

# Carlow Local Authorities



## Towards Universal Access for All Implementation Plan 2008 – 2015



## Table of Contents

### Part 1:

National context

The starting point

Our approach

What have we done so far?

Prioritisation methodology

### Part 2:

Action Plan 2008-2013

The built environment

Accessible customer services

Accessible information

Employment and retention of people  
with disabilities

Corporate governance

**This Disability Implementation Plan is on our website [www.carlow.ie](http://www.carlow.ie) and can be provided in alternative formats on request. Please contact our Access Officer (customer services), Michael Brennan on Telephone: 059-9170345  
E Mail: [mbrennan@carlowcoco.ie](mailto:mbrennan@carlowcoco.ie)**

## Your Comments and Ideas

Consultation with our customer is a key value that guides our work in Carlow Local Authorities. We welcome your comments and ideas about our disability implementation plan. You can send your comments in the following ways

1. **By Post to Michael Brennan, Access Officer, Carlow County Council, Carlow**
2. **By Fax to Michael Brennan: 059-9131581**
3. **By email to: [mbrennan@carlowcoco.ie](mailto:mbrennan@carlowcoco.ie)**
4. **By Phoning Michael Brennan on: 059-9170345**
5. **In person – Please contact Michael Brennan on Telephone: 059-9170345 to make an appointment**

## Introduction

### Welcome to Carlow Local Authorities Disability Implementation Plan 2008 - 2015



Tom Barry  
County  
Manager  
Carlow County  
Council



Denis Foley  
Cathaoirleach  
Carlow County  
Council



Tom O'Neill  
Cathaoirleach  
Town Council



Arthur McDonald  
Cathaoirleach  
Muinebheag  
Town Council

The purpose of this plan is to explain what actions we intend to take in Carlow Local Authorities over the next 7 years to continue to provide buildings, information and services that are more accessible and useable for all our customers including our customers with a disability.

#### **Key Objectives of this disability implementation plan are:**

- To work systematically towards creating a universally accessible built environment, that is buildings, facilities and spaces that can be accessed and used by **all** our customers, including our customers with a disability.
- To work systematically towards universally accessible information, that is information that all our customers can use.

- To work systematically towards providing universally accessible services, services that are flexible, responsive and useable for all our customers from first point of contact onwards.
- To raise awareness and build capacity of our employees so that they become more competent and confident in relation to access issues.
- To ensure goods and services that we procure are accessible to all.
- To adopt pro-active measures to increasing the employment rates of people with disabilities in Carlow Local Authorities.

Meeting our objectives will take time and will depend on collaboration and co-ordination between a wide range of people and agencies. There will also be challenges such as competing priorities and budgetary restrictions. However we believe that the implementation of this plan will be a significant step forward in realising our vision.

## Our Vision

**Public buildings, information and services that are accessible to all the people of County Carlow and that promote the participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of our community**

**Part 1** of the plan explains what we have achieved so far, who we have worked with and our approach to how we work with others. Part 1 also explains how our Disability Implementation Plan fits in with Central Government legislation and policy as well as international thinking on disability issues.

**Part 2** builds on the work we have completed to date and provides a detailed breakdown of each action that we intend to take over the next 7 years. The plan sets out key objectives, identifies specific actions, provides timeframes for achievement, and assigns responsibilities for implementation.

We look forward to working with our employees, elected members, our customers, statutory, community and voluntary partners in the implementation of this plan that will result in a more accessible and inclusive County Carlow for all.

Click here to: [Read our Summary Plan](#)      [Read our Full Plan](#)



**Kennedy Avenue  
Accessible Car Parking**



**Kennedy Avenue  
Accessible  
Crossing**



**Millenium Bridge**



**Entrance to Carlow Town Park from Millenium Bridge**



**Tactile paving on Dublin Road at School**

# **Carlow Local Authorities Disability Implementation Plan 2008 – 2013 (Full Plan)**

## **Part 1**

### **National Context**

Throughout the 1990's, Ireland experienced a fundamental shift in the way people thought about disability. People in Ireland with disabilities began to challenge the traditional view that a person with a disability was in some way “less able”, a person who was dependent on the charity of others and in need of “fixing”.

People with disabilities introduced us to a new way of thinking and challenged us to move from seeing people with disabilities as objects of charity to recognising them as full citizens with equal rights to access and participate in all areas of Irish society.

These changes culminated in 2004 when the Government launched a new National Disability Strategy.

The National Disability Strategy lays out a range of measures intended to enable the participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of Irish life. It includes The Disability Act 2005 that requires Local Authorities to work towards providing:



## **1. Accessible Environments including buildings, spaces, facilities and amenities**

## **2. Accessible Information**

## **3. Accessible Customer Services**

The Act also required some Government Ministers including the Minister responsible for Local Authorities to produce a “Sectoral Plan” to outline how their Government Department would deliver on their legislative responsibilities.

Chapter 4 of the Sectoral Plan requires each Local Authority to produce their own Disability Act implementation plan to explain how they will:

*“...promote universal access to all public spaces, buildings and services owned and operated by Local Authorities.”*

**This plan is an important step towards Carlow Local Authorities meeting their legal responsibilities as laid out in the Disability Act 2005 and the accompanying Sectoral Plan. This plan is also our “map” that will guide us towards realising our vision of universal access to all spaces, buildings, facilities and services that we own or operate**

## The Starting Point – What do we mean by Disability?

The traditional view of disability was that if a person's body or mind worked differently or less well than ours then that difference would stop the person from being able to take part in Irish society. This is because we compared people with disabilities against our idea of "normal", i.e. able bodied. We viewed disability as a tragedy for a person, because they were "different", the unfortunate one with the "faulty" body or mind and in many cases we believed that disability was equivalent to "less able".

Over the last 2 decades our view of disability has changed. We now recognise that people are different but we do not see difference as a tragedy or that difference equals being in any way "less". Carlow Local Authorities are committed to what is known as a social model of disability. This means that a person may have an impairment, i.e. a difference in the way their body or mind is structured or functions but that person is only prevented from taking part in society by the barriers we put in their way. People are not disabled by their own bodies or minds but they become disabled by the barriers we create, for example inaccessible buildings or information.

This new way of thinking has huge implications for all our work because it means that we can "disable" our customers through inaccessible buildings, facilities, service delivery and the way that we provide information. Rather than "disable" our customers we want to "enable" them so how do we plan to do that?

## Our Approach

Our approach is built on 5 principles that we believe are essential for success. These are:

### 1. Universal Access

We define universal access as environments, information and services that can be accessed and used by **all** our customers, including our customers with a disability. This means that access for everyone becomes the “norm”.

The most effective way to deliver universal access is to ensure that we consider the impact of our plans and work on all our customers including those with a disability. This applies to buildings, facilities, information and services and needs to be done at the very earliest stages of a design or proposal for change. For example, the area engineers already incorporate universal access principles in the design and implementation of pedestrian crossings and tactile paving as part of Village Urban Renewal schemes and traffic management plans.

The key approach we will use to find out how our work affects our customers is contained in the next two principles, consultation and disability proofing.

### 2. Consultation

Consultation with our potential and current customers is essential and our customers with a disability are no different. We want to ensure that consultation is not a “one off” event but is an ongoing dialogue so that we can learn more about what works and what does not work for our customers with a disability. Our customers with disabilities will also help us to “proof” our decisions going forward so that their needs are included in our plans.

### **3. Disability Proofing**

We define disability proofing as

... “a strategy which aims to make sure that disabled people and their needs are included from the start in the development of all structures, policies and practices.”

We will endeavour to adopt a process of disability proofing at every stage of the development of a new building, service or when a facility or service is being refurbished or amended. We will do this by asking how will this decision affect our customers with a disability? The answers to that question will inform how we move forward.

Reaching our vision of Universal Access for all is an ambitious vision and in order to make that happen we also recognise the importance of our next principle, corporate commitment..

### **4. Corporate Commitment**

Our ability to deliver environments and services that are universally accessible depends to a large degree on clear structures and on co-ordination of those structures within our Local Authorities and also between ourselves and a range of other agencies.

The Corporate Plan sets out a strategic framework for action for Carlow Local Authorities for the period 2004 to 2009. This policy document is implemented through Business/Team plans which are prepared on an annual basis by each Department in consultation with employees, to enable the Council to achieve the long -term objectives outlined in the Corporate Plan. The annual business plans drive the Performance Management Development System. Progress in

respect of the delivery of the Corporate Plan is reported on yearly basis through the Carlow Local Authorities Annual Report which is adopted by the elected members.

## 5. Building Capacity

The development and implementation of this plan will enable us to gather knowledge, acquire skills and share expertise. We want to transfer our learning through the organisation and build the confidence and competence of our employees to work with and serve their colleagues and customers who may have a disability.



Carlow County Buildings



Carlow Town Hall

## What Have We Done So Far?

### 1. Achievements to date in providing Universal Access

We have already made major changes to our built environment, our services and information that we believe has significantly improved access for all people in Carlow. Our achievements to date include:

#### **Built Environment:**

- Access Audits carried out by Carlow Access Movement in 2006.
- Access audits carried out on all buildings, heritage sites, graveyards, parks and playgrounds by an external access auditing company in 2007.
- Installation of automated doors in the County Building, Town Hall, County Library, Planning and Motor tax.
- Loop systems installed in every reception point throughout Local Authority.
- Meeting rooms in County Building made accessible.
- Accessible lift installed in Carlow Town Hall.
- Accessible lift and toilet facilities installed in McGrath Hall.
- Pedestrian crossing installed at County Buildings.
- Provision of clear directional signage in all Local Authority Buildings.
- Purchase of accessible information kiosk for County Buildings.
- Provision of low counters in reception at County Buildings.

- Provision of ramps, pedestrian crossings, footpath and tactile paving in key locations in Carlow, Tullow and Bagenalstown.
- Provision of accessible parking along Barrow Way in Bagenalstown.
- Provision of accessible play equipment in Myshall and Carlow Town.
- Provision of tactile paving in Tullow.
- Accessible parking bays painted blue to highlight presence.
- Access Officer for Built Environment appointed.
- Provision of signage in Oakpark and Ducketts Grove Amenity Areas.
- Upgrading of Disabled Parking bays.
- Wheelchairs, low counters and evacuation chairs available in all public buildings.

### **Customer Services:**

- Disability awareness training provided to 90% of employees.
- 3 Access Officers appointed, one for customer services (Michael Brennan), one for Information Communications Technology ( Eoin Ling), and one for the Built Environment (Eoin O' Ceallachair).
- Resource appointed for disabled parking management by wheelchair user in Carlow Town.

## **Information:**

- Provision of accessible reading material for library service, audio books and large print.
- Publication of Carlow Local Authority Corporate Plan and Annual report (2004 - 2009) in large print.
- Production of a video outlining services provided by Carlow Local Authorities and the role of elected members produced in association with Carlow Access Movement (CAM).
- Web site audited and achieved compliance in December 2007.
- Purchased Content Management System for council website devised using National Disability Authority guidelines so that as employees update information it is available in an accessible format.
- Provided guidelines on producing clear print and circulated these to all our employees.

## **2. Achievements to date in Consultation**

Carlow Local Authorities adopted the Barcelona Declaration in April 2004 and part of that commitment involved establishing ongoing consultation structures with local people with disabilities and their advocates.

We wanted to consult with a broad range of people with disabilities so that we might understand the different types of barriers that people experience.

We began working with Carlow Access Movement (CAM) an organisation that comprises people with physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities as well as representatives from People with Disabilities in Ireland (PWDI).



The purpose of CAM is to promote access and participation for all people with disabilities who live in and visit County Carlow and to raise awareness within County Carlow of Disability issues.

In 2005 our Barcelona Implementation Team was re-named Carlow Universal Access Team and became the group that leads our disability implementation plan. Members of CAM and a representative from People with Disabilities in Ireland (PWDI) continue to sit on this team and play a key role acting as a consultation link between ourselves and people with disabilities throughout County Carlow.

CAM members are also part of the community and voluntary forum on our County Development Board. As part of this work CAM named individuals in most parts of County Carlow to act as a feedback link between people with disabilities in their locality and Carlow Local Authorities. In this way we can reach and consult with people across all parts of the County.

Local CAM points of contact can provide feedback up to the wider CAM group and this feedback can then be fed by CAM representatives through to the Universal Access Team. The process then works in reverse. When the Universal Access Team wants to hear the views of people with disabilities in Carlow they ask for feedback from the CAM representatives that sit on the Universal Access Team. These representatives can consult with the wider CAM group who may in turn seek further more local feedback through their local area points of contact.

This standing item approach to consultation provides a continuous loop of information and feedback and is used by Carlow Universal Access Team to help identify priorities and also in practical problem solving.

We also carry out “one off” consultations to supplement our ongoing work and we try to inform our customers about our plans and work in relation to disability access issues. For example representatives on the Carlow Universal Access Team have been on local radio programmes that focus on disability issues.

**Please see Figure 1 for a graphic over view of the structure of representation to Carlow Local Authorities.**

### 3. Achievements to date in developing Disability Proofing

We have engaged in disability proofing exercises over the last 2 years and we have used a disability impact assessment on a limited number of plans. For example an Access statement and drawings for Visualise, a new art gallery, were sent to members of CAM and others from the disability sector. They considered the impact of plans on people with disabilities and sent their comments back to the Local Authority who incorporated elements of feedback received.

Our efforts in disability proofing to date have been relatively informal. We recognise that Disability Proofing is an approach that we need to extend and apply to the provision of information and services. We also need to develop a more systematic approach to disability proofing across all our work going forward and this is an objective in part 2 of our plan for 2008 – 2015.

### 4. Achievements to date in developing Corporate Commitment

It is not possible to implement a plan as ambitious and far reaching as this one without clear structures that co-ordinate all plans and activities internally and between organisations across County Carlow.

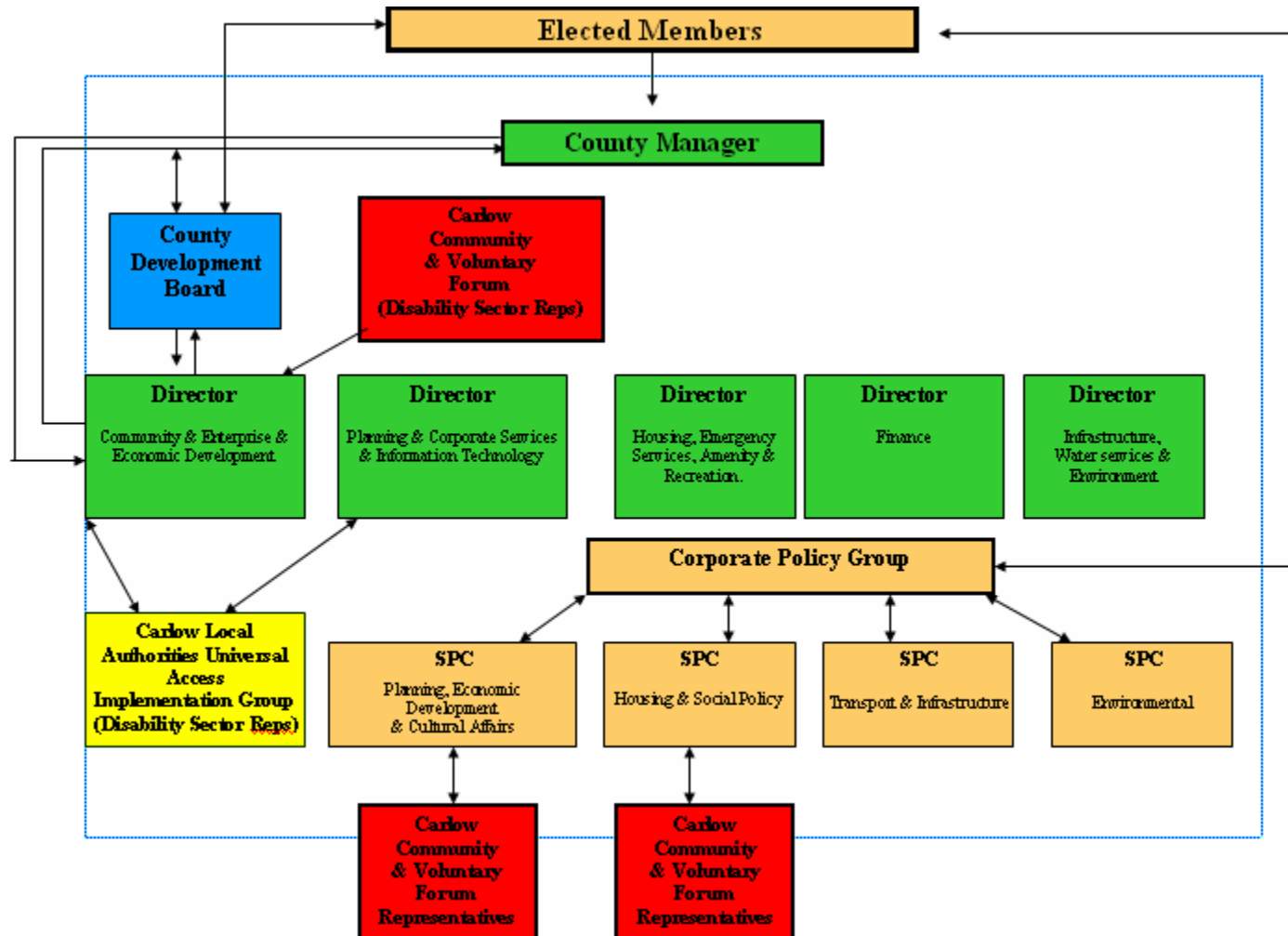
Our Universal Access Implementation Team is made up of internal members (employees working in functions across the organisation) including **Michael Brennan** (Senior Executive Officer Corporate Services/Human Resources), **Eoin O Ceilleachair** (Senior Assistant Chief Fire Officer and Prevention ), **Margaret Nolan** ( Administrative Officer Community and Enterprise) **Kieran Cullinane** ( Senior Engineer Town Council /Central Area) **Lily Slye** ( Executive Engineer Housing Recreation & Amenity) **Tom King** (County Librarian) **Fiona O Neill** (Senior Executive Officer, Environment), **Liam Fitzgerald** (Senior Engineer Roads) **Paul Gilmore** (IS Analyst Developer) and **Paula Murphy** ( Executive Planner).

Three members of CAM also sit on the implementation team **P.J Cleere, Bella Stafford and Mary McDonnell.**

Each member of the team is responsible for feeding back progress to colleagues in their area and for clarifying issues in relation to the plan. Each member of the team will also accept lead responsibility to drive specific actions forward over the lifetime of this plan.

The Senior Executive Officer (Corporate Services) is responsible for informing and liaising with Directors that make up the Senior Management Team and our County Manager.

1 Graphic overview of structure of representation to Local Authorities.



## 5. Achievements to date in Building Capacity

We are committed to developing our employees in terms of knowledge and the development of skills. In this way they will become more competent and confident in working with their colleagues with a disability and serving their customers with a disability. We are also committed to raising awareness of the importance that we place on Universal Access throughout County Carlow. So far we have:

- Provided a one day disability awareness course to 90% of our employees.
- Provided job specific technical training to some of our employees ( for example ICT).
- Employees received Sign Language training .
- 5 of our employees participated on the University of Ulster Access Auditing programme.
- Provided guidelines on producing clear print and circulated these to all our employees.
- A Universal Access & The Built Environment Seminar was arranged for Design Professionals, Planners, Engineers, Technicians and other relevant personnel in County Carlow ,which focused on promoting awareness in relation to complying with Universal Accessibility for all and to encourage best practice on site.

## Prioritisation Methodology

The sectoral plan clearly states that actions proposed by each Local Authority must be prioritised. Carlow Local Authorities have used the following criteria to prioritise the actions that you will find in Part 2 of this plan. We used the following criteria:

1. Results of audits with recommendations for action to include cost bandings and priorities.
2. Level of usage. The more frequently a building, facility, information etc is used / needed the higher priority it is accorded.
3. View of people with disabilities. An essential factor in deciding what actions deserve higher priority is to ask the people who are potentially enabled or disabled by our buildings, facilities and services.
4. Potential Impact. Some buildings, facilities and services may not be used as frequently as others but can have a huge impact on reaching more of our citizens if they are made more accessible.
5. Coherence with other agencies plans (e.g. transport).
6. Budget. The importance of ensuring that our limited resources are used efficiently cannot be overstated.
7. Unique local circumstances.

# Carlow Local Authorities Disability Implementation Plan

## Part 2: Action Plan (2008 – 2015)

This plan provides information about what actions we are going to take over the next 7 years to build on our work to date.

We are planning to take actions in relation to

[\(Click here to read full plan online\)](#)

- **The Built Environment**
- **Accessible Customer Services including services provided to us by procurement**
- **Accessible Information**
- **Employment and Retention of people with disabilities**



Items highlighted in **RED** refer to accessible environments including buildings, spaces, facilities and amenities.

Items highlighted in **PURPLE** refer to accessible information.

Items highlighted in **GREEN** refer to accessible customer service

## The Built Environment

We have completed access audits of all our buildings, heritage sites, graveyards, parks and playgrounds. Our focus over the next 7 years will be to ensure that we prioritise our actions through consultation with people with disabilities and other agencies.

Action	Key Tasks	Budget Estimate	Timeframe From- To	Lead Dept. Individual Responsible	Linkages	Progress to Date & Next Steps	Performance Indicator / Best Practice
<p><b>Part 3 Section 25</b></p> <p>Devise rolling 5 year access plan of works to implement recommendations from access audit.</p>	<p>Consult with access groups in the local area as to how they wish to prioritise the recommendations from access audits.</p> <p>Consult with other agencies to ensure co-ordination of actions.</p> <p>Create decision making matrix to prioritise key recommendations.</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>Completed as part of 2008 budget</p>	<p>June 2008 – ongoing</p> <p>5<sup>th</sup> August completed</p>	<p>Corporate Services</p>	<p>Universal Access Team</p> <p>Recreation and Amenity</p> <p>Transport</p> <p>Environment</p> <p>Planning Dept</p>	<p>Regular meetings established.</p> <p>In progress.</p> <p><b>Appendix A to Implementation plan shows details of</b></p>	<p><b>NDA Excellence through Accessibility Award (Guidelines 6-11).</b></p> <p><b>02 Ability Awards (Accessibility).</b></p> <p><b>Carlow Local Authorities Development Plans Departmental Business</b></p>

	<p>Create summary of recommended actions and present to Universal Access Team</p> <p>Meeting with engineers to hand over management and coordination of addressing the requirements highlighted by the audits.</p> <p>Incorporate findings of Access Audits into general work plans for engineers and facility managers.</p>	N/A	June 2008		Building Control	<p><b>priorities through to 2015.</b></p> <p>Plans for 2008 include build outs on 5 junctions in Bagenalstown for improved access. 14 new parking bays and 3 new pathways.</p>	<p><b>Plans</b></p> <p><b>Corporate Plans</b></p>
Carry out access appraisals on any plans for	Develop / amend procurement policy & procedure to reflect inclusion of		Ongoing	Corporate		Recommendations for procurement policy	<b>NDA Excellence through Accessibility</b>



## Accessible Customer Services

Sections 26 and 27 of the Disability Act outline the requirements on a Public Body regarding accessible services. Key priorities over the lifetime of this plan are to review our services for accessibility, create customer panels to customers with a disability and work with local disability groups to carry out a mystery shopper project for us.

Action	Key Tasks	Budget Estimate	Timeframe From- To	Lead Dept. Individual Responsible	Linkages	Progress to Date & Next Steps	Performance Indicator / Best Practice
<p><b>Part 3 Section 26 (1) (a)</b></p> <p><b>Ensure accessibility of mainstream public services, where practicable and justifiable.</b></p>	<p>Review (audit) accessibility of services and information.</p> <p>Produce short report on key findings.</p> <p>Consider report and amend / insert new actions into implementation plan</p> <p>Conduct demographic profile of local people with disabilities</p> <p>Carry out customer</p>	<p>€7,000 to include report &amp; database of audit findings</p> <p>€6000</p> <p>€6,000 to include short report</p>	<p>Completed August – September 08</p> <p>2009</p>	Corporate Services	<p>All Departments</p> <p>Workplace Partnership – Customer Services Working Group</p>	<p>Completed 1<sup>st</sup> week September 08</p> <p>Funds assigned in 2008 for Halliwick Swim Training, Gymnastic Club pilot and Physical</p>	<p><b>NDA Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services &amp; Information provided by Public Bodies.</b></p> <p><b>NDA ETA (Guidelines 1,2,&amp; 5).</b></p> <p><b>02 Ability Awards</b></p>

	<p>consultation by focus groups / listening meetings</p> <p>Produce short report on key findings.</p> <p>Implement “mystery shopper” project with people with disabilities in community</p> <p>Produce short report on key findings.</p> <p>Establish standing consumer access panels for regular feedback.</p> <p>Review/ amend or create new actions dependent on recommendations from findings as above</p> <p>Disability proof all new or significantly changing services.</p> <p>Review policy on</p>	<p>€6.500 to include report</p> <p>€600 advices</p>	<p>2009</p> <p>On an annual basis</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Completed September 08</p> <p>Q109</p>	<p>Corporate Services</p>	<p>Open Minds/ Carlow Equal</p>	<p>Activity Leader Training for young people with disabilities.</p>	<p><b>Customer Action Plan</b></p> <p><b>Customer Charter.</b></p> <p><b>Social Inclusion Strategy.</b></p> <p><b>Equal Status Policy.</b></p>
--	--	---	--	---------------------------	---------------------------------	---	--

	<p>equality and diversity and amend as necessary to ensure it reflects Equal Status Acts 2000 &amp; 2004</p> <p>Review and disability proof customer charter and customer action plan.</p>						
<p><b>Part 3</b> <b>Section 26</b> <b>(1) (b)</b> <b>Provide for assistance if requested to persons with disabilities in accessing the service</b></p>	<p>Review communication strategy to include policy &amp; procedures to respond to requests for assistance.</p> <p>Ensure dissemination of procedures to employees (employee briefing). C.F to be part of broader staff briefing on access issues</p> <p>Encourage employees to acquire skills (e.g. sign language).</p> <p>Set up partnerships to ensure employees can practice skills.</p>	<p>€600 advices</p>	<p>End 2008</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>From Sept. '08 ongoing</p>	<p>Corporate Services &amp; IT</p>	<p>all departments</p> <p>External Provider</p>	<p><b>NDA Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services &amp; Information provided by Public Bodies.</b></p> <p><b>NDA ETA (Guidelines 1,2,&amp; 5).</b></p> <p><b>02 Ability Awards.</b></p> <p><b>Customer Action Plan</b></p>	

	Ensure measures are promoted to the public (communication campaign).				Carlow Access Movement		with performance indicators.  Customer Charter.  Social Inclusion Strategy.  Equal Status Policy.
<b>Part 3 Section 26 (1) (C) Expertise Ensure the availability of appropriate expertise and skills re: making its services accessible. Expertise can be made</b>	Develop database / register of local & national sources of advice.  Identify expert advice on access.  Ensure the availability of internal & external experts to give advice about accessible services.  Ensure advice is communicated to	€1200	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter 08	Corporate Services	External Provider  Carlow Access Movement	Ongoing  Ongoing	<b>FÁS register of Disability Equality Training Providers.</b>  <b>Data base for info/advice developed and on intranet.</b>  <b>Email and</b>



<p>available within the organisation , or, where appropriate sourced externally.</p>	<p>relevant personnel. Allow time for considering advice and implementing any actions.  Put data base of supports on intranet and brief staff</p>						<p>evidence of briefing sessions.</p>
<p><b>Part 3</b> <b>Section 26</b> <b>(2) Access Officer</b> <b>Support Access Officers with responsibility for providing or arranging the co-ordination of assistance &amp; guidance.</b></p>	<p>Document procedures to make Access Officer readily available to people with disabilities.  Document procedure to make Access Officer readily available to employees requiring advice.  Brief staff (2 hr sessions) on role of Access Officer and procedures (part of broader briefing session to include IT, database of supports, Procedures to respond to requests)</p>	<p>€600 advices and draft procedure  €1200 a day (4 groups a day) estimate 3-4 days</p>		<p>Corporate Services  Corporate Services</p>	<p>IT/Fire Services/Access Officers  Consult with CAM re publicity campaign</p>		<p>NDA Excellence through Accessibility (Guidelines 1,2, 5 &amp; 12).  02 Ability Awards (Customer Service).  Customer Charter.  Customer Action Plan.  Minutes of</p>

	<p>Publicise the name of the Access Officer, their role and how they may be contacted.</p> <p>Consult on best way to ensure message reaches maximum number of people with disabilities.</p> <p>Ensure Access Officer receives role specific training, coaching and support as identified in training plan &amp; PMDS.</p> <p>Ensure Access Officer has access to external expert advice &amp; support (e.g. hotline support).</p>					<p>1 AO has completed UU course Sep 08</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>meetings showing evidence of consultation.</p> <p>Training plan and PMDS of Access Officers.</p> <p>Evidence of engagement with expert advice.</p> <p>Corporate Plans/ Team Business Plans/PMDS.</p>
--	---	--	--	--	--	---	---

<p><b>Part 4</b> <b>Section 27</b> <b>Ensure accessibility is built into procurement policy, procedures and decision making.</b></p>	<p>Review existing procurement policies, procedures, guidelines, templates etc.</p> <p>Amend above to include “design for all” as a selection criteria in tender.</p> <p>Ensure all employees are aware of new requirements.</p> <p>Ask tenderers to provide information on experience and expertise in accessibility / design for all.</p> <p>Assign gate keeping role / Procurement Officer.</p> <p>Develop guidelines for employees re: when accessibility is not appropriate on specific grounds.</p>	<p>Internal staff costs and consultancy</p>		<p>Finance</p>	<p>Preparation of document commenced March 08 To be completed end 2008</p>		<p><b>NDA Excellence through Accessibility (Guideline 4).</b></p> <p><b>Evidence of policies reviewed and amended.</b></p> <p><b>Evidence of consultation e.g. minutes of meetings.</b></p> <p><b>Corporate Plans/ Team Business Plans/PMDS</b></p>
--	---	---	--	----------------	--	--	---

<b>Part 3 Section 39 Appoint Inquiry Officer, independe nt of the performan ce of their function to deal with complaints made</b>	Document role and parameters of Inquiry officer.  Ensure that Inquiry Officer(s) receive training.  Promote services offered by and name of Inquiry Officer.	€600		Corporate Services	All Departments		<b>NDA Excellence through Accessibility (Guidelines 5, 12).</b>  <b>Principles of Quality Customer Care.</b>
<b>Part 3 sections 25-29 of the Act. Ensure that documente d procedure s in relation to complaints are in</b>	Disability proof complaints procedure.  Develop complaints procedure to take account of Complaints under Disability Act 2005  Publicise Inquiry officer role & complaints	€600 to include advices and sample procedure		Corporate Services	All Departments		<b>Customer Care Plan.</b>  <b>Customer Charter.</b>  <b>Corporate Plans/ Team Business Plans/PMDS</b>

<b>place, well publicised and accessible.</b>	procedures in every Public Office. Brief employees to ensure they are aware of these procedures.						
---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--

## Accessible Information

The Disability Act 2005 requires Public Bodies upon request to provide information in accessible formats for customers who may have a range of impairments including visual impairment, hearing impairment and intellectual impairment.

We are committed to developing a clear strategy that will enable us to provide information in a range of accessible formats in a timely manner.

Action	Key Tasks	Budget Estimate	Timeframe From- To	Lead Dept. Individual Responsible	Linkages	Progress to Date & Next Steps	Performance Indicator / Best Practice
<b>Section 28 (1) (a) Hearing Impairment</b>	Become familiar with the communication needs of people with visual, hearing or intellectual impairment (briefing by local disability groups & representative organisations).  Consult with people with disabilities and disability groups on above.	N/A	1 <sup>st</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter 2009.	Corporate Services  I.T.	Carlow Access Movement		<b>NDA Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services &amp; Information provided by Public Bodies.</b>
<b>Section 28 (1) (b) Visual Impairment</b>		N/A			All depts.		
<b>Section 28 (3) Intellectual</b>		N/A			Groups such as NCBI/NA D/IWA		

<p><b>Impairment</b> Review arrangements for providing information to the public as above to ensure that, as far as practicable, information provided orally and in writing is accessible.</p>	<p>Develop accessible information policy to include electronic information</p> <p>Develop 2 key documents a year in alternative formats in consultation with people with disabilities and retain basic stock of documents (e.g. Customer Charter, Complaints form) CF consultation with people with disabilities</p> <p>Develop &amp; publish procedures to respond to &amp; process requests for accessible formats with performance indicators (x reference requests under accessible services)</p> <p>Develop guidelines and brief employees on creating accessible information including accessible electronic</p>		<p>2009</p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 09</p>	<p>Corporate Services</p>		<p>(Guideline 5 &amp;12).</p> <p><b>NDA First Steps in Producing Accessible Publications</b></p> <p>.</p> <p><b>Principles of Quality Customer Service.</b></p> <p><b>Customer Care Action Plan.</b></p> <p><b>Customer Charter &amp; Customer Action Plan.</b></p> <p><b>02 Ability Awards (Customer Service).</b></p>
--	--	--	--	---------------------------	--	---

	<p>files</p> <p>Ensure customer care charter is prominently displayed in all public offices</p> <p>Identify &amp; negotiate with providers of accessible information.</p> <p>Develop service provider database for producing alternative formats.</p> <p>Refine in-house style guide – include in staff briefings.</p> <p>Employees briefings to ensure they know what access support is available</p> <p>Monitor &amp; document requests &amp; response to these actions.</p>		<p>Sept. '08</p>				<p><b>Corporate Plans/ Team Business Plans/PMDS</b></p>
--	--	--	------------------	--	--	--	---



<p><b>Promote the availability of accessible formats to the public and monitor usage.</b></p>	<p>Consult with people with disabilities &amp; representative groups about promotion of access initiatives and publicity campaign</p> <p>Implement publicity campaign</p> <p>Highlight that people with disabilities can contact Carlow Local Authorities using a variety of methods.</p> <p>Highlight procedures for requesting assistance, producing alternative formats and making complaints.</p> <p>Highlight role of Access Officers and Inquiry Officer</p>						<p><b>As above</b></p>
<p><b>Section 28 (2)</b></p>	<p>Develop a “frequently asked questions”</p>		<p>4<sup>th</sup> Quarter</p>	<p>I.T.</p>			<p><b>NDA Excellence</b></p>

<p><b>Communication with the public via electronic format to be made accessible</b></p>	<p>guide on access features of electronic communication in Carlow County Council to include how to create accessible electronic files, how to activate basic access feature in Word etc</p> <p>Brief employees on electronic access.</p> <p>Provide training and support for employees publishing content to the website.</p> <p>All content for web site through named persons who check for accessibility.</p> <p>All content checked by an external independent expert to ensure accessibility.</p> <p>Develop a repository</p>	<p>08</p>				<p>through Accessibility (Guideline 14).</p> <p>O2 Ability Awards</p> <p>Frequently asked questions guide.</p> <p>Style guide.</p> <p>Evidence of targeted training and support.</p> <p>Name of gate keeping person to check accessibility for web.</p>
---	--	-----------	--	--	--	---

	<p>of access information and support for employees on intranet.</p> <p>Develop data “tracking” system to collect customer information.</p> <p>Consult with people with disabilities on new / potentially emerging technologies.</p> <p>Consider further upgrades to website to include capacity to create HTML files or voice activation</p>						<p><b>Employees informed.</b></p> <p><b>Evidence of retained services independent expert.</b></p> <p><b>Depository established and available on Intranet.</b></p>
<p><b>Computers, kiosks &amp; public access terminals to be made accessible.</b></p>	<p>Audit all public access terminals.</p> <p>Develop implementation plan.</p>			Corporate I.T.			<p><b>NDA Excellence through Accessibility (Guideline 13).</b></p>

## **Employment and Retention of People with Disabilities**

### **Human Resource Management**

Part 5 of the Disability Act places a number of obligations on public sector employers to take all reasonable measures to promote and support the employment of people with disabilities and to ensure that the organisation reaches any compliance targets set by Government. The Act also requires public bodies to report on an annual basis in relation to the achievement of compliance targets and initiatives taken to promote employment. Local authorities who have not attained a minimum of 3 % for the employment of people with disabilities are required to immediately put in place measures to ensure this target is reached. Carlow local authorities reached and exceeded this compliance target in 2007.

Carlow local authorities 'Code of Practice on Recruitment and Selection Procedures' states that ' employment opportunities are accessible to all potentially qualified applicants, including people with disabilities, for whom all appropriate facilities are provided to ensure that they have the opportunity to perform to their optimum at interview'. Additional positive action measures and measures to improve recruitment, progression and retention of staff with disabilities are required.

Our Human Resource Management policies, procedures and practices will support and facilitate the employment of people with disabilities.

Action	Key Tasks	Budget Estimate	Timeframe From- To	Lead Dept. Individual Responsible	Linkages	Progress to Date & Next Steps	Performance Indicator / Best Practice
<p><b>Section 30: Employment</b>  <b>Ensure procedures are in place to monitor, record &amp; report employment quota target &amp; review progress.</b></p>	<p>Disability proof current recruitment and retention policy &amp; procedures including application forms</p> <p>Develop and promote reasonable accommodation policy and procedures for employees and applicants.</p> <p>Consult with people with disabilities and other agencies e.g. FÁS on how to more effectively recruit &amp; retain people with disabilities in</p>	<p>€600</p> <p>€600 advices and sample policy and procedures</p>	<p>September 08</p> <p>September 08</p> <p>2009</p>	<p>HR</p> <p>HR</p>			<p><b>NDA Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services &amp; Information provided by Public Bodies.</b></p> <p><b>NDA Excellence through Accessibility (Guidelines 1,2,&amp; 5).</b></p> <p><b>02 Ability Awards.</b></p>

	<p>employment.</p> <p>Ensure advertising includes publications accessed by people with disabilities.</p> <p>Develop and maintain reasonable accommodation register.</p> <p>Utilise targeted recruitment competitions.</p> <p>Offer training, work experience, mentoring and shadowing opportunities for people with disabilities.</p>	<p>Included in advices above</p>					<p><b>Customer Action Plan with performance indicators.</b></p> <p><b>Customer Charter</b></p> <p><b>Social Inclusion Strategy.</b></p> <p><b>Equal Status Policy.</b></p>
--	---	----------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--

## Corporate Governance

*Each local authority will prepare a yearly progress report on its performance in relation to delivery of actions, targets and timeframes set out in its Implementation Plan and include it in its draft Annual Report for adoption by Council's elected members. (Sectoral Plan 6.2.5)*

This Plan will be submitted to the Department of the Environment on an annual basis. We are committed to a number of core actions that will impact across all our services and will provide long term learning and benefit to the whole organisation

Action	Key tasks	Budget Estimate	Timeframe From-To	Lead Dept. Individual responsible	Linkages	Progress to date & next steps	Performance Indicator / Best Practice
<b>Governance</b> <b>Develop mechanism for disability proofing all decision making processes, planning</b>	Decide on disability proofing mechanism / structures to be used  Disability proofing workshop for key staff to include output of disability	Consultation €1200  3 x 0.5 days training €2,000					<b>NDA Excellence through Accessibility (Guidelines 1-12).</b>

<p><b>across all buildings, facilities and services.</b></p>	<p>impact tool</p> <p>Consult with people with disabilities on disability proofing.</p> <p>Build commitment to disability proofing into corporate plan with cross cutting theme of social inclusion.</p> <p>Commit to disability proofing approach and build this into annual plans etc</p> <p>Monitor disability proofing process.</p>						<p><b>Documented evidence of disability proofing applied.</b></p> <p><b>PMDS.</b></p>
	<p>Disability implementation plan – standing item for Senior Management meetings.</p>						<p><b>NDA Excellence through Accessibility Award (Guideline 1).</b></p> <p><b>Minutes of</b></p>



							meetings.
	Provide mainstream disability equality training into annual training plans, e.g. via induction training.						<b>NDA Excellence through Accessibility Award (Guideline 1-3 &amp; 5).</b> <b>NDA (Guidelines re: training providers).</b>

Report prepared by: Configure Limited, First Floor, 32 Upper Kevin St., Dublin 8.

[www.configure.ie](http://www.configure.ie)

and WebsterLawlor and Associates