



**Special EU Programmes Body**  
**Comhlacht na gClár Speisialta AE**  
**Special EU Schemes Board**

# **DISABILITY ACTION PLAN**

## **2020-2025**

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A copy of this Disability Action Plan will be made available on our website

[www.seupb.eu](http://www.seupb.eu)

The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) can provide information and documents in a range of alternative formats on request. This includes but is not limited to: Irish, Ulster Scots, minority languages, Braille, large print, or audio.

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## Foreword

This Disability Action Plan (the Plan) is a statement of the Special EU Programmes Body's (the 'Body') commitment to fulfil its statutory obligations under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006). The Act places duties on public authorities, when carrying out their functions, to have regard to the need to:

- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life ('the disability duties').

This Plan sets out how the Body will meet these duties through a range of action measures. It also outlines the Body's commitment to the promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people including enhanced engagement with, and the involvement of, disabled people in the work of the Body.

I, as the Chief Executive, along with the Director of Corporate Services, will allocate all necessary resources (in terms of time, people and money) in order to effectively implement this Plan and, where appropriate, build objectives and targets relating to the disability duties into corporate and annual business plans.

We will also put appropriate internal arrangements in place to ensure that the disability duties are complied with and this disability action plan is effectively implemented. We will ensure the effective communication of the plan to staff and to providing all necessary training and guidance for staff on the disability duties and the implementation of the plan.

We confirm our commitment to submitting an annual report to the Equality Commission on the implementation of this plan, as well as carrying out a five yearly review of it.



**Gina McIntyre**  
Chief Executive



**Paul Sheridan**  
Corporate Services Director

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## **1. Introduction**

- Under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006, the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) is required when carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the need to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life ('the disability duties').

Section 49B of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, requires the SEUPB to submit to the Equality Commission a Disability Action Plan showing how it proposes to fulfil these duties in relation to its functions.

## **2. Role and Functions of the Special EU Programmes Body**

The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) is a North/South Body, established under the Agreement between the Government of Ireland and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and came into effect on 2 December 1999. The Agreement stipulates that the SEUPB will implement the policies directed by the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) as specified by the North South Co-operation (Implementation Bodies) (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 and the British-Irish Agreement Act 1999, as amended.

The Body's primary aim is to promote cross-border co-operation through the implementation of PEACE IV and INTERREG VA. The Body has been designated the role of Managing Authority and Certifying Authority for both Programmes.

The SEUPB also has a broad role to support North/South participation in INTERREG VB Transnational Programmes which are relevant to Northern Ireland. Alongside this the SEUPB has an advisory and signposting role for North/South participation in the INTERREG VC Inter-regional programme.

## **3. Effective Implementation of the Plan**

The SEUPB is committed to the effective implementation of all aspects of this Plan in all parts of the Body. Overall responsibility for determining the Plan lies with the Chief Executive. The Director of Corporate Services will be responsible for the

implementation of the Action Measures at Annex 1 to ensure that the Body's disability duties are met.

#### **4. Action Measures**

The SEUPB has detailed the action measures it intends to take over the period 2020-2025 of this disability action plan in order to fulfil its disability duties. Full details of these, together with performance indicators or targets, are provided at Annex 1.

#### **5. Annual Reporting**

We confirm our commitment to submitting an annual progress report on the implementation of this plan to the Equality Commission and carrying out a five year review of it.

A copy of the Plan, the annual progress report to the Equality Commission and the five year review of this plan will be made available on the Body's website [www.seupb.eu](http://www.seupb.eu).

#### **6. Consultation**

SEUPB published a draft disability action plan for public consultation from 5 June 2020 until 28 August 2020. The consultation consisted of:

- a written request for responses to target groups;
- a public press advertisement; and
- use of the consultation page/area on the SEUPB website.

SEUPB welcomed feedback and contributions from the following organisations:

- Archways
- Autism NI
- Fighting Blindness
- Mencap
- The Irish Society for Autism
- The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)
- The Cedar Foundation (easy-read)

Their involvement helped to:

- identify general barriers faced by disabled people participating in public life;
- identify opportunities in which the Body can promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- shape and inform the action measures contained within the Plan.

The Body received comments on the Action Measures contained within the draft plan and has amended and updated a number of actions following a review of the comments received.

This Final Disability Action Plan will be uploaded to the SEUPB website

[www.seupb.eu](http://www.seupb.eu)

## **7. Public Life Positions**

The Body will continue to encourage the participation of disabled people via direct recruitment to the Body, and when seeking volunteers from relevant government departments for Monitoring Committees and Steering Committees for the Programmes. Should a volunteer with a disability from one of the Body's accountable Departments be nominated to the Monitoring and/or Steering Committee, reasonable adjustments will be provided as required. All of the Body's recruitment and selection processes will also be undertaken in accordance with the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and with due regard to the disability duties.

The Chief Executive of the SEUPB is supported by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC). Audit and Risk Assurance Committee roles are professional roles and members are appointed based on professional qualifications. The membership is independent of the SEUPB and consists of three external members. The Body welcomes applications from professionals, both with and without a disability.

ARAC members are appointed for four years and are eligible to be re-appointed at the end of this period for a further two years. A recruitment campaign took place in March 2020 and positions were advertised on the SEUPB website, [stateboards.ie](http://stateboards.ie) and other specialist board member recruitment websites.

## **8. Previous Measures**

The following measures reflect the many positive actions SEUPB has taken in delivering previous Disability Action Plans:

- SEUPB's Recruitment & Selection procedures have been reviewed to ensure fair participation from job applicants with disabilities.
- Disability equality training has been provided to staff members.
- Training has been provided for all staff and external panel members involved in recruitment and selection panels on their disability duties.
- A review of the Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) procedures for staff and regular visitors to SEUPB offices was carried out.
- When hosting internal or external events, the Body have ensured that presentation and promotional material are easily readable; signage is clear; handouts are in accessible formats; venues are easy to reach and are accessible and delegates are made aware of fire evacuation policies and location of toilets.
- SEUPB has provided appropriate information and advice to people with disabilities.
- The SEUPB has raised awareness of our disability obligations, and additionally provided a confidential opportunity to advise staff if they have any related requirements.

## **9. Monitoring and Evaluation**

SEUPB is committed to monitoring and reviewing policies and practices to ensure the disability duties are being met. Monitoring the progress of the plan itself is a significant element of this process.

The Body will undertake an annual review of the Disability Action Plan, assessing progress against the action measures. This will provide a measure of how effectively the Body is meeting its disability duties.

The Body will monitor employees in post and job applicants through the selection procedure to ensure that it is aware of employees' and potential employees' disability needs.

The SEUPB will monitor the delivery of disability related training for all staff, and all employees will be provided with a copy of the Plan.

Overall responsibility for implementing, reviewing and evaluating the Plan and the point of contact within the Special EU Programmes Body will be:

**Name:** Paul Sheridan  
**Title:** Corporate Services Director  
**Address:** SEUPB, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, 2 Clarence Street West, Belfast, BT2 7GP  
**Telephone number:** 028 90 266660  
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## ANNEX 1

### DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2020-2025

The following measures will be undertaken and monitored, on an annual basis, by the SEUPB to promote attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in public life.

This action plan is broken down into three categories:

1. Staff training and awareness raising;
2. Communication;
3. Participation in Public Life, Recruitment and Support Measures for Disabled Staff.

<b>1. STAFF TRAINING AND AWARENESS-RAISING</b>				
<b>Measure</b>	<b>Performance Indicators / Targets</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Intended Outcome</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
1.1 Ensure all staff and office holders receive disability equality legislation and disability awareness training, covering both seen and unseen disabilities.	Number of staff and office holders receiving training.  Content of feedback forms.  Post training evaluation.	All existing employees and office holders to receive initial training in first six months of 2021 and refresher training every 3 years.  All new employees and office holders to receive training within 6 months of start date.	Improved staff and office holder knowledge and increased awareness of disability issues; all new staff and office holders have an awareness of disability and an understanding of disability. equality legislation, including the disability duties.	HR Manager

## 1. STAFF TRAINING AND AWARENESS-RAISING

Measure	Performance Indicators / Targets	Timescale	Intended Outcome	Responsibility
1.2 Ensure staff and external members involved in recruitment and selection panels are provided with appropriate training on disability awareness and the disability duties.	<p>Number of panel members receiving specialist training.</p> <p>Content of feedback forms.</p> <p>Post training evaluation.</p>	Staff and external members who sit on recruitment and selection panels to receive training within 6 months of taking up role and refresher training every 3 years.	All members of recruitment and selection panels have an awareness of disability, and an understanding of current disability equality legislation.	HR Manager
1.3 Deliver equality screening training based on an analysis of priority areas and job/office holder roles.	Ensure suitably qualified personnel are available to provide equality screening.	2021	At least 4 staff members/office holders to be trained and available to carry out equality screening. Review existing competence level and supplement if necessary.	HR Manager
1.4 Provide advice and support to staff/office holders on health related matters via the Employee Assistance Programme.	Number of staff and office holders receiving advice/support.	Ongoing	To assist with wellbeing and increase emotional intelligence amongst teams.	HR Manager

**2. Communication**

Measure	Performance Indicators / Targets	Timescale	Intended Outcome	Responsibility
2.1 Ensure the SEUPB’s website is in compliance with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.	Ensure website meets the international accessibility standard, WCAG 2.1 AA_or its European equivalent, EN301 54 and publish an accessibility statement.	An accessibility statement has been published on the SEUPB’s website in accordance with the Regulations. The SEUPB is currently working through a number of actions to make it fully compliant with the Regulations following an independent audit of the site.	Ensure that website is ‘perceivable, operable, understandable and robust’ for all users.	Communications Manager
2.2 Alternative formats of key documents will be provided upon request to include easy-read, braille, large print and audio.	100% of requests received for key documents in alternative formats will be provided.	Within 2-3 weeks of all requests, depending upon the size of the document.	The work of the SEUPB is communicated to all via a variety of methods.	Communications Manager
2.3 Promote the organisation’s Disability Action Plan 2020-2025 through internal communication channels e.g. Staff newsletter, email.	Updates provided as and when opportunity arises.	2020-2025	All staff are aware of the SEUPB’s disability obligations.	HR Manager
	Progress on delivery of Action Plan is quarterly agenda item at Senior Management Team meetings.	2020-2025	Ensure Action Measures are on target.	Director of Corporate Services

**2. Communication**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Performance Indicators / Targets</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Intended Outcome</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
2.4 Include disability related information in bulletins issued by the SEUPB's Health & Well-being Group, as appropriate.	Relevant information issued by Health & Well-being Group, in relevant e-bulletins to all staff, as appropriate.	2020-2025	Keep staff appraised of relevant disability related information.	HR Manager
2.5 Provision of information to staff on national disability awareness days through staff internal newsletter.	Include information on national disability awareness days within internal staff e-zine/newsletter.	2020-2025	Raise awareness and visibility of disabled issues amongst all staff.	Communications Manager
2.6 Promote a positive image of disabled people.	At least one article, case study and/or image (as a minimum) to be included in the SEUPB's Annual Report and Your EU magazine (published seasonally).	2020-2025	Help to promote a positive image of disabled people within the SEUPB's external communications.	Communications Manager
2.7 Ensure that all promotional video/film material produced by the SEUPB is accessible.	All promotional video/film material produced by the SEUPB to be subtitled.	2020-2025	Increase accessibility of SEUPB produced promotional video/film content.	Communications Manager

## 2. Communication

Measure	Performance Indicators / Targets	Timescale	Intended Outcome	Responsibility
2.8 Ensure that all SEUPB co-ordinated events meet the needs of disabled people.	All event locations have disability access; presentations and other event literature are available in alternative formats upon request –such as easy-read, braille, large print and audio. ; use of registered interpreters (BSL and/or ISL) at significant SEUPB co-ordinated events i.e. programme launches/closures or large-scale public consultation workshops; ensure that signage at all events is visible and clear; venues have suitable parking/public transport access; and venue rooms are accessible and provide a welcoming environment.	2020-2025	Ensure that SEUPB co-ordinated events are accessible for disabled people.	Communications Manager & Manager of Managing Authority
2.9 Where appropriate and relevant, SEUPB will consider co-designing and co-delivering project events in conjunction with young people with learning disabilities.	Monitor the number of suitable projects for this co-design/co-development option.	2020-2025	Young people with learning disabilities are given the opportunity to participate in public life.  Positive attitudes towards disabled people are promoted.	Communications Manager

### 3. Participation in Public Life, Recruitment and Support Measures for Disabled Staff

Measure	Performance Indicators / Targets	Timescale	Intended Outcome	Responsibility
3.1 Advertise vacancies widely in a variety of media, including disability organisations such as the Disability Employment Service, and include the following statement in our job adverts: "We will make reasonable adjustments for applicants who have disabilities."	Monitor the number of applicants who learn of the position via such a disability organisation.	2020-2025	That all people, those with and without a disability, have equal access to information on SEUPB vacancies.	HR Manager
3.2 Ensure that all requests for reasonable adjustments as part of the selection process are facilitated.	100% of requests received for reasonable adjustments are facilitated.  Provide ongoing advice and support to applicants/employees in relation to reasonable adjustment requirements.	2020-2025	Ensure that the SEUPB recruitment process is accessible for all and that no applicant will be discriminated against due to disability during any selection process.	HR Manager
3.3 Consider participating in the Disability Confident employment scheme and/or mentoring programmes and/or a work placement scheme	Provide opportunities for people with disabilities to join the workforce.	Matter will be brought before the Senior Management Team for their assessment during the first six months of 2021 and annually thereafter.	SMT will decide whether this is a viable option for the Body to participate in	HR Manager

### 3. Participation in Public Life, Recruitment and Support Measures for Disabled Staff

Measure	Performance Indicators / Targets	Timescale	Intended Outcome	Responsibility
3.4 Consider membership of local 'disability organisation' such as Employers for Disability NI or Disability Action.	Ensure SEUPB is reaching those with disabilities in relation to public advertisement of vacancies and event publicity etc.	Matter will be brought before the Senior Management Team for their assessment during the first six months of 2021 and annually thereafter.	The Senior Management Team will decide whether this is a viable option for the Body to participate in.	HR Manager
3.5 Ensure all managers are aware of the provisions of the Attendance Policy which allow for special consideration of disability issues.	All staff who have responsibility for managing attendance to attend training within 6 months of taking up role.	2020-2025	Ensure that all managers are aware of the Attendance Policy which allows for special consideration of disability issues.	HR Manager
3.6 Provide ongoing advice and support to employees in relation to reasonable work adjustment requirements.	Record the number of reasonable work adjustment requests by employees and any adjustments made to meet these requests.  Seek ongoing input from employees with disabilities as to their experience of the 'reasonable adjustment' process and respond accordingly.	2020-2025	Meet, where appropriate, requests for reasonable work adjustments made by disabled staff.	HR Manager

Signed:



Chief Executive

Date: 3 December 2020

Signed:



Director of Corporate Services

Date: 3 December 2020