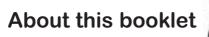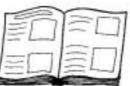# Code of Practice

on Accessibility of Public Services and Information provided by Public Bodies

NATIONAL DISABILITY AUTHORITY
ÚDARÁS NÁISIÚNTA MÍCHUMAIS

Easy to read edition

Code of Practice for Public Organisations About Making Public Services and Information Easy for People with Disabilities to Use

Easy to Read Edition

About this booklet

This booklet is booklet number

This booklet is about Sections 26, 27 & 28 of Part 3 of the Disability Act 2005

Please note that this booklet is intended as a guide only and does not cover detailed aspects of the legislation.

Thanks

Mencap developed this easy to read booklet

Thanks to Access First for the pictures

Contents

Some information about this code of practice

Who is this code of practice by?

This code of practice was written by the **National Disability Authority.**

We want to make sure that people with disabilities can get good services and support.

Who is this code of practice for?

This code of practice is a guide for **public organisations.**

There are lots of different public organisations.

They are not part of the Government but are involved with the work that the Government does or have been set up as part of a government law.

Here are some examples of public organisations in Ireland

- Departments of State
- county councils
- the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland
- Dublin Bus
- Public libraries

What is this code of practice about?

This code of practice is a **guide** to help public organisations make their services and information as easy for people with disabilities to use as possible.

A law called the **Disability Act** says that all public organisations now **have to try to make sure, as far as they can,** that their services and information are easy for people with disabilities to use.

This has been the law since 31 December 2005.

The Disability Act is split up in to different sections.

Sections **26, 27, and 28** talk about what public organisations now have to do to make their services and information easy for people with disabilities to use.

This code of practice talks about

* what public organisations have to do under sections **26, 27 and 28** of the Disability Act

* things that can help public organisations do what the law says they have to do

Why have we produced this code of practice?

We were asked to produce this code of practice by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

It will help public organisations do what the law says they have to do as part of the Disability Act.

It will also be useful for people with disabilities who use the services that public organisations provide.

Here are some things that can make it difficult for people with disabilities to use services.

- information that is difficult to understand

- organisations not knowing enough about what people with disabilities want and need

We think public organisations need to

- think carefully about how to make their services and information as easy as possible for people with disabilities to use

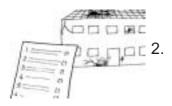- provide services and information in a way that meets the needs of the individuals that will be using them

We want public organisations to do what they can to make their services and information easy for people with disabilities to use.

What does this code of practice not talk about?

1. This code of practice does not talk about what public organisations are asked to do by another law called the **Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004.**

   • The Equal Status Acts also talk about information and services

   • Public organisations should look at what they have to do both as part of the Disability Act and the Equal Status Acts

2. This code of practice does not talk about what public organisations need to do to make **buildings and heritage sites** easy for people with disabilities to use.

   Heritage sites are things like old buildings and castles.

3. This code of practice does not talk about how a person with a disability can complain if a public body has not made their services or information easy for them to use.

   Sections **38, 39 and 40** of the Disability Act say that a person with a disability can complain to someone who works for the public bodycalled an **Inquiry Officer.**

   If they are not happy with the answer they get from the Inquiry Officer they can complain to someone called an Ombudsman.

Making services easy for people with disabilities to use

(This talks about section 26 1A of the Disability Act)

Section 26 of the Disability Act talks about making **services** easier for people with disabilities to use.

To find out what services are included, look at section 2 of the Disability Act.

What public organisations have to do

Public organisations have to try to make sure, as far as they can, that people with disabilities can use their services as easily as anyone else.

For example, this means making sure a person with a disability can use their services at the same time and in the same place as anyone else, wherever this is suitable and practical.

How can public organisations make this happen?

1. **They can look at how well their services work for people with disabilities at the moment.**

    They can look to see

    • if there is a difference between how people with disabilities and people with no disabilities use their services

    • how easy the services are for people with disabilities to use

2. **They can make a plan**

    The plan will look at things they need to do to make their services easier for people with disabilities to use.

They could ask people with disabilities, or other people who know what to do, to help them decide what should be in the plan.

3.   They can tell the public about what they plan to do.

How can public organisations decide what they need to put in their plan?

1.   They could ask us (National Disability Authority) for advice about things like

- how best to look at their services

- how to make a plan

2.   They could set up an advisory group

An advisory group is a group of people that know a lot about the services that the public body provides.

The advisory group can help the public body decide what to do to make their services easier for people with disabilities to use.

3.   They could check their buildings to see if there is anything they could do to make them easier for people with disabilities to use. For example, a public body could put their light switches lower on the wall so that people with disabilities could reach them.
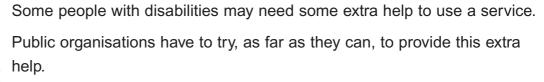
4.   They could look to see if there is anything else they can do to make their customer care policy better. A customer care policy talks about the things that the public body does to help their customers.

Helping people with disabilities to use services

(This talks about section 26 1b of the Disability Act)

What public organisations have to do

Some people with disabilities may need some extra help to use a service.

Public organisations have to try, as far as they can, to provide this extra help.

For example, a person with a disability may need someone to help them make decisions about a service. Or, they may need some information in sign language if they cannot hear.

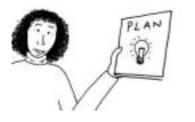## How can public organisations make this happen?

To help people with disabilities use their services, public organisations could think about

- **what type** of extra help a person with a disability might need. They could ask other people for ideas about this.

- **how often** people with disabilities might need some extra help

- **how easy** the extra help will be to provide? Is it practical and suitable? For example, will staff need training? Or will the public body need to ask another organisation to provide the extra help?

  If another organisation will provide the extra help, will it take a lot of time to organise?

Here are some more things a public body could do.

- they could **make a plan** about the things they will need to do when someone asks them for help

- they could **make sure staff know what to do** when someone asks them for help

- they could set up a **consumer group**

  A consumer group is a group of people that use the services. The group could meet to discuss how to make the services easier for people with disabilities to use

- they could provide **disability awareness training** for all their staff

- they could **tell the public** about what they plan to do

Having a member of staff to help people with disabilities use services

(This talks about section 26 2 of the Disability Act)

What public organizations have to do

Access Officer

Some people with disabilities may need some extra help to use

a service.

Public organizations must have at least 1 member of staff whose job it is

to arrange this help for a person with a disability.

That member of staff is called an **Access Officer**

How can public organizations make this happen?

To get an Access Officer public organizations could

- think about what **skills** the Access Officer would need and make sure the Access Officer gets the right **training and support** from their managers

- think about **how many** Access Officers they would need. A public body may need more than 1 Access Officer if they provide a lot of services

- make sure the Access Officers will be **available to help** vpeople with disabilities when ever they are needed

- **tell the public** about the Access Officers

Having experts available

(This talks about section 26 1 c of the Disability Act)

What public organizations have to do

Public organizations must have experts to help them decide how to make their services easier for people with disabilities to use, whenever this is suitable.

Experts are people that know a lot about a subject.

How can public organizations make this happen?

Public organizations could

- **decide what things** they may need expert advice about

- find out if any experts are available in their **own organisation** or whether they need an expert from another organisation

- **train staff to be experts**

- **set up a group** that can help them decide what expert advice they may need and where they can get it from

- **tell the public** what they plan to do

Buying and hiring services that are easy for people with disabilities to use

(This talks about section 27 of the Disability Act)

What public organizations have to do

Public organizations have to try to make sure, as far as they can, that the products or services

they **buy or hire** from other organisations are, as far as practical,

easy for people with disabilities to use.

They have to try to do this, as far as they can, unless

- it would not be practical

- the services would cost the public body too much to buy or hire

- the services would take too long to provide

Here are some examples of products and services that public organizations could buy or hire from other organisations

- equipment like telephones, computers and technology

- services like advertising or training

How can public organizations make this happen?

1. They can look at the way they buy services at the moment.

They can make sure that they think about how easy the service will be for people with disabilities to use.

2. They can make sure their staff know about what the Disability Act says about buying and hiring services that are easy for people with disabilities to use.

Making sure information is easy for people with disabilities to use and understand

(This talks about section 28 1 a of the Disability Act)

What public organizations have to do

Public organizations have to, try to make sure, as far as they can, that when people with disabilities ask for information, the **information** they provide is as easy as possible for people with disabilities to use and understand.

Information can be given to people in many ways.

- **spoken information.** For example, when someone talks at a meeting
- **written information.** For example, a book or a leaflet
- **electronic information.** For example, information on a website or on an email

Public organizations have to try to make sure, as far as they can, that the information they provide is in a **format** that is easy for a person with a disability to use.

For example, if a person cannot hear they may need information in sign language.

If a person finds it difficult to read they may need information in big writing with pictures.

Making information easy to use for people who find it difficult to hear

How can public organizations make this happen?

They can think about how to make spoken information easy to use for someone who finds it difficult to hear.

For example, public organizations could

- put their information in **writing**

- send information by **email or text messages**

- send information by **text or video phones**

- put **induction loops** in their reception area and a meeting room

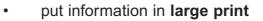- provide **Irish Sign Language interpreters**

Making information easy to use for people who find it difficult to see

How can public organizations make this happen?

They can think about how to make written information easy to use for someone who finds it difficult to see.

For example, public organizations could

- put information in **large print**

- put information in **braille**

- make information easy to use with **adaptive technology.** For information about adaptive technology go to page 21

- they could put information on **audio tape or CD**

But they need to remember that

- people often do not remember information as well if they hear it

- some information does not work very well if it is put on audio tape or CD

Here are some more ways public organizations can make information easy to use for people who find it difficult to hear or see.

1. The public body can find out about the needs of people who find it difficult to hear or see.

2. The public body can think about these things

- how to **find out what format** the person with a disability wants the information to be in

- how to **deal with any requests** they get for information in another format

- how to **make sure staff know what to do** if someone asks for information in another format

- how to make sure they can **provide the information in another format.** They may need to ask another organisation to provide it

- how **easy** it would be to provide the information in that format

- how to **offer other types of support** if none of these formats are available

- how to **keep a note** of how many requests they get for information in another format. This will help the public body to plan for the future

Making information easy to use for people who use adaptive technology

Adaptive technology is special equipment that helps people with disabilities to get the information they need if they cannot use standard technology.

Here are some examples of adaptive technology

- a computer that reads out words on a screen

- a computer that can make the words on the screen bigger

What public organizations have to do

Public organizations have to try to make sure, as far as they can, that the information they provide electronically can be used by people who use adaptive technology.

Electronic information is information in things like emails and websites.

How can public organizations make this happen

- they can **find out about the needs** of people who use adaptive technology

- they can find out **how to make electronic information easy for people with disabilities to use**

- they can **look at what they are currently doing** to make electronic information easy for people with disabilities to use, and see if they can make things better

- they can make sure they know about any **new adaptive technology** that becomes available. For example, a technology called smart card

- they can look at some **guidelines and standards** about making electronic information easy for people with disabilities to use.

Here are some guidelines and standards public organizations could look at

1. Our guidelines about how to make **electronic information** easy for people with disabilities to use. Our guidelines talk about how to make things like emails and websites easy for people with disabilities to use.

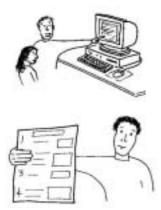To look at these guidelines go to our website at **http://accessit.nda.ie**

2. Guidelines about how to make **websites** easy for people with disabilities to use. These guidelines are written by an organisation called the **Web Accessibility Initiative**

To look at these guidelines go to the Web Accessibility Initiative's website at **http://www.w3.org/WAI/**

Here is a useful website that public organizations could look at **www.oasis.gov.ie**

This website has lots of information about how to make electronic information easy to use for people who find it difficult to see and who use adaptive technology.

Making information easy to understand and use for people with a learning disability

What public organizations have to do

Public organizations have to try to make sure, as far as they can, that information that would be important to people with a learning disability, is easy for them to read and understand.
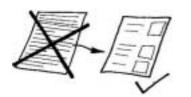
Written information that is easy to read and understand is often called **easy to read.**

How can public organizations make this happen?

Public organizations can make **easy to read** versions of their written information.

Here are some ways public organizations can make their written information easy to read and understand

- they can make sure the **words they use** are easy to understand

- they can use **short sentences and paragraphs**

- they can leave **lots of space** between the writing

- they can use **pictures** to support what the words say

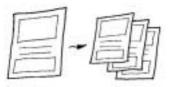Here are some things public organizations can do to produce **easy to read** versions of their information

- they can **find out what they need to do** to produce an easy to read version of their information

For example, can they produce it themselves or do they need

another organisation to do it for them?

- they can **decide what information** should be made into an easy to read version

- they can find out **how many people** may want or need an

  easy to read version of this information

Here are some more things public organizations can do

- they can decide how to deal with requests for easy to read versions of their information

- they can make sure **staff know what to do** when someone asks them for an easy to read version of information

- they can **keep a note** of how many requests they receive for easy to read versions of their information. This will help public organizations plan for the future

- they can **look at examples** of easy to read information

Public organizations can look at some easy to read versions of our information

They can look at

- our strategic plan for 2003-2006

- a document called **First Steps in Producing Accessible Publications**

To get a copy of our easy to read versions contact us

(National Disability Authority)

To find out how to contact us go to the section called **Where to get more information and help** on page 26

Where to get more information or help

For information or advice about this code of practice

Or to get this code of practice in another format, for example, in

- easy to read
- braille
- large print
- audio tape
- or accessible HTML

Contact us **(The National Disability Authority)**

write to

National Disability Authority

25 Clyde Road

Dublin 4

Ireland

telephone (01) 608 0400

fax (01) 660 9935

email standards@nda.ie

website www.nda.ie

For information and resources about daily living for people with disabilities in Ireland

contact Assist Ireland

telephone1890 277 478. This is a lo call number

email support@assistireland.ie

website www.assistireland.ie

For information about public and social services

Look at the Oasis website

websitewww.oasis.gov.ie

or contact Comhairle. This is an organisation that supports other organisations to provide good information about social services

write to

Comhairle
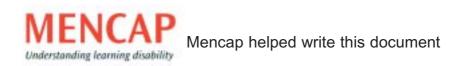
7th Floor

Hume House

Ballsbridge

Dublin 4

telephone(01) 605 9000

emailinfo@comhairle.ie

website www.comhairle.ie/

For information about the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004

contact **The Equality Authority**

write to

The Equality Authority

2 Clonmel Street

Dublin 2

telephone (01) 417 3333 or 1890 245 545. This is a lo call number

email info@equality.ie

website www.equality.ie

Mencap helped write this document

Thanks to Access First for the pictures

National Disability Authority
25 Clyde Road, Dublin 4. Tel: 01 608 0400 Fax: 01 660 9935
Email: nda@nda.ie

www.nda.ie