



Department for  
**Regional  
Development**

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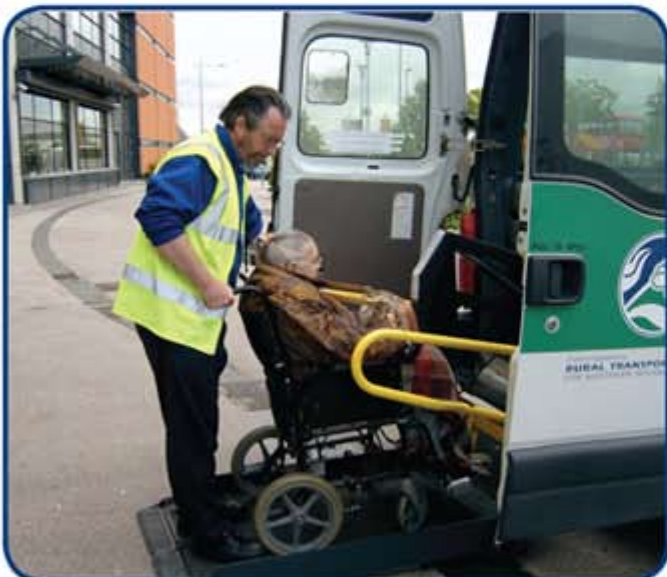
AN ROINN

**Forbartha Réigiúnaí**

MÁNNYSTRIE FUR

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# Disability Action Plan 2007-2010





## DISABILITY ACTION PLAN – 1<sup>st</sup> July 2007 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010

<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>1.1</p>	<p>Under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006), the Department for Regional Development is required when carrying out its functions to have due regard to the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and</li><li>• encourage participation by disabled people in public life ('the disability duties').</li></ul> <p>Under Section 49B of the DDA 1995, the Department for Regional Development is also required to submit to the Equality Commission a <b>disability action plan</b> showing how it proposes to fulfill these duties in relation to its functions.</p>
<p>1.2</p>	<p>As Minister and Permanent Secretary of the Department for Regional Development, we are committed to effectively implementing the disability duties and this disability action plan. We will allocate all necessary resources (in terms of people, time and money) in order to effectively implement this plan and build objectives and targets relating to the disability duties into corporate and annual operating plans.</p> <p>We will also put internal arrangements in place to ensure that the disability duties are complied with and this disability action plan effectively implemented. We will ensure the effective communication of the plan to staff and ensure that all necessary training and guidance is provided for staff on the disability duties and the implementation of the plan.</p>

	<p>We confirm our commitment to submitting an annual report to the Equality Commission on the implementation of this plan as well as carrying out a five yearly review of this plan.</p> <p>We are committed to engaging effectively with people with disabilities and their representative groups in the development, implementation and review of this plan. An early draft was considered by the Department's Equality Forum, which is attended by groups from the disability sector. The Department participated in a corporate NICS consultation event in May 2007, which was attended by a number of disability-related organisations and, following which, this plan was produced.</p> <p>The plan has been amended to reflect comments received on foot of a written NICS corporate consultation. It will be regarded as a work in progress and amended and updated as necessary to reflect any further consultation comments received and any issues emerging from the Department's engagement with representative groups and people with disabilities.</p> <p>In addition, the Department will through its Section 75 Equality Forum, which meets twice a year, consult with the disability sector both on the implementation and review of its Disability Action Plan.</p> <p>Responsibility for implementing, reviewing and evaluating this disability action plan will rest with the Departmental Board and the Minister. Day to day work on the Disability Action Plan will be carried out by the Equality Unit and the Department's Equality Working Group which has representatives from all business areas. Reports on progress will be made quarterly to the Departmental Board and the Minister. The first point of contact for enquiries within the Department for Regional Development will be:-</p> <p><b>Name:</b> Brendan Devlin  <b>Title:</b> Head of Corporate Services Unit  <b>Address:</b> Clarence Court, 10-18 Adelaide Street Belfast, BT2 8GB  <b>Telephone number:</b> 028 90 540180  <b>Fax number:</b> 028 90 540064  <b>Textphone:</b> 028 90 540642  <b>Email:</b> Brendan.Devlin@drdni.gov.uk</p>
1.3	<p>We confirm our commitment to submitting an annual progress report on the implementation of this plan to the Equality Commission and</p>

	<p>carrying out a five year review of this plan, or plans submitted to the Equality Commission over the five year review period. The annual progress report will be included in the general Section 75 Annual Progress Report.</p> <p>A copy of this plan, our annual progress report to the Equality Commission and our five year review of this plan will be made available on our website <a href="http://www.drdni.gov.uk">www.drdni.gov.uk</a>. Copies of the Department's Disability Action Plan will also be issued to all relevant disability organisations or representative groups.</p> <p>If you require this plan in an alternative format (such as in large print, in Braille, on audio cassette, easy read or on computer disc) and/or another language, please contact the above person to discuss your requirements.</p>
1.4	<p><b>Functions</b></p> <p>Outlined below are the range of functions of the Department for Regional Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• regional planning;</li> <li>• transportation strategy;</li> <li>• ports and public transport;</li> <li>• roads and water policy;</li> <li>• providing and maintaining roads; and</li> <li>• water and sewerage services – new arrangements.</li> </ul>
1.5	<p><b>Public Life Positions</b></p> <p>The bodies for which the Department for Regional Development has responsibility for the appointment of board chairmen and members are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company;</li> <li>• Belfast Harbour Commissioners;</li> <li>• Londonderry Port and Harbour Commissioners;</li> <li>• Warrenpoint Harbour Authority; and</li> <li>• Northern Ireland Water.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the Department helps to appoint the members of the Inclusive Mobility Transport Advisory Committee.</p>

2.

## **Previous Measures**

Outlined below are the key measures which have already been taken to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in public life. These have been grouped under a number of headings.

### **Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people**

It should be noted that many of the measures shown below, particularly those associated with public transport, will also encourage the participation of disabled people in public life.

### **Strategic / Policy Measures**

The Department for Regional Development's Equality Scheme, which was approved by the Equality Commission on 15 February 2001 and reviewed in 2006, promotes equality of opportunity for disabled people and other Section 75 groups. In reflection of the Department's transport and strategic planning responsibilities, disability has been a major issue in many of Department's Equality Impact Assessments.

The Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) 2002-2012 includes a commitment to build in accessibility for people with disabilities as a condition of public money being spent on all new public transport investment.

As part of the RTS an Accessible Transport Strategy (ATS) was developed in 2005 with the aim of enabling older people and people with disabilities to "have access to a transport system that enables them to participate more fully in society, enjoy greater independence and experience a better quality of life".

The ATS underpins the Department's transport programmes. It includes an Action Plan which covers a number of initiatives. This is posted on the Department's website. As part of the Action Plan, the Department established a Mobility Inclusion Unit in 2005 to oversee implementation of the recommendations in the Action Plan.

## Transport Programmes

The Department has sponsored the following investment to make buses and trains accessible:

- £73 million to purchase 23 new, fully accessible, trains for NI Railways, which came into service in 2004/05 and 2005/06.
- The Department assisted Translink in 2003/04 with the purchase of 190 new buses at a cost of almost £23m. In addition, funding of £48m was allocated for the period 2004 - 2007 from which 352 new buses have been purchased. In 2007, approval has been given to allow Translink to purchase a further 345 buses at costs of some £51m including those needed for the School Transport initiative.
- Door-to-Door demand responsive transport services were introduced in 29 urban areas.

***The Rural Transport Fund (RTF)*** is administered by the Department and has been in existence since 1998. Its primary objective is to reduce social exclusion in rural areas by improving or providing new transport opportunities for people with reduced mobility. Since 1998, 18 Rural Transport Partnership have been established and now provide more than 600 000 trips per year.

***The Concessionary Fares Scheme*** was established to promote accessible public transport, for members of the community who are most vulnerable, through discounted fares. The scheme was extended in 2004 to include half-fare travel for additional groups of people with disabilities and further extended in October 2008 to provide free travel to all people at age 60.

Under the ***Transport Programme for People with Disabilities***, which has been in existence since 1991, the Department supports the provision of specialised transport services for people with reduced mobility in all urban areas with a population of more than 10,000. Membership is now in excess of 9000 providing 14 000 journeys per month.

The Department also supports Shopmobility NI and individual Shopmobility schemes, which improve the accessibility of town centres and shopping centres for people with mobility difficulties.

The Department has also developed a Travel Training pilot for people with disabilities.

The Department administers the **Blue Badge Scheme** which enables people with disabilities to park on-street, close to the facilities and services they need so as to improve their lifestyle, independence and freedom of choice.

The Department's Roads Service provides a number of **Infrastructure and Pedestrian** measures that improve the accessibility of the road network for disabled people, including: dropped / flush kerbing; raised crossing points; tactile paving at dedicated crossing points; accessible parking bays, both on-street and in off-street car parks; and tactile/rotating cone devices under the push button control at signalized crossings.

### **Accessibility of Information**

The Department has developed a Guide to Making Information Accessible and a Disability Etiquette booklet which set out the good practices to be followed by policy makers and front line staff when considering and responding to the needs of people with disabilities.

The Department has adopted the UK website accessibility standards as defined by the Cabinet Office's e-Government Unit. These standards (<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/e-government/resources/handbook/introduction.asp>) set clear parameters for the presentation, lay-out and operation of all government websites.

The Department operates the *Getting Out and About* website, which provides a source of relevant transport information for people with mobility difficulties.

A Travel Safe Guide about Community Safety for People with Learning Disabilities was published by the Department in November 2005.

The Door-to-Door Scheme has an accessible application and booking system.

The Department has developed a bank of photographs to provide positive images of people with disabilities using public transport. The Department's internal staff magazines Equality Times, Roundabout and Radius regularly run positive articles about people with disabilities.

### **Engagement with Stakeholders and Mainstreaming of Disability Issues**

The Department funds the Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC). IMTAC's role is to provide independent advice to government, transport providers and others on issues that affect the mobility of older people and people with disabilities. IMTAC has an open and accessible recruitment process. At least 50% of members must be disabled or older people. This approach has helped to encourage the participation of disabled people. Currently 15 out of 21 members have a disability with a further four people with disabilities involved in working groups. The regular high level contacts with officials and the Minister, to whom IMTAC reports annually, secures the involvement of disabled people in public life and the promotion of positive attitudes to disabled people.

The Department supports the Northern Ireland Mobility Centre to provide a service to people with a disability in order to assess their personal transport needs.

The Department funds the Community Transport Association to deliver advice and guidance to the voluntary and community sector in delivering transport services. This includes guidance and training on Section 75 and disability issues.

The Department's Mobility Inclusion Unit was established in 2005 to take forward and oversee a number of initiatives designed to reduce the barriers that prevent disabled people and older people from using public transport. The unit was created as part of the ATS Action Plan and oversees implementation of the other recommendations in it.

An internal Equality Working Group was established in November 2000. The group meets quarterly to discuss equality issues and disseminate guidance and good practice. All business areas within the Department are represented on it.

The Department also established an Equality Forum in 2001/2002 as a means of engagement between policy makers and the Voluntary and Community Sector. This meets twice a year to review equality issues.

Equal Opportunities Branch promotes and implements all aspects of departmental Equal Opportunities Policy within DRD and DCAL.

The Department participates in the Promoting Social Inclusion Disability Working Group Forum and related sub group on Housing, Transport, Information and Access.

The Department's Roads Service provides regular representation at disabled interest committees/groups such as Disability Action's Regional Access Committee and IMTAC's Personal Mobility Working Group.

## **Employment**

### **Equal Opportunities Policy**

The Northern Ireland Civil Service Equal Opportunities Policy, developed by the Department of Finance and Personnel, applies to all aspects of working life and is fully implemented within the Department. Further information, with details of any actions taken or planned centrally in respect of the two disability duties, is contained in the Department of Finance and Personnel's Disability Action Plan.

The Department's Personnel Division publishes an equal opportunities magazine, "Equality Times" twice a year. This has a regular focus on disability issues.

### **Recruitment**

Recruitment to the Northern Ireland Civil Service is undertaken centrally by the Department of Finance and Personnel. Further information, with details of any actions taken or planned centrally in respect of the two disability duties, is contained in the Department of Finance and Personnel's Disability Action Plan.

The Department participates in the Employee Support Scheme and participated in its forerunner, the Sheltered Placement scheme.

### **Workforce Data**

Statistical information on disability within the Northern Ireland Civil Service workforce is collated centrally by the Department of Finance and Personnel. Further information is contained in the Department of Finance and Personnel's Disability Action Plan.

### **Buildings/Accessibility**

Buildings and property within the Northern Ireland Civil Service Estate are managed by Properties Division of the Department of Finance and Personnel. Further information, with details of any actions taken or planned in respect of the two disability duties, is contained within the Department of Finance and Personnel's Disability Action Plan.

The Department's buildings are accessible in compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

### **Complaints**

Any member of the public or member of staff who feel that they have not been properly treated by the Department may submit a complaint through either the Department's General Complaints Procedure or the Section 75 Equality Complaints Procedure. Staff may initiate the Equal Opportunities and Harassment Complaints Procedures. The Department monitors and reviews all complaints and, where appropriate, takes remedial action.

### **Training**

Equality of Opportunity and anti-discrimination issues including awareness of equality legislation are included in all Departmental induction training courses, training courses for new managers and the Management Development Programme, which tells staff of their duty to avoid acts of unlawful discrimination and to promote a harmonious working environment.

The Department has trained some 1880 management staff on general Section 75 awareness.

The Department's Roads Service has trained some 70 frontline staff on DDA awareness.

The consultation approach used during the development of the ATS, such as workshops and presentations, gave disabled people and their representative organisations the opportunity to be actively involved in the decision-making process. This approach was commended by the sector and has been disseminated across the Department as an example of good practice.

### **Procurement**

Procurement of goods and services for the Northern Ireland Civil Service is undertaken centrally. Further information, with details of any actions taken or planned centrally in respect of the two new disability duties, is contained in the Department of Finance and Personnel's Disability Action Plan.

### **Encourage the participation of disabled people in public life**

### **Public Appointments**

All public appointments in the Department for Regional Development are made, as far as practicable, in accordance with the Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies, published by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (Northern Ireland) and follow the guidance provided by the Central Appointments Unit. Further information, with details of actions taken or planned centrally in respect of the two disability duties, is contained in the Disability Action Plan for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

The Department has complied with the OCPA (NI) Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies in all its public appointment processes.

All applications and appointments are monitored for diversity, including disability, and statistics provided on an annual basis to OFMDFM.

All advertisements and/or Information Packs contain an Equal Opportunities 'welcome statement'.

	<p>Advertisements make clear that appropriate arrangements can be made for people with disabilities.</p> <p>Appointments are also advertised in the press, on the Department's website and via OFMDFM's on-line magazine 'All Aboard' which is circulated to various disability groups.</p> <p>Full details of the post and the applicants' information pack (including an application form) can be accessed from the DRD website which meets the latest website accessibility standards.</p> <p>Information packs and application forms can be made available, on request, in a range of accessible formats such as audio tape or Braille.</p> <p>Telephone, fax and textphone numbers and a postal address are given as sources to access information, including information on accessible formats.</p> <p>The Department carefully reviews the selection criteria for each appointment to ensure that the person specification does not contain unnecessary requirements that might discourage or exclude applications from people with disabilities.</p>
	<p><b>Action Measures</b></p> <p>Outlined below are measures which we propose to take over the period from January 2009 to March 2010 of this disability action plan, together with performance indicators or targets. These will be regularly reviewed and developed, with additional measures identified, throughout the period of the plan.</p>

**Measures to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people**

It should be noted that many of the measures shown below, particularly those associated with public transport, will also encourage the participation of disabled people in public life.

Measures	Timescale	Performance Indicators/ target	Progress as of 31 December 2008	Staff Contact
<p><b>Accessible Transport Strategy</b></p> <p>In association with partners, implement the measures in the ATS Action Plan for 2007-2009</p>	Ongoing	Regularly review policy standards and good practice guidance produced in GB, Europe and elsewhere and consider whether/how these can most effectively be implemented in Northern Ireland.	The Accessible Transport Strategy Action Plan was published in July 2008.	<p>Alan Preston</p> <p>Gavin Hamilton</p>
	March 2009	Disability awareness and diversity training will be provided for all staff involved in the design or delivery of transport service or facilities for older people with disabilities.	CTA & Translink are continuing to deliver training on an ongoing basis.	Alan Preston
	March 2009	Examine the feasibility of establishing a "One Stop Shop" providing a range of specific travel advice on public transport, community transport, Door-to-Door, taxis, private operators, leisure travel, shop mobility and concessionary fares.		<p>Alan Preston</p> <p>Trevor Robinson</p>

Measures	Timescale	Performance Indicators/ target	Progress as of 31 December 2008	Staff Contact
To agree and publish an ATS Action Plan for 2009-2012.	December 2009	<p>Publish draft action plan for consultation by 31 March 2009.</p> <p>Consideration by Minister, RDC and Executive by December 2009</p>		Gavin Hamilton
The Department will continue to support accessible transport solutions for people with disabilities. This will include operating Door-to-Door transport services in urban areas and the Rural Transport Fund Services in rural areas.	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>December 2009</p> <p>October 2009</p>	<p>Provide services in 29 urban areas.</p> <p>Provide specialised transport serves in rural areas.</p> <p>Investigate the potential of a Northern Ireland wide membership scheme for Shopmobility.</p> <p>Implement Demand Responsive projects in rural areas throughout Northern Ireland.</p>	<p>Door-to-Door Transport services are now operating in 29 urban areas.</p> <p>18 Rural Community Transport Partnerships are operating throughout Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Pilots currently operational.</p>	Trevor Robinson

Measures	Timescale	Performance Indicators/ target	Progress as of 31 December 2008	Staff Contact
<p>The Accessible Transport subgroup of the British Irish Council have agreed to look at a number of areas across the eight administrations to consider what a disabled person requires to travel from one administration to another.</p>	<p>Meet biannually with eight administrations, (N.Ireland, Scotland, Wales, England, Isle of Man, Jersey, Guernsey, Ireland)</p>	<p>The areas to be explored are Accessible Information, Accessible Training, Concessionary Fares, Blue Badge and greater engagement between advisory groups.</p>	<p>The Department is continuing to collate information from the eight administrations, for inclusion on a common page on respective websites. A meeting on 5 December 2008 continued the consideration of a common web page and mutual recognition of concessionary fares.</p>	<p>Gavin Hamilton</p>
<p>The Department will continue to support IMTAC as a source of independent advice on the transport needs of disabled people.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>April 2009</p> <p>Date for delivery of report and action plan to be agreed</p>	<p>Agree a work programme annually with IMTAC which reflects Government Priorities.</p> <p>Commission IMTAC to complete a report to identify ways that the Government can improve access to transport services for people with learning difficulties and mental health service users.</p>	<p>Work programme agreed in May 2008. Monthly monitoring meetings occurring.</p>	<p>Gavin Hamilton</p> <p>Andrew Adams</p> <p>Trevor Robinson</p> <p>Alan Preston</p>

Measures	Timescale	Performance Indicators/ target	Progress as of 31 December 2008	Staff Contact
<p><b>Training &amp; Communication</b></p> <p>The Department's Equal Opportunities Branch has identified the need for, and is undertaking, a continuous programme of extensive Equal Opportunities training directed at <b>all</b> grades. This training has been developed by the Department to make staff aware of discrimination and incorporates the employment legislation that includes disability awareness and covers the Department's Disability Action Plan.</p>	<p>October 2007 to March 2010</p>	<p>By March 2008 have 200 frontline staff trained.</p> <p>A further 1500 DRD staff to be trained before 31 March 2009.</p> <p>Training evaluation shows increased staff awareness and understanding.</p>	<p>Achieved.</p> <p>710 DRD staff to be trained by the end of December 2008.</p> <p>Evaluation information will be available at 31 March 2009.</p>	<p>Ashley Russell-Cowan</p>

Measures	Timescale	Performance Indicators/ target	Progress as of 31 December 2008	Staff Contact
<p>The Department through internal briefing mechanisms such as Departmental Brief, Equality Times, Roundabout, and Radius will publish articles to promote awareness of the Disability Action Plan and the statutory duties.</p>	<p>From July 2007 – March 2010.</p>	<p>Initial articles in the Departmental Brief and magazine(s) to be published by September 2007.</p> <p>Increased staff awareness of Disability Action Plan.</p> <p>Further article in Departmental Brief in January 2009.</p>	<p>Articles published in Departmental Brief August 2007 and Equality Times April 2008.</p>	<p>Ashley Russell-Cowan</p> <p>Margaret Langhammer</p>
<p>The Department will review ways of making information on services more accessible and include additional measures in its Guide to Making Information Accessible.</p>	<p>May 2008 - March 2010</p>	<p>Number of customer complaints.</p> <p>Annual Review of Guide by September 2009.</p> <p>Number of translations provided.</p> <p>Number of website hits.</p>	<p>Some slippage. Final revised Guide issued 23 September 2008.</p>	<p>Margaret Langhammer</p>
<p>Introduce a Disability Section to the DRD Equality website.</p>	<p>By September 2007</p>	<p>Disability Section to meet central government standards covering both accessibility and presentation.</p>	<p>Achieved July 2007.</p>	<p>Margaret Langhammer</p>

Measures	Timescale	Performance Indicators/ target	Progress as of 31 December 2008	Staff Contact
<p><b>Monitoring</b></p> <p>Review existing and future action measures at the Departments Equality Working Group (EWG) and Equality Forum meetings and reflect in amended Action Plan.</p>	<p>Quarterly</p>	<p>Disability Action Plan on the Agenda of all quarterly EWG and bi-annual Equality Forum meetings.</p> <p>Reviewed and revised Action Plan to be considered at Equality Forum and cleared with WBR and Minister.</p> <p>Revised Plan sent to Equality Commission and stakeholders including RDC by 30 January 2009.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Meeting held with Equality Commission on 4 December 2007 to discuss improvement to plan. Revised draft Plan considered by Equality Forum on 3 December 2008.</p>	<p>Margaret Langhammer</p>
<p><b>Public Life</b></p> <p><b>Public Appointments</b></p> <p>To review the Department's public appointments procedures to identify ways of facilitating applications from people with disabilities to implement actions identified by March 2008.</p>	<p>March 2008</p>	<p>More disabled people applying for public appointments.</p> <p>Annual review with Sponsor Divisions of diversity in Public Appointments.</p>	<p>Meeting held with Sponsor Divisions to discuss diversity in Public Appointments in April 2008</p>	<p>Margaret Langhammer</p>

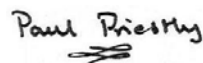
Measures	Timescale	Performance Indicators/ target	Progress as of 31 December 2008	Staff Contact
		<p>Inclusion of additional measures to facilitate diversity in applications in the Department's public appointments procedures.</p> <p>Reference to new duties in Procedures.</p>	<p>A review and update on implementation of the recommendations in the Short Term Working Group report on Diversity in Public Appointments was sent to Central Appointments Unit on 13 May 2008.</p> <p>Annual review of procedures completed in November 2008. Fliers have been issued to additional groups in order to attract more diversity in the applications.</p>	
<p>Inform Section 75 groups of the publications and mailing list on public appointments produced by Central Appointments Unit.</p>	<p>By March 2008</p>	<p>Increased awareness of public appointments across Section 75 groups, including disability groups.</p>	<p>Fliers were sent to the CAU distribution list which includes all S75 groups. Monitoring has indicated an increase in diversity in recent applications.</p>	<p>Margaret Langhammer</p>

Measures	Timescale	Performance Indicators/ target	Progress as of 31 December 2008	Staff Contact
Arrange training for those holding public appointments on disability equality legislation and disability awareness.	By April 2008	All those holding public appointments to be trained.	Sponsor Bodies have been asked to include as part of training for new Board Members.	Margaret Langhamer




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**Conor Murphy**  
Minister for Regional Development




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**Paul Priestly**  
Permanent Secretary