



Disability Discrimination Order (Northern Ireland) 2006

Disability Action Plan

for Belfast City Council

June 2007

This Disability Action Plan can be obtained from us in alternative formats, including large print, Braille, audio cassette, computer disk, easy read, digital daisy, plain language, and signed video. You can also download it from our website. Our website is accessible (we work towards level AA of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0).

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Foreword

As the democratically elected body representing the people of Belfast, it's important for us to be conscious of the Disability Discrimination Act 1998 when carrying out our functions and providing civic leadership.

"Promoting good relations" is one of the council's strategic objectives in its corporate plan – this means that all Services/Departments include the promotion of equality (incorporating disability and the new duties) and good relations in their annual business plans and set out the actions they are taking to achieve this objective.

We are fully committed to fulfilling our statutory obligations in compliance with Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006) which places new duties on public authorities to:

- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

The council's Disability Action Plan sets out how we propose to positively meet these new duties.

The council exists to serve the people of Belfast and to provide civic leadership on issues of concern to the people who live and work in the city.

We will ensure that all councillors and council employees are aware of the new disability duties. We will take the lead to ensure that the necessary resources are made available for preparing councillors and employees to deliver the actions set out in this Plan. We wish to ensure that the Disability Action Plan is implemented effectively in the true spirit of our commitment to the new duties.



Lord Mayor



Chief Executive

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006 requires us, in carrying out our functions, to:
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
 - encourage participation by disabled people in public life.
- 1.2 We are committed to the fulfilment of these disability duties in all parts of our organisation and have set out how we intend to do this in our Disability Action Plan.
- 1.3 We will undertake a planned programme of communication and training on the disability duties for all staff and Councillors. This training will coincide with our induction training, refresher training and Councillor training on disability. Training timescales are evidenced in the Plan.

2. Purpose of the disability action plan

- 2.1 This Plan sets out how we propose to fulfil the disability duties in relation to our functions.

3. Our role and function

- 3.1 We perform five principal roles within our local area:
- the direct provision of a number of services and facilities;
 - the promotion of the arts, tourism, community and economic development, equality and good relations;
 - regulating and licensing certain activities relating to environmental health, consumer protection and public safety;
 - representation on a number of bodies and boards including education; and
 - consulting on issues relating to functions conducted by other government bodies and agencies on issues such as planning, water, roads and housing.

3.2 In performing the above roles we provide:

- facilities for recreational, social and cultural activities including leisure centres, community centres, parks, sports grounds and places of entertainment;
- street cleansing services;
- waste collection and disposal services;
- burial grounds;
- grant aid to support the arts, good relations, community development and the promotion of tourism and economic development;
- administration and regulation of matters relating to the environment, public health and public safety such as building control, noise pollution and consumer protection;
- licensing and regulation of street trading, places of entertainment, amusement centres, sex establishments, lotteries, cinemas and petroleum stations; and
- the making and regulation of bye-laws.

3.3 To enable us to provide the above services and perform our other functions, we must levy an annual rate. We have the power to:

- acquire and dispose of land;
- borrow money;
- employ staff; and
- procure goods and services.

3.4 We have adopted a wide range of policies to support and implement the above statutory functions and provision of services and facilities.

4. Public life positions

4.1 We do not have direct control over public life positions; however we do have people from various sections of the community sitting on council groups, for example:

- Good Relations Steering Panel;
- Section 75 Consultative Panel;
- Disability Working Group (Waterfront Hall);
- Friends of Botanic and Falls Parks;
- Friends of Zoo;
- Friends of Waterworks;
- Travellers Group;
- Youth Forum; and
- Community Safety Partnership;
- North Foreshore Steering Group;
- BCC Renewing the Routes Group;
- Shankill Cleanup Forum and
- Belfast Healthy Cities.

5. Commitment to the effective implementation of the Disability Action Plan

5.1 We are committed to the effective implementation of all aspects of the Plan in all parts of the organisation. Overall responsibility for determining policy on how this will be achieved lies with the Councillors. Day-to-day responsibility for carrying out the policy lies with the Equality Officer, who reports through the Good Relations Manager monthly to the Chief Officers' Management Team and the Chief Executive who are ultimately responsible for the oversight and implementation of administrative arrangements to ensure that the Council complies with our disability duties. The Equality Officer reports work in relation to disability to the interdepartmental working group (GRWG) every two months and to the Disability Action group chaired by the Director of Corporate Services monthly.

5.2 As part of our business planning process, we will build smart objectives, target setting and monitoring into the

corporate and business plans. These are reflected at all levels of strategic planning. Progress on meeting objectives, including those relating to the disability duties will be monitored and reported upon at the most senior level within the organisation. The Equality Officer will ensure the Disability Action Plan will be monitored and reported on annually. All Disability Action Plan reports will proceed through the council reporting mechanisms and to Chief Officers Management Team.

- 5.3 We will include a formal progress report on meeting the objectives in our annual report to the Equality Commission.

6. Internal arrangements

6.1 We have 51 Councillors elected for four year periods. They currently meet monthly in full session and more frequently in committees and sub committees. The principal committees at present are:

- Policy and Resources Committee;
- Development Committee;
- Health and Environmental Services Committee;
- Licensing Committee;
- Parks & Leisure; and
- Town Planning Committee.

A range of council departments support these committees.

6.2 The Chief Executive oversees the work of the departments through the Chief Officers' Management Team.

6.3 The Chief Executive is responsible for the strategic direction of the council and through the Chief Officers' Management Team oversight of the management of services and the longer term planning and allocation of resources. We are currently undergoing an improvement and efficiency agenda in response to the Review of Public Administration (RPA). This will result in internal changes to the current departmental and committee structures.

6.4 Statutory responsibility for the effective implementation of the Disability Duty lies with the council.

6.4.1 The Chief Executive and the Chief Officers' Management Team is responsible for ensuring that the council's decisions are implemented and for overseeing administrative arrangements to make sure the DDO is implemented effectively. Our Equality Officer will support this work and act as our main point of contact. Currently, our Equality Officer is Stella Gilmartin who can be contacted at:

6.4.2 Chief Executive's Department, Good Relations Unit, City Hall Freeport BEL4010, Belfast City Council,

Freephone 08000855412
Text phone number: 028 9027 0405
Email: gilmartins@belfastcity.gov.uk
Website: www.belfastcity.gov.uk

- 6.4.3 The Equality Officer will report regularly to the Good Relations Working Group which is chaired by the Director of Legal Services. The working group comprises of senior representatives of each of our departments. Regular progress reports are sent to the Good Relations Steering Panel, Chief Officers' Management Team and the Policy and Resources Committee.
- 6.4.4 We place great importance on disability issues and have established a Disability Working Group chaired by the Director of Corporate Services. This group comprises senior representatives from each department including the Equality Officer.
- 6.4.5 Appendix 1 is an organisational chart which shows how we will deliver our disability duties.
- 6.4.6 As part of our corporate planning process, we'll deliver smart targets relating to the disability duties. We'll integrate these into departmental and individual business plans.
- 6.5 We have seven departments, each of which is headed by a Chief Officer:

**A Chief Executive's Department
Chief Executive, Peter McNaney**

The Chief Executive's Department is responsible for providing support for the Lord Mayor and councillors in their roles as public representatives.

It also provides administrative support to the Belfast District Policing Partnership and its four sub-groups.

The Corporate Communications Section is responsible for strategic communications, public relations and making sure that the public and staff are informed of our policies.

The Good Relations Unit coordinates and integrates our work in promoting equality of opportunity and good relations.

B Corporate Services Department **Director, Trevor Salmon**

The Corporate Services Department is responsible for all our human resources, financial services and information systems functions.

It also provides our fleet management, building and catering services and oversees the registration of births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships.

Civic buildings (including the City Hall) are managed through this Department.

C Development Department **Director, Marie-Thérèse McGivern**

The Development Department includes Economic Initiatives, Urban Regeneration and Directorate sections. More recently, it established a European Unit and has responsibility for the Waterfront and Ulster Halls.

It is responsible for a wide range of inter-related areas including economic development, the promotion of culture and heritage, tourism development, major civic events and community services.

It also looks after all aspects of estates management, property planning and development, corporate procurement and the examination and development of planning, transport and urban policy.

Under the 'Belfast: Capital City 2006 to 2010' strategy, the Department will work to drive a competitive Belfast forward as the economic and cultural driver of the region.

**D Health & Environmental Services Department
Director, William Francey**

The Health & Environmental Services Department provides both direct services such as refuse collection and street cleaning and all of our regulatory and licensing functions in the fields of building control, environmental.

It works to improve public safety and health, helping to create a more attractive and sustainable city. Work ranges from monitoring food and consumer products to improving safety in buildings, workplaces, homes and the wider environment. The department also leads on community safety issues.

The department also has major waste management responsibilities, including waste collection and disposal, street cleansing, litter prevention and recycling, which are becoming increasingly important in our efforts to create a healthier, safer and more sustainable city.

**E Legal Services Department
Director, Ciaran Quigley**

The Legal Services Department provides a comprehensive legal service. It comprises three sections dealing with property and procurement, litigation and employment law and enforcement and environmental law.

It provides a specialised legal advice service in relation to all areas of local government law and plays an important corporate role in its input to council policy decisions regarding public and administrative law.

The department also provides legal services to a number of other district councils and outside bodies.

**F Parks & Leisure
Director, Andrew Hassard**

The Parks & Leisure Department is responsible for managing many of our major assets including leisure centres and parks and open spaces. Leisure Services is currently responsible for the development, provision and maintenance of the Council's indoor Leisure Facilities, of which there are currently twelve. In relation to facility development the section is currently in the final phase of constructing the Grove Well Being Centre an innovative project and a first for Northern Ireland and expected to be completed in December 2007. A Sports Development and Physical Activity Strategy has also been developed and implementation commenced in 2006. It will contribute not only towards improving the health and well being of the population but will also support the development of athletes across a range of sports in preparation for the 2012 Olympic Games.

The Parks and Cemeteries Section is responsible for all aspects of the development, provision and management of the Council's Parks and Cemeteries Service which covers over 140 sites across the city including over 50 parks, 74 playgrounds as well as the Zoo, Malone House and Belfast Castle. The section launched its Open Spaces Strategy in November 2005 and the implementation of the strategy is currently ongoing.

**G Improvement Directorate
Director, Gerry Millar**

The Improvement Directorate is responsible for developing and delivering a single improvement and efficiency agenda for the organisation. The aim is to provide excellent, customer facing services to the citizens of Belfast through a co-ordinated programme of improvements. The Improvement Directorate has responsibility for asset management and procurement and also aims to enable more co-ordinated engagement with external partners.

It will secure effective performance management across the organisation by creating corporate planning, clear reporting and measurement mechanisms. The Directorate will also provide a single point of accountability for the delivery of all improvement and efficiency targets.

The Directorate will also introduce better resource planning and help build capacity across the organisation to improve service delivery and enable us to respond to future changes such as the RPA.

7. Effective engagement

- 7.1 We are committed to engaging with disabled people in the drafting, implementation, monitoring and review of this Plan. Further information on how we'll do this is outlined in Section 10 on Consultation.

8. Annual report

- 8.1 The annual report will be included in our Annual Report to the Equality Commission on the implementation of an Equality Scheme but will also be available as a stand alone document.
- 8.2 A copy of the annual report will be made available on our website. You can also download it from our website. Our website is accessible (we work towards level AA of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0).

9. Five year review

- 9.1 We will carry out a five year review of the Plan in consultation with the Equality Commission for NI (see 12.1).

10. Consultation

- 10.1 We are committed to carrying out consultation in accordance with the guiding principles set out in the

Equality Commission guidelines and recognise the need for such consultation to be timely, open and inclusive.

- 10.2 We are keen to seek the views of disabled people on a number of levels when developing the Plan. We will:
- seek to engage disabled people and the organisations representing disability at the development stage;
 - consult our AA list (a list of consultees identified in our Equality Scheme);
 - present the Plan to our consultative forum which includes representatives from disability organisations; and
 - consult at our timely annual consultation event (April 24th 2007).
- 10.3 The anticipated outcomes of this robust consultation exercise are to:
- identify barriers faced by disabled people in public life and specifically any barriers they've encountered when dealing with us;
 - identify past examples where we have not promoted positive attitudes towards disabled people and identify future opportunities to promote positive attitudes;
 - set priorities and identify solutions to take remedial action; and
 - monitor and review how effective these measures have been.
- 10.4 When consulting on any matter relating to the duties, we will work with representatives groups, individuals with disabilities and Section 75 groups on the best way to get their views. This may take the form of face to face meetings, advisory groups, surveys, consultative panels, internet discussions and other methodologies identified as best practice. Consultee responses to the consultations and our response will be recorded. All consultees will receive a copy of our response to their comments.
- 10.5 We will advertise in the local press and specialist disability press to raise awareness and encourage individuals to

attend consultations. And we'll place this draft plan on our website asking for feedback from individuals and organisations.

- 10.6 As part of the consultative process, we'll remove barriers by making sure documents are available in alternative formats, including large print, Braille, audio cassette, computer disk, easy read, digital daisy, plain language, and signed video. This will be done in a timely fashion and we'll establish the basis for dialogue and engagement with disabled people during the life of the Plan.
- 10.7 We'll develop best practice in communicating with young disabled people as well as looking at additional dimensions which create multiple identities such as ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation and religious belief.

We are keen to ensure the highest level of inclusion in our consultation day and therefore we will work on ensuring the highest standard of accessibility (in its fullest sense) for disabled people on the following issues:

- time of meeting;
- accessible venue;
- how the meeting will be run;
- use of appropriate language;
- provision of a signer or interpreter or other communication support
- provision of childcare; and
- provision of expenses.

- 10.8 We believe that it's important for disabled people to be involved in the implementation, monitoring and review of the Plan. Section 12 of this document lays out the initiatives we want to implement. We are keen to hear your views and comments and will update our actions in line with your feedback.
- 10.9 As part our overall consultation process, we will host an annual consultation event to enable two-way discussion. This will give disabled people an opportunity to provide feedback on how we are implementing our disability duties.

We will aim to provide information at least one month in advance of this event to allow adequate time for groups and individuals to consult among themselves first. Prior to the annual meeting we will allow adequate time for groups and individuals to consult amongst themselves as part of the process of forming a view on the implementation of this scheme. We will therefore aim to provide information at least one month in advance of the annual meeting.

11. Action measures already taken

11.1 We have already taken a number of measures to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage their participation in public life as a result of the duties under Section 75 for example:

- We facilitate a special interdepartmental group chaired by the Director of Corporate Services. The Equality Officer is a member of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) Group, specifically to progress the equality agenda. We have adopted the British Standard 8300 as our standard for designing and improving our buildings.
- The DDA group is a member of Disability Action Business Support Scheme. The Business Support Scheme is a partnership between companies and Disability Action in their approach towards good practice on disability issues. It encourages companies to be forward-thinking in their approach to disability issues within the workplace. It helps them to improve their services for disabled people and acknowledges their efforts.
- We receive the Disability Action Business Support Scheme Award which commends us for work on disability issues in relation to communication, access, training, policy and procedures, and marketing initiatives.
- The DDA group launched the Disability Strategy in the City Hall on 5 October 2005. The strategy highlights the

work completed to date, the achievements and future plans. This strategy is the main vehicle for reviewing and updating all areas of disability access to council goods, services and facilities. We've included a copy of the strategy, incorporating an action plan and review for 2005-2006, in Appendix 2.

- The DDA has set up a signage sub group to focus on way finding and signage in council buildings.
- We have ensured that all our departments include a textphone number on stationery and other publications where their phone number appears.
- All our public documents such as our Corporate Plan and City Matters are available in alternative formats – other languages, Braille, large print, disk, digital daisy, plain language, easy read, signed video and audio cassette.
- At all our events we address access related issues both in relation to the venue and the information we are providing.
- We are committed to increasing the representation of disabled people in the workforce. We have successfully implemented the Disability Strategy action plan for 2005-2006 (see appendix 2) and have facilitated at least 32 work experience placements. This work continues annually.
- We set up an internal employee disability focus group in 2006. The Equality Officer chairs the group which acts a forum to discuss issues relating to council employees and disability.
- We rolled out a disability awareness programme for employees which entailed a half day for frontline staff and full day for managers and supervisors. Between March 2004 and November 2006, we trained 2,375 staff.

12. Timescale for implementing the action measures

- 12.1 The table below outlines the timescale for implementing the action measures. In line with the timetable for RPA, the current 26 council structure will be replaced with a new structure with effect from 1 April 2009. We have discussed the Disability Action Plan with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. We have agreed to present a one year plan in the first instance, which we'll update annually. This timetable outlines our actions up until 31 March 2008. All plans will be included in the Five Year Review to the Equality Commission (see 9.1).
- 12.2 In some instances we have added measures which could apply to section 75 and the Disability Discrimination Order. We have included them in year one of the disability action plan to indicate good practice, the work we are currently engaged in and plans for the rest of the current year.

Disability Action Plan

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENT

Duty 1: to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people				
Equality				
Action	Outcome	Milestones	Responsibility	Timescale
Research and develop equality management guide	Improved guidance to service providers on a range of equality issues	Completion of draft plan for staff by December 2008	Equality Officer	March 2008 ongoing
Embed the disability duties into our corporate consultation processes	Disabled peoples' views taken on board in council's decision making process	Evidence of engagement and influence in minutes and reports.	Chief Executive's Department	March 2008 ongoing
Facilitate the Disabled Employees Forum to establish clear aims and objectives	Agreement on aims and objectives	Develop terms of reference for group by third meeting in 2007	Equality Officer	March 2007
Corporate Communications				
Continue to maintain accessibility of website to AA level	Production of an accessible internet website	Monthly review internally and externally through Sitemorse (measure of website accessibility)	Corporate Communications Publications Team.	March 2008 ongoing
Maintain Crystal Mark for website	An easy to use and easy to read site	Annual review of Crystal Mark standards	Corporate Communications Publications Team	March 2008 ongoing

Action	Outcome	Milestones	Responsibility	Timescale
Review new intranet site to ensure accessibility	Production of an accessible intranet website	Launch of new site by June 2007 and regular reviews	Corporate Communications Publications Team	June 2007
Include regular features about disability in City Matters (city wide magazine for residents of Belfast)	Better informed residents	Three articles per year in City Matters	Corporate Communications Publications Team	Three times a year
Include regular features about disability in Intercom (internal staff magazine)	Better informed staff	At least three articles per year in the Intercom magazine	Corporate Communications Publications Team	Intercom published six times a year
Include photography in publications and our online systems using positive imagery of disabled people using council services	More positive images of disabled people	Quarterly review of publication of City Matters and other publications to ensure positive imagery	Corporate Communications Publications Team	March 2008 ongoing

Duty 2: to encourage participation by disabled people in public life				
Members' Support				
Action	Outcome	Milestones	Responsibility	Timescale
Improve access to public meetings of the District Policing Partnerships and its Sub-Groups to be disability proofed	Improved access	Inspection to ensure that all external venues comply with disability requirements	District Policing Manager	March 2008 Ongoing
Promote disability awareness including new duties under the Disability Discrimination Order as part of the induction programme for Councillors	Improved understanding among Councillors	Yearly review of induction programme content	Committee and Members' Services	March 2008 ongoing

CORPORATE SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Duty 2: to encourage participation by disabled people in public life				
Human Resources				
Action	Outcome	Milestones	Responsibility	Timescale
Extend online recruitment system to include external applicants	Improved access	Launch On line system in May 2007 Review and monitor external system on-line system by September 2007	Senior Human Resources Advisor (Employee Resourcing)	Launch of on-line system externally-May 2007 Evaluation – Sept 2007
Monitor applicants, short listed applicants and appointees with disabilities	Accurate quantitative data	Information available for monitoring/reporting processes	Senior Specialist (Community Outreach/ Diversity Monitoring)	March 2008 ongoing
Provide at least 30 work experience placements for disabled people across the council	Improved opportunities	Evaluate success of placement from both perspectives (council and individual)	Senior Specialist (Community Outreach/ Diversity Monitoring)	March 2008 ongoing
Attend careers fairs, interview skills, training and site visits to promote job opportunities for disabled people	Increased awareness of range of jobs within the council and the qualifications required Improved interview techniques for disabled people	Increased number of disabled applicants and appointees	Senior Specialist (Community Outreach/ Diversity Monitoring)	March 2008 ongoing

Action	Outcome	Milestones	Responsibility	Timescale
Consider new options following termination of the Employment Support Scheme and its replacement by the new 'Workable' programme	Enhanced job opportunities	Choose preferred option/s for future involvement in 'Workable' programme	Senior Specialist (Community Outreach/ Diversity Monitoring)	September 2007
Monitor the reasonable adjustments made for disability employees	More accessible working environment Managers aware of issues which may impact an employees attendance and ability to carry out duties	Creation of a monitoring system	Disability Access Group Senior Specialist (Employee Relations)	March 2007
Prepare options for future delivery of disability awareness training for staff (to include training on encouraging participation in public life and creating positive attitudes towards disabled people)	All employees fully aware of legislative requirements	Choose preferred option/s for future delivery Training delivered by March 2008	Senior Human Resources Advisor (Development Unit) Human Resources Advisor (Development Unit) D.A.G.	March 2007 Deliver training by March 2008

Action	Outcome	Milestones	Responsibility	Timescale
Provide details of publicly advertised council vacancies to the Disablement Advisory Service and other disability organisations	Increased number of disabled applicants	Conduct a review to ensure target audience is being reached	Senior Human Resources Advisor (Employee Resourcing)	March 2008 ongoing
Collect data from employees relating to Section 75 categories	Accurate quantitative data	Conduct voluntary monitoring survey	Senior Specialist (Community Outreach/ Diversity Monitoring)	December 2007
Create a greater awareness of our Guaranteed Interview Scheme	Improved recruitment and selection processes Increased number of disabled applicants	Development of guidance notes on completing application forms and information relating to the Guaranteed Interview Scheme Review number of applications received from disabled people More detailed information in respect of applicants' disabilities to ensure correct reasonable adjustments are made	Senior Human Resources Advisor (Employee Resourcing)	March 2008 September 2007

Action	Outcome	Milestones	Responsibility	Timescale
Monitor reasonable adjustments we have made for disabled interviewees	More accessible interview processes	Creation of a monitoring system	Senior Human Resources Advisor (Employee Resourcing)	June 2007
Assess the impact of the Government's new 'Workable' Programme	Improved opportunities	Meet with representative from Cedar Foundation Consider any future participation in scheme	Senior Specialist (Employee Relations)	March 2007

DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Duty 1: to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people				
Development Department				
Action	Outcome	Milestones	Responsibility	Timescale
Delivering Disability Awareness Training to staff and voluntary organisations	More positive attitudes and skills among staff	All new staff to receive disability awareness training	HR Unit(s) Development Officer, Community Development Workers, Play Workers	March 2008
Provide work experience for disabled people	Improved employment opportunities	Work experience placements provided as requested in line with HR policies	HR Unit(s)	March 2008
Waterfront Hall				
Ensure Belfast Waterfront Hall disability training addresses barriers to access for disabled people	Improved staff knowledge and customer service reducing barriers to participation for disabled people	Review of design and delivery of bespoke training	Belfast Waterfront Hall House Manager / Duty Officer	April 2007

Duty 2: to encourage participation by disabled people in public life				
Development Department				
Action	Outcome	Milestones	Responsibility	Timescale
Encourage the involvement and representation of disabled people in community planning and engagement processes (such as neighbourhood forums set up under the sustainable neighbourhood action plan (SNAP))	Increased influence on policy development and service delivery issues across the city	Consultation plan incorporating a process for including disabled people in SNAP over the next two years	Development Department	March 2008
Waterfront Hall				
Review and improve the Belfast Waterfront Hall Access Guide in respect of the new duties	Improved information on access to the hall	Access guide will be produced by September 2007	Belfast Waterfront Hall House Manager	September 2007
Ensure that new duties are taken into account when redesigning the Belfast Waterfront Hall Website	Duties included on new Website	Consultation on Website by September 2007	Belfast Waterfront Hall Internal Website Group	September 2007
Complete and Launch of new Belfast Waterfront Hall Website	Improved Website accessibility	Launch of Website	Belfast Waterfront Hall Internal Website Group	September 2007

Action	Outcome	Milestones	Responsibility	Timescale
Apply for Arts & Disability Charter (A standard for Arts Venues on Disability Access)	Clear standards of accessibility for disabled people accessing the Arts	Development of targets, regular progress reports	House Manager	January 2008
Maintain Waterfront Hall Access Group	Effective and focused forum for consultation on the Hall's services and arts issues specifically related to disabled people	Maintain minutes of engagement with disabled people	Belfast Waterfront Hall House Manager / Duty Manager	September 2007
Research on concessionary pricing policy	Revised concessionary pricing policy for the hall	Appoint consultants to conduct research by September 2007	Belfast Waterfront Hall Programming & Development Manager/Box Office Manager	September 2007
Increase the number of work experience placements for disabled people	Improved job experience opportunities	Report and evaluation of placements	Belfast Waterfront Hall House Manager/Finance & Administration Officer	November 2007
Improve communication systems for employment opportunities at the Hall	Increased awareness of employment opportunities	Set-up communications system developed by November 2007	Belfast Waterfront Hall Finance & Administration Officer	November 2007

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Duty 1: to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people				
Cleansing Services				
Action	Outcome	Milestones	Responsibility	Timescale
Provide site visits to Cleansing Services if requested by organisations representing disabled people	Improved access to information on job prospects in Cleansing Services	Facilitation of two site visits in 2007	Cleansing Services with Human Resources	One visit pre June 2007 and second visit pre December 2007
Waste Management				
Raise awareness of the facilities for disabled people at the council's public toilets through a programme of advertising and promotion	Increased awareness of accessibility of public toilets	Information updates to all citizens of Belfast using City Matters and on our website by March 2008	Waste Manager	March 2008
Promote the availability of RADAR keys for all Belfast City Council toilets which comply with the National Key Scheme for Disabled People	Increased awareness of the RADAR key system	Monitor uptake of take up of RADAR keys annually	Contracts Officer	March 2008 ongoing

Action	Outcome	Milestones	Responsibility	Timescale
Promote facilities at Recycling Centres specifically designed for use by disabled people	Improved awareness of the Recycling Centres. Increased customer satisfaction	Information specifically targeted to disability groups and accessible through our website and specialist disability press by March 2008	Waste Officer (Contracts & Operations)	March 2008
Environmental Health				
Ensure that all staff at recycling centres and civic amenity sites are specifically trained on providing services for disabled people	Positive attitudes, skills and confidence developed for staff working with disabled people	All new staff to receive disability awareness training annually	Area Recycling Officers	March 2008 ongoing

Duty 2: to encourage participation by disabled people in public life				
Environmental Health				
Action	Outcome	Milestones	Responsibility	Timescale
Undertake a diversity project - In partnership with the Good Relations Unit, map existing activities and identify needs in relation to community safety/ disability issues	Grant aid targeted to address community safety issues identified by disabled people	Research report completed by April 2007 Grant aid distributed to address community safety needs by March 2008	Environmental Health Service (Community Safety)	March 2008 ongoing
Conduct public consultation (to include disabled people) - to identify user needs, expectations and satisfaction with services	Better understanding of user needs Actions identified so that our service better meet needs of all service users	Completion of consultation by May 2007 Prioritisation & implementation of actions by March 2008	Environmental Health Service (Business Development)	March 2008 ongoing
Safety of Seniors events - targeting older people and ensuring accessibility for those with disabilities	Reducing crime, fear of crime at a local level throughout the city, primarily targeting independently living older people	Organise 10 events by March 2008	Environmental Health (Community safety)	March 2008 ongoing
Review the provision of health training to develop a menu of consistent and targeted training	Target groups identified and availability of appropriate training communicated to them	Review completed by December 2007	Environmental Health Service (Health Development)	December 2007

Building Control				
Action	Outcome	Milestones	Responsibility	Timescale
Encouraged licensed premises to improve standards for disabled people through the introduction of the ' <i>Best Bar None Scheme</i> ' (which recognises licensed premises in Belfast with a national accreditation standard)	Improved standards at licensed premises	Scheme to be designed by September 2007 Scheme to be introduced by March 2008	Building Control Service	March 2008 Ongoing
Actively promote the William Keown Awards in Belfast	Greater knowledge of the William Keown Awards within the building industry and owners of premises	Discussions regarding greater participation to commence with the William Keown Awards by April 2007	Building Control Service	March 2008 ongoing

PARKS AND LEISURE DEPARTMENT

Duty 1: to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people				
Leisure				
Action	Outcome	Milestones	Responsibility	Timescale
Continue to deliver disability awareness training programme to all staff including holiday scheme staff ensuring Disability Discrimination Order compliance	Raised awareness and improved understanding	All permanent full time and part time staff and agency staff complete training by March 2008	HR Assistant Leisure Centre Management staff	March 2008 ongoing
	Best practice approach to service provision	All holiday scheme staff complete training by June 2007		June 2007
Parks				
Develop and introduce outreach programmes for a range of people who use open spaces	Improved use of open spaces	New programme introduced by March 2008	Parks Outreach Officer	March 2008 ongoing

Duty 2: to encourage participation by disabled people in public life				
Zoo				
Action	Outcome	Milestones	Responsibility	Timescale
Audit and improve access to zoological gardens to encourage more visitors	Improved access and increased visitor numbers	Implementation of audit findings by March 2008	Zoo Manager	March 2008 ongoing
Parks				
Review and improve general on-site signs for all open spaces	Better signs and information for customers	Erecting new signs over three year period commencing in 2007	Landscape planning and development unit	March 2008 ongoing
Introduce an improvement programme for Parks and Open Spaces incorporating the audit recommendations (which include the new duties)	Improved access for disabled people	Completion of audit recommendations by 2009	Landscape planning and development unit	March 2008 ongoing
Leisure Services				
Continue to extend the 'Inclusive' holiday scheme throughout our leisure centres, including the forming and maintaining partnerships with Bryson House	More inclusive summer recreational and educational programmes available for children with disabilities	Monitoring system to measure number of children with disabilities attending Holiday schemes evaluation	Sports Development Officer Leisure Centre Staff	31 August 2007

Action	Outcome	Milestones	Responsibility	Timescale
Establish an 'Access For All' working Group for the new Grove Well Being Centre	Policies for the new centre designed in partnership with disabled people and/or their representative groups	Identification of group members and agreed terms of reference developed	Leisure Centre Manager	28 February 2007 March 2008 ongoing
Develop classes in leisure centres which are targeted at disabled people	Improved access to leisure facilities for disabled people	Active programmes in 3 leisure centres	Leisure Centre Management	31 December 2007

IMPROVEMENT DIRECTORATE

Duty 2: to encourage participation by disabled people in public life				
Action	Outcome	Milestones	Responsibility	Timescale
Ensure that the needs of disabled people are represented on our Community Plan Partnership	Greater involvement in community decision making	Targeted consultation to be held with representatives of the disabled community to inform the development of the community planning process	Core Improvement Team Development Department and the Community Planning Partnership Strategic Tier	March 2008 ongoing
Ensure that the needs of disabled people are represented in our new Corporate Plan	Needs of disabled people properly considered in our key planning document	Corporate planning process to include activities designed to engage with disabled people in terms of the objectives and priorities of the organisation	Core Improvement Team	March 2008 ongoing
Ensure that our Consultation and Engagement Strategy takes account of the views of disabled people	Service planning and delivery informed by views of disabled people	Production of a Consultation and Engagement Strategy which includes targeted activity designed to connect with disabled people	Core Improvement Team and Corporate Communications	March 2008 ongoing

Action	Outcome	Milestones	Responsibility	Timescale
Ensure that the specific needs of disabled people are taken into consideration as part of the council's ongoing work on customer focus	Inclusive and tailored access to our services for disabled people	Improved customer focus for disabled people	Core Improvement Team	March 2008 ongoing

13. Targets

- 13.1 We are committed to monitoring and reviewing policies and practices to ensure that disability equality duties are being met. Monitoring the progress of this Plan is a significant element.
- 13.2 As part of this process, the Annual Review of the Plan will provide a part of the monitoring and review process and assist in drafting appropriate targets for the next period, whilst reporting on the achievement, or otherwise, of those set for the period of the Annual Review.
- 13.3 We have included the following targets as an integral part of the Action Plan.
- 13.3 Some targets are very specific, whilst other are of a more general nature, thus ensuring the Plan is a realistic and proactive plan, not solely reactive. The targets set are to cover a one year period in the first year as we want to ensure that we meet the practical needs of disabled persons and their carers on a timely basis.

14. How the disability action plan will be published

- 14.1 Following submission to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, this Plan will be available by contacting:

Name: Stella Gilmartin, Equality Officer

Phone number: (Freefone) 0800 0855412

Text phone number: 028 9027 0405

Email: gilmartins@belfastcity.gov.uk

Website: www.belfastcity.gov.uk

Contact Details

- 14.2 The availability of the Disability Action Plan will be advertised in the press, specialist disability press and can be accessed on our accessible website at:

Council website address **www.belfastcity.gov.uk**

- 14.3 We will, through our ongoing work with disabled people find appropriate ways of communicating the Plan. The Plan will be produced in clear print and plain language; will be available in alternative formats on request, including large print, Braille, audio cassette and computer disk, easy read, digital daisy and signed video.
- 14.4 The Plan will be highlighted through press releases, advertisement, mail shots and meeting directly with disabled people, carers and disability organisations.
- 14.5 In accordance with our Language Policy, the Plan will be available in languages other than English on request.
- 14.6 All employees will receive access to a summary Plan and be provided with a full Plan on request.

Appendix 2

Disability Strategy

Hard copy of the Disability Strategy will be circulated on request.

Appendix 3

Consultation Response Matrix

Name / Organisation	Comments	Belfast City Council Response
Brendan McKeever, Family Information Group	Do the new equality requirements cover “attitudes” and positive inclusion of disabled people?	Our plan indicates that we have and will continue to address ‘attitudes’ to disabled people through our training programmes. The Plan indicates how we will positively include disabled people in all aspects of our work.
Wendy Buchanan, Circles Network	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is clear that the council has invested significant time and resources in preparing their Disability Action Plan and we would suggest that the inclusion of a values statement underpinning the Councils commitment to equality and inclusion would further enhance this work. 2. The language used throughout needs to be consistent and promote a positive attitude towards disabled people. We would therefore recommend that the term “disabled people” be used in line with the social model perspective of disability. 3. The plan refers to a planned programme of training. Circles Network recommends that this should be disability equality training as distinct from disability awareness training and should be provided by disabled people. 4. Procurement – only organisations with a clear policy on equality and inclusion should be considered. 5. On page 23 the term “disability cases” is used – this is wholly unacceptable as it promotes negative and stereotypical attitudes towards disabled people. 6. On page 24, item 2 relates to work experience with the stated outcome of improved employment opportunities. Circles Network would like to suggest that an outcome which would promote positive attitudes would be to say “improved employment opportunities for disabled people and a gifted and diverse workforce within the Council” 	<p>Amended</p> <p>Amended</p> <p>We deliver both equality training which includes disability issues and disability awareness training. Training is procured from specialists in the area. Further training is planned and will include disability equality training.</p> <p>All organisations in the procurement process are advised of our equality and good relations agenda.</p> <p>Noted and amended</p> <p>Remains unchanged as we believe the outcome is self explanatory and does not require additional comment</p>

	<p>7. Throughout the plan where the outcome is stated as “improved staff knowledge” we would suggest that a better outcome would be “the barriers to the participation to disabled people have been removed”</p> <p>8. On page 26 the plan refers to an” Increase in the number of placements.....” Again this has negative connotations and it would be preferable to say “Increased seating arrangements for disabled people”</p>	<p>Noted and amended</p> <p>This point refers to actual work placements for disabled people in the Waterfront Hall</p>
General Comments to Open Consultation	Line managers to consider with Human Resources regarding flex-time working with staff disabilities and home-caring duties.	We have a comprehensive work life balance policy in operation and all employees are eligible to apply. Decisions are granted on a case by case basis.
	Assess the toilets in all City Council buildings, not just City Hall. What if you go to the recycling depots or for computer training or to the park?	The new recycling depots have accessible toilets available. We do have a range of toilet facilities in our major parks.
	More information needed on action plan points.	Due to the size of the document action points have been kept to a minimum. Further information will be provided on request.
RNID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Plan is very well laid out, with a clear introduction, and an easy-to-follow table of objectives, actions and deadlines. We recommend that you use this table to impact report against objectives and monitor and evaluate progress. I have enclosed a copy of RNID’s annual Impact Report as an example of good practice in how to report impact against objectives. <p>Chief Executive’s Department: <u>Corporate Communications</u></p> <p>1. We recommend that the Council’s website should include video clips signed in British Sign Language to increase accessibility further for those people who use sign language as their first language, and for whom the English language is not accessible. RNID can provide this service to the Council and you may like to look at our website to see this in practice – www.rnid.org.uk</p> <p><u>Committee and Member’s services.</u></p> <p>1. We commend the Council for planning to improve access to public meetings in external venues, and recommend that the inspection of those premises should include reference to textphone, fax and email contact details for the venue, publicised on all headed paper, or</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Your comments have been forwarded to Corporate Communications who will contact you in relation to the website.</p> <p>The District Policing Partnership has developed their own Disability Action Plan. Your comments have been forwarded to the</p>

	<p>notification or advertising materials for the meeting, to enable deaf and hard of hearing people to make contact with the venue ahead of the meeting.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The inspection should require an induction loop system available at reception areas, and within public meeting areas, to allow hearing aid users to participate fully. It is also critical to ensure that staff in those venues have been trained on how to operate a textphone, and a loop system, and that any equipment is regularly checked to ensure it is working. 3. Regarding the action to promote disability awareness to Councillors, as with any staff throughout the Council, it is imperative that the training provided includes an element of deaf awareness training, and communication skills training. You may find it helpful to contact RNID's Employment, Training and Skills Service (ETSS) to ensure that any training provided meets RNID's standards in deaf awareness training. Included with this response are details of RNID's Louder Than Words charter, which you may be interested in pursuing as an assurance to Council service users that the Council has met RNID quality standards in being fully accessible to deaf people and hard of hearing people. <p>Corporate Services Department: <u>Human Resources</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We are very pleased that the Council plans to provide at least 30 work experience placements to people with disabilities, as a key area of our work is to assist deaf and hard of hearing jobseekers to access work experience opportunities and employment. RNID ETSS is keen to work with the Council in providing work placements to our deaf and hard of hearing clients. 2. In relation to the proposed outcome of creating more accessible interview processes, RNID ETSS can also provide professional support, information, advice and training to staff in recruiting deaf and hard of hearing people. We can offer a number of platforms for the Council to promote employment opportunities to deaf and hard of hearing people, and are happy to work with the Council in distributing employment information to our client base. 3. The reference to monitoring of reasonable adjustments for disabled employees is welcomed, with a further note to also monitor adjustments made for employees who become disabled during their employment with the Council, in terms of job or role review, support offered, equipment provided and flexibility of terms etc. 4. Again, in relation to disability awareness training for staff, we recommend that an element of deaf 	<p>DPP manager. All meetings, where possible, are fully accessible.</p> <p>As above</p> <p>Noted. This information has been passed to the training section in Human Resources</p> <p>Noted. This information has been passed to the training section in Human Resources</p> <p>Noted. This information has been passed to the training section in Human Resources</p> <p>We monitor all employees both those with disabilities and those who have become disabled whilst in employment.</p> <p>Noted. This information has been</p>
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	awareness training be included within this, and that this is of a standard agreed by RNID.	passed to the training section in Human Resources
Disability Action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Disability Action recommends that public authorities follow the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland’s Disability Action Plan template (pages 83-86 of A Guide for Public Authorities) Our comments will follow that layout for ease of reference. 2. Disability Action commends the range of formats offered, information on website accessibility and the clarity of the contact details for Stella Gilmartin, particularly the free phone number (next to front page). 3. Whilst welcoming the statement from the Mayor and Chief Executive, Disability Action is concerned that the statement only refers to making Councillors and employees “aware”. Disability Action would advise a stronger statement regarding the commitment of necessary resources to preparing councillors and staff to deliver these important duties should be added (Foreword). 4. In relation to public life positions, Disability Action would make the following points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabled people are underrepresented in public positions as a result of barriers, whether real or perceived, in the advertising of public life positions, and/or the recruitment/selection process, (for example, essential/desirable criteria can rule out disabled people at the beginning of the process) or as a result of lack of confidence in disabled people caused by negative societal attitudes. • Furthermore the actual operating systems of a public position may be inaccessible to disabled people eg use of jargon, lack of opportunity for background reading, time commitment, duration and location of meetings, accessibility of venues, etc. • which they have lead responsibility but should embrace the opportunity presented by the Review of Public Administration to create new structures and opportunities which involve disabled people in the development and delivery of policy. • Participation in public life includes opportunities for disabled people to engage with policy makers, therefore consultation will be key to public authorities in meeting their duties. • The public authority should also look to the provision of support mechanisms to enable that engagement and to the leadership it can offer to others in terms of models of good practice to influence change in other sectors. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This plan should propose such proactive 	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted and amended.</p> <p>Noted and amended.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted and these</p>

	<p>measures as shadowing and mentoring to fulfil this duty.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council obviously appoint to a range of external groups. These too should have been listed in this draft Disability Action Plan and the Council should commit to finding ways of ensuring that they secure a greater level of representation on such groups. <p>5. The statements on effective implementation lack any reference to frequency of reporting to the Senior Management Team and the Chief Executive. This should be added. (page 4, paras 5.1 and 5.2).</p> <p>6. Disability Action would ask for information on how the Council will communicate with young disabled people and those with multiple identities. (page 12 para 10.7).</p> <p>7. Whilst recognising the value of annual consultation events, Disability Action advocates more regular interactions with disabled people and their organisations. We believe this is the best way to build relationships and explore in greater depth issues important to disabled people and their social inclusion. (page 13 para 10.9)</p> <p>8. Disability Action recognises and commends the work already undertaken by Belfast City Council on disability equality. (pages 13-15, para 11.1)</p> <p>9. A general comment on the plan is that the vast majority of actions cannot be measured.</p> <p>ion to the Plan itself, Disability Action would make the following points:</p> <p>Executive's Department</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Duty 1</u> Equality Actions 1 & 2 timescales should be 	<p>comments sent to relevant policy makers within the Council for consideration.</p> <p>The council does not appoint to a range of external groups. This is housed within the political structure.</p> <p>Noted and amended.</p> <p>We communicate and consult with young people and those with multiple identities through our usual mechanisms, and in addition to: the young people forum, our consultation forum, employee disability forum, and our consultation through our AA list to umbrella organisations such as youthnet. We are discussing using specialist magazines to advertise our work.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>The departments have, on most occasions, indicated March 2008 as</p>
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	<p>shorter. We advise December 2007. <u>Corporate Communications</u> Action 6 timescale should be shorter we advise September/October 2007.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Duty 2</u> All actions – timescales should be shortened, we advise October/November 2007. <p>Corporate Services Department</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Duty 2</u> Actions 2, 3, 4 and 10 Part 1, timescales should be shortened, we advise September/October 2007. <p>Department</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Duty 1</u> Actions 1 and 2 Timescales should be shortened, we advise October 2007. Action 3 – The issue is not about types of disabilities, but about their effects. <p>and Environmental Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Duty 1 – Waste Management</u> Action 1 – The timescale should be shortened we advise October 2007. • <u>Environmental Health</u> Action 1, this appears to be the same as Waste Management Action 3 	<p>this is the year end of the reporting period. The actions will be completed at various times throughout the year.</p> <p>As above.</p> <p>As above.</p> <p>Noted and amended.</p> <p>As above.</p> <p>Noted and amended</p>
<p>Belfast Health and Social Care Trust</p>	<p>Pg 2 (3.1) Representation on a number of bodies and boards including education: is there any representation on Health & Social Care from boards?</p> <p>Pg 4 (4.1) Disability Working Group – is there anyone with a learning disability or representative of people with learning disabilities on this working group?</p> <p>Pg14 (11.1) Staff training – who provided the training to staff? There are a number of disability groups including Learning Disability who provide training for staff, this may be something you wish to consider for future training.</p> <p>Pg 18 Features about disability in City Matters – we are currently constructing a website regarding day services/opportunities for people with learning difficulties, perhaps we could link to your website.</p> <p>Positive Imagery – we may be able to help with this.</p> <p>Pg 20 Work placements – we are keen to further discuss the possibility of employing people with disabilities.</p>	<p>Our political representatives sit on the Eastern health and Social Services Council</p> <p>The disability working group is an internal officer lead group. We do have representation from Mencap on our consultative forum</p> <p>Disability Action won the contract through our procurement process</p> <p>Your comments regarding City Matters and Positive Imagery have been sent to Corporate Communications. They will be in touch with you in the near future</p> <p>Your comments have been forwarded to Human Resources. They will be in touch with you</p>

	<p>Pg 33 Develop classes in leisure centres – we are keen to discuss further.</p> <p>Pg 34 Community Plan Partnership – we are keen to discuss further.</p>	<p>in the near future</p> <p>Your comments have been forwarded to Leisure. They will be in touch with you in the near future</p> <p>Your comments have been forwarded to an Officer responsible for Community Planning. They will be in touch with you in the near future</p>
Anne Garland	The proposals will only benefit disabled people if they are followed up by other departments, in my experience the DOE are most certainly a culprit! / Road services.	Thank you for your comment. The impact of our policies and plans directly affects people who live, work and visit our city.

Name / Organisation	Comments	Belfast City Council Response
RNID	<p>Development Department: Waterfront Hall</p> <p>1. It is disappointing that the Plan for the Waterfront Hall does not mention an action on providing accessible arts performances for disabled people, as a way of demonstrating participation in public life.</p> <p>2. We recommend that the Council include an action to provide a number of signed and captioned performances during the year and that these performances are promoted to deaf and hard of hearing people. We can provide you with sources of support, information and services for accessible arts performances.</p>	<p>A key Objective of the Waterfront Hall is to provide a 'Focus in the Community' and through our Programme and Audience Development Section we actively seek to provide a programme of events that achieve maximum accessibility for all sections of the community. In relation to disabled people this is achieved in a number of ways via implementation of the Hall's Arts, Education and Community Development Strategy, our Community Ticketing Scheme, and also by developing ongoing working partnerships with organisations such as Open Arts, ADAPT, The Junction Club, and Dance United.</p> <p>The Hall does provide both signed and audio described performances for shows which run over a number of days and management discuss with event promoters the possibility of offering this facility where it is feasible. The Waterfront's own in-house pantomime production has had both a signed and an audio described performance for the past two years. Signed and audio described performances are promoted within the Hall's <i>Waterfront</i> guide and on the website. Bi-annual opera performances are sur-titled and again these are advertised within the <i>waterfront</i> guide. The Hall's Access Group</p>

	<p>3. Allied to this point, is the need to ensure that the theatre is looped, and that seats with a clear view of the stage, interpreter or captioning screen, are reserved for people requiring those services.</p>	<p>play an important advisory role to us, and offer support in promoting our events to disabled people, and we would be most welcoming of RNID involvement in this regard.</p> <p>The Hall has an existing infra-red facility in both its auditoria and an induction loop facility in several of our meeting rooms. If a signer is used for a performance appropriate seats are allocated for patrons wishing to make use of this service.</p>
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