

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

DRAFT

**Disability Equality
Scheme
2006-2009**

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Disability Equality Scheme
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INTRODUCTION

1. Wyre Forest District Council (the Council) is situated in North Worcestershire. We are a predominantly rural area with a large proportion of the population of 98,500 living in the key towns of Kidderminster, Bewdley and Stourport -on- Severn. Over seventeen thousand people in Wyre Forest report having a disability or long term limiting illness, representing nearly 18% of the population. The Disability Equality Scheme therefore addresses the needs of a very significant proportion of the community, as well as those providing care and support.
2. The Council provides a wide range of local services to residents, businesses and visitors including refuse collection, recycling, public conveniences, housing benefits, leisure, planning, licensing, environmental health, car parks, Bewdley Museum and concessionary travel. We operate from six different sites and have over 500 employees.
3. We are committed to providing quality services to everyone in Wyre Forest. We are committed to challenging inequality and discrimination, in whatever form, including age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief and sexual orientation.
4. Our ***Equality and Diversity Framework*** and associated schemes aim to improve fair and equal access to employment and Council services. **Appendix 1**. We will take steps to raise awareness of this commitment with our employees and customers.
5. Under our Disability Equality Scheme disabled people as employees and service users can expect to be treated with respect and to have their communication needs met. The service they receive from the Council will not be diminished because they are disabled.
6. The actions in this Scheme will be taken forward by our employees and in partnership with other organisations in Wyre Forest and Worcestershire. Fair treatment for all is a vital part of service delivery and makes Wyre Forest a great place to live and work.

WHY DO WE NEED A SCHEME?

7. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) was introduced in order to improve opportunities for disabled people. It is unlawful to discriminate against a person because they experience a disability. Organisations must also make 'reasonable adjustments' to ensure that disabled people can access services and employment.
8. As from 5 December 2006¹ all public bodies, when carrying out their functions, must have due regard to the need to:
 - Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
 - Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the DDA.
 - Eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability;
 - Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
 - Encourage participation by disabled people in public life; and
 - Take steps to take account of disabled people's needs, even where this involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people.
9. See Other Relevant Legislation **Appendix 2.**

WHO DOES THE SCHEME APPLY TO?

10. In the use of the term 'disabled people', we are including people young and old, of all races and faiths with different genders and cultural backgrounds, gay men and lesbians, those who have a learning difficulty, physical impairment, sensory impairment or a mental health difficulty – in a nutshell everyone!
11. The Scheme applies specifically to discrimination, equality of opportunity and the promotion of good community relations in respect of disabled people.
12. The DDA amended the definition of disability. It says that you are 'disabled' if you have:

¹ Section 49A Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended by DDA 2005

- A mental or physical impairment
- This has a substantial adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities
- The adverse effect is long-term (meaning it has lasted for 12 months, or is likely to last for more than 12 months or for the rest of your life)

This includes but is not limited to:

- Physical impairment, such as using a wheelchair
- Sensory impairments, such as sight and hearing
- Mental impairments, depression or schizophrenia
- Learning disabilities or cognitive impairment
- Some severe disfigurements
- Some conditions that may be progressive or long-standing, such as cancer, diabetes, multiple sclerosis and HIV/AIDS

13. The Scheme applies to all aspects of the Council's functions including:

- Service provision
- Commissioning and purchasing of goods and services
- Recruitment, employment, training and employee development
- Exercise of statutory powers and responsibilities
- Partnerships with other organisations
- Community involvement
- Promotion and publicity
- Planning

14. The Scheme applies at all levels of the Council's activities including

- Corporate and individual
- District wide and neighbourhood localities eg Broadwaters, Horsefair & Greenhills
- Service delivery
- Policy development
- Organisational design and delivery, including project management
- Target – setting, inspection and regulation

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY DISABILITY EQUALITY?

15. The Council believes that:
- Disabled people should enjoy the same rights as non-disabled people and be able to participate fully in society.
 - Choice, control, respect and self-esteem are important factors in all disabled people's lives.
 - Disabled people are frequently excluded from mainstream activities, not because they have an impairment, but because society has not taken the action which would overcome its effects.
 - Disabled people should be consulted and involved in planning and developing the services they need.
 - We should continue to develop and deliver services in a way that enhances rather than diminishes disabled people's independence.

WHAT ARE OUR KEY OBJECTIVES?

16. To eliminate discrimination against disabled people the Council has adopted the following key objectives:
- To take action, individually, collectively and in partnership with others, to raise standards and make our services culturally sensitive, relevant and accessible to meet the needs of all disabled people.
 - To take action to recruit and promote people from all backgrounds, at every level and across all professions, because of the additional value, knowledge and personal qualities their diversity brings.
 - To take action to put into practice systems, policies and procedures that are fair, flexible and supportive to all who are affected by them.
 - To influence others through good practice in service provision, employment and procurement.
17. In working towards these key objectives the Council will be contributing to a more just and equitable society.

WHAT DO WE PLAN TO DO?

Service delivery by the Council

18. We will ensure that our services are fair, appropriate, responsive and accessible to the disabled people in Wyre Forest. One of the ways we can do this is to make all Council buildings accessible where practicable.
19. We will monitor and review services and policies to ensure there is no unlawful or unjustified discrimination. We will improve monitoring of ethnicity, language, religion and make information more available. to enable disabled people to make real and informed choices.
20. We will make published information available in appropriate formats on request, (e.g. large print, audio tape, computer disc and Braille), and accept and respond to correspondence in these formats keeping abreast of new technologies.
21. We will make it a condition of grant aid or service agreements that organisations providing services on behalf of the Council are able to demonstrate an understanding of the needs of disabled people and are capable of meeting those needs.
22. We will also tell people about good practice and improve our knowledge about effective services for disabled people.

The Council as an Employer

23. The Council is a major employer within the community and will take positive steps to eliminate discrimination and harassment on the grounds of race, gender, marital/family status, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion and belief, gender reassignment.
24. In pursuing this aim the Council will adopt and subscribe to best practice techniques as advanced by other agencies e.g. Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.
25. In recruitment advertising, the Council will advertise in the appropriate media to ensure that it targets its audience to get the best available talent and ensure that application packs are non-discriminatory.
26. The Council will promote its commitment to equality policies in recruitment advertisements and job packs, emphasising that the Council will welcome job applications from all members of the community. It will guarantee an interview to those who are disabled who meet the criteria for the post.

27. The Council will ensure that recruitment and selection decisions are based upon objective, measurable and reasonable selection criteria.
28. All employees, applicants and new recruits will be provided with copies of the Council's Equality Policy statement.
29. The Council will ensure training in non-discriminatory practices is provided to service managers involved in recruitment and selection.
30. The Council will continue to maintain and develop existing equality monitoring arrangements and take appropriate action on its findings.
31. The Council will monitor its employee development process to ensure that training and development opportunities continue to be open to all employees and will not be influenced by factors such as disability, race, gender, marital/family status, age, sexual orientation, religion and belief and gender reassignment.
32. The Council will regularly review its disciplinary and grievance procedures to ensure an appropriate mechanism is in place to deal with bullying and harassment.
33. The Council will ensure that it uses a pay structure that ensures employees are rewarded fairly and equitably.
34. The Council will ensure ongoing training programmes for employees to both raise awareness of equality issues and to the application of equality principles in relation to service delivery to all sections of the community.
35. The Council's commitment to equality in employment and in service delivery will be reinforced in employee induction programmes.

PROCUREMENT: HOW WE DO BUSINESS

36. To further promote disability equality in the way that we procure goods and services the Council plans to:
 - Explore opportunities to incorporate disability equality clauses into conditions of contract to ensure all relevant legislation is observed;
 - Develop a scheme to ensure disabled entrepreneurs have equal opportunities to tender for Council contracts; and

- Liaise with disability organisations to provide targeted advice on future trading opportunities to disabled people.

DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

37. Democratic participation for disabled people – i.e., whether someone wants to be a Councillor or just be able to take part in a democratic debate or visit their Councillor in a surgery is an objective that we are keen to meet.
38. Standards that will be applied to achieve this include:
 - Proactively approaching/consulting disabled people on how they would like to be involved in the democratic processes of the Council.
 - Ensuring that disabled people are continually involved in the decision making process from policy formulation to detail of operation.
 - Ensuring public meetings are held in fully accessible venues and at times that are likely to suit community members.
 - Ensuring that appropriate communication is in place, so disabled people and other members of the community can easily access and understand public documents.
 - Promoting the positive benefits of becoming involved.
 - Ensuring public documents are kept jargon free and are good examples of 'Plain English'.
 - Advertising democratic participation standards to the public and media to demonstrate organisational commitment.
 - Developing Councillors in their community leadership role – and encouragement of individuals to consult their ward Councillors more.
 - Democratic Services being seen as a champion of good practice in the Council.

DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

39. The Council positively welcomes feedback and complaints (defined as “any expression of dissatisfaction with our services which needs a response.”) Any employee can take and record a complaint. The Council is aware that for those sections of the community who have difficulties in accessing services the Council’s formal complaint procedure may also be inaccessible.
40. Our objective in having a complaint procedure is to ensure that residents concerns are addressed. A pre-requisite for this is that all sections of the community have confidence in the responsiveness of the Council. The Council will accordingly encourage the use of organisations such as Disability Action Wyre Forest, or any other organisation or person, to act as an advocate for the complainant.
41. All complaints are formally recorded in accordance with the adopted complaint scheme and is subject to monitoring and report to Members. The complainant will be kept informed of the progress of the complaint and what action, if any, will be taken by the Council. If this does not satisfy the complainant then they will be advised of their right to take the complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman and/or the Disability Rights Commission.
42. From October 2007 the Commission for Equality and Human Rights will supersede the Disability Rights Commission following which complaints should be addressed to, and will be taken forward by the Commission for Equality and Human Rights.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

43. The Council will work to ensure that this Scheme is fully implemented by:
 - Informing councillors and employees about it and about legislation specifically relating to disabled people.
 - Providing disability equality training for all councillors and employees.
 - Providing training for those involved in the management, recruitment and selection process, ensuring that procedures are in place to identify and apply reasonable adjustments to the working environment as appropriate.

- Consulting with employees and providing a programme of career development and mentoring for disabled employees.
- Providing additional training, or supervision to enable disabled persons to overcome the effects of past disadvantage including the lack of opportunity to gain previous work experience.
- Supporting employees who acquire a disability during their employment with the Council and assisting them to maintain their existing career path.

PROMOTION AND PUBLICITY

44. We will work to protect and promote the rights of disabled people by:
- Promoting and publicising this Policy and working to raise awareness of disability issues within the community at large.
 - Monitoring proposals by the Government, statutory agencies and other bodies that particularly affect disabled people.
 - Encouraging good practice from partnership organisations.

CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION

45. The Council's Consultation Strategy 2005-2008 reflects our commitment to involve and consult all sectors of the community on a wide range of policies, plans, budgets and proposals.
46. The Council believes that the Scheme can only be effective if we fully understand the needs, aspirations and priorities of disabled people. We will therefore:
- Involve disability advisory bodies such as Disability Action Wyre Forest and provide support, resources and information to enable consultation to be effective.
 - Ensure that people with learning disabilities have appropriate support in order to fully participate in the consultation process.
 - Explore and develop other means of effective consultation with disabled people.

SCRUTINY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

47. The Council's scrutiny arrangements including the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and the Audit Committee will monitor all aspects of the Council's Equality and Diversity framework including: -

- Performance of all legal duties and requirements of Codes of Practice;
- Delivery of all elements of the Audit Commission's Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) and any local performance indicators;
- Delivery of the Council's commitments on equality in achieving the Equality Standard in Local Government. which requires local authorities to measure their progress in implementing all equality and diversity issues.
- "Mainstreaming" which requires the Council to make equality and diversity an integral part of everything it does, right through from the planning and development of strategies and policies, to the actual delivery of services to people on the ground.

48. To ensure full accountability for the Scheme:

- A Cabinet Member will be responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the Scheme and for recommending changes and improvements necessary to the Cabinet.
- The Chief Executive will hold all Heads of Service accountable for taking steps to ensure this Scheme is promoted, understood and implemented by Council employees.
- The Chief Executive will continue to chair the Equality and Diversity Working Group of employees of the Council and strategic partners, which works to action plans to ensure the practical delivery of appropriate policies and strategies determined by the Council.

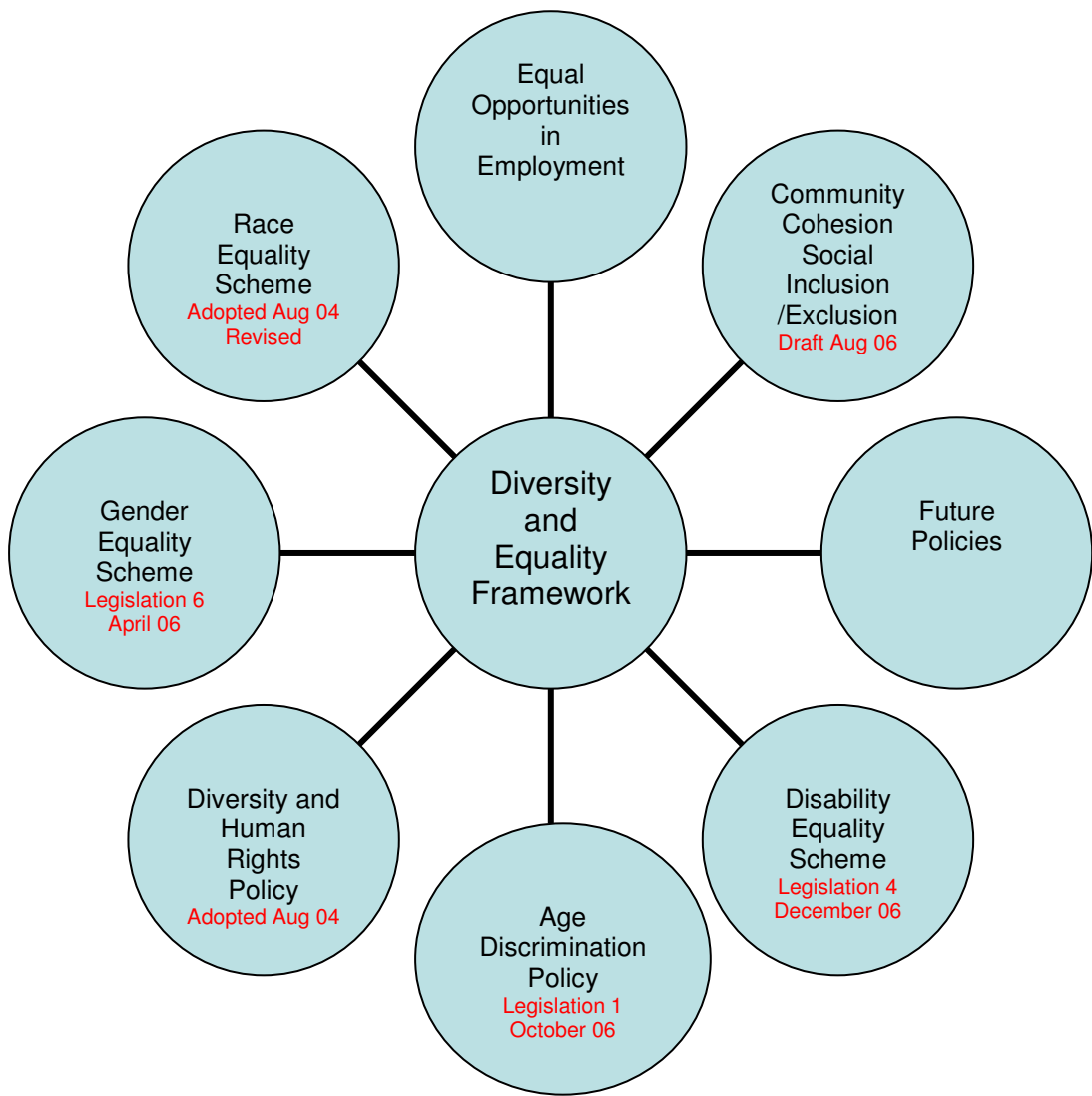
IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTION PLAN

49. Our Action Planning framework where we can build standards and focus on achieving our objectives is based on eight areas :
- Making sure the Disability Equality Scheme is put into practice
 - Identifying relevant functions and policies
 - Assessing and consulting on the likely impact of proposed policies
 - Monitoring council policies for adverse impact
 - Communicating the results of assessment, consultation and monitoring
 - Making sure the public have access to council buildings, information and services
 - Employment duties – monitoring employment and supporting employees
 - Training employees

See Implementation and Action Plan Appendix 3

REVIEW

50. This Scheme will be reviewed every 3 years as part of the review of the Equalities and Diversity Framework. The review will consider:
- The Council's services and policies, including services and policies it is proposing to introduce, to ensure they are not affecting some groups negatively and that all communities are satisfied with them.
 - How the Council will deal with evidence that its services and policies are not in line with the general duty.
 - How the Council will deal with complaints about the way it is meeting the duty or other complaints about disability equality.
 - How the Council will publish the results of its assessments, consultations and monitoring.
 - How the Council will make sure that everyone, whatever their disability, has access to information about the Council and its services.
 - How the Council will make sure that its employees understand their responsibilities under the duty.



Current “equality” legislation comprises:

The Gender Recognition Act 2004
The Civil Partnership Act 2004
Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999
The Human Rights Act 1998
The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
The Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000)
The Sex Discrimination Act (as amended) 1975
The Equal Pay Act (as amended) 1970

Future/developing legislation includes:

Disability Discrimination Act 2005
The Equality Act 2006
The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

The Gender Recognition Act 2004

The purpose of this Act is to provide transsexual people with legal recognition in their acquired gender. Legal recognition will follow from the issue of a full gender recognition certificate by a Gender Recognition Panel. In practical terms, legal recognition will have the effect that, for example, a male-to-female transsexual person will be legally recognised as a woman in English Law. On the issue of a full gender recognition certificate, the person will be entitled to a new birth certificate reflecting the acquired gender and will be able to marry someone of the opposite gender to his or her acquired gender.

The Civil Partnership Act 2004

This Act creates a new legal relationship of civil partnership, which two people of the same-sex can form by signing a registration document. It also provides same-sex couples who form a civil partnership with parity of treatment in a wide range of legal matters with those opposite-sex couples who enter into a civil marriage.

Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003

These regulations outlaw discrimination (direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation) in employment and vocational training on the grounds of religion or belief. The regulations apply to discrimination on grounds of religion, religious belief or similar philosophical belief.

Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003

These regulations outlaw discrimination (direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation) in employment and vocational training on the grounds of sexual orientation. The regulations apply to discrimination on grounds of orientation towards persons of the same sex (lesbians and gay men) and the same and opposite sex (bisexuals).

Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999

These regulations are a measure to prevent discrimination against transsexual people on the grounds of sex in pay and treatment in employment and vocational training. They effectively insert into the Sex Discrimination Act a provision to extend the Act, insofar as it refers to employment and vocational training, to include discrimination on gender reassignment grounds.

The Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act came fully into force on 2 October 2000. It gives further effect in the UK to rights contained in the European Convention of Human Rights.

The Act:

- makes it unlawful for a public Council to breach Convention rights, unless an Act of Parliament meant it could not have acted differently;
- means that cases can be dealt with in a UK court or tribunal; and
- says that all UK legislation must be given a meaning that fits with the Convention rights, if that is possible.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995

This Act prohibits discrimination against disabled people in the areas of employment, the provision of goods, facilities, services and premises, and education; and provides for regulations to improve access to public transport to be made.

The Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000)

The Race Relations Act (RRA) makes it unlawful to treat a person less favourably than another on racial grounds. These cover grounds of race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), and national or ethnic origin. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act outlawed discrimination (direct and indirect) and victimisation in all public Council functions not previously covered by the RRA, with only limited exceptions. It also placed a general duty on specified public authorities to promote race equality and good race relations. There are also specific duties for listed organisations including the production of Race Equality Schemes.

The Sex Discrimination Act (as amended) 1975

This Act (which applies to women and men of any age, including children) prohibits sex discrimination against individuals in the areas of employment, education, and in the provision of goods, facilities and services and in the disposal or management of premises.

The Equal Pay Act (as amended) 1970

This Act gives an individual a right to the same contractual pay and benefits as a person of the opposite sex in the same employment, where the man and the woman are doing: like work; or work related as equivalent under an analytical job evaluation study; or work that is proved to be of equal value.

Future/developing legislation

Disability Discrimination Act 2005

This Act makes substantial amendments to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (see above). The 2005 Act places a general duty on public authorities to promote disability equality and to have due regard to eliminate unlawful discrimination. Those listed bodies within the public sector will also be subject to a specific duty of the 2005 Act. The specific duty provides a clear framework for meeting the general duty and includes the requirement to produce a Disability Equality Scheme. The Disability Equality Duty for the Public Sector will come into force in December 2006.

The Equality Act 2006

The Equality Bill was re-introduced in Parliament on the 19 May 2005 and gained Royal Assent in February 2006. The Act's main provisions include:

- the creation of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) which would give individuals suffering from discrimination easier access to support and provide employers and service providers with improved advice and information in a one-stop-shop. The purpose and functions of the CEHR are defined in the Act
- making discrimination unlawful on the grounds of religion and belief in the provision of goods, facilities and services, education, the use and disposal of premises, and the exercise of public functions
- placing a duty on public authorities to promote equality of opportunity between women and men ('the gender duty'), and prohibit sex discrimination in the exercise of public functions. The Act will also include a specific duty on public bodies to produce a Gender Equality Scheme.

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 come into force on 1 October 2006.

The Regulations (which will not affect the age at which people can claim their state pension) will:

- ban age discrimination in terms of recruitment, promotion and training.
- ban unjustified retirement ages of below 65.
- remove the current age limit for unfair dismissal and redundancy rights.

They will also introduce:

- a right for employees to request working beyond retirement age and a duty on employers to consider that request.
- a new requirement for employers to give at least six months notice to employees about their intended retirement date so that individuals can plan better for retirement, and be confident that "retirement" is not being used as cover for unfair dismissal.

Disability Rights Commission

- Code of Practice: the elimination of discrimination in the field of employment against disabled persons who have had a disability (1999)
- Code of Practice: duties of trade organisation to their members and applicants (1999)
- Code of Practice: rights of access, goods, facilities, services and premises (1999)
- Access to goods, facilities and services: regulatory impact assessment (1999)
- Duty of reasonable adjustment on trade organisations to make reasonable adjustment: regulatory impact assessment (1999)
- Code of Practice: on employment and occupation (2004)

Equal Opportunity Commission

- • Code of Practice on sex discrimination (1985)
- • Code of Practice on equal pay (1997)

Commission for Racial Equality

- Code of Practice for the elimination of racial discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment (1984)
- Code of Practice for the elimination of racial discrimination in education England and Wales (1989)
- Code of Practice in rented housing (1991)
- Code of Practice non-rented (owner-occupied) housing (1992)
- Code of Practice in primary health care services (1992)
- Code of Practice in maternity services (1994)

Age

- Code of Practice on Age Diversity in Employment (1999)

Commission on Integration and Cohesion

The Commission on Integration and Cohesion was announced by Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government Ruth Kelly on 28 June 2006 and officially launched on 24 August 2006.

The Commission, a fixed term advisory body, is considering how local areas can make the most of the benefits delivered by increasing diversity – but will also consider how they can respond to the tensions it can sometimes cause. It will develop practical approaches that build communities' own capacity to prevent problems, including those caused by segregation and the dissemination of extremist ideologies.

The Commission is chaired by Darra Singh, Chief Executive of Ealing Council. The Commission is due to report in July 2007.

1. Making sure the Disability Equality Scheme is put into practice
Purpose: To ensure compliance with our duty to promote equality of opportunity for all by ensuring that disability equality is mainstreamed into all policies, functions and procedures of the Council

Objective	Action	Outcome/PI	Timescale
To implement the Disability Equality Scheme	Prepare action plan(s) to review functions, policies and procedures, and all other elements of the Scheme	Completion of action plan(s) Increased awareness of disability equality across the district	Ongoing from December 2006
Identification of managers' responsibilities regarding the implementation of the Disability Equality Scheme	The requirement to promote disability equality as part of the generic managers' competencies that they are assessed against	Increased emphasis given to disability equality within all decision making across the Council	Ongoing from December 2006
To provide assistance in the implementation of the Scheme at a corporate level	Guidelines and advice to be developed and disseminated	Increased awareness of disability equality and the implementation of the Disability Equality Scheme	By July 2007
To develop the Equality and Diversity Working Group to support the implementation of the Scheme	Continue to work to existing terms of reference Liaise with existing consultation groups	Group effectively supporting our disability equality work More effective and responsive disability equality policies across the Council	By July 2007

1. Making sure the Disability Equality Scheme is put into practice - continued

Objective	Action	Outcome/PI	Timescale
Raise the standard of disability equality across the Council	The Scheme will be reviewed every 3 years	Revised Scheme Continued updates to the Scheme	Annual assessment with full review in 2008
To raise public awareness of the Scheme	Scheme made available via the Council's website	Increased awareness of the Council's commitment to eliminate discrimination	Ongoing from December 2006
To monitor the implementation of the Scheme	Annual monitoring and reporting of Disability Equality Scheme action plan tasks	Satisfaction across the Council of the progress made under the Scheme The Scheme is revised if necessary	Annual assessment and monitoring to Cabinet Scrutiny Committee, Audit Committee and Cabinet

2. Identifying Relevant Functions and Policies

Purpose: To give appropriate priority to the promotion of disability equality when carrying out functions and policies

Objective	Action	Outcome/PI	Timescale
To meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005	To review all the functions and policies of the Council according to our duty to promote disability equality (the Scheme)	All functions and policies are reviewed as per the Scheme Application of the Scheme across all Divisions	Ongoing from December 2006 All new policies/functions reviewed Final review in 2009

3. Assessing and consulting on the likely impact of proposed policies

Purpose: To determine how policies, functions and procedures affect disabled people (in service delivery and employment) and whether they are having an adverse impact on some groups or individuals

Objective	Action	Outcome/PI	Timescale
<p>Inform all senior managers of the need to capture data necessary for long term impact to be assessed</p> <p>To ensure that arrangements are made to monitor any adverse impact on the promotion of disability equality</p>	<p>A monitoring form is produced and adopted</p> <p>Ongoing appropriate consultation and an evaluation of their effectiveness in supporting objectives</p>	<p>Data is monitored in a consistent manner throughout the Council</p> <p>Corporate baseline statistics established</p>	<p>Annual review and reporting on critical policies ongoing from December 2006</p>
<p>To ensure the consistent use of the monitoring procedure</p>	<p>The monitoring form will be used in conjunction with any applications to the Council for a service, job vacancy, and customer satisfaction surveys</p>	<p>Service delivery is more able to meet the needs of the service users</p>	<p>Ongoing from December 2006</p>

Incorporation of Disability Equality Scheme considerations within corporate service planning guidelines	Work toward standardising service planning guidelines across the Council	Improved service delivery by development of local targets and outcomes within services	Ongoing from December 2006
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4. Monitoring Council policies for adverse impact

Purpose: To build disability equality into the policy-making process, and to make that process clear, open and inclusive

Objective	Action	Outcome/PI	Timescale
To assess the likely impact of proposed policies on the promotion of disability equality	Divisions undertake Disability Equality Impact Assessments	Qualitative research is provided to identify likely, and existing impact, on disability equality	Annual assessment and reporting
Guidelines and training for additional Disability Equality Scheme statements within Disability Equality Impact Assessments	Develop guidelines for drawing out disability equality issues considered as part of the Impact Assessments. Training designed to disseminate this information to officers completing impact assessments	Guidelines developed and training available	By July 2007

Annual monitoring of adverse impacts identified in Disability Equality Impact Assessments and other feedback mechanisms	<p>Collection of adverse impact information considered by each department across the Council.</p> <p>Compilation of information and consideration of impact on council service delivery</p>	Annual monitoring report to be produced	Ongoing annual assessment and reporting
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5. Communicating the results of assessment, consultation and monitoring

Purpose: To make sure that monitoring, assessment and consultation activities, and their results are clear and plain to our customers and employees

Objective	Action	Outcome/PI	Timescale
Identification of information needed	Direction given to Divisions on what information needs to be available in accessible formats for public information	Information made available through appropriate channels	Ongoing from December 2006
Development of employees guidance on how to produce accessible information	Develop guidelines for Divisions to follow in producing accessible information	Divisional information easily accessible across the Council	By July 2007

To identify arrangements for publishing results of assessments, consultations and monitoring	Results are published using a variety of media and formats: internet, intranet, special reports and newsletters	Publicly available record of progress	By July 2007
Development of accessible communication channels	The identification of appropriate communication channels for different community groups and employees undertaken through various consultation mechanisms	Maintenance and development of communication channels between the public and the Council	By July 2007

5. Communicating the results of assessment, consultation and monitoring - continued

Objective	Action	Outcome/PI	Timescale
User satisfaction monitoring	Monitoring of representatives on effectiveness of communication channels and accessibility of information	Increased accessibility of information across the district	Annual assessment of monitoring

Dissemination of guidelines to employees on specific communication needs of disabled people across Wyre Forest	Compilation of information available within the Council on customer care and service needs and production of guidelines disseminated to employees	Employee guidance to increase the accessibility of information for our customers	By July 2007
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6. Making sure the public have access to Council buildings, information, services and functions
Purpose: To ensure that disabled people know about particular services, encourage people to use services and remove the barriers to access so that services are equally available to everyone in the community

Objective	Action	Outcome/PI	Timescale
To identify service needs of disabled people, and barriers to accessing services	Use consultation and monitoring arrangements and other available means to identify need	Increased satisfaction levels	Ongoing from December 2006

To provide information in accessible format	Ensure that all employees who have contact with the public are aware of procedures to accommodate people with language and accessibility needs	A greater take up of service or satisfaction with the service provided, revealed by future consultation	Ongoing from December 2006
To continue to comply with all appropriate legislative requirements for building accessibility for all District Council property	Continue existing programme of maintenance for all District Council buildings	A more easily accessible built environment	Ongoing

7: Employment duties – monitoring employment and supporting employees

Purpose: Information from monitoring will be used to develop schemes (if required) to lead a workforce that further represents the profile of the communities of Wyre Forest

Objective	Action	Outcome/PI	Timescale
Annual employment monitoring	Annual reporting and dissemination of employment monitoring information	Produce annual employment trends and develop action plans arising from trend analysis	Annual assessment and reporting
To eliminate any possible discrimination in the workforce	Augment existing monitoring practices by including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training application rates • Training nomination rates • Harassment and discrimination complaints • Grievances • Disciplinary proceedings and decisions made • Exit interviews 	Results used to inform the recruitment and selection process Publish workforce profile annually	Annual assessment and reporting
To identify barriers to access to employment and to work with other public sector agencies to attract disabled people into the recruitment process	Continue existing work to develop new initiatives through continued consultation and scrutiny mechanisms	Improvement and further development of statistical workforce profile information. Publish statistical results in performance reviews	Ongoing from December 2006

7: Employment duties – monitoring employment and supporting employees - continued

Objective	Action	Outcome/PI	Timescale
To eliminate any possible discrimination in the recruitment and selection process	Augment existing monitoring practices to enable faster statistical analysis	Equality of opportunity throughout the entire recruitment process Leading to an increase in the representation of disabled employees	Annual assessment and reporting
Engage community and consultation groups in the development of approaches for increasing workforce representation	Develop and maintain existing consultation mechanisms to discuss how to improve and increase the representation of disabled employees within the Council	Long-term increase in the number of disabled employees within the Council	Ongoing in accordance with consultation programme

8: Training employees

Purpose: To ensure that employees working in this area have the skills they need to ensure that we meet our duty to promote disability equality

Objective	Action	Outcome/PI	Timescale
To incorporate the requirements of the Disability Equality Scheme into current training programmes	Ensure trainers (external and internal) include where appropriate Disability Awareness training Monitor training programmes	Training reflects the requirements of the Disability Equality Scheme. Annual statistics for disability related training of employees	Ongoing from December 2006
To ensure that employees have the relevant information about the Scheme commensurate with their post	Managers to cascade information and arrange appropriate training	To raise awareness of the Disability Discriminations Act requirements	Ongoing from December 2006
To ensure that training remains relevant and of a high standard	Develop a robust evaluation system for use within each department	Training continues to meet the needs of employees and remains of a high standard	Annual assessment and reporting
Continual update and dissemination of employees guidelines on new disability equality legislation	Compilation of existing information available within the Council and production of up-to-date guidelines made available on the intranet	Increased awareness among all employees of legislative requirements. Employees made aware when new legislation is passed	Ongoing from December 2006