



# Disability Access Strategy

<b>Policy and Procedure</b>	<b>Ref No:</b>
Department: Clinical Services	WAVE Disability Strategy
Author: Clinical Services Director	August 2013
Review	August 2019
Next Review	August 2022

## 1 Objectives

## 1.1 Definitions of Disability and Impairment

There are a number of definitions and models of 'disability'. These include legislative, medical and social models and definitions.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995, amended by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006, defines a person with a disability as:  
*'Someone with a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'*

The social model of disability makes an important distinction between 'impairment' and 'disability'. The key definitions within this model are:  
*'Impairment – an injury, illness or congenital condition that causes, or is likely to cause, a long term effect on physical appearance and / or limitation of function within the individual that differs from the commonplace'*

*'Disability – the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in society on an equal level with others due to social and environmental barriers'*

The strategy takes account of the social model of disability which aims to encourage society to consider disability in a different way. It makes the important distinction between 'impairment' and 'disability' in recognising that people with 'impairments' are disabled by the barriers that commonly exist in society. The basis for the social model is that it is not about the disabled person's impairment but how society reacts to it. It requires society to remove the barriers so that all people have equality of opportunity. It has been influential in altering attitudes and causing society to consider that it needs to adapt to the needs of disabled people rather than defining them as the problem.

The objectives of the WAVE strategy are to:

- Support disabled people to better exercise their rights, choices and life opportunities
- Support the continuing development of an inclusive and effective range of high quality health and social care services

- Develop clear and achievable recommendations which are capable of being monitored and evaluated; and

## **2. Values**

The strategy addresses the needs of all age groups, both children and adults, regardless of the cause of the disability. In accordance with the articles and principles stated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability, it promotes:

- Dignity and respect for individual differences;
- Social inclusion and acceptance of the individual by society;
- Independence and life opportunities;
- Informed choices;
- Anti-discrimination in service provision; and
- Equality of opportunity and access to services and facilities.

The strategy has adopted a life cycle approach to service provision and support, recognising that people living with disabilities will have changing needs throughout their lives. It also recognises that people with a disability, like other members of society, have a range of needs including physical, emotional, psychological and social needs.

## **3 Key Policy Principles**

The policy principles underpinning the development of this disability strategy are:

### **3.1 Prevention / Early Intervention**

Early assessment, diagnosis and intervention with the aim of minimising increased complexity of need in future years.

**3.2 Balanced Risk - Effective Assessment and Management** – The promotion of choice and independence for people with disabilities so that barriers to accessing WAVE services are removed and people are encouraged to realise their maximum potential in all aspects of their lives.

**3.3 Social Inclusion** – People with disabilities to have access to the same opportunities and choices (e.g. education, employment, health and social care, housing, leisure and transport as everyone else).

**3.4 User / Carer Participation** – the involvement of service users (clients) and carers in the planning, delivery and audit of WAVE services.

#### **4. WAVE Youth Services**

Services for young people at WAVE (6-25 yrs) include Counselling, Complementary Therapy and Peer Group support. Services are delivered in accordance with the OFMDFM Ten Year Children’s Strategy ‘Our Children and Young People: Our Pledge’ and the DHSSPS ‘Families Matter Family Support Strategy,’ which draw heavily upon the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

**The Children (NI) Order 1995** is the primary piece of legislation in respect of children in NI. Article 17 states that a child shall be taken to be in need if “he is disabled.” Article 18 determines the statutory responsibilities of HSC Trusts to provide for ‘children in need’ in their area, including disabled children. In addition, Article 19 provides for support for ‘children in need’ within early years, which also includes children with disabilities.

#### **3.2 Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing**

In keeping with the Bamford Review, the NI Mental Health Promotion Strategy and the “Protect Life” Suicide Prevention Strategy demonstrate there is a need to ensure that the factors affecting the mental health and wellbeing of people with a disability are effectively addressed.

##### The Mental Health Promotion Strategy

A nurturing childhood – the early years (particularly from conception to 3 years old) are of unique importance in terms of:

- Intellectual, emotional and social development;
- Education – making use of the capacity to learn, grow and develop;
- Being in employment – having good working conditions;
- Having good physical health and being active;
- Being socially engaged – taking part in community activities.
- Having strong personal relationships;
- Living in a healthy environment – having access to urban green spaces, warm housing, affordable and accessible transport; and
- Being in a safe community free from the threat of violence and intimidation

At an individual level there is a need to promote positive mental health

and build resilience by addressing factors such as family and personal relationships, social engagement, physical health, childhood experiences, educational attainment and personal development.

#### **4. Accessibility**

ALL WAVE facilities facilitate disabled access including building entrances, toilets, car parking facilities, internal lifts

WAVE also promotes regular client feedback on facilities and support. This feedback is designed to promote ongoing service improvement and is sought from individual clients and also via several forums (e.g. WAVE Injured Group).

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