THREE YEAR REVIEW DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2019 - 2022

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Contents

Executive Summary

Tables

Executive Summary

Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to review the implementation of Ulster University's Disability Action Plan 2019 - 2022 (DAP 2019-22), which aimed to:

- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;

- encourage the participation of disabled people in public life; and

- identify any barriers to participation.

It was expected that implementation of the DAP 2019 - 22 would further increase accessibility to Ulster University ('the University') and its services, thus ensuring that people with disabilities could fully engage in University life, as a place to work and to study.

This report also supports the University in complying with its obligations arising under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)1995 (as amended), to carry out a review of its Disability Action Plan and to forward the report to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland ('the Equality Commission').

Methodology

Various methods have been used to assess the effectiveness of the actions in the Disability Action Plan for the purposes of this report, including:

- Monitoring the actions and reporting on progress each year through the University's Section 75 Annual Progress Report to the Equality Commission;

- Engagement with the University's Staff DisAbility Network; the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy Steering Group sub-group for Advancing Disability Equality; and Ulster University Students' Union (UUSU);

- 'Attitudes towards disability' surveys in February/March 2022 for Academic Staff and Professional and Support Services Staff; and

- A review of student applicant and staff data.

Findings

Whilst the main objectives of the Disability Action Plan 2019 – 2022 have always been to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage their participation in public life, the implementation of the University's Disability Action

Plan has resulted in a multitude of benefits/achievements for the University, including:

- the establishment of a sub-group of the EDI Strategy Steering Group, to provide additional focus on 'Advancing Disability Equality';

- the launch of the University's first Wellbeing Strategy, to provide a framework for improving health and wellbeing at the University;

- over £150,000 of fund-raising activities, providing support for *Mind Your Mood*, to raise awareness of mental ill-health and provide interventions for more students;

- a greater awareness of disability issues amongst staff, with the development of refreshed online disability awareness training, (complementing an already extensive awareness raising programme), and the mainstreaming of the disability duties via the University's policy screening pro-forma and procurement documentation;

- increased visibility of the University's Staff DisAbility Network internally and externally through the establishment of a dedicated webpage and a social media platform, and membership of the National Association of Disabled Staff Networks (NADSN);

- more established links with the external disabled community, particularly as a result of the University's sports outreach programmes and the Widening Access and Participation Strategy; and

- increased collaboration with the Students' Union, informing disability campaigns and events, such as the Sunflower products, to raise awareness of 'Hidden Disabilities.'

Progress has been made over the life cycle of the Disability Action Plan 2019 – 2022, as various contributory measures were completed within and across functional areas. Full details of each completed measure can be found in the University's Section 75 Annual Progress Reports.

While the COVID-19 pandemic proved to be challenging in terms of accessing the University premises, the pivot to online platforms to deliver training in one virtual room - across a multi-campus institution, was a positive outcome for participants in terms of accessibility.

However, the results of the staff 'attitudes to disability' surveys demonstrate that specific awareness raising initiatives and training is required. While there has been a

greater emphasis on increasing staff knowledge, only 54% of respondents had heard of the two disability duties. The feedback also demonstrates the need to better communicate and increase visibility of the Disability Action Plan. Over one-third of respondents did not know the University's Disability Action Plan existed.

There has been little variation in disability declaration rates throughout the life cycle of the DAP. As of 6 February 2022, 5.2% of staff declared a disability – an increase of just 0.2% compared with 6 February 2018.

A number of respondents to the staff surveys indicated the need for enhanced engagement between staff, students and external stakeholders to improve decision-making that will enhance digital and physical accessibility at the University.

Continued high-level commitment and good communication/publicity are central to building on the success of the DAP. It is anticipated that the University's new institutional strategy, due to be launched at the start of the next academic year (2022/23), will increase engagement of staff and students with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) agenda. This will increase the focus on disability issues and help ensure that the DAP is refreshed each year (as a live and flexible document); and that the disability duties are embedded within the University's civic contribution activities.

Conclusions

All legacy 'ongoing' actions will now be considered to be mainstreamed, so that the emerging Disability Action Plan 2022-2027 consists of actions that are unique, new and relate specifically to the two disability duties. Where possible, quantifiable performance indicators and timescales will be implemented. Actions that were not completed (n=2) will be rolled over into the new DAP.

The review of the University's DAP indicates that it has been effective in a variety of ways. For example, it has led to continued improvements in the way in which disability issues are monitored, managed, evaluated and reviewed at the University.

However, the review also indicates that there is still much work to be done to build on previous successes and to meet the challenges identified. To this end the University remains committed to effectively implementing the disability duties, through its new Disability Action Plan 2022 - 2027.

Introduction

As required by Section 49B of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended), Ulster University must carry out a five-year review of its Disability Action Plan (DAP) and forward a report of this review to the Equality Commission.

The Equality Commission granted the University a one-year extension to implement the previous Disability Action Plan and therefore the DAP review in 2019 covered a six-year period.

In order to realign with the reporting commitments and for completeness, this report will cover a shorter period and review the implementation of the Disability Action Plan 2019 – 2022. The current DAP will expire this year and the findings of this review will support the development of new actions in the University's new Disability Action Plan 2022 – 2027.

This report outlines:

- **What the University's Disability Action Plan 2019 - 2022 has achieved;**

- **What remains to be done; and**

- **How it plans to build on the successes already achieved and meet the challenges identified.**

What the DAP has achieved

The DAP sets out to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage their participation in public life. Its implementation has resulted in a multitude of benefits/achievements for the University.

Key milestones/benefits/successes include:

- the establishment of a sub-group of the EDI Strategy Steering Group, to provide additional focus on 'Advancing Disability Equality';

- the launch of the University's first Wellbeing Strategy, to provide a framework for improving health and wellbeing at the University;

- signing up to the Equality Commission's Mental Health Charter, which provides a framework for working towards mentally healthy workplaces;

- over £150,000 of fund-raising activities, providing support for *Mind Your Mood*, to raise awareness of mental ill-health and provide interventions for more students;

- a formal monitoring and reporting structure and the nomination of responsible senior staff, which ensures accountability for the delivery of agreed objectives in all functional areas across the University;

- improved access to specialist resources due to a greater focus on a collaborative or 'multi-agency' approach to supporting disabled students and staff;

- improvements to the quality and variety of support provided for students and staff at the University;

- a greater awareness of disability amongst staff, with the development of refreshed online disability awareness training, (complementing an already extensive awareness raising programme), and the mainstreaming of the disability duties via the University's policy screening pro-forma and procurement documentation;

- increased consultation opportunities (within the University) and more direct, formalised channels of communication with disabled staff though the Staff DisAbility Network including engagement in respect of 'return to campus', the enhanced Belfast campus, and the development of the University's Sports Strategy and the Travel and Transport Strategy;

- 'Introduction to Deaf Culture and BSL' awareness session open to all staff, facilitated by the Staff DisAbility Network, and a series of Disability Awareness sessions to celebrate Disability History Month;

- engagement with the National Association of Disabled Staff Network (NADSN) to implement a peer mentoring scheme to support the Staff DisAbility Network's Chair and Co-chair to develop their roles;

- membership of the Staff DisAbility Network increased from 13% of disabled staff to 35% of disabled staff during the lifecycle of the DAP;

- increased visibility of the University's Staff DisAbility Network internally and externally through the establishment of a dedicated social media platform and membership of NADSN;

- improved physical and general access to education and information;

- more established links with the external disabled community, particularly as a result of the University's sports outreach programmes and the Widening Access and Participation Strategy;

- increased collaboration with the Students' Union, informing disability campaigns and events, such as the Sunflower products, to raise awareness of 'Hidden Disabilities';

- improved monitoring of disability and various disability issues; and

- the inclusion of disability issues on Faculty and Departmental agendas/work plans.

These benefits have been achieved incrementally over the life cycle of the DAP, as various contributory measures were completed within and across functional areas. Full details of each completed measure can be found in the University's Section 75 Annual Progress Reports.

Completion of Key Activities

There are 31 actions in the University's Disability Action Plan 2019 - 2022. There were no additional actions included during the lifespan of the DAP.

A final status of actions is detailed at Table 1.

Table 1   Final status of actions

Period	Number of Actions	Complete	Not Completed	Actions to be rolled over into new DAP
2019-2022	31	29 (94%)	2 (6%)	2 (6%)

Required actions:

For the purposes of the University's new Disability Action Plan:
- assume 'ongoing' actions contained within the DAP 2019-22 are mainstreamed within respective functions;
- all actions will be unique, new and relate specifically to the two disability duties;
- where possible, quantifiable performance indicators and timescales will be implemented (to avoid further 'ongoing' actions); and
- rollover the two outstanding actions into the new Disability Action Plan.

Performance indicators - Were they met?

The DAP's main objectives were long-term and forward looking; to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage their participation in University/ Public life. Therefore, performance indicators for each action were developed to support these objectives, to enable effective monitoring (i.e. an 'evaluation' of the progress of the actions themselves) and to align with prevailing (and future) University business/work plans.

The 'performance indicators' were reviewed, and their success described within the 'outputs' and outcomes' within each Section 75 Annual Progress Report.

However, these reports indicate that almost all performance indicators were ongoing during the life of the DAP. The true success of the DAP's objectives is measured by evaluating changes in attitudes, participation and accessibility at the end of the DAP, using a variety of information sources. These are reviewed in the following sections.

Attitudes towards disabled people – have they changed?

The University carried out two separate surveys in 2022 to assess attitudes towards disability. These focussed on academic staff and non-academic staff; and using modified survey questionnaires which were used previously in 2017, this has enabled direct comparisons to be made and provided an indicator of changes in attitudes towards disabled people. Return rates for the surveys were significantly higher, albeit the results still only provide a snapshot indicator of attitudes towards disabled people.

Despite the surveys each having a different focus, it was welcomed that across the board, the majority of respondents felt that there are positive benefits to having disabled people in the University environment. Benefits ranged from providing a different perspective to providing positive role models. Similarly, the majority of respondents were either very confident or quite confident about interacting with disabled people and significant experience of working with or supporting disabled people exists at the University. This has been a common theme in all staff surveys.

Attitudes towards disabled people varied by respondent type:

- 71% of non-academic staff respondents felt there were positive benefits to having disabled people in the working environment. This compares with 69.6% in 2017 and suggests more positive attitudes towards disabled people in the working environment.

- 84% of academic staff respondents felt that there are positive benefits to having disabled students in the learning environment. This compares with 76% in 2017 and suggests an increase in positive attitudes towards having disabled students in the learning environment.

Participation of disabled people

An analysis was carried out to assess whether the participation of disabled people had increased between 2019 and 2022. This included:

- a review of **staff and student application and employment/enrolment data** (e.g. FETO and UCAS data) to assess whether the University is attracting greater numbers of disabled applicants compared with 2019/20, and whether disabled applicants are more successful than non-disabled applicants;

- a review of **disability disclosure rates**;

- a review of the **membership of Clubs/Committees/Networks**; and

- an analysis of **disability/equality awareness training data**, to assess whether learning objectives have been achieved.

The results of each analysis follow.

Review of Staff Applicant Data

This analysis reviews staff applicant data, as reported in the University's Article 55 Reviews. As with any monitoring information system, the results are totally dependent on disabled people disclosing a disability.

Disabled applicants and appointees (2019-2022) are described in Table 2. As shown, numbers of disabled applicants has steadily increased; with 2.9% increase in the proportion of disabled staff appointed over the life cycle of the Disability Action Plan 2019 - 2022.

Table 2   Disabled Applicants and Appointees 2019 – 2022

Year	Applicants			Appointees		
	Disabled (n)	All applicants (n)	Disabled %	Disabled (n)	All appointees (n)	Disabled %
Feb 2019	478	16434	2.9	30	1233	2.4
Feb 2020	298	7197	4.1	14	446	3.1
Feb 2021	91	1561	5.8	6	274	2.2
Feb 2022	295	5083	5.8	24	455	5.3

Appointee numbers also fluctuated over the period. This can be attributed to fewer posts being available during the COVID-19 pandemic, changes to working practices and the introduction of flexible working arrangements. The proportions of disabled and non-disabled successful applicants mirror the fluctuation of appointee numbers during this period is mirrored in (Table 3).

Table 3   Application success rates

Year	Disabled			Non-disabled		
	Applicants (n)	Appointees (n)	% Successful	Applicants (n)	Appointees (n)	% Successful
Feb 2019	478	30	6.3	15956	1203	7.5
Feb 2020	298	14	4.7	6899	432	6.3
Feb 2021	91	6	6.6	1470	268	18.2
Feb 2022	295	24	8.1	4788	431	9.0

Whilst employee numbers have increased since 2019, the **proportion of disabled employees has also marginally increased** (Table 4). To compare over a longer period of time, the proportion of disabled employees was 3.9% in 2012.

Table 4   Employees

Year	Employees		
	Disabled (n)	**All employees (n)**	**%**
Feb 2019	119	2423	4.9
Feb 2020	131	2585	5.1
Feb 2021	125	2560	4.9
Feb 2022	137	2622	5.2

Review of Student Applicant Data

This quantitative analysis reviews student applicant data, as reported by UCAS and the University's student monitoring system (Banner). Again, the data are totally dependent on disability disclosure. Table 5 illustrates applicant data for 2018/19 – 2021/22. As shown, both the number and proportion of UCAS applications from disabled applicants have increased since 2018/19.

Table 5   UCAS Applications 2018/19 - 2021/22

Year of Entry	Total UCAS applications	UCAS Applications from Disabled Students	% of Applications from Disabled Students
AY 2018/19	28,047	3,379	12.0
AY 2019/20	27,749	3,691	13.3
AY 2020/21	28,115	3,731	13.3
AY 2021/22	29,866	4,388	14.7

This coincides with an increase in the success rate of applications from disabled students since 2018/19 (Table 6). Over the period, application success rates for disabled students remained in line with application success rates for non-disabled students (Tables 7 and 8).

Table 6   Successful Applications by Disability AY 2018/19 – 2021/22

Year of Entry	Total Successful Applications	Successful Applications from Disabled Students	% All Successful Applications from Disabled Students
AY 2018/19	19,211	2,291	11.9
AY 2019/20	19,963	2,616	13.1
AY 2020/21	21,721	2,803	12.9
AY 2021/22	21,898	3,278	15.0

Table 7   Successful Disabled Student Applications AY 2018/19 – 2021/22

Year of Entry	Applications from Disabled Students	Total Successful Applications from Disabled Students	% of Applications from Disabled Students which were successful
AY 2018/19	3,379	2,291	67.8
AY 2019/20	3,691	2,616	70.9
AY 2020/21	3,731	2,803	75.1
AY 2021/22	4,388	3,278	74.7

Table 8   Successful Non-Disabled Student Applications 2018/19 – 2021/22

Year of Entry	Applications from Non-Disabled Students	Total Successful Applications from Non-Disabled Students	% of Applications from Non-Disabled Students which were successful
AY 2018/19	24,668	16,920	68.6
AY 2019/20	24,058	17,347	72.1
AY 2020/21	24,384	18,918	77.6
AY 2021/22	25,478	18,620	73.1

Between 2018/19 and 2021/22, the average application success rate for disabled students was 72.1%, compared with 72.8% for non-disabled students. This is positive, considering that applicant numbers for both disabled and non-disabled students have fluctuated since 2018/19 (Table 9).

Table 9   Successful UCAS Applications AY 2018/19 – 2021/22

Year of Entry	Total UCAS Applications	Total Successful UCAS Applications	% Applications Successful
AY 2018/19	28,047	19,211	68.5
AY 2019/20	27,749	19,963	71.9
AY 2020/21	28,115	21,721	77.3
AY 2021/22	29,866	21,898	73.3

Student entrants for 2018/19 -2021/22 are illustrated in Table 10. This highlights a general increase in the proportion of disabled undergraduate entrants over the period, compared with a slight decrease in the proportions of postgraduate entrants over the reporting period.

Students with disabilities are encouraged to engage with the University's Student Wellbeing team in order to access reasonable adjustment recommendations (RARs) and get support to access additional funded disability support (as appropriate), to ensure full participation. Since 2018/19, the numbers of students with RAR's to support them with their disability related additional study needs has increased by 24%, from 2151 students in 2018/19 to 2664 students in 2021/22.

Table 10 - Historical Overview of Disabilities Declared by New Entrants by Level AY 2018/19 – 2021/22

Level	AY 2018/19			AY 2019/20			AY 2020/21			AY 2021/22		
	Disability Declared	All Entrants	%	Disability Declared	All Entrants	%	Disability Declared	All Entrants	%	Disability Declared	All Entrants	%
UG	873	6,352	13.7	1,019	6,284	16.2	1,115	6,702	16.6	1,358	6,955	19.5
PGT	191	2,629	7.3	201	3,089	6.5	259	5,220	5.0	314	6,283	5.0
Total	1,064	8,981	11.9	1,220	9,373	13.0	1,374	11,922	11.5	1,672	13,238	12.6

Review of disability disclosure rates

Various guidance documents exist at the University to encourage staff and students to disclose a disability. These include the Disclosure Guidelines for Academic and Faculty Support Staff (Students); Disability Disclosure Guidelines for all Line Managers; the Staff Protocol for Making Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Staff, and staff and student disclosure forms.

During the reporting period, the University developed guidance for staff entitled, 'What do we mean by disability?' This is available to staff internally via the Staff DisAbility Network and EDI web pages.

There has been little variation in declaration rates throughout the life cycle of this DAP. As of 6 February 2022, 5.2% of staff declared a disability. While language continues to be updated during the review of disability documentation, actions to promote 'sharing of disability information' should be included in the new DAP.

Staff

Staff disclose disability to the University in a variety of ways. For example:

- they may complete an Equal Opportunities form or update their personal Equal Opportunities record online to indicate that they are disabled; or,

- alternatively, they may complete a disclosure form.

These more formal methods of disability disclosure enable the University to monitor disability for planning purposes. However, many staff may choose a less formal method of disclosure, for example, if they require a reasonable adjustment. In these instances, they may only tell their line manager that they are disabled, and/or may request that information about their disability is not passed on to anyone else. Therefore, these staff may not be included in the general Equal Opportunities monitoring data.

Required action:

For the purposes of the new DAP:

- Encourage disability disclosure though increased visibility of disabled people and through training and awareness sessions.

Students

Students disclose in a variety of ways. For example, they may indicate on their UCAS form that they are disabled (i.e. before they arrive at the University), they may indicate at online registration that they are disabled (when they arrive at the

University), they may register with Student Wellbeing - Accessibility Services, or they may tell a member of staff that they are disabled (i.e. informally, during their course).

As such, it is almost impossible to get an accurate picture of disclosure rates for students the University. Equal Opportunities data suggest that there has been an incremental increase in students disclosing a disability at the University. In 2020/21, 12.6% of students declared a disability; this compares with 11.9% in 2019/20.

Work is ongoing to encourage students to disclose disability, to ensure that all disabled students receive appropriate support at the University.

Required action:

For the purposes of the new DAP:

- Encourage disability disclosure by new students/entrants through awareness campaigns.

Review of public life positions

As outlined in the DAP, the range of public life positions available at the University are:

- University Council;
- University Senate;
- Convocation;
- University Committees, working groups and consultative groups;
- Students' and Students' Union clubs, societies and sabbatical officers;
- Students' Union Board of Trustees;
- Students Union Council; and the
- University Staff DisAbility Network

Whilst disabled staff and students are encouraged to apply to participate in the main University Committees (i.e. Council, Senate and Convocation) general University committees, working groups and consultative groups are constituted according to area of expertise, interest and relevance (i.e. staff are invited to participate).

All committees and working groups are expected to align with the University's equality statement:

> 'In reaching its decisions, the Group will support and promote the values contained in the University's Equality Scheme and associated policies. It will ensure that wherever possible it is proactive in promoting equality of opportunity and good relations among persons of different religious belief; political opinion; racial group; age; marital status; sexual orientation; between men and women generally; between persons with a disability and persons without; between persons with dependants and persons without, and that its actions do not adversely impact on any of these groups."

The University Council was reconstituted in January 2021, following staff elections and an external recruitment exercise. As at 6 February 2022, no members of Council or SLT declared a disability.

Membership of the Staff DisAbility Network increased from 13% of disabled staff to 35% of disabled staff during the lifecycle of the DAP. Members of this Network have helped to inform the draft actions within the University's new DAP 2022 - 2027.

The University also responds to requests from outside bodies for representation on various committees/boards. In the past, this has included:

- Health Trusts;
- Local Councils;
- Professional Bodies;
- Government Committees/Working Groups;
- Boards of Governors; and
- Editorial Boards

Required action:

For the purposes of the new DAP:

- Consider more effective ways of encouraging disabled people to put themselves forward for positions on the University's main committees and external committees/boards.

Disability awareness training

Online disability awareness training provides immediate and accessible information about disability legislation; rights and responsibilities under this legislation; disability etiquette etc.

In order to complete the on-line training successfully, staff must complete a series of quizzes and achieve a pass mark of at least 60% for each quiz. This allows EDI staff to ensure that the learning objectives of each unit within the training have been achieved. On completion, staff are also invited to provide feedback on the training.

Feedback has been taken into consideration to enhance the content to help make it more relevant, interactive and engaging. At the beginning of 2022, the content of the University's online 'Equality and Diversity' and 'Disability Awareness' training modules were refreshed.

Both modules will be migrated onto a new learning platform to enhance usability and accessibility. It is envisaged that the new system will also trigger alerts to remind staff to renew their training before the expiration date, which is hoped will help increase completion rates.

By 31 March 2022, 65% of current staff had successfully completed the 'Equality and Diversity' training and 60% had completed the 'Disability Awareness' training. This

was a significant increase in completion rates from 2019/20 by 7.8% (57.2%) and 9.9% (50.1%) respectively.

New staff are required to complete the training during induction, and regular reminders are sent out to all staff encouraging them to complete the training.

Required actions:

For the purposes of the new DAP:

- Increased awareness of the new Disability Awareness training module through the enhanced functionality of the LMS LEARN system which can send automated reminders to staff, as well as promoting the training through regular communications on the University's social media and internal news channels.

- Include signposting to training in Inductions with new staff.

More specialised training was provided within a general disability awareness programme of face-to-face and online training, for example:

- Autism Awareness (Employers for Disability NI – 'EfDNI')

- Dyslexia & Dyscalculia Awareness (EfDNI)

- ADD, ADHD & Dyspraxia Awareness (EfDNI)

- Introduction to Hearing Loss Awareness (EfDNI)

- Workable Programme (Disability Action)

- Reasonable Adjustment Protocol

- Introduction to BSL and Sign Communication

- SENDO

Further information about the impact of this awareness training is provided within the Section 75 Annual Progress Reports.

Various training sessions provided over the period indicate that each session has been well-received, and useful to staff. Using post-training surveys and polls / chat bar functionality on MS Teams, the feedback has been very positive.

For example:

"Awareness of areas that I didn't have any knowledge of. The delivery was great as real-life examples were used and it made it feel more relevant." (Neurodiversity Awareness – EfDNI – December 2019)

"Very interesting and informative. Relaxed tone and delivery style suited the audience. Very good all round." (SENDO Awareness – in-house training - January 2022)

Feedback from in-house training has been used to improve the training and/or develop the online training.

Disability Equality Training

Whilst all training provided aims to increase awareness of disability legislation and disability issues, it takes cognisance of the disability duties in that it also aims to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage their participation in public life.

In November 2020, the EDI Unit provided a bespoke training session on the disability duties and the Disability Action Plan, in conjunction with the Equality Commission. 18 staff attended. Only 54 % of respondents to the staff 'attitudes to disability' surveys (March 22) indicated that they are aware of the disability duties March 2022.

The University continues to raise awareness of the disability duties during one-on-one equality screening meetings with policy owners. This also helps to mainstream the disability duties into the University's policies, practices and procedures.

Required actions:

For the purposes of the new DAP:

- Increase uptake of the mandatory disability awareness training;
- Provide specific training on the disability duties/DAP to increase awareness;
- Deliver disability equality training for staff; and
- Develop a programme of disability awareness training for staff. Consider the disability survey results (key findings) in regard to training requirements and awareness raising.

What remains to be done?

The University's DAP achieved a variety of tangible outcomes for disabled people (described above); work is ongoing to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage their participation in public life within the University's third DAP.

The majority of actions have been completed (94%) and must be considered to be mainstreamed. The new DAP should consist of actions that are unique, new and relate specifically to the two disability duties. Where possible, quantifiable performance indicators and timescales will be implemented. This will improve the relevance and clarity of the DAP 2022-2027.

The results of the 'attitudes to disability' surveys demonstrate that specific awareness raising initiatives and training is required; and the feedback used to develop a new and well-managed training programme.

Continued high-level commitment and good communication/publicity are central to building on the success of the DAP and it is anticipated that the University's new Corporate Strategy, will bring a renewed focus on disability issues.

How to build on success

Continued high-level commitment and good communication/publicity are central to building on the success of the new DAP.

In order to celebrate and build on this success, the University will:

- establish an internal advisory body, which is representative of the staff and student body, to engage with and to help inform decision making and project planning;

- enhance the profile and online accessibility of the Disability Action Plan on the University's website; and increase awareness through social media and through the University's internal communication channels;

- improve training on the disability duties and provide a comprehensive programme of awareness sessions for *all* staff on a wide range of disability issues and as reflected in feedback from the staff surveys;

- develop and promote guidance for staff that supports the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and the requirements of the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) to address potential barriers and to promote inclusive online events;

- be proactive in further enhancing relationships across all Faculties to identify and showcase research or teaching that directly impacts on disability in society.

- assume all actions that are complete have been 'mainstreamed' into the day-to-day business of the University; and where possible, ensure all actions within the next Disability Action Plan are unique, new and relate specifically to the two disability duties;

- ensure that the staff 'attitudes to disability' surveys' results (key findings) are considered;

- improve clarity of the performance indicators so that they are outcome focused (where possible) and measurable (quantifiable);

- include supporting actions to encourage/enhance disability disclosure;

- consider different ways of encouraging participation of disabled students in the Sports Union;

- continue to mainstream the disability duties within its policies (i.e. include 'disability duties' questions within its policy screening pro-forma); and

- continue to work with the Students' Union to promote disability equality.

How to meet the challenges identified

In order to meet the challenges identified, the University will:

- re-state its commitment to effectively implementing the disability duties and ensure that positive practice is maintained, celebrated and communicated through the new DAP;

- adopt a more collaborative approach by consulting and engaging more widely with disabled people to ensure that the University's new DAP is agile, accessible, visible and fit for purpose;

- ensure adequate data are collected to monitor the effectiveness of the measures (i.e. in terms of changes in attitudes and participation), and where necessary, mitigate any new challenges; and

- ensure that disability equality is embedded within all functional areas and reporting structures.

Conclusion

The review of the University's DAP indicates that it has been effective in a variety of ways. For example, it has led to continued improvements in the way in which disability issues are monitored, managed, evaluated and reviewed at the University.

However, the review also indicates that there is still much work to be done to build on previous successes and to meet the challenges identified. To this end the University remains committed to effectively implementing the disability duties, through its new Disability Action Plan 2022 - 2027.

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