

Plean Gníomhaíochta um Míchumas 2023-2027

Disability Action Plan 2023-2027



Comhairle Ceantair
**an Iúir, Mhúrn
agus an Dúin**

**Newry, Mourne
and Down**
District Council

Foreword

Welcome to the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Disability Action Plan for 2023-2027 which sets out how we as a Council intend to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities who live in, work or visit our district.

This is Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's third Disability Action Plan, and it has been designed to ensure that Council fulfils its statutory obligations in compliance with section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) (as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006).

The Disability Discrimination Act places duties on public authorities, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

This plan outlines the actions and processes which we as a Council will undertake to ensure issues facing people with disabilities and their carers are effectively mainstreamed within Council decisions and service delivery.

Councillor Valerie Harte

Chairperson of Newry, Mourne and Down
District Council

Marie Ward

Chief Executive

1. Introduction

- 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
 - encourage participation by disabled people in public life.
- 1.2 Under Section 49B of the DDA 1995, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is also required to submit to the Equality Commission a Disability Action Plan which outlines how Council will fulfil its duties in relations to its functions.
- 1.3 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's commitment is detailed in the Disability Action Plan in this report. It outlines the following:
- the issue to be addressed
 - the outcome wanted
 - the positive action to be undertaken
 - the measure which will determine success
 - the department responsible for addressing the issue and
 - the anticipated timeframe for action

2. The Role of Council and its functions

- 2.1 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is the third largest Local Government Authority in Northern Ireland. With an electorate of 182,073 it covers South Armagh and parts of County Down. It incorporates two areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and has an extensive coastline stretching from Strangford Lough to Carlingford Lough and borders the counties of Louth and Monaghan in the Republic of Ireland.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has 41 Elected Members representing the following 7 District Electoral Areas:

- Crotlieve
 - Downpatrick
 - Newry
 - Rowallane
 - Slieve Croob
 - Slieve Gullion
 - The Mournes
- 2.2 Elected Members provide civic and political leadership and oversee the day to day running of the Council, representing the interests of their constituents

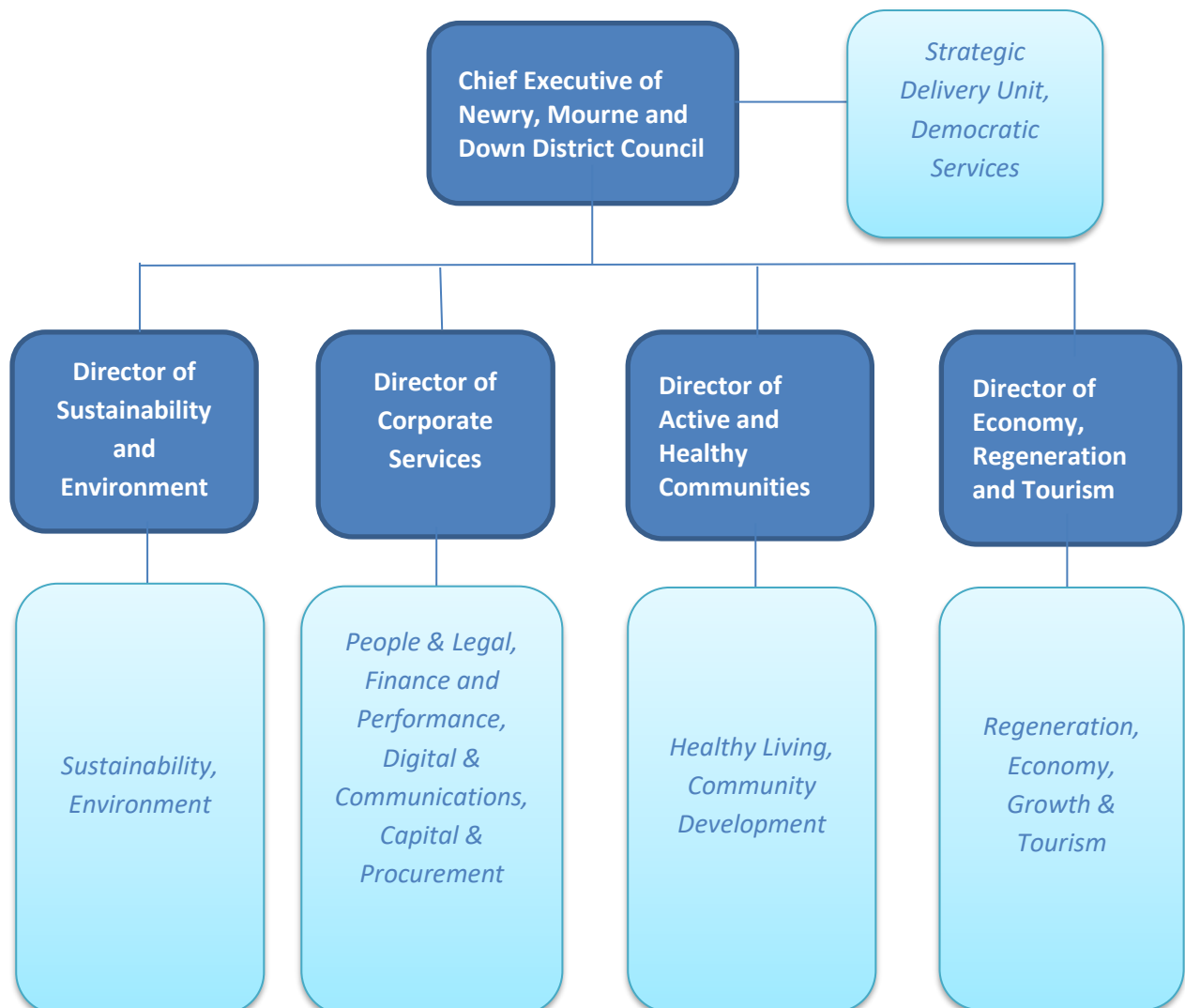
and ensure the views of people across Newry, Mourne and Down are reflected in the Council's decisions and how services are delivered.

2.3 In addition to the Council's Monthly meeting, the business of Council is conducted across 4 Directorates and their four committee meetings each month. These directorates are:

- Economic Regeneration and Tourism
- Active and Healthy Communities
- Sustainability and Environment
- Corporate Services

2.4 The structure, functions and responsibilities of each directorate are detailed in the following diagram.

1. Council structure



3. Public life positions for which the Council has responsibility

3.1 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has responsibility for a number of public life positions on council committees.

Examples of these include:

- Peace Plus Partnership
- District Electoral Area Forums
- Policing and Community Safety Partnership

3.2 The Council also appoints Elected Members to external organisations.

Examples of these include:

- APSE NI Executive Board
- Warrenpoint Harbour Authority
- Community Planning Partnership
- Local Government Partnership on Traveller issues

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

4.1 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is committed to the effective implementation of all aspects of the plan in all parts of the organisation. Overall responsibility for determining policy on how this will be achieved lies with the Elected Members, and with the Chief Executive who will be responsible for the implementation of administrative arrangements to ensure that the Council complies with our disability duties.

4.2 As part of its corporate planning process, the Council has identified the promotion of equality of opportunity and incorporating disability duties as part of its corporate plan. These will be reflected at all levels of strategic planning within the Council including individual staff objectives and business plans. Progress on meeting objectives, including those relating to the disability duties will be monitored and reported upon at the most senior level within the organisation. The Corporate Policy and Equality Officer will monitor and report on this annually. A formal report of progress on meeting the objectives relating to the disability duties will be included in the Council's annual report to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

5. Internal Arrangements

5.1 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has 41 Elected Members. They meet monthly in full session and frequently in committees and sub-committees.

- 5.2 The Chief Executive oversees the work of the Council's four Directorates through the Senior Management Team.
- 5.3 The Council is committed to fulfilling the statutory responsibilities contained in its Disability Action Plan in all parts of the organisation. The Council's Corporate Policy Section provides specialist support and advice to Council and Officers on matters relating to the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations, disability duties, policy development and rural needs. The Head of Corporate Policy will ensure the implementation of the actions in the Disability Action Plan, and the Corporate Policy and Equality Officer will be the main point of contact.

6. Effective Engagement

- 6.1 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is committed to engaging effectively with relevant groups in the implementation, monitoring and review of this plan. This will be undertaken through meetings with key stakeholders and advertising through the Council's social media and the local press.

7. Annual Report

- 7.1 The Council will prepare an annual report on the implementation of its Disability Action Plan. The annual report will be included as part of the Council's annual report to the Equality Commission on the implementation of the Equality Scheme. This will be made available on the Council's website.

8. Five Year Review

- 8.1 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council will carry out a five-year review of its plan, in consultation with the Equality Commission for NI.

9. Consultation

- 9.1 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council carried out a 12-week public consultation in the development and review of its Disability Action Plan 2023-2027 during the period 20 March 2023 to 12 June 2023.
- 9.2 The draft plan was advertised on the council's website, newspapers and through social media where comments were sought from individuals and organisations.
- 9.3 The Disability Action Plan is a living document. Consultation on the Disability Action Plan is on-going via engagement with key stakeholders and service users. Comments and suggestions on the plan are welcomed at any time.

- 9.4 The Council has sought to ensure the involvement of people with disabilities by consulting with representative groups at both regional and local levels.
- 9.5 The Council consults regularly with a range of local and regional groups of people with disabilities and those representing them. This includes Action Mental Health, Employers for Disability NI, IMTAC, Autism NI, Cedar Foundation and Disability Sports NI.
- 9.6 Barriers to consultation continue to be removed by ensuring accessibility of documents in appropriate formats. To ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, we provide information in alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable. Where an exact request cannot be met, we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided. Consideration is given to how best to communicate information to young disabled people as well as considering additional dimensions such as ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation and religious belief.

10. Action Measures

- 10.1 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council positively promote attitudes towards disabled people and encourage their participation in public life. These include:
- Activity Officer – Role is to provide participation opportunities for people with disabilities in sport and recreation;
 - Employee opportunities in conjunction with USEL;
 - All interviewers participating in the Council’s recruitment and selection process are aware of disability duties;
 - All current and proposed policies are screened in accordance with the Council’s Equality Scheme to ensure that they do not have adverse impact on any of the nine equality categories;
 - Autism Friendly initiatives in Council facilities and events;
 - Delivery of Shop Mobility Scheme in Newcastle and Delamont Country Park;
 - Provision of an assisted bin collections.

11. Timeframe for the implementation for the Action Measures

- 11.1 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council’s revised Disability Action Plan is for the period 2023 to 2027.

Disability Action Plan

Awareness & Understanding

ISSUE	OUTCOME	POSITIVE ACTION	MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME
Disability Awareness and Training	To continue to embed an understanding of the council's due regard duty with regards to Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006	<p>Develop a Disability Awareness training programme for all staff and elected members to ensure that council is aware of its responsibilities under the legislation</p> <p>Examples of training programmes will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Duties • Disability Awareness, • Autism Friendly, • Dementia Friendly, • Brain Injury Awareness <p>Appropriate and relevant training on disability duties for officers participating</p>	<p>Number of training sessions/programmes delivered</p> <p>Attendance figures of elected members participating in the Disability Awareness Training</p> <p>Attendance figures of staff participating in the Disability Awareness Training</p> <p>Evaluation and feedback from staff and elected members.</p>	<p>Corporate Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Policy • Learning and Development <p>SMT</p> <p>Chief Executive Office</p>	Ongoing and reviewed annually

		<p>recruitment and selection panels</p> <p>Continue to provide disability awareness induction training to new staff</p> <p>Relates to both Disability Duties</p>	<p>Monitor the impact of the training programme on service delivery.</p>		
		<p>All policy makers within Council to take into consideration the disability duties when proposing or revising policy</p> <p>Relates to Disability Duty 1</p>	<p>All new and revised policies will ensure compliance with disability duties.</p>	<p>SMT</p> <p>Council Officers</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
Engagement					
Issue	Objective	Positive Action	Measure	Responsibility	Timeframe
Engagement	Continue to engage with disability organisations	Corporate Policy to engage organisations and investigate opportunities to undertake collaborative working	New initiatives undertaken	Corporate Policy	Ongoing

		Relates to both Disability Duties			
		Continue to provide employment opportunities/work placements for people with disabilities Relates to Disability Duty 2	Number of people employed	Human Resources	Ongoing
		Elected Members' civic leadership role advocating with others for the benefit of all people of the district. Relates to both Disability Duties	Number of appointments to external partnerships and Community Planning Partnership	Democratic Services / Community Planning / Corporate Policy	Ongoing
Promotion					
Issue	Objective	Positive Action	Measure	Responsibility	Timescale
Positive Promotion	Raise the profile of Council's Diversity Ambassadors	To undertake a PR campaign internally and externally to promote the role of and assistance	Number of people who engage with Diversity Ambassadors	Diversity Ambassadors	October 2023

		given by the Council's Diversity Ambassadors Relates to Disability Duty 1		Council Officers Elected members	
	Continue to raise awareness and positively promote disability	District Electoral Area Forums to host events supporting residents and organisations Relates to both Disability Duties	Number of events held	DEA Officers	Ongoing and reviewed annually
		Chairperson of Council continue to support charities as part of their annual programme Relates to Disability Duty 1	Number of charities supported	Chief Executive Office Chairperson	Annually
		Council continues to 'light up' civic buildings on recognised days which support and raise awareness of disability related issues	Number of times civic building is 'lit'	Chief Executive Office	Minimum 4 events per year

		Relates to Disability Duty 1			
		<p>To maintain the Shop Mobility Scheme delivered by the Newcastle Centre and Delamont Country Park</p> <p>Relates to both Disability Duties</p>	Numbers of people using the service	Active and Healthy Communities	Ongoing
		<p>To develop an online directory of local support organisations.</p> <p>Relates to Disability Duty 1</p>	To have available on Council website	Corporate Policy	October 2024

Access					
Issue	Objective	Positive Action	Measure	Responsibility	Timescale
Access to information	Information on council services is accessible to all parts of the community	Production of a corporate 'Making Information Accessible' Guide for staff Relates to Disability Duty 1	Number of council publications available in a variety of formats Number of requests for information in alternative formats	Corporate Policy	June 2024
		'Making Information Accessible' training sessions to be delivered across Council Relates to Disability Duty 1	Number of Council officials participating in 'Making Information Accessible' training sessions	Corporate Policy	October 2024
		DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY Develop the corporate website ensuring it meets all accessibility requirements Relates to Disability duty 1	Availability of an accessible corporate website Accessibility Statement on Website	Corporate Services • Corporate Communications and Marketing	October 2025

		<p>Providing accessibility information</p> <p>Information provided on accessibility of buildings and events made available on Council website</p> <p>Relates to both Disability Duties</p>	Information available on website	All Directorates	April 2024
Access to services and facilities	Services and facilities are accessible all parts of the community	<p>Ensuring our new buildings shall be fully compliant with the Building Regulations and DDA compliant</p> <p>Relates to both Disability Duties</p>	Building of a new Civic Centre and new Theatre and Conference Centre in Newry.	Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Directorate	December 2025
		<p>Review of council facilities to ensure they are accessible to all members of the community</p> <p>Relates to both Disability Duties</p> <p>Council to meet the requirement of the Equality Commission's</p>	Percentage of Council owned facilities meeting the requirements of the 'Every Customer Counts' accessibility checklist	All Directorates	Annually - April

		<p>'Every Customer Counts' initiative</p> <p>Relates to both Disability Duties</p>			
		<p>Continue to provide programmes in Council facilities and events to support people with disability e.g. dedicated autism friendly programmes.</p> <p>Relates to both Disability Duties</p>	<p>Number of people participating in programmes and events</p>	<p>All Directorates</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
		<p>Review and promote the usage of the Council's Buddy Card Scheme.</p> <p>Relates to both Disability Duties</p>	<p>Number of people availing of initiative</p>	<p>Active and Healthy Communities</p>	<p>June - Annually</p>

Complaints	Ensure people with a disability can access the Council's complaints/ comments procedure	Provide a range of accessible formats available to make a complaint re council services Relates to Disability Duty 1	Number of complaints Number of complaints referencing disability issues	Corporate Services – Administration and Customer Services Corporate Policy	Ongoing June – Annually
Workforce					
Issue	Objective	Positive Action	Measure	Responsibility	Timescale
Workforce diversity	To better understand workforce profile	Investigate the opportunity for engagement between Corporate Policy and HR to develop a Section 75 workforce profile and identify number of employees of Council with disabilities Relates to Disability Duty 1	Relevant section 75 workforce data	Corporate Services – HR and Corporate Policy	Ongoing

		Continue to facilitate requests for reasonable adjustments within the workplace Relates to both Disability Duties	Number and type of requests for reasonable adjustments	All Directorates in conjunction with Safety, Health and Emergency Planning Section	June – Annually
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13. How the Disability Action Plan will be published

- 13.1 Following submission to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, this plan will be available by contacting:

Corporate Policy Section
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council,
Monaghan Row,
Newry
BT35 8DJ
Telephone: 0300 013 2233
corporatepolicy@nmandd.org

The availability of the Disability Action Plan will be advertised in all local papers in the district as well in council's social media, and can be accessed on the Council's website at:

<https://www.newrymouredown.org/corporate-policy-and-equality>

- 13.2 In accordance with Council's Equality Scheme, the plan will also be available in alternative formats upon request, where reasonably practicable. Where an exact request cannot be met we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided.
- 13.3 The Council acknowledge individuals may experience different barriers according to their impairment, and through our ongoing work with people with disabilities, representative groups and carers will ensure appropriate ways to communicate the Plan.
- 13.4 The Plan will be highlighted through press releases, on social media, through email and meeting directly with disability organisations, representative groups and individuals.
- 13.5 In accordance with the Council's Bilingualism Policy, the Plan will be available in the Irish Language upon request. Consideration will also be given to requests to produce the Plan for people who speak a minority language.
- 13.6 In addition, employees will be made aware of the Disability Action Plan and how their duties and responsibilities assist the Council meet its obligations.