

Disability Equality Scheme Annual Report 2007-08



Introduction

New legislation over recent years has introduced a range of equalities duties for local authorities. The intention is to ensure that public authorities use their influence in ensuring equal access to services for all members of the community. New duties to promote race, disability and gender equality all required the Council to prepare equalities schemes and action plans. The action plans are to be reported against annually, and the schemes themselves to be reviewed every three years.

The OIC Annual Performance Report 2007 includes general equalities reporting, but this report relates specifically to the Council's Disability Equality Scheme action plan.

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (the 2005 Act) places a general duty on all public authorities to promote disability equality. The Act also imposes a number of specific statutory duties on Orkney Islands Council as a scheduled public authority. In particular, the Council must set out what it should do to plan, deliver, and evaluate action to eliminate disability discrimination and promote equality.

The Council's plans in this regard are contained in the Disability Equality Scheme 2006-09. The scheme sets out principles and actions that will need to be achieved across every service that we deliver. It has been shaped around the views of disabled people and the requirements of the General and Specific Duties of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, and can be found on the OIC website:

<http://www.orkney.gov.uk/media/v2/ChiefExecutive/DES/DES06NOV30.pdf>.

Please get in touch...

...if you would like to help us to promote disability equality in Orkney

...if you would like this document in any other format

...if you would like any further information

Contact: Anna Whelan or Eileen Linklater

Address: Corporate Policy Unit, Chief Executive's Department,
Orkney Islands Council, Council Offices, School Place, Kirkwall,
KW15 1NY

Telephone: 01856 873535

Email: policy@orkney.gov.uk

Annual Report Summary

A final draft of the Disability Equality Scheme was posted on the Council's website by the statutory deadline of 4th December 2006. This Scheme was then adopted by the Council at its General Meeting on 27th February 2007. Progress against the Action Plan **is detailed in annex one**, and can be summarised as follows:

1. The steps that have been taken to fulfil the disability equality duty

Involving disabled people –

- Orkney Community Planning Partnership has commissioned Voluntary Action Orkney to produce a strategy for consulting with hard-to-reach groups including disabled people.
- Orkney Young Scot (Dialogue Youth) has continued to liaise with the Department of Education to hold discussions with disabled school pupils on how to improve access in schools.

Implementation of the Disability Equality Scheme –

- The Scheme was published in final draft by the statutory deadline, and then subsequently adopted at committee. The Council website is currently being redesigned so it is not possible at present to monitor the number of hits on the Scheme.
- A limited number of departmental service plans have incorporated actions, but all service plans are due to be revised for the period 2008-11.
- The deadline for ensuring compliance in relation to procurement will need to be revised in line with the Joint Working in Orkney project, which has procurement as one of its workstreams.
- Progress against equalities generally has been reported publicly in the OIC Annual Performance Report 2007.

Improved Access –

- The Statutory Performance Indicator on percentage of public service buildings that are suitable for an accessible to disabled people has steadily increased.
- A corporate strategy for accessible information has yet to be developed.
- Orkney Young Scot (Dialogue Youth) continue to host weekly meetings for a disabled user group which has been very successful, and consistently attracts 8 young people.

Better Employment Opportunities –

- The Community Planning Partnership is continuing to support the Employability Orkney and Re-Use Orkney supported employment projects via the Fairer Scotland Fund.

Promoting positive attitudes –

- There is as yet no corporate training system in place to cascade disability equality awareness.
- The Scheme has been promoted in the local media and the Council staff newsletter.

2. The results of the information-gathering which it has carried out

Information gathering –

- The Council recognises that it needs to develop a corporate approach to impact assessment which would ensure all current policies and practices are routinely assessed for relevance and impact on the duty. Due to a lack of available staff, this work could not be done in 2007.

Better Employment Opportunities –

- New recruits and applicants with disabilities are being monitored, but a staff survey is required to establish a baseline of those already in post.
- Data is being collected on harassment and discrimination complaints, grievances, and disciplinary proceedings, but there is as yet no system in place to monitor training opportunities for people with disabilities.

3. What the authority has done with the information gathered

From the analysis which has been done in relation to available data, no significant concerns or gaps are apparent. However it is acknowledged that a lack of staff available to do the work has meant that information gathering and guidance for services could not be progressed immediately.

The action plans associated with the Council's Education Department and Licensing Board Disability Equality Schemes are reported upon separately.

Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan (Orkney Islands Council, 27th February 2007) - Progress as at 21st February 2008

Aim	Objective	Action	Target date	Responsible	Measurable indicators	Outcomes	Progress 2007/08
1. Involving disabled people	1.1 To develop ongoing and meaningful involvement of disabled people in Council service delivery and decision making	Devise means to encourage more involvement of disabled people in Council planning	Annual Review – December 07/08/09	Assistant Chief Executive	Number of stakeholders participating in involvement activities	Improve quality and relevance of Disability Equality Scheme	<p>OCPP Steering Group have commissioned Voluntary Action Orkney to produce a strategy for consulting with hard-to-reach groups including disabled people. Target - March 2008.</p> <p>Orkney Young Scot is liaising with Education to consult disabled school pupils regarding access.</p>
		Benchmark best practice for involving disabled people					

Aim	Objective	Action	Target date	Responsible	Measurable indicators	Outcomes	Progress 2007/08
2. Implementation of the Disability Equality Scheme	2.1 To identify departmental responsibilities regarding implementation	Incorporate actions into Departmental Service Plans	April 2007	Department Directors	Number of service plans including departmental actions relating to the promotion of disability equality	Increased emphasis given to disability equality across Council departments	2 service plans – CX's Dept and Housing Division include actions.
	2.2 To meet the obligation to review the scheme every 3 years	To produce revised Disability Equality Scheme	December 2009	Assistant Chief Executive	Publication of revised Disability Equality Scheme	Revised, improved scheme	On target.

Aim	Objective	Action	Target date	Responsible	Measurable indicators	Outcomes	Progress 2007/08
	2.3 To publicise the Scheme	Publish DES on the Council's website and make available from Customer Services in other formats on requests	4 December 2006 (draft) 13 February 2007 (final)	Assistant Chief Executive	Number of hits on documents available on OIC website and number of documents collected from Customer Services	Increased awareness and accessibility of disability equality information	Published draft on time, and final version once adopted at committee. Not possible to count hits as new website in development, 3 copies of the draft requested from customer services during consultation; none post-consultation.

Aim	Objective	Action	Target date	Responsible	Measurable indicators	Outcomes	Progress 2007/08
	2.4 To ensure compliance among suppliers of goods and services	Ensure joint framework for procurement specifies expected standards of compliance with equalities legislation for third parties	June 2007	Director of Finance	Adoption of compliant joint framework for procurement	Suppliers complying with disability equality legislation	Revise deadline in line with Joint Working in Orkney project.
	2.5 To monitor action plan progress	Monitor Disability Equality Scheme progress against the action plan	Annual Performance Report 06/07, 07/08 and 08/09	Assistant Chief Executive	Number of completed Disability Equality Scheme actions	Performance monitored	General reporting in APR (early 08), more detailed progress report made available.
	2.6 To report on action plan progress	Publish action plan progress in OIC Annual Performance Report	Annual Performance Report 06/07, 07/08 and 08/09	Policy Unit	Progress reported in Annual Performance Report	Performance reported publicly	General reporting in APR (early 08), more detailed progress report made available.

Aim	Objective	Action	Target date	Responsible	Measurable indicators	Outcomes	Progress 2007/08
3. Information gathering	3.1 Develop model for impact assessment	Agree templates for impact assessment	February 2007	Equalities Officer Working Group	Template adopted by departments	Corporate approach to impact assessment established	
	3.2 To assess current policies and practices for relevance	All departments to review their policies and practices following agreed template	April 2007	Department Directors	Number of functions and policies updated and recorded alongside Race Equality database	All policies and practices routinely assessed for relevance to the disability equality duty	
	3.3 To assess current policies and practices for impact	All departments to impact assess their policies and practices following agreed template	Cycle to be determined by departments	Department Directors	Number of relevant functions and policies assessed for impact and recorded on database	All current policies and practices routinely assessed for impact on the disability equality duty	

Aim	Objective	Action	Target date	Responsible	Measurable indicators	Outcomes	Progress 2007/08
	3.4 To assess new functions and policies for impact	Develop corporate template for all new functions and policies to follow including equalities assessment	April 2007	Corporate Policy Unit	Corporate template adopted by Management Team and guidance distributed across departments	All new functions and policies assessed for impact on the disability equality duty	
	3.5 To take action to remedy adverse impacts identified in Disability Equality Impact Assessments	Each department to take action in service plans to remedy any adverse impacts	To be determined by departments	Department Directors	Service Plans contain actions to mitigate service impacts	Evidence of improvements to service delivery as a result of adverse impact information	

Aim	Objective	Action	Target date	Responsible	Measurable indicators	Outcomes	Progress 2007/08
4. Improved Access	4.1 To comply with all legislative requirements for physical access to Council property	Review/amend existing practice to comply with Disability Equality Scheme	April 2007	Corporate Property section	Amended or updated practices	More accessible Council property	Statutory Performance Indicator: % of public service buildings that are suitable for and accessible to disabled people has steadily increased.
	4.2 To provide information in accessible formats	Develop strategy for accessible information	June 2007	Assistant Chief Executive	A strategy for accessible information	Increased accessibility of information	
	4.3 To make existing facilities for young people available for young disabled people	Develop disabled user group run by Orkney Young Scot and Orkney Disability Forum at Laing Street Youth Information Point	Annual Review – December 07/08/09	Orkney Young Scot and Orkney Disability Forum	Number of visits to Youth Information Point by young disabled people	Equality of access to services for young people	Laing Street continues to host weekly meetings for a very successful disabled user group of 8.

Aim	Objective	Action	Target date	Responsible	Measurable indicators	Outcomes	Progress 2007/08
5. Better Employment Opportunities	5.1 To monitor recruitment, selection, and employment of people with disabilities	Gathering of employment monitoring information	Annual Review 07/08/09	Personnel Section	Establish baseline number of disabled people employed, and number of disabled people applying for jobs	Increased knowledge of employment trends	Need to survey staff to establish baseline. New recruits and applicants monitored.
	5.2 To eliminate any possible discrimination in the workforce	Establish monitoring practices including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Training § Harassment and discrimination complaints § Grievances § Disciplinary proceedings 	Annual Review 07/08/09	Personnel Section	Establish baseline number of disabled people in training, in harassment or discrimination complaints, in grievance procedures, and in disciplinary proceedings	Better informed recruitment and selection process	Data being collected for all incidences with the exception of training (no systems in place)

Aim	Objective	Action	Target date	Responsible	Measurable indicators	Outcomes	Progress 2007/08
	5.3 To identify barriers to access to employment and to work with other public sector agencies to attract people with disabilities into the recruitment process	Develop initiatives between community planning partners, including Employability Orkney, Furniture re-use, and Orkney Young Scot Community Regeneration Fund Projects.	2008	Policy Unit	Support the Regeneration Outcome Agreement reporting process by reporting annually to Communities Scotland on progress	More diverse workforce in Orkney Decrease in number of people claiming incapacity benefit	Supported via the Fairer Scotland Fund for 2008/09.
6. Promoting positive attitudes	6.1 To ensure that employees are fully informed about Disability Equality	Cascade information within departments	Ongoing	Department Directors	Evidence of information distributed to employees	Increased awareness of barriers to equality for Disabled people and ways to overcome these barriers	No training systems in place.
		Provide appropriate training where necessary	Ongoing	Personnel Section	Number of staff receiving training		

Aim	Objective	Action	Target date	Responsible	Measurable indicators	Outcomes	Progress 2007/08
	6.2 To improve attitudes toward disabled people through positive images	Regular articles in the staff newsletter, local media, and on OIC website (and related websites)	Ongoing	Communication s section	Number of articles in local media on equalities themes	Culture change in attitudes toward disabled people	Promotion of the Scheme in Newslines, local media and OIC website.