

Co%ownership

**DISABILITY
ACTION PLAN**

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Disability Action Plan

To promote positive attitudes towards disabled people

To encourage the participation of disabled people in Public Life

Extension to 31st March 2022

Please note that this document is available on request in alternative formats and/or other languages.

Please contact:

Mark Graham
Chief Executive
Moneda House,
25-27 Wellington Place,
Belfast,
BT1 6GD
T: 028 90327276
M: 07917 544210
Textphone: 18001 028 9032 7276
Email: mgraham@co-ownership.org
Website: www.co-ownership.org

1.0 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), NI Co-Ownership Housing 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, NI Co-Ownership Housing is also required to submit to the Equality Commission a disability action plan showing how it proposes to fulfil these duties in relation to its functions.

2.0 Commitment

Co-Ownership is committed to implementing effectively the disability duties and this disability action plan. We will allocate all necessary resources in terms of people, time and money in order to implement effectively this plan and where appropriate, build objectives and targets relating to the disability duties into corporate and annual operating plans.

We will also put appropriate 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 to providing all necessary training and guidance for staff on the disability duties and the implementation of the plan.

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.

Responsibility for implementing, reviewing and evaluating this disability action plan and the point of contact within Co-Ownership will be:-

Mark Graham
Chief Executive
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If you require this plan in an alternative format and/or a different language, please contact the person above to discuss your requirements.

A copy of this plan, our annual progress to the Equality Commission and our five year review of this plan will be made available on our website at www.co-ownership.org

3.0 Consultation

Co-Ownership is committed to carrying out consultation in the development of its disability duties. We are keen to seek the views of disabled people in relation to this plan. To do this, Co-Ownership will be engaged on a number of levels:

- We will inform all staff through our Staff Corporate briefings and our staff shared drive on the development of this plan; and
- We will publish our plan through our website.

Through our consultation Co-Ownership has and will continue to:

- Identify the barriers faced by disabled people in participating in public life in general and specifically any barriers they may encounter or have encountered in relation to their dealings with Co-Ownership;
- Identify opportunities for Co-Ownership to promote positive attitudes;
- Set priorities and identify opportunities for encouraging participation in public life; and
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of measures taken and the proposals outlined in the Plan.

4.0 Functions

Co-Ownership is Northern Ireland's regional body for shared ownership and the organisation that runs the Co-Ownership Scheme. It was established in 1978 and is registered as a housing association under the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 and also as an industrial and provident society under the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts (Northern Ireland) 1969 and 1976.

Co-Ownership is regulated and partly funded by the Department for Communities and was set up to contribute towards meeting affordable housing need through the promotion and development of the concept of equity sharing (shared ownership) in the housing sector.

Co-Ownership's main role is *"to provide opportunities through equity sharing to those outside the margins of conventional home ownership."* It is a form of shared ownership where purchasers identify the starter home of their choice on the open market and apply to Co-Ownership which then purchases the property on their behalf; properties and purchasers must qualify. Co-Owners

are not tenants; their stake in the property is held under an equity sharing lease arrangement with the opportunity to own the property outright at a later stage.

The Board of Management of Co-Ownership membership comprises the Chair and up to 14 other members appointed under the terms set out in the Code of Governance. The Board made up of non-executive directors, reflects a range of interests, representing the interests of users of the service.

The functions of Co-Ownership for the purposes of the Order include its powers and duties in connection with:

- Customer Services
- Governance
- Corporate Functions
- Housing Administration
- Housing Management
- Finance
- Marketing
- IT
- Human Resources
- Consultants/contractors/suppliers

5.0 Public Life Positions

The range of public life positions over which Co-Ownership Housing has responsibility for, is -

- Board members of Co-Ownership Housing

6.0 Previous Measures

Outlined below are the key measures which Co-Ownership has already taken to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in public life.

- Disability awareness training
- Provision of an E-Learning Academy with built in accessibility features
- Workplace policies and Reasonable adjustments
- Recruitment policies
- Accessibility policies
- Accessible corporate publications
- Staff training and awareness raising regarding promotion of access to services and information
- All the Co-Ownership Housing policies are screened in line with Section 75 requirements
- User involvement policies

- Policy proofing

7.0 Action Measures

Outlined below are the measures we propose to take over the period of this disability from April 2016 to March 2022.

7.1 How the Plan will be published

This Plan will be available by contacting:

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Website: www.co-ownership.org

The plan can be accessed on the Co-Ownership's website (web address above).

The plan will be produced in clear print and plain language and will be available in alternative formats on request for people who speak a minority language.

An electronic copy of the Plan and a paper copy on request will be provided to all our employees.

7.2 Proposed Measures

The measures which we propose to take over the period of this revised Disability Action Plan are outlined in Appendix 1, together with performance indicators and targets.

Co-Ownership is committed to monitoring and reviewing policies and practices to ensure that disability equality duties are being met. Monitoring the progress of this Plan will be incorporated into the reporting systems on equality issues. Senior management will be informed of progress as part of the annual review process.

We confirm our commitment to submitting an annual progress report on the implementation of this plan to the Equality Commission and to carrying out a review of the plan.

The annual review of the Plan will also form part of the monitoring and review process and assist in drafting appropriate targets and key performance indicators for the next year.

Appendix 1: Proposed Measures

Measures to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in public life

Measure		Timescale	Performance Indicators/Targets
1.	Training on general Disability Equality Awareness - delivered to all Staff and Board including senior managers, human resources and new recruits as part of the induction process.	Ongoing	Training provided to all staff, senior managers, human resources and members of recruitment and selection panels during 2016/17 training plan Disability duties included in the induction programme for all staff E-learning facility to include module on disability duties
2.	Assess and improve accessibility of website	Ongoing	Improved access to information
3.	Update operational policies in respect of people with disabilities	Annually	Ongoing policy review programme
4.	Review communication policies, practices and procedures to ensure compliance with disability duties	Annually	All communication policies take account of disability duties
5.	Prompt staff to keep up to date their personal equality monitoring records via our self-service human resources IT recording system	Issue prompt to staff on a regular basis	Year 1 onwards
6.	Support staff with disabilities	Ongoing	Ensure reasonable adjustments made as

			required
7.	Regular reporting to Senior Management Team and Board on implementation of disability duties	Ongoing by March annually	At least annually and through Annual Report submitted to ECNI
8.	Include an update in the annual Equality report to the Equality Commission on progress under this action plan	Annually	Report submitted to ECNI
9.	Update Equality Commission on any changes to the action plan	On-going/as and when necessary	Updated action plan submitted to ECNI

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