



# Disability Action Plan

## Example Action Measures

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Complying with Section 49A & Section 49B  
of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA).  
A guide for designated public authorities.

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# Introduction

Sections 49A and 49B of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) (the Disability Duties) places **duties on public authorities to have due regard to the need to:**

- **Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and to**
- **Encourage participation by disabled people in public life.**

This guidance will assist public authorities to comply with their duty to have a DAP and that the measures contained in their DAP are focused towards the duties.

The advice aims to support equality officers and policymakers who are developing or reviewing their DAP by providing a range of examples of action measures that may be taken. All action measures highlighted in this guidance are examples taken from the Commission's [Disability Duties Guide](#) [pdf] and are not exhaustive.

It is the responsibility of each public authority to determine the measures which are most effective, in light of its own particular remit, the range of its functions and the type of structures, processes and procedures that it has in place.

## Section 1:

# Action measures to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people

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**Promoting positive attitudes** can include taking steps to:

- portray (and encourage others to portray) disabled people in a positive role
- eliminate ignorance and prejudice towards disabled people in the wider community and workplace.

### 1. **Review of a public authority's external and internal communication policies, practices and procedures in order to ensure that disabled people are portrayed in a positive role, for example:**

- Review all new/revised promotional, educational, or information materials (internal and external) produced e.g. leaflets, booklets, guidance, videos/DVDs, advertising campaigns, to portray disabled people in a positive role.
- Review the website to ensure that disabled people are portrayed positively.
- Encourage the disability forum (where one exists or is created) to develop its own web pages to inform and raise staff awareness on disability issues and inform other areas of policy and practice.
- Include sign language interpreters on any promotional videos, podcasts, key website information etc.
- Review all other forms of communication (internal and external) to identify opportunities to portray disabled people including for example, social media, press releases, public reports, media interviews, staff updates/newsletters, etc.
- Identify disability champions and develop a description for the role, at a senior level, to communicate on its importance and ensure the measures are implemented through the DAP and communicate on its importance.
- Encourage disabled staff and service users to submit articles to in-house magazines, newsletters and other forms of internal communication.

- Make all staff and office holders aware of the Disability Duties and the public authority's DAP. Undertake this by:
  - Including information in induction of new staff/office holders, at staff/office holders training sessions
  - Alerting staff/office holders to information on the internet and/or intranet, articles in staff and sectoral magazines and newsletters.

**2. Measures to promote positive attitudes amongst employees, office holders and others** (such as the wider public, customers, service users, students etc.)

- Staff training (see actions to meet both duties below)
- Recognising and valuing the contribution of disabled employees and office holders, as a means of challenging prejudicial attitudes.
- Drafting articles/communications about portraying positive role models.
- Ensuring the leadership of the organisation recognise and value staff contributions.
- Setting up a staff forum to seek views from disabled staff on how to promote disability equality in the workplace and on policies practices and procedures.
- Establishing an accessible complaint/feedback mechanism to ensure that there is a complaint or feedback process in place whereby a disabled employee, customer or service-user can raise concerns in circumstances where an employee has not displayed positive attitudes towards him/her.
- Undertaking awareness raising events for staff and/or service-users to encourage positive interaction between disabled and non-disabled people to promote positive attitudes e.g. a housing authority organises an event to promote awareness of a housing scheme for disabled people in the community – they bring disabled and non-disabled people together to meet and discuss the scheme.
- Undertaking corporate social responsibility type events, which provide opportunities for disabled people and non-disabled people to interact/work together.

## Section 2:

# Action Measures to Encourage Disabled People's Participation in Public Life

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Encouraging disabled people's **participation in public life** can include:

- Taking actions to involve and ensure disabled people have the opportunity to contribute to public policy decision making or decisions relating to the way in which public authorities deliver their services or carry out their functions. Involvement should relate to any public policy not only disability related public policy.
- Taking actions to include encouraging disabled people's participation in political life (e.g. as members of consultative fora, as elected representatives or as voters) and ensuring the formal structures of governing and advisory bodies are accessible to and inclusive of disabled people.
- Public authorities may have a wide range of public life positions within its remit. For example, it may be responsible for a number of government public appointments as well as co-ordinating a variety of user groups and/or working groups. The examples detailed below apply to all opportunities for disabled people to participate in public life, including the more formal public appointments process.

### **1. Undertake an audit of all public life positions and opportunities to develop new ones**

- Undertaking an audit of existing formal and informal practices in relation to recruiting individuals to any public life positions and develop an action plan to increase participation as per examples below.

### **2. Recruitment, Selection and Participation of Disabled people**

**Encourage disabled people to apply** for public life positions for example by:

- Undertaking a review of where and how a public authority advertises public life positions and/or involves people from outside the organisation and seek alternative ways to inform disabled people of opportunities to get involved/contribute.

- Reviewing the information sent to applicants to remove any unnecessary barriers to disabled people applying, either for jobs or to participate in the work of the public authority in other ways.
- Developing applicant information that outlines the support that is available to disabled applicants during the recruitment process and/or when they engage with the organisation by other means.
- Building capacity of disabled people to apply, for example by offering work shadowing, work experience placements and/or financial support.
- Providing feedback to unsuccessful candidates who have a disability.
- Delivering training courses with community/voluntary organisations to develop the skills and knowledge needed for public life positions and encourage disabled people to attend the training.
- Including a welcoming statement indicating that the organisation particularly welcomes applications/interest from disabled people.
- Organising an annual public life/appointments seminar with a disability theme to encourage disabled people to apply for public life positions/engage with the public authority.

**Raise awareness of public life positions** and ways in which disabled people can engage with the organisation by;

- Contacting local disability groups or representative bodies and liaising with them as regards the most effective way of raising awareness amongst their disabled members.
- Advertising positions widely in the press.
- Advertising in magazines or other publications which are targeted at disabled people.
- Advertising vacancies on a public authority's website and raising awareness.
- Working in partnership with other public authorities in order to maximise existing methods of raising awareness amongst disabled people and to explore new initiatives.
- Targeting opportunities/vacancies at older people, as many disabled people are over the state pension age.

- Organising information sessions or open days aimed at disabled people.

**Remove barriers to the selection process and participation if appointed** for example by:

- Reviewing the selection criteria to ensure there are no unnecessary criteria that makes it more difficult for disabled people to succeed.
- Establishing a guaranteed interview scheme and shortlisting disabled people who meet the minimum criteria for the position, automatically for interview.
- Retaining a certain number of board positions for disabled people i.e. 'ring fencing' positions on boards/user forums etc. only open to disabled people, where under-representation exists.
- Providing accessible transport where required and/or reimbursement of reasonable travel expenses.
- Providing induction, support and development opportunities for any disabled people participating in public life.
- Providing training/support (if required) to disabled members of Boards to ensure they can fully participate.
- Ensuring meeting times and venues are accessible (DDA compliant).
- Reviewing the documentation relating to the public life position (for example, advert, application form etc.) in terms of language and/or images used, format etc. to identify barriers to disabled people applying.
- Taking steps to dispel any perceptions that may exist amongst disabled people that they will be judged negatively by selection panel members because they have a disability or that a public life position is open to a 'certain type' of individual.
- Providing information in application packs outlining the support that is available to disabled applicants during the various stages of the recruitment process, as well as after they are appointed. For example, public authorities could make it clear to applicants that reasonable travel expenses will be paid.
- Ensuring and making it clear to disabled applicants, that all documentation relating to the public life position, is available on request in accessible formats (DDA compliant).

- Accepting applications from disabled people in accessible formats (DDA compliant).

**Support disabled people to develop their capacity to participate** in public life positions, for example by:

- Providing placement opportunities.
- Raising awareness of the contribution of current/previous disabled members detailing the provision of induction, support or training once appointed.
- Supporting capacity building measures as regards the voluntary/community sector; for example giving financial or other support to disability groups or others in relation to the provision of training for disabled people in interviewing or other relevant skills.
- Providing constructive feedback to unsuccessful disabled applicants.
- Running training courses aimed at developing the skills and knowledge needed for public life positions and taking measures to encourage disabled people to participate on those courses.

**3. Create opportunities for involving disabled people in public life for example by:**

- Auditing organisational opportunities at all levels of the organisation for opportunities to engage disabled people and draft actions based on the audit for inclusion in the DAP.
- Ensuring all consultations engage with disabled people and representative groups.
- Developing a consultative group for new policies and discussion of Section 75 screening exercises; ensuring the views of disabled people and representative groups are represented.
- Developing a disability working group, which includes members who are disabled, in order to help the public authority identify barriers to equality of opportunity for disabled people (including barriers to implementing the Disability Duties) and decide on remedial action.
- It is important to remember that such a group should not only be consulted on policies that the public authority deems as disability related but on any policies affecting the general public.

The purpose of the disability working group could be:

- Establishing an employee disability/equality forum (ensuring disabled people represented).
- Appointing non-executive directors with broad community and customer-focused to review and implement action plans.
- Informing policy development.
- Informing corporate personnel procedures.
- Establishing and reviewing websites.
- Publishing articles on website and in-house publications to promote awareness of disability issues.
- Facilitating and organising events to promote awareness of disability issues.
- Drafting terms of reference for groups agreed with disabled staff.
- Agreeing the group's decision making processes e.g. methods of feedback from the group through a disability champion to SMT and/or quarterly reports/presentations to SMT within 6 months of implementation of DAP.
- Working with other public authorities to develop a consultative group engaging disabled people and representative groups (if smaller public authority).
- Putting in place action measures to monitor the effectiveness of these fora.

#### **4. Effective Consultation**

- Consulting on public authority action plans by allowing a period of at least 2 months for the consultation period. The consultation should be inclusive, targeted, ongoing and use appropriate methods. By consulting on DAPs, public authorities are providing an opportunity for disabled people to participate in public life.
- Consulting with disabled people when implementing and reviewing their DAPs.
- Ensuring ongoing dialogue between the public authority and disabled people as regards the implementation and review of DAPs.
- Extending consultation on the DAP and other policies where the reason for the request is disability related.

## Section 3:

### Action Measures that can meet both duties

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Although there are two distinct parts to the Disability Duties i.e. action measures to encourage the participation of disabled people in public life and positive attitudes towards disabled people, each part requires separate consideration. The two duties complement each other; steps taken to implement one part of the duty may also contribute to the implementation of the other part. Some examples include:

#### 1. Training and Awareness Raising

A DAP must include action measures on the provision of training and guidance for staff and office holders on **disability equality legislation** and **disability awareness training**. Example actions include:

- Specific details in the DAP about the **nature of training** that will be provided and **when training will be provided**, for example:

**'Disability equality legislation'** training will include:

- Understanding employer and employee duties and responsibilities under the DDA.
- Understanding employer and employee duties and responsibilities under the Disability Duties.
- Information on the organisation's equal opportunities policies and procedures.
- Information on the organisation's commitment to the Disability Duties.

**'Disability awareness and etiquette'** training will include:

- Promote positive attitudes of disabled people within the training.
- Explain of the barriers faced by disabled people in society (including attitudinal and environmental factors).
- Promote an understanding of the social model of disability.
- Address issues around the use of appropriate language.
- Challenge stereotypes and misconceptions about disabled people.

- Include specific details in the DAP about **who will be trained** including:

- Leadership i.e. senior management and Board members
- Members of recruitment and selection panels
- Personnel staff
- Managers and supervisors

- Front line staff
- Other employees involved in taking measures to recruit/retain disabled people
- Include **other relevant training actions** in DAPs, for example:
  - Recruitment and selection training - Ensure all those involved in recruitment and selection panels have been trained in disability awareness and disability equality legislation to ensure no negative attitudes in recruitment and selection processes.
  - Leadership specific training - Training senior management on their roles and responsibilities and accountabilities with regard to compliance with the Disability Duties and driving forward the organisations DAP, ensuring quality, current and relevant action measures and a plan that covers all functions.
  - Disability Duties built into staff and board member induction training.
- Develop **Guidance on the disability duties** for staff, for example:
  - Ensure Disability Duties information and articles are on the staff intranet and regularly communicated in staff newsletters, briefings and updated biannually.
  - Update the website with disability equality/awareness training materials/packages so other organisations including other public authorities and community and voluntary sector can use them free of charge.

## 2. Internal mechanisms / structures to ensure compliance with the duties

- Establishing a cross functional working group in order to ensure buy-in from all functions of the organisation.
- Leadership should request quarterly update reports on the Disability Duties and communicate the importance of the duties.
- Submitting the annual progress report to relevant senior management.
- Allocating a senior member of staff as a disability champion who is accountable for and who ensures effective implementation of the DAP.
- Allocating resource to the DAP by:
  - Putting names against measures other than equality staff.
  - Putting real budgets against action measures.

### 3. Monitor and Review Actions

- Senior management as well as the disability/user forum (where one exists or is created) should review existing and future action measures on a regular basis (e.g. quarterly or bi-annually).
- Reviewing existing systems and procedures for collecting disability related data and adapt the systems if necessary to capture monitoring information relevant to the 2 duties.
- Working with other organisations (other public authorities or community/voluntary sector) to commission data/research.
- Monitoring public life measures for example by:
  - Collecting and reviewing monitoring information on disability for applicants/appointees by issuing Section 75 monitoring questionnaires for applicants and disabled employees.
  - Undertaking qualitative research by commissioning research on barriers to accessing/participating in public life positions/use of focus group discussion and service user survey.
- Monitoring the promotion of positive attitudes measures for example by:
  - Conducting a wide scale survey of public attitudes to disabled people (use as baseline or to measure progress).
  - Using existing data on public attitudes to disabled people as a baseline.
  - Conducting an internal staff survey on attitudes.
  - Carrying out exit interviews and including disability attitude questions in surveys for disabled and non-disabled employees and service users.
  - Monitoring disability related complaints of discrimination, both internal and external.
  - Monitoring and evaluating the provision of disability equality/awareness training i.e. has the training been effective?
- Identify gaps in monitoring data and set out in the plan how these will be addressed.

### 4. Procurement

Public authorities enter into large numbers of contracts with public, private and voluntary sector organisations for goods, works, services and staff and as a result will need to ensure that in procuring services etc., they comply with all aspects of the DDA 1995, including the Disability Duties for example by;

- Including criteria in procurement contracts to encourage third parties to comply e.g. a government department in partnership with the community/voluntary sector develop an award scheme. See the Commission's [guide on building equality into the procurement process](#) [pdf]

## 5. Employment measures

- Creating work experience/volunteer placements for disabled people and/or introducing other outreach measures e.g. capacity building training for disabled people.
- Using positive action measures to create ring-fenced positions for disabled people.
- Developing initiatives with voluntary organisations to undertake more work experience placements.
- Guaranteed Interview Scheme: interviewing all disabled candidates who meet the essential criteria.

## 6. Measures which encourage other people / organisations to promote both duties

Depending on the public authority's remit and range of functions, taking measures to encourage/influence other organisations or bodies or work in partnership to promote both duties, for example:

- Other public authorities
- Private employers
- Voluntary/community organisations
- Political parties
- Trade unions

For example, a public authority through its work with local councillors may encourage political parties to take measures that will encourage disabled people to stand for election as councillors for the political party in question. It also runs disability equality and awareness training for councillors.

## 7. Disability Initiatives

- **Mental Health Charter:** Sign up to the Equality Commission's [Mental Health Charter](#), audit the organisation and develop an action plan based on the Charter actions.

- **Every Customer Counts:** Sign up to the Equality Commission's [Every Customer Counts disability access initiative](#), audit the organisation and develop an action plan based on the charter actions.

**Further Information is available on the Equality Commission's website:**

- [Disability Action Plans](#)
- [Disability Duties for Public Authorities](#)

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