



Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service

Disability Action Plan 5 Year Review

Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion
Service

December 2012

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Introduction

The NI Blood Transfusion Service developed and consulted on its first Disability Action Plan in 2007, following the introduction of new disability duties on 01 Jan 2007, which state that public authorities, when carrying out their functions must have due regard to the need to:

- 1) promote positive attitudes towards disabled people, and
- 2) encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

This plan was for a term of 3 years, from July 2007 to June 2010. The Equality Commission NI subsequently granted an extension of the plan until March 2013 to facilitate alignment with our Equality Action Plan.

What have we achieved so far?

The NI Blood Transfusion Service has achieved the following over the last 5 years:

When	Measure achieved
2007-08	Technical changes were made to the HSC Discovering Diversity e-learning programme to enhance accessibility for disabled people. Staff with disabilities were amongst those involved in the pilot.
	The NIBTS Screening template was revised to include questions on the two disability duties. Managers were made aware of the revised screening template.
	The NIBTS explicitly made reference to the Disability Action Plan in the Business Plan and as such the Disability Action Plan was recognised as a key strategic objective.
	We carried out an audit of recruitment practice to ensure no barriers for people with disabilities. We undertook a review of three policies in this regard with disability mainstreamed into one combined policy.
	We adopted and implemented a policy of guaranteed shortlisting for people with disabilities where a candidate meets the minimum essential criteria for the post.

	<p>Desktop review carried out by Central Services Agency (with whom we work closely on equality issues) of training in Equality Awareness, Disability Awareness and Screening to ensure the needs of people with disabilities are met. No barriers were identified however evaluation forms were updated to incorporate a disability needs question.</p>
	<p>In 2007/08 ten members of staff completed Disability Awareness Training. 40 staff attended Equality Awareness Training; this training also incorporated the new disability duties.</p>
	<p>Guide developed for staff on disability, in particular communication and etiquette when meeting a disabled person; this guide was made available to staff, including in alternate formats on request.</p>
	<p>The NIBTS contributed to the development of the diversity e-learning resource. The programme uses photographic images of disabled people, and video clips involving people with disabilities, portrayed in a positive manner.</p>
	<p>Disability was added to the agenda for all quarterly equality meetings with consortium of agencies to ensure disability was kept to forefront of equality agenda.</p>
	<p>The Chief Executive / Medical Director of NIBTS was named as the Disability Champion for the organisation.</p>
2008-09	<p>In the annual joint consultation on the screening outcomes of all policies screened, for the first time a summary of policies was produced in Plain English in order to widen accessibility to those with mild learning or literacy difficulties.</p>
	<p>We carried forward reference to disability objectives in our Business plan for 2008-09, ensuring our Disability Action Plan was again a recognised strategic objective.</p>
	<p>In 2008/09 7 members of staff completed Disability Awareness Training. 24 staff attended Equality Awareness Training; this training also incorporated the new disability duties.</p>
	<p>The NIBTS, through the Equality Unit at the Central</p>

	<p>Services Agency, met with a range of disability groups (RNIB, Disability Action, Cedar Foundation) and Help the Aged, to ascertain communication needs of people who are blind or partially sighted; in terms of preferred formats (Braille, Daisy, Audiotape etc.), formats of written materials (font type, size, style etc.), website best practice, and how best to disseminate information to recipients – email, via voluntary organisations, by post, articles in relevant publications etc.</p>
	<p>We drew up and adopted a Disability consultation list to facilitate a more efficient process of engagement with disability related organisations on relevant issues.</p>
	<p>The disability duties continued to be an agenda item at the quarterly equality meetings of the consortium of agencies and special bodies, convened by the Equality Unit at the Central Services Agency.</p>
	<p>A guide was developed and put in place for managers on reasonable adjustments for staff with a range of disabilities; the guide was developed by the consortium of agencies in consultation with disability groups, trade unions and relevant professionals, e.g. Occupational Health, in February 09.</p>
	<p>NIBTS continued to progress the implementation of the Knowledge and Skills Framework of which Equality and Diversity is a core dimension for all staff.</p>
	<p>Our internal equality group continued to meet and specified disability matters as a discrete agenda item.</p>
	<p>We participated in the development of a Disability Training Checklist to be used when co-ordinating any training session or event to remove barriers to participation for people with disabilities.</p>
2009-10	<p>An advisory group was established by the NIBTS along with the HSC agencies and special bodies, to inform the approach to the Section 75 Audit of Inequalities. This group comprised of a range of Section 75 representative groups, including a range of disability groups. This group would also inform</p>

	<p>decision making on priority actions emanating from the audit.</p> <p>In partnership with Disability Action, NIBTS continued to offer a part time porter post (only open to a person with a disability); reviewed twice yearly.</p> <p>We continued to implement the Disability Training Checklist to ensure any barriers for participation of people with disabilities were removed.</p> <p>The NIBTS, represented by the Equality Unit at the Business Services Organisation, participated in a regional working group, along with representatives from a range of disability organisations, including Mencap, Action Mental Health and RNID. The group was tasked with taking forward the development of this disability e-learning module along with AurionLearning for delivery in Sept 2010.</p> <p>In 2009/10, 12 members of staff completed Disability Awareness Training. 13 staff attended Equality Awareness Training; this training also incorporated the new disability duties.</p> <p>Screening Training, delivered by the Equality Unit at the Business Services Organisation, included the new duties. 6 members of staff received this training.</p> <p>We introduced a “phased return to work” in order to facilitate employees return to work after long term sickness, including disability related absence.</p>
2010-11	<p>The NIBTS, through the Equality Unit, continued to work with a wide range of disability organisations and individuals with disabilities to develop an eLearning module on disability, as part of the HSC Discovering Diversity eLearning programme. These organisations and individuals provided expert advice throughout the development of the resource and participated in a range of video clips within the resource, which was launched early in 2011.</p> <p>The NIBTS, along with a range of HSC agencies and special bodies, carried out a joint consultation on our new equality scheme, audit of inequalities and action plan. Consultees included a wide range of disability groups.</p>

	<p>BTS worked with its partner organisations and the Equality Unit to select a relevant training provider to deliver a Mental Health Awareness Training session for managers which aimed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase awareness of mental health issues in the workplace • Improve managers' skills and confidence in dealing with mental health and wellbeing in the workplace • Promote a positive approach to employing people with mental health problems <p>2 BTS staff participated in the training.</p> <p>We, along with our partner organisations and the Equality Unit, developed a tool for undertaking the audit of inequalities; this tool incorporated a section specifically relating to the two disability duties. As the audit tool was completed for each functional area within BTS, the two duties were taken into consideration in the context of all of the functions of BTS.</p> <p>We continued to implement the new HSC Screening Template, which incorporated specific questions on the disability duties, thereby ensuring that the duties were taken into consideration in all policy and decision making in BTS.</p>
<p>2011-12</p>	<p>A meeting was held with the advisory group in April 2011 to present a summary of the outcome of the consultation on the Equality Scheme and Action Plan.</p> <p>A meeting was held with AdaptNI in January 2011 regarding their training programme and potential for signposting their clients and contacts to public life opportunities in organisations; their 'In the Loop' programme aims to bridge the gap between Public Authorities seeking to attract more disabled people and those who want their voices to be heard on committees and in public life positions.</p> <p>We, along with our partner organisations and led by the Equality Unit at the Business Services Organisation, put in place a process for publishing screening templates as soon as they were</p>

	completed (in accordance with a request by a disability organisation) and for publishing the quarterly screening reports.
	Work continued to progress on the development of a Policy on Accessible Information, including ongoing input from disability representative organisations.
All 5 years	The NIBTS, along with a range of HSC agencies and special bodies, carried out joint annual consultations on the screening outcomes of all policies screened up to March 2011. Consultees included a wide range of disability groups. From April 2011 to present we publish our screening on completion and issue a quarterly report to consultees.
All 5 years	We monitor a quarterly report from Complaints Department to identify and review disability related complaints.
All 5 years	We added a disability accessibility question to evaluation forms for training. We review these training evaluations to identify and where possible rectify any areas for improvement.

Learning from our last Disability Action Plan

1. Consultation on Screening Outcomes

We are committed to learning from consultee comments on our work in relation to screening, and give thorough consideration to all comments we receive.

2. Monitoring of Complaints

No complaints received.

3. Disability Accessibility in Training Evaluation

We asked trainees if there was anything we could change in relation to accessibility of the training, to make it more accessible for people with disabilities. We received a few suggestions:

- Ensure lights over projector screen are dimmed

- Ensure printed copies of training materials are in an accessible font size
- Make the entrance more accessible
- Don't rush the session
- Provide a map to the training venue

We have taken on board all comments received regarding training and made changes to subsequent training sessions.

What gaps are there

In relation to our disability action plan, the only action we did not complete was to investigate the scope for collaborative working to hold awareness raising campaign/ event(s) which encourages positive interaction between disabled/ non-disabled people.

Intensive work on the Audit of Inequalities, Equality Action Plan and Equality Scheme resulted in the reallocation of resources from this action. We intend to work together with our partner organisations to address this action in our new disability action plan.

How we developed our new plan

We provide a description on how we developed our new Disability Action Plan in our consultation document – Disability Action Plan Draft for Consultation December 2012.