

Invest
Northern
Ireland

Building Locally
Competing Globally

Disability Action Plan

April 2011 - March 2014

Disability Discrimination Order (Northern Ireland) 2006



1. Introduction

1.1 Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006), requires Invest NI 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').

Section 49B of the DDA 1995 also requires Invest NI to submit to the Equality Commission a **Disability Action Plan** showing how it proposes to fulfil these.

1.2 Stephen Kingon (Chairman) and Alastair Hamilton (Chief Executive) of Invest NI, are committed to discharging the disability duties and implementing this Disability Action Plan. Invest NI will therefore:

- deploy people, time and money to put this plan into action and build objectives and targets on disability duties into corporate and annual operating plans;
- put in place internal arrangements to ensure that the disability duties are complied with and this disability action plan effectively implemented;

- ensure the effective communication of the plan along with training and guidance to staff on the disability duties and the plan;
- submit an annual report to the Equality Commission on the progress of the plan and carry out a review every five years;
- carry out timely, open and inclusive consultation in accordance with Equality Commission guidelines.

Pamela Marron will co-ordinate, review and evaluate the plan and is the point of contact within Invest NI.

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Should you require this plan in an alternative format (including Braille, disk, audio cassette or in minority languages to meet the needs of those whose first language is not English) then please contact the above person.

1.3 A copy of the plan, our annual report to the Equality Commission and our five year review is available at www.investni.com.

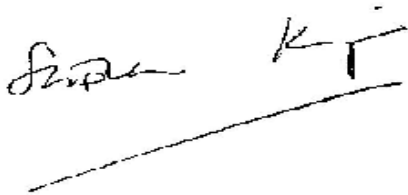
1.4 Functions of Invest NI

Invest Northern Ireland, a Non Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment (DETI), was formed in April 2002 as the main economic development organisation in Northern Ireland to help businesses, principally in manufacturing and tradable services, to compete internationally and by attracting new investment.

We offer companies a single point of contact for high-quality services, expert advice and support for growth particularly in strategy, research and development, people management, e-business, energy management and exports.

Our primary focus is to

“increase business productivity, the means by which wealth can be created for the benefit of the whole community”.



Stephen Kingon
Chairman

There are three client facing groups -

Innovation and Capability Development; Entrepreneurship and Enterprise and Business International – which work with client companies and are supported by a **Corporate Services Group**.

1.5 Public Life Positions

Invest NI is responsible for making appointments to the following publicly owned body

- NI-CO

Over the duration of this plan, Invest NI will review its range of public life positions and how it can best encourage those with disabilities to participate in those positions.



Alastair Hamilton
Chief Executive

2. Previous Measures

Outlined below are the key measures which Invest NI has already taken to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and to encourage the participation of disabled people in public life.

Our headquarters building in Bedford Square, Bedford Street was designed, built and operates to best practice guidelines following consultation with Disability Action.

- A textphone number is printed on all publications and on our website to ensure accessibility to our offices and staff.
- Publications are produced in alternative formats on request. A “Making Information More Accessible” document has also been produced and this has been distributed to all staff for guidance and to raise awareness. We are committed to making information more accessible and an audit on the accessibility of the Invest NI website has been carried out. The recommendations from this have been implemented and the site is now compliant with A guidance standards and we are looking at how we can improve accessibility.
- A Signer (English/Irish language as requested)/interpreter is present at key events. Invitations for events will also include a request for details of any special requirements.
- Equality co-ordinators have been appointed

within each division to assist with the implementation of our equality obligations. These co-ordinators are given update training every year to ensure they are aware of the latest legislation.

- Section 5 of the Invest NI Equality Scheme sets out our commitment to equality training and raising awareness.
- All programmes have been reviewed under the Accelerating Entrepreneurship and Business Development Solutions Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) to ensure that they are accessible to those with disabilities.
- We have also completed an EQIA on our Draft Corporate Plan 2008-2011 to ensure our high level strategies are now equality proofed. A new Corporate Plan is now being drafted for the period 2011 – 2014.

Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people

- Our website is accessible in accordance with the WC3 website guidelines.
- We have delivered equality training to all staff which has raised awareness of our responsibilities concerning people with disabilities.
- We have also held specific training on Disability Awareness and the two new disability duties. This training will be provided on an ongoing basis for all new

staff entering the organisation. Our diversity training has also been delivered to all staff and as above it too is provided on an ongoing basis for new staff members.

- Our building is fully accessible to encourage the participation of people with disabilities in our everyday activities.
- All our documentation is made available in alternative formats to help encourage people with disabilities to apply for and participate in public life positions.

Encourage the participation of disabled people in public life

Our approach is based on these principles:

- Everyone has the right to equal access to information.
- Information can be made available in various formats to suit particular needs.
- When we make information available in a format that an individual or group prefers we will do it quickly and for free.
- We make sure that people know how and where to get the information they need.
- When we cannot provide preferred formats we will make the information available in other ways. For example, we can arrange face-to-face meetings to pass on information; give an oral briefing; or give

staff time to help customers understand and complete forms.

- We also, where reasonably possible, provide interpreters and signers for those who would wish to attend any of our programmes or events.
- Some people may need help from a supporter who would come with them when we are providing information to them and we will make all reasonable adjustments to allow for this.
- Car parking is provided on site for staff who have a disability.
- Our HQ building is fully accessible and has been reviewed by the Disability Action Access Consultant. Toilets for people with disabilities are provided on all floors and a designated fire evacuation lift is available for emergency exit.
- We will also seek to make reasonable adjustments for any member of staff declaring a disability.
- All employees have undergone equality training to raise awareness of the issues surrounding Section 75 and equality of opportunity.

3. Action Measures

These measures in our Disability Action Plan will be taken between **April 2011 and March 2014**.

Measures to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage their participation in public life

Actions:	Outcomes:	By When:	Responsibility:
Update Invest NI website to make it more accessible for those with disabilities.	We are re-purposing our website to reflect the new 21 solutions approach for Invest NI. That means a new site style and copy on the existing Content Management System (CMS). The new site will be fully AA compliant.	Target is AA compliance by May 2011 on the existing CMS and continuing the AA compliance within a new CMS in Q3.	Corporate Communications and Marketing unit and IT Team
Raise awareness with all staff regarding the Disability Discrimination Act and our Disability Action Plan, through updates in staff magazines and the use of visual aids such as the Ability NI Disability Exhibition and sponsorship of the Ability NI Calendar.	Staff have an improved awareness of the disability duties and our disability action plan, helping to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.	Ongoing, as and when opportunities become available.	Equality Team
Ensure training is provided to employees on the disability equality legislation.	All staff are trained on our obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act legislation including our top management team and board.	Ongoing. All staff have been trained to date and this will continue for new staff as they enter into the organisation.	Learning and Development Team
Provide a more inclusive service to customers with hearing impairments.	Courses on sign language are periodically offered to staff and members of the facilities management team.	Courses will continue to run on an ongoing basis.	Learning and Development Team
Ensure all HQ Facilities Staff have received training on how to provide an inclusive customer facing service for people with disabilities. This will include refresher training on	All HQ Facilities Staff are trained on our obligations on the Disability Discrimination Act legislation and be able to provide a more inclusive service.	Ongoing. This will continue for new staff coming into the organisation.	Learning and Development Team

Actions:	Outcomes:	By When:	Responsibility:
usage of textphones.			
Ensure our recruitment and selection procedures are inclusive and encouraging to those with disabilities to participate in recruitment trawls.	We advertise positions within the Employers for Disability Bulletin Board, as well as via the mainstream press and include welcome statements in all our job advertisements to encourage those with disabilities to apply for jobs within the organisation.	Monitoring of applicants will continue to be reviewed annually and feedback from Section 75 groups will continue to be implemented on a year by year basis.	Human Resources Team
Ensure our buildings are easily accessible to all those with disabilities.	Ongoing audits are completed by the HQ facilities team to ensure compliance with best practice recommendations.	Ongoing and fully implemented via the Communications and Access EQIA which is available for public consultation from May 2011 to 1 st August 2011.	Facilities Management Team and Equality Team
Encourage those with disabilities to participate in the public life positions.	We will seek to encourage people with disabilities to become involved in public life positions within our remit, (currently the NI-CO Board).	The Chairman and two NI-CO Board members were reappointed to a second term in 2010, their positions will be re advertised in November 2012 for appointment on 31 st March 2013.	Corporate Co-Ordination Team and Equality Team
Encourage those with disabilities to consider starting their own business. We will seek to encourage people with disabilities to consider becoming entrepreneurs and tailor the advice available to overcome barriers experienced by those with disabilities.	'Working for Me' seminar to run in conjunction with Disability Action. The seminar aims to provide information of both a general and specific nature to encourage entrepreneurship amongst people with disabilities. To include case studies relating to micro business and also information relating to impact on benefit payments, as well as an overview on support offered by Invest NI as a whole.	First event in September 2011 with consideration given to introducing this as an annual event	Equality Team.

4. Publication of Final Results and Decision

Invest NI received one response during the consultation process; this was from Disability Action, whose comments are listed below. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Disability Action for their time and input.

COMMENT	INVEST NI RESPONSE
Regarding Disability Awareness and DDO training Disability Action requests information on how Invest NI measures improved awareness as a direct result of training. (Positive Attitudes)	There is routine monitoring of all training within Invest NI, but beyond this it is difficult to quantify shifts in positive attitudes other than through extensive and expensive research that cannot be warranted in the current economic climate
Disability Action seeks clarity on whether Invest NI have designated car parking for disabled visitors/clients. (Public Life)	Car parking spaces is available on request only as spaces are limited. However, street parking is available on two sides of the building.
Regarding Invest NI's website Disability Action would advise that the minimum recommendation is for level AA in relation to accessibility. Disability Action would ask if the action regarding the website update has been completed.	The revised website was designed to be AA compliant but we have yet to verify this with a 3 rd party; however this will be done shortly, (see action plan for more detail).
Action regarding encouraging people with disabilities to participate in public life is somewhat vague. Disability Action believes that this measure should outline how this will be achieved.	Invest NI welcomes further dialogue with Disability Action to clarify appropriate positive actions, however we would highlight that welcome statements have been used the past and will continue to be used within advertisements for board positions, to encourage applications from people with disabilities.
Disability Action requests information on the number of requests for public appointment information.	Invest NI are responsible for the appointment of NI-CO board only and all appointments to NI-CO are handled through DETI's Public Appointments Unit rather than Invest NI directly.

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