



AFBI

DISABILITY

ACTION PLAN

2017 – 2021

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Foreword

We are pleased to present the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute's (AFBI) Disability Action Plan, which sets out the actions we propose to take for the five year period 2017 – 2021.

This is AFBI's second disability action plan and we remain committed to implementing effectively the disability duties set out under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 and this Disability Action Plan.

We continue to ensure that there is disability equality across all aspects of our business, in how we treat our customers, staff and all those who use our services.

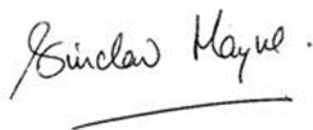
We will allocate all necessary resources (in terms of people, time and money) in order to implement effectively this plan and where appropriate, build objectives and targets relating to the disability duties into corporate and annual operating plans.

We will also put appropriate internal arrangements in place to ensure that the disability duties are complied with and this disability action plan is effectively implemented. We will ensure the effective communication of the plan to staff and to provide 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.



Chairman, AFBI



Chief Executive, AFBI

Dated: 15 March 2018

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1. Introduction

A disability is defined as “a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

Under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006), AFBI 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, AFBI is also required to submit to the Equality Commission a Disability Action Plan showing how it proposes to fulfill these duties in relation to its functions. We will ensure this Action Plan is effectively communicated to our staff and that we continue to consult and meet with disabled people to hear their views when reviewing the implementation of the plan.

Day to day responsibility for monitoring progress towards the targets outlined in the Disability Action Plan lies with AFBI Human Resources Branch.

In our second Disability Action Plan we have set out the actions we will take forward that link to other legislative obligations impacting on the lives of disabled people.

2. Our Roles and Functions

AFBI was established on 1st April 2006 under the Agriculture (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 and is the main provider of technical and scientific support for the agri-food and biosciences sector in Northern Ireland.

The Institute's vision is to advance the local and global agri-food and biosciences sectors through scientific excellence and in order to fulfil this vision AFBI is engaged with the international research community in providing scientific solutions to key global challenges including food security, environmental protection, climate change and disease control.

AFBI undertakes an assigned work programme on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) which comprises statutory and analytical testing, disease surveillance and emergency response activity, together with research and development and specialist advice in areas such as:

- Sustainable livestock systems;
- Climate change, land use and ecosystem services;
- Fisheries and aquatic ecosystems;
- Food safety, quality and innovation;
- Animal health/'one health';
- Agri food and rural economy.

As outlined in AFBI's Corporate Plan these 6 areas going forward will be aligned to 3 overarching science programmes:

- Sustainable Livestock Systems;
- Ecosystems and the Environment;
- Societal Impact.

3. Report on Progress

We will submit a progress report to the Equality Commission each year on the implementation of this Disability Action Plan. We will also publish it on the Institute's website alongside our Annual Progress Report.

As required by the DDA (1995), the Institute will also carry out a five year review of its plan and submit it to the Equality Commission.

4. Proposed Action Measures

On the following pages we have outlined the measures which we propose to take over the next five years, together with performance indicators and or targets. We will review and update this plan on a regular basis, and will continue to engage with key organisations and individuals representing the interests of people with disabilities.

AFBI is committed to monitoring and reviewing policies and practices to ensure that the disability duties are being met at all times. Monitoring the progress of this action plan will be incorporated into the six monthly report to the AFBI Board on equality issues and annually to the Equality Commission.

Performance indicators and or targets are set out in the plan, some are specific, while others are more general reflecting the nature of AFBI's work and the challenges.

PROPOSED ACTION MEASURES

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

1. Staff Training

Proposed Actions:		
1. Ensure all managers and staff are aware of their legislative responsibilities under DDA and Section 75.		
Performance Indicators(PI)/Targets (T)	By When:	Responsibility:
1.1 Conduct a review of the online Equality and Diversity training, to ensure that it addresses the disability duties and raises awareness of disability related issues (T).	December 2017.	Learning & Development Unit.
1.2 All staff to undertake Equality and Diversity Training as part of their Induction. Training includes information about disability; equality legislation and bullying and harassment (T).	Within 3 months of joining.	Learning & Development Unit and Line Managers.
1.3 All staff to undertake refresher Equality and Diversity Training on a rolling basis (T).	Every 3 years.	Learning & Development Unit.
1.4 All interview panels trained in Criteria Based Interviewing techniques which includes the legislation regarding reasonable adjustments for disabled candidates. One to one sessions can be facilitated as part of a reasonable adjustment request (T).	As and when required.	Learning & Development Unit.

2 Communication

Proposed Actions:		
2. Provision of information that is easy-to-access and understand.		
Performance Indicators(PI)/Targets (T)	By When:	Responsibility
2.1 Provide written and web-based information in alternative/accessible formats as and when required (PI).	Upon request.	Human Resources & Head of Corporate Communications.
2.2 Encourage users (from Consultee list) to review the AFBI website for accessibility (PI).	September 2018.	Head of Human Resources.
2.3 Inform staff of AFBI's Disability Action Plan (DAP) and targets via the Intranet and Newsletters (PI).	Publish DAP following final approval.	Head of Human Resources.
2.4 Select a topical area of focus and publish information and guidance for staff and line manager's e.g Managing Stress (PI).	Quarterly.	Human Resources and Health & Safety Unit.

3 Consultation & Engagement

Proposed Actions:		
1. Improve how we consult and engage with people with disabilities, this includes our own staff and those who use our services.		
Performance Indicators(PI)/Targets (T)	By When:	Responsibility:
1.1 Further review our consultees list and ensure that is representative of all relevant disability groups, and ask their preferred consultation methods for future policy reviews (T).	October 2018.	Head of Human Resources.
1.2 Maintain and or further develop the links with USEL (or similar organisations) for opportunities for inclusive employment for people with a disability (PI).	Schedule at least 2 meetings by January 2019.	Learning & Development Unit.
1.3 Continue to provide applicants with an opportunity to indicate any reasonable adjustments which may be required to assist them during the recruitment process (PI).	Incorporated into the recruitment process.	Head of Workforce Planning.
1.4 Equip line managers with the knowledge and skills to effectively manage staff and identify potential welfare issues (T).	Incorporated into the Management Development Programme for 2017/18.	Learning & Development Unit.
1.5 Provide health and wellbeing support for staff via the employee assistance programs (EAP) in place (PI).	Incorporated into EAP programme and accessible to all staff.	Head of Human Resources.

4 Accessibility & Facilities

Proposed Actions:		
4.1 Review and monitor the accessibility of AFBI facilities and explore opportunities for improving access.		
Performance Indicators(PI)/Targets (T)	By When:	Responsibility:
4.2 Continue to review existing premises accessibility to ensure access compliance with legislation (PI).	Bi-annually.	Head of Human Resources and Head of Estate Unit.
4.3 Ensure that any planned building projects outlined in the DAERA - AFBI Estate Strategy comply with disability standards (PI).	Ongoing.	Head of Estate Unit.
4.4 Review of the nature of staff related cases being dealt via the employee assistance programme and ensure support services are available to address (T).	December 2018.	Head of Human Resources.
4.5 Work with the Department of Finance (DoF) Central Procurement Directorate to ensure all AFBI contracts with suppliers and contractors have a commitment to Equality and Diversity (PI).	Incorporated into Procurement procedures.	Head of AFBI Procurement.

Useful links

- Action Mental Health: www.amh.org.uk

Twitter: @amhni

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/hashtag/TakingActionOnMentalHealth

Tel: 02891 828494

- Action on Hearing Loss: www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/

Email: informationline@hearingloss.org.uk

Twitter: @hearinglossni

Facebook: www.facebook.com/actiononhearingloss

Tel: 080 8808 0123

- Attention Deficit Disorder NI (ADD-NI): www.addni.net/

Email: hello@addni.net

Facebook: www.facebook.com/addni.childrenscharity/

Tel: 028 9020 0110

- Autism NI: www.autismni.org/

Email: info@autismni.org

Twitter: @AutismNIPAPA

Facebook: www.facebook.com/AutismNI/

Tel: 028 9040 1729

- CareCall: <http://www.carecallwellbeing.com/>

Email: support@carecallwellbeing.com

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/CarecallSupport>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/carecallsupport>

Tel: 0800 389 5362

- Carers Northern Ireland:
www.carersuk.org/northernireland

Email: info@carersuk.org

Twitter: @CarersUK

Facebook: www.facebook.com/CarersNI/

Tel: 028 9043 9843

- Disability Action: www.disabilityaction.org

Email: hq@disabilityaction.org

Twitter: @disabilityni

Facebook: www.facebook.com/disabilityaction

Tel: 02890 297880

- Equality Commission for Northern Ireland:
www.equalityni.org

Twitter: @EqualityCommNI 26

Tel: 02890 500 600

- Mencap NI: www.mencap.org.uk/northern-ireland

Email: helpline.ni@mencap.org.uk

Twitter: @Mencap_NI

Tel: 028 9069 1351

- Mindwise: www.mindwisenv.org/

Twitter: @MindwiseNV

Facebook: www.facebook.com/MindWisenv

Tel: 028 2323 9040

Orchardville Society: www.orchardville.com

Email: info@orchardville.com

Twitter: @orchardvillesoc

Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/The-Orchardville-Society

Tel: 02890 732326

- Royal National Institute of the Blind: www.rnib.org.uk

Twitter: @RNIB

Facebook: www.facebook.com/rnibuk

Tel: 030 3123 9999

- The Cedar Foundation: www.cedar-foundation.org

Email: info@cedar-foundation.org

Twitter: @cedarfoundation

Facebook: www.facebook.com/CedarFoundation

Tel: 02890 666188

- Ulster Supported Employment Limited: www.usel.co.uk

Email: info@usel.co.uk

Tel: 02890 356600