

## East Sussex County Council Disability Equality Scheme 2006 – 2009

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 As a public body we are committed to the principles of good corporate governance. Openness, inclusivity, integrity and accountability are at the very heart of the way Members and officers operate at East Sussex County Council (the Council) and are fundamental to our role in providing vision and leadership for the wider community which we serve.

1.2 Our aspirations in relation to disability are embedded in the context of our commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between all people, as set out in the Council's Equality Scheme.

1.3 We are committed, in our functions as an employer, as a service provider and as a beacon to the community, to strive to secure improved outcomes for disabled people.

1.4 This Scheme sets out how we will realise these aims and meet our obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005.

1.5 Our intention is that this Scheme will be a living document which will be amended as required to take account of its effectiveness in promoting disability equality.

## 2. Valuing disabled people

2.1 Valuing disabled people is a fundamental aspect of achieving the Council's vision:

We aim to be a modern, efficient and responsible authority, working with our partners to provide:

- a better quality of life and security for the people of East Sussex; and
- affordable, good-quality services for the lowest possible council tax.

We will make a positive difference to local people's lives by:

- making best use of resources
- being clear about the choices involved in our decision-making and encouraging stronger local communities.

The ways in which we intend to meet these commitments are set out in detail in the Council Plan.

2.2 Valuing disabled people is an important step towards meeting our commitment to achieve Level 3 of the Equality Standard by April 2008.

2.3 Valuing disabled people also helps us to meet our key objectives, in particular:  
to maximise the potential of all of our employees (Key Objective 3.1)  
to improve the status of East Sussex as an employer of choice (Key Objective 3.2)

2.4 In the context of employment, our vision for the Council is of a workforce that not only reflects the diversity of the local community so that we may better serve it, but also where progression and promotion are based entirely on merit and where discrimination, including unconscious discrimination, is eradicated.

## **3. The Disability Equality Duty**

### **The social model of disability**

3.1 The DDA 2005 is based on the social model of disability. In embracing the social model of disability we recognise that the poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion experienced by many disabled people are products of attitudes and the way society and the environment are organised, rather than inevitable consequences of their impairments or medical conditions.

3.2 The social model approach is fundamental to understanding and implementing the Disability Equality Duty. The aim of the duty is, through involving disabled people, to identify and remove the barriers which have prevented them from accessing the range of life choices and opportunities that are open to non-disabled people.

3.3 The social model focuses on the societal barriers rather than on individual impairments. An important aspect of this approach is the requirement to make anticipatory adjustments that will enable many disabled people rather than waiting until individual disabled people attempt to use a service, or access education, and encounter barriers.

### **Defining disability**

3.4 The definition of disability in the DDA 2005 is a broad term, and covers people with a wide variety of disabilities. Using the DDA definition a person is disabled if:

- they have a mental or physical impairment
- this has an adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities
- the adverse effect is substantial and long-term ( it has lasted for 12 months, or is likely to last for more than 12 months or have a life-long effect).

3.5 This definition includes people whose impairment might not be immediately obvious, for example people with mental health issues, learning disabilities or medical conditions such as cancer or HIV.

3.6 The effects of a condition or impairment are considered as they would be without the use of any medication or aids which may be effective in alleviating those effects (with the one exception of spectacles).

3.7 A person with a progressive condition such as cancer, which is expected to have an adverse effect their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities in the future, will be covered by the Act from the point of diagnosis.

3.8 If a disability has adversely affected a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, but doesn't any more, it will still be counted as having that effect if it is likely to recur.

3.9 In meeting the needs of disabled people it is important to note that, as well as having different impairments, disabled people will also have differing experiences depending on their age, gender, sexual orientation, religion and race, culture or ethnicity.

3.10 People who meet the DDA definition of disabled persons are protected by the Act whether or not they themselves might consider themselves to be disabled.

### **The general duty**

3.11 The Act places a general duty on all public authorities, when carrying out all of their functions, to 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 disabilities
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encourage disabled people to participate in public life
- Take account of disabled people's needs, even when more favourable treatment is required to ensure equal opportunities

3.12 The term 'due regard' takes into account relevance and proportionality. Disability equality will be more relevant to some of the authority's functions than others. Proportionality requires greater consideration to be given to disability equality in relation to functions or policies that have the greatest impact on disabled people. Whilst it may not always be possible to adopt an ideal option to promote disability equality due regard must always be given, alongside other competing requirements, to the requirement to promote disability equality.

## The specific duties

3.13 In addition to the general duty there are also new specific duties which provide a framework to assist authorities in planning, delivering and evaluating action to meet the general duty and to report on these activities.

3.14 There is a requirement to publish a Disability Equality Scheme and to include within it the following elements:

- The way in which disabled people have been involved in the development of the Scheme
- The authority's methods for impact assessment
- Steps which the authority will take towards fulfilling its general duty (the action plan)
- The authority's arrangements for gathering information in relation to employment and its delivery of education and its functions
- The authority's arrangements for putting the information gathered to use, in particular in reviewing the effectiveness of its action plan and in preparing subsequent Disability Equality Schemes

## 4. Involving Disabled People

4.1 Disabled people are interested in the way the Council carries out its functions and we recognise the importance of their involvement in the development of this Scheme through identifying barriers and unsatisfactory outcomes, identifying priorities for action plans and assisting planning activity. They will also have a crucial role in implementation because their contribution to Equality Impact Assessments, information gathering and monitoring the effectiveness of initiatives will feed into the review and revision of this Scheme.

4.2 Disabled people will continue to have regular opportunities to provide feedback and raise issues via the Performance Management process, the confidential Staff Survey, the Disabled Employees' Forum, the Customer Satisfaction Survey and the Citizens' Panel.

4.3 We will continue to work with disabled staff, disabled customers (service users) and members of the wider community, their representative organisations and our community partners to secure improved outcomes for disabled people in East Sussex.

4.4 We recognise that disabled people may also be members of other minority groups and that we need to take this into account when planning to meet the diverse needs of disabled people.

4.5 Decisions will be made with regard not only to any financial implications but also to the wider community engagement aspects.

### **Involving employees**

4.6 In 2004 East Sussex Disability Association (ESDA) carried out a survey of disabled employees at East Sussex County Council. They examined the recruitment and selection process for disabled people seeking employment with us. The survey was designed to assess the effectiveness of existing practices, identify what was working well and identify any barriers to gaining and sustaining employment and to career development. The findings and recommendations of the report are outlined in the 'Final report of a disability assessment and survey of disabled employees carried out for the Council in June – November 2004'.

4.7 A Disabled Employee's Forum was set up in October 2005 for disabled employees of the Council to ensure their involvement from the development stage in Council initiatives. Support is provided to facilitate and service meetings of the Forum and members are given release time to enable them to attend. The priorities identified by disabled members of staff via the Disabled Employee's Forum have been taken into account in the Corporate Equalities Training Plan. Their priorities have been also been incorporated through their involvement in the development of a new mandatory equalities e-learning package which will promote disability equality to all staff.

4.8 Disabled employees are currently involved in the development of specifications for an updated intranet system for the Council.

4.9 Disabled employees have been involved in the development of this Scheme through the contribution of the Disabled Employees' Forum and the contribution of Adult Social Care staff, many of whom are disabled people,

### **Involving customers**

#### **Involving customers - Adult Social Care**

4.10 Adult Social Care is responsible for assessment, care managing and commissioning services to meet the needs of a wide range of people with different conditions or impairments including mental health conditions, physical disabilities, sensory impairments, learning disabilities and long term illnesses.

4.11 The overall aim is to promote independence, choice and quality of life for people whilst providing Fair Access to services.

4.12 Customer feedback is given through satisfaction surveys, a complaints and a compliments system.

4.13 Broader feedback on accessibility and appropriateness of services has been given by different groups of disabled people through consultation on Equality Impact Assessments.

4.14 A reference group of disabled people is under discussion with the aim of informing future developments. The process of establishing it may involve a survey, focus groups and one-to-one interviews which will give baseline information to test our action plan against.

4.15 The Learning Disability Partnership Board gives feedback from learning disabled people. Learning Disability networks will also include learning disabled people.

4.16 People with mental health conditions are currently represented in Mental Health Action Groups with voluntary and statutory sector stakeholders and also on the Mental Health Partnership Board. A service user organisation undertakes quality audits of services for people with mental health conditions. Other user-led organisations are commissioned to supply support services in the community and to train peer advocates. Employment opportunities for people with mental health conditions have been promoted through peer advocacy. Other employment opportunities have been promoted within mental health services e.g. in patient advocacy and liaison services (PALS). In general, there are many employment projects, both within statutory and non-statutory settings, which actively promote the employment of people with a history of mental health conditions.

4.17 The Drug and Alcohol Team (DAAT) has a service user involvement strategy and there is a bi-monthly Service User Involvement Steering Group. The DAAT Joint Commissioning Manager meets with service user groups on a regular basis as part of service planning. There is an annual Drugs and Alcohol Conference attended by all stakeholders, including service users.

### **Involving customers - Children's Services**

4.18 Children's Services provides services for children, young people and their families and carers, many of whom are disabled with a wide range of special educational needs, mental health conditions, physical disabilities, and sensory impairments.

4.19 It aims to involve disabled people through satisfaction surveys, focus groups, the complaints and comments system, consultation on Equality Impact Assessments, and through groups such as the Disabled Children's Development Group.

4.20 In addition, the Participation Unit aims to involve children and young people. It is investing in the development of a group bringing together disabled children and young people to inform service development.

4.21 Children's Services will also be involved in the establishment of the reference group (see 4.14 above) which the Adult Social Care Department is working to develop to address important joint areas of work, such as disabled young people in transition to adult services and the involvement of disabled parents/carers in services aimed at their children.

### **Involving customers - Transport and Environment**

4.22 Consultation within the Transport and Environment Department will be carried out in accordance with any current or future Corporate Standards and Guidelines.

### **Involving the community**

4.23 Organisations representing disabled people, including ESDA and Mind, are represented on the East Sussex Assembly. The Assembly is the wider partners group of the East Sussex Strategic Partnership which has responsibility for both the Local Area Agreement and the Sustainable Community Strategy

### **Involving the community – Adult Social Care**

4.24 In addition to the initiatives set out above (see 4.10 – 4.17), community organisations are consulted on new service developments through Equality Impact Assessments.

4.25 Black and minority ethnic (BME) disabled people, including Gypsies and Travellers, will also be able to input to Adult Social Care services through the BME Engagement Project.

4.26 Older disabled people will be involved through the Older People's Forums which are supported through the performance and engagement Unit in Adult Social Care.

4.27 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) older and younger disabled people have also given feedback to the Department through community organisations.

### **Involving the community – Children's Services**

4.28 The community is involved in service development through a range of methods as set out above (see 4.18 – 4.21). In particular, voluntary and community groups are involved in the Disabled Children's Development Group which plays a key role in service planning and improvement with partners.

4.29 Equality Impact Assessments around the development of new services, or changes to current services, involve the community through consultation. A major part of this involves securing the views of disabled people.

4.30 Disability organisations, including disabled children and young people were involved in the planning of a successful Disability Conference which was held in February 2006. Aims of the conference were to launch new guidance for schools on disability equality and to identify practical ways in which schools can continue to provide rich and meaningful experiences in promoting diversity and equality.

### **Involving the Community – Library Services**

4.31 The Public Libraries User Survey is carried out every 3 years to gather feedback from adults and children on a wide range of questions about library buildings and services.

4.32 A major consultation exercise was carried out in 2004/5 to gather information from people not using library services. The consultation included a focus group for disabled people and provided information that enabled us to identify ways of making library services more accessible to disabled people including improving online access to information.

## **5. Equality Impact Assessment**

5.1 The Council is required to set out in its Scheme its proposed methods of assessing the impact of its policies and practices, or the likely impact of its proposed policies and practices, on disabled people. In this context 'policies and practices' refers to all of the activities that the Council carries out.

5.2 Equalities Impact Assessments on the Council's existing policies and practices were undertaken in each of the Council's Departments in 2004/2005.

5.3 The Council is committed to undertaking Equality Impact Assessment on any organisational initiatives planned for implementation during the life-span of this Scheme to ensure that due regard is given to the need to promote disability equality.

5.4 The Council's arrangements for impact assessment are:

- Training in undertaking and reviewing Equality Impact Assessments is provided for staff with responsibility for impact assessment
- Use will be made of the existing Council's Equality Impact Assessment process
- Disabled employees, customers and/or members of the community, as appropriate, will be involved in setting priorities

5.5 Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken on key Council initiatives planned for implementation during the life-span of this Scheme to ensure that due regard is given to the need to promote disability equality.

5.6 A sample Equality Impact Assessment template is set out in Appendix 5 of the Council's Equality Scheme.

## **6. Gathering information**

6.1 The Council is required to set out its arrangements for gathering information on the following, and state how this information will be used:

- The recruitment, development and retention of disabled employees
- The effect of its policies and practices on the educational opportunities available to, and on the achievements of, disabled pupils and students
- The extent to which the services it provides, and those other functions it performs, take account of the needs of disabled people

### **Gathering information on employment**

#### **Recruitment**

6.2 Information on the number of disabled applicants applying, shortlisted and appointed is currently collected on the personnel database. This information is used to undertake Equality Impact Assessment to assess whether our recruitment policies and practices are creating barriers to disabled people obtaining employment.

6.3 Information on disability in the workforce will continue to be used to monitor the percentage of disabled employees in the workforce and to evaluate progress against performance indicators. The information will also be used to assist in the process of establishing meaningful targets to ensure the Council continues to improve its performance in meeting the needs of existing and potential employees.

## **Retention**

6.4 Information on the numbers and reasons for disabled employees leaving the employment of the Council is collected. Together, this information will be used to identify, and take steps to remove, any adverse differential impact on the retention of disabled employees.

## **Employee development**

6.6 Information is analysed to establish the percentage of disabled employees in the top 5% income bracket and is used to evaluate progress against performance indicators and set achievable targets for improvement.

6.7 Arrangements will be made to gather information on training courses attended, career progression and appraisals. This information will be used to inform Equality Impact Assessment of relevant personnel policies and practices so that remedial measures can be undertaken as required and appropriate targets set.

6.8 Information is gathered on disciplinary action and reports of disability harassment and manual systems are in place for recording these.

## **Gathering information on education and children's social care**

6.9 Children's Services places a very high priority on gathering accurate data and analysing it to assess the implications for service development.

6.10 The School Improvement Service collates information on the attainment of children in groups that are vulnerable to under-achievement.

6.11 Equalities data is shared across the department and an annual equalities data report will be produced, starting in December 2006, using data from schools, social care and satisfaction surveys.

6.12 The information for children, young people and families will be cross-referenced with school attainment, exclusions, attendance, looked after children status and receipt of family support and analysed by disability and other equality categories including special educational needs.

6.13 There will also be a focus on obtaining 'soft' quantitative information through reference groups of disabled people via organisations such as East Sussex Disability Association.

6.14 The Participation Unit is also committed to gathering information from disabled children and young people and there are regular surveys of disabled children and young people who visit the respite units.

6.15 We will endeavour to make the best use of the information gathered to inform progress on the Every Child Matters agenda.

## **Gathering information on other Council services and functions**

### **Gathering information on adult social care**

6.16 Statistical information is gathered on people referred for assessment for services, on the outcomes of assessment and on services provided directly or through independent contractors. Data collection methods need to be adapted to capture information by type of impairment and identify barriers experienced by different groups of disabled people. The objective will be to be able to cross-reference with ethnic origin and gender information to give a more holistic view of individual clients.

6.17 Data collection and analysis of services provided to learning disabled people and to people with mental health conditions requires co-ordination jointly with Sussex Partnership Trust.

6.18 Qualitative information is gathered as set out in 4.10 – 4.17 above. Consultations involving Adult Social Care staff and service users are subject to approval by the Research Governance Panel. In future, participants must be monitored according to DRC guidelines to enable analysis of barriers for specific groups of disabled people.

## **7. External partnerships**

7.1 In order to deliver better services the Council is involved in community partnerships, for example the East Sussex Strategic Partnership, the Learning Disability Partnership Board and the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. Where those partnerships do not have a separate legal identity they are not bound collectively by the disability equality duty. However, the Council is committed to giving due regard to disability equality in relation to the work of partnerships by ensuring that it takes forward work to promote disability equality.

7.2 A Compact for East Sussex was launched in 2003. The aims of the Compact are to establish a framework for public sector and voluntary and community sector partners to work together more effectively to achieve common goals, to develop and deliver services and to build strong, cohesive and self-determining communities. The shared principles set out in the Compact provide an equalities framework within which the council may effectively engage with the community and promote disability equality in its partnership working.

7.3 The Council recognises the important contribution of the voluntary and community sector organisations and will ensure that such organisations working with disabled people have fair access to the Council's funding streams.

## 8. Procurement

8.1 In relation to the procurement and contract management process, we are committed to giving due regard to meeting the disability equality duty in relation to the procurement process, and in the monitoring of the contract.

8.2 Where the nature of a function which is contracted by the Council means that the contractor is itself carrying out the public authority function, the Council will where practicable ensure that the contractor itself will be responsible for meeting the disability equality duty in carrying out that function.

8.3 In many situations, however, the contractors are not performing public functions for the Council. In such situations the obligation to comply with the duty remains with the Council.

8.4 Steps which the Council will take to ensure that we meet the disability equality duty include:

- Revising any standard terms and conditions which they have for contracting their services to include information about the DDA 2005
- Ensuring that relevant government guidance on social or equality issues in procurement is considered
- Including where practicable a requirement in every contract that the contractor must comply with the anti-discrimination provisions of the Act
- Where practicable, requiring the contractor to provide evidence to the authority that demonstrates its compliance with the general or specific duties
- Ensuring that disability equality is appropriately reflected and given due weight in the specification, selection and award criteria, and the contract conditions, in a way which is consistent with EC and UK procurement rules
- Seeking to ensure that contractors fully understand any disability equality requirements of the contract

8.5 The Council will review the questions we ask potential contractors to assess their attitude and approach to equalities. In undertaking this review we will take into account the advice and guidance produced by the Disability Rights Commission and, in due course, the Commission for Equality and Human Rights on disability equality and procurement and contract management in local government.

8.6 We will ensure that businesses and voluntary sector organisations that are operated by, for or inclusive of disabled people have fair access to Council

contracts in line with the Compact for East Sussex and the Department for Communities and Local Government's (DCLG) Small Business Friendly Concordat guidelines.

## 9. Current Position

### Disability equality initiatives in employment

9.1 The Council is signed up to the Two Ticks Scheme and displays the Disability Symbol - a recognition given by Jobcentre Plus to employers who have agreed to take action to meet the following five commitments regarding the employment, retention, training and career development of disabled employees:

- to interview all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and consider them on their abilities
- to ensure there is a mechanism in place to discuss, at any time, but at least once a year, with disabled employees what can be done to make sure they can develop and use their abilities
- to make every effort when employees become disabled to make sure they stay in employment
- to take action to ensure that all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed to make these commitments work
- each year to review the five commitments and what has been achieved, plan ways to improve on them and let employees and Jobcentre Plus know about progress and future plans.

9.2 In response to the 2004 ESDA report, the Council has employed a Disability & Diversity Officer to implement the recommendations of the report. Achievements to date include setting up a Disabled Employee's Forum, and raising managers' awareness of disability issues through the provision of briefing sessions and a comprehensive online resource on the DDA, recruitment and reasonable adjustments.

9.3 A successful training and work experience partnership project, with Job Centre Plus and Royal British Legion Industries (RBLI), designed to create employment opportunities for long term disabled people resulted in 5 offers of employment with the Council's Personnel and Training team.

9.4 The Council is a partner in Disability Equals Business, a European Social Fund project which works with private businesses and public sector organisations across Sussex to increase the employment opportunities for disabled people through raising awareness of the business case for employing disabled people and fostering disability confidence.

9.5 Through the Corporate Training Plan, training is provided for managers and staff on disability awareness and disability equality. This training promotes

disability equality in the various aspects of employment and in service delivery. It is supported by an incremental training programme aimed at staff who have specific requirements for more specialist equalities training i.e. those working directly with specific user groups.

## **Disability equality initiatives in service delivery**

### **Disability equality initiatives in Adult Social Care**

9.6 Paragraphs 9.7 – 9.18 below set out the proposed initiatives to promote disability equality in Adult Social Care.

9.7 Improving Life Chances of disabled People is a strategy currently being developed by Adult Social Care, in partnership with a range of other local organisations. The strategy will set out what kind of services Adult Social Care intends to commission, including services from the voluntary and independent sectors. It will focus on how services are delivered to individuals who face significant disadvantage as a result of barriers that are increased by impairments and/or ill-health.

9.8 The development of commissioning strategies, services and procurement practices, which embrace the social model of disability through and with organisations of disabled people.

9.9 Development of a reference group of disabled people to support the development of these policy initiatives.

9.10 Through the Learning Disability Partnership Board and local Learning Disability networks, to provide support for the involvement of learning disabled people in service development.

9.11 A range of mental health service user involvement initiatives as set out above (4.16) and support for direct provision by service user groups such as Active8 in Hastings. Opportunities will be sought for further developments across the County.

9.12 Proactive monitoring of access for people with sensory impairments to Social Care Direct and locality sensory teams, and looking, in particular, for any continuing barriers experienced by people with dual sensory loss.

9.13 Developing the direct payments system to be more responsive to the needs of learning disabled people, people with mental health conditions, older people and minority groups in partnership with community organisations. This includes developing the range of support available for people in these groups.

9.14 Through the BME Engagement Project partnership with community organisations, to reach BME people who are disabled to ensure greater

awareness, involvement and the delivery of appropriate services to BME disabled people.

9.15 Development of an Equality and Diversity Competency Framework for staff and managers and a staff/team development toolkit which disabled people from diverse backgrounds will contribute to.

9.16 The provision of disability equality training for all Adult Social Care staff.

9.17 The promotion of inclusive communications practice, including interpreting and translation and non-verbal methods of communication, in all aspects of the work of the Department.

9.18 Disability harassment issues to be fully integrated into the Adult Protection procedures and practice.

### **Disability equality initiatives in Children's Services**

9.19 The "Together", guidance produced in 2006 for schools on the inclusion of pupils vulnerable to underachievement, particularly disabled pupils.

9.20 Training has been developed for Children's Services staff and school governors on promoting positively promoting the disability equality duty in 2006-2007.

9.21 The Disabled Children's Development Group has been established together with partners in the statutory and the voluntary sector in order to identify priorities for disabled children.

9.22 The establishment of a disabled children and young people reference group through the Children's Services Participation Unit.

9.23 The development of the Children's Services Accessibility Strategy, which provides guidance on ensuring the accessibility of buildings, the curriculum and information for disabled pupils.

9.24 The development of the Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Strategy, which focuses on the need for services for disabled pupils within mainstream services and identifies out of school and leisure activities as a high priority for disabled children and families.

### **Disability equality initiatives for the community**

9.25 Access to library buildings and services are being improved through a range of initiatives including a major programme of work to ensure buildings are accessible including the installation of lifts at Hailsham and Heathfield; the

provision of many online services including reference resources; the provision of mobile library services in rural locations and for those who find it difficult to visit library buildings; the ESCC Mobile Office which also provides access to council services and learning opportunities; the provision of an Equal Access library in Newhaven and subscriptions with RNIB for talking books.

9.26 Full information about library services for disabled people is provided on the Council's website.

9.27 East Sussex Community Information Service (ESCIS) can be accessed free in all libraries, and from any other online location, and provides a major database of community information including information on services for disabled people.

9.28 The Strategy for library services for older people sets out priorities for improving the quality, equity and accessibility of library services to older people across the County, many of whom are disabled.

## **10. Outcomes**

10.1 The purpose of this Scheme is to enable the Council to achieve demonstrably improved outcomes for disabled people across East Sussex.

10.2 In order to achieve this:

- We will have in place an action plan setting out the outcomes we want to achieve and how we will go about achieving them
- We will have in place Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to help us to evaluate the effectiveness of the steps set out in the action plan.
- We will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the steps set out in the action plan.
- We will review our action plan annually in the light of outcomes to date.

## **11. Annual Reporting**

11.1 We will publish a report each year, which will include a summary of:

- the steps taken under the action plan;
- the results of information gathering; and
- the use to which the information has been put.

## 12. Communication

12.1 This Scheme will be available in a range of formats including large print, Braille, and audio.

12.2 We are aware that we may not always get it right and we welcome and are happy to learn from constructive feedback.

12.3 Contact for feedback or queries:

Strategy Team  
Personnel and Training  
County Hall  
Lewes BN7 1SG

Telephone: 01273 482993

Email: [sandy.inness@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:sandy.inness@eastsussex.gov.uk)

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### 13. Disability Equality Action Plan

This action plan reflects priorities identified through the involvement of disabled people, as set out above, including through the East Sussex Disability Association (ESDA) report on the experience of disabled employees and through the development of the Adult Social Care and Children’s Services Equality Strategies.

	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Action 2006/2007</b>	<b>2007/2008</b>	<b>2008/2009</b>
<b>1</b>	The Council is successful in attracting, recruiting, retaining and developing disabled people and the confidence of employees in reporting disabilities is increased	Personnel & Training	<p>Complete implementation of disability action plan including: delivery of managers’ DDA briefing sessions, provision of support for the Disabled Employees’ Forum; provision of an intranet toolkit to facilitate reasonable adjustments; evaluation of the effectiveness of system for coordinating IT adjustments; and ensuring that a standard system is in place for requesting adjustments to premises.</p> <p>Implementation of Corporate Equalities Training Plan including: the delivery of disability equality and awareness training by ESDA; roll-out of mandatory equalities e-learning package for all staff, dignity at work</p>	<p>Provide and facilitate an online forum for disabled employees</p> <p>Develop and implement a process for the redeployment of disabled staff at risk</p> <p>Consistent monitoring of employment data</p>	<p>Review of the experience of disabled employees including manager awareness of disability issues and attitudes towards disability</p> <p>Evaluation of employment data to identify good practice and identify actions to address any adverse impact</p>

East Sussex County Council Equality Scheme - Appendix 1  
(Draft November 2006)

			<p>training.</p> <p>Arrangements made to address the gaps identified in employment monitoring data.</p>		
2	Improved systems and processes are established for communicating with disabled people	All Departments	Co-ordinate ability to produce information in a comprehensive range of alternative media	Launch - raise awareness of staff and customers	Evaluation of the systems and processes in place for communicating with disabled people to identify good practice and identify actions to address any adverse impact.
3	Disabled people, including children and young people are involved in service development	All Departments	<p>Develop a user involvement protocol.</p> <p>Coordinate capacity across the Council to involve the full range of disabled people in service development</p> <p>Development of Disabled People's Reference Group</p> <p>Continue to support the work of the Learning Disability Partnership Board.</p>	<p>User involvement protocol is in place</p> <p>Corporate mechanisms and procedures are in place and used for involving the full range of disabled people</p>	Evaluate the effectiveness of user involvement procedures to identify good practice and identify actions to address any adverse impact.
4	Proactive Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken on new Council initiatives	All Departments	The Equality Impact Assessment process will be reviewed to facilitate proactive Equality Impact	Proactive Equality Impact Assessment involving disabled people in the development of all new	Proactive Equality Impact Assessment involving disabled people in the development of all

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			<p>Assessment and to enable the identification of good practice</p> <p>Delivery of training in undertaking and reviewing Equality Impact Assessments</p> <p>Disabled Employees' Forum involved in intranet development and any other new Council initiatives impacting on employment.</p>	<p>Council initiatives</p> <p>Disabled employee's forum involved in evaluating the Council's disability equality and awareness training and any other new Council initiatives impacting on employment.</p>	<p>new Council initiatives</p> <p>Disabled employees Forum involved at the development phase of any new Council initiatives impacting on employment</p>
<b>5</b>	Due regard is given to disability equality where services and other Council functions are contracted	All Departments	<p>Review of information and assessment documentation for potential contractors</p> <p>Work with Disability Equals Business (the Equal Project) to explore ways of monitoring disability equality where services and other Council functions are contracted</p> <p>Work with Disability Equals Business to develop training for staff involved in contract management</p>	<p>Implement monitoring of contracted services in relation to meeting the Disability Equality Duty</p> <p>Delivery of training for staff involved in contract management</p>	Evaluation and review
<b>6</b>	Disability harassment is addressed	Personnel & Training	Monitoring of disability harassment is undertaken	Evaluation of data on disability harassment to identify good practice and identify actions to address	implementation of any actions identified

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<b>7</b>	Consistent monitoring data is collected on employment, service delivery and involvement of disabled people according to DRC guidelines.	All Departments	<p>A common data collection procedure is agreed and implemented across all departments.</p> <p>Arrangements made to address gaps identified in the information that is currently collected</p> <p>Monitoring information is collated for Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA)</p>	<p>any adverse impact</p> <p>Consistent collection of monitoring data</p> <p>Evaluation of monitoring data to identify good practice and identify actions to address any adverse impact</p>	Share good practice and implementation of action identified to address any adverse impact
<b>8</b>	Disability equality initiatives in service delivery are integrated into departmental and council business planning.	All departments	<p>Specific actions to be inserted following consultation period.</p> <p>Monitored through departmental management teams and corporate equality group</p>		
<b>9</b>	The Council is successful in promoting the participation of disabled people in public life.	Chief Executive's Department			