information available for monitoring/reporting processes in terms of measuring the effectiveness of measures to encourage participation by disabled people in the Association	Personnel and Training Department	April 2008

Action	Outcome	Milestone	Responsibility	Timescale
Develop partnerships with organisations which provide training opportunities and support to disabled people	Provide improved training and employment placement opportunities	Evaluate success of placement from both perspectives (Association and individual)	Personnel and Training Department	April 2008
Conduct consultation (to include people with disabilities) to identify user needs, expectations and satisfaction with services)	Better understanding of user needs. Actions identified so that our service better meets the needs of all users	Completion of consultation by ** Prioritisation and implementation of actions by April 2008	Housing and Care Services Department	April 2008
Review Complaints Policy	Increase access to people with a disability	Updated policy	Personnel and Training Department	December 2007
Continue to comply with all aspects of new build design for disability access and conform to the requirements contained within the newly amended Building Regulations	Ensure the needs of disabled people taken into consideration	Building Control Certificates and DSD Reports	Property Services Department	Ongoing

Action	Outcome	Milestone	Responsibility	Timescale
Implement accessibility audit action plan	Ensure the following areas are accessible for people with disabilities: - External approaches - Entrances and Receptions - Horizontal and Vertical - Circulation - Internal Spaces - Signage and Information - Evacuation and management - Customer Care	Evidence of completed audit action plans	Property Services Department	April 2008
Implement year 1 of the Customer Satisfaction Strategy	Needs of individuals with a disability identified	Action plans drawn up	Housing and Care Services Department	March 2008
Provide all staff with diversity awareness training	Increased awareness of diversity issues	Training to be delivered by October 2007	Personnel and Training Department	April 2008
Monitor equality of opportunity in relation to allocations	Accurate quantitative data	Quarterly reports to the Housing Management Sub-Committee	Housing and Care Services	March 2008

Action	Outcome	Milestone	Responsibility	Timescale
Review the Special Needs Tenant Participation Strategy	Ensure views taken on board	Enhanced quality of life of special needs residents	Housing and Care Services	March 2008
Ensure disabled people are supported to participate in Tenants Forum and Residents meetings	Increased accessibility to people with a disability	Monitor requests for support and actions	Housing and Care Services Department	April 2008
Ensure all surveys involving staff, tenants, residents, members of the public give due consideration to the duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995	Ensure views/needs of people with a disability are identified	Action plans resulting from surveys	Department Directors	April 2008
Review the Associations website to ensure accessibility	Install systems to improve and monitor its accessibility by anyone with a disability	Update of website and monthly reviews of website accessibility	IT Team	October 2008

Signed by:

Chair

Chief Executive