



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 20TH JANUARY 2009

SUBJECT: DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME MONITORING REPORT

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise on the development and implementation of the Disability Equality Scheme within Caerphilly County Borough Council.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This is the Disability Equality Scheme monitoring report for Caerphilly County Borough Council. It is a requirement of the General Duty to promote and encourage disability awareness, and to eliminate unlawful discrimination, both with staff employed by the council, and to the customers to whom council services are supplied. The report gives an appraisal of the development of the Disability Equality Scheme and its implementations.
- 2.2 The Disability Equality Scheme sets out how the Authority will comply with the legislation governing Disability equality, which includes:-
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
 - Disability Discrimination (Amendment) Act 2005
 - Equality Act 2006
- 2.3 Throughout 2007/2008 the council has made considerable progress in terms of supporting and raising awareness of the Equalities agenda.
- 2.4 Equalities are supported within the Authority by a framework of working groups, which report into the Executive Equalities Group chaired by the Director of Corporate Services. Each sub group deals with one of the council's four Equality Schemes.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Disability Equality Scheme has links with a number of council policies and strategies:-
- All other Equalities policies
 - Recruitment and Selection
 - Community Strategy
 - Staff Training and Development
 - Customer Care

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The DDA (Amendment) Act places a statutory duty on all public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and to promote equality of opportunity.
- 4.2 This will include the core functions of policy development, service design and delivery, decision-making and employment, the exercise of statutory discretion, enforcement and any services and functions that have been contracted out.
- 4.3 This new duty puts the onus on each public authority to promote equality between council staff and through the delivery of services to create:
- Better informed decision-making and policy development.
 - A clearer understanding of the needs of the service users.
 - Better quality services, which meet, varied needs.
 - More effective targeting of policy and resources.
 - Better results and greater confidence in public services.
 - A more effective use of expertise in the workforce.
- 4.4 In order to progress the delivery of the general duty, there is also the following series of specific duties: -
- Prepare and publish a disability equality scheme that shows how the public authority will meet its general and specific duties, and how it will set out its disability equality objectives.
 - Gather and use information on how the public authority's policies and practices affect disability equality for customers, and in the delivery of services.
 - Consult stakeholders and take account of relevant information in order to determine its disability equality objectives.
 - Assess the impact of its current and proposed policies and practices on disability equality.
 - Implement the actions set out in the Disability Equality Scheme within three years.
 - Provide interim monitoring reports upon the progress of the scheme, and update the action plan. Review the scheme at least every three years.
- 4.5 The Disability Equality Scheme has been updated to include the new action plan. This information is already on-going work in Caerphilly county borough and so its inclusion does not alter the Scheme or the Council's commitments to Disability Equality.

5. DISABILITY EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

- 5.1 In March 2007, the Authority implemented a framework for developing equalities within the authority. The framework is made up of an Executive Equality Group chaired by the Director of Corporate Services and four Sub Groups; Race, Gender, Language and Disability.
- 5.2 The chairs of each sub group are Heads of Service, one from each directorate within the Authority. The Chief Executive and Directors have tasked these officers to deliver equalities within the Authority in a consistent manner. Each chair is also a member of the Executive Equality Group.
- 5.3 The chair of the Disability Equality Sub-Group is the Assistant Director for Communities and Leisure, Peter Gomer.
- 5.4 An early task of the group was to review the current equality action plan and to provide evidence from all Directorates that Disability issues were being delivered, equally within the authority.

- 5.5 The group is supported by the Cabinet Member for Transport and Planning, who is also the council's 'Disability Champion'.
- 5.6 The current summarized action plan, which indicates progress and possible problem areas, is attached in Appendix A.

6. DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME - MONITORING REPORT

- 6.1 More detailed information on the progress of the Disability Equality Scheme can be found in Appendix B.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no financial implications to the Monitoring Report & Action Plan - any financial implications are noted in the Disability Equality Scheme and have already been approved by Council.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no personnel implications to the monitoring report - any personnel implications are noted in the Disability Equality Scheme and have already been approved by Council.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That the progress to date with the Disability Equality Scheme action plan be noted and approved.

10. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To ensure that the Disability Equality Scheme is implemented within Caerphilly County Borough Council.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Monitoring of the implementation of the Disability Equality Scheme is required under the Disability Discrimination (Amendment) Act 2005.

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Background Papers - Disability Equality Scheme 2006 - 2009

(This is available by e-mail for information or can be found on the council's website, on the Disability page of the Equalities Section, which forms part of the wider Council and Democracy Section).

Appendices:

Appendix A

Disability Equality Action Plan Summary

Appendix B

Disability Equality Scheme - Monitoring Report