



# **PROBATION BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**

## **DISABILITY ACTION PLAN**

**2020-2023**

This document can be made available in alternative formats such as large print, Braille, disk, audio tape or in an ethnic-minority language upon request. Requests for alternative formats can be made to the Probation Board using the following contact information:

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Document Amendment History

<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>
0.1	January 2020	First draft
0.2	February 2020	Second draft following internal consultation
0.3	July 2020	Updated following external consultation
0.4	October 2020	Updated following SLT discussions
0.5	November 2020	PPC Approved
1.0	November 2020	Board Approved

## Foreword

Welcome to the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) Disability Action Plan 2020-2023 that sets out how we intend to meet our statutory obligations and how disability issues will be more effectively mainstreamed by making sure they are central to policy and decision making within PBNI. This three-year plan reflects the three-year PBNI Corporate Plan process.

This Disability Action Plan is a statement of the PBNI's commitment to meeting its statutory obligations to have regard to the need to promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities; and encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

## Introduction

1.1 Under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006), the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) 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, The Probation Board for Northern Ireland 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.

1.2 As Chief Executive of PBNI, I am committed to implementing effectively the disability duties and this disability action plan. We will allocate the 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.

Day to day responsibility for implementation of the Action Plan lies with the Head of HR who, through the Deputy Head of HR, is responsible for overseeing and managing the implementation of this action plan to ensure that disability duties are complied with. The Deputy Head of HR who is also the Disability Champion will keep this Disability Action Plan under review. PBNI will also put

appropriate internal monitoring arrangements in place to ensure that the action plan is effectively implemented.

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 three-year review of our disability action plan, in line with the PBNI Corporate Plan.

### **Communication**

We will communicate this plan to staff and provide training and guidance for staff on the disability duties and the implementation of the plan.

A copy of this and our previous Disability Action Plan, Annual Progress Reports to the Equality Commission as well as PBNI's reviews of its Disability Plans are available on our website [www.pbni.org.uk](http://www.pbni.org.uk).

### **Consultation and Engagement**

We believe that the involvement of people with disabilities in the development of this action plan is essential to its success. To this end, we have sought the views of staff and groups representing people with a disability about service delivery and employment issues. We consulted with different groups representing people with a disability seeking their feedback.

PBNI is committed to involving people with disabilities in the delivery of this plan and its further development. We will ensure that this plan remains a live document and that progress is noticeable and changes apparent.

We are grateful for the time and expertise people and groups have given to the development of this plan and are thankful for all the comments received both from our own staff and from people who have taken the time to respond to our external consultation.

Any future amendments to this plan will be communicated to consultees and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

## **Alternative Formats and Publication**

If you require this plan in an alternative format (such as in large print, in Braille, on audiocassette, easy read or on computer disc) and/or ethnic minority language, please contact us to discuss your requirements.

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**1.3** We confirm our commitment to submitting an annual progress report on the implementation of this plan to the Equality Commission and carrying out a three-year review of this plan, or plans submitted to the Equality Commission over the three-year review period.

A copy of this plan, our annual progress to the Equality Commission and our annual review of this plan will be made available on our website

<https://www.pbni.org.uk/>

### **1.4 The Work of the Probation Board**

The work of PBNI is often complex and multi-faceted as outlined in the PBNI Corporate Plan 2020-23, it can be summarised in five core elements:

1. Ensuring sentence compliance means that PBNI holds offenders to account in terms of keeping to the requirements of a court order or conditions of a licence and will take appropriate enforcement action where there is evidence of non-compliance.
2. Challenging offending means PBNI engages with offenders in order to produce positive changes in attitudes and behaviours, which will impact on and reduce their likelihood of offending in the future. This involves supporting the offender to commit to change through constructive and effective interventions.

3. Minimising harm means that PBNI contributes to community safety through the appropriate and proportionate use of constructive and restrictive measures and controls to minimise the risk of harm to others and promote the safety of victims. This work is undertaken within multi-agency risk management arrangements.
4. Promoting responsible citizenship means that PBNI supports offenders to become more responsible citizens and better integrated into the community. This work involves PBNI in enabling offenders to access appropriate services, promoting social inclusion of offenders and assisting them to make positive choices about their own behaviour.
5. Providing Support means that PBNI works to improve and safeguard the social well-being of individuals, families and communities.

The focus of all of the work undertaken by the Probation Board is to reduce offending and making communities safer. These elements are incorporated into the full range of work undertaken by PBNI staff. We recognise that we are dealing with people, and therefore we assess each individual's risks and needs to put in place a programme of work, which aims to reduce their likelihood of offending in the future.

### **Public Life Positions**

The Probation Board for Northern Ireland is a Non-Departmental Public Body. Public life appointments to positions including the Board are the responsibility of the Department of Justice.

### **Achievements**

Below are some of the achievements delivered through PBNI's previous Disability Action Plan 2015-2020.

- PBNI sought and received feedback from disabled service users as part of the PBNI's Service Users Survey 2015-2016.
- PBNI's Recruitment Policy was reviewed to address positive action measures in recruitment for people with disabilities.
- Affirmative action measures were used in the recruitment of the new PBNI Board in 2018 in order to attract people with disabilities to apply.
- PBNI has included equality monitoring designed to understand the equality profile of service users including disability with the new electronic case management system.
- PBNI has ensured that new PBNI offices have ground floor accessible offices for service users and staff or that suitable and accessible lifts are in operation to ensure that our premises are accessible.
- PBNI continues to work in partnership with criminal justice organisations to promote good equality practice through the Criminal Justice Equality Network CJEN.
- As part of the DoJ's Autism Strategy, autism training is delivered annually. The DoJ Autism Guide was made available to all staff.
- Under PBNI's revised Equality Scheme, all policies are screened to identify if there are opportunities to promote positive attitudes and engagement in public life.
- All PBNI staff involved in recruitment and selection receive bespoke equality training, which includes awareness of steps that are permitted in law to enable the fair participation of people with disabilities in recruitment and selection procedures.
- PBNI has convened a Good Relations Steering Group chaired by a Director of Probation and comprises of senior managers from across the organisation. This group considers PBNI's section 75 (2) responsibilities as well as all equality (including disability) and diversity issues and actions.
- PBNI induction training on Equal Opportunities has been expanded to specifically raise awareness of our disability duties under DDA.
- Two eLearning packages have been designed – equality at work and culture awareness. 70% of staff completed equality at work course, 21% completed the culture awareness eLearning course. These have recently been made compulsory for all new starts.
- Disability awareness raising articles were published in PBNI's internal newsletter

- The 2016 Communication Strategy included a section seeking to review and improve the accessibility of information.
- The Disability Action Plan was published on the PBNI website and circulated to all staff.
- PBNI signed up to the 'Jam Card' initiative providing training and awareness materials to all staff dealing with the public and service users. JAM Card allows people with a learning difficulty, autism or communication barrier tell others they need 'Just A Minute' discreetly and easily.
- PBNI has developed links with the Rainbow Network and Leonard Cheshire Trust and held an event for managers in 2019 to specifically look at issues around domestic abuse and disability.

### **Action Measures**

Measures that PBNI proposes to take during the next three years to promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities are outlined.

To promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities we must remove cultural and physical barriers. We are committed to actions that will help remove the disadvantage and social exclusion experienced by many disabled people.

	Action	Measure	Timescale	Owner	Performance Indicator
1	PBNI will actively seek engagement with disabled people through service user forums.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review the number of disabled service users on the SU Forums.</li> <li>2. Work with service users to increase disability representation</li> </ol>	<p>2020-2021</p> <p>2021-2023</p>	AD Prisons	Make service users aware of the service user groups and encourage their participation
2	Review the recruitment procedure, to ensure people with disabilities are actively encouraged to apply for all roles within PBNI	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Advertise PBNI positions so that people with disabilities see them and are encouraged to apply</li> <li>2. Guaranteed interview for those who declare a disability and meet the essential criteria</li> </ol>	<p>Benchmark figure of those applying March 2021</p> <p>Agree the target %</p> <p>Increase to target % of applications by 2023</p>	HR Manager	Increase the number of people with a disability applying to PBNI within the 3-year period of this action plan.
3	All PBNI staff and Board members to receive equality and disability training	Deliver equality and disability training to all staff, promoting positive attitudes towards staff and service users with a disability	Jan - June 21	Dep. Head of HR	<p>All staff receive training</p> <p>Monitor complaints and grievances for disability references</p>
4	Review the process to enable monitoring of members of staff with a disability and establish a target % for the workforce	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review the process for staff to declare a disability</li> <li>2. Benchmark with other DoJ agencies, UK and Ireland to establish a target %</li> <li>3. Establish a target and measure it.</li> </ol>	<p>2021</p> <p>2021</p> <p>2022-23</p>	HR Manager	<p>80% staff have responded to HR to declare if they have a disability or not</p> <p>Target agreed and measured</p>
5	Actively consult with disability groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify the main disability groups in NI.</li> <li>2. All external consultations to be sent to disability groups.</li> </ol>	Nov 2020	SLT	Disability groups are consulted on policy and major decisions
6	Promote inclusivity of people with disabilities via the communications strategy	Review all communications to ensure that disabled people are represented and have an inclusive role	2020-21	Head of Communications	Disabled people have a role in all relevant communications
8	Implement the PBNI Disability Passport	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Investigate the disability passport principle</li> <li>2. Develop PBNI's disability passport</li> <li>3. Communicate, provide training and implement the passport</li> </ol>	<p>2021</p> <p>2021</p> <p>2021</p>	HR Manager	PBNI Disability Passport is actively used by staff with a disability
9	Ensure all staff feel included in PBNI and have the opportunity to feed into policy development and major decisions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop an internal consultative method for equality, diversity and inclusion involvement</li> <li>2. Seek participation from staff</li> </ol>	<p>2021</p> <p>2022</p>	Dep Head of HR	<p>Approved method for how we involve staff</p> <p>Equality, diversity and inclusion involvement is available to all staff</p>
10	PBNI will undertake the upgrade of their premises to comply with DAA regulations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review the current estate provision</li> <li>2. Prioritise upgrading works to provide DDA compliance</li> </ol>	<p>2020-2021</p> <p>2021-2025</p>	Head of Finance	<p>Delivery of upgraded premises</p> <p>9</p>

Signed by:

Handwritten signature of Cheryl A Lamont in black ink.

**Cheryl Lamont CBE**  
**Chief Executive**

Handwritten signature of Dale Ashford in black ink.

**Dale Ashford QFSM**  
**Board Chair**

Date: 20 November 2020