

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon
Borough Council

Draft Disability Action Plan

2024-2027



**Armagh City
Banbridge
& Craigavon**
Borough Council

This Disability Action Plan can be obtained from the Council in alternative languages, audio, magnification, colour contrast and other access functionalities by clicking on the Website Accessibility tab at top of the page on the Corporate website. It can also be downloaded from the Council's website at: [Disability - Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council \(armaghibanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk\)](http://armaghibanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk)

If you would like a hard copy /or a copy in an alternative format, not already available on our website, please contact:

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Foreword

Welcome to the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council's proposed Disability Action Plan for 2024-2027(the Plan) which is a statement of the Council's commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity for disabled people and complements its Equality Scheme under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The Plan has been designed to ensure that the Council fulfils its statutory obligations in compliance with section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006.

The Disability Discrimination Act places duties on public authorities, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

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

These are collectively referred to as 'the disability duties.'

The Council is committed to the fulfilment of its disability duties in all parts of the organisation and this plan sets out how it intends to do this.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006 requires the Council, in 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.

These are collectively referred to as the 'disability duties'.

1.2 The Council is committed to the fulfilment of its disability duties in all parts of the organisation and as required Under Section 49B of the DDA 1995, the Council has set out in this plan how it proposes to fulfil these duties in relation to its functions.

This plan, in form and content, must conform to the guidelines contained within the Commission's guide for public authorities.

1.3 The Council will ensure the effective communication of the plan to staff and will undertake a planned programme of training and guidance on the disability duties for all staff and Elected Members.

2. Purpose of the Disability Action Plan

2.1 This Plan sets out how the Council proposes to fulfil the Disability Duties in relation to its functions.

3. The Council – its Role and Functions

3.1 The roles and functions of Local Government in Northern Ireland are set out in the Local Government Act (NI) 1972, the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 and other Miscellaneous Acts and Regulations.

3.2 Local Government responsibilities fall into three main areas:

- **Direct Service Provision** - Councils provide a range of local services
- **Representation** – Council nominees sit as representatives on various statutory bodies

- **Civic Leadership** – Councils reflect the views of their community in relation to the planning and delivery of certain regional services

3.3 The Council performs the following roles within its local area and district:

- The direct provision of a number of services and facilities,
- The promotion of the arts, tourism, community and economic development,
- The regulation and licensing of certain activities relating to environmental health, consumer protection and public safety,
- Councillors are appointed to represent the Council or elected members in general, on a number of public bodies
- The Council leads a community planning process in partnership with other public service providers in order to collectively address local problems

3.4 In the performance of the above roles the Council carries out functions in the following areas:

- The provision of facilities for recreational, social and cultural activities including leisure centres, community centres, parks, open spaces, sports grounds and places of entertainment, theatres, museums and galleries.
- Street cleansing
- Waste collection and disposal
- The provision of burial grounds
- The provision of public conveniences
- Registration of births, deaths and marriages
- Off-Street parking
- The provision of grant aid/financial assistance to support community development
- The delivery of health and recreation and wellbeing programmes
- The administration and delivery of funded and non-funded capital programmes and heritage projects which enhance the economy and the environment.
- The administration and regulation of certain matters relating to the environment, planning, public health and public safety including building control, property certificates, energy performance of

buildings, building regulations, housing unfitness, food safety, statutory nuisance, dangerous buildings, air pollution, noise pollution, dog control, animal welfare, consumer protection and health and safety.

3.5 To enable the Council to provide the above services and perform its other functions, the Council must levy an annual rate and has the power to:

- Acquire and dispose of land
- Borrow money
- Employ staff
- Procure goods and services

3.6 To support and implement the above statutory functions and provision of services and facilities, the Council has adopted a wide range of policies. These can be accessed via the Council's website using the following [link](#).

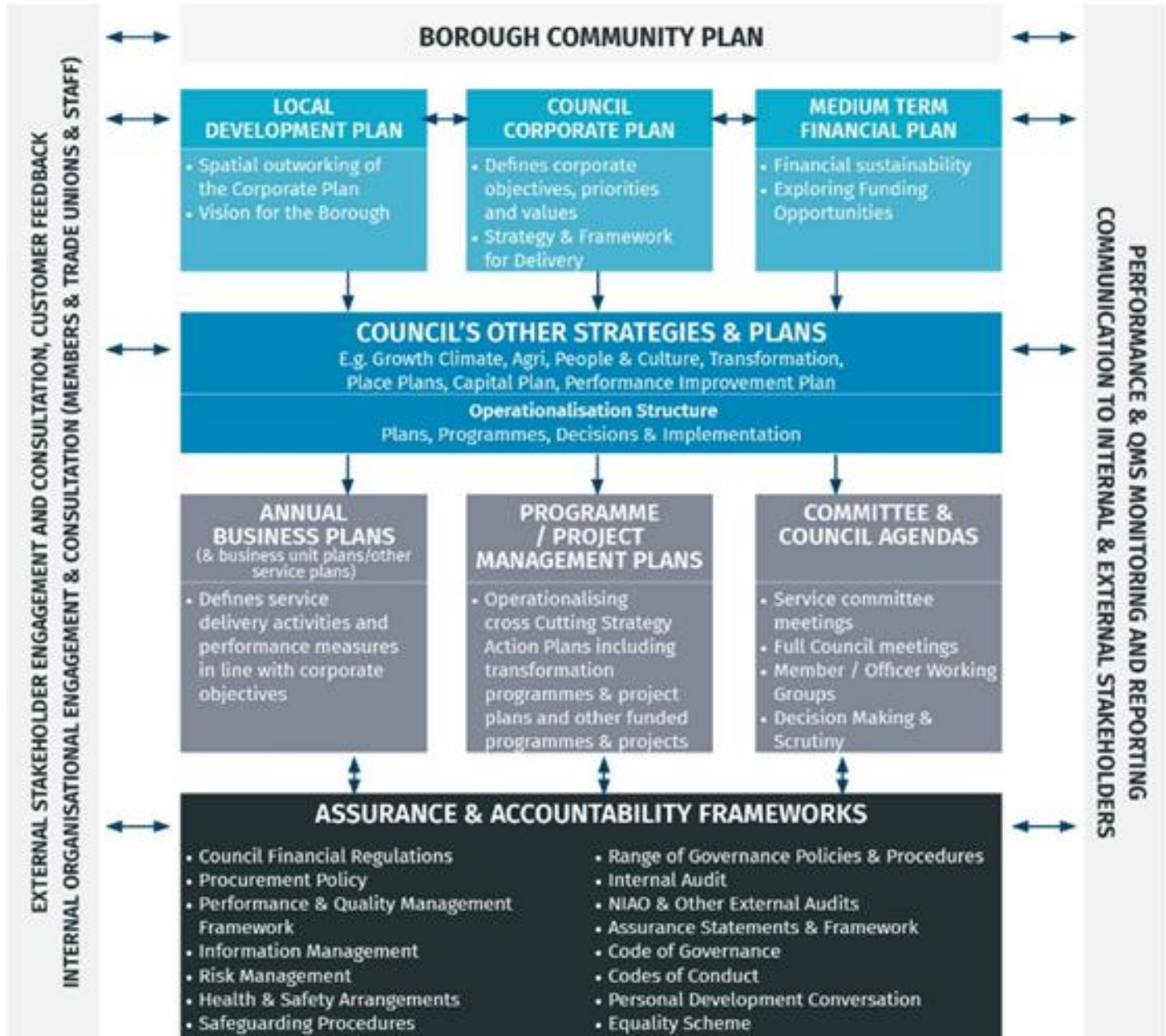
3.7 The diagram below outlines the Council's strategic management approach. It seeks to link the overarching Council objectives to service and individual work plans, making clear the contribution individuals make towards achieving strategic outcomes. It provides a mechanism to establish and implement an integrated way of communicating and implementing objectives throughout Council so that all plans are clear and 'joined up', known as the '**golden thread**'.

ARMAGH CITY, BANBRIDGE & CRAIGAVON BOROUGH COUNCIL STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT APPROACH

OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Regional And National Strategies & Partnerships

Immediate Influencers - Political Stability & Direction | Health of the Economy | Labour Market - skills, capacity & availability



The diagram above illustrates the need for connections between all levels. This golden thread is supported by engagement and improvement processes. The plans listed above are illustrative of the key plans, rather than an exhaustive list.

4. Public Life Positions

- 4.1 A key disability duty is to encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

The Equality Commission's guidance on the definition of public life includes participation in focus groups or working groups, community associations or fora, community police liaison committees; citizens' panels, local strategic partnerships and user groups for services provided by the local authority.

The Council is responsible for a number of public life positions e.g., Committees such as the Performance and Audit Committee in which a lay representative is appointed for each term of Council; the Community & Voluntary Sector Panel, established in 2018 as part of the Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Community Planning Partnership. The Council also engages and consults on an ongoing basis with a range of consultees which includes those within the disability sector.

5. Council's commitment to the effective implementation of the Disability Action Plan

- 5.1 The Council is committed to the effective implementation of all aspects of the Plan in all parts of the organisation. Overall responsibility for determining policy on how this will be achieved lies with the Elected Members. Day-to-day responsibility for carrying out the policy determined by the Elected Members lies with the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team who are responsible for the implementation of administrative arrangements to ensure that the disability duties are complied with by the Council in carrying out its functions.
- 5.2 As part of its corporate planning process, the Council will build actions and performance indicators relating to the Disability Duties and Action Plan into business plans and other strategic delivery/action plans.
- 5.3 Progress on meeting actions, including those relating to the Disability Duties and Action Plan will be monitored and reported upon at the most senior level within the organisation on an annual basis.

6. Internal arrangements

- 6.1 The Council has 41 elected members, elected for a four-year period meeting monthly at full Council. The Council has selected a traditional Committee Structure as its form of decision making.

The Council organises its business through six standing Committees. Five of these committees meet on a monthly basis, four of which include twenty members. The Planning and Regulatory Services Committee consists of 14 members and has full decision-making powers on planning matters that fall within its remit. The Audit and Performance Committee meets on a quarterly basis, and consists of seven elected members and one lay member.

Committees

- Economic Development and Regeneration
- Environmental Services
- Governance, Resources and Strategy
- Leisure and Community Services
- Performance and Audit
- Planning and Regulatory Services

The Council also has the power to establish Sub-Committees and working groups.

- 6.2 The Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive oversee the work of the departments through the Executive Management Team, which together with the Elected Members create the corporate body of the Council.

7. Effective Engagement

- 7.1 The Council is committed to engaging effectively with disabled people in the drafting, implementation, monitoring, and review of this Plan. Further information on how this is done is outlined in Section 10 below.

8. Annual Report

- 8.1 The Council will prepare an annual report on the implementation of the Disability Action Plan. The annual report will be included as part of the

Council's annual report to the Equality Commission on the implementation of our Equality Scheme.

- 8.2 A copy of the Annual Equality Progress Report will be made available on the [Council's website](#).

9. Review

- 9.1 The Council will carry out a review of the Plan , every four years, in line with the Corporate Plan.

10. Consultation

- 10.1 The anticipated outcomes of the consultation are to: -

- Identify barriers faced by disabled people in participating in public life in general and specifically any barriers they have encountered in relation to their dealings with the Council.
- Identify past examples where the Council has not promoted positive attitudes towards disabled people and identify future opportunities to do so.
- Identify the effectiveness of the previous Disability Action Plan

Consider the consultation responses and amend the proposed plan if deemed reasonable within Council's remit and resources

- 10.2 The Council is keen to bring about change for disabled people and is, therefore, focusing on involvement and participation in preparing the Plan.

To do this, the Council will seek to actively engage at both regional and local levels to obtain the views of disabled people in relation to the development of the Plan.

- 10.3 When consulting on any matter relating to the duties, the Council will strive to use a range of appropriate consultation methods which might include online or face to face meetings and focus groups. The Council will formally consult on the Plan with groups representing a broad range of disabilities. The Plan will be emailed to section 75 groups. It will also

be advertised through the Council's social media channels and views will be sought from individuals and organisations via the Council's [Consultation Hub](#) via the website.

- 10.4 The Council will strive to remove barriers by making sure consultation documents are available in alternative formats upon request. When arranging meetings, the Council will work to ensure accessibility through the consideration of such issues as the time and venue of meetings, and the provision of appropriate communications support where required.
- 10.5 A summary of Consultees' comments and our response to them will be recorded and made available on the 'We asked, You said, We did' section of the Consultation Hub and consultees' will be advised on the availability of this summary.

11 Actions to Promote Positive Attitudes Towards Disabled People

11.1 This section details the actions we propose to take and how we will measure performance of the Disability Action Plan (2024-2027)

Action	Lead Responsibility	Performance Indicator	Standard/Target	Expected Outcome/Impact
Raising Awareness and Training				
Review of training materials for Induction and Equality and Diversity Training	Policy, Equality and Diversity Team	Training materials reviewed	Annually	Training materials and information relating to Disability access will remain up to date
Mandatory Induction Training for all new employees, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan • Examples of barriers faced by disabled people 	Policy, Equality and Diversity Team & Organisational Development and Performance Team	The % of new staff completing Induction Training within first 3 months of employment	80%	Increased awareness of equality and disability legislation and understanding of issues relating to our customers

Action	Lead Responsibility	Performance Indicator	Standard/Target	Expected Outcome/Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate language and etiquette • DDA and reasonable adjustments • The Council's Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work policies and procedures 				
Provide Equality and Diversity Training for all staff	Policy, Equality and Diversity Team & Organisational Development and Performance Team	The number of annual training sessions	3	Increased awareness of equality and disability legislation and understanding of issues relating to our customers
Provide Equality and Diversity Training for Elected Members	Policy, Equality and Diversity Team	The number of annual training sessions	1	Increased awareness of equality and disability legislation and understanding of issues relating to our customers

Action	Lead Responsibility	Performance Indicator	Standard/Target	Expected Outcome/Impact
<p>Encourage Tier 4 Managers to support staff completion of corporate eLearning modules – Equality and Diversity in the Workplace and Autism Awareness</p> <p>The Equality and Diversity in the Workplace Module covers:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality section 75 duties • Disability Duties • Equality in the workplace • Respectful Language • DDA and reasonable adjustments 	Organisational Development and Performance Team & Policy, Equality and Diversity Team	<p>The number of Team meetings attended annually to raise awareness of online training modules and other disability and equality related matters.</p> <p>E Learning reminder for Tier 4 Managers at Keeping Connected Network meetings</p> <p>The % completion rate of the 5 eLearning modules (Baseline is 25% Oct 23)</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>Year 1 (2024/25) 40%</p> <p>Year 2 (2025/26) 60%</p> <p>Year 3 (2026/27)80%</p>	Increased awareness of equality and disability legislation and understanding of issues relating to our customers

Action	Lead Responsibility	Performance Indicator	Standard/Target	Expected Outcome/Impact
Provide training on specific disabilities or general disability awareness where need identified Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health First Aid • Autism Awareness • Disability Awareness Training 	Policy, Equality and Diversity Team & Organisational Development and Performance Team.	The number of training requests met.	100%	Increased awareness of disability legislation and understanding of issues relating to our customers with specific or general disabilities
Sharing of Equality Commission Training opportunities quarterly with Organisational Development and Performance Team for Tier 4 Managers & Inclusive ABC Working Group	Policy, Equality and Diversity Team Organisational Development and Performance Team	Equality Commission Training Calendar shared.	Quarterly	Increased disability awareness for Tier 4 managers supporting disabled employees and meeting the needs of disabled customers
Have a database of images for use in Council publications that display	Communications and Design Services	Use of images of disabled people in Council	Annually	Visibility of disabled people across a range of areas reflected in Council

Action	Lead Responsibility	Performance Indicator	Standard/Target	Expected Outcome/Impact
positive images of disabled people		publications/social media posts/website		marketing/promotional materials
Partnership Working				
Work with the Department of Health and other stakeholders to update the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's Every Customer Counts Accessibility checklist to ensure the needs of people who are neurodivergent are included	Policy, Equality and Diversity Team and Inclusive ABC Working Group in Partnership with the Department of Health	Attend Dept of Health Meetings Review and Provide Feedback on Accessibility Checklist	2 Provide Feedback on Checklist	More accessible services for people who are neurodivergent and their families.
Work in partnership with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the Council's Economic Development Services Department to raise awareness of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's Every Customer Counts Initiative with staff and retail businesses	Policy, Equality and Diversity Team & Economic Development Services Department in Partnership with The Equality Commission	The number of advice/training sessions delivered to staff and retail businesses in the Borough	Annually	More accessible services for disabled people throughout the Borough

Action	Lead Responsibility	Performance Indicator	Standard/Target	Expected Outcome/Impact
Engage with the Southern Health and Social Care Trust's Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Forum for shared learning	Policy, Equality and Diversity Team	Attendance at SH&SCT ASD Forum	Quarterly/as required	Sharing of good practice in order to inform changes to service provision for customers with Autism
Build on partnership with AccessAble to improve the visibility of Council Facilities and other private sector facilities in the Borough.	Policy, Equality and Diversity Team Communications and Design Services Inclusive ABC Working Group AccessAble	Review of Access Guides completed	Annually	Improved information for disabled people visiting our facilities/participating in Council activities
Maintenance of Autism Impact Award in Navan Centre and Market Place Theatre	Tourism, Arts & Culture	The number of annual Awards maintained	2	Improved access to Tourism, Arts & Culture facilities for people who are neurodivergent and their families.
Deliver a range of inclusive summer schemes and other programmes in partnership with external providers	Health and Recreation Department in partnership with the Southern	The number of annual accessible sports programmes delivered	30	Accessible Sports Programmes available for a wide range of customers

Action	Lead Responsibility	Performance Indicator	Standard/Target	Expected Outcome/Impact
	Health & Social Care Trust and Disability Sport NI / Live Active NI			
Provision of Inclusive Swimming lessons	Health & Recreation Department	The number of weekly inclusive group sessions delivered	2 Disability swims 2 Quiet Hour swims	Improved access to swimming and improved health outcomes for disabled customers
Provision of Inclusive Gym sessions	Health & Recreation Department	The number of weekly inclusive gym sessions delivered	2	Improved access to gym activities and improved health outcomes for disabled customers
Mainstreaming Disability Access and Inclusion				
Develop membership of Inclusive ABC Working Group to include elected members and all Council departments reflecting all areas of direct service provision	Policy, Equality and Diversity Team	The number of Inclusive ABC meetings held each year. The number of departments represented on the Inclusive ABC Group	5 10	Collective approach to the sharing of best practice in the areas of disability access and inclusion. Improved awareness internally on how to meet customer access needs.

Action	Lead Responsibility	Performance Indicator	Standard/Target	Expected Outcome/Impact
Provision of Quiet spaces for Council activities and events to support the needs of Neurodivergent citizens & families	All Departments	Number of Quiet spaces facilitated throughout the year	3 Annually	Inclusive activities facilitated for all
Maintain Inclusive Sports Facility (ISF) Accreditation for SLLC and obtain for the other 2, Tier 1 Council Leisure Centres in Armagh and Banbridge	Health & Recreation Department	Annual accreditation obtained for all 3 Tier 1 Leisure Centres	Annually	Increased participation of Disabled People in Sport and Leisure activities
Develop and update an Inclusive section on the Council's main corporate website bringing together information from Corporate , GetActiveABC and Tourism websites into one area for customers. Add appropriate links to Council affiliated websites	Communications & Design Services Team & Inclusive ABC Working Group	Relevant sections reviewed and updated	Quarterly	Collective approach to promotion of inclusive activities/events/support services in ABC Increased awareness of the range of accessible facilities, activities and events available.

Action	Lead Responsibility	Performance Indicator	Standard/Target	Expected Outcome/Impact
Advertise inclusive facilities, activities and events on social media as and when required	Communications and Design Services Team	The number of annual Disability related social media posts	12	Collective approach to promotion of inclusive activities/events/support services in ABC Increased awareness of the range of accessible facilities, activities and events available.
Junior Sports Awards (Subject to budget) Senior Sports Awards (Subject to budget)	Health and Recreation Department in partnership with Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon Sports Forum	The number of annual Junior Sports Awards for a Sports Person with a disability The number of annual Senior Sports Awards for a Sports Person with a physical disability or sensory disability	1 (March) 1 (September)	Encourage others to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
Play Strategy 2018-2026 42 play parks completed as part of a 5-year Capital Programme Two	Health and Recreation Department	The number of Play Parks upgraded with inclusive play equipment	Approximately 42 by end March 2029	All play parks are designed to be inclusive and offer opportunities for children regardless of their needs and abilities. Inclusion of Sensory &

Action	Lead Responsibility	Performance Indicator	Standard/Target	Expected Outcome/Impact
				Communication Board in all new/refurbished play parks moving forward.
Non-fixed inclusive play programmes such as Play in the Community, Play Through the Ages and Forest Schools	Health and Recreation Department Outdoor Leisure	The number of Inclusive non-fixed play programmes delivered.	2023-2026	Programmes developed to ensure outdoor play opportunities for all children and young people regardless of their needs and abilities.
The Mobile Accessible Toilet will be made available at 12 large scale Council events each year	Health and Recreation Department Tourism, Arts and Culture Department	The number of annual large-scale Council events where the Mobile Accessible Toilet (MAT) is available	12	Improved access at large scale Council events.

Actions to encourage the participation of disabled people in public life

Action	Lead Responsibility	Performance Indicator	Standard/Target	Expected Outcome/Impact
Partnership Working				
Engage with the local disability sector and local disabled people in relation to the drafting, implementation and monitoring of the Council's next Disability Action Plan	Policy, Equality and Diversity Team & Inclusive ABC Working Group	Engagement completed	2026/2027	Improved engagement with the disability sector and a better understanding of the needs of disabled people when accessing our services
Link with external organisations / schools / colleges to promote work experience / placement opportunities in Council	Heads of Department with support from the Human Resources and Organisational Development Department	The number of Disability Employment Organisations engaged with annually	5	Increased participation of disabled people in Council placements.
Pilot a 'Reverse Jobs Fair' In Armagh to match disabled people with employers and	Labour Market Partnership, Economic Development	Number of disabled job applicants in attendance	30	Increased participation of disabled people in labour market

Action	Lead Responsibility	Performance Indicator	Standard/Target	Expected Outcome/Impact
employment opportunities. This is the first of its kind in N. Ireland.				

12. How the Disability Action Plan will be Published

12.1 Following submission to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, this Plan will be published on the Council's website at:

[Disability & Equality](#)

12.2 In accordance with the Councils Equality Scheme, the Plan will be available in alternative languages, audio, magnification, colour contrast and other access functionalities by clicking on the Website Accessibility tab at top of the page on the Corporate website. If you would like a hard copy /or a copy in an alternative format, not already available on our website, please contact:

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E: equality@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

The availability of the Disability Duties and Action Plan will be highlighted on our website, on social media, through email and meeting directly with disability organisations, representative groups, and disabled people.