

Disability Action Plan 2020-2022

Public Health Agency (PHA)

Updated April 2020

If you need this document in another format or language please get in touch with us. Our contact details are at the back of this document.

| What is in this report? | Page |
|--|-------------|
| Introduction | 3 |
| Who is included in our plan | 4 |
| How we developed this plan | 4 |
| How we have updated this plan | 5 |
| What we do | 5 |
| How people can be involved in our work | 7 |
| What we have done up to now | 7 |
| What we are going to do | 10 |
| Action Plan 2020-2022 | 11 |

Introduction

The Public Health Agency is committed to best practice with regards to our staff and service users that have a disability. We aim to be recognised as leaders in Health and Social Care for equality and diversity. The law says that in our work we have to:

- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

The law also says that we have to develop a disability action plan. We have to send this plan to the Equality Commission. The plan needs to say what we will do in our work to make things better for people with disabilities.

As Andrew Dougal and Valerie Watts – Chair & Chief Executive of the Public Health Agency – have stated we want to make sure we do this in a way that makes a difference to people with a disability. We will put in place what is necessary to do so. This includes people, time and money. Where it is right to do so, we will include actions from this plan in the yearly plans we develop for the organisation as a whole. These are called ‘corporate’ plans or ‘business’ plans.

We will also put everything in place in the organisation to make sure that we do what we have to under the law. This includes making one person responsible overall for making sure we do what we say we are going to do in our plan.

We will let our staff know what is in our plan. We will also train our staff and help them understand what they need to do.

The person in our organisation who is responsible for making sure that we do what we have promised to do is Ed McClean. If you have any questions you can contact Ed McClean at:

Name: Ed McClean

Title: Director of Operations

Address: 4th floor (South), 12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast, BT2 8BS

Telephone number: 03005550114 prefix with 18001 for Text Relay

Email: Edmond.mcclean@publichealth.hscni.net

Every year we write up what we have done of those actions we said we would take. We send this report to the Equality Commission. We also publish this report on our website:

<http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/>

We have a look at the plan every year to see whether we need to make any changes to it. If we need to, we write those changes into the plan. Before we make any big changes we talk to people who have a disability to see what they think.

When we finish an action we take it off the plan for the next year. That way we keep our plan up to date. It shows what we still have to do.

Who is included in our plan?

Our plan relates to the following key areas:

- People with physical disabilities;
- People with sensory disabilities (such as sight loss or hearing loss);
- People with autism or Asperger's Syndrome; people with dyslexia; people with learning disabilities;
- People with mental health conditions (such as depression); and,
- People with conditions that are long-term (such as cancer or diabetes).

It also covers people who are included in more than one of these areas. We have other equality laws that require us to promote equality of opportunity across a number of diverse categories. In our plans we need to also think about other factors such as caring responsibilities, age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity and marital status.

How we developed this plan

In developing this plan we looked at what we have done so far to make a difference for people who have a disability. We also read what the Equality Commission said would be good to do. All this helped us think about what else we could do to make a difference.

We thought it was important to involve people who have a disability in developing our plan. So we invited any of our staff who have a disability to be part of a small group to work on this. We also said that any of our staff who are interested could join.

We then invited disability groups to a meeting to find out what they thought about our ideas. We also asked them whether there was anything else we could do.

The plan then went to public consultation, to get the views of the general public on what we are going to do.

We reviewed our plan in 2015 following comments received by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. This plan covered the time from 2015-18.

In 2017, when our plan came towards its end, we spoke to the Equality Commission about what we should best do. This is because in late 2015, the Minister for Health announced that there would be important changes in Health and Social Care that would affect us. The Health and Social Care Board would be closed and the Public Health Agency would be impacted by this in important ways. We agreed with the Equality Commission that we would extend our plan until those changes have been made; we would develop and consult on a new plan after that; and, in the meantime, we would update the plan every year to make sure we keep making things better for people with a disability.

How we have updated this plan

Some of our partner organisations in Health and Social Care, such as the Business Services Organisation and the Patient and Client Council, developed and consulted on new plans in 2017-18.

We have drawn on the learning from this work for the updated plan for 2020-22.

We have updated the actions that relate to working with us and have added a new action. We want to deliver on these together with our partner organisations in Health and Social Care. We have also updated actions that relate directly to what we do. Some of them seek to encourage greater participation of people with a disability in what we do. Through others we promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability.

What we do

The Public Health Agency is part of health and social care in Northern Ireland. We were set up in April 2009.

We do things like:

- We find out what things people need to protect them from diseases and other hazards.
- We find out what services people in Northern Ireland need to keep healthy.
- We do not provide the services but work with other organisations that are called Trusts and other voluntary and private organisations that do so.
- We buy services from Trusts including, for example, hospital services.
- We organise and buy screening services. This is about finding out at an early stage whether a person is ill or is at risk of becoming ill.
- We try to make it easier for people to make healthier choices, for example in what they eat.
- We work with other organisations to try and reduce the big differences between different groups of people in Northern Ireland in how healthy and well they are.
- We develop and run campaigns for the general public in Northern Ireland on important health topics, for example on smoking.
- We develop websites on a number of health topics, for example on drugs, alcohol and smoking. Some sites are for specific groups such as young people or health professionals.
- We support research. We also buy and pay for research. We carry out some of the research ourselves.
- We make sure we learn from when something goes wrong in how health care is provided in Northern Ireland.

- We work with other organisations to improve the range and quality of services, for example for people of all ages with learning disabilities.
- We need to make sure services are good quality and check out that they are.
- We work with other health and social care organisations to improve how they engage with those who use their services, with carers and with the public.
- We also employ staff.
- We have to make sure that we obey the laws about employment, services, equality and rights.

How people can be involved in our work

There are many ways in which people can be involved in the work of the Public Health Agency. This includes, for example:

- Focus groups in the development and evaluation of relevant public information campaigns, for example on flu or bowel cancer screening
- Project Retain – putting the voice of older people at the heart of nursing care
- HSC Research and Development: sitting on research funding awards panels or taking part in research steering groups.

What we have done up to now

This is some of what we have done already to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in public life.

Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people

- Images and photographs of events include people with a disability whenever they participate in these.
- For information targeted at people with a disability efforts are taken to include photographs of them.

- Disability issues are covered in much of PHA's communication due to its remit (for example reports on PHA conferences such as on brain injuries).
- On our behalf, the Equality Unit in the Business Services Organisation have developed a resource and checklist for staff on how to positively portray people with a disability in their work.
- The Equality Unit have developed a signposting resource for all staff on support available in the community. It includes information and contact details for a number of disability organisations. We update this resource every year.
- To date, we have held 13 disability awareness days for our staff. Each looked at different disabilities: Epilepsy, Sight loss and blindness, Depression, Hearing Loss and deafness, Learning disabilities, Cancer, Arthritis and Musculoskeletal conditions, Diabetes, Dyslexia, Multiple Sclerosis, Autism, Fibromyalgia, and on mild to moderate mental health conditions.
- We deliver training sessions on mental health awareness to our staff. Since 2015-16, we have delivered courses each year for staff and managers on mental health first aid, mindfulness and managing stress; and courses for staff who are carers.
- We developed a module on disability for inclusion in the eLearning "Discovering Diversity" training package. This resource is available to all Health and Social Care staff. We also developed a scenario focusing on disability issues in our new eLearning "Making a Difference". All our staff have to complete this training.
- In Equality Screening Training we look at how the disability duties can be considered in practice. Whenever staff take decisions they must write down what they have done or plan to do to promote the disability duties in their decisions.

Encourage the participation of disabled people in public life

- We set up a disability network for staff in the PHA and the other 10 regional Health and Social Care organisations. Part

of the role of this network is to raise disability issues with decision makers in our organisation.

- We participate in a disability work placement scheme together with the 10 other regional Health and Social Care organisations. This means we offer 26-weeks work placements for people who have a disability.
- Along with our partner organisations and led by the Equality Unit, we have put in place a process for publishing equality screening templates as soon as they are completed. A disability organisation had suggested that we do so. We do the same for publishing quarterly screening reports. We ask people for their thoughts and suggestions on our screenings.
- When we evaluate training that the Equality Unit delivers we include a question on the needs of trainees with a disability. This helps us to find out whether we need to make any further adjustments.
- We have adopted an Accessible Formats Policy. It says how we decide which documents we produce in a range of different formats. We have put together practical tips for staff, for example on how to get different formats done.
- We let our staff, service users and the public know that they can ask for materials in other formats such as in large print or as a CD.
- Nursing: we have involved people with a learning disability in developing the Regional HSC Hospital Passport. The passport is for people with a learning disability to complete (with or without help) and present to staff every time they have contact with a general hospital. It gives staff important information on the person and how they prefer to communicate, their medical history and any support they might need while in hospital.
- HSC Research and Development: we have held consultation exercises with surviving patients and carers with cancer as part of Cancer Conference.
- HSC Research and Development: we have run workshops for patients and members of the public to explore issues

related to becoming and being a member of the public involved in research and the role of researchers in facilitating this involvement. This course is called Building Research Partnerships.

- Service users with dementia, learning disability, mental health issues and their carers have been involved in the steering groups for the Bamford and Dementia Research Programmes. Persons with dementia and young people who are care leavers have also been involved on some of these projects as peer researchers.

What we are going to do

In the table below we list all the actions that we will do. We also say when we will do them. The Equality Unit in the Business Services Organisation (BSO) will support us in the implementation of this action plan.

Public Health Agency (PHA) Disability Action Plan 2020-2022

What we will do to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in public life

| What we will do | What we are trying to achieve | Performance Indicator and Target | By whom and when |
|--|--|--|---|
| 1. Allied Health Professionals Commission Action on Hearing Loss to deliver deaf awareness training to staff in the PHA. | Promotion of positive attitudes Ensure that staff are aware of challenges faced by people who are deaf, and what they can do to support someone who is deaf. Promotion of positive attitudes towards people who are deaf. | Training delivered for Nursing; Allied Health Professionals (AHP); Personal And Public Involvement (PPI); 10,000 Voices; and Patient Experience teams Training sessions evaluated | Assistant Director of Allied Health Professions, Personal and Public Involvement and Patient Experience End March 2022 |

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>2. HIV infection in pregnancy: Northern Ireland guidelines for the management of women and their babies</p> <p>Engage with HIV positive women who have experienced childbirth recently to review the new HIV guidelines and suggested changes to service provision.</p> | <p>Participation in public life</p> <p>Participation of HIV positive women in development of regional guidelines and care pathway across NI.</p> <p>Improvements in service provision for all low risk HIV positive women by offering antenatal care and delivery in local units.</p> <p>Promotion of positive attitudes towards HIV positive women through staff training.</p> | <p>Engagement with Positive Life members.</p> <p>Updated guidelines circulated to all Trusts.</p> <p>Awareness sessions delivered to all Trusts about the management of HIV positive mothers and their babies.</p> | <p>Regional Antenatal Infection Screening Programme Co-ordinator</p> <p>End March 2021</p> |
| <p>3. Northern Ireland Diabetic Eye Screening Programme</p> <p>Work alongside service-users to develop the new service delivery model for the NI Diabetic Eye Screening programme.</p> | <p>Participation in public life</p> <p>Ensure people with diabetes are involved in the planning of the change to the service. This co-production will improve the service for people with diabetes.</p> | <p>Engagement with service users on key aspects of service delivery, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • location of fixed sites across NI • communication strategies for different groups of patients. | <p>Assistant Director Public Health/Screening</p> <p>End March 2022</p> |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p>4. Staff Awareness Days</p> <p>Raise awareness of specific barriers faced by people with disabilities</p> | <p>Promotion of positive attitudes</p> <p>Staff are better equipped to identify and meet the needs of colleagues and service users with a disability</p> | <p>Two annual Awareness Days profiled in collaboration with voluntary sector groups.</p> <p>Features run on Connect (PHA intranet).</p> <p>>50% of staff participating in the evaluation indicate that they know more about people living with disabilities as a result of the awareness days.</p> | <p>Equality Unit</p> <p>End March 2021</p> |
| <p>5. Tapestry</p> <p>Promote and encourage staff to participate in the disability staff network and support the network in the delivery of its action plan.</p> | <p>Participation in public life</p> <p>Staff with a disability feel more confident that their voice is heard in decision-making.</p> <p>Staff with a disability feel better supported.</p> | <p>Feedback from Tapestry members</p> | <p>Agency Management Team with support from Equality Unit</p> <p>End March 2022</p> |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| <p>6. Disability Work Placements</p> <p>Create and promote meaningful placement opportunities for people with disabilities.</p> | <p>Promotion of positive attitudes</p> <p>People with a disability gain meaningful work experience.</p> <p>Staff are better equipped to identify and meet the needs of colleagues and service users with a disability</p> | <p>At least one placement offered by PHA every year</p> <p>Feedback through annual evaluation of scheme indicates that placement meets expectations.</p> | <p>Agency Management Team with support from Equality Unit</p> <p>End March 2021</p> |
| <p>7. Mental Health Charter</p> <p>Sign up to Mental Health Charter and to Every Customer Counts.</p> | <p>Promotion of positive attitudes</p> <p>Staff with mental health conditions feel better supported in the workplace</p> | <p>Promotion of both Charter Marks</p> | <p>Agency Management Team with support from Equality Unit</p> <p>End March 2022</p> |

Signed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Dougal'.

Andrew Dougal
Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Valerie Watts'.

Valerie Watts
Interim Chief Executive

Date 20 March 2020



4th floor (South), 12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast, BT2 8BS

Telephone: 03005550114

Textrelay: 18001 03005550114

You can also email us through our website on:

<http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/contact-us>

Updated April 2020