



Special EU Programmes Body
Foras Um Chláir Speisialta An AE
Boord O Owre Ocht UE Projects

DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2009-2011

Draft for Consultation – November 2009

A copy of the Disability Action Plan will be made available on our website www.seupb.eu

The Special EU Programmes Body can provide information and documents in a range of alternative formats on request. This includes but is not limited to: Irish, Ulster Scots, minority languages, Braille, large print, disc, audio-tape, and videos for deaf users of sign language.

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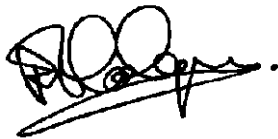
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Foreword

The Disability Action Plan is a statement of the Special EU Programmes Body commitment to fulfil the statutory obligations in compliance with Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006). The Act places duties on public authorities, when carrying out their functions, to have regard to the need:

- to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- to encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

The Plan is also important because it outlines how disability issues can be more effectively mainstreamed within the Special EU Programmes Body, thus ensuring they are central to the whole range of policy decision-making within the Body.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pat Colgan', with a horizontal line underneath.

Pat Colgan
Chief Executive
Special EU Programmes Body

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1. Introduction

1.1 Under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006, the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) is required when carrying out its functions to have due regard to the need:

- to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- to encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

1.2 Under Section 49B of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Special EU Programmes Body is also required to submit to the Equality Commission, a Disability Action Plan (the Plan) showing how it proposes to fulfil these duties in relation to its functions.

1.3 This Disability Action Plan updates our previous plan developed in 2007 to identify actions to be taken during the 2009-2011 period.

1.4 The Special EU Programmes Body will continue to show commitment to the effective implementation of the Plan. The Body will allocate all necessary resources in order to effectively implement the Plan and will also build objectives and targets relating to the disability duties into the Body's Corporate and Business Plans.

1.5 The Body will continue to ensure the effective communication of the Plan and is committed to providing training and guidance for all staff.

2. Purpose of the Disability Action Plan

2.1 The Plan sets out how the SEUPB proposes to fulfil the disability duties in relation to its functions.

3. Role and functions of the SEUPB

3.1 The SEUPB is a North South Body established under the Agreement between the Government of Ireland and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (the Agreement) on 8 March 1999 and came into effect on 2 December 1999.

The Body's primary aim is to promote cross-border co-operation through the implementation of European funding Programmes; the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation for Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland 2007-2013 (PEACE III) and the Cross Border Territorial Co-operation Programme 2007-2013 (INTERREG IVA). The Body has been designated the role of Managing Authority and Certifying Authority for both Programmes and has a much more substantial role in the delivery of the funding directly to the projects on the ground.

The SEUPB also has a role in supporting North South participation in transnational and inter-regional Programmes. The Programmes include; North West Europe Programme, Atlantic Area Programme and the Northern Periphery Programme.

4. Effective implementation

- 4.1 The Special EU Programmes Body is committed to the effective implementation of all aspects of the Plan in all parts of its organisation. Overall responsibility for determining policy on how this will be achieved lies with the Chief Executive. Day to day responsibility for carrying out the policy determined by the Chief Executive lies with the Director of Corporate Services and she will be responsible for the implementation of administrative arrangements to ensure that the disability duties are complied with by the Body in carrying out its functions.

5. Effective engagement

- 5.1 The Body is committed to engaging effectively with disabled people in the drafting, implementation, and review of the Plan. Further information on how this will be done is outlined in Section 7 on Consultation.

6. Annual Reporting

- 6.1 The Body will report annually to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland on the implementation of the Equality Scheme and Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order (DDO) 2006.

7. Consultation

7.1 The Special EU Programmes Body is committed to carrying out consultation in a meaningful manner in the development of its disability duties. The Body is keen to bring about change for disabled people and recognises the benefits of external involvement and participation in preparing the Plan. The SEUPB welcomes any comments, enquiries and feedback, as well as requests for meetings to discuss the Plan.

7.2 Specifically we are keen to seek the views of disabled people in relation to the development of the 2009-2011 Plan. To do this the Special EU Programmes Body is committed to proactively engaging with disability groups. We will invite the following organisations to submit comments on the updated 2009-2011 plan.

- Cedar Foundation
- Disability Action
- NI Association of Mental Health
- Mencap
- FACE Inclusion Matters
- Royal National Institute for the Blind and the Blind Centre for Northern Ireland
- Royal National Institute for the Deaf

Their involvement is designed to assist the Body by:

- identifying 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 Body;
- identifying circumstances in the past in which the Body has not promoted positive attitudes towards disabled people and by identifying opportunities in the future for the Body to promote such attitudes;
- setting priorities and identifying solutions with regards to taking remedial action; and
- monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of measures taken.

7.3 The SEUPB also seeks the views of consultees in relation to the Action Measures listed in Section 10.

- 7.4 Consultation will consist of:
- written request for responses to target groups; and
 - placement of the updated 2009-2011 plan on the consultation zone on the SEUPB website.
- 7.5 We are happy to accept responses in a variety of formats including:
- in any written form, for example, letters, papers, fax;
 - by e-mail to consultation@seupb.eu
 - by requesting a one-to-one meeting; and
 - any other method which can be reasonably accommodated.
- 7.6 As part of the consultation process, barriers to proper consultation will be removed by ensuring the accessibility of documents in alternative formats. Information will be made available in a timely fashion.
- 7.7 Section 10 of this document identifies the actions the Body wishes to implement. We would seek views and comments on these actions and will consider amending them or including additional ones following the comments we receive.
- 7.8 On completion of this consultation the SEUPB will review all feedback and update the Disability Action Plan 2009-2011 as necessary.

8. Public life positions over which the Body has responsibility

- 8.1 Although the Special EU Programmes Body has limited opportunity to directly encourage disabled people to apply for/participate in public life positions, the Body will continue to clearly communicate our goal of encouraging the participation of disabled people in public life via direct recruitment to the Body and when seeking volunteers for Monitoring Committees and Steering Committees for the Programmes. The Body will encourage other agencies who nominate these individuals to consider and where possible implement their responsibility in this area.

9. Previous measures

9.1 The Body has already taken a number of measures to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage their participation in public life.

9.2 Recruitment

The SEUPB, in formulating its recruitment policies, has tried to ensure that it maximises the opportunity to attract applicants with disabilities for jobs within the Body.

The SEUPB Equal Opportunities Policy is included in the recruitment pack for job applicants and additional training has been provided for staff involved in recruitment and selection panels.

With regards to job advertisements the SEUPB:

- publicly states that all appointments are made on the basis of merit; and
- can offer job details and related information in alternative formats upon request.

We also advise potential job applicants on how to find out about reasonable adjustments for the recruitment process. Applicants are requested on their application form to advise us of special provisions or facilities required at interview.

9.3 Training

A programme of disability awareness training for managers and frontline staff is ongoing. Examples of training have included Deaf Awareness Training delivered by RNID in June 2009 and Managing Disability in the Workplace training delivered by Disability Action in September 2009. The training programme will continue throughout the 2009-2011 period.

Staff with disabilities are encouraged to participate fully in all of the Body's training courses, corporate days and events.

9.4 Equality

The Special EU Programmes Body was approved in 2003 as a designated body under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and thus was required to prepare an Equality Scheme. Section 75 of the Act requires all designated bodies, in carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity to a range of groups including persons with a disability and persons without.

The SEUPB regularly reviews its policies and if appropriate will conduct an Equality Impact Assessment to determine the extent, if any, of the different impacts of a policy on different equality groups. If any adverse impact is identified, the impact assessment must consider alternatives or mitigating measures to promote equality.

On request the Body will provide the Equality Scheme and related documents in alternative formats. This includes but is not limited to: Irish, Ulster Scots, minority languages, Braille, large print, disc, audio-tape, and videos for deaf users of sign language.

All staff have received equality awareness training and the Body has appointed an internal Equality Working Group with responsibility for mainstreaming the Equality Scheme.

9.5 Textphone

To improve accessibility for people with hearing difficulties the SEUPB has a textphone in the main Belfast office.

9.6 Website

The SEUPB website has recently been reviewed and upgraded and is now AA accessible. This ensures the highest standard of accessibility for people with different disabilities for whom it may be difficult to use conventional websites for example, people with sensory and motor disabilities.

9.7 Premises

The headquarters, located in the Gasworks in Belfast, provides a suitable environment for disabled workers. Additional disabled toilet facilities are provided on a number of floors and corridors were widened to allow full

accessibility. Signage is provided in colour definition and Braille. The kitchen facilities include lowered work surfaces and space beneath the sink to allow full accessibility for wheelchair users. Accessibility issues have been extensively addressed throughout the building including level access, adequate clear opening widths to doors, lift and complementary stepped access and clear zones of visibility. A passenger lift is provided for access to the first, second and third floors.

The Body is committed to ensuring all its offices are in buildings which are fully accessible for all staff including disabled people (notably wheelchair users and people with other mobility disabilities) as well as people with sensory and learning disabilities. Arrangements are put in place to ensure the smooth evacuation of people with disabilities in the event of an emergency.

The Facilities Manager within the Body has been designated as the Access Officer.

9.8 Providing Advice and Information

The SEUPB is committed to ensuring the advice and information services it provides are accessible to all.

The documents and publications of the Body can be provided in a range of alternative formats on request. This includes but is not limited to: Irish, Ulster Scots, minority languages, Braille, large print, disc, audio-tape, and videos for deaf users of sign language.

The Body is also committed to providing all publications in such a way that they are easily legible type sizes and appropriate typefaces which use colour contrasts that best meet the needs of people with visual impairments.

To assist all learners and in particular those with learning disabilities the SEUPB tries to use plain English in its publications. Further to this, personal calls and face-to-face meetings to discuss and explain any of the Body's reports or publications can be provided.

The Body's commitment is that as far as practically possible all publications:

- Are in plain English;
- Are in easily legible type sizes and approved typefaces;
- Are short and simple;
- Use illustrations to clarify or simplify the meaning; and
- Uses colours that meet the requirements of people with visual impairments.

10. Action Measures

10.1 The following table details the measures the Body will take to implement the disability duties.

Action Measure	Timescale	Performance Indicator/Impact
<p><u>Training and Guidance</u></p> <p>Ensure all staff members are provided with a copy of the Disability Action Plan.</p> <p>All new staff members to be briefed on the Body's disability duties.</p> <p>Provide disability awareness training to all frontline staff members.</p> <p>Ensure those involved in recruitment and selection panels are appropriately trained and kept up to date with best practice.</p>	<p>The Plan will be issued to all staff when the consultation process is complete.</p> <p>As new entrants join the SEUPB.</p> <p>September 2009 - September 2011.</p> <p>Ongoing programme of development for Human Resources staff via external training and information updates (for</p>	<p>The Information and Research Officer will keep a record of all staff in receipt of the Plan.</p> <p>As part of the induction process the Information and Research Officer will meet with new entrants to outline the Body's disability duties.</p> <p>Increased awareness of disability issues and improved customer service.</p> <p>Human Resources to keep a record of formal training.</p>

<p>Provide senior managers with specialist training to assist them in managing disability in the workplace and to effectively contribute to adjustment plans and the Disability Action Plan.</p>	<p>example, Legal-Island emails). HR to advise panel members on recruitment and selection best practice.</p> <p>September 2009.</p>	<p>Promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people.</p> <p>Details of the training and attendees will be recorded by the Information and Research Officer.</p>
<p><u>Encouraging participation in public life</u></p> <p>When seeking volunteers for Monitoring Committees and Steering Committees the Body will clearly encourage other agencies who forward these individuals to promote the participation of disabled people in public life.</p> <p>Remove barriers within the recruitment/selection process and ensure the welcoming statement is included in all recruitment materials.</p>	<p>September 2009 – September 2011.</p> <p>Ongoing.</p>	<p>Higher participation of disabled people in public life.</p> <p>Annual review to be conducted by the Information and Research Officer to ensure this has taken place.</p>

<p>Monitor the SEUPB complaints procedure to ensure appropriate corrective action is taken in consultation with disabled people.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>	<p>The Information and Research Officer will review the complaints procedure annually.</p>
<p><u>Communication</u></p> <p>Work with projects to identify opportunities to promote the positive representation of disabled people.</p> <p>When hosting events (internal or external) the following procedures are and will continue to be followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation and promotional materials are easily legible; • Signage is clear; • Handouts are in an accessible format; • Venues are easy to reach and accessible; • Delegates are aware of relevant fire evacuation policies and the location of toilets; and • Venues are chosen to ensure that they are welcoming environments. 	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Ongoing.</p>	<p>Promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people.</p> <p>To improve access to SEUPB services.</p>

<p>Ongoing review of publicity materials to ensure positive images of disabled people are used.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>	<p>A review of Your EU! and the SEUPB website will be conducted annually.</p>
<p><u>Internal measures</u></p> <p>Appoint Disability Champions to assist with implementing the disability duties (review appointments in line with staff turnover).</p> <p>To ensure all employees who require additional assistance to carry out their duties are provided with adequate support.</p> <p>Task the Information and Research Officer with assisting employees on accessibility auditing, identifying training needs and sourcing advice on specific needs.</p>	<p>January 2010 (for initial appointments).</p> <p>Ongoing.</p> <p>October 2009 – September 2011.</p>	<p>Increased awareness of the Body's disability duties.</p> <p>Promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people.</p> <p>Promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people.</p>

11. Monitoring and evaluation

- 11.1 The SEUPB is committed to monitoring and reviewing policies and practices to ensure the disability duties are being met. Monitoring the progress of the Plan itself is a significant element of this process.

- 11.2 The Body will undertake an annual review of the Disability Action Plan including an analysis of actions completed (actions outlined in Section 10). The review will highlight actions still to be completed and will provide a measure of how effectively the Body is implementing the disability duties.

- 11.3 The Body will monitor employees in post and job applicants through the selection procedure to ensure that the Special EU Programmes Body is aware of employees and potential employees' disability needs.

- 11.4 The complaints procedure will be reviewed annually to ensure there is an appropriate mechanism in place for individuals and groups to contact the Body with regards to issues they may have. Complaints received by the Body will be monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure appropriate corrective action is taken and that complaints which require changes to the operational context of the Body are acted upon.

- 11.5 The SEUPB will monitor the delivery of disability awareness training for all staff.

- 11.6 The Body will monitor the screening of all policies in line with the Equality Scheme commitments and review policies where adverse or potential adverse impact is identified.

12. How the disability action plan will be published

- 12.1 The Plan can be requested from the Information and Research Officer using the following contact details:

Stephanie Galbraith
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EU House
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Belfast
BT7 2JB

Phone number: 028 90 266729

Textphone number: 028 90 266678

Email: stephanie.galbraith@seupb.eu

- 12.2 The Final Disability Action Plan 2009-2011 will be published on the SEUPB website www.seupb.eu
- 12.3 The Body will, through our ongoing work with people with disabilities and people with learning disabilities, find appropriate ways of communicating the Plan. The Plan will be produced in clear print and will be available in alternative formats on request.
- 12.5 All employees of SEUPB will be provided with a copy of the full Plan.