

# DAERA Disability Duties Annual Progress Report

1 April 2015 / 31 March 2016



Department of  
**Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs**

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Valerie Keys

Equality Branch

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)

Room 512 Dundonald House

Upper Newtownards Road

Ballymiscaw

Belfast BT4 3SB

Telephone: 028 9052 4435

Fax: 028 9052 4884

Typetalk: 18001 028 9052 4435

Email: [equalitybranch@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:equalitybranch@daera-ni.gov.uk)

Web: [www.daera-ni.gov.uk/daeras-equality-scheme](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/daeras-equality-scheme)

# DAERA Disability Action Plan 2015-2017

- Annual Progress Report for period

- 1 April 2015 / 31 March 2016

As of 8th May 2016 the names and functions of NI Government Departments changed and the number of Departments decreased. The new Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has brought together all the existing functions of DARD (with the exception of Rivers Agency), Inland Fisheries from Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) and environment functions from Department of the Environment (DOE) (including Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)).

This review covers the period before the formation of the new Departments and therefore refers to DARD throughout.

## **PART B - Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Disability Action Plans**

**1. Number of action measures for this reporting period that have been:**

10

Fully Achieved

4

Partially Achieved

0

Not Achieved

2. Please outline below details on all actions that have been fully achieved in the reporting period.

2 (a) Please highlight what **public life measures** have been achieved to encourage disabled people to participate in public life at National, Regional and Local levels:

Public Life Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome/Impact
<p>Ensure all managers are aware of their legislative responsibilities eg under the DDO, DDA and S75.</p>	<p><b>Achieved and ongoing.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior managers have been regularly updated on disability / equality issues through the Equality Steering Group. The ESG is made up of senior representatives from across DARD business areas, NIPSA and external representatives from key organisations with an interest in DARD business; and rural equality and good relations issues. Also ESG members are updated on equality / disability training on an ongoing basis.</li> </ul>	<p>Business areas and policy makers better informed about the DDO impacts on their business area and increased engagement and improved outcomes on disability and equality issues.</p>
<p>Improve representation by people with disabilities on NDPBs.</p>	<p><b>Achieved and ongoing.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During 2015/16, AFBI Sponsor Branch administered a competition to recruit members to the AFBI Board. Competition documents were fully reviewed during the planning process. Candidate Information documents included a welcome statement for a range of equality groups and were available in alternative formats (on request). In addition, ASB issued notification of the opportunity to 55 disability / equality interest groups, with input from DARD Equality Branch and Commissioner for Public Appointments NI.</li> </ul>	<p>Through disability organisations raised awareness of board vacancies to a wider audience. Further work will be undertaken.</p>

Public Life Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome/Impact
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recent LMC Chair / Board Member interviews were held at a location with disabled access (and special facilities available on request). The advertisement for the Board positions specified that remuneration ‘includes costs associated with disabilities’.</li> </ul>	
Hold quarterly meetings of the Equality Steering Group (ESG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three meetings of DARD’s Equality Steering Group (ESG) were held during the reporting period. The Disability Forum is represented at this meeting at which they provide an update on progress made by the Forum and also highlight any areas of concern.</li> </ul>	Business areas and policy makers better informed about the DDO impacts on their business area and increased engagement and improved outcomes on disability and equality issues.
Promote work placement opportunities	<p><b>Achieved and ongoing.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During the year the DARD Direct office in Enniskillen facilitated the placement of a student from the local Willowbridge School, a school that provides education for pupils aged from three to nineteen with moderate and severe learning difficulties. The student spent approximately one half days per week (during the school term) working in the office and was given a variety of tasks to complete under the supervision of an existing member of staff who volunteered to be their mentor.</li> </ul>	Overall the placement of students in this office has resulted in positive feedback not just from the staff and the students themselves but from the wider members of the public who use the office.

Public Life Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome/Impact
Staff Awareness Raising.	<p><b>Achieved and ongoing.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In June 2015 Equal Opportunities Section issued a survey to all industrial staff which approximately 15% of them completed. The survey encouraged anyone with a disability who had not already declared that they have a disability on their HR record to consider doing so.</li> <li>• The survey also sought views on what more DARD could do to assist those with a disability in their workplace as well as seeking feedback on individual's experiences of the reasonable adjustment process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The survey invited members of staff with a disability to consider joining the Department's disAbility Forum which several of them did.</li> </ul>

2(b) What **training action measures** were achieved in this reporting period?

Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome/Impact
Provide specific disability training for policy makers and front line staff.	<p><b>Achieved and ongoing.</b></p> <p>In 2015/16, 395 industrial and 16 non-industrial staff attended the classroom based Diversity Now refresher training. 28 other staff successfully undertook the e-Learning package. 26 Staff received Disability Awareness for Frontline Staff.</p> <p>All residential support staff at CAFRE received a full day's training in August 2015 on mental health awareness. Mental</p>	<p>Staff better able to assist our customers who at times may need additional assistance.</p> <p>This training improved the knowledge and understanding</p>

Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome/Impact
	health is often thought of as a hidden disability, and as such is relevant under the Disability and Discrimination Act.	of staff and made them much more aware of the issues and concerns of students dealing with mental health issues.

2(c) What Positive attitudes **action measures** in the area of **Communications** were achieved in this reporting period?

Communication Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome/Impact
Provision of information that is easy to access and understand.	<p><b>Achieved and ongoing.</b></p> <p>All documents produced in-house have adhered to the written communication guidelines and have a disability/equality statement on how to access alternative formats.</p> <p>Equality Branch continues to promote the production of easy-read versions of all major DARD publications. These are provided on the internet and in hard copy on request.</p> <p>Disabled angling guides are available providing information on waters in the Public Angling Estate accessible for anglers with a disability.</p>	DARD's commitment to producing Easyread documents has been positively welcomed by people with disabilities and key organisations.

2 (d) What action measures were achieved to ‘encourage others’ to promote the two duties:

Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome/Impact
<p>Increased support and engagement with the disability sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DARD has worked in partnership with a number of NICS Departments to deliver a range of initiatives to address rural poverty and social isolation these include a number of equality related interventions as follows:</li> <li>• The Assisted Rural Travel Scheme is a rural transport initiative to improve rural access to public transport. Introduced in conjunction with DRD in December 2009 the Assisted Rural Travel Scheme has allowed rural dwellers entitled to a SmartPass, mainly the elderly and disabled to gain free or half fare transport on Rural Community Transport Partnership vehicles. Since 2009 1,083,922 passenger trips have been funded through this scheme.</li> <li>• DARD issued a Contract for Funding to Rural Support to establish a Social Farming Support Service which commenced on 1 September 2015.</li> <li>• Inland Fisheries Group has worked for some time in engagement with new groups, to show that angling is a healthy and reasonably priced outdoor activity which is available to everyone. The Inland Fisheries Group Outreach Programme was an exhibitor at the Disability Show in Lisburn in September 2015 and has followed up new contacts identified at the show.</li> </ul>	<p>This Support Service will establish Social Farming as a beneficial day opportunity for individuals, within the health and social care system, who are living with a learning disability or mental health issue.</p>



Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome/Impact
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building on the impact of the SoFAB, the Social Farming project, DAERA has allocated TRPSI funding in the 2015/16 financial year towards the development of a Social Farming Support Service to help embed this concept as a means to improve the lives of those living with disability or mental health problems through connection with farm families, agriculture and horticulture activities.</li> </ul>	
Improve how we consult and engage with people with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DARD undertook a public consultation on its Disability Action Plan during the period 21 January to 17 April 2015. Prior to launching the consultation the Equality Officer met with key disability organisations to discuss actions being proposed in the Plan. We received five responses to the consultation. Each of the responses was considered and a feedback report included in our response to each responder, advising of the outcome of our consideration to their suggested amendments.</li> </ul>	

2 (e) Please outline **any additional action measures** that were fully achieved other than those listed in the tables above:

Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcome/Impact
N/A		

3. Please outline what action measures have been **partly achieved** as follows:

	<b>Action Measures partly achieved</b>	<b>Milestones/ Outputs</b>	<b>Reasons not fully achieved</b>
1	Promote the staff Disability Forum and encourage new members to join and to play an active role.	<p>In June 2015 Equal Opportunities Section issued a survey to all industrial staff which approximately 15% of them completed. The survey encouraged anyone with a disability who had not already declared that they have a disability on their HR record to consider doing so.</p> <p>The survey also sought views on what more DARD could do to assist those with a disability in their workplace as well as seeking feedback on individual's experiences of the reasonable adjustment process.</p> <p>The Disability forum has continued to be represented at meetings of the Equality Steering Group.</p>	This has been another challenging year for the Forum. With the recent NICS voluntary exit scheme reducing the number of reps on the Forum, progress has been limited this reporting year. Discussions are ongoing on the way forward with regard to the Forum.
2	Improve representation across DARD forums, groups, committees etc.	To support the delivery of the new policy statement on equality, diversity and inclusion policy and ensure the Department is proactive in its work to promote and enhance equality, diversity and inclusion, the Department appointed its own Diversity Champion.	This has been a very challenging year for the Department and further work needs to be taken in this area and will be carried over to the revised Disability Action Plan 2016-2020.

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Reasons not fully achieved
		<p>The Champion has been working alongside the other Diversity Champions to support this corporate work and to look at how best to increase awareness, knowledge and understanding of the issue across the Department. In addition the Champion is also involved as a member of the Co-ordinating Committee of the NICS Senior Women's network, which was launched in May 2015.</p> <p>An event was held in March 2016 and was attended by approximately 50 staff with the Equality and Good relations Officer of Belfast City council attending as guest speaker. It is envisaged that this will be the first in a series of events held across the Department to celebrate and embrace diversity.</p>	
3	Display positive messages and images about people with disabilities.	When appropriate we have included equality focused wording in key press releases, and have portrayed images and wording about disabled people in a positive manner.	This is a continuing action and further work needs to be taken in this area and will be carried over to the revised Disability Action Plan 2016-2020.

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Reasons not fully achieved
3	Display positive messages and images about people with disabilities.	When appropriate we have included equality focused wording in key press releases, and have portrayed images and wording about disabled people in a positive manner.	This is a continuing action and further work needs to be taken in this area and will be carried over to the revised Disability Action Plan 2016-2020.
4	Raise awareness about autism.	A permanent student support officer at CAFRE has been appointed, and has attended a number of Autism specific training courses. Each CAFRE campus has designated quiet areas, which all students can avail of and all campuses are well signposted, and students take part in orientation activities at the start of term.	This is a continuing action and further work needs to be taken in this area and will be carried over to the revised Disability Action Plan 2016-2020.

4. Please outline what action measures **have not been achieved** and the reasons why.

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
	N/A	

## 5. What **monitoring tools** have been put in place to evaluate the degree to which actions have been effective / develop new opportunities for action?

### (a) Qualitative

**DARD Website:** Regular monitoring and publication of standard of website accessibility; web accessibility testing as appropriate.

**Facilities Management:** The effectiveness of the personal evacuation plans is assessed with individuals during evacuations (practice and real) to ensure they meet all parties' needs.

**CAFRE:** Specific training needs are discussed and assessed at the start of each academic year, and a training plan implemented to meet those needs.

### (b) Quantitative

**Facilities Management:** All personal evacuation plans for disabled staff are assessed and tested twice yearly through practice evacuations.

**CAFRE:** Training is provided for staff when it is identified that they will have students with specific difficulties. This is deemed the best approach as training can be tailored to the individual students' needs. The effectiveness of this training is monitored through interviews with the students to determine the level of satisfaction with the support they receive.

6. As a result of monitoring progress against actions has your organisation either:

- made any **revisions** to your plan during the reporting period or;
- taken any **additional steps** to meet the disability duties which were not outlined in your original disability action plan/any other changes?

N/A.

7. Do you intend to make any further **revisions to your plan** in light of your organisation's annual review of the plan? If so, please outline proposed changes? No

No.

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