

Disability Action Plan
for
Mid Ulster District Council
2021-2026

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Foreword

This Disability Action Plan is a statement of the Council's commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity for disabled people and complements its Equality Scheme under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

This is Mid Ulster District Council's second Disability Action Plan and it has been designed to ensure that the Council fulfils its statutory obligations in compliance with section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (NI) 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.

These are collectively referred to as 'the disability duties.' The Council is committed to the fulfilment of its disability duties in all parts of its organisation and this plan sets out how it intends to do this.



Cllr Cathal Mallaghan
Chair



Adrian McCreesh
Chief Executive

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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
- to encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

These are collectively referred to as ‘the disability duties’.

1.2 Under Section 49B of the DDA 1995, Mid Ulster District Council 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.

1.3 The Council is committed to the fulfilment of its disability duties in all parts of its organisation and has set out how it intends to do so in this Plan.

2. The Purpose of the Disability Action Plan

2.1 The purpose of this Plan is to set out how Mid Ulster District Council in relation to the delivery of its functions.

3. The Council – its role and functions

3.1 The roles and functions of Local Government in Northern Ireland are provided by the Local Government Act (NI) 1972, the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 and other Miscellaneous Acts and Regulations.

3.2 As a result of Local Government Reform, the Council has been given a wide range of transferring functions including functions relating to planning, roads, regeneration and community development, economic development and local tourism. Council now also has a leading role the Community Planning implementation process. The Council will facilitate and coordinate a joined up approach to the delivery of key projects and services which will address and improve local issues and challenges identified via the Community Planning development process.

3.3 The Council performs four principal roles within its local area and district:

- Direct service provision in response to community needs and legislative requirements – setting priorities for the area and for the Council and being accountable for the choices made.
- A development role as enabler/facilitator on economic and community development initiatives enabling and empowering local people; setting out the vision for local strategies in partnership with other agencies.
- A representative role on boards such as health and education – championing the district.
- A consultative role on issues such as water, roads and housing, by providing a challenge to the performance of all of the delivery agencies in the district.

3.4 In the performance of the above roles the Council will carry out functions in the following areas:

- Refuse Collection and Disposal
- Recycling and Waste Management
- Civic Amenity Provision
- Grounds Maintenance
- Street Cleansing
- Cemeteries
- Public Conveniences
- Food Safety
- Health & Safety
- Environmental Protection
- Environmental Improvement
- Estates Management Building Design and Maintenance
- Building Control
- Inspection/Regulation of New Construction
- Dog Control
- Enforcement Byelaws Litter etc.
- Licensing
- Sports and Leisure Services
- Sports and Recreational facilities
- Parks, Open Spaces, Playgrounds
- Community facilities
- Arts, Heritage and Cultural Facilities

- Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages
- Spatial Planning & Regeneration
- Community Planning
- Off Street Car Parking

The Council also has a role in:

- Economic Development
- Community Development
- Community Safety
- Sports Development
- Tourism

3.5 To enable the Council to provide the above services and perform its other functions, the Council must levy an annual rate and has the power to:

- acquire and dispose of land
- borrow money
- employ staff
- procure goods and services

3.6 To support and implement the above statutory functions and provision of services and facilities, the Council will adopt a wide range of policies.

4. Public life positions over which the Council has responsibility

4.1 A key aspect of the disability duties is to encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

4.2 The Review Report on the Effectiveness of the Disability Duties (Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, December 2009) identified a misunderstanding among public authorities regarding the definition of the public life with some authorities defining public life positions as public appointments. The Commission's guide makes it clear that the definition of public life is wider than this and includes:

- participation in focus groups or working groups
- participation in community group or fora
- local partnerships

- 4.3 Mid Ulster District Council does not have a responsibility for the membership of many such groups. However, Council is committed to ensuring that disabled people have the choice to be fully participative in groups/organisations that it has a responsibility for.
- 4.4 Council will also encourage other bodies such as community associations and user groups to take more positive steps towards including people with a disability and take accounts of their views.

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

- 5.1 Mid Ulster District Council is committed to implementing effectively the disability duties and this Disability Action Plan. In order to do so Council will put appropriate internal arrangements in place in order to ensure that the disability duties are complied with and this Disability Action Plan is effectively implemented.
- 5.2 We will ensure the effective communication of the Plan to employees and provide all necessary training and guidance for employees and elected members on the disability duties and the implementation of the Plan.
- 5.3 Overall responsibility for determining policy on how this will be achieved lies with the Elected Members, and day to day responsibility for carrying out the policy with the Chief Executive. As part of its corporate planning process, the Council will set objectives and targets relating to the disability duties. These will be reflected at all levels of planning within the Council including individual staff objectives.
- 5.4 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.

6. Internal Arrangements

- 6.1 The Council consists of 40 Elected Representatives, elected for four years periods meeting monthly at full Council. The Council has selected a traditional committee structure as its form of decision making.
- 6.2 The Council organises its business through 5 statutory committees that meet on a monthly basis and each of the Committees consists of 16 members. This is with the exception of the Audit Committee which has 8 members.
- 6.3 The Council also has the power to establish working groups.
- 6.4 The list below sets out current committees:
- Planning
 - Development
 - Environment
 - Policy and Resources
 - Audit
- 6.5 The Full Council meeting meets in full session on the last Thursday of every month when it receives and decides on reports and recommendations from the various committees.
- 6.6 The work of the Council operates under the leadership of the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive is responsible for giving the strategic direction and advice to the Council and oversees the preparatory work to ensure it is ready to deliver its services.
- 6.7 The Chief Executive will have the overall responsibility for the implementation of the Disability Duties and the Action Plan.
- 6.8 The point of contact for those seeking further information on the Action Plan is the Corporate Policy and Equality Officer (see page 1 for contact details) who will take specific responsibility for co-ordinating the day to day requirements for the delivery of the Action plan.

7. Effective Engagement and Consultation

- 7.1 Mid Ulster District Council is committed to engaging effectively with disabled people in the drafting, implementation, monitoring and review of this Plan.
- 7.2 The Council is committed to carrying out consultation in a meaningful manner in the development of its disability duties. In doing so the Council is keen to bring about change with and for people with disabilities and will therefore be focussing on the issue of involvement and participation in preparing and reviewing its Plan.
- 7.3 The Council's consultation process will be designed to ensure that people with disabilities are consulted at as early a stage as possible so that they can assist and inform the development of the Plan.
- 7.4 The Council will make every effort to remove any potential barriers to proper consultation by ensuring accessibility of documents in appropriate formats and in a timely fashion. Information will be made available on request in alternative formats. It will also be important to establish with people with a disability, the basis for dialogue and engagement during the life of the Plan. A variety of methods of discussion will be used such as meetings, one to one discussions, telephone and text phone discussions. Consideration will also be given to how best to communicate information to young people with a disability, as well as considering additional dimensions such as ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation and religious belief.
- 7.5 The Council believes it is important that people with disabilities are involved in the implementation, monitoring and review of the Plan. The Council will seek views and comments on the specific actions when they are developed and will consider amending them or including additional ones following the comments received.

8. Annual Report and Review

- 8.1 The Council will prepare report annually on the implementation of its Plan. The report will be included as part of the Council's annual report to the Equality Commission on the implementation of our equality scheme.
- 8.2 A copy of the full annual report and further reviews will be made available on the Council's website.

9. Action Measures

- 9.1 The Council continues to complete a number of actions which help promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage their participation in public life. These action measures include committing to:

Action Measure 1: Equality proof our Community Plan

Action Measure 2: Integrate our Disability duties into policies, programmes, plans and strategies

Action Measure 3: Include 'Changing Places' facilities in capital build projects venues (where a need is established)

Action Measure 4: Maintain Council's partnership working with Mid Ulster Disability Forum and other with disability support services/ groups within the District in order to gauge their views and opinions

Action measure 5: Any new/substantially renovated play areas meet the highest possible standards of accessibility

Action measure 6: Appoint a Disability Champion at officer and elected member level to progress the disability duties

Action measure 7: Provide flexible work placements/taster placements for individuals with disabilities with a view to preparing them for paid employment

Action measure 8: Training on Accessibility Auditing provided to relevant Mid Ulster District Council Staff

Action measure 9: Develop, deliver and implement a programme of awareness training for Council Officers including members of the Senior Management Team

Action measure 10: Develop, deliver and implement a programme of awareness training for Elected Member

Action measure 11: Develop and implement effective means of communication for people who have hearing loss

Action measure 12: Ensure accessibility details for buildings and events are available on Council’s website

9.2 The table below sets out the measures that Council intends to undertake to take in order to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation:

Action Measure	Responsibility	Performance	Timeframe
1: ‘Equality proof’ our Community Plan	Senior Management Team/Head of Community Development	Better promotion of equality and services for people with a disability	Equality Screening will be carried out intermittently over the duration of the Community Plan
2: Integrate our Disability duties into policies, programmes, plans and strategies	All Policy Authors	All new and revised policies screened for impact on disability duties ensuring that issues which may affect people with a disability will be sorted out at the earliest possible juncture	Dip sample carried out every six months
3: ‘Changing Places’ facilities included in capital build projects (where a need is established)	Senior Management Team Head of Technical Services	The number of changing places established in Council owned facilities	A minimum of 6 Changing Places to be registered by Mid Ulster District Council by 2026

Action Measure	Responsibility	Performance	Timeframe
4: Maintain Council's partnership working with Mid Ulster Disability Forum and other with disability support services/groups within the District in order to gauge their views and opinions	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	<p>Focussed consultation and engagement with people with disabilities will be carried out in order to understand their needs and requirements.</p> <p>This will include a 3 stage check in process (commencement, mid-way point and at conclusion) on relevant projects and plan</p> <p>Consultation is also inclusive of the statutory agencies representing people who have a disability.</p>	Monthly meetings attended by relevant Mid Ulster District Council staff
5: Any new/substantially renovated play areas meet the highest possible standards of accessibility	Head of Leisure Head of Parks Head of Technical Services	Inclusive and accessible services for people with a disability	Inclusivity rate to be increased by 20% (from 17.5%) by 2026
6: Appoint a Disability Champion at officer and elected member level to progress the disability duties	Head of Democratic Services Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Disability champions appointed to promote disability issues both internal and external to Council	Annually
7: Provide flexible work placements/taster placements for individuals with disabilities with a view to preparing them for paid employment	Director of Organisational Development Corporate Learning & Development Manager	Flexible Opportunities provided for people with a disability. This will include flexible opportunities ranging from job tasters from ½ day to up to 2 days and work placements lasting from 5 days to up to 8 weeks. This may involve job sampling i.e. moving between different work areas/departments. The opportunities provided can be individualised to meet the needs of the participants.	Annually

Action Measure	Responsibility	Performance	Timeframe
8: Training on Accessibility Auditing provided to relevant Mid Ulster District Council Staff	Director of Organisational Development Corporate Learning & Development Manager	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer will be skilled to advise	9 members of staff to be trained. Staff to be sought from various departments.
9: Develop, deliver and implement a programme of awareness training for Council Officers including members of the Senior Management Team	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer/Heads of Service	Increased awareness of disability legislation and understanding of the issues relating to the service users	Awareness Sessions X2 delivered Annually from 2021 Equality Screening training X1 delivered annually Employers for Disability Sessions (various topics) SMT Awareness Session X1 delivered annually
10: Develop, deliver and implement a programme of awareness training for Elected Members	Head of Democratic Services Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Increased awareness of disability legislation and understanding of the issues relating to the service users	Disability Awareness Sessions x2 Annually from 2021
11: Develop and implement effective means of communication for people who have hearing loss	Corporate Policy & Equality Officer	Appropriate and effective means of communication are in place	2021

Action Measure	Responsibility	Performance	Timeframe
12: Ensure accessibility details for buildings and events are available on Council's website	Heads of Service	Required information provided on Council's website	2021

10. How the disability action plan will be published

10.1 Following submission to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, this Plan will be available by contacting:

Ann McAleer
 Corporate Policy & Equality Officer
 Mid Ulster District Council, Dungannon Office
 Circular Road
 Dungannon BT71 6DT

Tel: 03000 132 132

E: ann.mcaleer@midulstercouncil.org

10.2 The availability of the Disability Action Plan will be advertised in the press and can be accessed on Council's website:

www.midulstercouncil.org/equality

10.3 The Council will, through our on-going work with people with disabilities and people with learning disabilities, find appropriate ways of communicating the Plan. The Plan will be produced in clear print and plain language, and will be available in alternative formats on request.

10.4 The contents of the Disability Action Plan will be highlighted through press releases, advertisements, Council literature and by meeting directly with disability organisations, representative groups and individuals.

10.5 In addition, a summary Plan as well as a full version of the Plan will be available on the intranet or in alternative formats upon request.