

DISABILITY EQUALITY ANNUAL REPORT 2010

Disability equality is about offering full opportunity and choices for disabled people to improve their quality of life and be respected and included as equal members of society.

The Council can make a significant contribution towards removing the barriers (both environmental and attitudinal) to equal opportunities for disabled people. The Council can do this by addressing the way in which we run our services and employ people, and also by exerting our influence in the community at large.

The disability duty on public authorities has now been in place for five years, since the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. This places a general duty on all public authorities when carrying out their functions to have a due regard to the need to:-

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons.
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act.
- Eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities.
- Promote positive attitudes to disabled persons.
- Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life.
- Take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities – even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

The Disability Equality Scheme was published in 2006 and is now four years into its publication. A Single Equality Scheme is currently in development and this scheme draws together all six equalities strands - age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief, and sexual orientation – to parallel the forthcoming changes in legislation under the 2010 Equality Act which is due to come into force in October 2010.

The current Disability Equality Scheme has nine actions within its action plan which are:-

Action	Responsibility	Status
Adaptation of Council properties	Head of Estate Services	Complete
Publish leaflet regarding disabled parking	Equal Opportunities Officer	Complete
Carry out consultation on underused bays	Equal Opportunities Officer	Superseded by new legislation
Publish list of information and services available from the Council and format	Corporate Policy Unit Manager	To be included in Single Equality Scheme action plan
Standardise documentation	Corporate Policy Unit Manager	Complete
Implement Video Relay Service in the library	Equal Opportunities Officer	Unable to implement this action as the company due to provide the service went out of business

Implement on-line BSL interpretation	Equal Opportunities Officer	Unable to implement this action as the company due to provide the service went out of business. This action will be added to the Single Equality Scheme action plan.
Advertise jobs using positive action i.e. at the Moray Resource Centre	Head of Personnel/Employee Support Services	Complete
Roll out disability awareness training with partners	Equal Opportunities Officer	Complete

Adaptation of Council Properties

Adaptation of Council properties is required to comply with the duties placed upon the Council by Part 3 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The Act places a duty on service providers to take reasonable steps to remove or alter any physical barrier which makes it impossible, or unreasonably difficult, for disabled persons to make use of such a service, or to provide some alternative means of making the service accessible to disabled persons. A 6 year programme of adaptation works to bring the Council's properties (which deliver public services) up to an appropriate standard has now been completed and disabled access to services is now an integral consideration in the construction, alteration and management of Council properties.

Disabled Parking Leaflet

The Council agreed to publish a leaflet on disabled parking as requested within the disability consultation held in 2005. This leaflet has now been produced and distributed to access points, libraries, Moray Resource Centre and is also available on the Council internet. The leaflet shows maps of all towns in Moray highlighting all disabled parking spaces within these towns.

Consultation on Underused Bays

This action has been superseded by the Disabled Persons Parking Spaces (Scotland) Act 2009. An information gathering exercise is currently ongoing with regards to identifying disabled bays. This applies to any car park available to the public and therefore includes both Council and private car parks. This information will be reported to the Scottish Parliament by September 2011.

Publish List of Information and Services Available from the Council

As a result of consultation it was highlighted that finding out what the Council can provide in terms of information and services may be difficult for those who are unable to investigate these provisions themselves. This action needs further consultation with the Moray Equalities Forum to determine whether this action is still relevant. Therefore this action will be added to the Single Equality Scheme action plan.

Standardise Documentation

All Council correspondence templates have been re-designed to include the Happy to Translate Logo with wording in Arial point 12, and distributed to all departments. This is to make reading easier for staff and service users with eye-sight difficulties.

The templates have been designed so they can be enlarged to Arial point 14 if required.

As of April 2011 the Council will no longer be using the Happy to Translate logo. As such, departments are currently phasing out the use of the logo and replacing it with an agreed statement, translated into the 3 most commonly requested languages and printed in Arial point 14 for those with visual impairments, which provides contact details for those wishing to access the following services:-

- Braille
- Audio transcription
- Braille
- Face to face British Sign Language interpreters

Research is currently ongoing in terms of the best way to inform the public of these services.

Implement Video Relay Service in the Library

It was not possible to implement this action as the company due to provide the service went out of business.

Implement On-line BSL Interpretation

It was not possible to implement this action as the company due to provide the service went out of business.

Research is currently ongoing into on-line BSL interpretation. Information on the type of systems available and costs has been gathered. One company has offered the Council a trial run of its system which will allow us to evaluate the tool in terms of our requirements. This will be an action in the Single Equality Scheme action plan.

Advertise Jobs Using Positive Action

The Moray Resource Centre and Employee Support Services are assisting us in advertising jobs using positive action.

Employee Support Services provides employment and training support for people who have learning disability, physical or sensory disabilities, people on the Autistic Spectrum, and people who have or are recovering from mental health difficulties. The service also supports Moray school pupils who have a disability to take part in work experience.

There are a number of opportunities available via Employee Support Services including:-

- Workstep (changing to Work Choice in October 2010)
- Voluntary work
- Paid permitted work
- Supported permitted work
- Open employment
- Work experience
- Training

Placement statistics for the past three years are as follows:-

2008 -2009	53 people into some form of employment
2009-2010	59 people into some form of employment
2010 to date	36 people into some form of employment

Since April 2010 the service has taken on 43 new clients with a currently total caseload of 213 people. The following provides a demographic breakdown of service users:-

Gender

Men	142
Female	87

Disabilities

Learning disability	77
Mental health	42
Physical Disability	42
Autistic Spectrum	30
Sensory Disability	12
Epilepsy	6
Head injuries	4

Roll Out Disability Awareness Training with Partners:-

Social Awareness Programme

The Social Awareness Programme delivers sessions through the medium of theatre. This year the Out of the Darkness Company gave presentations on the following topics:-

- Identity; including dealing with sensitive equalities issues within small rural communities
- Adult Protection including fraud and theft from vulnerable adults
- Domestic abuse including the impact on children within the home
- Child protection including the role played by schools

The sessions were attended by 260 staff from the Moray Council, Grampian Police, NHS and voluntary organisations.

Classroom based training

This year Adult Literacy volunteers, Home Carers, and staff at the Neon Centre in New Elgin have received classroom based equalities training.

In total 171 individuals have participated in this training. This total includes 26 individuals from the Grampian Valuation Joint Board and 47 from Aberdeenshire Council.

Scottish Rural Development Network & Islands

Matt Tyrer Regional Co-ordinator, Scottish Rural Development Network & Islands, provided a training session which centred on Identity. Approximately 25 people attended. This session encouraged those attending to consider the many forms of diversity in our communities as opposed to traditional equalities training which tends to focus upon ethnic background which many of the workforce have had little experience of.

E-learning

Equalities training was provided on-line for a short period but as the uptake was limited it was agreed in late 2009 not to renew the registration. There may be future opportunities to provide on-line equalities training through a partnership scheme with The Improvement Service. Discussions will be taking place in September 2010.

Further Information

All Council policies and activities are evaluated in terms of whether they require a full equality impact assessment. Through assessments we will begin to identify ways to make improvements to our services. These assessments will ensure that equality issues are considered:-

- In the formulation and design of all new policies
- In service delivery and provision
- In decision-making

To date 305 assessments have been completed. Recommendations and improvements have been identified within some impact assessments. The Equal Opportunities Officer asks services to provide quarterly progress reports against any recommended actions identified during the impact assessment process. Examples of these recommendations with regards to disability includes:-

- Regular liaison with disability groups with regard to traffic issues.
- Incorporating recommendations made by the Disability Discrimination Act assessor when developing a play area replacement programme.
- Carrying out an employer and user survey with regard to the Employment Support Service.

All completed EIAs are forwarded to the members of the Council's Equality and Diversity Corporate Advisory Forum for scrutiny. Selected EIAs are also taken to the Moray Equalities Forum for further consultation and the officer responsible for the EIA invited to participate in the discussion. This process ensures that EIAs are robust in their analysis of the impact of policies on equalities groups.

Summary

Progress has been made with regard to meeting the requirements set out in the action plan. Of the 9 actions identified, 3 are complete, 2 are ongoing, 1 will be included in the Single Equality Scheme action plan, 1 has been superseded by new legislation, and 2 could not be implemented as the company due to provide the service went out of business.

As an integral part of the Single Equality Scheme, an action plan is currently being developed in conjunction with consultation with the Community Planning Partners, the Equality and Diversity Corporate Advisory Forum and the Moray Equalities Forum.

The Equalities agenda within the Council is an emerging service which it is hoped will inform all Council services in the future.