

Disability Action Plan

April 2018 – March 2022

Accessibility statement

Any request for the document in another format or language will be considered.

Please contact equality.unit@eani.org.uk

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1 Introduction

The Education Authority (EA) has to follow the law which says that in our work we have to:

- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- encourage participation of 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 to make things better for people with disabilities.

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' 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 make sure we let our staff know what is in our plan. We will also train our staff and help them understand what they need to do to support people with a disability.

The person in our organisation who is responsible for making sure that the actions in this plan are taken forward is Matthew McDermott.

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

www.eani.org.uk

We will also review our plan every year to make sure we are doing what we said we would do. At the end of four years we will look at our plan in more detail and make changes if needed and also see what else we could do.

Whenever we develop or look at our plan we will invite people who have a disability to help us.

2 Who is included in our plan?

Our plan relates to the following key areas:

- People with physical disabilities;
- People with sensory disabilities;
- People with learning disabilities;
- People with mental health disabilities; and,
- People with other hidden disabilities.

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 for people with different backgrounds. In our plans we need to also think about other factors such as caring responsibilities, age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity and marital status.

3 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 then read what the Equality Commission said would be good to do. This was after they had looked at what other organisations have done.

At the same time as writing our disability action plan, we have also been writing an equality action plan. In order to write both action plans, we carried out an Audit of Inequalities, which is a large piece of research used to help us find out where the major inequalities exist and how we can develop actions to help this.

As part of this, we looked at research reports written by other people and the Equality Commission, we looked at information we have within EA and we talked to a range of people including those in the community and voluntary sectors.

We held a meeting of our Joint Consultative Forum and talked to children and young people from a number of school pupil councils and Youth Councils.

We also talked to our own staff and EA Board members. All this helped us think about what else we could do to make a difference.

4 What we do

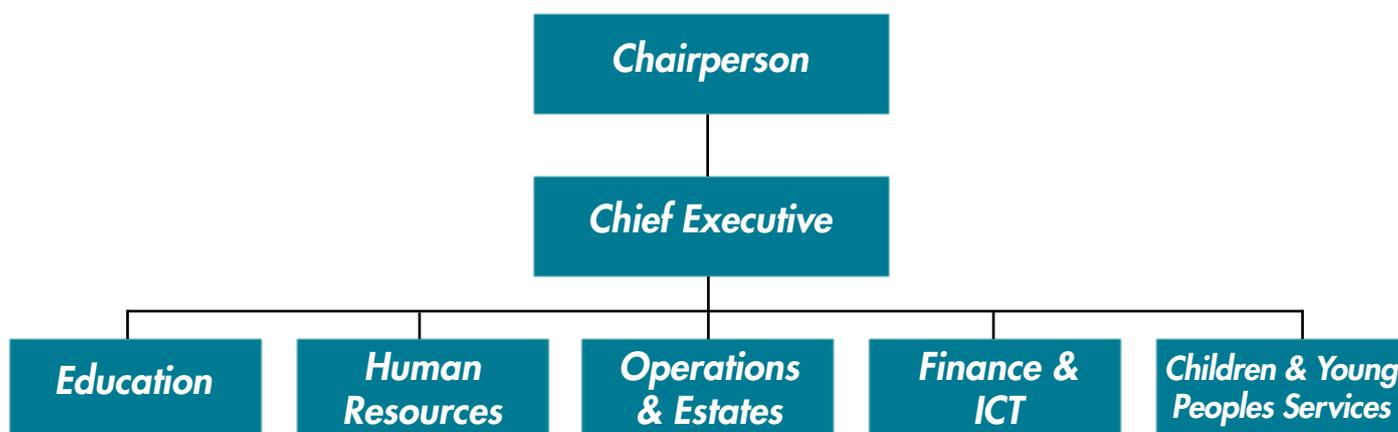
The Education Authority was established on 1 April 2015 under the Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2014. It replaced the five Education and Library Boards as a regional authority with responsibility for the delivery of education services in Northern Ireland.

We work in partnership with many other organisations in Northern Ireland to help deliver an education service for all children and young people.

We also employ a lot of people, about 40,000 in Northern Ireland, in schools and youth centres. They provide school meals, drive buses, they are classroom assistants and teachers and we also employ people in our administration offices.

The Education Authority has five Directorates. This is how we manage our work.

Diagram 1 - Directorates within the Education Authority



Each Directorate is responsible for a range of services and functions:

Human Resources and Legal Services

Responsible for policies and procedures for our staff and schools, including equality and legal services.

Operations & Estates

Making sure our buildings are good quality, that pupils can get their meals and can get to and from school safely and on time.

Finance & ICT

Making sure that we spend money wisely and don't spend more money than we have.

Education

Helping schools to prepare their plans and manage their staff.

Children & Young Peoples Services

Ensuring services are in line with the law and helping children and young people get access to educational services.

Chief Executives Office

Responsible for making our plans and how we communicate with people and making sure everybody does what they say they will do.

5 How people can be involved in our work

There are a number of ways in which people can be involved in the work of the Education Authority. This can be through:

- Working groups;
- Focus groups;
- Engagement events;
- Consultation events;
- Public meetings;
- Social media;
- Join Boards of Governors; and,
- We would also encourage engagement in the public appointments to the Education Authority Board.

Many of the actions in our plan, we cannot do alone, so we will work with other organisations including other public authorities to make the changes needed.

6 What we are going to do

In the table we list all the actions that we suggest we will do. We also say when we will do them and who will do them. This action plan is available on our website:

www.eani.org.uk

We will send this action plan out to all those on our list of consultees in April 2018 and give everyone 12 weeks to come back and tell us what they think of our plan. We can go and meet with people / groups if they want us to.

After the 12 weeks we will make any changes needed to our plan and publish a final document on our website. We will also make sure all our staff and EA Board members know about the plan.

7 Disability Action Plan

(1) Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people

	What we want to achieve (Outcome)	How we are going to do it (action)	How we will prove we have done it (metrics)	Who will do it	By when
1.1.	We will raise awareness of disability and the disability duties with our senior leadership team and Board members	We will provide a training session to our senior leadership team and Board members on disability equality and the disability duties	We will evaluate the training session	Equality Unit	Year 1
1.2.	Staff will be engaged and awareness will be raised about particular disabilities	We will host disability awareness days twice a year for staff and invite the community sector to participate	We will engage staff after the events to seek their feedback.	Equality Unit and Disability Working Group	Year 1 (one awareness day) Moving to twice a year
1.3.	Staff will have an improved knowledge of disability equality and how it relates to their work	We will develop an eLearning training programme for EA staff on understanding disability	Training evaluations	Equality Unit	Year 4

1.4.	Staff will have an improved knowledge of disability equality and how it relates to their work	We will incorporate disability awareness into EA corporate induction	Induction content	Learning and Development, Human Resources	Year 1
1.5.	Staff will have an improved knowledge of disability equality and how it relates to their work	EA will ensure staff are up to date with required disability related training including on reasonable adjustments, and report on training undertaken each year	Training records	All Directorates	On-going
1.6.	We will be a model employer for colleagues with a mental health disability	We will sign up to, adopt and implement the principals contained within the Mental Health Charter and associated work plans developed by the consortium of mental health organisations and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland	We will be hold the Equality Commission Mental Health Charter status	Health and Wellbeing, Human Resources	Year 1-4
1.7.	People with a disability will be more aware of jobs that are available in EA	We will establish links with the voluntary sector and other relevant organisations to have our job opportunities	Jobs will be issued through the voluntary and community sector networks	Recruitment, Human Resources	Year 1

			promoted through their networks and websites We will report on this annually			
1.8.	We will enhance our organisational culture to become more disability aware	We will identify and appoint a Disability Champion at EA Board	The Board minutes will record the disability champion	Equality Unit	Year 1	
1.9.	We will enhance our organisational culture to become more disability aware	We will have a corporate approach to the use of images including photography in corporate publications, which enforces a positive image of people with disabilities accessing our services	EA publications	Communications	Year 1	
1.10.	We will have a better understanding of the disability profile of our workforce	We will ensure the new Human Resources system allows staff to easily and confidentially disclose their disability status	Increase in number of staff that disclose they have a disability	HR Transformation Programme Manager	Year 2 & Year 4	

1.11.	Parents of deaf or hard of hearing pupils in our schools will have access to a professional, accredited interpreter in a timely manner	We will review the EA Sign Language Interpretation Service for deaf or hard of hearing parents and develop a new service.	A new policy and procedure will be developed, with an appropriate support service	Equality Unit	Year 2
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(1) Encouraging the participation of disabled people in public life

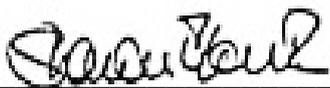
	What we want to achieve (Outcome)	How we are going to do it (action)	How we will prove we have done it (metrics)	Who will do it	By when
2.1.	Our staff will be engaged in our work around disability	We will set up a Disability Working Group made up of staff with a disability or carers of people with a disability, to support the implementation of this action plan	Disability Working Group established Terms of Reference Minutes and meeting	Equality Unit	Year 1
2.2.	We will better understand the needs of our staff with disabilities and those that care for someone with a disability, and they will feel better engaged. Staff with disabilities will also be better supported in the workplace.	Building on the work of the Disability Working Group, we will establish a Disability Staff Support Network	Disability Support Network Terms of Reference Staff surveys	Equality Unit with support from Organisational Development	Year 3
2.3.	We will encourage feedback from disabled people and their	Disability Issues will feature as part of the	Joint Consultative Forum Agenda and Minutes	Equality Unit	Ongoing

	representative groups on how we can encourage greater participation by disabled people in public life and act on this feedback	agenda of the Joint Consultative Forum			
2.4.	We will work to support more disabled people into employment	With partners in the Statutory and Community Sectors we will establish a Disability Placement scheme for people with disabilities who have been out of employment	Number of people in placements and placement evaluations	Equality Unit, Organisational Development and Recruitment	Year 4
2.5.	We will improve the accessibility of our website	We will develop a new website that meets the required accessibility standards We will self-audit the accessibility of our website	We will ask for feedback from our website users We will monitor complaints around access to our website	Communications	Year 2
2.6.	We will make our information easier to access and ensure staff make consistent decisions around accessible formats	We will develop an accessible information policy and database to capture decisions	A policy will be in place and a database in use	Equality Unit	Year 2

2.7.	Our buildings will be accessible for users	We will develop a self-audit for staff to audit the accessibility of venues when hosting meetings	Self-Audit will be developed	Equality Unit & Operations and Estates	Year 1
2.8.	We will be a model employer for colleagues with a disability	Working with disabled people, representative organisations and trade union colleagues we will review and update the Policy and Code of Practice on the Employment of People with Disabilities.	Policy and Code of Practice updated	Equality Unit	Year 1
2.9.	We will be a model employer for colleagues with a disability	We will attend careers fairs and promote EA as a Disability Friendly Employer	More applications from people who declare a disability	Recruitment	Year 2 Onwards
2.10.	We will be a model employer for colleagues with a disability	We will develop a Reasonable Adjustments Policy and a corporate approach to reasonable adjustments. Reasonable Adjustments Policy will be developed to include the financial	Reasonable Adjustments Policy in place	Equality Unit	Year 2

			considerations, training and practical steps in improving accessibility				
2.11.	We will be a model employer for colleagues with a disability	We will become a member of 'Employers for Disability NI'	We will promote and encourage the participation of people with disabilities onto Board of Governors by linking with the community sector	Membership and participation with Employers for Disability NI	Equality Unit Human Resources	Year 1-4	
2.12.	More disabled people will be on Boards of Governors	We will promote and encourage the participation of people with disabilities onto Board of Governors by linking with the community sector	More people with a declared disability will be members of Boards of Governors	Education Directorate	Year 1		
2.13.	People with a disability will be more involved in our work	We will review the progress of the plan and develop a new plan	Review Reports and new Disability Action Plan	Equality Unit	Annually		

Signed by:



Chair



Chief Executive

April 2018

