



Big Lottery Fund

NORTHERN IRELAND
DISABILITY ACTION PLAN

Progress Report

1 July 2007 – 31 March 2008

30 September 2008

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Section 1: Introduction – the disability duties

1.1 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 Big Lottery Fund (BIG) 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.

These duties are known as ‘the disability duties’.

1.2 Under Section 49B of the DDA 1995, BIG is further required to submit to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland a Northern Ireland Disability Action Plan showing how we propose to fulfil these duties in relation to our functions.

1.3 The BIG Lottery Fund published its first Disability Action Plan for Northern Ireland on 30 June 2007, setting out how we propose to meet the above requirements.

Section 2: BIG’s Disability Action Plan

2.1 In line with Equality Commission for Northern Ireland guidelines, BIG’s Disability Action Plan sets out the range of BIG’s commitments and arrangements for effectively implementing the disability duties and the Disability Action Plan. These include:

- (i) a statement of commitment to the disability duties
- (ii) details of relevant functions and policies
- (iii) details of BIG’s public life positions
- (iv) an overview of the UK-wide Joint Race and Disability Equality Scheme
- (v) consultation arrangements for the Joint Race and Disability Equality Scheme and Northern Ireland Disability Action Plan
- (vi) our commitment to submit an annual progress report on the Disability Action Plan to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and to carry out a five-year review of the plan
- (vii) arrangements for publication and dissemination of the Disability Action Plan
- (viii) an overview of BIG’s complaints procedure
- (ix) previous measures and processes established by BIG that help us to meet the new disability duties
- (x) an action plan of measures for meeting the disabilities duties.

Section 3: Previous measures

3.1 Our Disability Action Plan set out measures already taken in Northern Ireland and UK-wide that were helping us to meet the disability duties before their formal introduction. As these are previous measures, a progress review is not required in this document. We report on these measures through our annual reports to the Equality Commission and through our annual screening reports.

Section 4: This progress report

4.1 This report sets out the BIG Lottery Fund's progress in implementing the Disability Action Plan against the commitments and measures set out in the plan. This report covers progress during the first period of implementation, between 1 July 2007 and 31 March 2008 and sets out:

- (i) a progress review on the action plan
- (ii) information used to inform the review
- (iii) amendments made to the Disability Action Plan in light of the progress report
- (iv) plans for publication and dissemination of both the amended Disability Action Plan and progress report.

4.2 The action plan is split into two parts. The first part deals with internal policies and functions, such as human resources and finances, while the second part focuses on our external policies and functions, such as policy development and funding.

4.3 Unless otherwise stated, all of the measures reported on within this progress report are ongoing and will be reviewed on an annual basis throughout the lifetime of the plan.

4.4 Outlined below is a summary progress report of the Northern Ireland action plan for implementing the disability duties. The actions set out have been and will continue to be built into the Northern Ireland Directorate's annual business plan and individual staff work plans over the lifetime of the Disability Action Plan. More detailed information on each measure is available by contacting BIG using the contact details on page 20.

4.5 (i) Internal policies and functions

Measures	Progress at March 2008
<p>1. Take action to maintain accurate records on the disability status of staff, to monitor employment procedures. Human Resources (HR)*</p>	<p>A new online recruitment system for internal and external applicants was launched in January 2008. It allows staff to complete the personal monitoring information, including disability status.</p> <p>The 2007 staff survey also captured data on the number of disabled staff. Further information is at Section 6 (iii).</p> <p>Staff were regularly prompted, through regular internal updates (BIG Online) to complete data on equality, including disability.</p>
<p>2. To continue monitoring numbers and percentage of applicants at each stage of external recruitment and selection by disability, to identify priorities for action. HR</p>	<p>Analysis of data for the reporting period, in comparison to the previous eight months, showed no notable difference in the number of external disabled people who applied for jobs or were recruited. Data is produced every six months and reviewed and actioned by HR. Further information is at Section 6 (i) and (ii).</p>
<p>3. To continue monitoring numbers and percentage of applicants at each stage of internal recruitment and selection by disability, to identify priorities for action. HR</p>	<p>Analysis of data for the reporting period, in comparison to the previous eight months, showed no notable difference in the number of disabled staff who applied for jobs or were recruited. Data is produced every six months and reviewed and actioned by HR. Further information is at Section 6 (i) and (ii).</p> <p>Plans were put in place to develop further outputs to develop this measure.</p>
<p>4. To continue monitoring the numbers and percentage of staff in post by grade and directorate by disability, to identify priorities for action. HR</p>	<p>Our analysis of data for the reporting period, in comparison to the previous eight months, indicated no areas of concern and no reports or complaints about inequitable experiences attributed to disability.</p>
<p>5. To continue monitoring the numbers and percentage of staff making a bullying and harassment or grievance complaint or who are the subject of a disciplinary, by disability, to identify priorities for action. HR</p>	<p>Our analysis of data for the reporting period showed that there were no complaints or grievances attributed to disability. This figure is unchanged from the previous eight-month period. Data is produced every six months and reviewed and actioned by HR. Further information is at Section 6 (i) and (ii).</p>

* Human Resources (HR) functions across all directorates including Northern Ireland.

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<p>6. To continue monitoring the numbers and percentage of staff who have received performance-related bonuses by disability, to identify priorities for action. HR</p>	<p>Our analysis of data for the reporting period showed a small increase in the number of disabled staff nominated for performance-related bonuses. Data is produced every six months and reviewed and actioned by HR. Further information is at Section 6 (i) and (ii).</p>
<p>7. To continue monitoring the numbers and percentage of leavers and reasons for leaving by disability, to identify priorities for action. HR</p>	<p>Our analysis of data showed that no disabled staff left BIG during the reporting period. Data is produced every six months and reviewed and actioned by HR. Further information is at Section 6 (i) and (ii).</p>
<p>8. To develop and implement a more comprehensive way of monitoring training application and nomination rates by disability. HR</p>	<p>Since July 2007 we have been using a new HR system to call up, track and monitor course participants. Monitoring for the reporting period indicated that individual experiences were equitable regardless of disability. Plans were put in place to further enhance the system.</p>
<p>9. To monitor disability status of appraisees in relation to all decisions taken on performance and pay. HR</p>	<p>Up until 2008 we only monitored only bonus award rates. New monitoring procedures introduced in March 2008, via our online Employee Performance Management system, allows us to monitor individual objective rankings and overall ratings for all staff, which can be analysed against equality data.</p>
<p>10. To increase the number and percentage of disabled applicants in future external recruitment and selection campaigns. HR</p>	<p>Due to internal restructuring, BIG reduced the number of external recruitment exercises during the reporting period. There was no increase in the number and percentage of disabled applicants. Further information is at Section 6 (ii).</p> <p>BIG took part in the Employer's Forum on Disability's Standard to identify areas where we could improve our disability equality performance. Further information is at Section 6 (ii).</p> <p>Arrangements were put in place to explore additional methods for progressing this measure.</p> <p>We continued to promote the Positive About Disability Standard.</p>

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<p>11. To improve the retention rates of disabled staff. HR</p>	<p>No disabled staff left during the reporting period. Data is produced every six months and reviewed and actioned by HR. Further information is at Section 6 (ii).</p> <p>The 2007 staff survey showed greater satisfaction among disabled staff in comparison to the previous year. Further information is at Section 6 (iii).</p> <p>BIG began developing a training module for managers focused on managing disabled staff.</p> <p>We continued to implement the Positive About Disability Standard.</p>
<p>12. To ensure line managers of disabled staff (with support from HR) identify and address personal and professional development, as part of Employee Performance Management process. HR</p>	<p>This measure is monitored through BIG's confidential Employee Performance Management Process.</p> <p>BIG commenced development of a training module for managers, focusing on managing disabled staff.</p> <p>BIG implemented the Positive About Disability Standard.</p>
<p>13. To review recommendations from the evaluation of BIG's pilot Equality Assurance Process and implement as appropriate. Policy and Partnerships; NI Equality Adviser</p>	<p>The recommendations were reviewed and the revised process relaunched during Summer 2007.</p>
<p>14. To improve (i) equality assurance on all internal HR policies and functions; (ii) annual monitoring to assess need for full Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs); and (iii) subsequent EQIAs. The NI Equality Adviser is involved in this action for purposes of compliance with Section 75. HR; Policy and Partnerships; NI Equality Adviser</p>	<p>All new policies were screened using the amended Equality Assurance Process. No EQIAs were recommended in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Discussions were held to explore the benefits of a staff E-learning training programme on the Equality Assurance Process.</p>
<p>15. To ensure that the views of BIG's two unions (including disabled members) are fully reflected in the equality assurance and equality impact assessment work. HR</p>	<p>BIG's two unions contributed to the equality assurance of BIG's HR policies and fed back to their respective members on key issues, providing individuals with opportunity for input.</p>

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<p>16. To establish mechanisms for involving disabled staff in discussing BIG's employment policies and practices, their experiences and methods for making improvements. HR; Policy and Partnerships</p>	<p>BIG carried out its second staff survey in September 2007. The survey included questions on disability. All staff received a personal invitation to complete the survey. On a UK-wide basis disabled staff had the second highest response rating, reflecting a 5 per cent or more improvement in satisfaction on 2006. Further information is at Section 6 (iii).</p>
<p>17. To ensure that there is no discrimination in the appointment of any new members to BIG's Board and country committees. Policy and Partnerships; NI Policy Development and Public Affairs</p>	<p>Northern Ireland BIG commenced a public recruitment exercise for a new NI committee during the reporting year. The exercise complied with legal requirements and good practice</p> <p>UK-wide BIG progressed its Diversity Plan for its Board and Country Committees, aimed at redressing any imbalances in committee make-up, including disability.</p>
<p>18. To periodically provide training to ensure that all staff (i) are aware of the disability duties (ii) have the necessary skills relating to the implementation of the duties, and (iii) have sufficient levels of disability equality awareness in carrying out their day-to-day jobs. HR; Policy and Partnerships; Northern Ireland directorate</p>	<p>NI staff received email briefings and updates on the new duties, the Northern Ireland Disability Action Plan and UK-wide Joint Race and Disability Scheme.</p> <p>Staff were provided with one-to-one briefings, on request by individuals and/or their line managers.</p> <p>Plans were developed to deliver an interactive presentation to NI staff on equality developments, including the Disability Action Plan.</p> <p>Staff were made aware of their equality duties through BIG's performance management process.</p> <p>A new online Equality and Diversity E-Learning package was launched in February 2008, to facilitate staff learning about equality issues, including disability issues.</p> <p>Work commenced to design a disability module for managers to maintain awareness about our disability duties.</p> <p>Guidance on the equality duties remains standard information on the intranet.</p>

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<p>19. To ensure that all relevant training programmes include reference to disability issues where relevant.</p> <p>HR; Operations; Policy and Partnerships; NI Equality Adviser</p>	<p>Northern Ireland Internal guidance and briefing materials on BIG's equality duties were updated to include the disability duties.</p> <p>UK-wide Procedures for ensuring that all staff attend mandatory corporate induction training, which includes an equality and diversity module, were tightened.</p> <p>Plans put in place to develop a new disability module for managers managing disabled staff.</p> <p>Plans discussed to develop an E-learning module on the Equality Assurance Process.</p> <p>Checklist developed to inform the design and commissioning of new training and help us to integrate equality issues into relevant programmes.</p>
<p>20. To ensure all UK Board and NI Committee members participate in an equality session as part of induction and receive regular briefings on relevant changes in legislation and good practice and their implications for BIG.</p> <p>NI Policy Development and Public Affairs; Operations; Policy and Partnerships</p>	<p>UK Board members, including the NI Committee chair, attended an equalities session in January 2008, which covered disability legislation.</p> <p>NI Committee members received equality guidance within their induction materials.</p> <p>The NI Committee received regular written and oral briefings on the disability duties and Disability Action Plan.</p>
<p>21. Apply relevant criteria where a procurement requiring a full business case is carried out.</p> <p>Corporate Services</p>	<p>Northern Ireland Inception meetings are organised with contractors, at which they are made aware of our equality commitments, including the need to produce materials in alternative formats.</p> <p>UK-wide Plans were put in place to review procurement materials to reflect this position.</p>
<p>22. To ensure BIG's commitment to accessible internal communication (i.e. font type and size) is adhered to.</p> <p>Policy and Partnerships</p>	<p>Guidance on accessible internal communication (minimum standards) has been issued in the past to all staff. We are reviewing the guidance and will update all staff when finalised.</p>

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<p>23. To meet the commitments outlined in our Positive About Disability (two ticks) Award and to raise general awareness of the award among staff. HR</p>	<p>Our annual review was carried out in October 2007. Positive responses from disabled staff to specific questions in the 2007 staff survey indicated BIG's commitment to the award.</p>
<p>24. To review BIG's procurement policy to ensure it meets the requirements of the disability duties. Corporate Services</p>	<p>Northern Ireland Inception meetings are organised with contractors, at which they are made aware of our equality commitments, including the need to produce materials in alternative formats.</p> <p>UK-wide Plans were put in place to review procurement materials to reflect the disability duties.</p>
<p>25. To periodically remind staff of the availability of the Employee Assistance Programme (to support staff in times of crisis). HR</p>	<p>This programme is confidential, hence it is not possible to measure uptake. Staff received reminders through internal updates and the service was also flagged up as part of BIG's stress policy</p> <p>A new Health Care Plan was introduced, which extended the gym membership scheme to include wider benefits that can be taken up by all staff regardless of disability, for example, physiotherapy and health screening. The scheme was highlighted to all staff in the run-up to its introduction and is highlighted on the Intranet on an ongoing basis.</p>

(ii) External policies and functions

Task and responsibility	Progress at March 2008
<p>1. To continue monitoring requests for publications in alternative formats and identifying priorities for strategic action. Policy and Partnerships; Communications and Marketing; NI Equality Adviser and NI Policy, Development and Public Affairs</p>	<p>Northern Ireland The NI Directorate maintains a log of requests. One specific disability-related request was made during the reporting period. In addition, large print materials were supplied at two information events.</p> <p>UK-wide Market research on BIG's publications was completed during summer 2007. The research included questions on accessibility and highlighted that the general public, grant holders and applicants and potential applicants were generally positive about BIG's publications.</p>

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<p>2. To review beneficiary equality monitoring data i.e. application and success rates, by disability status. To incorporate this information into our equality assurance work and identify and implement actions where appropriate.</p> <p>Policy and Partnerships and Operations; NI Equality Adviser and NI Policy, Development and Public Affairs and Operations</p>	<p>Northern Ireland No equality assurance reviews were required in Northern Ireland during the reporting period.</p> <p>Our first Disability Action Plan stated that we would carry out two reviews a year for each programme. This timescale has been reviewed to more accurately reflect programme delivery timescales.</p> <p>UK-wide: We began a review process of how we collate, analyse and report on beneficiary equality monitoring data. Research was carried out in March 2008 to identify how we could improve the reliability of data captured. The recommendations will be fed into the design of our future funding processes and internal operational mechanisms (Business Process Re-engineering).</p>
<p>3. To (i) integrate an equality perspective into the specifications of relevant evaluation and research initiatives; and (ii) continue to review results from relevant research to inform funding policy and practice.</p> <p>Policy and Partnerships; Communications and Marketing; NI Equality Adviser and NI Policy, Development and Public Affairs</p>	<p>Northern Ireland Internal reviews were carried out on Awards for All and Reaching Communities NI, including an equality review to identify any gaps in funding for disability organisations. Areas of disability access were rechecked. There were no disability or communication issues arising.</p> <p>Evaluations of legacy NI funding programmes were used to inform external evaluations; for example the Sporting Chance publication.</p> <p>UK-wide The UK Board agreed that an equality perspective will be built into all new funding programmes, so that equality becomes a core objective of evaluations.</p> <p>A number of reports and summaries were commissioned, which will inform future policy and programmes; for example, a review of BIG funding for older people and a programme evaluation for Palliative Care.</p>
<p>4. To conduct UK-wide research into the public's attitudes to BIG, review findings (by disability) and identify action points. This research will include NI.</p> <p>Policy and Partnerships; Communications and Marketing; NI Policy, Development and Public Affairs unit</p>	<p>BIG completed its first UK-wide survey on public attitudes in autumn 2007. There was a proportionate response from disabled staff and there were no disability issues of note. This survey will be repeated annually.</p>

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<p>5. To establish mechanisms for involving external organisations in discussing the equality dimension of BIG's business (to include disability groups). This will involve the NI Equality Adviser proofing with key stakeholders in NI.</p> <p>Policy and Partnerships; Communications and Marketing; NI Equality Adviser and NI Policy, Development and Public Affairs</p>	<p>Northern Ireland BIG initiated contact with around 480 external equality stakeholders as part of our Screening 3 consultation process and followed this up with a series of one-to-one meetings.</p> <p>The Equality Adviser attended a networking event for public authorities in January 2008, organised by the Equality Commission, which provided further guidance and exchange of information on the disability duties.</p> <p>UK-wide BIG's open Board meeting in November 2007 included representatives from organisations with a particular interest in disability issues.</p> <p>During 2007/08 we held meetings with a number of strategic equality organisations (e.g. Equality and Diversity Forum and the Commission for Equality and Human Rights), to develop dialogue.</p>
<p>6. Develop voluntary and community sector research (survey to key stakeholders), review findings by disability and identify action points. Ongoing discussion in NI with key stakeholders.</p> <p>Policy and External Relations; NI Equality Adviser and NI Policy, Development and Public Affairs</p>	<p>Northern Ireland BIG carried out a significant piece of research with stakeholders, including disability groups, aimed at gaining a better understanding of how stakeholders perceive ongoing relations with BIG. Accessibility was discussed in the focus groups. There were no disability equality issues arising. This research will help us to form a baseline to measure our impact as a funder and feed into future funding. We anticipate that this research will be updated on an annual basis.</p> <p>UK-wide Independent research was commissioned in England and Wales to assess key stakeholders' level confidence in BIG. An analysis of results from organisations that mainly targeted disabled people showed no discernable differences in responses from the average. This research will be repeated annually.</p>
<p>7. To continue monitoring whether Freedom of Information requests lead to disability complaints and identify action points.</p> <p>Policy and Partnerships</p>	<p>Requests from and regarding disability groups within Northern Ireland are recorded and addressed on an ongoing basis. No disability-related issues were reported.</p>
<p>8. To ensure that any customer satisfaction survey carried out allows for a review of findings by disability.</p> <p>Operations; Policy and Partnerships</p>	<p>A survey was carried out for 2007/07. There were no disability issues of note. The survey will be carried out on an annual basis and analysed by disability.</p>

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<p>9. To explore how we can meet the access requirements of British Sign Language users and people with learning disabilities. In NI, the same action will be explored with Irish Sign Language.</p> <p>Policy and Partnerships; Communications and Marketing; NI Policy, Development and Public Affairs</p>	<p>The NI office has not received any requests during the reporting period for publications in British or Irish Sign Language. BIG's corporate approach is to offer an interpreter as an alternative to BSL. We are looking at options for offering interpreters.</p>
<p>10. To pilot an online (interactive) form for funding programmes which affords greater accessibility for applicants and award holders. This will be reviewed in the context of NI and any changes implemented.</p> <p>Policy and Partnerships; Communications and Marketing; NI Equality Adviser and NI Policy, Development and Public Affairs</p>	<p>BIG launched its online form in March 2007 with the People's Millions programme, which had a NI strand. Our 2007/08 customer survey indicated that most users found the form easy to use. Alternative formats of application were accepted where there were particular communication needs. There were no disability-related issues arising.</p> <p>We used an Outline Proposal Form for our Reaching Communities NI programme. Alternative formats were available on request.</p> <p>We provided Microsoft Word versions of the stage 2 application forms for the Live and Learn and Safe and Well funding programmes.</p>
<p>11. To explore further with relevant bodies BIG's policy on not accepting completed application and monitoring forms in alternative formats.</p> <p>Operations; Policy and Partnerships; Communications and Marketing</p>	<p>This measure was explored during the reporting period. BIG's corporate approach continues to be that we do not accept completed application and monitoring forms in audio visual/DVD or CD format.</p>
<p>12. To discuss internally the most efficient ways of producing publications in alternative formats.</p> <p>Communications and Marketing</p>	<p>This measure was explored, including a review of our use of 'Talking News'. Our review indicated that our policy is appropriate to demand.</p> <p>We continued to promote the availability of materials in alternative formats.</p>

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<p>13. To take action to ensure that key staff are competent in using textphone and all reception desks have access to induction loops. Corporate Services; NI Planning and Support Services</p>	<p>Northern Ireland We reviewed staff competence for retrieving messages and developed plans for further training for 2008. Key staff across the NI Directorate will receive this training, including the Equality Adviser. We have further agreed to carry out competency reviews every six months and to test equipment before events to ensure specific needs are met.</p> <p>UK-wide Frontline customer enquiries are redirected to staff at our externally contracted information and advice service (Broadcasting and Support Services), who are textphone-trained. NI staff support these calls.</p>
<p>14. To ensure that BIG's website and Intranet meet accessibility standards. We will employ Ability Net to carry out an evaluation into the accessibility of our website. Policy and Partnerships; Communications and Marketing; NI Information and Events team</p>	<p>As a result of an extensive audit (2006), a wide range of action were implemented on both the external website and Intranet aimed at improving accessibility. Our websites are subject to testing by external agencies that are experts in accessibility and usability. We also use automated testing tools such as WAVE.</p>
<p>15. To improve (i) equality assurance on all new and reviewed policies and functions relating to external functions; (ii) annual monitoring to assess the need for a full equality impact assessment (in line with the equality assurance timetable); and (iii) subsequent equality impact assessments. NI will conduct these functions for its own business and set a timetable for same. Policy and Partnerships; NI Equality Adviser</p>	<p>Northern Ireland Section 75 monitoring on new external products was carried out using the revised Equality Assurance process. No EQIAs were recommended. The findings were published in our Screening 3 Report.</p> <p>Key results of UK-wide policies are also published in BIG's annual Joint Race & Disability Equality Scheme progress report.</p>
<p>16. To develop a customer care strategy to support BIG's customer care standards (to include reference to disabled customers). Implemented in NI in line with our Corporate Standards. Policy and Partnerships</p>	<p>BIG's UK-wide customer service strategy was approved by the UK Board in November 2007. The strategy will work towards reconsidering our position on the Customer Care Charter mark in March 2009.</p> <p>A customer satisfaction survey was conducted December 2007/January 2008, which has informed the customer service action plan.</p> <p>The common customer service charter was revised and approved by Lottery Forum and was due for publication by October 2008.</p> <p>Plans were put in place to develop a new customer service training programme.</p>

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<p>17. To relaunch BIG's internal complaints procedure, review level of stage two complaints quarterly and identify action points. Implemented in NI in line with our Corporate Standards. Policy and Partnerships</p>	<p>Northern Ireland The NI Directorate maintains a complaints database, which is reviewed on a monthly basis. There were no disability-related complaints received during the reporting period.</p> <p>UK-wide A new internal complaints process was introduced. The system for stage 2 complaints was upgraded to include a prompt for staff to record when they have asked for equalities advice. Further improvements were made to the system to ensure a similar record is consistently made for stage 1 complaints.</p>
<p>18. To produce an Equality Good Practice Guidance booklet for applicants and grant-holders. In NI, the Policy, Development and Public Affairs division will lead on dissemination. Policy and Partnerships; Communications and Marketing; Operations; NI Policy, Development and Public Affairs</p>	<p>The online guide (Equality Matters) was informally launched in July 2007. Plans were put in place to formally launch a hard copy during 2008, following review and reformatting after user feedback. Equality Matters can be viewed on our website.</p> <p>Key staff, including NI staff, received training to raise their awareness of the guide's key messages.</p> <p>The guide was published on the BIG website and disseminated externally at events. Public awareness was raised through press releases and the BIG ebulletin.</p>
<p>19. To develop an internal protocol to allow staff to respond in an effective and efficient way to accessibility queries from customers. This will be implemented in NI in line with corporate standards. Policy and Partnerships; Communications and Marketing; NI Directorate</p>	<p>An internal protocol was drafted and was awaiting sign-off at March 2008.</p>
<p>20. To develop guidance for staff when working with support workers and interpreters. Policy and Partnerships; NI Directorate</p>	<p>Guidance has been developed to support the internal protocol and was awaiting sign-off at March 2008.</p>

Section 5: Review process

Review methods

5.1 To assess our progress in implementing the Disability Action Plan and promoting the disability duties, we utilised both internal and external sources of information covering the period from July 2007 to March 2008. This section of the report sets out the types and range of internal and external information used and the findings.

Internal sources

5.2 During the review process we referenced the following internal information:

- (i) Joint Equality Scheme annual progress report
- (ii) Human Resources data
- (iii) Staff Survey 2007
- (iv) research undertaken during the review period
- (v) feedback and input from the Internal Equality Group.

(i) Joint Equality Scheme annual progress report

5.3 BIG published its UK-wide Joint Race and Disability Equality Scheme (Joint Equality Scheme) in December 2006 and its first annual report on progress in February 2008, covering the period of implementation from December 2006 until November 2007.

5.4 As Northern Ireland's Disability Action Plan is based on the UK-wide Joint Equality Scheme (JES), the first annual JES progress report has provided a reference for reviewing UK-wide aspects of the Northern Ireland Disability Action Plan. The JES progress reports sets out the internal sources of information collated and referenced during the UK-wide review process, including:

- Employment monitoring results
- Employee survey 2007.

5.5 Full details of UK-wide findings are published in the JES progress report, which can be viewed on the BIG website or is available, on request, in alternative formats.

(ii) Human Resources data

5.6 We gathered, from our Human Resources department, statistics on key areas of human resources work related specifically to the Northern Ireland Directorate, which have enabled us to assess progress in these areas over the reporting period.

Key findings

5.7 The following findings relate specifically to Northern Ireland except where stated. In some instances data for Northern Ireland is too small and may identify individual staff members. In these cases the UK-wide finding is presented for the reporting period, compared with the previous eight-month period.

5.8 The key findings were that:

- There was no increase in the number of staff with disabilities and that data showed that BIG had an under-representation of disabled staff. As part of our engagement with the Employers Forum on Disability we had our practices audited regarding employing and providing service to people with a disability. In September 2007 we received a diagnostic report from the Forum which was being progressed at March 2008.
- There were no applicants for job vacancies who declared disabilities.
- On a UK-wide basis, there was a significant increase in the number of staff nominated and a small increase in the number of disabled staff nominated for a performance-related salary bonus.
- There was one case grievance case instigated in the Northern Ireland Directorate. This case was not related to disability.
- No disabled staff left the Northern Ireland Directorate during the reporting period or the previous eight-month period.

5.9 Analysis of data concluded that these findings are not statistically significant. BIG will continue to monitor this data every six months.

(iii) Staff Survey 2007

5.10 BIG completed its first staff survey in September 2006 and the second in September 2007.

5.11 There was a high percentage of responses by Northern Ireland staff (45 surveys completed out of 60 sent). However, a Northern Ireland breakdown of responses cannot be provided as it would allow respondents to be identified.

5.12 This section presents a UK-wide comparative profile of staff responses 2006 and 2007.

	Corporate	Disabled	Non-disabled
Improved on 2006	50 (62%)	54 (67%)	48 (59%)
Fall on 2006	24 (30%)	24 (30%)	25 (31%)
+ 5% > 2006	26 (32%)	46 (57%)	28 (35%)
- 5% < 2006	4 (5%)	15 (22%)	4 (5%)

5.13 The following observations can be made:

- The fall in responses to questions asked, in comparison to 2006, was evenly distributed across all groups and reflected the corporate trend.
- Disabled staff reported the second highest level of satisfaction on 46 questions (compared with Non-Disabled, Black and Minority Ethnic groups, White and Corporate categories) reflecting a 5 per cent or more improvement on 2006. Disabled staff reported a lower level of satisfaction (compared with all of the other categories) on 15 questions, six of which related to the Senior Management Team. The other nine questions that drew less positive responses will be further researched by the Employee Survey consultants, to identify any trends or issues to be developed within the Corporate Action Plan.

(iv) Research undertaken during the review period

5.14 We consulted with relevant policy and operations staff on research and evaluations conducted during the reporting period. The reports on this area of work is integrated in Section 4.

(iv) Feedback and input from the Internal Equality Group (NI)

5.15 The Internal Equality Group was consulted during the review process and was an important source of feedback and assessment of progress on the implementation of the Disability Action Plan.

External sources

5.16 During the review process we gathered and considered information from the following external sources:

- (i) key stakeholders
- (ii) Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
- (iii) good practice examples
- (iv) Joint Equality Scheme annual progress report.

(i) Stakeholders

5.17 The Big Lottery Fund welcomes comments on our Disability Action Plan at any time, in addition to during formal consultation periods. The review process on implementation of the plan during the reporting period was informed by:

- stakeholder responses following dissemination of the Disability Action Plan in July 2007
- comments and feedback from stakeholders during consultation on our Screening 4 Report from January-April 2008.

All comments relevant to the disability duties collated during have informed amendments to the plan and will continue to inform future discussions and amendments.

(ii) Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

5.18 In carrying out this review process, BIG adhered to guidelines from the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. The Equality Adviser also attended a seminar organised by the Commission in January 2008, which provided further guidance on implementing the disability duties. This guidance will inform future discussions and amendments to the Disability Action Plan.

(iii) Good practice

5.19 In conducting this review, we carried out research into examples of good practice across the statutory sector in meeting the disability duties, as well as advice on good practice from key organisations. Examples include the Northern Ireland Assembly and various councils across Northern Ireland.

(iv) Joint Equality Scheme annual progress report

5.20 As previously stated, BIG published its UK-wide Joint Equality Scheme (JES) in December 2006 and its first annual report on progress in February 2008, covering the period of implementation from December 2006 until November 2007.

5.21 The JES progress reports sets out both the external sources of information collated and referenced during the review process, including:

- funding statistics
- voluntary and community sector research
- research into public attitudes to BIG
- publications research
- publication requests
- Equality Matters guidance – user testing
- complaints and Freedom of Information requests
- evaluation and research.
- Commissioned customer survey.

5.22 Full details are published in the JES annual progress report, which is published on the BIG website or is available, on request, in alternative formats.

Section 6: Next Steps

Amendments to Northern Ireland Disability Action Plan

6.1 BIG is committed to reviewing its Northern Ireland Disability Action Plan on an annual basis, in order to measure progress on implementation of the plan. Having completed our first review of the plan, we made amendments to the document and submitted it to the Equality Commission in September 2008, along with a copy of this progress report. At the time of writing arrangements were in place to publish the revised plan, along with this report, on our website and Intranet.

6.2 The following changes were made to the Disability Action Plan:

1. We amended elements of the introductory sections, to reflect the most recent developments within BIG.
2. The following measures were revised:
 - (i) Internal measure No. 14: The wording of this measure was amended from ‘to conduct’ equality assurance to ‘to improve’ equality assurance. This change was made to more accurately reflect BIG’s intention to improve and enhance the Equality Assurance Process in relation to the disability duties. The timeline for this measure was also amended to better reflect policy timescales.
 - (ii) Internal measure No. 15: The timeline for this measure was amended to better reflect policy timescales.

Northern Ireland Disability Action Plan progress report

- (iii) Internal measure No. 20: Timeline clarified.
 - (iv) Internal measure No. 22: Additional related measures were added to this measure to include specific actions for the Northern Ireland Directorate. The timeline was also clarified.
 - (v) Internal measure No. 25: Timeline clarified.
 - (vi) External measure Nos. 2, 6, 8, 11, 13, 14: Timelines clarified.
 - (vii) External measure No. 15: The wording of this measure was amended from 'to coordinate' equality assurance (etc) to 'to improve' equality assurance (etc). This amendment was made to more accurately reflect BIG's intention to improve and enhance the Equality Assurance Process in relation to the disability duties.
3. The progress column of the Disability Action Plan was removed. This information was included in the first plan in order to report on progress at that time. Further progress updates will be published separately in annual progress reports alongside future revised Disability Action Plans.
 4. Minor typing and plain English changes were made throughout the document.
 5. A definition of disability has been included as an additional appendix. This definition has been taken from the Equality Commission's Factsheet 5, 'Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Definition of Disability'.

6.3 BIG is committed to keeping our Disability Action Plan under review. We will keep you informed of any future reviews, progress reports and amendments to the plan.

Report to Equality Commission

6.4 BIG has a duty to submit an annual progress report on our Disability Equality Action Plan to the Equality Commission as part of our wider annual report to the commission. We submitted this report to the Commission by the deadline of 31 September 2008. This report will also be published on our website, in October 2008.

Your views

6.5 At the time of writing plans were in place to profile the amended Disability Action Plan and progress report at BIG consultation events taking place through autumn and winter 2008/09.

6.6 We also welcome comments on the plan at any stage, either in writing or by telephone or through organised meetings. Please get in touch using the contact details at Section 7 if you have any comments.

Accessibility

6.7. This document is available on our website and can also be provided in hard copy. It can also be provided, on request, in alternative formats (such as in large print, in Braille, on audio-cassette, easy read and on computer disc) as well as in other languages. If you would like a copy in an alternative format, please contact the Equality Adviser at the details below to discuss your requirements.

Section 7: Contact details

7.1 If you have any comments on this document or wish to discuss any element of our equality work, please contact:

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