



# Belfast Harbour

## DISABILITY ACTION PLAN

December 2023 – December 2028

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- Large font
- Audiocassette
- Braille
- Main minority ethnic languages

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## **DISABILITY ACTION PLAN**

### **Belfast Harbour Commissioners**

#### **Foreword from the Chief Executive**

We are pleased to present the fourth Disability Action Plan of Belfast Harbour Commissioners (BHC), outlining our strategic initiatives for the next five years to enhance disability inclusion and equality across our operations.

Our commitment to the two disability duties outlined in Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 remains steadfast. We are dedicated to fostering disability equality in our business, encompassing our interactions with stakeholders, and our treatment of staff members.

Reflecting on the period of our previous Disability Action Plan (2017-2022), we are proud to acknowledge the progress achieved in various dimensions. The evolution of BHC's Corporate Responsibility Strategy has enabled a forward-thinking and inventive approach to advancing disability equality both internally and externally. Positive feedback from our recent consultations with Disability Action and other stakeholders affirms that our efforts in staff awareness and training have successfully cultivated a more inclusive and supportive environment for individuals with disabilities.

As we look ahead, the Disability Action Plan (2023-2028) serves as a comprehensive blueprint for integrating disability equality into our broader commitment to corporate responsibility and good governance. This plan outlines ambitious yet attainable targets for the next five years, as we strive to create an inclusive and supportive environment for everyone associated with BHC.

We recognise that the journey towards disability equality requires ongoing dedication, collaboration, and a willingness to adapt and improve. As such, we are committed to regularly monitoring and evaluating our progress and making necessary adjustments to ensure we are meeting our objectives and making a meaningful impact.

Together, with the support and engagement of our staff, stakeholders, and the wider community, we can make significant strides towards a more inclusive and equal future for all.

**Joe O'Neill**

**Chief Executive**

## 1. 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), Belfast Harbour Commissioners (BHC) is required when carrying out its functions to have due regard to the need to:

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

Under Section 49B of the DDA 1995, BHC is also required to submit to the Equality Commission a disability action plan showing how it proposes to fulfil these duties in relation to its functions.

The Chief Executive of BHC is committed to implementing the disability duties and this disability action plan. BHC allocates resources (in terms of people, time, and financial budget), to implement this plan and where appropriate, build objectives and targets relating to the disability duties into corporate and annual operating plans.

Overall responsibility for the action plan lies with the Board. Day to day responsibility lies with the People and Digital Transformation Director, Leadership Team and Senior Management Team who will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the plan. Where feasible, the Senior Management Team will build objectives and targets relating to the disability duties into the corporate and annual reporting plans and monitor progress in implementing actions.

We will also put appropriate internal arrangements in place to ensure compliance with the disability duties and effective implementation of the plan. 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.

We confirm our commitment to submitting an annual report to the Equality Commission on the implementation of this plan.

Responsibility for implementing, reviewing, and evaluating this disability action plan and the point of contact within BHC will be:

**Mike Dawson**  
**People and Digital Transformation Director**

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The Plan will be forwarded to the Equality Commission. The final action plan will be published on our website.

We confirm our commitment to submitting an annual progress report on the implementation of this plan to the Equality Commission and carrying out a five-year review of this plan. A copy of this plan, our annual progress to the Equality Commission and our five-year review of this plan will be made available on our website [www.belfast-harbour.co.uk](http://www.belfast-harbour.co.uk)

## **2. Objectives**

- 1) To mainstream and embed accessibility and inclusion duties across Belfast Harbour
- 2) To enhance the experience of people with disabilities and long-term conditions working in Belfast Harbour
- 3) To enhance the physical and digital accessibility and inclusiveness of Belfast Harbour for people with disabilities and long-term conditions.

## **3. Consultation**

BHC is committed to engaging effectively with disabled people in the drafting, implementation, monitoring, and review of this Plan.

BHC is committed to carrying out consultation in a meaningful manner in the development of its disability duties.

In addition, we are keen to seek the views of disabled people in relation to the development of the Plan. This will be achieved through direct contact with disability organisations and working with other organisations, as appropriate.

As part of the consultation process, barriers to effective consultation will be removed by ensuring accessibility to documents in appropriate formats. Information will be made available on request in accessible formats including, Braille, large print, and audio. Information will also be made available in accessible formats in a timely fashion. It will also be important to establish with disabled people the basis for dialogue and engagement during the life of the Plan.

## **4. Role and Functions**

Belfast Harbour is a Trust Port. As such its operational remit is governed by Statute and it operates on a commercial basis. BHC's purpose outlined in its Corporate Plan [www.belfastharbour.co.uk](http://www.belfastharbour.co.uk) is to support and develop the regional economy by the operation of the Port, growth of Port capacity and development of the Harbour Estate.

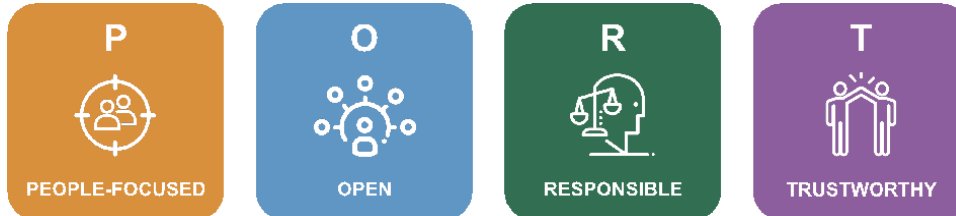
As outlined in the Corporate Plan, our Vision is to be a world leading regional port offering leading- edge marine and estate facilities, thereby enabling the economic development of Northern Ireland.

We recognise that the values held by the organisation guide the decision-making process at all levels. The values stated below, therefore, are employed to validate behaviours and decisions throughout the business.

1. World Leading Regional Port – a best in class and customer-focused Port, with modern and resilient infrastructure and an exemplary Health & Safety offering at its core.
2. A best-in-class Green Port – sustainability and decarbonisation that underpin the World's Best Regional Port and an Iconic Waterfront for the City.
3. A Key Economic Hub – an engine for economic growth for the region, leveraging the Trust Port model, creating jobs and talent pipelines, underpinning the Port, Property, and industrial asset base.
4. A best-in-class Smart Port addressing the innovation and digital aspects that underpin the World's Best Regional Port and an Iconic Waterfront for the City.

5. An Iconic Waterfront for the City transforming the infrastructure and landscape of Belfast's waterfront through integrated Placemaking, community and civic engagement.

Our values are the heart of Belfast Harbour's Culture:



**People Focused** – We put our people at the centre of our business and work collaboratively to achieve the best outcome for all. We provide an inclusive workplace where all can achieve their full potential.

**Open** – We are innovative in our approach and open to new or better ways of doing things. As an agile business, we adapt and react quickly when required.

**Responsible** – We put the safety and wellbeing of our employees and customers above everything else. As a Green Port, we are committed to environmentally friendly and sustainable practices.

**Trustworthy** – As a Trust Port we always act in the best interest of our customers and stakeholders. We act with integrity and do the right thing. We respect our partners, building trust with our stakeholders.

## 5. Public Life Positions

Board Members are appointed by the Department for Infrastructure on the basis of open public advertisement. The number of Board members, including the Chair and Chief Executive Officer, may be no less than ten and no more than fifteen and up to four Board Members shall be members of Belfast City Council.

The management of the Port of Belfast is independent of Government and falls to the Board and the Executive team. The duties of Board Members are akin to those of a company director, and to be accountable for the proper exercise of the statutory and administrative requirements placed upon them.

## 6. Previous Measures

The following are indicative of the positive measures BHC has taken to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage their participation in public life. These include:

- Mainstreaming the Duties on Disability with the CR Strategy and promoting the interests of people with disabilities both through our staff and outreach activities with the wider community.
- Providing targeted Disability Awareness and Equality training and evaluating the effectiveness of the training
- Seeking input from equality and relevant disability groups (including consulting on the drafting, implementation, monitoring, and review of the Plan).
- Staff monitoring

- Integrating questions on the Disability Duties in screening of policies.
- All selection processes address the special needs of applicants on an individual basis.
- All recruitment panel members receive specialist training to ensure equality of opportunity is considered throughout the process.
- Ensuring the special needs of people with disabilities are met in relation to access to the building.
- Enhancing the accessibility of the information on the website for people with disabilities.

## **7. How the Disability Plan will be Distributed**

The Disability Action Plan will be circulated to established consultees and can be accessed on the Belfast Harbour website [www.belfast-harbour.co.uk](http://www.belfast-harbour.co.uk)

BHC will, through our ongoing work with people with disabilities and people with learning disabilities, find appropriate ways of communicating the Plan. The Plan will be produced in clear print and plain language, will be available in alternative formats on request, including large print, Braille, or audio on request.

All employees will be notified of the Plan which will be published on both the intranet and our Gateway employee communications app.

## **8. Action Measures**

Belfast Harbour is a commercial Port and business to business organisation that recognises the need to promote a positive working environment regarding disability. Belfast Harbour Commissioners has already taken several measures to promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities and to encourage their participation in public life and aims to build on this in the revised plan. In the following pages we have set out the action measures we propose to take over the period of the Disability Action Plan ending 2028 together with performance indicators.

Action Measures to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and to encourage participation by people with disabilities in public.

## Action Measures

Objective	Measure	Outcome	Performance Indicator	Timescale and Ownership
To enhance the experience of people with disabilities and long-term conditions working in Belfast Harbour	Provide training on disability duties, disability legislation and issues in terms of disability to all Board members and employees	<p>Renew JAM card membership and provide training to all staff.</p> <p>Deliver specific disability awareness training for employees as per People Strategy.</p>	<p>Number of people trained each year.</p> <p>Number of employees to successfully achieve accreditation.</p> <p>New employees to receive disability awareness training during induction, within 6 months of start date.</p>	People Team by January 2025.
To enhance the experience of people with disabilities and long-term conditions working in Belfast Harbour	Develop training resources on disability equality training regarding the disability duties and their application in Belfast Harbour.	<p>All new employees understand their role in promoting positive attitudes to people with disabilities and their role in relation to encouraging the participation of disabled people in public life.</p> <p>Retrain existing employees and ensure all interview panel members have received disability awareness/legislation training within the past three years.</p>	<p>Number of new employees receiving induction.</p> <p>Number of existing employees trained.</p>	People Team 2023 to 2028
To mainstream and embed accessibility and inclusion duties across Belfast Harbour	Ensure the commitment to interview all candidates who meet essential criteria is included in recruitment	Annual review of effectiveness of measure in promoting equality in access to interview	Number of applicants with disabilities (who meet the essential job criteria) successful in progressing to interview and in securing roles.	People Team Ongoing Monitored each year First report August 2024.

	documentation and reviewed.  To become a Disability Confident employer.		Ensure those sitting on interview panels have received disability awareness training within past 3 years.	
To mainstream and embed accessibility and inclusion duties across Belfast Harbour	Communicate directly with people with disabilities and advocates for people with disabilities about policies under review and issues affecting them	Encourage participation of people with disabilities in public life  Become an affiliated member of Disability Action. Consult with Disability Action working groups on our Disability action plan.	Establish meaningful links with disability groups Monitor the input of people with disabilities into policy development and issues affecting them	People Team August 2024 and subsequent annual reporting
To mainstream and embed accessibility and inclusion duties across Belfast Harbour	Frontline staff monitoring and reporting on the needs and issues facing people with disabilities	Improved level of access through assessing the individual needs of people with disabilities.	Monitoring the level of satisfaction and identification of ways to enhance the experience for people with disabilities	Facilities and Events Co-Ordinator Immediate Annual Reporting
To enhance the experience of people with disabilities and long-term conditions working in Belfast Harbour	Ongoing involvement of participants with disabilities in everyday activities and being active members in our society, promoting inclusion.  To identify opportunities to include positive images of disabled people in BHC literature.  Subject to applications award at least one Community Award to an organisation focused on	Promoting positive image of people with disabilities and their participation in public life.  To communicate positive messages on disability and help challenge stereotypes regarding disability.	Work in partnership with relevant charities and third sector organisations to ensure participation of young people with disabilities in available activities.  Award made in line with judging criteria.	Communication and Corporate Responsibility Manager March 2024 and annually



	improving skills to help disabled people better participate in public life.			
To mainstream and embed accessibility and inclusion duties across Belfast Harbour	Review the action plan on an annual basis and report on performance to the Commissioners	Annual review of effectiveness of measure in promoting positive image of people with disabilities and their participation in public life	Review of targets and indicators on an annual basis to assess the effectiveness of BHC initiatives that affect people with disabilities	People Team August 2024 and annually thereafter
To mainstream and embed accessibility and inclusion duties across Belfast Harbour	Partner with Now Group to provide work placement opportunities to disabled people.	Provide opportunities to improve and develop employment skills in a real setting.	Number of work placements provided.	People Team / Other suitable departments by January 2025
To enhance the experience of people with disabilities and long-term conditions working in Belfast Harbour	Sign up to Mental Health Charter.  Review & renew mental health first aid training.  Audit our recruitment and selection policies in respect of our duty to make reasonable adjustments.	Create an open and inclusive workplace culture which displays respect for those with mental ill health	Number of MHFA on site, number retrained.  Number of reasonable adjustments made.	People Team August 2024 and annually thereafter