



THE UNIVERSITY
of ADELAIDE

The University of Adelaide

DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN 2020 – 2024

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The University of Adelaide is committed to ensuring that people with a disability are welcomed and included. We will honour the University's egalitarian history by continuing to value diverse experiences and perspectives, shaping an inclusive culture and addressing the structural inequalities that inhibit opportunities for some of our existing and prospective staff and students.



INTRODUCTION



The University of Adelaide is committed to building and supporting a diverse and inclusive community in accordance with the principles of equal opportunity and social justice. A focus on the quality, impact and involvement of a diverse range of people will enable the University to utilise the skills and experience of its entire community.

This Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2020 – 2024 complements the University’s Strategic Plan which commits the University to ‘continue to pursue an agenda of equity and access’.

As an institution that values excellence, we have high expectations of our students and staff. Recognising that individuals contribute in many different ways the University is committed to ensuring that all students and staff are informed, heard, connected and valued.

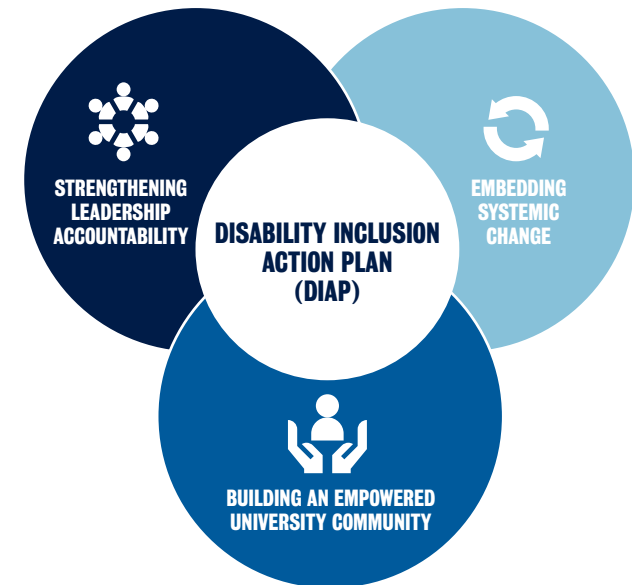
The 2020 review of the University of Adelaide’s Disability Action Plan 2014-2019 and development of the University of Adelaide Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2020-2024 demonstrates the University’s ongoing commitment to support diversity and inclusion in its community.

This Disability Inclusion Action plan makes clear a zero tolerance for unlawful discrimination on the grounds of disability as set out in the University’s Equal Opportunity Policy and associated procedures and guidelines.

Based on a comprehensive University-wide consultation process considering student and staff feedback, this Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2020-2024 is organised around three areas of focus outlining our commitment as follows:

- Strengthening leadership accountability
- Embedding systemic change
- Building an empowered University community

The Plan is supported by an Annual Implementation Action Plan identifying accountabilities and time frames to monitor our ongoing commitment.





ACHIEVING INCLUSION

The University is committed to continuously build on its achievements from previous Disability Action Plans to improve and strengthen its diverse and inclusive community. This Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2020-2024 provides opportunities for further improvements.

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The University has obligations relating to disability and discrimination, under both Federal and State legislation and standards being:

- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*
- *Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth)*
- *Disability Standards for access to premises 2010 (Cth)*
- *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA)*

Collectively these acts and regulations establish that it is unlawful to discriminate against any person on the grounds of disability.

Though Disability Inclusion Action Plans are not a legal requirement, the University has established this Plan because it is determined to make clear its commitment to create a culture that is inclusive of the needs of students and staff with disability, and an environment where all students and staff have full access to participate in University life and achieve their potential.

DEFINITIONS

DISABILITY

Disability may be temporary or permanent and is not necessarily visible. Some 18% of the Australian population have disability. Whilst some people with disability contribute to society in the same way as those without disability, many must overcome significant barriers which prevent their full participation. People with disability may require adjustments to be made to facilitate access to the breadth of University activities and culture, so that they are able to participate on the same basis as other staff and students.

In developing this Disability Inclusion Action Plan, the University of Adelaide is guided by the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*, which provides a very broad definition of disability. The Disability Inclusion Action Plan is also guided by the principles of the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Declaration 2009 (CRPD), which seeks to address the barriers to inclusion for people with disability.

The disability categories have been provided by the Department of Education, Skills and Development (2020) in relation to Higher Education, and aim to be inclusive of all types of disabilities and medical conditions. (*Please refer to page 9*).



SOME 18% OF THE AUSTRALIAN POPULATION HAVE DISABILITY. WHILST SOME PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIETY IN THE SAME WAY AS THOSE WITHOUT DISABILITY, MANY MUST OVERCOME SIGNIFICANT BARRIERS WHICH PREVENT THEIR FULL PARTICIPATION.

Whilst specific categories can assist in further understanding the types of disabilities, this Disability Inclusion Action Plan also seeks to promote a culture centred around social development and human rights, beyond the limitations of specified categories, in line with the [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#). The University appreciates that there are additional social barriers that are experienced by people living with disability which the University undertakes to address through the development of strategies, policies and programs under this Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

The CRPD focusses on the interaction of the person with a disability and the environment, and the obstacles experienced in removing those barriers. It centres around human rights and fundamental freedoms that must be enjoyed by all persons with disabilities. The CRPD establishes categories of rights and identifies where adaptations have been made. This values-based approach will ensure that the University considers the rights of persons in its community with disabilities, rectifies the areas where rights have been violated, and promotes where protection of rights must be reinforced.

DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION AND REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

Under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*,

Direct disability discrimination occurs where: A person with disability is treated less favourably than someone without disability and/or **reasonable adjustments** are not made for the person with disability, and therefore, they are treated less favourably than someone without disability.

Indirect disability discrimination occurs where: A requirement or condition is applied equally to people with disability and those without disability, but because of disability, a person does not, will not or is not able to comply with the requirement or condition and is therefore disadvantaged. or

A person with disability may be able to comply with a requirement or condition if **reasonable adjustments** are made, but the **reasonable adjustments** are not made, and the person with disability is disadvantaged.

Reasonable adjustments are measures or actions taken to assist students or staff with disability to enable them to fully and safely participate in study or work at the University of Adelaide. An adjustment is considered reasonable, if it achieves this objective, taking into consideration the student's or staff member's specific needs, and balancing these with the interests of all parties affected (including the individual, the University, other staff and/or students). An adjustment is not required if the making of the adjustment would constitute 'unjustifiable hardship' on another person or provider.

Students and staff with disability are significant contributors to the University's diverse community. The University is committed to providing, where practicable, equal access. Wherever possible the University will provide reasonable adjustments to enable all staff and students to fully participate and enjoy the university experience and reach their potential. For students, this experience should include a first-class education and the social, developmental and career opportunities that this affords. For staff, the university experience should include scope for a fulfilling and productive career, with full opportunities for development and advancement.

Students and staff are encouraged to seek advice and assistance in understanding the types of reasonable adjustments that may be available, based on their specific disability and individual needs.

The University's [Disability Support team](#) provides personalised advice and assistance to students with disability. Disability Advisors design [Access Plans](#) which outline the reasonable adjustments determined to suit the student's specific requirements.

The University's [Health, Safety and Wellbeing \(HSW\) team](#) are able to provide advice to staff with disability or their supervisors, and to discuss options for determining reasonable adjustment in the workplace.

A FRAMEWORK ACCESS AND FOR INCLUSION



GOVERNANCE

Overall responsibility for the Disability Inclusion Action Plan will rest with the Vice-Chancellor's Executive supported by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic) and the Executive Director, Human Resources who together will establish a Core Team who will promote and monitor implementation of the Plan.

Annual implementation plans will be prepared and recommended to the Vice-Chancellor's Executive and monitoring and reporting will occur annually to the Vice-Chancellor's Executive. Updates and achievements against the Plan will be periodically communicated to the University Community.

COMMUNICATION

The Plan will be communicated to all staff and students, and made available on the University website.

The University will lodge the Plan with the Australian Human Rights Commission. This is a voluntary measure outlined in the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*. This requires the Commission to make the University's Plan publicly available (via its website).

IMPLEMENTATION

Responsibility for implementation of the Plan is shared by a cross section of staff across the University, including senior executives, managers, teaching staff and staff providing services to students.

A Core Team will be established to include diverse representation across the University with responsibility to ensure the University meets its obligations under the Disability Inclusion Action Plan and annual implementation plan.

An annual implementation plan will be developed to ensure:

- Communication of the Plan's objectives and actions, policies and procedures.
- Development of policies and programs to achieve key objectives.
- Review of current practices.
- Accountabilities for implementation are established and communicated.
- The commitments of the plan are reviewed and reported on.

Student Support Services, Information Technology and Digital Services, Infrastructure Branch and the Human Resources Branch will also have leading roles in developing and maintaining policies, procedures and supporting tools as well as implementing specific projects that facilitate achievement of the Plan's objectives. Teaching staff in Faculties and Schools will ensure equitable access to education for students with a disability.

The University's Staff Diversity & Inclusion Advisor, and Directors of Gender Equity Diversity and Inclusion in the Faculties will maintain responsibility for the implementation of the Plan.



OUR COMMITMENT

The University is committed to valuing difference and to respecting and appreciating every individual and the diversity of skills and experiences that staff and students bring to the University community. Continuing to pursue an agenda of equity and access will mean a University wide commitment to creating a culture of inclusion. Our values and behaviours coupled with effective leadership will underpin the University's success.

This plan is organised around three key areas of focus: strengthening leadership accountability, embedding systemic change, building an empowered university community.



1. STRENGTHENING LEADERSHIP ACCOUNTABILITY

Leadership across the University unites our University community and our leaders shape culture by their words and behaviour.

The University acknowledges that leadership is key to supporting our desired culture. Part of leading well will include a renewed focus on care for the social, emotional and physical wellbeing of students and staff. As the staff and student experience largely turns on effective local leadership, our institutional initiatives will complement the efforts of our people to exercise pastoral care at a local level. We expect our leaders will do this by showing a genuine interest and care for the students and staff with whom they interact.

1.1 Culture

- Continued commitment to defining observable behaviours connected to our values in order to cement a culture of equality and inclusion.
- Build awareness and acceptance of disability and integrate across all aspects of the institution.
- Use testimonials to promote achievement of staff and students with a disability throughout all levels of the University.
- Build connections with our alumni as effective advocates influencing our University community and culture, as role models and mentors.
- Actively support disability networks within and outside of the University.
- Continue to consult with staff and students through surveys and focus groups to better understand the staff and student experience and provide support in areas that need further development.
- Encourage staff and students to disclose their disability status to enable reasonable adjustments to be explored.
- Foster and create a culture of respect that encourages staff and students to disclose their disability status.
- Create and maintain a physical and digital environment that provides a platform for staff and students to achieve successful outcomes.
- Continued and increased collaboration and connection between staff and Disability Support with the implementation of a Disability Inclusion working group encouraging an ongoing partnership.
- Implement initiatives to improve understanding of the experiences and impacts faced by staff and students with a disability during periods of significant change.

1.2 Leadership Commitment

- Value leadership behaviours that demonstrate inclusivity.
- Leaders to embrace diversity and uphold the dignity of each individual.
- Demonstrate authentic leadership by driving the Staff Values and Behaviours Framework in activities for staff.
- Embed disability awareness into leadership and management development programs (Professional and Academic).
- Encourage, support and ensure inclusivity through flexible working options.
- Implement a mentoring program for people with a disability.

1.3 Learning and Development

- Disability awareness training available for staff.
- Embed disability awareness in the induction for leaders incorporating discrimination, complaints management & inclusive leadership.
- Embed the Disability Inclusion Action Plan into the induction process for staff and students.
- Embed disability awareness training into the staff induction program.



2. EMBEDDING SYSTEMIC CHANGE

The University is committed to drawing on the experience, knowledge and expertise of staff and students with diverse lived experience to develop policies, programs and strategies to create a culture and University where all can thrive.

2.1 Attraction and Retention

- Enable career pathways that are respectful of people's expertise, preferences and potential to contribute to the University's priorities.
- Improve access to employment opportunities.
- Invest in the career pathways of staff and students with disability.
- Ensure that the University's recruitment and professional development procedures are free from discrimination, with specific regard to disability.
- Promote the University as an employer of choice for candidates with a disability.
- Increase participation rates of students with disabilities, and develop strategies to improve retention rates.

2.2 Policies and Procedures

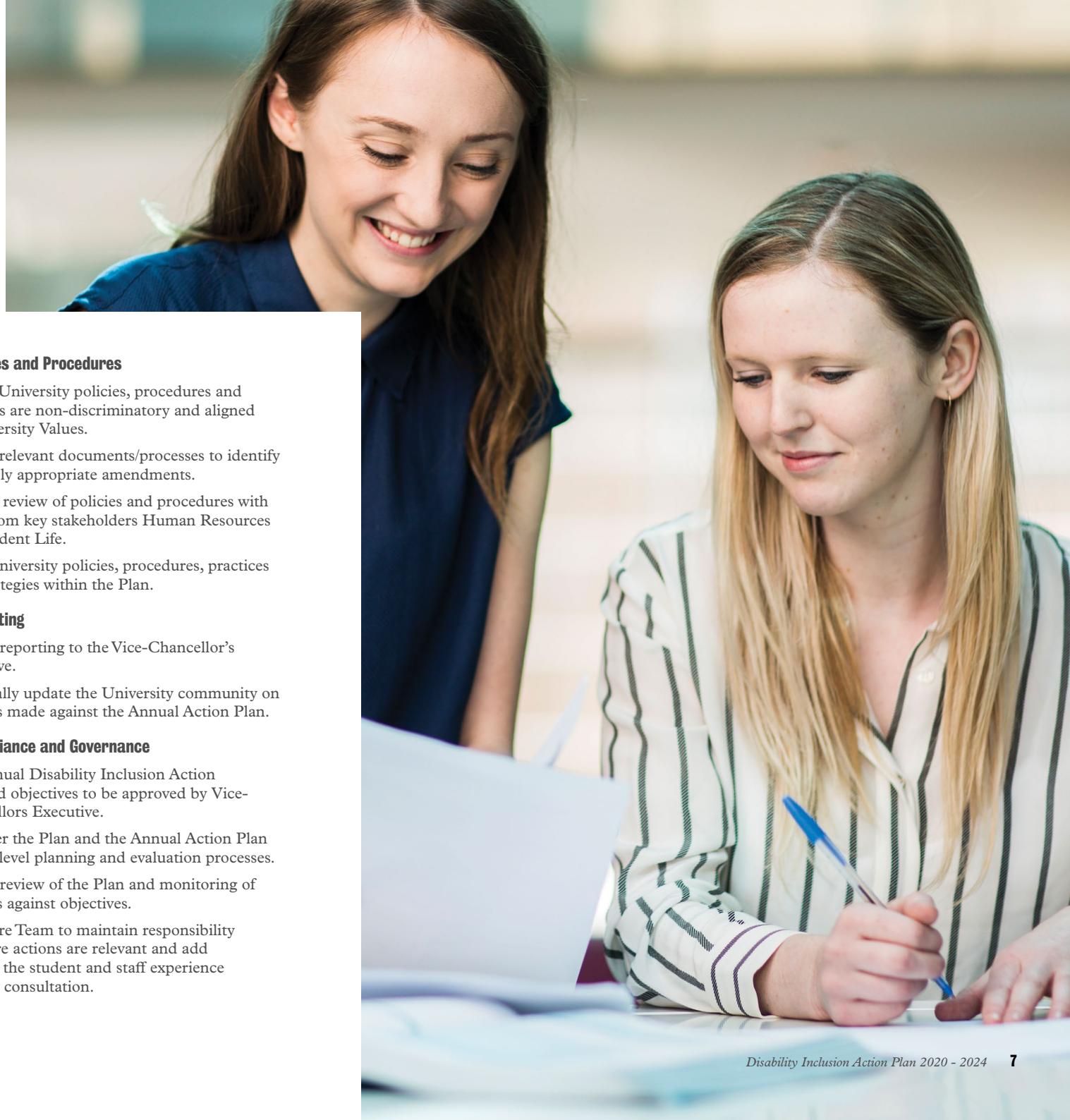
- Ensure University policies, procedures and practices are non-discriminatory and aligned to University Values.
- Review relevant documents/processes to identify and apply appropriate amendments.
- Regular review of policies and procedures with input from key stakeholders Human Resources and Student Life.
- Align University policies, procedures, practices and strategies within the Plan.

2.3 Reporting

- Annual reporting to the Vice-Chancellor's Executive.
- Biannually update the University community on progress made against the Annual Action Plan.

2.4 Compliance and Governance

- The annual Disability Inclusion Action Plan and objectives to be approved by Vice-Chancellors Executive.
- Consider the Plan and the Annual Action Plan at local level planning and evaluation processes.
- Annual review of the Plan and monitoring of progress against objectives.
- The Core Team to maintain responsibility to ensure actions are relevant and add value to the student and staff experience through consultation.





3. BUILDING AN EMPOWERED UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

The University respects and values the contribution and experiences of its community with disability. It will ensure that all members of its diverse community have equality of opportunity through:

3.1 Access to Information

- Ensure the digital environment is accessible to student, staff and visitors.
- Existing and new IT software applications (including website) will be audited to review accessibility.
- Review accessibility prior to purchasing new IT software applications.
- Technology will continue to be an enabler and supporter of our University and the strategic vision.
- The use of technology which has been developed with universal design principles will be prioritised to enable access by all.
- We will continue to design and align technology around University and individual need, rather than the other way around.
- Identify opportunities to improve the way we capture, harness and use data for the purpose of improving access and participation.
- Implement guidelines to improve the way information is delivered to staff and students ensuring accessibility for all.

3.2 Physical Environment

- Identify outstanding issues and new opportunities where modifications to physical spaces are required, with consideration to universal design principles;
- Consider universal design principles, when designing physical spaces; and
- Ensure the most accessible routes across campus are easily identifiable and communicated effectively.
- Ensure the most accessible routes across campus are communicated widely when changes occur.

3.3 Learning and Teaching

- The needs and requirements for staff and students with a disability are reflected in all teaching and learning experiences across the curriculum with consideration to universal design principles.
- Ensure that all staff have access to information to effectively support students with disability.
- Provide a confidential point of contact in every Faculty and Division for staff and students to discuss disability support.
- Actively communicate the level of support available to staff and students.



THE NEEDS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY ARE REFLECTED IN ALL TEACHING AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES ACROSS THE CURRICULUM WITH CONSIDERATION TO UNIVERSAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES.



RELATED DOCUMENTS AND POLICIES

- Staff Values and Behaviour Framework
- Code of Conduct
- Equal Opportunity Policy
- Student Behaviour and Conduct Procedure
- Complaint Resolution (Staff) Procedure
- Reasonable Adjustments to Learning and Assessment for Students with a Disability Policy
- Behaviour and Conduct Policy
- Fair Treatment Procedure
- Student Misconduct Rules
- Student Grievance Resolution Policy
- Student Grievance Resolution Process
- Student Charter

DISABILITY CATEGORIES

The following disability categories have been provided by the Department of Education, Skills and Development (2020) in relation to Higher Education, and aim to be inclusive of all types of disabilities and medical conditions:

- **Hard of Hearing/deaf/Deaf** is used to refer to a person who has an acquired mild, moderate or even a severe or profound hearing loss after learning to speak, communicates orally and maximises residual hearing with the assistance of amplification. A person who is deaf has a severe or profound hearing loss from, at, or near birth and mainly relies upon vision to communicate, whether through lip reading, gestures, cued speech, finger spelling and/or sign language.
- **Physical disability** affects the mobility or dexterity of a person and may include a total or partial loss of a part of the body. A physical disability may have existed since birth or may be the result of an accident, illness, or injury experienced later in life; for example, amputation, arthritis, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, paraplegia, quadriplegia or post polio syndrome.
- **Intellectual disability** is used to refer to low general intellectual functioning and difficulties in adaptive behaviour, both of which conditions were manifested before the person reached the age of 18. It may result from infection before or after birth, trauma during birth, or illness.
- **Specific Learning Disability (SLD)** refers to conditions of a neurological origin that cause significant difficulties in perceiving and/or processing auditory, visual or spatial information, or any combination of this information. They include disorders that impair functions such as reading (dyslexia), writing (dysgraphia) and mathematical calculation (dyscalculia).
- **Mental health condition** refers to a cluster of psychological and physiological symptoms that cause a person distress and which represent a departure from a person's usual pattern and level of functioning.
- **Acquired brain injury (ABI)** is injury to the brain that results in deterioration in cognitive, physical, emotional or independent functioning. Acquired brain injury can occur as a result of trauma, hypoxia, infection, tumour, accidents, violence, substance abuse, degenerative neurological diseases or stroke. ABI's may be either temporary or permanent and cause partial or total disability or psycho-social difficulties.
- **Low Vision/Blind** is a partial loss of sight causing difficulties in seeing, up to and including blindness. This may be present from birth or acquired as a result of disease, illness or injury.
- **Medical condition** is a temporary or permanent condition that may be hereditary, genetically acquired or of unknown origin. The condition may not be obvious or readily identifiable, yet may be mildly or severely debilitating and result in fluctuating levels of wellness and sickness, and/or periods of hospitalisation; for example, AIDS, cancer, chronic fatigue syndrome, Crohn's disease, cystic fibrosis, asthma or diabetes.
- **Neurological condition** affects the usual function of the central and peripheral nervous system, including Autism Spectrum Disorder, epilepsy, Alzheimer's disease, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, brain tumours or ADHD.
- **Other disability** is a disability or long term condition which is not suitably described by one or several disability types in combination.

FOR FURTHER ENQUIRIES

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