



Loughs Agency
Draft Disability Action Plan

December 2020

Accessibility Statement:

Requests for the document in an alternative format will be considered.

Please email: general@loughs-agency.org

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) (as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006), Loughs Agency is required when 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 ('the disability duties').
- 1.2 Under Section 49B of the DDA 1995, Loughs Agency is also required to submit to the Equality Commission a Disability Action Plan demonstrating how it proposes to fulfill these duties in relation to its functions.
- 1.3 The Board and Chief Executive of Loughs Agency are committed to implementing effectively the disability duties and this Disability Action Plan. We will seek to allocate the necessary resources (in terms of people, time and money) in order to effectively implement this Plan and where appropriate, build objectives and targets relating to the disability duties into annual operating plans.
- 1.4 We will also put appropriate internal arrangements in place to ensure that the disability duties are complied with and this Disability Action Plan effectively implemented. We will ensure the effective communication of the Plan to staff and to providing all necessary training and guidance for staff on the disability duties and the implementation of the Plan.
- 1.5 We confirm our commitment to submitting an Annual Report to the Equality Commission on the implementation of this Plan, as well as carrying out a three-year review of this Plan. Loughs Agency is committed to consulting with people with disabilities and groups that represent people with disabilities.
- 1.6 Overall responsibility for implementing, reviewing and evaluating this Disability Action Plan and the point of contact within Loughs Agency will be:
- Name:** John Paul O'Doherty
Title: Interim Director of Corporate Services
Phone number: 028 71 342100
Email: jp.odoherty@loughs-agency.org
Website: www.loughs-agency.org
- 1.7 If you require this Plan in an alternative format (such as in large print, in Braille, on audio cassette, easy read or on computer disc) and/or an alternative language, please contact the above person to discuss your requirements.
- 1.8 A copy of this Plan, the Agency's annual progress to the Equality Commission Northern Ireland (ECNI) and its three-year review of this Plan will be made available on the Agency's website at www.loughs-agency.org.

2. Functions

2.1 The Agency performs four principal roles within its remit:

- the promotion of development of Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough for commercial and recreational purposes in respect of marine, fishery and aquaculture matters;
- the conservation, protection and development of the inland fisheries of the Foyle and Carlingford Areas;
- the development and licensing of aquaculture, and
- the development of marine tourism.

2.2 In the performance of the above roles the Agency carries out functions in the following areas:

- Conservation and Protection.
- Development.
- Aquaculture and Shellfisheries.
- Corporate Services.

3 Promoting Positive Attitudes towards Disabled People

3.1 Loughs Agency has engaged with organisations that represent disabled people during consultation processes, as part of its Section 75 requirement, and will continue to do so.

Loughs Agency screens any policies / projects for equality impact assessment, taking due note of any adverse impact on disabled people.

3.2 Public Life Positions

Loughs Agency is a North South Body and therefore does not have control over the appointment of its Board. The North South Ministerial Council is responsible for the appointment of Loughs Agency's Board Members.

4. Action Measures

4.1 Outlined in Annex 1 and 2 below are the measures the Agency proposes to take over the three-year period of this Disability Action Plan, together with performance indicators or targets.

Year 1	2020-21
Year 2	2021-22
Year 3	2022-23

5. Effective Engagement

5.1 The Agency is committed to carrying out consultation in a meaningful manner in the development of its disability duties in accordance with the Equality Commissions guiding principles. In doing so the Agency is keen to bring about

change for disabled people and is therefore focusing on the issues of involvement and participation in preparing this Plan. The Agency is also committed to engaging effectively with disabled people and their representatives in the drafting, implementation, monitoring and reviewing of this Plan and will ensure that this engagement continues in the future.

5.2 It is hoped that these ongoing consultation measures will enable the Agency to:

- identify barriers faced by disabled people in participating in public life in general and specifically any barriers they have encountered in relation to their dealings with the Agency;
- identify circumstances in the past in which the Agency has not promoted positive attitudes towards disabled people and by identifying opportunities in the future for the Agency to promote such attitudes;
- set priorities and identify solutions as regards the taking of remedial action; and
- monitor and review the effectiveness of measures taken.

Following on from the initial consultation the Agency intends to further discuss the implementation of the Plan by meeting with:

- individuals;
- advisory groups;
- consultative panels; and
- by carrying out surveys and other innovative ways of involving disabled people.

5.3 The Agency is keen to ensure the highest level of inclusivity in consulting and therefore will consider the following:

- the time of day of meetings;
- the appropriateness of the venue, and whether it could be accessed by those with disabilities;
- how the meeting will be run;
- the use of appropriate language; and
- whether a signer or interpreter is necessary.

6. Annual Report

The Agency will prepare an Annual Report on the implementation of its Plan. The Annual Report will be included as part of the Agency's Annual Report to the Equality Commission on the implementation of its Equality Scheme.

7. Three-Year Review

The Agency will carry out a three-year review of its Plan, in consultation with the Equality Commission for NI.

8. Action Measures

It is everyone's responsibility to create a productive environment in which each person can fulfil their potential without unnecessary obstacles. The Agency is committed to a series of actions that it believes will help remove the disadvantage and social exclusion experienced by many people with disabilities.

In the tables below, Annex 1 and 2, the Agency lists all the actions that it suggests it will do, when they will be done and who will do them. This Action Plan is available on our website at www.loughs-agency.org. The Agency will send this Action Plan out to all those on its list of consultees in December 2020 for a period of 12 weeks and welcomes feedback on its Plan during this period. A series of meetings can be arranged during this consultation period upon request. The meetings can take place internally or externally in line with appropriate COVID-19 guidelines. After the 12 week period the Agency will consider any comments received and will make any necessary changes required to its Plan. A final version of the Plan will be published on the Agency's website. The Plan will also be distributed to all staff and Board Members within the Agency.

Signed by:

Chairman of the Board

Chief Executive

Annex 1: Actions To Promote Positive Attitudes Towards Disabled People.

Action Measures	Performance Indicators and Timescale / Lead	Outcomes
<p><u>Training</u> Deliver disability equality and etiquette awareness training programme to all employees.</p>	<p>Deliver 1 disability equality and etiquette awareness programme to all employees. Year 1-3.</p> <p>All staff to attend training within 6 months of commencing employment.</p>	<p>Develop the capacity of all staff to ensure awareness of legal obligations in relation to employment and service delivery.</p> <p>Develop the capacity of staff to remove attitudinal barriers to appointing employees.</p> <p>Promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people.</p>
<p>Provision of tailor-made course to employees.</p>	<p>Deliver 1 tailor-made course to employees relating to communicating effectively with disabled people. Year 3.</p>	<p>Develop the capacity of the Agency to support people with disabilities, focusing on communication.</p>
<p>Deliver disability equality and etiquette awareness training programme to all Board Members.</p>	<p>Deliver 1 disability equality legislation and disability and etiquette awareness programme to all Board Members. Year 1-3.</p> <p>All Board Members to attend training within 6 months of commencing Board position.</p>	<p>Board Members have improved knowledge of the disability legislation.</p> <p>Develop the capacity of Board Members to ensure awareness of disability related issues in Board decisions.</p> <p>Promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people among Board Members.</p>
<p>Provision of 1 tailor-made course to all Board Members.</p>	<p>Deliver 1 tailor-made course to Board Members relating to communicating effectively with disabled people. Year 3.</p>	<p>Develop the capacity of Board Members to support people with disabilities focusing on communication.</p>

Design, deliver, review and monitor procedures for all training programmes delivered to staff and Board Members.	Measurement and review design to incorporate reaction, learning and behaviour in all training programmes. Year 1-3 following training.	Training is up to date and relevant and will challenge negative stereotypes / attitudes towards disabled people. Promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people among Board Members.
Induction training for all new employees on disability duties.	Training requirements for new staff are formally reviewed at the beginning, midpoint and end of the annual performance cycle. As appropriate.	New staff have improved knowledge of the legislation and increased awareness of disability.
Training on good practice in relation to the recruitment / interviewing of a person with a disability for anyone involved in the recruitment panel / procedure.	Training requirements are reviewed at the initial stage of the recruitment competition. As appropriate.	Staff have improved knowledge of best practice and increased awareness of disability.
<u>Communication</u> The Agency will use internal methods of communicating with staff to raise awareness of national awareness days / weeks, particularly in terms of disability.	Disability related communication articles recorded. Year 1-3	Increased staff awareness and understanding of the needs of disabled people and how to better support disabled people.
Prepare an Annual Progress Report on the action points in this Disability Action Plan. The Progress Report will detail progress in terms of actions fully achieved, partially achieved and not achieved.	Annual Progress Report to the Equality Commission for NI (ECNI). Completed annually by the Director of Corporate Services.	ECNI will receive Annual Progress Report by the end of August each year.
Develop a corporate approach to the use of images, including photography, which reinforces a positive image of disabled people accessing Loughs Agency's services.	All publications will conform to new corporate approach. Year 2.	Positive attitudes to disabled people in all communications.

<p>Promote staff's health and wellbeing particularly in terms of mental ill health.</p>	<p>Enhanced understanding of how to maintain good mental health.</p>	<p>Positive attitudes towards disabled people and staff.</p>
<p>Develop opportunities to signing ECNI's Mental Health Charter.</p>	<p>Enhanced awareness of mental health issues.</p> <p>Supportive work environment for staff with mental health related issues.</p> <p>Sign up to ECNI's Mental Health Charter. Year 3.</p>	<p>Model employer for colleagues with a mental health disability.</p>
<p>Ensure staff and Board Members can easily and confidentially disclose their disability status through a confidential survey.</p>	<p>Increase in number of staff and Board Members disclosing if they have a disability. Year 2.</p>	<p>Better understanding of the disability profile of our workforce and Board Members.</p> <p>Positive attitudes to disabled people and staff.</p>

Annex 2: Encouraging and Supporting Full Participation of Disabled People in Public Life.

Measures	Performance Indicators /Timescales	Outcomes
Recruitment and selection procedures reviewed in line with best practice to remove barriers.	Reviewed recruitment and selection procedures. Year 3.	Improved access to job vacancies for disabled people.
Advertisement of positions for employees on external disability related groups and Employers for Disability NI jobs Bulletin Board.	Number and location of advertised positions for staff positions. As appropriate / HR.	Improved access to job positions for disabled people. Supporting full participation of disabled people in public life positions.