



# Guidelines for Purchasers of Disability Equality Training



NATIONAL DISABILITY AUTHORITY  
ÚDARÁS NÁISIÚNTA MÍCHUMAIS

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Acknowledgements: Paula Murphy, Accessibility Co-ordinator Quality Customer Services, National Disability Authority.

Our special thanks:

- Dr Michael Timms for his work in producing this document and the associated projects.
- to all those who responded at the consultation phase and assisted in bringing this document to completion.



# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Part 1 What is Disability Equality Training?</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 Reasons for training	5
<b>Part 2 Purchasing Training</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1 Management Commitment	8
2.2 What to look for in a trainer?	8
2.3 How will the training be delivered?	15
2.4 Content of Disability Equality Training	16
2.5 Evaluation and Follow-up of Training – Individual and Organisational	18
<b>Part 3 Embedding disability equality into the ethos of your organisation</b>	<b>20</b>
3.1 Who is the target audience?	20
3.2 Team Work	20
3.3 Policies, Procedures and Practices	20
3.4 Action Planning	21
3.5 Consultation	22
3.6 Further Organisational Development	23
3.7 Role of HRM	23
3.8 Review	25
<b>Appendix 1 – References</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Appendix 2 – Excellence through Accessibility</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Appendix 3 – List of Representative Organisations</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Appendix 4 – NCBI; Ways to Make information Accessible to All</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Appendix 5 – Further information on Training</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Appendix 6 – Training Event Booking Form Template</b>	<b>34</b>

## Introduction

The NDA has developed these guidelines for purchasers of Disability Equality Training to assist organisations with the development of their Disability Equality Training programme. This document complements the NDA's recently developed Equality and Disability FETAC module, designed to provide recognition to learners. The NDA does not provide or accredit Disability Equality Training. However, these Guidelines set out for purchasers what to look for in a trainer, how the trainer might work with the organisation and the broad content of disability equality training programmes. Following the establishment of an organisational commitment to disability equality, staff training is only the first step in the process, but it is essential that all staff are afforded the opportunity to explore how their attitudes and organisational processes could be a barrier to people with disabilities. The training will also allow staff to explore their roles and the roles of all stakeholders in creating a more accessible environment for all.

## Part 1

# What is Disability Equality Training?

Traditionally there have been two main types of training:

- 1) Disability Awareness Training, and
- 2) Disability Equality Training

**1) Disability Awareness Training** aims to specifically provide information or raise participant awareness of disability issues without necessarily leading to any action or behaviour change on the part of the individual or organisation.

Traditionally, the focus of Disability Training has been on staff awareness, but this may serve little purpose if it is carried out in a vacuum, and may well be counter-productive – for instance, it may create frustration among staff who see how change could be implemented, but find the organisation inactive and/or uncommunicative at this level. It is therefore vital that staff development and training initiatives be accompanied by policy and procedural developments within the organisation in relation to people with disabilities. Management must also demonstrate genuine commitment to these goals.

**2) Disability Equality Training** allows learners to explore disability in an equality context, and the role of society in creating an inclusive society. Disability Equality Training recognises that people with disabilities have the right to participate fully in the economic, social and cultural life of that society and that such rights are underpinned by legislation. It informs the behaviour and actions of its recipients in relation to disability. It does this by:

- Working out of a social understanding of disability and difference. It identifies the social and physical barriers to full participation (information, structural, attitudinal etc), which are in society and are the responsibility of all
- Enunciating a human rights-based approach to participation in society
- Outlining the requirements of current legislation in relation to disability (e.g, The Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004, The Equal Status Acts 2000 and 2004 and The Disability Act 2005)
- Enabling learners to understand the participation needs of people with different kinds of impairments (e.g, people with learning difficulties, unseen impairments and mental health difficulties)
- Identifying the changes in personal and/or organisational behaviour required to realise equality for people with disabilities to participate fully as a member, or as a customer, of that organisation

- Seeking an approach to the training input which requires the initiatives of Disability Equality Training to be management led

Disability Equality Training is more effective as it strives to achieve attitudinal change at an organizational level so that disability equality is embedded in all policies, procedures and practices.

## 1.1 Reasons for training

Through Disability Equality Training and by recognising the civil and human rights issues associated with disability the organisation can contribute to the creation of a more inclusive and equal society. Through improved awareness, knowledge and understanding, the organisation can work towards creating social cohesion and a culture that welcomes and values diversity. In addition to the broader impact of contributing to the development of a more equitable inclusive society, there are many legal and business reasons for providing Disability Equality Training to individuals and organisations.

**Equality Legislation:** the introduction of the Equality legislation in the late 1990s has been pivotal in focusing organisations on their equality/diversity obligations. The Employment Equality Act (1998 and 2004) provides a legal imperative to organisations to ensure they are not discriminating, harassing or sexually harassing employees and potential employees across the nine equality grounds (including disability). The Equal Status Act (2000 and 2004) moved the focus beyond the direct workplace, and onto access to and provision of goods and services across each of the nine grounds. Further information on the Equality legislation can be sought from the Equality Authority ([www.equality.ie](http://www.equality.ie)). The provision of equality/diversity training was, and continues to be, a key starting point for many organisations keen to ensure all their staff are aware of their duties and obligations under the Act.

The Disability Act 2005 also highlights the importance of expertise on access issues.

The Act states:

‘Where a service is provided by a public body, the head of the body shall -...

- c) ensure the availability of persons with appropriate expertise and skills to give advice to the body about the means of ensuring that the service provided by the body is accessible to people with disabilities.’

(Part 3, Section 26 [c] )

And in relation to employment the Act states:

‘The measures referred to in subsection (2) may include . . . ‘

- f) the provision of information to employees of the body to increase their awareness and understanding of the contribution that persons with disabilities may make to the work of the body.'

(Part 5, Section 49 [3f])

One hundred Local Authorities in Ireland have also signed up to the Barcelona Declaration. This means that, under the Declaration, Local Authorities now need to implement seventeen agreements including the following:

'The Municipal Governments will establish permanent skill-providing and training systems aimed at city personnel in order to ensure adequate comprehension and attention to the needs of the disabled.'

(Number XV, The Barcelona Declaration, 1995)

**Business Benefits:** an organisation that appreciates the diverse identities of its employees and customers can provide a higher quality of service to all stakeholders. An organisation that values diversity and promotes disability equality can have a wider pool of applicants for positions of employment. If an organisation has embedded disability equality into its ethos, it is more likely to be viewed as an 'employer of choice' by potential employees. Existing employees who acquire a disability will also be more comfortable in disclosing their disability, and discussing possible requirements, if the organisation proactively promotes disability equality. This is a particularly important strategy as 'about 85% of working-age people with a disability or chronic illness have acquired that disability.' (NDA, 2005) Associated benefits can include improved staff morale, commitment and satisfaction.

An organisation that is reflective of the diversity of its customer base can also be more effective in delivering service(s) in a way that focuses on their customers' requirements. The Strategic Management Initiative emphasised the importance of the principles of 'equality/diversity' and 'access' in the twelve 'Principles of Quality Customer Service for Customers and Clients of the Public Service.' These principles should underpin the quality of service provided by public services in their dealings with the public and each other. The organisation can detail and promote its commitments to disability equality through its Customer Action Plan and/or Customer Charter.

## Part 2

### Purchasing Training

Purchasing training is only one element of embedding disability equality into the ethos and practice of your organisation. To maximise the impact of the training, organisations should ensure they have read and understood Part 3 of these Guidelines before purchasing training.

#### 2.1 Management Commitment

The provision of training is a first step in a larger organisational commitment to disability equality. Management should have a strong role to play in the purchasing of Disability Equality Training. For the training to be effective, it must be linked to the strategic objectives of the organisation and the organisational equality/diversity policies. The management team must also be involved in developing commitment to this objective by clearly explaining the benefits of, and need for, disability equality in their organisation. Management's knowledge of the organisation's key players and processes will help in the planning and expansion of disability equality so as to achieve support for this goal. The supporting framework of departmental objectives and needs analysis, for example through performance appraisal like PMDS (Performance Management and Development Systems), can also be a driver of the training plan.

#### 2.2 What to look for in a trainer?

All trainers should:

- Have a training qualification and/or relevant experience
- Have a strong social model perspective. This means the trainer should focus on how the physical and social barriers in society can disable an individual
- Have extensive knowledge of disability policy issues. The trainers should be up to date with current developments in the disability sector in Ireland
- Have experience of disability and have developed their training programme in consultation with people with disabilities

#### The Core Values of a Disability Equality Trainer

This section sets out what is required of the trainer, in terms of knowledge and behaviour, in relation to training skills. Some of these requirements for trainers are general while others are specific to Disability Equality and Disability Awareness training.

## **Personal Development**

Trainers will have a commitment to life-long learning – both in themselves and in those they train. They will seek to achieve the fullest possible development of those they train by the use of appropriate learning methods and, specifically, the use of feedback.

## **Participants as Agents of Change**

Trainers will always treat the trainee as the agent of his or her own change. They will do this by taking steps at the beginning of any training contract to establish this with the trainees.

If the Trainer identifies the need for further change amongst the trainees in the organisation, they will inform the Purchaser appropriately.

## **Confidentiality**

Trainers will at all times respect the confidentiality of any:

- Business information given to them by an organisation with which they liaise in the course of their work
- Personal information given, to which they have access as a result of engaging in the training process

## **Commitment to a Legal Framework**

Trainers will not act in any way that would constitute or lead to a breach of the law; neither would they knowingly encourage nor assist unlawful conduct by those they work with, either employers or trainees.

## **Area of Competence**

Trainers will set out their particular areas of competence/expertise. They should, where applicable, make known to the purchaser any limitations to their own knowledge and abilities by not undertaking any activities for which they are not appropriately prepared or qualified.

## **Integrity of Trainer**

Trainers will act in a manner that is honest and diligent in all their dealings with clients who employ them, as well as those to whom they deliver training. For example, this will include:

- Being able to give an employer a reasoned justification and breakdown of fees and

charging structure

- Maintaining high standards of accuracy in any information or advice given in any setting
- Remaining objective in matters of controversy and conflict in any setting

## **Continuing Professional Development**

Trainers will have a commitment to continuing professional development and will keep a record of relevant self-developmental training undertaken, as well as qualifications obtained and professional bodies to which the trainer might be admitted. Such a record should always be available for inspection by a prospective employer.

(Taken from the NDA Code of Practice for Disability Equality Training, unpublished)

## **Types of Trainers**

Depending on need, purchasers can choose between four types of training providers:

1. An external trainer who delivers training directly to staff. This type of trainer should have a training qualification and/or experience, have developed their training programme in consultation with people with disabilities and have an extensive knowledge of disability policy
2. A disability consultant hired to work in partnership with an organisational training unit to tailor an existing disability equality programme or develop a new programme. This may be the preferred option for larger organisations due to the resource implications
3. A 'train the trainer' approach, where the organisation hires a disability trainer to up-skill the current training unit. This can be advantageous in embedding disability equality into the ethos and practice of the organisation.

Whatever approach is deemed most suitable by the organisation, all trainers should have a strong social model perspective. The trainer should also seek to establish a desire for real cultural change within the organisation.

When an approach has been decided upon, the organisation should set up an initial meeting with the trainer. The purpose of this meeting should be to clarify details and expectations, and to agree on a suitable method and follow-up.

The trainer will need information on the target audience. S/he will need to be sensitive to the learners' needs and individual objectives. The trainer will also need to establish the particular access requirements of individual participants so that the most appropriate

delivery style and information formats can be utilised (e.g, information needed in alternative formats). The individuals' own objectives may also require specific tailoring of the programme, for example in relation to employment for HR staff, or built environmental accessibility for health and safety/maintenance staff.

### **How will the trainer work with my organisation?**

Before engaging the services of a trainer, it is important that the organisation has considered its objectives for the Disability Equality Training programme. These objectives can then be discussed and reviewed with the Trainer. Although the style of provision of Disability Equality Training may differ from trainer to trainer and organisation to organisation, it should still meet individual, group and organisational needs. Boydell and Leary differentiate three levels of performance that can each be applied to organisations, groups or individuals.

The three levels of performance are:

1. Implementing – bridging the gap between present and desired performance – measured against existing standards, for example, customer action planning
2. Improving – to achieve continually rising standards, for example, accessibility and customer care training in line with the Sustaining Progress Action Planning
3. Innovating – doing new and better things to produce change, for example, developing an organisational commitment to improved accessibility

(Identifying Training Needs, 1996)

The trainer will need to meet with responsible staff (Disability Liaison Officers, Access Officers and Human Resources) to discuss organisational needs and ways of progressing them. It is essential that the training objectives are linked to business and departmental objectives if the training is to be more than an awareness-raising exercise and is to achieve real organisational change.

### **Where do I find a trainer?**

Trainers can be sourced from many locations, including:

Local/national organisations of people with disabilities can put you in touch with their members who provide training. Comhairle has recently produced a National Directory of Voluntary Organisations which is available from their offices or online as part of the Resource Database for the Community and Voluntary Sector ([www.comhairle.ie](http://www.comhairle.ie)).

The FAS website ([www.fas.ie](http://www.fas.ie)) has a Register of Disability Trainers. This register is linked

to their grant scheme for the private sector. However, many of the organisations will provide training in the public sector also.

The NDA website ([www.nda.ie](http://www.nda.ie)) has a Directory of Accessibility Consultants linked to their Excellence through Accessibility award (See Appendix 2 for more information on the award). Although the main focus of the award is accessibility, many of the organisations also provide Disability Equality and Disability Awareness training. Please note the NDA does not recommend/accredit any of the individuals in the Directory.

The Wheel has produced a Directory of Trainers, Researchers and Evaluators which is available from their website ([www.wheel.ie](http://www.wheel.ie)).

The Local Government Management Services Board website ([www.irishtrainingdirectory.ie](http://www.irishtrainingdirectory.ie)) is an online database of trainers designed to assist public and private sector organisations in their search for a suitable trainer.

Training Directories detailing programmes, services and facilities in Ireland are also available.

Word of mouth – friends and colleagues in other organisations and sectors may be able to recommend trainers.

### **Where should I hold the training?**

The location of the training should also be given consideration. Opting for on- versus off-site training can have an affect on participation levels. Whatever venue is chosen, it is essential that the session is accessible and enabling for all if it is to be effective (See Table 1: Checklist for Accessible Venues). If the trainer is to establish a forum where attitudinal change can be facilitated, a climate of honesty and confidentiality needs to be established at the start and reinforced throughout the session.

**Table 1: Checklist for Accessible Venue**

Criteria/Tasks	Commentary
<p><b>Pre Event Registration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have the special requirements for all attending been acknowledged?</li> </ul>	<p>Sign language interpreter, speed-text, dietary requirements, guide dogs, wheelchair user.</p>
<p><b>Car Park</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there designated car park spaces available for people with disabilities?</li> <li>• If not, can designated spaces be reserved for people with mobility impairments?</li> <li>• Is there a drop-off point near the entrance of the building?</li> </ul>	<p>It is important that accessible car park spaces are designed correctly (Building for Everyone) and that the route from the car park to the entrance of the venue is clearly signposted.</p>
<p><b>Entrance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can people with disabilities enter the building using the same entrance as other visitors?</li> <li>• If not, is there a clearly signposted alternative entrance for people with disabilities?</li> <li>• Is the registration/reception desk at a height suitable for wheelchair users?</li> <li>• Do floors have non-slip finishes and/or short pile carpet?</li> </ul>	<p>Staff of the venue /organisers might direct people to alternative entrance in case of poor signage.</p> <p>The desk should be at a height of 1050mm for people standing and 750mm for wheelchair users (BFE)</p>

Criteria/Tasks	Commentary
<p><b>Main Training Room</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there clear signage to the main training room?</li> <li>• Is the main training room accessible from the entrance?</li> <li>• <u>When lift is required</u></li> </ul> <p>Is there more than one lift?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the training room have a functioning loop system?</li> <li>• Is the room large enough for expected number of attendees?</li> <li>• Does the room have audio/visual equipment capabilities for microphones, roving mikes, speakers, sockets for laptops etc?</li> <li>• Are the acoustics good in the room?</li> </ul>	<p>It is advised that the main training room should be situated on the ground floor, avoiding long corridors and heavy doors.</p> <p>Avoid venues with only one lift (in case it is out of order)</p> <p>If a loop is not installed in the room – a system can be hired. It should be checked for correct operation before the event.</p> <p>Must take into account wheelchair users, people with guide dogs. Ideally there should be mixture of chairs with and without armrests, as people’s preferences vary.</p> <p>A room with echoes will cause problems for people with hearing impairments</p>
<p><b>Lift Design</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the lift accessible?</li> </ul> <p>Fire-proofed, correct dimensions for a wheelchair, mirror, hand rails, visual and auditory warnings etc. (See BFE)</p>	
<p><b>Accessible Toilets</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there at least one accessible toilet on the same floor as the main training room?</li> <li>• If not, are there accessible toilets that can be accessed by a lift?</li> </ul>	<p>Toilet design needs to be of standard of Technical Guidance document, Part M of Building Regulations or Building for Everyone</p>

## 2.3 How will the training be delivered?

The training activities employed will depend on the objectives and needs of the organisation, departments and individuals. Learners can work individually, in groups, through brainstorming or facilitated discussion. A variety of activities are preferable for a session to allow for people's different learning styles. Activities could include:

- **Presentations** – in/formal presentations may work well for establishing clear objectives and the structure of the programme with the learners. It is important to remember that the audience's attention span with this type of delivery is limited, but the use of 'post-its', flashcards, flip charts and audience involvement can also enhance the effectiveness of the experience.
- **Visual aids** – overheads, PowerPoint presentations, flip charts, posters, videos and other multi-media productions can also assist in making the training more memorable. Visual imagery should be reflective of diversity and provide an ideal opportunity to portray strong, positive imagery of people with disabilities.
- **Case Studies** - can be based on real/fictitious scenarios and involve questions on what could/should be done. For the purpose of Disability Equality Training, case studies usually should cover key points of equality/disability legislation. Through individual and/or group work, learners can explore key concepts like reasonable accommodation and positive action based on factual analysis.
- **Practical Exercises** – can allow learners experience through simulated situations, where they can learn from experience as well as theory. These may range from analysing media imagery of people with disabilities to disability-proofing organisational policies. It is the reflection on the learning from practical exercises and examining the possible solutions that is the real learning experience for the trainees. The trainer's role in drawing out feelings and behaviours is key here.
- **Role Plays** – can help learners to experience situations and/or view society from a different perspective to their own. As such, they can be helpful for honing interpersonal and attitudinal skills. However, care should be taken to ensure a comfortable experience for all and the focus should remain on the social model of disability at all times. The trainer's role in the careful planning of material and participants is essential in creating an appropriate learning environment. We do not recommend the use of disability simulation exercises like encouraging participants to navigate the room blindfold, or using a wheelchair. These exercises tend to create an unrealistic experience and can be found offensive.
- **Technology-based exercises** - this relatively new approach allows learners to have

far more control of their training experience by using technology-based programmes like CD ROMs or websites. Learners can usually participate at their own convenience, but they do need to be actively involved for the session to be effective. Although this approach can be re-used throughout the organisation, the range of products currently available is still rather limited.

See 'Ask Me: Guidelines for Effective Consultation with People with Disabilities' for further information on facilitation.

## 2.4 Content of Disability Equality Training

**Disability Equality Training** should focus on a number of key areas. The significant difference in the provision of Disability Awareness Training and Disability Equality Training is the inclusion of a focus on a whole organisational approach. This section involves utilising the information and heightened awareness of the learners and allowing them to put the theory into practice by examining the policies, procedures and practices of the organisation.

### 1. History of Disability

This involves an overview of the effect of economic, social, political and educational factors on how people with disabilities have been defined and treated throughout the centuries, up to the rise of the cross-disability movement. Issues likely to be mentioned include institutionalisation, segregation, inclusive research, human rights and access to services.

Learning Objectives should include:

- What do we mean by disability?
- How is it defined?
- What is the history of disability?
- How does it differ from impairment?

### 2. Disability and society

This will involve a consideration of models of disability. You will hear mention of the 'medical' and 'social' models. The 'medical' model places the disability in the person who has the impairment – it is they who need to be 'fixed'; while the 'social' model places the disability in the wider world, asserting it is society that needs 'fixing' in order that disabled people can be included. The paradigm shift is the actualisation of the move in our society from a 'medical' to a 'social' way of thinking about disability.

Learning Objectives should include:

- How do we view disability in society?
- How does the social model differ from the medical model?
- How does society restrict people with disabilities?
- How can we create a more inclusive society?

### **3. Equality and Disability**

A review of current Disability and Equality legislation, as well as the history of its development, would be an essential element of Disability Equality Training. This would give consideration to all disability issues (e.g, reasonable accommodation and positive action) related to such legislation. The overview should also look at victimisation, discrimination and harassment or sexual harassment. It should also include a focus on the implications of such legislation for behaviour of staff in relevant areas of work.

Learning Objectives should include:

- What do we mean by disability as an equality issue?
- How does discrimination exist in society?
- What legislation covers disabled people's rights to equal status and employment opportunities?
- How can people with disabilities face multiple discriminations and/or inequalities?
- What does it mean to accept disability as a cultural experience?

### **4. Disability and Communication**

Owing to the historical segregation of people with disabilities, non-disabled people often have little or no experience of working or socialising with people with disabilities. This unfamiliarity can create anxieties at the prospect of sharing workspace or providing services to disabled people. A trainer will be prepared to give time to discussing appropriate etiquette (the language to employ and the behaviours to use) in a range of situations tailored to the individual's actual or expected experience. The question of how an organisation interacts with disabled people may arise, and this can be addressed in a way that includes the concepts of empowerment and consultation.

Learning Objectives should include:

- What language should I use when interacting with/about people with disabilities?
- How does my organisation interact with people with disabilities?
- What myths and misconceptions are perpetuated in society about people with disabilities?
- How does media imagery portray people with disabilities?

## 5. Proactive Approach

Aside from the requirements of legislation, the organisation and its staff, through the training process, may develop thoughts on how procedures and practices could be modified to better include people with disabilities. Before any training is put in place, the purchaser and the trainer will be able to discuss strategies for eliciting such thoughts and ideas and bringing them back to management.

Learning Objectives should include:

- What is disability equality proofing?
- What are my organisation's equal opportunities policies and procedures?
- What is accessibility?
- How could the accessibility of my organisation be improved?
- How can I improve my own practices to be more inclusive of people with disabilities?

## 2.5 Evaluation and Follow-up of Training – Individual and Organisational

Evaluation of the training is in many ways as essential as the training itself, but is an element that is frequently neglected by organisations. Evaluation has benefits for:

- The trainer – to assess their own performance and their effectiveness in meeting the set objectives
- The individual – to assess their learning outcomes against their objectives
- The organisation – to assess the extent to which the training objectives and outcomes aligned with organisational goals

Disability Equality Training differs from other types of training in that it does not involve the acquiring of a new skill or information, but focuses on attitudinal change and understanding. This can make it quite difficult to evaluate. The most influential evaluation framework comes from Kirkpatrick (1959). Kirkpatrick's model focuses on four levels:

1. Reaction - to gather data on participants' reactions at the end of a training program
2. Learning – to assess whether the learning objectives for the program are met
3. Behaviour – to assess whether job performance changes as a result of training
4. Results – to assess the costs v benefits of training, i.e. the organisational impact in terms of reduced costs, improved quality of work, etc

1. **Reactions** - these tend to be evaluated using feedback surveys or post-course reaction questionnaires. The forms tend to cover areas like the preparation, delivery, content, activities, venue and areas for improvement.
2. **Learning** - ways of testing attitudinal change and information acquired can vary. Possible assessments for Disability Equality Training include:
  - Learner Log – where the learner keeps track of the knowledge he/she has acquired and how it is put into practice post the training programme through an individual record
  - Project work – group/individual work based around a brief/topic over a specified period of time
  - The use of case studies, role plays and group exercises during the training session can also help evaluate the learning level of attendees
3. **Behavioural** – this area can be very difficult to measure post – Disability Equality Training. The use of PMDS and 360° feedback with line management may assist in terms of individual appraisal. The use of responsive evaluation/feedback from key stakeholders, like a panel including customers with disabilities or representative organisations, can also provide feedback on the accessibility of the organisation.
4. **Results** - the provision of Disability Equality Training can be reported on, under elements such as customer care and equality/diversity, to the performance verification group and in strategic plans and annual reports. Benefits could also be measured through customer service feedback and HR, for example in terms of the recruitment and retention of people with disabilities.

In terms of independent external assessment, the NDA can assist in measuring and assessing the organisational commitment to improved accessibility. The Excellence through Accessibility™ awards framework was developed following a PPF commitment in partnership with the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. Through access audits of the built environment and communication infrastructure, the assessment of policies, practices and procedures and interviews with staff and customers, the NDA can assess current levels of accessibility. The NDA assessment will also help the organisation embark on a continuous improvement model through action planning for the future short, medium and long term SMART objectives. (See Appendix 2)

## Part 3

# Embedding disability equality into the ethos of your organisation

## 3.1 Who is the target audience?

- Individual Level

This includes all staff: those working at the frontline and those supporting them

- Operational and Supervisory Level

Teamwork is essential in ensuring disability equality is embedded into the ethos of all departments, divisions, sections and agencies

- Strategic and Policy Level

Leadership is key to the successful implementation of all initiatives. Disability Equality needs to be internalised in all policies, procedures and practices for real effect

## 3.2 Team Work

For change to be effective it needs to permeate all levels of the organisation. The commitment to change needs to be led by a dedicated member of staff – usually senior management or an Access Officer. This person should have overall responsibility for overseeing the department's response to disability equality. Not only does this allow others to follow by example, but also ensures that accessibility and disability proofing is internalised in all the organisation's policies and procedures. An internal working/cross functional team of staff responsible for accessibility matters should be developed. Individuals can take responsibility for particular initiatives. The involvement of staff at all levels assists with keeping teams informed of developments and also identifying changes in organisational behaviour. The primary task of this team could be the development of a Disability/Accessibility Action Plan.

## 3.3 Policies, Procedures and Practices

The organisation's equality policy detailing its commitment to non-discrimination, accommodating diversity and positive action, would be a clear starting point. These commitments will assist in setting the disability equality objectives for the team, and also in monitoring the effectiveness of the policy.

Once the team is established, its members can start looking at the organisation's policies,

procedures and practices. A disability proofing process can be carried out which could involve:

- Awareness-raising of staff – through training, the promotion of positive action and committing to maximising accessibility, the organisation can heighten and maintain the awareness levels of staff.
- Auditing of current information – the collection and analysis of data and the examination of policies and projects will assist in developing an overview of the organisation's current status. This auditing will help to identify the extent to which disability issues have been dealt with in past policies, actions and projects, are being dealt with currently and can be dealt with going forward.
- Consulting with people with disabilities – the Barcelona Declaration Project found that 'effective proofing may only work if there is a constructive and meaningful consultative process in place for people with disabilities'. See the section on consultation below for more information.
- Carrying out an impact assessment – looking at the extent to which new policies and projects may impact on people with disabilities so as to ensure the decision-making process is fully aware of the impact of decisions on everyone.

(NDA/Barcelona Declaration Project 'Disability Proofing Template for Local Government.)

This process can be particularly helpful in ensuring organisational policies/procedures are not discriminating indirectly against people with disabilities.

The organisation should also consider how effective it's equality policies are in ensuring the organisation is not only compliant with legislation, but also seizing the opportunity to be proactive and take positive action. The Equality Authority can provide guidance on producing equality policies, equality proofing and also offer Equality Reviews and Action Plans Schemes.

### 3.4 Action Planning

The team should look at developing an action plan from its findings by dividing the specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely (SMART) objectives in to short, medium and long-term timeframes. This is usually based on resources available and priorities, e.g. compliance with legislation or following consultation with stakeholders.

#### **The Action Plan:**

- Develop an action plan flowing from the policy analysis and auditing results
- The action plan should define responsibility and key performance indicators for accessibility at all levels

- Consult staff and customers on the content of the plan
- All staff should receive literature advising them of their rights and responsibilities under the action plan, for example, the duty not to discriminate
- Use relevant external data to inform the plan
- Define equality/disability targets with timeframes that are specific and measurable
- List evidence of achievement against performance indicators
- Define action to be taken to achieve compliance
- Have Senior Management endorse the Action Plan

### **3.5 Consultation**

The NDA document 'Ask Me: Guidelines for Effective Consultation with People with Disabilities', identifies ten essential elements for effective consultation with people with disabilities:

- Plan all consultations to include people with disabilities
- Decide the who, what and why of your consultation process
- Choose the most appropriate method for consulting with particular groups
- Train staff and facilitators in Disability Equality Training
- Identify the groups you want to consult with
- Ask people with disabilities what their needs are so that the consultation works for them as well as you
- Check that all elements of the consultation process are accessible
- Allow time for those consulted to consider the issues fully
- Review your practices and policies
- Contact representative organisations for advice and assistance

## 3.6 Further Organisational Development

In addition to training and proofing, the organisation should consider:

- Delivering training programmes to emphasise commitment to, and the effectiveness of, the accessibility policy, plan and other disability equality outcomes
- Building accessibility objectives in to the PMDS appraisal process
- Monitoring the effect of consultation outcomes on service delivery
- Disability-proofing all policies and procedures
- Ensuring all staff are trained to provide an appropriate and informed response to all customers
- Ensuring staff training in disability equality is formally linked to performance management
- Sharing experiences and provide support for others in the development of their good practice
- Equality monitoring of the take-up of services becomes a priority
- Establishing mechanisms for responding to discrimination and complaints about inaccessibility
- Developing a mechanism to measure, monitor and review improvements in accessibility
- Using well-designed standard application forms
- Adopting positive action measures so as to include groups that are currently under-represented
- Advertisements, promotional literature, public areas promoting positive imagery and reflecting diversity
- Asking representative organisations, voluntary groups and individuals with disabilities in the community how best they can deliver services for all

## 3.7 Role of HRM

Human Resources needs to spearhead the campaign to actively promote Disability equality within the organisation. Human Resources should examine the disability equality implications for future strategic objectives like recruitment and training at the development stage.

This could include:

- Targeting of training – although all staff within the organisation should be trained, HR can use their expertise to plan the rollout of the Disability Equality Training programme to maximise ‘buy-in’ and manage the organisational change. This could mean including a disability equality element in induction training, targeting frontline staff first or perhaps management to ensure systematic change occurs.
- Integration with other training – in line with the disability proofing process, consideration should be given to adding a disability dimension to all other training.
- Line management – on their disability equality responsibilities, for example in terms of job descriptions, reporting, PMDS and responsibilities in terms of legal and organisational issues.
- Interview Panels – all members should be aware of their legal and organisational responsibilities in ensuring the process is fair and transparent for all potential employees.
- HR Unit – staff should be aware of how to disability equality- proof the recruitment, employment and retention processes in the organisation.
- Specialised/tailored training – for example access auditing. Access audit training rates an existing building/website against given criteria for usability and accessibility.

This may be particularly relevant for facilities staff for built environment accessibility, or I.T. staff on web accessibility. Complaint-handling for customer service staff or access officers can also be beneficial.

- ‘Marketing’ of disability equality in the organisation – attitudinal change is required if staff are to accept and believe that the commitment to disability equality constitutes real organisational change. This shift will require careful management via partnership and consultation with all stakeholders.
- ‘Employee champion’ – this involves ensuring that staff are committed to the organisation and are contributing fully. (O’Riordan, 2004). This involves active consultation, the monitoring of morale and staff representation with/of employees with disabilities.
- Cross Functional Teams – will assist in the central implementation of disability equality in the organisational behaviour. Human Resources should ensure the team is representative, is supported by adequate resources, and has communication channels open to it.
- Partnership – this mechanism should be used for promoting disability equality and social cohesion.

## 3.8 Review

The review of the disability equality improvement process is essential. The impact and outcomes of all processes need to be assessed to ensure the desired improvement is being achieved.

People with disabilities, funders, staff and customers should all be involved in the evaluation stage. This review could take place on an annual basis in line with annual/strategic review.

This will allow gaps to be identified, which will be most useful for forward planning. The results of this evaluation should be publicly available in accessible formats.

In some organisations, improvements following Disability Equality Training may be measurable by improvements in turnover, numbers of complaints received etc. However it is worth noting that complaints may increase before they decrease when a more accessible system is adopted. Other organisations may find it beneficial to compare their achievements against best practice examples/models or have them acknowledged through an award scheme like **Excellence through People** for the evaluation of training processes, or Excellence through Accessibility for the assessment of accessible public services.

## Appendix 1 – References

Boydell, T. and Leary, M. (1996) Identifying Training Needs, CIPD, London, [www.cipd.co.uk](http://www.cipd.co.uk)

Equality Authority (2004) Guidelines on Equality and Diversity Training in Enterprises, Dublin, [www.equality.ie](http://www.equality.ie)

Equality Authority (2000) Support Pack on the Equality/Diversity Aspects of Quality Customer Service for the Civil and Public Service, Dublin

Hackett, P (1997) Introduction to Training, CIPD, London

Kerry Network of People with Disabilities (2001), Welcoming Customers with Disabilities, Kerry, [www.pwdi.ie](http://www.pwdi.ie)

NDA (2004) Ask Me: Guidelines for Effective Consultation with People with Disabilities, Dublin, NDA, [www.nda.ie](http://www.nda.ie)

NDA (2003) Building for Everyone, Dublin, NDA

NDA (unpublished) Code of Practice for Disability Equality Training and Disability Awareness Training

NDA (2005) Disability and work, Dublin, NDA

NDA/Barcelona Declaration Project (2003), Disability Proofing Template for Local Government 2001-2004, Dublin, NDA

NDA (2005) Excellence through Accessibility; Guidelines and Criteria, Dublin, NDA

NDA (due 2005) Guidelines for Access Auditing on the Built Environment, Dublin, NDA

NDA (due 2005) Guidelines on ICT Accessibility Auditing, Dublin, NDA

Useful Websites:

<http://www.accessit.nda.ie> - NDA IT Accessibility Guidelines

[www.barcelonaproject.ie](http://www.barcelonaproject.ie) - for further information on the Barcelona Declaration

[www.fas.ie](http://www.fas.ie) - for the Register of Trainers

[www.fetac.ie](http://www.fetac.ie) - the national awarding body on training and education in Ireland

[www.equality.ie](http://www.equality.ie) - for further information on the Equality Authority, Equality legislation and their publications

[www.nda.ie](http://www.nda.ie) for further information on the NDA, publications, Excellence through Accessibility, the Directory of Consultants and information on access auditing

## Appendix 2 - Excellence through Accessibility

### **What is the NDA Excellence through Accessibility Award?**

The NDA Award acknowledges those public bodies that provide accessible services in a manner consistent with the needs of their customers.

### **Where did this award come from?**

In the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness 2000, the Government made a commitment to do the following:

“Each Government Department will ensure that reasonable steps are taken to make its services and those of agencies under its remit accessible to people with disabilities. To facilitate effective action and acceptable standards in this regard, the National Disability Authority will issue guidelines in accordance with international norms and will award an accessibility symbol to compliant public offices. Government Departments and agencies will take all reasonable action to qualify within five years.

Adequate resources will be provided to the National Disability Authority and the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to monitor, guide and audit progress towards the achievement of this commitment.”

These guidelines, criteria and audit tool arise from this PPF commitment.

### **What's the aim?**

The aim of the Award is to examine objectively and encourage the accessibility of services provided by Government Departments and Agencies under their remit to people with disabilities.

### **What will be examined?**

The guidelines will take account of three critical areas that are common to all organisations:

1. Access to Quality Customer Services
2. Access to the Built Environment
3. Access to services delivered via Information and Communication Technology

The NDA has developed a set of 14 guidelines and 41 criteria across these three areas.

### **Who can apply?**

Applicants must provide a public service and be a Government Department or an Agency under the remit of a Department.

### **What if my organisation owns, manages or controls a heritage site?**

Applications are welcome from heritage sites. For the purpose of assessing the built environment we have developed separate guidelines to ensure that the characteristics of the site are not compromised.

### **How do I apply?**

An application form must be completed. This form is available on request in a variety of formats from the NDA or can be downloaded from our website at: [www.nda.ie](http://www.nda.ie).

This form must be accompanied by copies of the following documents:

- Safety Statement
- Equality/Equal Opportunities Policy
- Customer Charter/Customer Action Plan
- A list of staff members and customers for possible interview

The NDA welcomes the opportunity to interview customers with disabilities where possible. Organisations may be able to identify interested customers with disabilities from their customer panels, consultative mechanisms etc.

### **What then?**

After you submit your application, the NDA will contact you to arrange for an assessment to be carried out by experienced and trained assessors. The assessor will capture evidence from documentation, observation and interview. Organisations must make sure the necessary documents and staff are available for interview.

### **Who makes the decision?**

The Awards Approval Board will be set up to oversee the whole process. Once the assessors complete their work, they will submit their report to this Board, which will make all final decision on awards. They also have the authority to postpone or decline registration.

The Board will register the application as any of the following:

- Committed through Accessibility
- Quality through Accessibility
- Excellence through Accessibility

<b>DESIGNATION</b>	<b>SCORE</b>
Committed	Scored the minimum on all applicable performance indicators.
Quality	Scored the minimum on all applicable performance indicators and reached an overall score of 65%
Excellence	Scored the minimum on all applicable performance indicators and reached an overall score of 80%

### **How long do I have the Award?**

If you are approved, you will have the registration for three years. You will then have to re-apply for the Award.

### **Is there a review process?**

Applicants who are unhappy with the decision of the Board can apply for a review to an Independent Review Officer at the NDA offices. Reviews can only be made when a deficiency in the assessment process is identified. The Review Officer will decide on the case and reply in writing within 60 days of receipt of the letter. This decision is final.

### **What is the cost?**

It may be the case that applications from larger organisations will involve a contribution to the costs of the audit. If this proves necessary in any case, an estimate of the cost will be prepared and agreed with each applicant before the audit is carried out.

### **What does a compliant public office get?**

An accessibility symbol is awarded to public offices compliant with these guidelines.

## Appendix 3 - List of Representative Organisations

Name of Organisation	Postal Address	Telephone Number	Fax Number	Email Address
Disability Federation of Ireland	Funbally Court Funbally Lane Dublin 8	01-4547978	01-4547981	info@disability-federation.ie
Forum of People with Disabilities	21 Hill Street Dublin 1	01-8786077		inforum@indigo.ie
Irish Deaf Society	30 Blessington Street Dublin 7	01-8601878	01-8601960	info@irishdeafsociety.ie
Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind	National Headquarters & Training Centre Model Farm Cork	021-4878200	021-4874152	info@guidedogs.ie
Irish Wheelchair Association	Blackheath Drive Clontarf, Dublin 3	01-8186400	01-8333873	info@iwa.ie
Kerry Network of People with Disabilities	3 Basin Court Tralee Co Kerry	066-718061		kerry@pwwdi.ie
Mental Health Ireland	6 Adelaide Street Dun Laoghaire Co Dublin	01-2841166	01-2841736	information@mentalhealthireland.ie
NAMHI	5 Fitzwilliam Place Dublin 2	01-6766035	01-6760517	info@namh.ie
National Council for the Blind of Ireland	Whitworth Road Drumcondra Dublin 9	01-8307033	01-8307787	info@ncbi.ie
National Association for the Deaf	35 North Frederick Street Dublin 1	01-8175777	01-8783629	nad@iol.ie
National Federation of Voluntary Bodies	Oranmore Business Park Oranmore, Galway	091-792316		brian@fedvol.ie
National Parents & Siblings Alliance	31 Magenta Hall Santry Dublin 9	01-8421267	01-8421267	npsa@eircom.net
Not for Profit Business Association	Unit G9 Calmount Ballymount Dublin 9	01-4293600	01-4600919	info@notforprofit.ie
People with Disabilities in Ireland	4th Floor Jervis House Jervis St Dublin 1	01-8721744	01-8721771	info@pwwdi.ie

## Appendix 4 - NCBI; Ways to Make information Accessible to All

- For main text, use upper and lower case letters, as words will retain their shape making them easier to read.
- Key words and headings should be highlighted in bold type. Avoid italics and underlining, as they can be difficult to read.
- Only use UPPER CASE to emphasise isolated letters or short phrases and headings.
- Fat letters are more easily seen than thin letters. Use letters in plain type (Sans Serif). Arial is a good choice of lettering type.
- It is more difficult to read text if letters and words are stretched, crammed together or split using hyphens.
- Colour and contrast of the lettering and the background must be considered. Black on white or white on black are good contrasting colours. Sometimes, however, black and white can give too much reflection and so more muted colours can improve visibility, e.g. navy background with cream text, black background and yellow text or cream background with navy/ black text.
- The paper surface should have a matt finish to reduce reflection and glare. This is especially important when a person with vision impairment uses illumination and magnification to read.
- The type size requirement varies with individuals; “jumbo” large print is not suitable for all. The print should be as small as is comfortable for the individual, so the eye can cover more letters in one sweep. Size 14 point is a good size for publications and company letters. Where large print is requested, size 22 is recommended.
- If using very large font for heading for example, a negative text is better – dark background and light colour text (e.g. the banner on left of this page).
- Use colours and bullets to highlight important points in text.
- Colour block the page numbers.
- Columns of text should be clearly separated from each other.
- The left margin of text should not have a jagged edge. Each line of text should start in the same place making the beginning of the next line easier to find; this is particularly helpful for those using magnification.

- Avoid setting text over images. Clear, simple, plain text and images, with good colour contrast are easier to see.
- For larger documents, ensure that the document can be flattened so that the pages can easily be placed on a scanner or screen magnifier.
- A consistent layout will help the reader to access the information that they need. The layout should be the same for each section, for example, telephone number first, fax second and email third. Place index, contact names, addresses and useful telephone numbers in bold type, on the first or last page of publications.

## **Appendix 5 – Further information on Training**

### **Further Education and Training Awards Council**

East Point Plaza, East Point Business Park, Dublin 3

T: +353-1-8659500

F: +353-1-8650067

Web: [www.fetac.ie](http://www.fetac.ie)

Email: [information@fetac.ie](mailto:information@fetac.ie)

### **Higher Education and Training Awards Council**

26-27 Denzille Lane

Dublin 2

T. +353 (0)1 631 45 67

F. +353 (0)1 631 45 77

Web: [www.hetac.ie](http://www.hetac.ie)

Email: [info@hetac.ie](mailto:info@hetac.ie)

### **FAS – National Training and Employment Authority and Excellence through People**

27 – 33 Upper Baggot St

Dublin 4

T. +353 (0) 1 607 0500

F. +353 (0) 1 607 0600

Web: [www.fas.ie](http://www.fas.ie)

Email: [info@fas.ie](mailto:info@fas.ie)

### **Chartered Institute of Personnel Development**

7/8 Upper Mount St

Dublin 2

T.

F. +353 (0)1 676 6655

+353 (0)1 676 7229

Web: [www.cipd.co.uk/branch/ireland](http://www.cipd.co.uk/branch/ireland)

### **Irish Institute of Training and Development**

Leinster Mills

Osberstown

Naas

Co Kildare

T. + 353 (0) 45 88 1166

F. +353 (0) 45 88 1192

Web: [www.iitd.ie](http://www.iitd.ie)

Email: [info@iitd.ie](mailto:info@iitd.ie)

## Appendix 6: Training Event Booking Form Template

**Title of Training Event**

**To be held at: (insert address of training venue and date of event)**

### Booking Form

Please complete one booking form (photocopy as required) for each person who wishes to attend and return to *(insert contact details of person in charge of registration)* by *(insert date on which booking form must be returned. Provide postal, telephone and email contact information)*

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Postal Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please tick the following where applicable:**

I require a sign language interpreter

I require a loop system

I require a speed text operator

I will be accompanied by a PA

I will be bringing my guide dog

I require accessible parking facilities

Special dietary requirements;

Please specify:

---

Any other requirements.

Please specify:

---

Require materials in an alternative format: Please indicate

Braille

Large Print

Easy to read

Disk (3.5 floppy)

CD

If you would like this form in an alternative format (list formats available/available upon request) please contact *(Insert contact details of person in charge of information provision)* by *(insert date on which booking form must be requested and provide postal, telephonel/minicom and email contact information)*





**The National  
Disability Authority,  
on behalf of the  
State, promotes  
and helps secure  
the rights of  
people with  
disabilities.**

**National Disability Authority  
25 Clyde Road, Dublin 4. Tel: 01 608 0400 Fax: 01 660 9935  
Email: [nda@nda.ie](mailto:nda@nda.ie)**

**[www.nda.ie](http://www.nda.ie)**