



Disability Action Plan

2008-2011

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 disability 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 Chairman and Chief Executive of the Labour Relations Agency we are committed to implementing effectively the disability duties and this disability action plan. We will allocate all necessary resources (in terms of 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 Second Disability Action Plan to be produced by the LRA. This action plan follows on from our 2007 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 to providing 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 2007 plan, we shall submit further annual reports as well as carrying out a five yearly review of this plan. The Agency will also consult with disabled people when implementing and reviewing its plans.

Responsibility for implementing, reviewing and evaluating this disability action plan and the point of contact within the Labour Relations Agency will be:-

Name: Dr Gerry O'Neill
Title: Director (Corporate Services)
Address: Labour Relations Agency
2-8 Gordon Street
Belfast
BT1 2LG
Telephone number: 028 9032 1442
Fax number: 028 9033 0827
Email: gerry.o'neill@lra.org.uk
Textphone: 028 9023 8411

If you require this plan in an alternative format (such as in large print, in Braille, on audio cassette/CD, easy read or on computer disc) and/or language, please contact the above person 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 five year review of this plan, or plans submitted to the Equality Commission over the five year review period.

A copy of this plan, our annual progress to the Equality Commission and our five year review of this plan 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 Functions

Outlined below is the range of functions of the Labour Relations Agency.

- Preventing disputes through the promulgation of good employment relations practice across the province;
- Preparing information sheets and codes of practice;
- Responding to enquiries via meetings and telephone (the system having been upgraded in course of the year);
- Providing workshops;
- Providing individual conciliation services;
- Facilitating the resolution of collective disputes; and
- Facilitating arbitration hearings.

1.5 Public Life Positions

The range of public life positions over which the Labour Relations Agency (LRA) has responsibility, are as follows:-

- LRA Chairperson
- LRA Board (9 members)
- LRA Arbitrators
- Independent Experts to Industrial Tribunals (on equal pay issues)

Appointments to the positions of Labour Relations Agency Chairperson and Board Members are public appointments for which the Department for Employment and Learning has responsibility.

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 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 LRA's car parks
- Provision of disabled access toilets on each floor of our buildings.
- Utilisation of Tynetalk operator assisted relay service for callers with hearing difficulties.
- Providing home-visits to house-bound users of our service

Encourage the participation of disabled people in public life

- Information can be made available in various formats to suit particular needs
- Engaging with Disability Action to participate in the Workable NI programme
- We will make reasonable adjustments for any staff member / public life appointee declaring a disability
- Welcoming applications from suitably qualified persons regardless of disability in our recruitment advertisements for Board Members

3. Action Measures

Outlined below are the measures which we propose to take over the period of this disability action plan (1 July 2008 to 30 June 2011), 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 Five Year Review to the Equality Commission.

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

Measures	Timescale Indicators/target	Performance
Incorporate objectives & targets contained within this Action Plan into the Corporate and Annual Business Plan	Ongoing 30 September 2009	Devote one strategic objective to Equality matters to encompass disability
Conduct staff survey on attitudes towards disabled people.	31 March 2009	Determine methods of data collection, content and objectives of survey.
	31 May 2009	Undertake initial survey
	31 July 2009	Complete analysis & communicate findings to staff

Measures	Timescale Indicators/target	Performance
<p>Provide training & guidance to Board, Arbitrators and employees on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability equality legislation • Disability awareness • Disability duties & the Agency DAP • Disability code of practice on employment & occupation <p>Establish feedback mechanism whereby a disabled person can raise concerns in circumstances where an employee has not displayed positive attitudes towards him/her.</p> <p>Communicate this mechanism through website, on-site posters, information leaflets.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Completion by 30 September 2009</p> <p>31 March 2010</p> <p>30 September 2010</p> <p>31 August 2009</p> <p>30 September 2009</p>	<p>Employee training provided</p> <p>Board Members' training provided</p> <p>Arbitrators' training provided</p> <p>Revision of existing Complaints Procedure as part of 'mainstreaming' the disability duties</p> <p>Feedback mechanisms to be designed & made operational following completion of employee training</p>

Measures	Timescale Indicators/target	Performance
<p>Review our external & internal communication policies, practices & procedures in order to ensure that disabled people are portrayed in a positive role.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Completion by 31 July 2010</p> <p>31 March 2011</p>	<p>Complete review of Website</p> <p>Complete review of recruitment documentation policies, procedures & information materials</p> <p>Induction loop system extended to all conference & interview rooms in our head office</p>
<p>Review our website's 'access features' & compatibility with specialist hardware & software used by disabled people.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Evaluation of Website's usefulness</p>
<p>Maintain compliance with legislative requirements for access by those with disabilities to LRA offices.</p>	<p>Ongoing with completion by 30 June 2011</p>	<p>Access to conference rooms in both offices by wheelchair users enabled.</p>
<p>Establish a Disability Action Group of Agency employees who wish to bring practical benefits to disabled Agency employees & service users.</p>	<p>30 November 2009</p>	<p>Membership of Action Group to be canvassed following completion of staff training</p>

--	--	--

Measures	Timescale Indicators/target	Performance
Identify duties for a person with learning disabilities.	30 June 2009	Identification of appropriate duties
Revise existing 'exit interview' subject areas, to include discussion & consideration of the effectiveness of measures taken in carrying out our 'disability duties'.	31 October 2008	Exit interview structure amended
Conduct monitoring exercise on existing employees to improve accuracy of disability data held (e.g. employees who have developed disabilities since appointment).	31 January 2010	Monitoring exercise to be undertaken after completion of staff training (to encourage honesty & trust in disclosure)

Measures	Timescale Indicators/target	Performance
<p>Support any staff with disabilities in respect of training & development needs & career development opportunities.</p> <p>Review Health & Safety procedures and information to ensure duty of care to disabled employees / visitors is provided.</p> <p>Source appropriate artwork produced by local artists with disabilities</p>	Ongoing	Ensure LRA has a record of disabled staff's uptake of training & development opportunities
	Ongoing	Provide training to Senior Management Team, HR & monitoring support officers on the identification of appropriate support required by staff with disabilities
	31 March 2010	Complete review of Health & Safety procedures & information.
	31 October 2010	Provide training to Health & Safety Officers in relation to needs of disabled persons.
	Ongoing Completion by 31 March 2011	Display artwork in public areas of Agency offices

Signed by:

Chair

Chief Executive