



# Agenda for Change

This document is also available, on request, in Braille, audio, large print, computer disk or as a pdf document.

Disability Action is a registered Charity: Charity No. XN71868A



## FOREWORD

Disability Action is a pioneering Northern Ireland charity, working with and for people with disabilities. We work with our members to provide information, training, transport, awareness programmes and representation for people regardless of their disability; whether that is a physical, mental, sensory, hidden or learning disability.

More than one in five (300,000) people in Northern Ireland has a disability and the incidence is higher here than in the rest of the United Kingdom. Over one quarter of all families here are directly affected by disability issues.

Since the reintroduction of devolution in December 1999 the Northern Ireland Assembly has made some attempts to address disability issues, however we remain 2 years behind in relation to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Bill and other elements of legislative protection are now in danger of lagging behind.

The pressure on our devolved administration to meet the economic challenges of years of infrastructural and other neglect placed additional restrictions on the provision of a comprehensive, rights based, well resourced service for disabled people here. With the current suspension, the rights of disabled people are in even greater danger of being ignored.

In 2003, Disability Action developed the Making It Happen programme in an attempt to produce an agenda for action on disability issues in Northern Ireland and used the occasion of the European Year of People with Disabilities to help focus the activities of the many disabled people who have been involved in this process.

In January 2003 Disability Action organised a conference attended by over 100 disabled people and their organisations to set the context within which the Making It Happen programme could be developed.

That conference was unique in that a pre conference survey of 90 disabled people and their organisations was used to set the agenda of the issue based conference. Workshops were facilitated by key decision/policy

makers, many of whom heard the views of disabled people directly for the first time.

The outcome of the conference was an agreement to continue this issue based work during 2003 with the aim of producing an Agenda for Change prepared by disabled people who wished to participate in the process. The key priorities identified by the conference for detailed work were:

- Education
- Employment and Vocational Training
- Health and Social Care
- Housing
- Political, Civil and Other Rights
- Sports, Arts and Culture
- Transport

but a range of other issues were recognised as having continuing importance.

Young people with disabilities who had participated in the conference indicated that rather than join an issue specific group they preferred to meet together to identify and debate the common issues they faced as young people.

The groups worked over a period of 10 months exploring the issues and identifying the key actions which should be included in any Agenda for Change. The result is the Agenda outlined on the following pages which not only identifies key actions but also the responsible players and in certain cases the timescales within which these actions should be completed.



Chief Executive  
Disability Action

## AGENDA FOR CHANGE

In this Agenda prepared by disabled people and their allies, we will be setting our priorities for actions to initiate or effect positive change in the lives of disabled people in Northern Ireland over the next 3- 5 years.

Our priorities concern the need for a restored Northern Ireland Assembly or a direct rule Government working with all key stakeholders, particularly disabled people themselves, to develop and appropriately resource a disability equality strategy.

Such a strategy should be based on a holistic approach and a non medical model of disability. The strategy must of course be supported by a range of other actions designed to ensure progress in each of the following areas:

- Advocacy
- Built Environment
- Education
- Employment and Vocational Training
- Health and Social Care
- Housing
- Implementing the Social Model of Disability
- Independent Living
- Information for All
- Political, Civil and Other Rights
- Sports, Arts and Culture
- Transport
- Young People

## ADVOCACY

The term advocacy is used to describe a range of advocacy schemes including, self advocacy, peer advocacy and group advocacy.

Whatever the type, effective advocacy provision enables the individual or the group to identify, quantify and present their needs, priorities and concerns to others, particularly service providers, in ways which are most

positive and accessible to the individual or group.

Developing and using advocacy services enables disabled people to gain skills in participation, presentation, involvement, negotiation and community development as well as familiarising statutory service providers with the direct representation needs of disabled people.

To fulfil this Agenda for Change

| Recommendation  | For Attention By  |
|---|---|
| Funding should be provided for the establishment of a regional network of disabled persons' advocacy projects providing comprehensive individual and group support. | The Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety and the Office of The First Minister and Deputy First Minister |

## BUILT ENVIRONMENT

An inclusive built environment is one in which all buildings and places are accessible to everyone, including people with a disability.

Some progress has been made over the last twenty years including the introduction of Part R of the Building Regulations and an improvement in Planners duties to draw the attention of developers to access issues. The introduction of the final set of rights under the Disability Discrimination Act planned for October 2004 relate to the removal of physical barriers and have created a high level of expectation among disabled people and their allies that the physical exclusion they experience will be lessened.

However a range of concerns continue to exist. Key of these are the facts that most of the built environment was constructed long before legal duties were placed on developers, there is a lack of understanding of the abilities, requirements and expectations of disabled people and access provision continues to be to minimum rather than best practice standards. Beyond the design and build process, the principles of access and inclusion are not

consistently carried through to the management of buildings and their services.

To enable the full physical inclusion of disabled people the following measures are necessary:

| Recommendation   | For Attention By                     |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Full consultation with disabled people and their organisations on the design of all public buildings and on all planning issues at all stages of the planning process must be ensured.   | The Planning Service                 |
| Design standards should be put in place which not only meet the minimum levels of accessibility and egress but which will achieve the highest possible access standards in buildings, public spaces, streetscapes and rural areas. | The Construction Service             |
| The educational and professional development of designers and other practitioners must be so structured as to equip them with a fuller understanding of the needs of disabled people and the principles of inclusive design.       | Universities and Professional Bodies |
| A system of planning and development control that incorporates the principles of inclusive design should be introduced.  | The Planning Service                 |
| The Building Regulations should be enforced in a consistent manner and in full across all Council areas. Wherever possible these minimum standards should be exceeded and good practice encouraged.                                | Building Control                     |

## EDUCATION

This subject was seen at the Making It Happen Conference as a key priority and a group of people representing Carers Northern Ireland, Disability Action, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and Speech Matters worked to produce the following proposals in relation to primary, secondary and tertiary education as well as life long learning.

The importance of a comprehensive, supportive and inclusive education in underpinning all the individual's life activities is generally accepted by our society. Current special educational needs legislation, the Education (NI) Order 1996 contains a presumption that children with special educational needs will receive their education in a mainstream setting, yet in Northern Ireland there remain 49 special schools and 172 special units providing in 2002\* for 4879 children. In the same year 5851 children with special educational needs were educated in mainstream classes.

Pupils with statements comprise between 2% and 3% of the school population but it cannot be assumed that these are children with a disability. Not all disabled children have special educational needs and not all children with special educational needs have a disability.

In relation to Further Education there are 200,000 enrolments each year in 16 Further Education Colleges and hundreds of out centres in the community. Provision by the Department for Employment and Learning in the academic year 2001/02\* (which generates funding in the 2003/04 academic year) shows a total number of 5766 students categorised as having learning difficulties or disabilities.

Key issues in relation to education include the recognition that the application of flawed civil rights legislation to education leads to parallel flaws in any Special Education legislation.

\*Latest Available Figures

Limitations to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Bill including definitions, statements of disability, reasonable adjustments, lack of duty to make school premises accessible and a lack of rights to legal redress.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Bill links special educational needs to disability discrimination. These overlap, but are not the same. The focus needs to be kept on civil rights rather than attempting to refine educational provision. This issue is compounded by the perceived difficulties in incorporating the proposed Special Educational Needs Bill into the forthcoming Single Equality Bill.

| Recommendation  | For Attention By  |
|---|---|
| <p>The Disability Discrimination Act should be fully extended to education and its application should be effectively resourced by September 2004.</p>   | <p>The Office of The First Minister and Deputy First Minister, the Department of Education and the Department for Employment and Learning</p>           |
| <p>The following elements should be included in the Special Educational Needs Bill:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full implementation of the Disability Discrimination Act in schools as it is to be applied to colleges.</li> <li>• A tribunal should hear cases of alleged discrimination in both schools and further and higher education, and should have powers to award financial compensation.</li> <li>• The duty to plan for accessibility in schools should be timebound and there should be a right to make a complaint where plans are not implemented effectively.</li> </ul> | <p>The Department of Education</p> <p>The Department of Education and the Department for Employment and Learning</p> <p>The Department of Education</p> |

|  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There should be a duty to provide auxiliary aids and services in schools where reasonable.</li> </ul>                         | <p>The Department of Education</p>  |  | <p>The Department of Education and the Department for Employment and Learning</p>  |
| <p>Early intervention models must be provided across Northern Ireland.</p>   | <p>The Department of Education and the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety</p> | <p>Support must be provided for disabled children being educated outside their locality, sometimes in Great Britain, to help re-integrate them in their community – Policy proposals on this issue should be agreed by December 2005.</p>                  |  |
| <p>A fundamental review – involving disabled people – of special educational needs provision should be undertaken and completed by December 2005.</p>                  |   | <p>Effective transition planning, where appropriate, for all disabled students entering further and higher education should be in place with effect from September 2004.</p>   | <p>The Department of Education, the Department for Employment and Learning and the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety</p>  |
| <p>Such a review should include:</p>   |   | <p>Disability Awareness and Etiquette training should be included in the curriculum from September 2005.</p>   | <p>The Department of Education and the Department for Employment and Learning</p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development of a vision for the role of ‘special schools’ including their relevance to a mainstreaming policy.</li> </ul> |   | <p>The need to ensure parents have access to all the information and support services they need should be key to all provision.</p>  | <p>The Department of Education</p>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An updating of such terminology as ‘special’ should be undertaken within a framework of supports not needs.</li> </ul>        | <p>The Department of Education</p>  |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A review of the effectiveness of the statementing process.</li> </ul>   |   | <p>The need for disabled adults to have access to learning in the way they want it and when they want it with the support they need to achieve their own goals should be paramount.</p>  | <p>The Department for Employment and Learning.</p>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statemented pupils being allowed to take the 11+ Transfer Test and any successor selection testing arrangements.</li> </ul>   |   |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion of special schools in any new (post-Burns) structure for secondary education provision.</li> </ul>                  |   | <p>Greater co-operation is required between education and healthcare providers not only for children who acquire their impairment at birth or in childhood, but also for the adult who acquires his/her disability as a result of illness or accident.</p> | <p>The Department of Education, the Department for Employment and Learning, the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety, Health and Social Services Boards and Trusts</p> |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Specialist rehabilitation focussed educational provision should be made for adults and children with mobility and co-ordination impairments, including speech disabilities. | The Department of Education, the Department for Employment and Learning, the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety, Health Boards and Trusts |
| Consideration should be given to the introduction of conductive education services, for children.   | The Department of Education   |
| A specific focus should be developed on the educational and life long learning needs of the families and carers of disabled people.   | The Department for Employment and Learning  |

## EMPLOYMENT AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Employment was also seen as a key concern of disabled people at the Making It Happen conference. The employment working group of 9 people represented both individuals and organisations including Rethink, Voices Forum, The Blind Centre for Northern Ireland, Dr B's Kitchen, Broadway Workshop and Hawthorns Adult Centre.

In spite of legislative changes and government initiatives, people with disabilities are still up to five times more likely than non-disabled people to be out of work and claiming benefits.

The Autumn 2001 Labour Force Survey estimates that about one in five (20%) people of working age in Northern Ireland have a current long-term disability and only 36% of these are in employment. Northern Ireland has both the highest incidence of disability in the United Kingdom and the lowest regional employment rate (67.8% as compared to the highest 80.4% in the South East of England). Disabled people are three times more likely to be economically inactive than those who are not disabled.

The barriers faced by people with disabilities moving into vocational training and employment are substantial. High dependence on state benefits means that attempting training and employment presents a very real risk to people with disabilities given the high rates of return to benefit within one year.

The presence of other barriers such as institutional and individual discrimination, negative attitudes, physical access, transport and access to information is also well documented.

The group examined the actions necessary to permit people with disabilities to achieve the right to economic independence. The actions are presented under five headings – Transition, Training, Disablement Advisory Service, Employment and Benefits System.

They are borne from the experience of the participants who had a background in Employment, Employment Support, the Trade Union movement and attendance at Day Centres.

### Transition

Young people with disabilities across Northern Ireland have the right to appropriate support in making the transition from school to adult life and all relevant departments and agencies should co-ordinate their efforts to ensure this happens.

### Recommendation

Young people with disabilities should be give real choice in transferring from school including access to the mainstream training offered to their non-disabled peers.

### For Attention By

The Department of Education and the Department for Employment and Learning

Links should be established between special schools, day centres/ resource centres, voluntary organisations, further education and Careers/DAS staff.

The Department for Employment and Learning, the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety and Health Boards and Trusts

Relationships of trust should be built between Careers/DAS staff and young people with disabilities and their parents/carers in the transition years (14-19 years).

The Department for Employment and Learning

### Training

People with disabilities have the right to access mainstream training opportunities with support if necessary or to avail of training which meets their particular needs

#### Recommendation

#### For Attention By

Providers of training and education opportunities should maximise inclusion in training delivery, support services and social inclusion.

Training and Education Providers

All professional and support staff should receive adequate training in meeting the needs of disabled learners.

The Department for Employment and Learning and Training Providers

Access courses for people with disabilities should be provided.

The Department for Employment and Learning and Training Providers

Employers should be required to deliver mandatory equality training for all staff.

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and OFMDFM

Opportunities for lifelong learning should be provided for disabled people who may not have achieved their potential in school.

The Department for Employment and Learning

In resourcing training, the Department for Employment and Learning should favour providers who can demonstrate inclusive delivery.

The Department for Employment and Learning

Training which provides effective job matching and real outcomes in employment should be given priority for funding

The Department for Employment and Learning

Adequate resources to meet the disability specific needs of trainees (eg interpreter services, technical support, plain English/alternative formats, specialist trainers where necessary) must be provided.

The Department for Employment and Learning

Access to the full range of New Deal provision for people claiming incapacity benefit should be widened.

The Department for Employment and Learning and the Department for Social Development

Disabled trainees should receive adequate support to avail of mainstream government funded training programmes (eg New Deal, Jobskills).

The Department for Employment and Learning

Qualification requirements should be reviewed to ensure they do not block the participation of people with learning disabilities.

The Department for Employment and Learning and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority

Provision must meet local needs and must be equitably distributed across Northern Ireland.

The Department for Employment and Learning and the Office of The First Minister and Deputy First Minister

### Disablement Advisory Service

People with disabilities have the right to a professional, consistent, user friendly statutory service to assist them in accessing employment and training.

| Recommendation   | For Attention By                           |
|--|--|
| A realistic number of Disablement Employment Advisors must be employed to adequately guide people with disabilities through training and employment. | The Department for Employment and Learning |
| High quality, in-depth training must be provided at recruitment and on an ongoing basis to DAS staff.  | The Department for Employment and Learning |
| The salary structures and promotion arrangements for Disablement Employment Advisors must be reviewed to encourage the retention of expert staff.    | The Department for Employment and Learning |
| Every effort should be made to give job seekers one point of contact with the Disablement Advisory Service to help build relationships of trust.     | The Department for Employment and Learning |

More active links with Health and Social Services day centres and resource centres should be developed and maintained to bridge the departmental gap in service provision.

The Department for Employment and Learning and Health Boards and Trusts

Outreach work to engage with people with disabilities in their own homes and to support more people to actively seek work must be resourced.

The Department for Employment and Learning

### Employment

People with disabilities have the right to equality of opportunity in employment in terms of recruitment, retention, training, promotion and the provision of any necessary supports

| Recommendation  | For Attention By   |
|---|--|
| The views and support needs of employees with disabilities must be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis.                                 | The Department for Employment and Learning   |
| Employers should be encouraged to use the full range of supports available to increase the number of people with disabilities in the workforce. | The Department for Employment and Learning and Invest NI   |
| Negative attitudes of employers and co-workers should be addressed through training and awareness raising.                                      | The Department for Employment and Learning, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and Invest NI |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Modern communication methods should be introduced to encourage the development of home working opportunities.  | The Department for Employment and Learning                                 |
| Funding should be secured to increase Employment Support to 1000 places as recommended in the Report of the Taskforce on Employability and Long-Term Unemployment. | The Department for Employment and Learning                                 |
| The focus on the potential for advancement for Employment Support employees should be increased.   | The Department for Employment and Learning                                 |
| A continuing focus on the needs of people with significant disabilities in the delivery of any new Employment Support programme should be maintained.              | The Department for Employment and Learning and Employment Support Sponsors |
| The status of existing Employment Support employees should be protected by the identification of additional resources for the revised programme.                   | The Department for Employment and Learning                                 |
| The administration systems for Access to Work should be reviewed to decrease the bureaucratic burden and duplication of form filling placed on applicants.         | The Department for Employment and Learning                                 |
| Increased funding should be provided to service the well documented need for Access to Work support.   | The Department for Employment and Learning                                 |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Awareness should be raised of the range of assistance available under Access to Work including the support worker element.   | The Department for Employment and Learning and Voluntary Providers |
| Disabled workers should not be required to make financial contributions in relation to Access to Work provision when resources are stretched.  | The Department for Employment and Learning                         |
| The Equality Commission should increase resources allocated to enable effective support for people with disabilities seeking legal and other advice and assistance against inequality in the workplace.                | The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland                       |
| The Equality Commission should ensure that its resources are so allocated as to maintain an equitable focus on disability issues.  | The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland                       |
| The Equality Commission's programme of information dissemination on rights and responsibilities under disability equality legislation should be extended to ensure outreach to people with disabilities and employers. | The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland                       |

### **Benefits System**

People with disabilities have the right to a sufficient, secure income which should not be jeopardised in any way by a movement towards work.

| Recommendation  | For Attention By   |
|---|--|
| The 52 week and two year linking rule should be removed. Once established, entitlement to incapacity benefit should only be removed if the claimants medical condition improves.                    | The Department for Social Development and the Social Security Agency                 |
| Return to work interviews or other assistance should be offered on a voluntary basis only.  | The Social Security Agency and the Department for Employment and Learning            |
| Awareness should be raised of the arrangements in place for permitted work.   | The Social Security Agency and the Department for Employment and Learning            |
| Resources should be available to fund the support structure necessary to avail of permitted work.   | The Department for Employment and Learning and the Department for Social Development |
| The “ONE” concept of one point of contact for claimants should be built upon and all staff involved must be highly trained in both disability awareness and the complexities of the benefit system. | The Department for Employment and Learning and the Social Security Agency            |
| The administrative systems involved in claiming tax credits should be revised to reduce bureaucracy and simplify the process.   | The Inland Revenue   |

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Disability is neither an illness nor a disease, yet our society continues to see and treat disabled people as if they were ill. To this end disabled people are often patronised and stigmatised as being a drain on society’s resources. This view of disabled people needs to be changed and Health and Social Care services needs to change their view and consequent treatment of disabled people.

Disabled people like all other people in society access and use health and social care services when they need to, either for general health issues or because of their impairment. However Health and Social Care is not their reason for being, as is believed by many people, but rather a means to an end. Good health and well-being enables us all to go to work, take up training and educational opportunities, play sport and pursue leisure activities as well as carrying out the day to day activities that go to make up our lives.

Thus for disabled people Health and Social Care services perform two important functions – they provide Health and Social Care in times of illness and provide inclusion or access to society by the provision of aids, adaptations and supports that enable the individual to negate, overcome or reduce the impact of their impairment and/or the barriers created by society.

The Agenda for Change we wish to set is that these two functions are recognised and that equality of access for all disabled people is created in both functions.

Disabled people demand equality of access to all health and social care services. Access exists on two levels, physical access and non-discrimination in relation to income and treatment.

Equality of physical access means that disabled people should be enabled to independently (if they wish) access all Health and Social Care buildings, including all hospitals, all day centres, all health centres, all general medical practitioners, all dentists, all opticians and all community pharmacists. Access includes the widest range of access to treatments and consulting

rooms not only for physically disabled people, but for those who are blind or visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, have learning disabilities, mental ill health or any other impairment.

**Non discrimination**

Disabled people believe that they have long been covertly discriminated against when it comes to access to treatment. Disabled people believe that they are not valued as members of society and thus when health and social care is rationed (as is often the case) their impairment counts against them, particularly when decisions on transplanted organs or access to expensive drugs or therapies are made.

Health and Social Care Services need to take positive action to show that they are not using impairment as a factor when making decisions about the allocation of resources in relation to non-impairment related illness.

| <b>Recommendation</b>  | <b>For Attention By</b>   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Advocacy</b></p> <p>Disabled people need to be represented at all stages of policy development.</p>  | <p>The Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety, Health Boards and Trusts</p> |
| <p>Independent advocates need to be present at service delivery panels to represent disabled people in the decision making process surrounding their health and social care, when desired by the person.</p> | <p>Health Trusts, General Practitioners<br/>Dentists</p>  |

**Information**

Information on Health and Social Care needs to be provided in appropriate formats to meet the needs of clients. This covers general information and individual specific information personal to the client. It also includes spoken information that should be delivered in an appropriate language.

The Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety and all service providers

**Interpreters**

People who use interpreters to communicate effectively with service providers, should have such services provided in ways that enable them to access services on an equal basis.

The Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety

**Signage**

Signage at Health and Social Care delivery points must be effective and inclusive. Formats should be appropriate and the requirement should also apply to private providers of services.

All service providers

**Inclusion**

This function of Health and Social care has a significant impact upon disabled people and how they lead their lives. Access to the right aids, adaptations and support can make the difference between inclusion and independence and isolation and dependence. Today too many disabled people still fall into the latter category due to the lack of appropriate, timely service.

The provision of services directly related to disability do not necessarily need to be delivered by the Health and Social Care Services, as they are not necessarily related to illness or disease. These services are about providing equipment or supports that enable an individual to become and feel included in their/our society.

In reviewing current service provision the group felt that there is an unequal division of resources between acute services and community services for the individual at a macro economic level. This is where the inequality begins for disabled people who rely more on community services which have always been the poor relation to the acute sector within health and social care provision.

The skewing of money into the acute sector helps ensure that the needs of disabled people are continually under resourced and thus the exclusion from society is perpetuated.

| Recommendation  | For Attention By   |
|---|--|
| There needs to be a realignment of resources between the acute and community sectors. More money must be made available to enable disabled people to live independently.                            | The Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety |
| More information on the Direct Payments system needs to be made available to people in appropriate formats. The system needs to be better promoted and it must be easier to access than at present. | Health Trusts  |

Disabled people should be able to access and avail of the most up to date and appropriate aids and adaptations (including wheelchairs) that meet their needs and enable them to lead an independent life.

The Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety, Health Boards and Trusts

Disabled people should receive more appropriate domestic support. Often people need domestic support such as decorating and grass cutting to improve their quality of life, and sense of well being.

Health Trusts  
General Practitioners  
Social Workers

## HOUSING

The Housing group was made up of 16 individuals. Many of the representatives came from a Housing Association background but the group was conscious of its balance throughout its deliberations. The group met four times in total although they also communicated via email and post.

Accessible housing is a key factor in ensuring that disabled people have the opportunity to live independently. Without access to appropriate housing disabled people have little or no control over their ability to participate in society or to be included in the mainstream.

Disabled people have the right to choose where they live and should have access to the support they need to enable that. In particular people should not have to find themselves in situations where they are forced to leave a location or friends or family in order to find accessible accommodation.

Disabled people are disadvantaged in the housing market due to the inadequacy of building standards in terms of accessibility. Recent changes to the Building Regulations introduced a standard of “visitability” to new dwellings which is to be welcomed as a step in the right direction. However the Regulations should be much more demanding, the required standard

should equate to one of “Lifetime Homes”. Although it should be noted that even this standard is not universally accessible and there will remain a requirement for “wheelchair housing”. The current Building Regulations place too much onus on an individual building control officer to make judgements in terms of the site and requirements, and the regulation can be easily avoided.

The group believe that a house which does not meet the needs of its occupant in terms of accessibility and use-ability should be deemed unsatisfactory in terms of the definition of homelessness.

Housing Associations have traditionally designed to a higher standard and are encouraged to do so by way of a multiplier grant from the NIHE. The NIHE has also adopted Lifetime Homes as its standard in new build (though they now build very little) and as far as possible in refurbishments.

Accessibility in the private sector is not a consideration and will not be until such times as legislation is introduced, therefore a disabled person has to incur additional expense (at the time of construction) to adapt a dwelling to suit their requirements, or in existing dwellings make do until grant aid becomes available.

There is no grant aid available to build to an accessible standard in the first place.

We welcome the recent statement that the means test of parents of disabled children is to be lifted. We hope that this will be matched with an increase in the resources available to the NIHE in order to avoid further delays in the allocation of grant aid.

To meet the housing needs of disabled people the following actions must be undertaken:

**Recommendation**

**For Attention By**

Disabled people must have the same right to choose where they live as non disabled people and should have access to the support they need to enable that right to be exercised.

The Department for Social Development and Voluntary Organisations

A comprehensive Housing Strategy should be devised for Northern Ireland prioritising disability and cross referencing not only other sectoral strategies but similar work on Transport, Health and Social Care and Education.

The Department for Social Development

A register of accessible and adapted property in Northern Ireland should be established. This should be across all tenures. This may require more than one register and should be available to prioritise allocation within geographical locations.

The Department for Social Development and the NIHE

Northern Ireland should move to lead Great Britain in terms of the building regulation standards which are applied to housing.

The Department of Finance and Personnel and the Department for Social Development

Right to Buy should be available to disabled people as with other tenants, however measures must be taken to ensure that the availability of a stock of accessible housing is maintained.

The Department for Social Development

|  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| There is a need for much more communication in relation to housing need, use of stock and the prioritisation of allocation. Mechanisms must be developed to share information between sectors. | NIHE                          |
| All policies should be rural-proofed.  | NIHE                          |
| The recommendations of the fundamental review of the adaptations process should be implemented.  | NIHE                          |
| Ongoing disability equality and awareness training is required for all staff involved in the housing system whether statutory, voluntary or private.   | NIHE and Housing Associations |

### IMPLEMENTING THE SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITY

In the twenty first century disabled people continue to be defined by the type or cause of their impairment – The Medical Model. Such definitions create a culture of blame, placing the responsibility for social exclusion directly with the disabled person.

The alternative, the Social Model of Disability, focuses on how disabled people interact with society, sharing the responsibility for the inclusion of disabled people and encouraging their contribution.

Much lip service has been paid to the acceptance of the latter, yet Government departments, the wider public sector and all of society continue to define disabled people by their impairment.

The full inclusion of disabled people in Northern Ireland society can only occur when the Social Model of Disability is fully mainstreamed and informs every aspect of provision for disabled people.

| Recommendation  | For Attention By  |
|---|---|
| The Social Model of Disability should be the basis of all legislative and policy provision.   | The Office of The First Minister and Deputy First Minister, all Departments and the Public Sector |
| To ensure that progress towards such mainstreaming is measurable, each public sector organisation should be required to produce an annual report outlining its progress in implementing the Social Model of Disability. | All Public Sector Bodies  |
| Such annual progress reports should be the subject of independent monitoring and assessment.  | The Office of The First Minister and Deputy First Minister  |

### INDEPENDENT LIVING

Independent Living is not a programme or a service. It is a way of life within which disabled people have the ability to make their own lifestyle choices without having to depend on others for service or for decisions on how to live their own lives.

Independent Living must include consideration of issues such as personal assistance, information, benefits, housing, the provision of equipment and the right to participate in all aspects of life.

Independent Living does not mean that the disabled person has to do everything without assistance, rather personal assistants and the range of technological solutions are used to enable the disabled person to be independent.

Consequently the principles of Independent Living should underpin all service provision. These principles are:

**Being treated as individuals.**

**Receiving assistance when and in the way you require it.**

**Having the right to choose who provides such assistance.**

**Being empowered to live as independently as possible.**

**Participating fully in social, economic, political and cultural activities if you so choose.**

**Having the encouragement and support to use the direct payment system.**

**Having the encouragement to use the services of support agencies.**

To ensure this change:

| <b>Recommendation</b>  | <b>For Attention By</b>  |
|--|--|
| Funding should be provided for regional Independent Living services.                       | The Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety, Health Boards and Trusts |
| Adequate funding for Personal Assistant schemes and aids and equipment should be provided. | The Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety, Health Boards and Trusts |

**INFORMATION FOR ALL**

In any democratic society access to information is an essential key to participation and inclusion. Disabled people need access to all information in accessible formats to provide a basis for the informed choices they need to make in every area of life.

We now live in the Information Age and the Information Society is a term used to describe society's increasing dependence on computers and telecommunication.

It is vital that sufficient resources are provided to ensure that disabled people have equal access to information resources provided through Information and Communication Technology in formats and in locations accessible to all.

To ensure information is available to all

| <b>Recommendation</b>  | <b>For Attention By</b>                                    |
|--|--|
| Effective information services must be put in place to ensure that all public sector information is accessible, relevant, accurate and timely to enable disabled people and their families to make informed choices. | Government Departments and the Public Sector               |
| All departments, agencies, and service providers must adopt clear policies on quality standards relating to accessible information.  | Government Departments and the Public Sector               |
| The application of Good Practice Standards on access to information must be made a requirement on Government departments and agencies.   | The Office of The First Minister and Deputy First Minister |

Private sector companies, providing services under contract to the public sector must be required to meet the same information accessibility standards required of the public sector.

Government Departments and the Public Sector

## POLITICAL CIVIL AND OTHER RIGHTS

The Rights Working Group comprised six representatives from Ballymoney Disability Group, Magherafelt and District Disability Forum, North West Forum of People with Disabilities, the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Union's Disability Committee and Disability Action.

The group, was made up mainly of members of the Northern Ireland Alliance for Human Rights for People with Disabilities which prepared a response for the Draft Human Rights Bill for Northern Ireland. The group agreed that the work they had undertaken on the Bill of Rights continued to be relevant to this Agenda for Change.

Disabled people in Northern Ireland must have the right to access all civil and political rights in the same way as their non-disabled peers. Consequently all aspects of political life must be available to disabled citizens as voters, campaigners, elected representatives, party members, party staff or simply as constituents. One effect of such inclusion would be the involvement of disabled people in the development, implementation and appraisal of all relevant legislation, regulations and policy decisions.

To ensure such access, the following actions are required from the Government

### Recommendation

The creation and delivery of comprehensive enforceable civil rights legislation for people with disabilities.

### For Attention By

The Office of The First Minister and Deputy First Minister

Changes to the legal system to enable disabled people full participation as jurors, magistrates and other lay or employed officials.

The Northern Ireland Office

Equality of access is required for disabled people to the Assembly and other legislative and regulatory systems as elected or appointed members, staff and users or advisors to statutory bodies. Such equality must include the provision of information in accessible formats including BSL, ISL, large print, audio cassette, Braille and other forms of communication people may use.

Political Parties, Government Departments, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission

Every person with a disability has the right to be recognised first and foremost as a human being and must therefore be entitled to the same human rights as every other citizen.

Government Departments, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission

Disabled people have the right to live their lives freely and independently.

Government Departments, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission

The right to full participation by disabled people in the social, economic, cultural and political life of Northern Ireland must be upheld.

Government Departments, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Trade Union movement

Children with disabilities should have the same rights to education, play and social activities.

Government and the Children's Commissioner

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Disabled people have the right to a comprehensive and simplified benefit system, which adequately meets the extra cost incurred by people with disabilities.        | The Department for Social Development   |
| Disabled people have the right to have a properly funded information and advocacy service which meets their needs.  | The Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety and the Office of The First Minister and Deputy First Minister |
| Disabled people have the right to be fully consulted by all agencies Public, Private or Community which provided services funded by Government, to disabled people. | All Agencies  |
| Disabled people have the right to become parents whether biologically or through adoption and/or fostering.   | The Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety  |
| Disabled people have the right to determine how, when and with whom they choose to have relationships.  | All   |
| Disabled people have the right to access sex education appropriate to their age and understanding and to access contraception and reproductive advice.              | The Department of Education and the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety                                |
| Disabled people have the right to live without fear or threat of sexual, physical or psychological abuse.   | All   |

Disabled people have the right to access all information on genetic conditions to make informed choices including the right to refuse genetic counselling.

The Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety

## SPORTS, ARTS AND CULTURE

Five meetings of the Making It Happen Sports, Arts and Culture group were held and members included representatives from the Arts and Disability Forum, the Dyspraxia Foundation, Speech Matters, Open Arts, Disability Sports Northern Ireland, Leonard Cheshire, the Retinitis Pigmentosa group as well as interested disabled individuals. Some members of this group felt that the process should have been one of greater outreach and this view was brought to the attention of the project organisers who believe that the process followed was that agreed at the outset in January 2003.

### Sport

Available research into the participation levels of people with disabilities in sport and physical activity in Northern Ireland is extremely limited. However the findings of research carried out in Great Britain, combined with the experience of organisations working in the field here would suggest that participation levels could be as low as 10-15% of the disabled population – a figure well below the participation rate for the population as a whole.

Ironically this bleak situation exists at a time when there is an increasing demand from people with disabilities to take part in sport, particularly at a recreational level. People with disabilities want to participate in sport and physical activity for the same reasons as everyone else in society – to lead a healthy lifestyle, to gain a sense of achievement or challenge, or simply for fun and enjoyment. They also have the same right to participate in sport, as everyone else.

Although recent years have seen the development of a small number of excellent disability sports clubs and organisations that now run a range of

valuable programmes, these organisations remain poorly resourced and do not have the capacity to address the lack of opportunities, at all levels, across the whole of Northern Ireland. As a result it remains the case that in most areas of Northern Ireland, there are very few organised sports opportunities for people with disabilities.

Investment in sports and physical activity opportunities for people with disabilities by Government in Northern Ireland remains at an extremely low level, and the huge investment of Lottery Funds into mainstream sport in recent years has failed to improve in any significant way the under-representation of people with disabilities in sport. Although in general terms physical access to local authority owned sports facilities has improved, most disabled people still find it difficult to access Council organised activities and programmes.

Similarly, the main provider of sports opportunities in Northern Ireland, the voluntary sports sector, has struggled to meet the needs of people with disabilities. Only a few governing bodies and sports clubs have successfully developed programmes for disabled people, with the vast majority appearing to lack the capacity to develop programmes and activities which are inclusive of people with disabilities.

To ensure the full participation of disabled people in sport the following actions are needed

**Recommendation**

**For Attention By**

The Sports England Surveys into participation levels should be replicated by the Sports Council for Northern Ireland. This would lead to the establishment of baseline data regarding the participation levels of people with disabilities in sport, physical activity and physical education.

The Sports Council for Northern Ireland

The full inclusion of children with disabilities in the PE curriculum in mainstream schools needs to be ensured. Disability Specific Training Programmes must be provided for all PE teachers and trainee teachers.

The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, the Department of Education, Education and Library Boards, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education and the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment

District Council leisure centres need to ensure improved 'physical' access not only to their sports centres but to the range of programmes and services provided within them.

Local Authorities

Inclusive and disability specific facilities and equipment (eg inclusive fitness suites, boccia courts etc) should be developed and the provision of organised sports and physical activity participation programmes in leisure centres must be ensured.

Local Authorities

Innovative policies such as the introduction of 'Buddy' schemes and waged/unwaged pricing policies need to be explored.

Local Authorities

The provision of Disability Equality and Awareness Training Programmes for all leisure services staff should be a mandatory requirement of all grant aid to local authorities.

The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and the Sports Council for Northern Ireland

|   |   |
|---|---|
| A 'Regional' Sports Development Officer Network targeting the needs of people with disabilities should be introduced.   | The Sports Council for Northern Ireland and Local Authorities                           |
| Summer schemes and out of school provision must be fully accessible by Summer 2004.   | Local Authorities   |
| In consultation with disability sports organisations, a 'mainstreaming' policy on disability sport should be put in place.  | The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and the Sports Council for Northern Ireland |
| Training and funding packages must be provided to enable governing bodies and clubs to include people with disabilities in their activities and programmes at all levels from participation to performance. | The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and the Sports Council for Northern Ireland |
| The long term development of sports opportunities for people with disabilities must be supported by the allocation of a fair share of funding to disability specific sports development agencies.           | The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and the Sports Council for Northern Ireland |
| Pro-active measures must be put in place to ensure increased allocation of Sports Council Lottery Funding to disability sports projects.  | The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and the Sports Council for Northern Ireland |

**Arts**

The majority of this section formed part of an output from a conference organised by Open Arts, The Community Arts Forum, ADAPT NI and the

Arts and Disability Forum, which was held in the Craigavon Civic Centre in September 2003. The conference was a result of a consultation process with disabled people which took place throughout Northern Ireland in the Spring of 2003. Disabled and non-disabled people involved in the arts sector informed the content of the conference and the subsequent Charter which emerged. Group members agreed that these were the key issues to be addressed in any Agenda for Change.

| <b>Recommendation</b>  | <b>For Attention By</b>   |
|--|---|
| Ensuring the arts are performed in fully inclusive environments by providing the best standards of physical access in new, existing and refurbished venues.  | The Department of Finance and Personnel and the Department of Environment           |
| Ensuring staff and volunteers receive on-going Disability Etiquette Training.  | The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, the Arts Council and Local Authorities |
| Ensuring all agreed organisational policies include a disability policy which is fully integrated into the organisation's procedures and practices and which is monitored and evaluated against targets agreed in consultation with disabled people. | The Arts Council, Local Authorities and private/voluntary providers                 |
| For each arts organisation, a designated member of staff, with managerial support, should be responsible for ensuring the implementation of the disability policy the importance of which is recognised through appropriate structures.              | Arts Organisations  |
| All information should be produced in accessible formats.  | All Stakeholders  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Ensure disabled people are represented at all levels of organisational decision making in Board, Committees and as members of staff.  | Arts Organisations   |
| Initiate action to provide opportunities for disabled people to take part in mainstream and disability arts both as consumers and practitioners.  | The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and the Arts Council   |
| Each arts organisation should actively promote the employment of disabled people throughout the organisation.   | Arts Organisations   |
| The participation levels of disabled people in the Arts should be researched.   | The Arts Council   |
| Arts Programmes should in future be fully accessible.   | Local Authorities  |
| Capacity building programmes should be developed for individuals and groups wishing to be involved in the Arts.   | The Arts Council and the voluntary sector.   |
| Private clubs should be included in any update/revision of the Disability Discrimination Act.   | The Office of The First Minister and Deputy First Minister and the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure |
| A strategy to support the long term development of the disability arts sector should be urgently developed and appropriate resources to enable its delivery should be identified and allocated. | The Arts Council   |

## Culture and Language

A key consideration lacking in the culture of Northern Ireland is respect for and response to diversity. Apart from the two tribes, sectarian debate, cultural diversity particularly in relation to disability has been largely ignored.

Disability is still perceived as a wholly negative state within which the individual waits for a cure. The reality of life is that while many people wish to see improvement in their physical or emotional health there are many more who recognise disability as a societal response to difference and who are comfortable in their situations and confident in their contributions.

One of the strongest cultural groups is deaf people who use sign language. These individuals clearly identify with deaf culture and value their difference. The focus of this culture is of course language. The Language Rights working group advice to the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission includes the following

**“Everyone has the right to use the language of their choice and to participate in their chosen social, economic, religious and cultural life.....Indigenous languages shall be taken to include..... British and Irish sign language.....other communication modes shall include Braille or any other necessary means of communication arising through disability”.**

Currently there are 5000 deaf people in Northern Ireland using sign as their first language and another 12,000 who have learned sign language in classes established by the Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People.

Key actions necessary to implement any Agenda for Change include

| <b>Recommendation</b>  | <b>For Attention By</b>  |
|--|--|
| Recognition of BSL/ISL in line with the recognition already given by Westminster through legislation, policy and practice.   | Government<br>The Office of The First Minister and Deputy First Minister |
| The provision of the appropriate level of interpreter services to enable deaf people to participate fully in society.  | The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure                              |
| The promotion and development of respect for communication modes other than English.   | The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure                              |
| The provision of national statutory texts, forms and documents in Braille and other communication modes.   | All Departments  |
| The routine subtitling of all major films in cinema and on video and DVD and the development of the capacity of new DVD and personal video recorders to be capable of recording subtitles. | The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (United Kingdom)             |
| All public arts and entertainment venues should have working induction loops.  | The Department of Finance and Personnel                                  |
| A widespread take up of new technologies in cinema subtitling should be promoted.  | British Film Council   |

|  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| All theatres should provide communication support including captioned performances and in BSL/ISL to ensure that deaf people can enjoy performances as members of an audience. | All Theatres        |
| Measures should be introduced to increase levels of subtitling, audio description and sign language on television across Europe.   | European Parliament |
| Stringent quality standards and minimum standards for subtitling should be imposed by the regulator.   | OFCOM               |

## TRANSPORT

The Transport group consisted of six individuals with co-optees from the Department for Regional Development and Translink to give additional expertise. The group met to identify the key issues with final comments being made by email and in writing.

Transport plays a major role in enabling people to fully participate in society. Access to transport supports access to everyday services such as education, employment, health and social activities. Disabled people face many barriers in accessing transport which go beyond physical access to vehicles. The group has identified four issues and a series of recommendations which reflect the barriers faced by disabled people and a list of solutions for each.

| Recommendation   | For Attention By  |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <p><b>Reducing the Cost of Travel</b></p> <p>An extension of the present concessionary fares schemes to more groups of disabled people. The extension should allow free travel on bus and rail services as well as door-to-door services such as those presently operated by Disability Action in Belfast and Bridge in Derry.</p> | <p>The Department for Regional Development</p>  | <p>Investment in buses, which go beyond the minimum standard as set out in the Disability Discrimination Act PSV Accessibility Regulations. For example buses, which have provision for access by two wheelchair users.</p> | <p>Translink</p>   |
| <p>The introduction of schemes which enable disabled people to access low cost taxi services – taxi-card or voucher schemes in the rest of the United Kingdom should provide useful models.</p>  | <p>The Department for Regional Development</p>  | <p>Investment to make Goldliner Coaches accessible to all users.</p>  | <p>Translink</p>   |
| <p>Disabled people who rely on the car for mobility must be exempt from measures to reduce car use such as increased parking charges, work place parking levies etc.</p>   | <p>The Department for Regional Development</p>  | <p>Necessary investment to make bus routes accessible to more users through the provision of frequent bus stops with well designed waiting facilities and accessible information.</p>                                       | <p>Translink, The Road Service, and Local Authorities</p>                            |
| <p><b>Improving Access to Transport</b></p>  |   | <p>Investment in demand responsive bus services in both urban and rural areas.</p>  | <p>The Department for Regional Development</p>                                       |
| <p><b>Bus and Train Services</b></p>   |   | <p><b>Taxi Services</b></p>   |  |
| <p>The necessary investment must be made in bus and rail stations to make them accessible to all users.</p>  | <p>The Department for Regional Development</p>  | <p>Increased numbers of taxis accessible to everyone across Northern Ireland.</p>   | <p>The Department of the Environment</p>   |
| <p>Urgent investment is needed to enable the purchase of more low-floor buses.</p>   | <p>The Department for Regional Development</p>  | <p>Measures to ensure disabled people have access to a suitable vehicle when it is required eg Taxicard or taxi voucher schemes.</p>  | <p>The Department of the Environment and the Department for Regional Development</p> |
| <p><b>Bus and Train Services</b></p>   |   | <p><b>Community Transport</b></p>   |  |
| <p>The necessary investment must be made in bus and rail stations to make them accessible to all users.</p> <p>Urgent investment is needed to enable the purchase of more low-floor buses.</p>   | <p>The Department for Regional Development</p> <p>The Department for Regional Development</p> | <p>All disabled people living in rural areas should have access to a Rural Community Transport Partnership.</p>   | <p>The Department for Regional Development</p>                                       |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| More investment in community based door-to-door and group transport services in urban areas of Northern Ireland.  | The Department for Regional Development  |
| <b>Private Car</b>  |  |
| Disabled people who rely on cars for mobility should be exempt from measures to restrict car use, for example restricting parking spaces in town centres or the use of pedestrian only areas in town centres. | The Department for Regional Development  |
| Better enforcement of existing parking restrictions particularly with regard to abuse of the Blue Badge Scheme.   | The Department for Regional Development and the Police Service of Northern Ireland |
| <b>Air Travel</b>   |  |
| All travel agents, tour operators, airlines and airports to meet the guidance of the DFT Code of Practice – “Access to air travel for disabled people”.   | The Department for Transport (United Kingdom)                                      |
| <b>Sea Travel</b>   |  |
| All travel agents and ferry operators to meet the DPTAC Guidance – the Design of Large Passenger Ships and Passenger Infrastructure.  | The Department for Transport (United Kingdom)                                      |

### Tackling the Attitudes of Staff

The immediate removal in Northern Ireland of the present exemption of transport providers from the provisions of Part III of the Disability Discrimination Act.

The Office of The First Minister and Deputy First Minister, the Department for Regional Development and the Department of Environment

Disability Equality Training for all staff to be made compulsory for all public transport operators. This should include bus and train operators, taxi companies and community transport operators.

The Department for Regional Development

### Improving Travel Information

Public transport operators must be required to meet best practice in providing information in ways that is accessible to disabled people.

The Department for Regional Development

A travel information service for disabled people in Northern Ireland perhaps mirroring Tripscope in the United Kingdom should be established.

The Department for Regional Development

## YOUNG PEOPLE

The young disabled people who attended the Making It Happen Conference in January 2003 clearly stated their wish to meet together to discuss areas of common concern rather than to join issue specific groups.

The core group of 14 young people met formally on 4 occasions and represented Barnardo's, BIFHE, Cedar Foundation, Down's Syndrome

Association and Disability Action. The young people came from all areas of Northern Ireland.

The group defined its purpose as

**“to explore issues that young people with disabilities thought were important, make representations to relevant organisations on these issues and make a contribution to the Making It Happen Programme”**

The group recognised the strength of including young people with a range of disabilities and agreed to always encourage more young people to attend. They chose not to define young people with disabilities as they agreed that each young person is an individual with different needs and can self-determine their own identity.

The young people decided on list of priorities key of which were meetings with Belfast City Council, Derry City Council and the exploration with Youthnet, Opportunity Youth, the Youth Council and Youth Action of their work on Human Rights and Citizenship.

The Young People with Disabilities Working Group decided on two main priorities to be put on the Agenda of those decision makers who make choices on their behalf.

### Human Rights

The group believe in the active and positive recognition of the rights of young people and in the same recognition of the rights of young disabled people.

| Recommendation   | For Attention By |
|--|------------------|
| Young people with disabilities must be recognised and entitled to the same rights as any other diverse identity group of people made up of unique individuals. | Government       |

### Getting Out and Socialising

The group believe that Health and Safety issues are used as a reason to exclude young disabled people. Members agreed that all organisations need to approach this issue with respect through the remit of customer care. Customer Care policies and practices must include the recognition of specific support needs in a non patronising and/or molly coddling way. This includes recognition and acceptance of the fact that young people with disabilities do not always have a designated carer with them.

| Recommendation  | For Attention By                                |
|---|---|
| Pan Disability Training must be provided to support staff and young people with disabilities to communicate effectively. Such training should be available to providers of leisure activities, should cover issues of complex needs and multiple identity and should deal with issues rather than be disability specific. | Local Authorities, Education and Library Boards |

The group has already targeted a number of sectors. In respect of Human Rights and citizenship a range of Youth Organisations have been approached to include issues relating to young people with disabilities in their mainstream work.

The group has agreed to work with Disability Action’s FOCUS Consultancy in the design of that organisation’s disability awareness training for youth workers.

Meetings have been held with representatives from Belfast and Derry City Councils regarding issues of access and attitudes and there are follow up activities from this meeting. This group has expressed its wish to continue to meet and consider issues of relevance to them. Disability Action is currently seeking the necessary resources to support this work.

**Disability Action Head Office**

Portside Business Park

189 Airport Road West

Belfast BT3 9ED

Tel: 028 9029 7880

Fax: 028 9029 7881

Textphone: 028 9029 7882

Email: [hq@disabilityaction.org](mailto:hq@disabilityaction.org)



The publication of this Agenda has been supported as part of the European Year of People with Disabilities.