

NEWINGTON HOUSING ASSOCIATION

DIABILITY ACTION PLAN

To promote positive attitudes towards disabled people

To encourage the participation of disabled people in Public Life

September 2018 to August 2021

Alternative Formats

English: This Disability Action Plan can be made available in minority ethnic languages, on request, to meet the needs of those not fluent in English.

This Disability Action Plan can be obtained from Newington Housing Association in alternative formats including large print, Braille, electronically, or on disk.

If you would like a copy in an alternative format please contact:

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Introduction

Under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) (as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006), Newington Housing Association 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 Association is also required to submit to the Equality Commission a Plan showing how it proposes to fulfill these duties in relation to its functions.

Commitments

The Chair and Chief Executive are committed to effectively implementing the Disability Duties and this Plan.

Mainstreaming the Duties

Newington Housing Association is committed to successfully mainstreaming the Disability Duties throughout the organisation.

Resources

In order to deliver the actions detailed in this Plan, the Association is aware that additional resources will have to be allocated. Newington Housing Association is committed to allocating all reasonable, additional resources (in terms of people, time and money) required to implement this Plan.

Internal Arrangements

Newington Housing Association will put appropriate internal arrangements in place to ensure that the Disability Duties are complied with and the Plan is successfully implemented.

Anthony Kerr will have operational responsibility for ensuring the implementation and monitoring of the Plan. Regular and Annual Progress Reports will be provided through the normal reporting structures.

Training

Newington Housing Association is committed to providing training for staff and office holders on Disability Equality legislation and Disability Awareness.

Reporting Arrangements

Newington Housing Association confirms its commitment to submitting Annual Progress Reports on the implementation of this Plan to the Equality Commission and carrying out a

review of this Plan, in line with current review arrangements for Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. This will ensure the alignment of Section 75 and disability duties.

A copy of this Plan, the Association's Annual Progress Reports and review of this Plan will be made available on the Association's website

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Background

Newington Housing Association (1975) Limited was established in 1976. The Board of Management of the housing association membership comprises the Chair and 11 other members appointed by the Management Committee. Appointments are made in accordance with the Associations Rules, public appointments system and are for a period of a maximum of 9 years. The housing association reflects a range of interests, representing the interests of users of the service.

Newington Housing Association is a community based housing association with 667 units of accommodation, operating exclusively in North Belfast. The Association provides mainly general needs housing but also provides accommodation for older people, singles and provides accommodation for homeless people in partnership with The De Paul Trust.

Newington Housing Association is a part of the a Group Structure Agreement with Apex Housing Group. Newington Housing continues to be registered as a Housing Association with the Department for Communities and operates as an independent Housing Association with its own staff and Board of Management.

Newington Housing Association employs 15 full time and 2 part time members of staff.

Newington Housing Association Vision, Mission & Values

Vision

Building Communities

Mission

Working to build communities by providing quality, affordable housing.

Values

Community

Our focus is on the community's needs. To promote inclusion and build sustainable relationships within the local community.

Value for Money

To develop a culture of best value through strong financial management and partnering while maintaining the highest standards of service and quality.

Quality

To provide high quality, affordable local housing and to maintain all properties to the highest standards.

Accountable

To operate an open and transparent environment, through best practice management, effective governance and the adoption of the highest standard of accountability and probity.

Professionalism

To promote staff and Board Member development and training. To adopt best management and practice standards and create an environment of equality, respect and self esteem.

Functions & Responsibilities

1.7 The main functions of Newington Housing Association are:

- To provide affordable good quality housing for those in need
- To provide an efficient, equitable and effective housing service for the associations tenants
- To develop new quality and affordable housing
- To offer effective housing advice to applicants and prospective applicants

Public Life Positions

The public life positions which exist in the Association are Non-Executive Director posts.

The Association is aware that there is currently an under representation of disabled people in public life positions.

Report on Progress

We will submit a progress report to the Equality Commission each year on the implementation of this Disability Action Plan. We will also publish it on the website alongside our Annual Report of Progress.

As required by the DDA, the Association will also carry out a five year review of its Plan and submit it to the Equality Commission.

Proposed Action Measures

On the following pages we have outlined the actions we propose to take in coming years along with targets and timescales. We will review and update this Plan on a regular basis, and will continue to engage with key organisations and individuals representing the interests of people with disabilities.

We are committed to monitoring and reviewing our policies, procedures and practices to ensure that we continue to deliver an effective service to people with disabilities.

When working with disabled people we are committed to making the necessary changes in how we conduct our meetings to ensure meaningful participation by all involved.

The Association will recognise and take into account the varying needs of people with different disabilities. Newington Housing Association will also address the needs of people with multiple identities, such as ethnic minority women with disabilities, children and older people with disabilities etc. and will take account of these in the implementation of the action plan.

NHA Disability Action Plan Objectives 2018 – 2021

1) COMMUNICATION

- Accessible website
- Signage
- Positive Imagery
- Audit of materials/guides in collaboration with people with a disability
- Improve opportunities for a person with a disability to communicate with the Department

2) TRAINING

- Design and evaluate training in collaboration with people with a disability
- Provide training for managers and staff in managing stress
- Ensure people with a disability have full access to training and development opportunities
- Include at least one relevant disability issue each year at team meetings
- Invite key disability speakers to at least one event per year.

3) PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

- Promote interest from people with a disability on project groups, committees , etc
- Customer/staff surveys
- Engage with disability sector
- Facilitate the involvement of disabled people in the work of the Department
- Increase staff declarations
- Appoint a Disability Champion

4) RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

- Provide placement opportunities
- Provide work shadowing
- Increase number of applications from people with a disability
- Establish a mentor programme
- Support employees to manage their physical, mental and financial wellbeing

Outlined below are the action measures which the Association proposes to take until 2021. We will regularly review and develop the Plan, and will incorporate additional measures (when required) throughout the live of the Plan.

- Face to face contact with disabled people on a regular basis;(1)
- Inform disabled people about competitions and advertise competitions on our websites;(2)
- Carry out positive engagement with specialist disability organisations;(3)
- Continue to consult with disabled people on how existing barriers to promoting themselves or applying for Public appointments can be addressed;(4)
- Carry out annual exercises to encourage staff to declare disabilities/long term health conditions and ensure consideration is given to implementation of all identified reasonable adjustments; (5)
- Improve/review complaint feedback mechanisms to ensure a quality service to staff and service users;(6)
- Provide information to staff on specific disabilities/long term health conditions;(7)
- Support voluntary and community sector research , review findings by disability and identify action points; (7)
- Ensure that customer satisfaction surveys are carried out that allow for a review of findings by disability; (9)
- Take action to ensure that key staff are competent in using text phone and all reception desks have access to induction loops;(10)

- Develop internal protocol to allow staff to respond in an effective way and efficient way to accessibility queries from customers; (11)
- Develop guidance for staff when working with support workers and interpreters; (12)
- Identify gaps in data available and put measures in place to gather data for the future; (13)
- When hosting internal or external events ensure that :-
 - Presentation and promotion materials are easily readable
 - Signage is clear
 - Handouts are in accessible formats
 - Venues are easy to reach and are accessible
 - Delegates are made aware of fire evacuation policies and location of toilets
 - Venues are chosen to ensure that they are welcoming environments. (14)
- Increase engagement with representative groups from within the disability sector.(15)
- Establish best practice in the recruitment and employment of disabled people. (16)
- Seek the views of staff on the content and implementation of the Disability Action Plan and disability equality generally.(17)
- Use and review statistical analysis to identify areas of performance that need improving, including customer performance.(18)
- Review the location of where public events are held and ensure that they are fully accessible to disabled people. (19)

- When seeking volunteers for Committee's we will clearly encourage other agencies who forward these individuals to promote the participation of disabled people in public life.(20)
- Develop and implement an accessible information policy.(21)
- Continue partnership working arrangements with other housing Association's.(22)
- Encourage disabled tenants and staff to submit articles for Tenant Newsletters and other relevant publications (23)
- Promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities through use of positive imagery in magazine articles.(24)
- Provide advice to disabled tenants on changes in welfare reform and new legislation.(25)
- Provision of work placements and recognition and reward the contribution of disabled people on these placements.(26)
- Encourage disabled tenants to become involved on tenant groups etc.(27)
- Deliver requirements of UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.(28)
- Ensure measures in the action plan reflect all of the Associations functions.(29)
- Improve online access for tenants who have a disability.(30)
- Provision of disabled adaption's to tenants who have disabilities (31)
- Facilities to provide information and communication in alternative formats (32)
- Review policies to identify and assess any significant issues relating to the two disability duties (33)

- Include disability awareness in staff inductions (34)
- Engage with organisations and disabled people to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage participation by disabled people in Public life (35)
- Representation at joint consultation events hosted by the Northern Ireland Housing Association (36)
- Review Induction arrangements to ensure new staff with disabilities are aware of internal support available.(37)
- Collaborate on outreach activities with disability groups to raise awareness of public appointments (38)
- Work to increase representation by disabled people on tenant groups as and were appropriate.(39)
- Provide information that is easy to access and understand (40)
- Improve how we engage with people with disabilities (41)
- Where appropriate promote workplace opportunities and placements and increase engagement with the disability sector.(42)
- Ensure the delivery of our new build developments are designed and constructed to meet current and future long term needs of disabled people (43)
- Appoint a Disability Champion (44)

Timescale for the implementation of the Action Measures

Newington Housing Association intends to incorporate the above 44 no. measures into the day to day activities and acknowledges of the need to monitor progress in relation to the implementation of the Disability Action Plan. This is to ensure that the disability duties are being met.

An annual review of the plan will go some way towards monitoring and reviewing the Plan. This will help to develop targets and key performance indicators for the next year whilst detailing any significant outcomes relevant to the review period.

Some of the performance indicators may include circulating information to tenants asking for comments in communications sent out by the Association.

Appendix 1:

Measures to be taken to Implement Disability Duties

Actions	Outcomes	Lead Responsibility	Timetable
Face to face contact with disabled people on a regular basis (1)	Ensure that access to frontline staff is readily available to meet the needs of individual client (i.e. via home visits, interpreter services, loop systems, etc.	All staff	On-going - continuation from previous D.A.P.2015 – 2018.
Inform disabled people about competitions and advertise competitions on our websites;(2)	Use effective ways to promote active participation for all.	All Staff	On-going - continuation from previous D.A.P.2015 – 2018.
Carryout out positive engagement with specialist	Continue to formalise links with disability	B.O.M and C/Ex.	On-going - continuation

disability organisations;(3)	groups that offer guidance and advice.		from previous D.A.P.2015 – 2018.
Continue to consult with disabled people on how existing barriers to promoting themselves or applying for Public appointments can be addressed (4)	Liaise with individuals and groups promoting disability awareness, training and support.	All Staff	On-going - continuation from previous D.A.P.2015 – 2018.
Carry out annual exercises to encourage staff to declare disabilities/long term health conditions and ensure consideration is given to implementation of all identified reasonable adjustments;(5)	Staff survey to be completed to identify disabled and non-disabled employees. Conduct staff attitude survey in relation to disability issue.	Director of Operations Director of Operations	On-going - continuation from previous D.A.P.2015 – 2018. Annually

	<p>Survey to impact policy direction to ensure best practice</p> <p>Ensure mechanisms are in place to support staff with disabilities to fulfil career development and learning opportunities</p>	<p>SMT/Board of Management</p> <p>SMT</p>	<p>On-going - continuation from previous D.A.P.2015 – 2018.</p>
<p>Improve/review complaint feedback mechanisms to ensure a quality service to staff and service users; (6)</p>	<p>Review feedback as use it as a tool to improve work practices and service deliver</p>	<p>SMT</p>	<p>2018 - 2021</p>
<p>Provide information to staff on specific disabilities/long term health conditions; (7)</p>	<p>Regularly review and update staff welfare policy and provide professional support and guidance when required.</p>	<p>SMT</p>	<p>2018 - 2021</p>

Support voluntary and community sector research, review findings by disability and identify action points; (8)	Support, promote and incorporate research findings into the Association's daily activities.	SMT	2018 - 2021
Ensure that customer satisfaction surveys are carried out that allow for a review of findings by disability (9)	Review/Amend Tenant Satisfaction Survey to identify respondents with disabilities.	SMT	On-going - continuation from previous D.A.P.2015 – 2018.
Ensure all key staff are competent in using text phone and all reception desks have access to induction loops;(10)	Acquisition of text phone will be sought on relocation to new office accommodation. All relevant staff will be fully trained in the use of this form of communication.	SMT	On-going - continuation from previous D.A.P.2015 – 2018.
Develop internal protocol to allow staff to respond in an	Review and monitor guidance, policies	SMT	2018 - 2021

effective and efficient way to accessibility queries from customers;(11)	and procedures to ensure to effective service delivery and support.		
Develop guidance for staff when working with support workers and interpreters; (12)	<p>SMT to provide guidance, advice and support to front line staff.</p> <p>Disability Awareness refresher training for all appropriate staff.</p> <p>Engage with disability groups to obtain advice on development guidance.</p>	SMT	On-going - continuation from previous D.A.P.2015 – 2018.
Identify gaps in data available and put measures in place to gather data for the future; (13)	Review all data collection systems and implement change where	SMT	On-going - continuation from previous D.A.P.2015

	necessary.		– 2018.
<p>When hosting internal or external events ensure that :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation and promotion materials are easily readable • Signage is clear • Handouts are in accessible formats • Venues are easy to reach and are accessible • Delegates are made aware of fire evacuation policies and location of toilets • Venues are chosen to ensure that they are welcoming environments. (14) 	<p>If required, ensure all literature is offered in different formats.</p> <p>When hosting events, ensure that facilities meet the needs of all attendees.</p> <p>Encourage tenants with disabilities, who wish to attend events, to inform the Association of their specific needs and requirements, to promote engagement.</p>	All Staff	On-going - continuation from previous D.A.P.2015 – 2018.
Increase engagement with representative groups from within the disability	Use disability networks to circulate	BOM & SMT	On-going - continuation from

sector.(15)	advertises for employment vacancies to ensure recruitment advertising reaches a wide audience.		previous D.A.P.2015 – 2018.
Establish best practice in the recruitment and employment of disabled people. (16)	Use disability networks to circulate adverts for employment vacancies to ensure recruitment advertising reaches a wide audience.	BOM & SMT	On-going - continuation from previous D.A.P.2015 – 2018.
Seek the views of staff on the content and implementation of the Disability Action Plan and disability equality generally.(17)	Conduct a staff consultation exercise of DAP and implement any conclusions as a result of this.	SMT	On-going - continuation from previous D.A.P.2015 – 2018.

Use and review statistical analysis to identify areas of performance that need improving, including customer performance.(18)	Formulate findings from all data sources and identify areas where performance can be improved.	SMT	On-going - continuation from previous D.A.P.2015 – 2018.
Review the location of where public events are held and ensure that they are fully accessible to disabled people. (19)	All proposed venues will be inspected prior to the organising of events to they are accessible to all.	All Staff	On-going - continuation from previous D.A.P.2015 – 2018.
When seeking volunteers for Committee's we will clearly encourage other agencies who forward these individuals to promote the participation of disabled people in public life.(20)	Ensure all appointments to the Board are reviewed and monitored to identify gaps from under-represented groups and persons with disabilities.	BOM & SMT	2018 - 2021
Develop and implement an accessible information	Implement an NHA accessible	SMT	2018 - 2021

policy.(21)	<p>information policy</p> <p>Review how we communicate and inform our staff, tenants and others organisations in areas such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printed Info. • Electronic Info. • Face to face contact • Telephone 		
Continue partnership working arrangements with other housing Association's.(22)	<p>Continue working with Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations and other HA's via various operational forums, joint training & workshops.</p> <p>Continue operation of Apex/NHA intergroup agreement.</p>	All Staff	On-going - continuation from previous D.A.P.2015 – 2018.

<p>Encourage disabled tenants and staff to submit articles for Tenant Newsletters and other relevant publications (23)</p>	<p>Advise and encourage all tenants and staff member of the opportunity to submit articles.</p> <p>Incorporate a section in publications issued by NHA to promote inclusion.</p>	<p>All Staff</p>	<p>On-going - continuation from previous D.A.P.2015 – 2018</p>
<p>Promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities through use of positive imagery in magazine articles.(24)</p>	<p>Promote a culture of inclusion for all via the following: Tenants Newsletter/Annual Report will publish and seek to incorporate articles on people with disabilities, successful and positive outcomes</p>	<p>SMT</p>	<p>On-going - continuation from previous D.A.P.2015 – 2018</p>

<p>Provide advice to disabled tenants on changes in welfare reform and new legislation.(25)</p>	<p>Continued to provide adequate training to staff on upcoming changes that effect residents directly and/or and the wider community</p> <p>Ensure disabled tenants have easy access to partner organisations that provide advice and support (i.e. Tenant Debt Advice Service, North Belfast Advice Partnership, etc.).</p>	<p>All Staff</p>	<p>On-going - continuation from previous D.A.P.2015 – 2018</p>
<p>Provision of work placements and recognition and reward the contribution of disabled people on these placements.(26)</p>	<p>Where practical, review and promote work placements for all and encourage applications from persons with</p>	<p>SMT</p>	<p>2018 - 2021</p>

	<p>disabilities.</p> <p>Promote positive outcomes via various forms of communications (e.g. publications, website, etc.).</p>		
Encourage disabled tenants to become involved on tenant groups etc.(27)	Advise all tenants (incl. disabled tenants) of the opportunity to join community residents groups and continually encourage the recruitment of disabled tenants onto our own Tenant Forums.	All Staff	On-going - continuation from previous D.A.P.2015 – 2018.
Deliver requirements of UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.(28)	Ensure all legislative requirements and obligations are met.	SMT	On-going - continuation from previous

			D.A.P.2015 – 2018.
Ensure measures in the action plan reflect all of the Associations functions.(29)	Monitor and review DAP measures at regular intervals to ensure Best practice and that action outcomes are recorded in all NHA's day to day activities	All Staff	2018 - 2021
Improve online access for tenants who have a disability.(30)	Complete a review of the Association current website and ensure the	SMT	2018 - 2021
Provision of disabled adaption's to tenants who have disabilities (31)	Ensure that all adaptations are installed in an intrusive and timely manner (as per policy and DFC guidelines). Use feedback via the tenant satisfaction	PST/All Staff	On-going - continuation from previous D.A.P.2015 – 2018.

	<p>survey (Part 2 & 3) from tenants and other related questionnaires to encourage uptake of our adaptation service.</p> <p>Continue to complete and review findings of all Post Tenancy Visits to ensure tenant's new accommodation fully meets their needs.</p>		
<p>Facilities to provide information and communication in alternative formats (32)</p>	<p>Publicise and provide all publications in all relevant formats (on request from tenants or other sources).</p>	<p>SMT</p>	<p>On-going - continuation from previous D.A.P.2015 – 2018.</p>

Review policies to identify and assess any significant issues relating to disability duties (33)	SMT to incorporate all Section 75 requirements when reviewing policies.	SMT	On-going - continuation from previous D.A.P.2015 – 2018.
Include disability awareness in staff inductions (34)	SMT to carry out all staff inductions and emphasis the necessity	SMT	On-going - continuation from previous D.A.P.2015 – 2018.
Engage with organisations and disabled people to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage participation by disabled people in Public life (35)	Establish links, build positive relationships and networks which	All Staff	On-going - continuation from previous D.A.P.2015 – 2018.
Representation at joint consultation events hosted	NHA staff to participate proactively	All Staff	On-going - continuation

by the Northern Ireland Housing Association (36)	partnerships working events delivered by NIFHA		from previous D.A.P.2015 – 2018.
Review Induction arrangements to ensure new staff with disabilities are aware of internal support available.(37)	Ensure all staff are fully aware of relevant support services available to them from the outset of their employment and where necessary, incorporate additional support measures to suit individuals' needs and requirements.	SMT	2018 - 2021
Collaborate on outreach activities with disability groups to raise awareness of public appointments (38)	Form partnership and strengthen links with local groups.	All Staff	2018 - 2021
Work to increase representation by disabled people on tenant groups as	All staff when directly liaising with tenants are encouraged	All Staff	On-going - continuation from

and were appropriate.(39)	promote tenant opportunities for involvement and participation of in-house and external groups and events.		previous D.A.P.2015 – 2018.
Provide information that is easy to access and understand (40)	All correspondences and information issued by the Association will be clear an	All Staff	On-going - continuation from previous D.A.P.2015 – 2018.
Improve how we engage with people with disabilities (41)	Review existing practices and incorporate measures to encourage full engagement.	All Staff	2018 - 2021
Were appropriate promote workplace opportunities and placements and increase engagement with the disability sector (42).	Promote partnership working and incorporate Best Practice findings identified within the sector.	All Staff	2018 - 2021
Ensure the delivery of our new build developments are	Continue to complete	BOM & SMT	On-going - continuation

<p>designed and constructed to meet current and future long term needs of disabled people (43)</p>	<p>and review all findings from surveys carried out on all new build schemes to ensure standard are met and that the homes we provide meet all requirements of new tenants to live comfortably and unrestricted within their new homes</p> <p>Post Tenancy checks to ensure all existing facilities</p>		<p>from previous D.A.P.2015 – 2018.</p>
<p>Appoint a Disability Champion(44)</p>	<p>NHA will actively seek to appoint a Disability Champion from our existing tenant base.</p>	<p>SMT</p>	<p>By 2021</p>