

17

17 September 2008

RECEIVED 22 SEP 2008



Department of Finance and Personnel  
Rating Policy Division  
Room D12  
Rathgael House  
Balloo Road  
BANGOR  
BT19 7NA

Dear Sir/Madam

**Re: Review of Domestic Rating Data Sharing Public Consultation Document**

**INTRODUCTION**

Disability Action is a pioneering Northern Ireland charity working with and for people with disabilities. We work with our members to provide information, training, transport awareness programmes and representation for people regardless of their disability; whether that is physical, mental, sensory, hidden or learning disability.

More than one in five (300,000) people in Northern Ireland has a disability and over one quarter of all families here are directly affected by disability issues.

As a campaigning body, we work to bring about positive change to the social, economic and cultural life of people with disabilities and consequently our entire community. In pursuit of our aims we serve 45,000 people each year.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

**Telephone:** 028 7136 0811

**Textphone:** 028 7137 2077

**Fax:** 028 7136 0125

**E-mail:** [derry@disabilityaction.org](mailto:derry@disabilityaction.org)

**Web:** [www.disabilityaction.org](http://www.disabilityaction.org)

**Disability Action**, 58 Strand Road, Derry, Co.Londonderry, BT48 7AJ.  
Disability Action (NI) Company Limited by Guarantee Registered in  
Northern Ireland No. 19258. Vat No. 517-4635-42. Charity No. XN 71868A

Our network of services is provided via our Headquarters in Belfast and in three regional offices in Carrickfergus, Derry and Dungannon.

Disability Action welcomes the opportunity to respond to this draft and to aid our response has put the relevant page/paragraph of the draft in brackets at the end of our comments.

## **SPECIFIC COMMENTARY**

- 1 Disability Action is dismayed that this document has not been offered in a range of alternative formats. Disability Action strongly recommends that a statement offering a range of accessible formats should be placed at the beginning of the main consultation document and in any future documents for ease of reference.
- 2 Disability Action would ask the Department of Finance and Personnel to provide us with details of the level of accessibility of its website and whether or not it meets current European Standards. (Covering Letter)
- 3 Disability Action welcomes that emphasis is placed on increasing uptake however care should be taken that claimant's are not adversely impacted on, for example, to review awards unless at claimant's request.
- 4 Disability Action recommends that the information letters sent to individual ratepayers that are potentially eligible for various reliefs must be made available in a range of alternative formats.

Disability Action recognises the time and effort that have gone into producing this document for consultation and thanks the Department for the opportunity to respond and looks forward to continued dialogue.

Yours faithfully

  
**Monica Wilson**  
Chief Executive