



DISABILITY ACTION PLAN

June 2007

Name of Public Authority: Chief Electoral Officer for
Northern Ireland

**Responsibility for implementing, reviewing and evaluating
this disability action plan and the point of contact will be:**

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**This report can be found on the EONI website www.eoni.org.uk
and is available in a range of alternative formats on request.**

1. Introduction

1.1 Under section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006) the Chief Electoral Officer is required, when carrying out his 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 The Chief Electoral Officer is committed to implementing effectively the disability duties and this disability plan. He will allocate all necessary resources (in terms of people, time and money) in order to do this and where appropriate, build objectives and targets relating to the disability duties into corporate and annual business plans.

He will also put appropriate internal arrangements in place to ensure that the disability duties are complied with and that this disability action plan is effectively implemented, including:

- effective communication of the plan to staff;
- necessary training and guidance for staff.

1.3 He confirms his commitment to submitting an annual progress report to the Equality Commission on the implementation of this plan as well as carrying out a five yearly review of this plan or any other plans submitted to the Equality Commission over the five year review period.

1.4 A copy of this plan, the annual progress report and the five year review of this plan will be made available on the Electoral Office website – www.eoni.org.uk

1.4 **Functions**

Outlined below are the four key business areas within which all the Chief Electoral Officer's functions are based:

- Elections
- Registration
- Corporate Governance
- Central Services

The Electoral Office for Northern Ireland exists to support the Chief Electoral Officer in the performance of his statutory duties set out in the Representation of the People Act 1983 and other primary and subordinate legislation.

1.5 **Public Life Positions**

Although the Chief Electoral Officer has no direct responsibility for appointments to public life positions he will, within the boundaries of the statutory framework under which he operates, do what is possible to ensure that people with disabilities are not disadvantaged when standing as candidates in elections for which he has responsibility.

2. **Previous Measures**

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

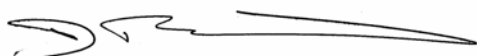
- Accessibility initiatives including improved access to office premises, re-location of polling places to provide better access for those with disabilities and the provision of statutory forms in plain English and in other formats.

- Reasonable adjustments including provision of ‘selector devices’ , large print notices at elections for the visually impaired and revised working practices and procedures.
- Equality awareness training for all permanent staff with a public interface role.
- Policy Consultation – interest groups representing people with disabilities are included in all relevant consultations.

3. Action Measures

Annex A outlines the measures which the Chief Electoral Officer proposes to take over the period 1 June 2007 to 31 May 2012 of this disability action plan, together with performance indicators and targets.

Signed by:



November 2007

Douglas Bain CBE TD Advocate
Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland

ANNEX A

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

Measures	Timescale	Performance Indicators/target
1. As far as reasonably practical ensure that all Electoral Office premises are DDA compliant.	By 31 December 2008	All premises DDA compliant.
2. Carry out a fundamental review of the polling station scheme taking particular account of the needs of persons with disabilities and the changes that will be required as a result of the closure of schools.	By 31 March 2009	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Achievement by publication of new scheme. 2. Effectiveness to be assessed by survey conducted during next major election following publication and by feed back from interest groups. .
3. Roll out of new electoral registration forms recently awarded crystal mark by the Plain English Campaign.	Summer 2007	Achievement
4. Regularly meet with Disability Action, RNID, RNIB and other groups representing people with disabilities.	Ongoing	To meet on a quarterly basis.

Measures	Timescale	Performance Indicators/target
5. Encourage electoral registration by those with disabilities through Electoral Registration Week 2007 themed on those with disabilities.	October 2007	Level of media coverage Feedback from 'customers'
6(a) Press NIO to remove common law rules on mental incapacity in accordance with the provisions of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 (b) Promote awareness of the changes amongst relevant stakeholders including those enfranchised by them.	Ongoing from Summer 2007 During 3 months after commencement of new provisions.	Request to NIO by 1 July 2007 Number of registration forms received
7. Dependent on outcome of election pilots in GB consider the use of candidate's photographs and coloured party emblems on ballot papers.	2008 - 2009	Dependent on outcome of pilots
8. Election material and information to be made available on audio tape and braille.	To be prepared for each election	Achievement
9(a) Press NIO to extend types of photographic ID acceptable for electoral purposes to include Translink War Disabled and Blind Persons Smartpasses; (b) Raise awareness of	Late 2007	Achievement

Measures	Timescale	Performance Indicators/target
the changes amongst those effected by them.	Within three months of legislative change	Number of registration forms received.
10. Review staff selection procedures to encourage the participation of disabled people in the recruitment process.	By 31 March 2008	Recruitment process in line with 'best practice'.