

Plean Gníomhaíochta um Dhaoine faoi Mhíchumas 2020-2023

Disability Action Plan 2020-2023



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 2020-2023 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 the second Disability Action Plan of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, 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 Laura Devlin

Chair of Newry, Mourne and Down  
District Council

---

Marie Ward

Chief Executive

## **Contents**

1 Introduction	Page 3
2 The role of Council, its functions and Structure	Page 3
3 Public life positions over which the Council has responsibility	Page 5
4 Commitment to the effective implementation of the Disability Action Plan	Page 5
5 Internal arrangement	Page 5
6 Effective Arrangement	Page 6
7 Annual Report	Page 6
8 Five Year Review	Page 6
9 Consultation	Page 6
10 Action Measures	Page 7
11 Timescale for the implementation of the Action Measures	Page 7
12 Action Plan 2020-2023	Page 8
13 How the Disability Action Plan will be published	Page 15

## **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 107,233 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

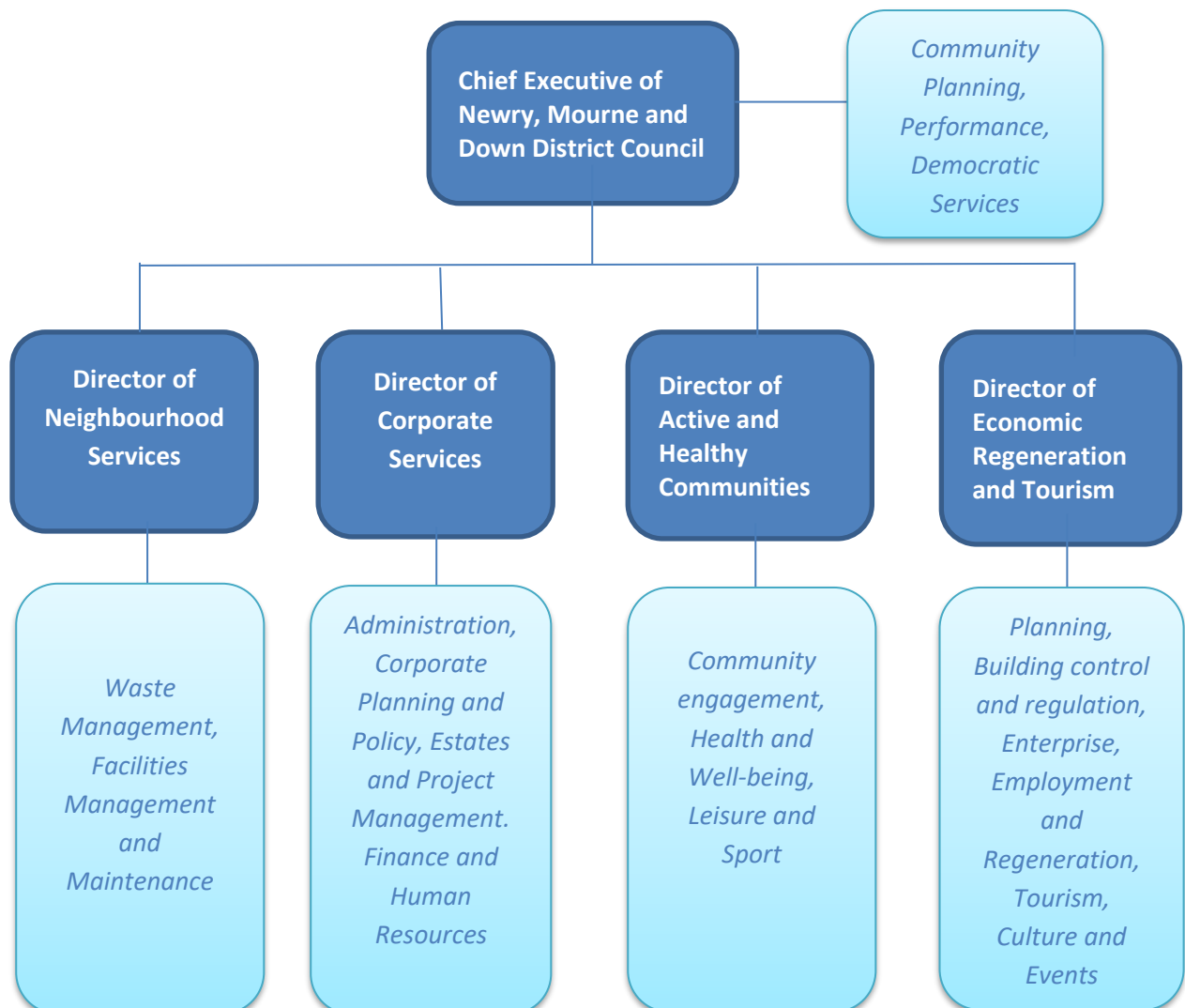
and ensure the views of people across Newry, Mourne and Down are reflected in the Council's decisions and how services are delivered.

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
- Neighbourhood Services
- 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 IV Partnership
- District Electoral Area Forums
- LAG Partnership
- Policing and Community Safety Partnership
- Albert Basin Park Task and Finish Working Group

3.2 The Council also appoints Elected Members to external organisations.

Examples of these include:

- Strangford Lough and Lecale Partnership
- Warrenpoint Harbour Authority
- APSE NI Executive Board
- Carlingford Lough Commissions Board
- East Border Region Directors 2019-2023

### **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, located within the Corporate Planning and Policy Department of the Corporate Services Directorate, 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 Corporate Planning and Policy Department is led by the Assistant Director of Corporate Planning and Policy. 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 is committed to carrying out meaningful consultation in the development and review of its Disability Action Plan. Council are keen to bring about change for people with disabilities and their carers by proactively taking measures in response to the disability Duties. Council would therefore like to ensure the involvement of people who have disabilities and those who care for people with a disability in the development of the plan.
- 9.2 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.

- 9.3 The Council has sought to ensure the involvement of people with disabilities by consulting with representative groups at both regional and local levels, as well as talking to, and meeting with individuals with a disability or carers.
- 9.4 The Council will consult 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, Cedar Foundation and Disability Sports NI.
- 9.5 The draft plan will be advertised on the council's website, newspapers and through social media in accordance with the council's policy section where comments will be sought from individuals and organisations.
- 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 has completed several actions which positively promote attitudes towards disabled people and encourage their participation in public life. These include:
- Activity Liaison Officer – Role is to provide participation opportunities for people with disabilities in sport and recreation to include participation in the arts and all other council activities;
  - 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;
  - Appointment of Diversity Champions;
  - Provision of an assisted bin collection.

## **11. Timeframe for the implementation for the Action Measures**

- 11.1 Newry, Mourne and Down District Councils revised Disability Action Plan is for the period 2020 to 2023.



Disability Action Plan					
1. Awareness & Understanding					
ISSUE	OUTCOME	POSITIVE ACTION	MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME
Disability Awareness and Training	To continue to embed an understanding of the council's 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"> <li>• Disability Awareness,</li> <li>• Autism Friendly,</li> <li>• Dementia Friendly,</li> <li>• Brian Injury Awareness</li> </ul> <p>Continue to provide training on disability duties for officers participating recruitment and selection panels</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>Monitor the impact of the training</p>	<p>Corporate Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Policy</li> <li>• Learning and Development</li> </ul> <p>SMT</p> <p>Chief Executives Department</p>	Ongoing and reviewed annually

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

		Continue to provide employment opportunities/work placements for people with disabilities  <b><i>(Relates to disability duty 2)</i></b>	Number of people employed	Human Resources	Ongoing
		Continue to engage with organisations on corporate consultations to ensure views of people with disabilities are heard  <b><i>(Relates to disability duty 1)</i></b>	Number of consultation workshops undertaken	Council Officers	Ongoing
<b>Promotion</b>					
<b>Issue</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Positive Action</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Positive Promotion	Raise the profile of Council's Diversity Champions	To undertake a PR campaign internally and externally to promote the role of and assistance given by the Council's Diversity Champions	Number of people who engage with Diversity Champions on issues	Diversity Champions  Council staff  Elected members	October 2020

		<b><i>Relates to disability duty 1)</i></b>			
Continue to raise awareness and positively promote disability	District Electoral Area Forums to host events supporting residents and organisations	<b><i>(Relates to both disability duties)</i></b>	Number of events held	DEAs	Ongoing and reviewed annually
	Chairperson of Council continue to support charities as part of their annual programme	<b><i>(Relates to disability duty 1)</i></b>	Number of charities supported	Chief Executive Office  Chairperson	Annually
	Council continue to 'light up' civic buildings on recognised days which support and raise awareness of disability	<b><i>(Relates to disability duty 1)</i></b>	Number of times civic building is 'lit'	Chief Executive Office	2 events per year
	Continue the Promotion of Newcastle as 'Autism Friendly'		Increase in the number of businesses	Economic Regeneration and Tourism	Ongoing

		<b><i>(Relates to both disability duties)</i></b>	signed up to the initiative		
<b>Access</b>					
<b>Issue</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Positive Action</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
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  <b><i>(Relates to disability duty 1)</i></b>	Number of council publications available in a variety of formats  Number of requests for information in alternative formats	Corporate Policy	June 2021
		'Making Information Accessible' training sessions to be delivered across Council  <b><i>(Relates to disability duty 1)</i></b>	Number of Council officials participating in 'Making Information Accessible' training sessions	Corporate Policy	October 2021
		Develop the corporate website ensuring it meets all accessibility requirements  <b><i>(Relates to disability duty 1)</i></b>	Availability of an accessible corporate website	Corporate Services  Corporate Communications and Marketing	March 2021

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><b><i>(Relates to both disability duties)</i></b></p>	<p>Building of a new Civic Centre and new Theatre and Conference Centre in Newry.</p>	<p>Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Directorate</p>	<p>March 2023</p>
		<p>Review of council facilities to ensure they are accessible to all members of the community</p> <p><b><i>(Relates to both disability duties)</i></b></p> <p>Council to meet the requirement of the Equality Commission's 'Every Customer Counts' initiative</p> <p><b><i>(Relates to both disability duties)</i></b></p>	<p>Percentage of Council owned facilities meeting the requirements of the 'Every Customer Counts' accessibility checklist</p>	<p>All Directorates</p>	<p>March - Annually</p>

		Investigate the possibility of extending the Shop Mobility scheme which currently operates in the Mourne DEA across other towns in the district  <b><i>(Relates to both disability duties)</i></b>	Numbers of people using service  Number of towns introducing the Shop Mobility Scheme	Economic Regeneration and Tourism Directorate  Active and Healthy Communities Directorate	Ongoing
		Continue to provide Autism Friendly programmes in Council leisure and community facilities.  <b><i>(Relates to both disability duties)</i></b>	Number of people participating in programmes and activities.	Active and Healthy Communities	Ongoing
		Review and promote the usage of the Council's Buddy Card Scheme.  <b><i>(Relates to both disability duties)</i></b>	Number of people availing of initiative	Active and Healthy Communities	September 2021
Complaints	Ensure people with a disability can access the Council's	Provide a range of accessible formats available to make a	Number of complaints	Corporate Services – Administration and Customer Services	Ongoing

	complaints/ comments procedure	complaint re council services  <b><i>(Relates to disability duty 1)</i></b>	Number of complaints referencing disability issues	Corporate Policy	Annually
<b>Workforce</b>					
<b>Issue</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Positive Action</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
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  <b><i>(Relates to disability duty 1)</i></b>	Relevant section 75 workforce data	Corporate Services – HR and Corporate Policy	December 2020
		Continue to facilitate requests for reasonable adjustments within the workplace  <b><i>(Relates to both disability duties)</i></b>	Number and type of requests for reasonable adjustments	All Directorates in conjunction with Health & Safety Section	Ongoing



### **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:

Suzanne Rice  
Corporate Policy and Equality Officer  
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council,  
Monaghan Row,  
Newry  
BT35 8DJ  
Telephone: 0300 013 2233  
[suzanne.rice@nmandd.org](mailto:suzanne.rice@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:

[www.newrymournedown.org](http://www.newrymournedown.org)

- 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.