



Disability Action Plan

2012-2015

For Consultation

DISABILITY ACTION PLAN

Labour Relations Agency

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), the Labour Relations 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 disabled duties').

Under Section 49B of the DDA 1995, the Labour Relations Agency is also required to submit to the Equality Commission a Disability Action Plan showing how it proposes to fulfil these duties in relation to its functions.

1.2 As Chief Executive of the Labour Relations Agency we are committed to implementing effectively the disability duties and this Disability Action Plan. We will take all the necessary steps (in relation to people, time and money) in order to implement effectively this plan and where appropriate, build objectives and targets relating to the disability duties into corporate and annual operating plans.

This is the Third Disability Action Plan to be produced by the LRA. This action plan follows on from our 2008-2011 action plan and outlines how the LRA intends to advance the measures outlined in the previous action plan. We will continue to put appropriate internal arrangements in place to ensure that the disability duties are complied with and this Disability Action Plan is effectively implemented. We will ensure the effective communication of the plan to staff and ensure the provision of all necessary training and guidance for staff on the disability duties and the implementation of the plan.

Having submitted an annual report to the Equality Commission on the implementation of the 2008-2011 plan, we shall submit further annual reports as well as carrying out a three yearly review of this plan. The Agency will also consult with Disability Advocates and Stakeholders when implementing and reviewing its plans.

The responsibility for implementing, reviewing and evaluating this Disability Action Plan and the point of contact within the Labour Relations Agency will be:-

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If you require this plan in an alternative format (such as large print, Braille, on audio cassette/CD, easy read or on computer disc) and/or language, please contact the Agency on info@lra.org.uk to discuss your requirements.

- 1.3 We confirm our commitment to continue to submit annual progress reports on the implementation of this plan to the Equality Commission and carrying out a three year review of this plan, or plans submitted to the Equality Commission over the three year review period.

A copy of this plan, our annual progress to the Equality Commission will be made available on our website www.lra.org.uk

In addition, all our employees will receive a copy of the plan.

1.4 **Who we are and what we do**

The Labour Relations Agency is an executive Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Department for Employment and Learning established in 1976 under the Industrial Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 and continued by the Industrial Relations Order (Northern Ireland) 1992. Under Article 69(3) of the 1992 Order, the Agency is required to pay the Northern Ireland Certification Officer's remuneration and allowances and to provide support services. These costs are reflected in our financial statements.

The Agency's principal activities are to assist employers, employees and their representatives to improve the conduct of their employment relations.

The Labour Relations Agency provides effective, impartial and confidential services to those engaged in industry, commerce and the public services in Northern Ireland, those services including:

- advice and assistance on all aspects of the employment relations and employment practices
- comprehensive conciliation, arbitration and mediation facilities for resolving both individual and collective matters in dispute.

These services are available to employers, employers' associations, individual employees, trade unions and other organisations or to individuals who require assistance with any question relating to employment relations or employment matters.

2. **Previous Measures**

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

Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people

- a text-phone number on our website and publications to ensure accessibility to our services;
- welcoming statements in our recruitment, selection and induction documentation;
- training on specific disability areas impacting on our staff, e.g. deaf awareness training, sign language training;
- provision of interpreters for those with communication difficulties and hearing loops installed in our conference rooms and interview rooms;
- provision of a designated disabled person's car space within the Agency's car park;
- provision of disabled access toilets on each floor of our buildings;
- utilisation of Typetalk operator assisted relay service for callers with hearing difficulties;
- providing home-visits to house-bound users of our service;
- extending Disability Access at Agency Headquarters by the installation of a wheelchair ramp to adjoining premises.

Encourage the participation of disabled people in public life

- information is made available in various formats to suit particular needs

- we engage with Disability Employment Services to participate in the Access to Work (NI) Programme
- we make reasonable adjustments for any staff member/public life appointee declaring a disability
- we welcome applications from suitably qualified persons regardless of disability in our recruitment advertisements for Staff and Board Members.

3. **Action Measures**

Outlined below are the measures which we propose to take over the period of this Disability Action Plan (June 2012 to 30 June 2015) together with performance indicators or targets. We will review and update this plan on an annual basis and all plans will be included within the three year review to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

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

Measures	Timescale Indicators/Target	Performance
1. Incorporate objectives and targets contained within this Action Plan into the Corporate and Annual Business Plans	30 September 2012	Devote one strategic objective to Equality matters to encompass disability
2. Conduct Staff Survey on attitudes towards disabled people	31 March 2013 31 May 2013 30 July 2013	Determine methods of data collection, content and objectives of survey Undertake initial survey Complete analysis and communicate findings to staff
3. Provide training and guidance to Board, Arbitrators and employees on: ➤ Disability Equality Legislation ➤ Disability awareness ➤ Disability duties and the Agency's Disability Action Plan ➤ Disability Code of Practice on employment and occupation	Ongoing. Completion by 30 September 2013 31 March 2013 30 September 2013	Employee Training provided Board Members' training provided Arbitrators' training provided
4. Installation of visual warning devices linked to the Agency's fire alarm system	30 June 2012	Fire Safety Standards BS5839
5. Review our external and internal communication policies, practices and procedures in order to ensure that disabled people are portrayed in a positive role	Ongoing Completion by 31 July 2013 30 June 2012	Complete review of website Complete review of recruitment documentation policies procedures & information matters Induction loop system extended to all conference & interview rooms in Head Office
6. Review our website's 'access features' & compatibility with specialist hardware & software used by disabled people	Ongoing	Evaluation of website's usefulness
7. Establish a Disability Action group of agency employees who wish to bring practical benefits to disabled Agency employees and services	30 November 2012	Membership of Action Group to be canvassed following completion of staff training
8. Identify duties for a person with learning disabilities.	30 June 2012	Identification of appropriate duties

<p>9. Revise existing 'exit interview' subject areas, to include discussion & consideration of the effectiveness of measures taken in carrying out our 'disability duties'</p>	<p>30 June 2012</p>	<p>Exit interview structure amended</p>
<p>10. Conduct monitoring exercise on existing employees to improve accuracy of disability data held (e.g. employees who have developed disabilities since appointment).</p>	<p>30 June 2012</p>	<p>Monitoring exercise to be undertaken after completion of staff training (to encourage honesty & trust in disclosure)</p>
<p>11. Support any staff with disabilities in respect of needs & career development opportunities.</p>	<p>Ongoing Ongoing</p>	<p>Ensure LRA has a record of disabled staff's uptake of training & development opportunities. Provide training to Senior Management Team, HR & monitoring support officers on the identification of appropriate support required by staff with disabilities.</p>
<p>12. Review Health & Safety procedures and information to ensure duty of care to disabled employees / visitors is provided.</p>	<p>30 June 2012</p>	<p>Complete review of Health & Safety procedures & information</p>
<p>13. Source appropriate artwork produced by local artists with disabilities</p>	<p>Completion by 30 June 2012</p>	<p>Display artwork in public areas of Agency offices.</p>

Signed by:

Chair
J McCusker

Chief Executive
W. Patterson