

1 Message from the Mayor



I take great pleasure in presenting Bland Shire Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021. This Plan outlines Council's actions over the next four years to make the Bland Shire more inclusive of people with a disability.

The plan forms part of other major reforms within the disability sector, to encourage positive change to the lives of people with disability and supports the full participation of all community members in all aspects of the community.

Council has already implemented a range of programs and strategies to remove access barriers and increase participation of people with disability in our community. This Plan builds on our previous work and seeks to strengthen the capacity of all Bland Shire residents.

As an all encompassing planning tool, the Plan has four major focus areas:

1. Positive attitudes and behaviour;
2. Liveable communities;
3. Employment; and
4. Systems and Processes

Adopting a broad focus across all of these areas will ensure the Bland Shire is continually striving for improvement to ensure our community is inclusive and offers opportunities for the full participation of all community members.

Engaging the community is vital to the Plan's success and I urge community members and other local stakeholders to support its implementation.

An inclusive Bland Shire will benefit everyone and strengthen our community.

2 Message from the General Manager



I am proud to champion the implementation of the Bland Shire Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) 2017-2021.

Council continues to work towards creating a more accessible and inclusive community which provides opportunities for all residents to fully participate and contribute to community life.

Included in this plan is a commitment to improve accessibility to Council services, facilities, programs and events. Council will also take a leadership role in the community by reviewing our own practices, internal systems and processes to ensure they support enhanced access and inclusion outcomes for our residents.

The Bland Shire DIAP provides the framework for a four year delivery program to progress our aims and objectives and support increased opportunities for People with Disability.

Along the way Council will regularly report back to the community to promote the progress and achievements of the Plan as part of our efforts to ensure quality outcomes for all Bland Shire residents.

I would like to thank everyone involved in the development of the Bland Shire Disability Inclusion Action Plan and look forward to many positive outcomes for our community as the delivery of the plan unfolds.

3 Background

For the first time all levels of government across Australia have committed to a unified, national approach to improving the lives of people with disability, their families and carers through the development of the National Disability Strategy. In this strategy the State and Federal Governments have committed to a person centred approach where the individual is the 'centre' of focus and not their disability. In August 2014 the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 was passed. This Act requires Council to develop a Disability Inclusion Action Plan to help remove barriers and enable people with disability to participate equally in their communities.

The Bland Shire Disability Inclusion Action Plan was endorsed at Council's May 2017 meeting and placed on public exhibition. The plan was formally adopted by Council at the June 2017 meeting.

The plan was update to include a progress report in July 2018.

4 Purpose

The purpose of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan is to set out the strategies and actions that Council will deliver in the next four years to enable people with disability to have greater participation in and access to Council services, facilities and information. The Plan includes actions for all areas of Council and will guide us in making our services and facilities more inclusive. Implementation of the actions in this Plan will benefit many people in our community including older people, people with a temporary injury and parents with young children.

The Plan is underpinned by the following principles which support the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006):

- Focusing on abilities and not disabilities
- Fundamental rights for all people
- Genuine dialogue and participation
- Improving access and inclusion for all
- Prudent use of resources
- Recognising the benefits of collaboration
- Access is everyone's business

5 Disability in our community

Disability is an issue that affects us all, in different ways. Most disabilities (nearly 90%) are invisible. However, all affect the ability of that person to live autonomously, to work and be welcomed in their community. The families, carers and friends of a person with a disability can also find that their ability to participate in community life and their acceptance within the community can be affected.

In 2015:

- Almost one in five Australians reported living with disability (18.3% or 4.3 million people).
- The majority (78.5%) of people with disability reported a physical condition, such as back problems, as their main long-term health condition. The other 21.5% reported mental and behavioural disorders.
- The unemployment rate for people with disability was 10.0%; higher than that for people without disability at 5.3%
- More than half of those with disability aged 15 to 64 years participated in the labour force (53.4%), which is considerably fewer than those without disability (83.2%).

In the Bland Shire Council area, 5.34% of residents or 288 people self-reported, in the 2011 Census, that they required assistance to complete the core activities of their daily living.

Bland Shire residents need for assistance with core activities 2011

Assistance required by age group	Number
0 – 9 years	14
10 – 19 years	15
20 – 29 years	8
30 – 39 years	12
40 – 49 years	23
50 – 59 years	39
60 – 69 years	31
70 – 79 years	55
80 – 89 years	60
90 – 100 years	31

84.4% of residents who identify as needing assistance with core activities or 243 people are considered low income earners (earning less than \$600/week).

6 Consultation

Council offered an opportunity for open ended feedback to be provided through Council's website in conjunction with IPR consultation that was undertaken for a period of 6 months from late 2016 to early 2017. Messages from Council's General Manager were displayed at community movie nights encouraging community members to have their say and report any issues or areas of concern to Council.

The Bland Shire Access Advisory Committee was engaged to connect with residents of the community and discuss the principles outlined in the DIAP guidelines, in order to report back to Council to assist with the development of the plan. The Access Advisory Committee

consists predominately of community members with a lived experience of disability or who have a strong interest in the area of disability.

One-on-one consultation was conducted internally with relevant Council staff to ensure a comprehensive approach was adopted when creating the Bland Shire DIAP.

As background to the consultation and to confirm issues which have been previously identified in the Bland Shire LGA, a review of existing documents and previous consultation was undertaken:

Key areas of importance or concern that were identified as a result of the review include:

- Council's Mobility Access Map is to continue to be updated and distributed on a regular basis
- Accessing hospitality outlets within the community is a huge concern as a number of local hospitality outlets are inaccessible to people with mobility issues
- Continue promotion of Councils Access Incentive Scheme, particularly to Main Street businesses and hospitality outlets
- International Day of People with Disability celebrations are to continue annually to assist in break down disability barriers and increasing community awareness of access and inclusion issues within the community
- The provision of access friendly public toilets

7 What are the guiding principles?

This plan is aligned with the principles underpinning the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) which acknowledges that people with a disability have the same human rights as those without disability. This approach requires that services are provided in a way that does not directly or indirectly prevent people with disability fully participating.

It further accords with the National Disability Inclusion Act (DIA) which commits the NSW Government to making communities more inclusive and accessible for people with disability now and into the future.

The National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 sets out a plan for improving the lives of people with disability, their families and carers. The NSW Disability Inclusion Plan aligns with this strategy.

Our approach has been developed around the four key outcome areas in the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan:

1. **Liveable communities**
Identifying and removing barriers to the environment, services and facilities for people with disability.
2. **Employment**
Increasing employment and inclusion in the workplace for people with disability.
3. **Attitudes and behaviours**
Developing positive attitudes by increasing awareness and inclusion practices.
4. **Systems and processes**
Identifying and removing barriers caused by our systems and processes.

This Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) 2017-2021 is consistent with The Local Government NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines.

7.1 Definition of disability

Guiding our understanding and approach is the definition of disability articulated in the *Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (NSW)*:

'The long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which in interaction with various barriers may hinder the full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.'

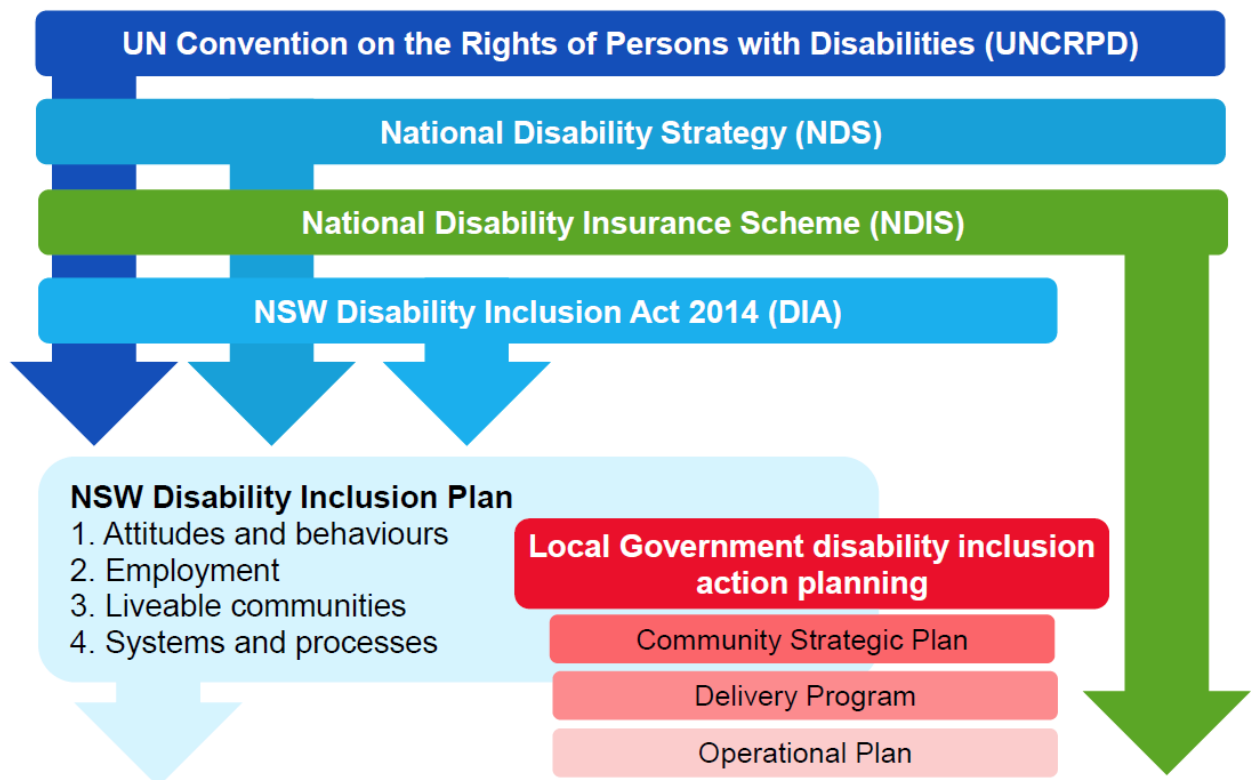
This definition reinforces the importance of viewing disability as a result of interaction between people living with a range of impairments and their physical and social environment. Disability is not just about impairment. The responsibility to break down barriers rests with the whole community.

We have also adopted the scope of disability from *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)* which describes disability as including:

- physical
- intellectual
- psychiatric
- sensory
- neurological
- learning disabilities
- physical disfigurement
- the presence in the body of disease causing organisms

8 What is the policy and legislative context?

Figure 1 The relationships between the relevant policy and legislative instruments



Source: *NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines*

This plan has been developed within the context of the following legislation:

- 1. *Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (NSW) (DIA)***
This continues the Government's commitment to improving the lives of people with disability and reaffirms the state-wide focus on building a truly inclusive community.
- 2. *Government Sector Employment Act 2013 (NSW) (GSE)***
The associated Regulation and Rules provide a new statutory framework focused on NSW government sector employment and workforce management. Strategies for workforce diversity are now required to be integrated with workforce planning across the government sector.
- 3. *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth) (DDA)***
This Act recognises the rights of people with disability to equality before the law and makes discrimination based on disability unlawful.
- 4. *Web Accessibility National Transition Strategy 2010***
The Web Accessibility National Transition Strategy sets a course for improved web services, paving the way for a more accessible and usable web environment that will more fully engage with, and allow participation from, all people within our society.
- 5. *NSW Anti Discrimination Act 1977 (ADA)***
This legislation prevents discrimination on the basis of race, including colour, nationality, descent and ethnic, ethno-religious or national origin, sex, including pregnancy and breastfeeding, marital or domestic status, disability, homosexuality, age, transgender status, and carer responsibilities.

9 Key outcome areas and actions:

9.1 Liveable communities

People with disability live in accessible and well designed communities with opportunity for full inclusion in social, economic, sporting and cultural life.

Aim	What Council will do	Timeframe	Action manager	Performance Indicator	Measurement	Progress to 2021
9.1.1 Service users are consulted and provide input on the accessibility of services.	9.1.1.1 Consult and engage with the community about accessibility and inclusion planning for park facilities, visitor facilities, visitor experiences, services, consultation and communication processes. Incorporate feedback into future processes where possible. Consult the community in accordance with IPR and customer satisfaction survey.	2017 and ongoing	Community Development Officer	% of community who are satisfied with the accessibility of Council public spaces	Community consulted around accessibility issues on an annual or bi-annual basis Community satisfaction levels.	The customer satisfaction survey was held in 2020 with a majority of the community satisfied with council's public spaces.
9.1.2 The physical environment is accessible and inclusive of service users and customers.	9.1.2.1 Review and improve processes to ensure that new Council builds and renovations align with the appropriate building codes and best practice in Disability (Access to Premises - Buildings) Standards.	2017 and ongoing	Manager Facilities and Risk	Increase in % of new works or renovations of existing facilities that align with appropriate building codes and best practice standards.	Council data	Steps and handrails have been installed at the West Wyalong Stadium to ensure ease of access for people with mobility issues.

	<p>9.1.2.2 Mobility Access Map to be updated and made available to the community in hard copy format and accessible on Councils webpage.</p>	Ongoing	Community Development Officer	Map created, made available on Councils website, promoted within the community through social media, Council Notices and community radio. Map available from Council offices and distributed to locally businesses and community groups.	Council data, access survey	<p>Councils Disability Access Map was updated in 2019.</p> <p>The Mobility Access Map is available on Council's website and will be promoted on social media throughout the year.</p> <p>The Mobility Access Map will be updated in 2021.</p>
	<p>9.1.2.3 Information on compliance with access design requirements under the Australia Standards 1428 are to be readily available to the community when required, particularly builders, designers and developers.</p>	Ongoing	Manager Development Services	<p>Increase in the Availability of design requirement information.</p> <p>Information to be included online.</p>	Council data	Information on Australian access design requirements and compliance standards is readily available on Councils website.
	<p>9.1.2.4 Promotion and administration of Councils Access Incentive Scheme to improve access to local businesses and community organisation premises with Main Street hospitality outlets prioritised.</p>	Ongoing	Community Development Officer	Minimum of two businesses and/or community facilities upgraded each year pending the receipt of at	Number of projects funded	Councils Access Incentive Scheme Grant fund was promoted across social and print media during the 2020 – 2021 financial year.

				least 2 applications that meet guidelines. Minimum of two external advertisements annually.		
	9.1.2.5 Review Council facilities, sites, parks, footpath, parking, sport and recreation facilities and library to identify barriers to inclusion and accessibility and ensure access is a considered when renewing and building new facilities.	Ongoing	Manager Facilities and Risk	Increase in the accessibility of Council facilities, sites, parks, footpaths, parking, sport and recreation facilities and library.	Council Data	
	9.1.2.6 Ensure the provision of accessible toilets and amenities within the community.	Ongoing	Manager Facilities and Risk	Increase in the % of community who are satisfied with Councils public Toilets and amenities	Council data Community satisfaction levels	Installation of new accessible public toilets within the shire.
	9.1.2.7 Funds are allocated within Councils annual budget to implement the Access Incentive Scheme Grant.	Ongoing	Bland Shire Counsellors	Annual funds made available in budget	Review of Council budget	Funds allocated to Councils Access Incentive Scheme Grant for the 2021 – 2022 financial year.
	9.1.2.8	Review annually	Manager Facilities and Risk	One upgrade completed annually	Council data	Installation of new accessible public

	Review and progressively improve accessibility of Councils existing facilities					toilets within the shire.
9.1.3 Provide support and assistance to local groups and organisations advocating on behalf of people with a disability	9.1.3.1 Regularly liaise with disability advocacy groups servicing the local area to provide assistance and support as required.	Ongoing	Community Development Officer	Disability advocacy group representatives invited to attend all interagency meetings. Number of organisations liaised with and the outcomes of support provided.	Interagency attendance records Council data	Support and assistance provided to a multitude of organisations who work with and advocate for people with disabilities particularly around the implementation of the NDIS and access to local service provision.
	9.1.3.2 Work with the Community Reference Group to advocate for improved access and inclusion for people with disabilities.	Ongoing	Community Development Officer	The Community Reference Group is maintained with agenda items and support provided as necessary. Meetings held on a bi-monthly basis	2 agenda items to be included each year	Only one Community Reference Group meeting held within the past financial year due to Covid 19 implications.

9.2 Employment

Aim	What Council will do	Timeframe	Action manager	Performance Indicator	Measurement	Progress to June 2020
9.2.1 Ensure the provision of a safe and accessible workplace for all Council staff, Councillors and visitors.	9.2.1.1 Review access features and barriers and conduct an audit to identify and assist in the removal of barriers and improving access.	2017 and ongoing	Manager Facilities and Risk	Increase in the accessibility of Council Workspaces % of staff happy with accessibility	Council data	Council conducted an access audit as part of its most recent Access Map update.
	9.2.1.2 Ensure Fire Wardens are trained in assisting people with a disability during emergency evacuation procedures. Ensure that a range of disabilities are included.	Ongoing	WHS Officer	Increase in the number of training sessions/staff trained in assisting people with disability in emergency situations.	Training has occurred	Fire Warden training was held in July 2020.
	9.2.1.3 Offer training for people with disabilities to assist them in the workplace.	2012 - 2021	HR	Increase in the inclusivity of the Bland Shire recruitment process.	Training is made available	Training will be made available as required.
9.2.2 The recruitment process is accessible.	9.2.2.1 Review and update the recruitment and selection process (including application, assessment and orientation processes) to ensure it is accessible for people with disability.	2020 - 2021	HR	Updates undertaken with initiatives to improve inclusion considered and adopted as required.	Council data	Provisions are made for people with disabilities when undergoing the recruitment process.

	9.2.2.2 Design position descriptions and recruitments processes to optimise the opportunities given to all applicants to demonstrate their merits against job requirements.	2020 - 2021	HR	% of PD's updated to consider and include disability and diversity.	Council data	All Council position descriptions have been updated and are compiled to accord with document accessibility standards.
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9.3 Attitudes and behaviours

Aim	What Council will do	Timeframe	Action manager	Performance indicator	Measure	Progress to June 2020
9.3.1 Senior management and staff are to sponsor and champion a commitment to access and inclusion internally and externally.	9.3.1.1 Disability awareness and competence training is to be provided for senior staff and management.	Ongoing	HR	Increase in level of training offered and number of senior staff and management trained in disability awareness and competence.	Council data	Disability awareness training to be offered to senior staff as required.
	9.3.1.2 Senior leaders raise the profile of access and inclusion in their communication by promoting the implementation of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) within their teams.	Ongoing	All Senior Staff	All senior staff are familiar with the DIAP and ensure that all staff are working in accordance with the actions specified in the plan.	Council data	The Disability Inclusion Action Plan has been discussed at MANEX, reviewed at a Council meeting and made available to all staff throughout the organisation with staff encouraged to

						familiarise themselves with the document.
9.3.2 Staff are trained in inclusive practice and disability access and awareness	9.3.2.1 Provide disability awareness training to Council employees with priority given to staff that have a high level of contact with the public.	Ongoing	HR	Increased % of staff trained in disability awareness	Council data	Bullying and harassment training held for all staff in the 2020 – 2021 financial period.
9.3.3 Involve people with a Disability in the development of communication campaigns regarding disability inclusion	9.3.3.1 People with a disability are to be consulted and included in the development of communication campaigns regarding disability inclusion.	Ongoing	Community Development Officer	Increase in the % of people consulted regarding disability inclusion	Council data Consultation has occurred	People with disabilities and their carers encouraged to provide feedback to Council in the development of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan.
9.3.4 Improve community attitudes and awareness of access issues and disability inclusion.	9.3.4.1 Promote access awareness and deliver community education around disability inclusion	Ongoing	Community Development Officer	A minimum of two promotional items are to be circulated annually.	Information has been published and distributed	Councils Access Awards and National Day of People with Disability Celebrations held in December 2020. Promotional material was circulated on multiple occasions for these events and Councils Access Incentive Scheme Grant.
	9.3.4.2 Partner with local organisations to deliver	Ongoing	Community Development Officer	A minimum of one educational activity to be	Activity has been held	Community education session held around mental

	education programs within schools/community.			held annually.		health and Psychosocial disabilities held with local schools through the resilience project digital program and the Butterfly Foundation youth sessions.
	9.3.4.3 Include features in Council's community newsletter about accessibility in and around the Shire.	Ongoing	Community Development Officer/ Community Relations Officer	Include accessibility in at least one community newsletter/Council notices page annually.	Information has been published and distributed	Information regarding Councils Access Incentive Scheme Grant stream published in Council Notices and on Social Media.
	9.3.4.4 Council hosts an annual event to celebrate international Day of People with Disability.	Annually	Community Development Officer	One event to be held annually	Event has been held	Event was not held in 2020 as a result of Covid19 implications. Social media promotion was used to mark the event, encourage the community to have their say on access and inclusion, to promote the access map and grant scheme and to increase community knowledge and

						awareness of access issues.
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9.4 Systems and Processes

Aim	What Council will do	Timeframe	Action manager	Performance indicator	Measure	Progress to June 2020
9.4.1 Promote available technology and assistance offered	9.4.1.1 Promote through all Council channels including social media, news paper, website, in library and through customer service staff describing available technologies and assistance offered	Ongoing	Community Development Officer/ Community Relations Officer	Promotion to occur at least two times per year across all promotional channels.	Information has been published and distributed	Available technology is promoted on Councils website and across social media.
9.4.2 Ensure sector information is up to date	9.4.2.1 Engage and consult with disability peak bodies to gather information and better understand the abilities and needs of people with different types of disability.	2020 - 2021	Community Development Officer	Number of partnerships maintained or increased.	Council data	Discussions held with a number of service providers to improve understanding of the needs of people with disability and their carers.
9.4.3 Ensure Councils website is accessible	9.4.3.1 Council website is reviewed annually with all upgrades to include accessible features and requiring web content compliance with at least conformance level AA in the W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.	Ongoing	Community Development Officer/ Community Relations Officer	Web content compliance maintained and/or improved.	Review undertaken	Council has recently moved to a new and far more user-friendly website platform to enable better online access for residents and users. The website continues to be updated regularly to ensure it is

						accessible for all residents and users.
9.4.4 Council is to work towards the provision of accessible documents provided in a number of different formats.	9.4.4.1 Council staff are to consider disability access guidelines when developing new and reviewing existing documentation	Ongoing	All staff	Investigate methods and new technologies to assist in providing information to residents in more accessible formats. Increase in the % of Council documents provided in an accessible format	Investigations undertaken and changes adopted to increase accessibility of Council information as required	Council employs user friendly fonts, text size and colours in all outgoing documentation. Council works to ensure all documents are compatible with adobe reader. Investigations and updates ongoing.
9.4.5 Quality service delivery provided to all customers	9.4.5.1 Service quality monitoring is to be conducted on an annual basis	Ongoing	All staff	Customer satisfaction levels maintained or increased	Customer satisfaction survey	Community Reference Group meetings are held bi-monthly with community members encouraged to voice any access issues or concerns.
9.4.6 Ensure that all public consultation opportunities provided by Council are	9.4.6.1 Event Accessibility Checklist is utilised when planning public forums/events around consultation. Accessibility is considered when planning consultation and developing consultation methods.	Ongoing	Community Development Officer/ Community Relations Officer	Increase in the accessibility of council events % of responses received from service users with a disability.	Council data	Council has created portable disabled parking signs for use at events to ensure events are access friendly. Event accessibility checklist used and site

inclusive and accessible.						audits conducted during event planning to ensure all events are access friendly where possible.
9.4.7 Ensure internal processes are flexible to meet the needs of service users and/or staff with disability	9.4.7.1 Internal processes are adapted to meet the individual needs of service users or staff as required.	Ongoing	HR	Satisfaction of staff and service users maintained or increased	Council data	Internal processes are adapted on an individual basis as required.
9.4.8 Ensure a coordinated approach to disability inclusion is adopted and maintained across all areas of the organisation	9.4.8.1 All staff are to be familiar with the DIAP ensuring directives outlined in the plan are adhered to and a coordinated and sensitive approach to disability inclusion is maintained across the organisation.	Ongoing	All staff	% of staff operating effectively in accordance with the directives specified in the DIAP.	Council data	All Council staff have been provided with a copy of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan and instructed to familiarise themselves with the document and the requirements noted.
9.4.9 Ensure recognition of the DIAP in Councils IPR documentation	9.4.9.1 The DIAP is to be acknowledged in Councils IPR documentation.	Ongoing	Executive level staff	The DIAP is acknowledged in Councils IPR documentation.	Review of IPR documentation	The DIAP is acknowledged in Councils IPR documentation (action 5.1.2).