

Disability Action Plan

April 2022-25



Chief Executive's Foreword

CCEA is committed to ensure that it conducts business to embrace every part of the community. CCEA recognises the importance of reaching out and being accessible to society as a whole.

This Disability Action Plan forms part of our overarching equality and good relations programme and impacts on the Council's priorities, activities and strategy.

Like other organisations, we have statutory obligations; however, CCEA aims to lead by example in promoting positive attitudes and encouraging the participation of disabled people in public life.

This Action Plan is therefore a further step forward in that work.

Signed by:

Leah Scott

Interim Chief Executive:

Tommy O'Reilly

Chairman:

Introduction and Legislation

Under Section 49a of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Disability Discrimination Order (NI) 2006 (DDO) CCEA is required, in carrying out its functions and duties to:

- Promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability; and
- Encourage participation by people with a disability in public life

Under Section 49b of the DDA 1995 CCEA is also required to submit to the Equality Commission a plan showing how it proposes to fulfil these duties in relation to its functions.

CCEA is committed to fulfilling these duties throughout the organisation and is setting out how we will achieve this in our Disability Action Plan (DAP).

In addition, CCEA must comply with the Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 (SENDO) and also the 'Adjustments for Candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties – Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments' published annually by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ).

Context

In Northern Ireland the Council for Curriculum, Education and Assessment (CCEA) is a non-departmental public body (NDPB) sponsored by the Department for Education.

The draft Programme for Government sets out the strategy for continuous improvement for society within Northern Ireland and CCEA will have a part to play - specific key indicators include:

- Outcome 3: we have a more equal society;
- Outcome 5: we are an innovative creative society where people can fulfil their potential;
- Outcome 8: we care for others and we help those in need;
- Outcome 9: we are a shared society that respects diversity; and
- Outcome 11: we give our young children and young people the best start in life.

CCEA can influence the success of these indicators through the work that it does and the way that it treats employees and stakeholders.

This includes the way it interacts with, and meets the needs of all stakeholders and customers, including people with disabilities and how it attracts, retains, develops and treats all employees within the organisation, including people with disabilities.

CCEA Role and Responsibility

CCEA is a unique educational body in the UK, bringing together the three areas of curriculum, examinations and assessment. CCEA's remit is to:

- advise Government on what should be taught in Northern Ireland's schools and colleges,

- monitor standards, ensuring that the qualifications and examinations offered by awarding bodies in Northern Ireland are of an appropriate quality and standard, and
- award qualifications - as Northern Ireland's leading awarding body, CCEA offers a diverse range of qualifications, such as GCSEs, including the new GCSE Double Award specifications in vocational subjects, GCE A and AS levels, Entry Level Qualifications and Online Language Assessment (OLA).

CCEA's Mission Statement is *'To enable the full potential of all learners to be achieved and recognised'*.

Commitment

CCEA is an accredited organisation of the Employers for Disability. In order to gain accredited status, CCEA has made (and is audited on) a number of key commitments:

Key Statement:

'Disability good practice will form an integral part of CCEA's policies in relation to employment and customer service.'

The organisation will implement the key statement through the following eight commitments:

1. Our commitment will be made at the highest level and communicated to all staff.
2. Our organisation will develop policies and practices in relation to:
 - the recruitment, retention and development of employees with disabilities;
 - serving customers with disabilities.
3. Our organisation will monitor and review progress in relation to the Disability Good Practice Commitments at appropriate intervals.
4. All staff will receive disability awareness training appropriate to their level and role within our organisation.
5. People with disabilities will be involved in the continuous development of our employment practices, products and services to ensure accessibility.
6. Measures will be taken to ensure that our premises are as accessible as possible for people with disabilities - both employees and visitors.
7. Our organisation will establish links with a range of disability training providers with the aim of offering work experience and training opportunities to people with disabilities.
8. Our organisation will encourage other employers and service providers to adopt disability good practice.

Delivery of the Disability Action Plan

CCEA is committed to deploying people, time and financial resource to put this plan into action and build objectives and targets on disability duties into corporate and annual operating plans.

All teams are actively involved in delivering actions in respect of disability. See *Appendix 2 for samples of “positive action that is currently being taken”*.

The HR team will take the lead and be the first point of contact for all disability matters.

Communication of the Disability Action Plan

CCEA will ensure that all staff are aware of the Disability Action Plan which will be placed on the CCEA intranet for employees, and on the CCEA website for customers/stakeholders and members of the public to access once agreed. The Disability Action Plan will be produced in plain English, clear print and will be available in alternative formats. Interested parties may also contact the Human Resources department for a hard copy or for an alternative format.

Equality Commission

CCEA will submit an annual progress report to the Equality Commission – this will be in the format of the general Section 75 Annual Progress Report. As part of the progress report there will be a general review of areas for improvement.

Consultation and Review

CCEA is committed to carrying out consultation around the Disability Action Plan in accordance with consultation guidelines. We will seek to engage people with disabilities and organisations who represent people with disabilities during the implementation, monitoring and review of this plan.

Once agreed, post consultation, the Disability Action Plan will be placed on the CCEA website and reported against annually.

CCEA will carry out a review of its plan (within 5 years), in consultation with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

Action Measures

CCEA has already taken a number of measures to promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities and encourage their participation in public life as a result of the duties under Section 75. Examples of these are given at Appendix 2.

The following (Appendix 1) are the measures which CCEA intends to take in order to implement the disability duties for the forthcoming period.

Disability Action Plan 2022-2025

1. Promote Positive Attitudes Towards Disabled People

Measure/ Activity	Performance Indicators	Responsibility	Timescale
<p>1.1 Raise awareness of disability with Council and Executive Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate training session 	Equality Forum/HR	Year 1/ongoing
<p>1.2 Educate, train, inform and listen to staff and managers.</p> <p>Training on general Disability/ Equality Awareness delivered to all Staff and new recruits as part of the induction process.</p> <p>This will include training on Disability Equality Legislation and on the duties included in the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).</p> <p>Training on the duties will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> promoting equality of opportunity; eliminating discrimination; eliminating harassment; encouraging participation in public life; and steps to meet the needs of disabled people. <p>Training will be reviewed ongoing to ensure relevant amendments and new inclusions to the DDA as required.</p> <p>Health & Wellbeing Programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new staff to be briefed at induction on Equality including the promotion of Disability in the workplace. Awareness training to be included in annual training strategy. No of sessions undertaken and evidence of same. Inclusion in Staff Survey Raise awareness of quality training available from disability groups and universities <p>Programme to include:</p>	<p>HR</p> <p>HR</p> <p>HR</p> <p>HR</p> <p>HR</p>	<p>Immediate effect</p> <p>Annual</p> <p>Annual</p> <p>Annual</p> <p>With immediate effect (March 2022)</p>

Measure/ Activity	Performance Indicators	Responsibility	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness sessions on mental health Promote sign language/offer classes to staff 	HR/Wellbeing Officer	Annual
		HR/Wellbeing Officer	March 2022

2. Encourage Participation of Disabled People in Public Life

Measure/ Activity	Performance Indicators	Responsibility	Timescale
2.1 Continue to promote inclusivity of all people in our promotional material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formulate a plan to review all documentation and associated criteria. 	Forum	Year 1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review all Publications with Multimedia to ensure photos which have positive images of people with a disability where possible are included. 	MM	Year 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCEA provide access arrangements for candidates with a disability to take an exam (for example a separate room, more time, modified papers etc.) 	Qualifications	Every exam series
2.2 All staff (including those who acquire a disability during their career) are facilitated to continue to work in CCEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the staff member (where practical) to continue to work, providing reasonable adjustments as required. 	HR	As and when required

Measure/ Activity	Performance Indicators	Responsibility	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek guidance from OH provider as required 		
2.3 Promote career development via work experience opportunities via the employer's forum and centres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCEA will seek to build relationships with organisations which assist the disabled. 	HR	Annual
2.4 Review Recruitment procedures to actively promote CCEA as an inclusive employer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCEA will monitor the intake of new entrants and continue to provide reasonable adjustments 	HR	Implemented
2.5 Monitor staff perceptions of how CCEA promote positive attitudes toward disability in the work place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey of staff 	HR	2022
2.6 CCEA to create and review a Disability Forum to ensure representation across all depts within directorates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability Forum created/TOR in place. Forum- seek feedback from staff and share information. 	HR	Implemented
2.7 As Govt guidelines change in relation to COVID 19, ensure provision for staff to work from home and return to the office safely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DSE assessments to be undertaken Individual risk assessments undertaken as required. Team assessments mandatory for all areas. 	H&S Officer/Safe Resourcing Manger	Apr 2022
2.8 Estates Our buildings will be accessible for users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans to relocate CCEA offices will ensure compliance with disability regulations 	Estates Manager	Year 2

Measure/ Activity	Performance Indicators	Responsibility	Timescale
2.9 Establish relationships with stakeholders with expertise in SEN through Advisory Board chaired by CCEA Assessment Development Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with SEN experts i.e. EA, BATOD, RNIB, J'town School for the Visually Impaired 	Assessment Dev Manager	Bi-annual
2.10 Employers For Disability We will retain membership of the Employers for Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Membership which will provide a source of referral for management and staff 	HR	Annual

Appendix 2 - positive action that is currently being taken

Action	Outcome	Performance Indicators	Responsibility	Timescale
Fair access for disabled students to the Curriculum and Qualifications	All learners are included in the educational system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCEA employs a Special Education Needs Manager who develops curriculum materials and guidance notes. 	Curriculum	Ongoing Annually report the number of new revised materials developed for SEN
Engaging with stakeholders to ensure that qualifications meet the needs of learners with disabilities	CCEA's qualification provisions for learners with SEN is appropriate to their needs, or is met by the open market of qualification providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modified papers Advisory Group meet to discuss and review processes to ensure qualification needs are met 	Qualifications	Bi-annually (Feb & Sep)

Action	Outcome	Performance Indicators	Responsibility	Timescale
CCEA ensures access/egress to all its buildings and premises	<p>All visitors are facilitated depending on the nature of the disability.</p> <p>All employees and other suppliers with individual needs are risk assessed and reasonable adjustments added.</p> <p>Clear communications channels, particularly in emergencies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No one is denied access to our facilities because of their disability. Suitable and reasonable adaptations are made. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan in place 	<p>HR/Facilities Management</p> <p>HR/Facilities Management</p> <p>HR/Facilities Management</p>	<p>As per individual need</p> <p>As per individual need</p> <p>As per individual need</p>
CCEA ensures access to car parking	On a one to one basis as requested. A number of disability parking bays are made available (as per legislation), other disabilities are also taken into account on an adhoc basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCEA ensures all disabled visitors and staff can get to the buildings as appropriate 	HR/ Facilities Management	As required
Meetings in external venues are accessible (the Approved Venues List)	Staff assured that all venues are accessible when booking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No complaints 	Finance/Facilities Management	As per public sector timescales
Meetings in external venues that are not on the Approved Venues List are risk assessed and are accessible	Additional venues are accessible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No complaints 	Individual departments	As and when required
CCEA advertises vacancies with local disability	Increased applications from people with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in numbers of disabled staff appointed 	HR	Ongoing

Action	Outcome	Performance Indicators	Responsibility	Timescale
groups to encourage more persons with a disability to apply for jobs				
Short term and long term absence monitored and reviewed for people with a disability	Greater communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An annual assessment will be carried out in March each year. 	HR	Ongoing
Particular requirements of people with disabilities are addressed with Health and Safety procedures	Legislation adhered to - people with disabilities treated equally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe evacuation and Personal Evacuation Plans 	HR/ Facilities Management	As and when required

Action	Outcome	Performance Indicators	Responsibility	Timescale
<p>COVID Implications Compliance in respect of the following:</p> <p>Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), as amended, in Northern Ireland in the context of coronavirus and reasonable adjustments.</p> <p>Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021</p> <p>Ensure effective resourcing</p>	<p>Guidance to be followed for Staff deemed at Risk or identified as Clinically Vulnerable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff affected in at least one of the categories listed in the DDA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mobility; manual dexterity; physical coordination; continence; ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects; speech, hearing or eyesight; memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand; or perception of risk of physical danger. Recruitment of 2 staff to manage and deal with Safe Resourcing and Wellbeing issues as a result of the COVID pandemic on a fixed term basis. 	<p>Safe Resourcing Manager/HR/Facilities</p> <p>HR</p>	<p>Staff recruited.</p>

A number of departments will do individual work to improve attitudes and participation with regard to Disability matters. These include

Regulation: employees ensure that all qualifications that are offered by CCEA are produced in line with JCQ standards.

Curriculum and Assessment: Our Programme Manager SEN and Primary Curriculum and Assessment together with the SEN Manager within the CAR department co-ordinates the production of resources and curriculum for children.

Qualifications: The Programme Manager for Qualifications Development duties has responsibility for ensuring a broader range of qualifications for learners with SEN. When qualifications are being designed, consideration is given to equality and DDA legislation.

Human Resources

The Human Resources Department leads on CCEA's Disability Policy and the development of the Disability Action Plan as well as supporting employees with disabilities.

Facilities Management: ensure the CCEA estate is accessible, manages disability car parking facilities and ensures reasonable adjustments to CCEA property for employees and visitors.

Marketing and Communications: staff ensure that all communications, whether for an internal or external audience, are accessible and easy to understand.

Multimedia: Web developers who ensure that the CCEA website is fully accessible and complies with international standards for accessibility.