



General Teaching Council
for Northern Ireland

Promoting Teacher Professionalism

General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland

DISABILITY ACTION PLAN

2018 – 2021

September 2018

Version 1.5

Disability Action Plan 2018 – 2021

This Plan shows what we are doing to support people with a disability. If you have any questions or comments on this scheme or require it in an alternative format e.g. Large print, Braille, audio format, easy read or another language please contact us by any of the following methods:

Email: info@gtcni.org.uk

Phone: 028 9033 3390

Text Relay: 18001 028 9033 3390 (If you can't hear or speak on the phone)

By Post: **Communications Team**

The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland
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FORWARD

The Chair and Chief Officer of the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland are committed to effectively implementing the disability duties and this Disability Action Plan. The GTCNI will ensure the required allocation of resources (in terms of people, time and money) in order to effectively implement this plan and build objectives and targets relating to the disability duties into corporate and annual operating plans.

The GTCNI will also put 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 provide training and guidance for staff on the disability duties and the implementation of the plan.

Signed by the Chairperson of the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland and the Accounting Officer:

Chair: David Gunning

Date: 5/9/18

Chief Executive Officer: 

Date: 5th September 2018

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Please note: Foreword and Annex I and II form part of this Disability Action Plan

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This is the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland's (the GTCNI/Council) first Disability Action Plan (DAP) and covers the period to 31 March 2021.
- 1.2 GTCNI will consult with stakeholders on this Disability Action Plan (the list of consultees is set out in Annex III of the GTCNI Equality Scheme) and subsequent Disability Action Plans.
- 1.3 The detail of the Disability Action Plan is set out in Annex I.
- 1.4 The GTCNI will submit an annual progress report on the implementation of this plan to the Equality Commission and carrying out a five year review of this Plan and further Disability Action Plans.
- 1.5 This Plan and our Equality Scheme will be made available on the GTCNI's website www.gtcni.org.uk

2 STATUTORY DUTIES

- 2.1 Under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006), the GTCNI is required when carrying out its functions to have due regard to the need to:
 - promote positive attitudes to people with a disability; and
 - encourage participation by people with a disability in public life ('the disability duties')
- 2.2 Under Section 49B of the DDA 1995, the GTCNI is required to submit to the Equality Commission a disability action plan showing how it proposes to fulfil these duties in relation to its functions.

3 FUNCTIONS

- 3.1 The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI) is the statutory, professional and regulatory body for the teaching profession, established by the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 and funded by teachers' annual registration fees.
- 3.2 The GTCNI is an Executive Non Departmental Public Body (NDPB). Its sponsor Department is the Department of Education.
- 3.3 The overall aims for the GTCNI are to:
 - Represent the professional interests of teachers;

- Provide a voice for the teaching profession by speaking with authority on education matters reflecting the experience of practising teachers; and
- Work with other bodies on matters affecting the well-being of teachers to improve teachers' working lives.

3.4 The statutory functions of the GTCNI include:

- The establishment and maintenance of a register of teachers;
- The approval of qualifications for the purposes of registration;
- regulation of the teaching profession;
- The provision of advice to the Department and employing authorities on registration; the training, career development and performance management of teachers; standards of teaching; standards of conduct for teachers; and
- Additional functions as the Department considers appropriate.

4 PUBLIC LIFE POSITIONS

4.1 The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (Constitution) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2001 set out that the GTCNI Council will consist of:

- 14 elected teacher members;
- 5 teachers appointed by the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council;
- 10 members appointed by other bodies representing different interests in the education field; and
- 4 members appointed by the Department of Education of whom one member will be representative of industry and commerce.

4.2 The four members appointed by the Department are appointments made in line with the Code of Practice issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The Code sets out the steps that must be followed to ensure a fair, open and transparent appointment process.

5 TRAINING FOR GTCNI STAFF AND COUNCIL MEMBERS

5.1 The GTCNI recognises that awareness raising and training play a crucial role in the effective implementation of the Disability Action Plan.

5.2 The GTCNI will communicate both internally and externally, it's commitment to the promote positive attitudes to people with a disability. To this end the GTCNI will develop an effective communication and training programme for all staff and will ensure that the GTCNI's commitment to the statutory duties under the DDA legislation is made clear in all relevant publications.

Awareness raising and training arrangements

- 5.3 The following arrangements will be put in place to ensure all our staff and all Council members are aware of and understand our equality obligations:
- We will develop a summary of this DAP and make it available to staff and Council members;
 - We will provide access to copies of the full DAP for all staff and Council members and ensure that any queries or questions of clarification from staff are addressed effectively;
 - Staff in the GTCNI will receive a briefing on this DAP within six months of its approval;
 - The DDA statutory duties form part of induction training for new staff;
 - Where appropriate, training will be provided to ensure awareness of the issues experienced by people with disabilities;
 - In addition, focused training will be provided for key staff within the GTCNI who are directly engaged in taking forward the implementation of our DAP commitments.
- 5.4 Training and awareness raising programmes will, where relevant, be developed in association with appropriate disability groups and our staff.
- 5.5 The GTCNI will draw up a training plan for all staff and Council members and personal training requirements agreed with line managers, as required. When this DAP is approved by the Equality Commission, the GTCNI will take measures to raise the general awareness of all staff and Council members about:
- Current DDA legislation;
 - The commitments within this DAP; and
 - The important role all staff and Council members have in implementing the DAP.
- 5.6 In order to share resources and expertise and ensure cost effectiveness, the GTCNI will, where possible, work closely with other bodies and agencies in the development and delivery of training.

Monitoring and evaluation of training

- 5.7 Our training programme will be subject to the following monitoring and evaluation arrangements:
- We will evaluate the extent to which participants in the training programmes have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve the above objectives, including feedback from participants on the quality and effectiveness of the training and identification of any further training needs; and

- The extent to which training objectives have been met will be reported on as part of the Section 75 annual progress report, which will be sent to the Equality Commission.

6 MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 6.1 The action plan sets out actions that the GTCNI plans to take forward until 31 March 2021. GTCNI will consult with stakeholders on its first Disability Action Plan; a list of consultees is set out in Annex III of the GTCNI Equality Scheme. The plan will be kept and will be treated as a liquid document to which other actions can be added through its lifespan.
- 6.2 Regular and ongoing consultation will be undertaken involving relevant stakeholders as an integral part of the evolution of the DAP.

ANNEX I DISABILITY ACTION PLAN

Outlined below are measures which the GTCNI will take over the period 31 March 2018 to 31 March 2021.

Action Measure	Outcome	Timescale
1 Publish and promote the Disability Action Plan (DAP)	Full dissemination of the GTCNI's commitment to the disability duties	By 31 March 2018
2 Review and report on progress on the DAP on an annual basis.	Reflect GTCNI's commitment to the disability duties in the Annual Progress Report submitted to the Equality Commission and published on the GTCNI website	By 31 August each year
3 Provide training on disability awareness to employees and the Council of the GTCNI	Increase awareness of disability issues and promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people	By March 31 2019
4 In partnership with disabled people design, deliver and evaluate training for staff on disability equality	Increase staff awareness of the range of disabilities and needs and increased ability to facilitate individuals' disability needs	By March 31 2019
5 Inclusion of a section in the Equality Screening template to reflect the disability duties	To ensure that all new policies (or changes to policies) take the disability duties into consideration at the outset of policy development	Ongoing
6 To increase awareness of the need for Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans	To ensure that any person with a disability has a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan	Regularly reviewed and updated
7 Review Performance Appraisal template to include prompt relating to disability	To ensure needs of staff are identified and met	By 31 March 2019
8 To ensure that as part of the induction process, employees or members of the Council of the GTCNI are asked if any reasonable adjustments are required	To address any disadvantage persons with a disability face in the workplace	Ongoing
9 Assess the accessibility and usability of the GTCNI website	Improved accessibility and participation	Ongoing
10 Assess and review internal/external	Improved accessibility	Ongoing

communications to ensure that information is accessible		
11 Put in place contractual arrangements for the production of materials in alternative formats	Alternative accessible formats are more readily available	By December 2018
12 Work with disabled people to consider the diversity of images used and potential for portraying wider range of individuals when developing information materials including websites by developing and using a Communications Team checklist	Ensure disabled people are portrayed in a positive manner	By December 2018