



DRAFT

**Disability Equality Scheme
Monitoring Report
January 2007 to June 2008**

Please contact the Performance & Policy Unit should you require a copy of this document in another format or language.

Tel: 01443 864415

Fax: 01443 864307

Email: equalities@caerphilly.gov.uk

Policy Unit
Penallta House, Tredomen Park,
Ystrad Mynach, Hengoed,
CF82 7PG

Contents

Item		Page
1.	Introduction and the Council's Equality Statement	4
2.	General health statistics for Caerphilly County Borough	5
3.	The General Duty and meeting specific duties	6
4.	The Council's Disability Equality Group (DEG)	6-7
5.	The DEG reporting structure	7-8
6.	Consultation	8-11
7.	Achievements	11-14
8.	Continuing Actions: Development of Forums:-	14
	• Caerphilly County Borough Access Group (CCBAG)	14-15
	• Caerphilly County Borough Disability Forum	16
	• Caerphilly County Borough Deaf Forum	16
	• Caerphilly County Borough Multi Agency Forum – For Equality Against Harassment (MAF)	16-17
9.	Employment	17-18

10.	Training:-	19
	A) BSL & Deaf Equality Awareness Training	19-20
	B) Equalities Awareness Training	20-21
	C) Equalities Awareness Training for Elected Members & New Staff	21
11.	Survey of Prioritised Buildings	21-22
12.	Communications	22
13.	Areas to Focus Upon 2008/09	23
	• Leadership & Corporate Commitment	23
	• Provision of council service information for Disabled People	24
	• Monitoring the satisfaction of Service Users	24

1. Introduction & Equality Statement

This is Caerphilly County Borough Council's Disability Equality Scheme Monitoring Report following the introduction of the Disability Equality Scheme.

Caerphilly County Borough Council is committed to equality of opportunity for all within the borough of Caerphilly. We want all people to be treated equally and fairly and with respect. Services must be targeted to reflect the needs of all people.

The Council will continue to respond positively by working with and involving local people and our staff to ensure that our approach is appropriate and effective both as a service deliverer and as the largest employer in Caerphilly county borough.

The Council's Equality Statement reflects our commitment to Disability Equality and the wider agenda: -

This Council recognises that people have different needs, requirements and goals and we will work actively against all forms of discrimination by promoting good relations and mutual respect within and between our communities and our workforce.

We will also work to create equal access for all to our services, irrespective of colour, ethnic origin, gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, religion, language or nationality.

As a local authority we are fully committed to meet our statutory responsibilities under the Equality Act 2006. This report will demonstrate the Council's achievements to date under our Scheme and note continuing actions for 2008/09.

2. General Health Statistics for Caerphilly County Borough

The following table provides background information on the number of people living within the county borough who have declared both good and bad health.

Health Status	Caerphilly		Wales	
	%	Actual Figures	%	Actual Figures
General health: Good	61.58	104,493	65.06	1,888,747
General health: Fairly good	23.41	39,197	22.49	652,903
General health: Not good	15.01	25,470	12.45	361,434

	Caerphilly		Wales	
	%	Actual Figures	%	Actual Figures
People with a limiting long-term illness	26.31	44,645	23.27	675,547

Source: 2001 Census Figures

From the above figures, the percentage of people with a long-term illness, is significantly higher than the all Wales average. Caerphilly County Borough therefore has proportionally more work to complete in order to ensure adequate and effective service provision.

3. The General Duty & Meeting Specific Duties

In order to progress the delivery of the general duty, there is also the following series of 'specific duties':

1. By December 2006, prepare and publish a disability equality scheme that shows how the public authority will meet its general and specific duties and setting out its disability equality objectives.
2. Gather and use information on how the public authority's policies and practices affect disability equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services.
3. Consult stakeholders and take account of relevant information in order to determine its disability equality objectives.
4. Assess the impact of its current and proposed policies and practices on disability equality.
5. Implement the actions set out in its scheme within three years.
6. Report against the scheme regularly and review at least every three years.

4. The Council's Disability Equality Group (DEG)

The Council's Disability Equality Group (DEG) meets on a quarterly basis to monitor the Disability Equality Scheme (DES), the Progress of the Action Plan, and to report on initiatives put in place by each Directorate of the council.

It is the management group for disability equality in the County Borough, with officers responsible for cascading information and actions arising, from the meetings, through to their respective service areas.

Membership of the group comprises of;

- representative officers from all Directorates,
- including, from ICT & Property Services; the DDA Officer (Buildings), and the DDA Corporate Budget Manager,
- there is also an elected council Cabinet Member, who is the Council's 'Disability Champion',
- a representative from the Council's H.R. Division,
- a representative from the Council's Communications Division,
- a member from Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO),
- representatives from the Caerphilly County Borough Access Group,
- and the Assistant Director for Community and Leisure, chairs the meetings.

5. DEG Reporting Structure

Significant items from the DEG activities are reported to the Executive Equality Group (EEG), which meets, on a quarterly basis. Where appropriate, items and issues will be regularly reported to the Council's Corporate Management Team.

The EEG is a high level group of officers and members, which is chaired by the Director of Corporate Services. Other membership comprises of the chairs of the other equality groups (Gender, Race, Disability, Welsh Language) who are generally Heads of Service. Also included on the group is the Policy Officer (Equalities), the Policy Officer (Welsh Language), with two elected members who are the Council's overall 'Equality Champions', plus

representation from the Council's Human Resources Division, the Communication Division, the Youth Offending Service, Valleys Regional Equality Council (VALREC) and Gwent Police.

6. Consultation

From two, face to face consultation exercises undertaken with disabled people, living in the county borough, the following information was obtained.

The participants were asked to discuss the following:

- To identify the barriers or concerns they face when dealing with the Council and accessing council services
- To set priorities for the Action Plan from the barriers identified

These barriers and concerns were looked at in relation to the four themes of the Community Strategy i.e., Health, Social Care and Well-being, Education for Life, Living Environment and Regeneration.

Barriers:	Suggested Priorities:
<u>Health, Social Care and Well Being</u>	
Reinforce cross-organisational links between organisations such as the Health Service and Social Services within the local authority.	To improve representation of Caerphilly Teaching Local Health Board, with cross cutting themes.
Parking badge/discs – service users not aware of how to get hold of a disc and the new system for requesting them has not been communicated to service users.	Better publicity in a variety of formats.

<u>Education for Life</u>	
Widen aisles to enable wheel chair access to libraries. Access to mobile libraries needs to be improved.	The need to offer alternatives to mainstream library services: online or phone library systems should be available.
Disabled people should be included within mainstream schooling. Schools should be adapted. 'Inclusive approach'.	Education should stimulate 'mainstream for all' and integration measures to ensure this. Action: do not restrict disabled people from using services on particular days – "integration!"
<u>Living Environment</u>	
Countryside barriers to stop motorbikes, also stop wheelchair access.	There are gates which wheelchairs and pushchairs can use but restrict motorbikes.
Need to forward plan new developments – wider pavements.	Repair pavements and keep vehicles off them.
<u>Regeneration</u>	
Geographical transport barriers to tourism sites. Accessible public transport.	Disability awareness needed among transport co-ordinators' and staff.
Housing adaptations – adapting properties to meet needs.	More regulatory control – more training for architects, planners etc.

General Issues

These issues were common areas for concern.

Barriers	Suggested Priorities
Accessible information: in appropriate formats to consider all people. Communication issues – sign language, visual aids, font size.	Review availability of documents in accessible formats and use good/relevant information. Standardise font size – minimum of Arial 12pt for employees and public.
Council is reactive, instead of proactive: Communication – how do we reach a ‘silent minority’ who we have not communicated with?	More efficient use of resources - Internal departments within the council need to liaise on what events, issues are being run or being worked upon.
Communication: The council is not user friendly to service users.	Utilise internet e.g. meeting notes, discussions, on-line calendars etc
Advertising: information about services needs to be advertised, so that people do not have to go and ‘look’ for help.	Cross-service advertising & identification of customer needs.
Awareness Raising	Disability awareness training for staff. Awareness raising for service users, of council facilities.

One key observation was, that care should be taken to ensure that the DES does not focus, just on physical disabilities, but incorporates actions for people with a learning disability, a mental health problem, sight impairment, Deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people, and people with less visible disabilities.

Some of the barriers identified have been solved and have become Council policy, such as information being available in alternative formats upon request.

However, the common issue that evolved from the consultations indicated a lack of awareness by users, on Council service provision, which consequently created a definite need to better advertise council services to ensure disabled people are aware of what is available.

Valuable information was collected from the consultations, and this proved to be a good starting point in the 'involvement' process for the development of the Disability Equality Scheme, and its associated Action Plan.

7. Achievements

The list of achievements, which will be described below, highlights how Council service areas have taken on board the results of the consultation process. **This is not an exhaustive list and further improvements to service delivery can be found in the Summary of Progress Action Plan at www.caerphilly.gov.uk**

There is further work to be done, to demonstrate year on year improvements.

- Following the successful consultation and by focusing upon the 'areas of concern' the Council's Disability Equality Scheme 2006/09 and associated Action Plan, was produced and is published at www.caerphilly.gov.uk
- The council's Web pages are now to the W3C standard.

- Equalities handbook for Staff, available on the Council's intranet site and hard copy.
- 'How to Organise Accessible Events Guide' to be placed on the Council's Intranet and Internet sites.
- Compilation of the Ward Profiles by Equality Categories including general statistical data on disabled people, and a mapping audit of ward locations www.caerphilly.gov.uk
- Production of a handy Pocket Guide titled 'Be Clear' which describes how to provide accessible information. These were, and continue to be, widely distributed, to Directors, Senior Managers, and Elected Members, as well as distribution to all schools via the head teacher network & at www.caerphilly.gov.uk
- Facilitation and support for the monthly Carers Forum.
- Establishment of a Sensory Garden at Markham.
- With the opening of the new Caerphilly County Borough Council corporate building, Penallta House, a variety of accessible equipment inc., loop systems in the council chamber, and in all meeting rooms, have been installed. The Caerphilly C B Access Group were instrumental in auditing the plans, attending on site visits in the construction phase, and on completion of the building undertook an access audit, and provided a full report on 'snags' encountered.
- The Policy Unit has purchased a portable loop system, which is suitable

for use at public meetings. The Policy Unit, in particular, has a regular involvement in planning and facilitating a number of public consultation meetings such as the Viewpoint Panel, Standing Conference etc.

- The Corporate Standard for printed communications was agreed as being a minimum of 12pt Arial. Also agreed was that the text size and style used in internal and external electronic mail will be 12pt Arial.
- The DEG was consulted for their input into the Draft Communications Strategy.
- Publication of information in alternative accessible formats, in most cases, upon request. However for some documents a Braille copy (English & Welsh) has been produced, as a matter of course.
- Swimming sessions for disabled children. Caerphilly County Borough Council is the first in Wales to provide swimming lessons for disabled children across all leisure centres with pool facilities.

Sporting opportunities for children and young people with disabilities is on the rise in Caerphilly county borough. There are now 32 clubs accessible to disabled people, operating in the area, and the number of people taking up memberships with these clubs has increased by 11.5% over the last year 2007/08.

- Completion of the '**Guidance Document - Access to Council Buildings The Foundation Standard**' which gives comprehensive guidance on the four principals for assessing and improving the access for disabled people, to council buildings i.e. Parking, Main Entrance, Access to reception area, and Accessible W.C.'s. This document will be

available for building managers in hard copy and will also be posted on the Council's Intranet site, for all staff to access.

- Blue badge scheme publicity has been re-written and distributed.
- Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) now included as standard practice under the Scrutiny process. Also within each service area's Annual Service Improvement Plan (SIPS)

8. Continuing Actions: Development of Forums

• Caerphilly County Borough Access Group (CCBAG)

Caerphilly County Borough Council continues to work closely with Caerphilly County Borough Access Group (CCBAG), particularly in continuing to facilitate and support CCBAG, but also to use the Access Group as a 'consultation sounding board' for any development and maintenance projects, which the council may wish to undertake. The CCBAG has a pivotal role in the county borough and is well respected.

Some examples of the type of persons the Group help are:

- The Elderly
- Sensory Impaired
- Wheelchair Users
- People with Walking Difficulties
- Parents With Children in Buggies

The Main Functions of the Group are to:

- Undertake audits throughout the Caerphilly County Borough when requested
- Scrutinise Planning/building Regulations applications to assess and

advise on access issues over and above the limitations imposed by Part M of the Building Regulations 2000 and subsequent amendments. This applies to non-domestic buildings, which are newly erected or have been substantially reconstructed and certain extensions to existing buildings

- Scrutinise planning applications for Change of Use, e.g. new shop entrances should be wheelchair accessible
- Investigate complaints regarding pavement obstruction throughout the county borough

The Group has conducted surveys of:

Banks, Post Offices, Petrol Stations, Garages, Public Houses, Libraries, Car Parks, Swimming Baths, Social Services Offices, Parks, Hospitals, Footpaths, Leisure Centres, Schools, Railway Stations, Churches, and Pedestrian Bridges.

The group consists of interested disabled voluntary members and representatives of other organisations such as:

Caerphilly County Borough Council's Building Control, Planning, Highways, Social Services Departments, Policy, Housing and Leisure Departments
Gwent Police Authority
Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO)
MENCAP

The CC BAG can be contacted by e-mail CCBAGsecretary@hotmail.com

- **Caerphilly County Borough Disability Forum**

Caerphilly County Borough will continue to assist in establishing, and facilitate, the Caerphilly County Borough Disability Forum, which meets quarterly. The Disability Forum seeks to promote equality, rights and choice in every aspect of life for disabled people, and carers, within Caerphilly County Borough, and seeks to compliment our other forums, young peoples, older peoples and carers, who may have members with disabilities.

- **Caerphilly County Borough Deaf Forum**

Recently, a Deaf Forum has been established within the county borough and is linked to Bargoed and Caerphilly Deaf Clubs. It is hoped that this Forum will now continue to meet on a regular basis in the future.

- **Caerphilly County Borough Multi Agency Forum – For Equality, Against Harassment (MAF)**

The Caerphilly County Borough Multi Agency Forum – For Equality, Against Harassment (MAF) was originally formed in 1996, to develop initiatives to prevent racist incidents, and to promote racial harmony and understanding of different cultures, within the county borough. As equality legislation progressed over the years, it was decided by the MAF that ‘hate crime incidents’ are not confined to racial incidents but affect all people including disabled people. With these principals in mind the MAF now takes on board any reported incidents and identifies any hot spots where incidents of ‘hate crime’ occur. This will cover officially reported, and unreported incidents, which involve issues of colour, ethnic origin, gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, religion, language or nationality.

It is hoped that through preventative measures and appropriate education

applied to the community, that the number of incidents are reduced, though there is the possibility that by encouraging the reporting of hate crime incidents, then initially the total figures could rise, as people become more confident with the reporting process.

9. Employment:

Progress has been made against the action plan during the last year with more areas of monitoring being introduced. Monitoring of the Discipline, Grievance, and Dignity at Work policies and procedures has been introduced to allow Officers to see whether there are any areas for concern. This monitoring was introduced on 1st April 2008 and the early indications are from the statistics that there are no particular areas of concern. All other areas of monitoring are continuing.

Workforce profile statistics are produced on a quarterly basis and the format has been improved to make it easier for the reader to focus straight away on any areas that may require further investigation. The statistics are presented to the Executive Equality Group and the Disability Equality Group for consideration on a quarterly basis. Leaver statistics are also produced on a quarterly basis and these are broken down by the equalities categories, including disability. The introduction of the new HR/Payroll system has allowed the production of enhanced statistics as the system comes on stream. There are still a number of modules of the system, which are to be phased in, and equalities monitoring is integral to the development of the system.

This monitoring was introduced on 1st April 2008 and the early indications from the statistics are that there are no particular areas of concern. It is acknowledged that the number of disabled employees is small but it does rely on employees and applicants for posts with the Council, actually declaring themselves as disabled.

During the last year the Council has undergone an audit by Employment Services and once again has been awarded the Two Tick Disability symbol. The award was presented at a ceremony held in February 2008, which was the first of its kind in South Wales.



The Council has also met with Remploy and confirmed the links that it already had with the organisation. Remploy were very happy with the arrangements that the Council has in place and was looking forward to the two organisations working together in the future. All Council job advertisements are placed with Remploy and Job Centre Plus to allow as wider access as possible to the community that it serves.

Any policies, procedures and processes that are introduced or amended, build upon the areas identified by the Equality Impact Assessments as areas for improvement.

During the past year the Council website has been revamped and improvements have been made so that it is accessible to all areas of the community. Part of this enhancement has been the redevelopment of the Council's application form to allow disabled people to be able to apply for posts with the Council more easily. The form is available in a number of formats upon request, and the font size of the form and the information contained on the website can be adjusted to the reader's requirements. As part of the redesign of the website, the Council has worked towards Level Double-A Conformance to W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0.

10. Training:

A) BSL & Deaf Equality Awareness Training

The Council provides a number of levels of BSL training and Deaf Awareness training for its employees, and staff of the Caerphilly Teaching LHB, and the Voluntary Sector. The table below indicates course provision and take up from 2005 to 2008. The intention is to continue to offer these courses for the academic year 2008/09.

BSL courses for CCBC staff; staff in the LHB & the Voluntary Sector			
Continue to support employees with additional professional training in:-			
2005 – 06	BSL Taster Courses	=	99
	Deaf Equality Training	=	Not offered
	BSL Introduction & Foundation	=	Not offered
2006 – 07	BSL Taster Courses	=	57
	Deaf Equality Training	=	Not offered
	BSL Introduction & Foundation	=	27
	BSL Level 2	=	1
2007 – 08	BSL Taster Courses	=	31
	Deaf Equality Training	=	47
	BSL Intermediate A	=	10
	BSL Introduction & Foundation	=	1
2008 – 09	Planning the courses for this period is under way		

An Apprentice interpreter from the BSL (British Sign Language) Futures Project, funded by the Welsh Assembly Government and European Social Fund, began a two year placement with the Council and Caerphilly Teaching LHB in 2006. The Apprentice, and sponsors have already been instrumental in further strengthening the links already made with the Deaf Community in Caerphilly county borough and will also be able to raise staff awareness of issues facing those in the Deaf Community. A Deaf Advocate Officer has been commissioned within the Social Services Directorate, working in partnership with Deaf Association Wales.

B) Equalities Awareness Training

Equalities Awareness Training statistics for Senior and Middle Managers and frontline staff (Those with a direct interface with members of the public):-

- For the financial year 2007/08 – 84 managers underwent Equalities Training Sessions, which included DDA awareness. However since the start of the equalities awareness training sessions, a total of 357 managers have been trained.

Managers: Equalities Awareness Training Summary 2007- 08						
				Middle Managers	Senior Managers	Total
Corporate Services (incl. Ch.Exec's)				15	4	19
Environment				10	8	18
Education				26	3	29

		(contd)	Middle Managers	Senior Managers	Total
Social Services			11	7	18
	No. Trained in 2007-2008		62	22	84
Total managers for training			442	292	734
Number completed training so far			147	210	357

C) Equalities Awareness training for Elected Members, & New Staff

- Up to March 2008, 50 elected members had undergone equalities training, including Disability. As part of the induction programme for new councillors, after the 1st May 2008 elections, an Equalities Awareness Session(s) will be held in the Autumn / Winter 2008.
- Generic Equality Training, including Disability, is part of the council's induction process for new staff.

11. Survey of Prioritised Buildings

The DEG assesses council buildings, which require DDA adjustments to bring them up to at least the 'Foundation Standard' throughout the county borough. Buildings are prioritised according to the usage by the public, to enable disabled people, to more easily access council services, and properties.

From the table below, the council has provided a reasonable amount of

funding on a year on year basis to achieve DDA compliance as soon as was practically possible. It is expected that funding will be available to continue the required adjustments.

Continue to survey prioritised list of council buildings. DDA expenditure is indicated below.		
DDA expenditure:-		
£354,758	2003/04	Approx 25 properties
£346,884	2004/05	Approx 35 properties
£576,207	2005/06	Approx 29 properties
£350,000	(To Dec 06 Approx 25 properties	
Aligns with		
start of DES)		
£554,900	2007/08	Approx. 40 properties.

12. Communications

The communications strategy covers the areas of Age, Disability, Gender, Human Rights, Linguistic Skills, Race Relations, Religion / Belief, Sexual Orientation, Welsh Language which make up the overall equality policy and aims to ensure that the Council's commitment to achieving equality in both service delivery and employment is communicated effectively to staff.

Caerphilly County Borough Council has set itself clear targets to achieve high quality standards in all that it does. In wishing to take forward this ambition the Executive Equality Group recognises an overarching communication strategy is an essential ingredient to deliver awareness and understanding of the policies and action plans it is creating under each of the equality strands.

Consistent with the Council's integrated approach to communications. Caerphilly Borough Council have a text messaging information service called 'Cyber K8'.

Caerphilly county borough's in-house team believes in taking a creative approach to engaging people with the Council's services and campaign initiatives. 'Sign up to text messaging with 'Cyber k8'. People can sign up by text or online to receive texts about one or more of the following: what's on, leisure, Council news, roadworks, live music, youth news, General Council, road safety. The system also allows people to submit text messages in to Cyber K8. <http://k8.managedtext.com/textmessagingservice.aspx>

13. Areas to Focus Upon 2008/09

The Council has made significant progress towards meeting the general and specific duties of the Disability Equality Duty and good progress has been made in responding to the council's Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan. It is however recognised that there remain some areas, which require further attention.

Areas which require further attention within the action plan for 2008/09 are as follows:-

- **Leadership and Corporate Commitment**

As previously mentioned the corporate group driving the Equalities Agenda, via the DEG, throughout the authority, is the Executive Equality Group. It is the function of that group to monitor the output from the Disability Equality Group to ensure that all council Directorates comply with current disability legislation.

From the results of the Equalities Awareness Training, the degree of commitment from Directorates needs some strong encouragement, to increase the attendance on the courses. These training courses have been running since late 2004 and only 49% of all managers have attended.

Equalities Awareness training for newly elected Members and those Members, who have yet to attend the sessions, should be addressed.

Although induction training for new staff includes a degree of Equalities Training, **more in-service training for existing staff** should be undertaken so that (in this case) disability issues continue to be considered. This will enable more staff to be confident in dealing with disabled people, politely and appropriately.

- **Provision of Council service information for Disabled People**

Build upon developing more effective public information from service areas on the provision of Council services for disabled people, and how to access them. Further work is to be undertaken on the Council's website to continue to improve accessibility to disabled people.

Develop ways of integrating disabled people to enable the use of services, alongside able members of the community, specially Education and Leisure services, and also, to improve disabled access to the countryside and parks.

- **Monitoring the satisfaction of Service Users**

Many of the results from the Consultation process have been addressed, but there is still room for improvement. Directorates should ensure that the services provided **continue to improve by monitoring the services**, and

publishing the results in appropriate formats.

The Council and its partners will continue working towards achieving the actions laid down in its Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan for 2008/09

There are more examples of continued improvements in the provision of Council services, to ensure that disabled people are not disadvantaged. These examples may be found in the 'Summary of Progress of The D.E.S. Action Plan' which is on the Council's website [**www.caerphilly.gov.uk**](http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk)