



Public
Prosecution
Service

Independent
Fair
Effective

2026-2029 Disability Action Plan

You can download this document from our website at www.ppsni.gov.uk.

The document can also be made available in an alternative format, such as large print, paper copy, Audio CD/MP3, Braille, Computer Disk and other languages.

If you would like an alternative format, please contact the person named below to discuss your request:

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PPS Purpose

Our Mission

Delivering an independent, fair and effective prosecution service.

Our Vision

Working for a safe and just society

Our Values

Doing the right thing

Consistently demonstrating integrity, independence, fairness and impartiality in everything that we do. Being accountable by always following through on our own commitments in delivering justice.

Everyone matters

One PPS, helping people achieve their potential, caring deeply about everyone's wellbeing whilst displaying mutual respect for each other as well as everyone within our society.

Succeeding together

One team, being resilient in difficult times, pulling together, supporting each other, taking real pride in everything we do, partnering, innovating and collaborating with others.

Having a strong voice

Having a strong voice for change within the criminal justice system, standing our ground for what is right by speaking the truth and holding ourselves (and others) accountable.

Making a difference

Driving change, minimising delay and working for a more effective justice system. Delivering a just and safe society for victims and adding value through independent, fair prosecutions.

Introduction

Under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) (as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006), the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland (PPS) is required when carrying out its functions to have due regard to the need to:

- Promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities; and
- Encourage participation by people with disabilities in public life ('the disability duties').¹

Under Section 49B of the DDA 1995, the PPS is also required to submit a Disability Action Plan (DAP) to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland showing how it proposes to fulfil these duties in relation to our functions.

Statement of Commitment

The PPS is committed to fulfilling these disability duties through the implementation of this DAP which sets out the actions that the PPS plan to take forward over the next three years. We will allocate appropriate resources including people, time and money for this purpose. We will continue to have the appropriate internal arrangements in place to ensure that the disability duties are complied with and that this DAP is effectively implemented.

The PPS will ensure that this plan is communicated to all staff and that the necessary training and guidance is provided to enable them to provide a first class service to all those with whom they come into contact through the course of their work.

Responsibility for the implementation, review and evaluation of this DAP sits with the PPS Management Board who have appointed the Senior Assistant Director for Resources and Change as Equality and Diversity Champion for the Service to oversee all aspects of the process. Progress in meeting the action plan will be monitored by the PPS Equality and Diversity Steering Group (EDSG), which is chaired by the Equality and Diversity Champion. Regular updates will be included in the reports made to the Management Board on equality, diversity and disability issues.

¹ Matters relating to the prosecution of offences are excluded by virtue of Section 49A(2)(a) of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) (as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006).

An annual progress report will be submitted to the Equality Commission. A copy of this plan and our annual reports are available on our website at www.ppsni.gov.uk

The Public Prosecution Service

Role of the PPS

The PPS is the principal prosecuting authority in Northern Ireland with responsibility for taking decisions as to prosecution in cases investigated by the police and other statutory authorities, such as HM Revenue and Customs.

The primary role of the PPS is to reach decisions to prosecute or not. Additional services are also available which enhance effectiveness, including the provision of prosecutorial and pre-charge advice and an enhanced service to victims and witnesses. Options are also available to allow prosecutors to deal with offenders other than through prosecution including adult and restorative cautions, informed warnings and youth conferencing. Prosecutors may also refer offenders to the National Driver Alertness Scheme.

In taking a decision as to the appropriate disposal in an individual case the prosecutor will take into account a range of public interest considerations including, for example, where the victim or defendant had, at the time of the offence or trial, significant mental or physical ill-health.

The PPS works with partner agencies, including the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS), Victim Support (VSNI) and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) to help witnesses, including those who are vulnerable, to give evidence at court.

The PPS is committed to ensuring the effective operation of legislation which provides for:

- Offences against the use of threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour concerning disability; and
- Increased penalties for offences aggravated by hostility towards a person's disability.

The PPS has also developed a Hate Crime policy which is aimed at ensuring consistency of approach in prosecuting hate crime, for example in making the

court aware of its enhanced sentencing powers in relation to offences aggravated by hostility.

Policy Development

The PPS also has a significant role in the development of policy within the criminal justice system and in the consultative process which is undertaken on proposed legislative reform.

It should be noted that responsibility for the development of policies relating to the recruitment and management of our workforce, as with all Northern Ireland Civil Servants, is the responsibility of the Department of Finance (DoF). Therefore, actions relating to the two disability duties as regards these policy areas will appear in the DoF Disability Action Plan.

Public Life Positions

There are currently two independent non-executive members of the PPS Management Board, who also have roles as chair and members of the Service's Audit and Risk Committee. In addition, there is an Independent Assessor of Complaints whose role is to oversee the complaints handling processes of the PPS in relation to non-prosecutorial matters.

Whilst these positions are not defined as 'public appointments' as such, people from all sections of the community were invited to apply through an open recruitment competition. These competitions were widely advertised in the press in order to reach as many people as possible.

PPS Disability Action Plan 2026 - 2029

Promoting positive attitudes towards people with disabilities

Action Measure	Ref.	Key Performance Indicator	Responsibility	Timescale
To set out our commitments to disability equality in Corporate Business Plans, of which this action plan forms a part	1.	Annual Business Plans will take account of, and reinforce our commitment to, implementation of the disability duties and other requirements under DDA legislation.	SAD Resources and Change Head of Policy and Information	Yearly
All staff will have access to training and opportunities to attend training on disability and diversity issues to raise awareness	2.	Ensure completion of mandatory NICS equality diversity and inclusion e-learning modules.	SAD Resources and Change Line Managers	Ongoing
	3.	Staff will have opportunities to complete external courses when available and the PPS will have a minimum of one staff member accredited as Disability Positive.	SAD Resources and Change	Yearly
	4.	PPS will retain 'JAM' accreditation. ²	SAD Resources and Change	Yearly

² The 'JAM' Card accreditation is a significant milestone for organisations and individuals seeking to support people with invisible disabilities. It allows individuals to discreetly signal their need for 'Just A Minute' of patience and understanding in various public settings.

Action Measure	Ref.	Key Performance Indicator	Responsibility	Timescale
All staff will have access to current, relevant information on disability related issues	5.	In conjunction with the NICS wide Disability Network, the PPS will promote NICS staff awareness seminars, training on disability and diversity related themes.	SAD Resources and Change Head of Resource Management	Ongoing
All staff will have access to current, relevant information on disability related issues	6.	Staff will be informed of any changes to policy.	SAD Resources and Change Head of Policy and Information	Ongoing
To provide opportunities for disability equality speakers to address the Equality and Diversity Steering Group (EDSG), the Victim and Witness Care Unit and other key personnel as appropriate.	7.	At least one disability awareness session will be provided annually to members of the EDSG, VWCU and other key personnel as appropriate.	SAD Resources and Change Head of Policy and Information	Yearly
To engage fully with the NICS Diversity Champions Network.	8.	PPS will participate in the meetings of the NICS Diversity Champions' Network.	SAD Resources and Change	Ongoing
	9.	PPS will meet all agreed commitments in progressing recommendations of the Disability Working Group.	SAD Resources and Change	Ongoing

Encourage participation by people with disabilities in public life

Action Measure	Ref	Key Performance Indicator	Responsibility	Timescale
An inclusive workplace for all	1.	PPS will have a Experience and Enviornment subgroup who set the Health and Wellbeing action plan for PPS staff.	SAD Resources and Change Head of Resource Management	Ongoing
	2.	All PPS staff to complete a minimum of one Health and Wellbeing course as part of their personal development plan.	SAD Resources and Change Line Managers	Ongoing
	3.	All PPS staff will have access to Trauma Resilience and ASSIT training.	SAD Resources and Change Head of Resource Management	Ongoing
	4.	PPS will have a Well Champion who assists the NICS WELL Team in the delivery of services, activities and provides information to staff on a range of health and wellbeing issues within the NICS.	SAD Resources and Change Head of Resource Management	Ongoing
	5.	PPS will promote and participate in any initiatives arising from the NICS commitment to the Mental Health Forum to ensure support for managers and staff to promote mental health and wellbeing in the workplace.	SAD Resources and Change Head of Resource Management	Ongoing

Action Measure	Ref	Key Performance Indicator	Responsibility	Timescale
An inclusive workplace for all (Continued)	6.	PPS will promote Health and Wellbeing seminars, events, training courses and toolkits.	SAD Resources and Change Head of Resource Management	Ongoing
	7.	PPS will ensure implementation of Reasonable Adjustments as per the NICS Policy.	SAD Resources and Change Head of Property Management / Line Managers	Ongoing
	8.	PPS will complete risk assessments to ensure PPS buildings are accessible.	SAD Resources and Change Head of Property Management	Yearly
	9.	PPS will invite staff to provide confidential disability declarations to aid the development of Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP).	SAD Resources and Change Head of Property Management	Yearly
	10.	PPS will participate in the NICS wide Health & Safety Committee.	SAD Resources and Change Head of Property Management	Quarterly

Action Measure	Ref	Key Performance Indicator	Responsibility	Timescale
To manage PPS statutory responsibilities.	11.	The Equality and Diversity Steering Group will meet regularly to discuss Equality and Disability related matters.	SAD Resources and Change EDSG Members	Ongoing
	12.	The Equality and Diversity Steering Group will review the Disability Action Plan measures and identify new measures as appropriate.	SAD Resources and Change Equality Officer	Ongoing
	13.	Regular updates from EDSG meetings will be provided to the Management Board.	SAD Resources and Change	Ongoing
	14.	The Annual Disability and Equality Progress Report will be completed and published to the required timescale.	SAD Resources and Change Equality Officer	Annually
To support any NICS work experience scheme for people with disabilities.	15.	The PPS will participate in the NICS work experience scheme for people with disabilities, and International Job Shadow Day.	SAD Resources and Change Head of Resource Management	When required
To monitor feedback received from people with disabilities or representative groups.	16.	Survey findings will be reviewed and any disability issues highlighted will be addressed as appropriate.	SAD Resources and Change	Ongoing

Action Measure	Ref	Key Performance Indicator	Responsibility	Timescale
To monitor feedback received from people with disabilities or representative groups.	17.	PPS will record the number of consultation responses received from disabled people or representative groups and assess the number of changes made as a result of their comments	SAD Resources and Change Head of Policy and Information	Ongoing
	18.	PPS will continue to schedule and host regular meetings of the Stakeholder Engagement Forum (SEF) and invite representative groups to attend.	SAD Resources and Change Head of Communications	6 monthly basis
	19.	PPS will monitor feedback and complaints received from service users to identify potential improvements in service delivery.	SAD Resources and Change Head of Policy and Information	Ongoing
Support for vulnerable victims and witnesses	20.	Each victim and witness will have a needs assessment undertaken by their Victim and Witness Care Unit Case Officer and will have an opportunity to identify any difficulties they are experiencing or support they may require	SAD Resources and Change Head of VWCU	Ongoing
	21.	Special Measures will be considered and applied for in cases where it is deemed appropriate.	SAD Resources and Change Assistant Directors	Ongoing

Action Measure	Ref	Key Performance Indicator	Responsibility	Timescale
Support for vulnerable victims and witnesses (Continued)	22.	PPS will continue to engage with the Department of Justice (DOJ), Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and other partner organisations regarding the potential enhancement of the broader VWCU Needs Assessment Service.	SAD Resources and Change Head of VWCU	Ongoing
	23.	PPS will lead on a review of the current needs assessment policies and processes within the VWCU, ensuring they are delivered consistently and in a trauma-informed way. We will also consult with stakeholders and take advice on any suggested improvements to the design of the revised Needs Assessment process.	SADs for Resources and Change / Serious Crime and Regions Head of VWCU	31 March 2027
Ensure access to information and services.	24.	Ensure information on the PPS internet and intranet is accessible and available in different formats on request (e.g. Braille, large print, audio).	SAD Resources and Change Head of Communications	Ongoing
	25.	Identify opportunities to deliver key messages and information in a more accessible way. I.e. easy read documents, animations.	SAD Resources and Change Head of Communications	Ongoing
Promote Diversity in Public Appointments	26.	PPS will continue to implement the NICS policy of Guaranteed Interview Scheme for those with a Disability.	SAD Resources and Change Head of Resource Management	For each competition

Action Measure	Ref	Key Performance Indicator	Responsibility	Timescale
Promote Diversity in Public Appointments (Continued)	27.	PPS will ensure all documentation relation to the competition will be available in alternative formats (e.g. Braille, large print, audio).	SAD Resources and Change Head of Resource Management	For each competition
	28.	Candidates will be offered an opportunity to request reasonable adjustments for the interview.	SAD Resources and Change Head of Resource Management	For each competition
To publish and promote the Disability Action Plan	29.	The Disability Action Plan will be published electronically and circulated to all staff. All PPS consultees will be notified of its publication.	SAD Resources and Change Equality Officer	At time of publication

Contact Us

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