

**Lights, Camera, Action**

Promoting Disability Equality in the Public Sector

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## Promoting Disability Equality in the Public Sector

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# Introduction

**Whatever indicator you consider, disabled people fare badly, whether it is lack of educational qualifications, poor employment rates, high crime rates or low use of services.**

The Prime Minister's Strategy Unit report 'Improving the life chances of disabled people' demonstrates that in all areas of life, disabled people, including those with long-term health conditions, face significant institutional discrimination<sup>1</sup>.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) concluded that "the average deprivation score of families containing a disabled adult is around twice that of families without a disabled adult."<sup>2</sup>

When it comes to education, only 11% of disabled people over the age of 45 have a degree, compared to 21% of non-disabled people.<sup>3</sup> Whilst 46% of non-disabled people have participated in formal or informal learning in the last 12 months, only 23% of disabled people have done so.<sup>4</sup>

Unpleasant experiences such as burglary are experienced by disabled people more often than non-disabled people. 3.8% of the non-disabled population experienced either burglary or vandalism during a 12 month period; for disabled people this was 4.6%.<sup>5</sup>

In employment, the situation is even more stark. There are 6.8 million disabled people of working age in Britain, but only half are in work, compared with four-fifths of the non-disabled population.<sup>6</sup> Employment rates vary greatly according to the type of impairment a person has. Disabled people with significant mental health problems have the lowest employment rates of all impairment categories, at only 20%.<sup>7</sup>

Bullying and harassment at work is another area where disabled people fare badly. For example over 14% of disabled women experienced bullying or harassment at work in a two-year period, compared to 3.6% of non-disabled women.<sup>8</sup>

## Introduction

The one area where disabled people have a more positive experience is in relation to participation in decision-making. There are a significant number of disabled councillors; disabled people vote in equal numbers and are more likely to think they can influence decisions within their local community.<sup>9</sup>

Across the board there are huge gaps in outcomes for disabled people. These gaps are not caused by disabled people's impairments, they are caused by the way our society operates, the way services are delivered and the way disabled people are treated. Closing many of these gaps is within the gift of the public sector. In fact it is core work for the range of public sector organisations and other organisations delivering public services. Many of these gaps are shocking and closing them is a long game – but the public sector has to be at the heart of promoting disability equality if change is going to happen.

For many years the legal framework relating to disability has focused on individual cases of discrimination, very often in a reactive way. During recent years there has been an increased understanding that for those gaps in equality to be closed organisations have

to address inequality at organisational rather than individual level and must be proactive rather than just reactive.

So, since 2006, the Disability Equality Duty has applied to the public sector. This guidance highlights just a handful of the hundreds of success stories where the public sector has used that particular duty to involve disabled people and improved outcomes and results. Many have utilised the framework of either a Disability Equality Scheme or a more general Equality Scheme. The key to success for many has been a combination of leadership, involving disabled people and a focus on outcomes.

Involving disabled people, proactively seeking to promote disability equality and identifying ways in which poor performance in this area could adversely impact on a public sector body has been very positive. Many public sector organisations have come to value this approach not just because of improved outcomes for disabled people but because of benefits to organisational performance, improved efficiency and higher satisfaction rates from service users and stakeholders.

This guidance provides public sector bodies, organisations delivering services in the public sector and disabled people with a range of examples of organisations who have successfully promoted disability equality. Information is also set out on involving disabled people, action planning and assessing the disability equality impact of policies and services. Also clearly identified are some highlights of the expectations disabled people have of high-performing public sector bodies.

Many organisations will be looking at how effective their work has been at promoting disability equality. Some will be revising their equality schemes and the legal obligations of public sector bodies are set out at the end of this guidance.

The massive gaps for disabled people can only be closed by public sector bodies actively promoting disability equality. This guidance aims to support that journey.

“Building on the progress we have made with our Disability Equality Scheme, the University of Manchester will continue to involve and consult with our disabled staff, students and stakeholders to ensure that we are meeting their needs.”

Patrick Johnson, Head of Equality and Diversity, University of Manchester

- 1 Prime Minister's Strategy Unit (2005) 'Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People'.
- 2 EHRC (2009) 'Equality measurement framework'.
- 3 Labour Force Survey (October 2007-September 2008), not including Annual Population Survey.
- 4 Labour Force Survey (January-September 2008), not including Annual Population Survey.
- 5 Home Office (2007-08) 'British Crime Survey'.
- 6 Disability Rights Commission (DRC) (2006) 'Disability Briefing'.
- 7 DRC (2006) 'Disability Briefing'.
- 8 Fair Treatment at Work Survey, 2005-06, GB (Grainger and Fitzner, 2007)
- 9 Citizenship Survey, 2007, England and Wales





## Involving Disabled People – Nothing about Us without Us

### Case study

#### **Islington Council – Structuring Involvement**

Islington Council in North London has a very rigorous and detailed process for involving disabled people.

Following a large user involvement exercise to assist them to prepare for their disability equality scheme (they facilitated three events, involving more than 150 local disabled people) they set up a Disability Reference Group (DRG). The Reference Group is now in its third year.

The Disability Reference Group is a group of 12 local disabled people with a range of impairments. The Reference Group feeds into the council's Disability Equality Performance Group, which is the body which scrutinises departmental progress. This group is chaired by a Director and attended by the Assistant Chief Executive and senior officers as well as representatives from local disability groups. Three representatives from the DRG attend this performance group.

The Disability Reference Group, which the local organisation of disabled people is paid to facilitate and manage, receives reports from departments and/or themed reports on key issues, e.g. consultations, complaints, and accessible information. They tell the council what they are doing and how they do it, then the council comments in detail on how successful or otherwise they think their approach and actions are. The report writer is then required to attend the Disability Equality Performance Group where they are expected to answer all the points from the Reference Group as well as issues raised by other council colleagues and local groups.

A range of successful actions have been identified in Islington and the council attribute much of this to the involvement of the DRG.

A similar group has also been set up within the council's Arm's Length Management Organisation to work on improvements to the management of the council housing stock.

### Case study

#### **London Development Agency – From Involvement to Action**

The London Development Agency (LDA) has involved disabled people in a number of ways, including major conferences, a disabled staff group, qualitative research and an Independent Disability Equality Group (IDEG). The LDA advertised for members of this group and all are disabled people, paid for their time and expertise within their own area. IDEG's involvement in shaping the disability equality scheme led to a key objective to support disabled entrepreneurs and build the capacity of business support advisors. A range of outcomes has been achieved in this area including:

The Enterprise In Sight programme was launched in 2007 to support visually impaired entrepreneurs to set up a business with a specific focus on women and black and minority ethnic (BAME) groups. An LDA-funded programme designed to support visually impaired entrepreneurs to establish successful businesses has been promoted on radio across London.

The promotion started in mid-April 2009 in a bid to encourage more people who are considering opening a business to get in touch with Enterprise in Sight. For the past two years the LDA has funded this programme, which has supported 21 businesses expand and assisted more than 10 entrepreneurs establish new businesses in London (sustaining them for over 12 months).

The project provides specialist and extensive one to one support to its target client group. The businesses have been established across a range of sectors – from sandwich-making through to arts and design. It's one of the ways the LDA is addressing the barriers to business for disabled Londoners.

The decision to produce an Inclusive Design Toolkit arose directly from priorities highlighted by the IDEG and included within the disability equality scheme. This sets out how the LDA plans to implement inclusive design principles in all its infrastructure and development projects. It is also a best practice guide to private sector developers working in partnership with the LDA in how the principles of inclusive design can be incorporated into their schemes from project inception through to end use.

This toolkit is having a significant impact across London, including on the development related to the Olympics.

“It is generally felt that the Disability Reference Group involvement and the structure of the Disability Equality Performance Group is leading to a cultural shift across the whole organisation towards promoting and ensuring disability equality.”

Liz Mercer, Disability Action Islington.

## Disability Equality Duty

Thousands of public bodies have a legal duty to involve disabled people in drawing up their disability equality scheme but involvement brings a variety of benefits which go beyond just compliance with statutory duties.

Disabled people bring a broad range of knowledge, skills, expertise and information which public bodies will find invaluable when developing policy, assessing services or modernising procedures. This knowledge is not just about disability related services but can inform and consequently improve performance across the organisation.

Involving disabled people is all about better policy-making and better service delivery. It helps public bodies improve outcomes, avoid serious mistakes and ensures that performance is better informed by the expertise of the people who understand disability equality best – disabled people. The whole point of involvement is to produce better results for disabled people and improved performance for the organisation.

In 2006, when the Disability Equality Duty placed a statutory requirement on key public bodies to involve disabled people, this daunted many. Dialogue with disabled people was not the way many organisations operated and old-fashioned consultation still dominated the engagement agenda.

However, community engagement is now something which many public bodies actively and creatively undertake and the involvement of disabled people has now become the norm rather than the exception. Traditional consultation – with service users, residents and stakeholders being presented with a fait accompli to comment on – is very much a thing of the past. Engaging and involving a range of people with an interest in an organisation is now accepted as the way that high-performing organisations operate.

Overall, the whole point of involving disabled people is to produce results – outcomes which are tangible and actively improve the lives of disabled people, promote disability equality and improve the performance of the organisation. If involving disabled people does not produce these outcomes it is probably not being done properly.

## The Key Elements of Involvement

### The People

**The involvement of disabled people should be planned and an organisational approach taken.**

There is no point in different teams or different departments having different ways of involving disabled people. At organisational level this needs to be planned and coordinated. Otherwise both the public body and disabled people end up wasting a lot of time and energy.

**A range of ways of involving and engaging disabled people needs to be put in place.** Just having just one activity to reach disabled people will limit the number of people and the breadth of expertise that the public body is reaching. The actual activities will depend upon the organisation and the particular issue they want involvement in. Public bodies have used methods such as disabled citizens' juries, disabled residents panels, focus groups, large-scale conferences, organised meetings, attending meetings of disability or voluntary sector organisations, questionnaires, text polls, arts activities, formal disability advisory groups, publicly appointed panels and many more.

**Involving disabled people is what it says on the tin – involving disabled people.** Whilst involving carers, parents, professionals and other stakeholders may be valuable, the prime purpose is the involvement of disabled people themselves. After all it is “nothing about us without us”.

**Mainstream involvement and engagement must not be forgotten.**

Just because there are some specific involvement activities being undertaken with disabled people doesn't mean that the organisation's mainstream involvement, engagement and consultation should not include disabled people. The mainstream engagement undertaken by the organisation must also include disabled people but the knowledge gained from the specific involvement activities may help to improve this as well.

**Any involvement must be fully accessible and inclusive.** Inclusive involvement needs to be planned in from the beginning. This means best practice in organising and running inclusive events

## The Key Elements of Involvement

and where people have particular needs they should be met straightforwardly and with the minimum of fuss.

**Communication about the involvement and the issues raised also needs to be fully accessible and inclusive.** It's important to remember the communication requirements of people with sensory impairments but also those with mental health issues, learning disabilities and autistic spectrum disorders.

**Involving disabled people will require a budget and resources.** Organising fully inclusive and accessible events and other involvement activities requires resources. Also, where public bodies are asking disabled people for their expertise, there will be an expectation that they should be rewarded for this. Where public bodies are asking disability organisations to help facilitate the involvement there will be an expectation that this should be a paid contractual relationship.

**Include the broadest range of disabled stakeholders.** Ensuring representation of different impairment types, ages, black and minority ethnic groups, genders, sexual orientations, religions and beliefs, areas of expertise, and geographical groups, if appropriate. Remember that the definition of disabled persons in the DDA covers people with a wide variety of disabilities including people whose impairment might not be immediately obvious – for example, people with mental health problems, learning disabilities, or medical conditions such as HIV or cancer.

**It's easier for some than others.** For some public bodies, reaching disabled people is relatively straightforward where they are serving a geographical area or a particular group of service users. Local disability organisations are often key in this situation in reaching disabled people, although this should be done through a contractual arrangement. For other public bodies, identifying disabled stakeholders may be more difficult, particularly when they are one step removed from service users. In this situation, national or regional disability organisations may be useful as is advertising for and establishing a formal disability group or panel.

### The Outcomes

**Everyone needs to know what the aim is.** For each involvement exercise there needs to be a clear understanding of what the public body wants to achieve and these expectations should be shared with all those involved.

**Everyone needs to be clear about the process.** Those involved in organising the involvement and the participants themselves all need to be really clear about what the expectations are, what the timescale is, what the process is and what the feedback mechanisms will be.

**No one wants a load of bureaucracy.** There must be a clear focus on the outcomes to avoid getting lost in the process. That focus needs to be kept throughout the involvement activities.

**There needs to be a good understanding of disability equality and the social model of disability.** Officers from the public body who are organising the involvement and those who will be utilising the information need to be trained in disability equality.

**Disabled people and disability organisations need to be involved from the beginning.** Simply involving disabled people at the end of a planning process for a policy or a new service will not be effective in improving that policy or service. Disabled people need to be involved from the beginning in order to ensure that this involvement brings the maximum benefits.

**Feedback is essential for a two-way dialogue.** For involvement to be effective it must be a two-way dialogue and therefore mechanisms need to be in place for regular and ongoing feedback, using a range of methods and ensuring all materials are accessible. This may be easy for structured involvement such as a disability equality advisory group but it will be more challenging for activities such as text polling, big conferences or questionnaires where there is not that regular and ongoing relationship. However, it is equally important for whatever involvement activities have been used.

## The Key Elements of Involvement

### **Involvement must be influential.**

Disabled people need to know that their views are listened to, considered and incorporated whenever possible. It is essential that disabled people, both those directly involved and others, know how influential the involvement has been and what the outcomes are. Sometimes, after due consideration, not all of the views of disabled people will be taken on board. In this situation it is absolutely essential that disabled people know why their views on certain areas were not incorporated.

**Involving disabled people is not a one-off exercise.** Some organisations have involvement activities which are short-term and specific to particular issues. Others choose to have ongoing and continuous ways of involving disabled people, which is likely to be the most effective.

**It's all about results.** Disabled people who were involved need to be assured that the activity or issue they were commenting on has achieved tangible improvements and results for disability equality. So even after the policy is implemented disabled people need feedback about how effective it's been, what it has achieved and where it is going in the future.

### Case study

#### **Doing Transport – the Jury**

As part of their work on disability equality Transport for London recruited a new Independent Disability Advisory Group in early 2009. This group of disabled people was publicly recruited and advises TfL on a range of disability equality issues. Each group member is linked to a particular area of TfL business.

When looking at producing a new disability equality scheme, TfL have involved their Independent Disability Advisory Group but they've also looked at other measures to involve disabled people.

The most significant of these has been a Disability Jury. With the help of a major organisation of disabled people in London, Transport for London recruited 14 jurors. They held several sessions with senior management from Transport for London on a range of issues – from attitudinal barriers through to the whole journey approach. The jury then met for a further two days to put together a series of recommendations for work over the following three years in relation to disability equality.

These recommendations were tested with the Independent Disability Advisory Group but also through a further round of engagement with disabled stakeholders in London. This led to a set of key objectives, priorities and actions over the following three years to improve their services for disabled Londoners.

“Involving disabled people in the process of developing a disability equality scheme is fundamental to producing a good scheme, and there are many ways of doing this effectively. Using a range of different ways of involving is often the best approach and Transport for London’s use of the Citizens’ Jury technique is engaging and interesting and helps disabled people get more into the detail of the organisation’s plans and proposals.”

Alice Maynard, Chair, Transport for London Independent Disability Advisory Group.

### Case study

#### Government Department Goes for Advisory Group

“We’ve seen real improvements to key policies and detailed scrutiny of actions, all coming from the involvement of disabled people.” Marie Pye, Chair, Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Disability Equality Scrutiny Advisory Group.



Defra (Department for the Environment Food & Rural Affairs) established a Disability Equality Scrutiny and Advisory Group (DESAG) in February 2008. The role of this group is to act as an adviser to

Defra, offering scrutiny and advice in respect of its progress on action plans and recommendations arising from the disability equality scheme and the Secretary of State report on disability equality. The relationship between the DESAG and Defra is therefore a mutually supportive one.

## Case study

Through DESAG Defra is able to draw upon the experience and expertise of disabled people who are experts on disability issues, and get an independent perspective on its performance.

DESAG meets three times each year, has advised on a number of issues and was particularly supportive in helping Defra in the development of the Secretary of State Report on disability equality. The advice of the DESAG shaped the format and content of the report and enabled Defra to focus on the issues that are of greatest priority for disabled people.

Recently, the DESAG made a specific recommendation that Disability Confident training be made mandatory for all staff.

As a direct consequence of this recommendation the Diversity and Learning and Development teams are working together to put processes in place to ensure that all new staff undertake diversity training (including disability) as part of their induction. Mechanisms will also be put in place so that existing employees also undertake this training and uptake is monitored.

## Case study

### **Nursing and Midwifery Council – Building Constructive Relationships**

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) is very clear about how involving disabled people in the development of their scheme ultimately led to meeting some of their targets around participation.

They started planning for a new disability equality scheme almost 18 months before this was due. The year before, they held seven events across the UK, asking nurses and midwives and the public about lots of equality issues, but dedicated a section of the meeting to disability. At these meetings they asked any disabled nurses, midwives or members of the public to get in touch with them if they were interested in being involved on disability issues. Around 46 of the 130+ people they met with signed up for further involvement – not all disabled people of course!

From that group, around 12 disabled people came forward or agreed to be part of an “expert panel of disabled people”. The group met three times in the course of a year. Two formal meetings and one seminar were held on health requirements for qualifying in nursing and midwifery, which the expert panel attended and contributed to.

**Case study****Essex County Council – Participation Networks Forum**

One of the members of the expert panel was a nurse who had been quite vocal in the past – often fairly criticising the NMC in the nursing press. The council was pleased that she wanted to work with them, but were naturally apprehensive. But it turned out that the nurse in question, Bethann, had her sights set much higher than the expert panel. She wanted to be a Council or Committee member. She had wanted to do this for some time but had not put herself forward. Through being a panellist and talking to equality and other staff at the NMC, she decided to go for it. She applied to be a Council member and a Committee member and was successfully appointed as a Committee member earlier this year!

“We have supported the council with promoting social inclusion, meeting with officers and politicians to monitor progress and identify barriers and how to remove them. Our involvement helps keep the disability equality agenda moving forward, and it is good to know the active participation of disabled people, carers and other diversity groups is at the heart of the process. We look forward to continuing our partnership in future.” Brian Mister and Ann Nutt, Co-Chairs, Participation Networks Forum (PNF).

Essex worked with local disability organisations to create a Participation Networks Forum about six months before they published their 2006-09 disability equality scheme. The PNF was instrumental in helping them identify areas for action. Several other local public sector organisations also partnered in the meetings.

The PNF, representing 53 member organisations, is now an established consultative forum for the council and has been active in monitoring and advising lead officers on their action plans.

## Case study

This consultative role has included advising the Waste, Recycling and Environment team on improving signage at the recycling centres; advising the Emergency Planning team on effectively communicating with disabled people in emergency situations (eg flooding); advising the Disability Discrimination Act Asset Surveyor on improving County Hall access (ramps, colour contrasting paving, etc); inputting to the complaints procedure review. Wider partnership examples include working with Basildon and Chelmsford Mid-Essex Primary Care Trust on inclusion and with the Crown Prosecution Service on their community involvement panel. Forum members are also actively involved as recruitment panel members for adult social care jobs at the council.

Essex County Council is convinced that the PNF has had a positive impact on improving services, not only for disabled people but also for the community in general and has helped to contribute to improved performance of the authority.

Jenny Owen, Executive Director, Adults, Health and Community Well-being and Chair of the Corporate Diversity and Equality Board, said: “The PNF has successfully given a voice to disabled residents of Essex. It provides a single forum where the council and other local public bodies can obtain informed advice and views, making sure our planning for services is right first time.”

## What Disabled People Expect... Involvement

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**To be involved in something which will lead to real outcomes, results and change**

The whole point of being involved for disabled people is to help improve key areas of the work of public bodies for disabled people and in relation to promoting disability equality. Disabled people want to see real and tangible outcomes as a result of their involvement.

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**Public bodies to plan involvement in advance**

Disabled people don't want to be involved in an ad hoc or disorganised way. The involvement strategy for an organisation needs to be planned in advance so that specific involvement activities can be undertaken within the established framework set out within that strategy. Some level of ongoing involvement is preferable to one off and fragmented involvement.

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**Public bodies to coordinate involvement**

Involvement needs to be coordinated within organisations so that disabled people's time is used to maximum effectiveness. 'Involvement fatigue' can easily occur when one department after another is seeking the views of disabled people – sometimes without even realising this is happening! Teams and departments within public bodies need to talk to each other, know what

## What Disabled People Expect... Involvement

involvement they are undertaking, share and coordinate. This will enable disabled people to be involved in the most effective ways.

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### **The involvement of lots of different disabled people**

Disabled people recognise both the similarities and differences in experience of different disabled people and the value of engaging with a wide range of disabled people. No disabled person wants to be seen as the spokesperson of their whole community. There is an expectation that disabled people from different BAME communities and different faiths, of different genders, ages and sexual orientations are all involved. Also a recognition that people with a range of impairments and diverse experiences need to be involved.

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### **Lots of different ways of being involved**

Disabled people expect to be given a choice about the different ways they could be involved. Having just one way of being involved could exclude lots of disabled people. Some people prefer meetings; others quite like questionnaires; some people like small events; whilst others would prefer social activities. No one expects hundreds of ways of being involved but there should be a reasonable choice.

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### **A clear idea of what is wanted**

Having clarity about what is expected, wanted and what the hoped-for outcomes will be makes involvement much easier. Disabled people expect this to be set out from the beginning and any changes to be discussed and agreed.

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### **Fully accessible and inclusive involvement**

Having an involvement process which is accessible to everybody in an inclusive way is an absolute minimum requirement for disabled people. Some accessibility is just a given and should always be provided – accessible venues, information in a range of formats (including easyread), communication support provided, regular and advertised restbreaks, a range of food to suit different needs, staff training in disability equality and reasonable adjustments including transport met with the minimum of fuss.

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### **Good communication about what is going on**

Everybody needs to know what's going on. Good and accessible communication is essential. The logistics of this will depend on the particular involvement activities, but for example for formal meetings, information needs to be provided in appropriate formats well in advance, with regular reminders about the meetings and communication afterwards about what was achieved.

### **Feedback, feedback and feedback**

Whatever involvement activities is utilised, disabled people need clear and, where appropriate, regular feedback about what has happened and what has been achieved. Disabled people need to know that their views were listened to, considered and, where appropriate, acted upon. Where things couldn't be taken forward, disabled people need to know exactly why not.

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### **Recognising people's contribution**

Public bodies expect to pay for expertise, so when disabled people are being asked for their time and ideas they also expect payment or another form of recognition, e.g. vouchers.

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### **A professional/contractual arrangement with disability organisations**

Where a disability organisation is being asked to support involvement, to feed back the views of their members or to facilitate contact between a public body and disabled people, this should be a professional/contractual arrangement with appropriate financial reimbursement.

### **Some real improvements as a consequence of their involvement**

Disabled people are giving up their time to be involved with the public body to make things better. They expect to see some real improvements in disability equality outcomes and hopefully in other areas of the public body as a consequence of their involvement. Public bodies need to keep disabled people informed as things develop and to ensure they are aware of the outcomes and results from their involvement. Disabled people who weren't involved also need to know about this – then maybe next time they will get involved as well if they see it is worthwhile.

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## Action Planning

### Case study

#### **London Borough of Barnet – top priorities**

As part of the work around involving disabled people in developing their Disability Equality Scheme, it became clear that disabled people in Barnet identified transport as a top priority. Other key issues included community safety and education.

Disabled people identified the top five services/ issues to promote disability equality as: transport (77%), crime and safety (58%), issues affecting education for disabled children and young people (53%), housing (50%) and health (50%).

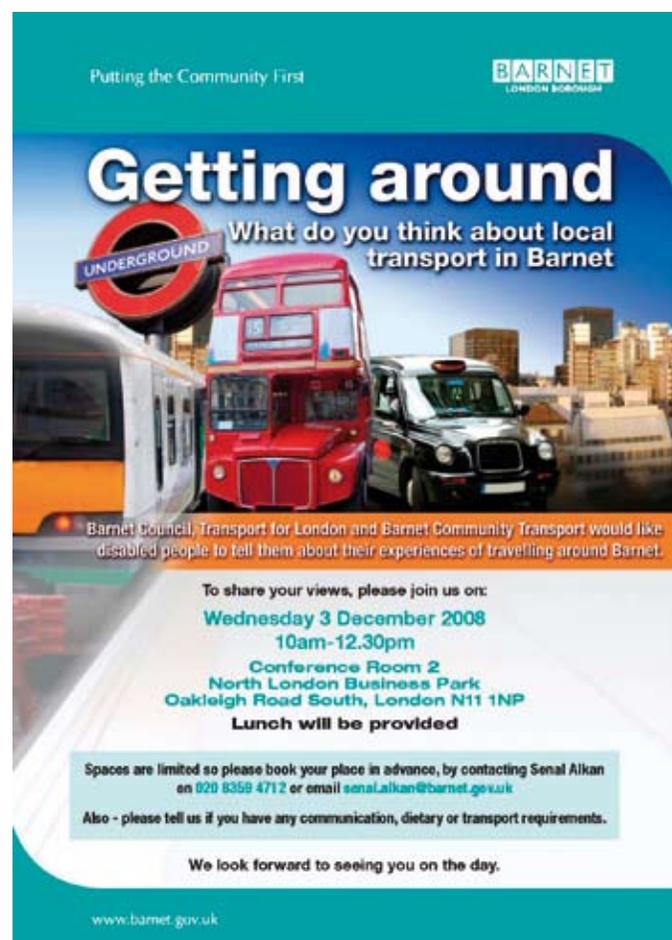
In 2007, Barnet Learning Disability Partnership Board developed an accessible third-party hate crime reporting system, initially for people with learning difficulties to report hate crime and to increase their confidence of moving around a large borough.

In December 2008 a transport seminar was organised through a sub-group of the Learning Disability Partnership Board with TfL and local partners, including members of Barnet's disabled communities. The seminar aimed to influence public transport policy, increase disabled people's awareness of public transport options, and increase disabled people's confidence to make greater use of public transport.

Almost 80 people attended from a range of groups including learning disabilities, mental health, physical and sensory impairment as well as older adults. One of the comments fed back to TfL was that bus drivers regularly turned off the 'talking bus', discriminating against people with visual impairments, learning difficulties or those unfamiliar with the bus stop locations. TfL committed to halting this bad practice. Following on from this seminar many disabled residents commented on the improvement of the 'talking bus' service.

## Case study

Barnet explored this as part of their commitments towards delivering 'Valuing People Now' and increasing social capital. They commissioned a series of travel training sessions to be delivered by a local third sector organisation, which aimed to increase the confidence of people with learning difficulties to use public transport at different times of the day. Direction of travel was measured through baseline perception assessment, repeated 12 months later.



## Case study

### Manchester University – Actions Leading to Increased Numbers

Manchester University has taken significant steps to improve disability equality as a result of its disability equality scheme and action plan. Below are some of the actions that were committed to and have been taken:

- Under Manchester University's accessibility plan it has worked with 'Disabled Go' to produce detailed online information for disabled people about the accessibility of 125 of its university buildings.
- The university has reviewed its provision of support and services for disabled staff and as a result has expanded its student disability service to enable it to provide specialist support for disabled staff.
- The university is also designing and delivering an ongoing programme of disability awareness related training appropriate to staff roles and functions.

The increasing number of disabled students that Manchester University supports is also a sign of its success and the positive impact that the duty has had for many disabled people.

Since 2006, public bodies have been under a legal duty to promote disability equality. For many key public sector organisations this has been achieved through the framework of a disability equality scheme or in some cases by including disability within a general equality scheme.

“Our disability equality scheme enables us to plan, deliver and evaluate our actions with regards to meeting the needs of and promoting equality of opportunity for disabled people.”

Elaine Shilcock, Head of Disability Services Office, Manchester University.

Whether public bodies meet their legal obligations through the framework of a scheme or not, the focus has been and continues to be on having clear evidence about how effective an organisation is in promoting disability equality, seeking the views of disabled people and setting actions across all the areas that the organisation works in. Through this mechanism, public sector bodies not only significantly contribute to improving their performance on disability equality but also their performance more generally.

Taking a proactive approach to identifying the gaps in performance, through evidence gathering, and to setting clear actions across the organisation provides a systematic and practical way of effectively promoting disability equality. Assessing the impact of individual policies or procedures can add to this and this is covered in a later section.

As with all the work of the public sector on promoting equality, the focus of disability equality schemes, single equality schemes or objective/action planning must be to achieve positive outcomes and improved results.

## A proactive approach

Some organisations have raised concerns that the framework of a scheme limits the range of work which can be undertaken. However, a large number of public sector bodies have welcomed this framework, which provides consistency and ensures that disability equality objectives and actions are based on evidence and involvement and reach all areas of the organisation.

For those public sector bodies who are required to utilise the framework of an equality scheme then this scheme must last for no longer than three years. As the duty became effective in December 2006, many organisations will be looking at revising this area in late 2009.

## The Key Elements

**It's all about results.** The whole point of action planning or utilising the framework of an equality scheme to improve performance on disability equality is to achieve results. If this doesn't happen then something isn't working properly.

**Good leadership leads to good actions.** Leadership from the top of an organisation will make successful improvements on disability equality much easier to achieve. Leadership across the organisation will ensure that the actions which are identified are owned by those delivering them and therefore have a better chance of success.

**Going beyond the obvious.** It's essential that the work on promoting disability equality is effective right across the organisation, not just in the areas where disability is traditionally dealt with like HR or social care/support. It is absolutely vital that the objectives and actions on disability equality reach right across the organisation and have an impact in all areas. Staying within the organisation's comfort zone or cherry picking will not lead to significant improvements.

**Starting with the evidence.** Action planning needs to be based on solid evidence, a comprehensive map of how the organisation is performing in relation to disability equality. Many organisations will have built up this evidence base through their previous work, particularly if they had a disability equality scheme. For organisations delivering services, a clear understanding of how these are benefiting disabled people and which disabled people they are not benefiting is crucial. For all organisations, clear benchmarking of performance, identification of gaps and patterns of inequality are essential.

**Where to find the evidence.** The evidence which will be needed to make up the disability equality map will come from a range of sources dependent upon the organisation: evidence arising from actions in previous equality schemes, demographic data, relevant performance data, including from previous actions/targets, information from equality impact assessments, internal information including from sources like HR, complaints and feedback. Qualitative information will also be very important, including relevant research.

**Dealing with evidence gaps.** It is now several years since public sector bodies should have begun collecting and using evidence in relation to promoting disability equality. The number of gaps in this evidence should by this stage be very limited. If gaps remain then consideration should be given to commissioning specific research, focus groups or data collection to provide this information with some urgency.

**Involving disabled people.** The third key element to effective action planning on disability equality is involving disabled people. The expertise, knowledge and information that disabled people can bring is essential. This is covered in the previous section and, for successful action planning, improved results and performance, the principles of inclusive and influential involvement are key.

## A proactive approach

**The importance of selecting objectives.** The next step is to identify a clear set of objectives. This is probably the most important decision that will be made within the organisation on disability equality for some years. These need to be the absolute top priorities for what the organisation wants to achieve in relation to promoting disability equality over the next few years.

**How to select objectives.** The key elements to help identify clear objectives for the organisation in relation to disability equality are the evidence and the gaps it identifies; the organisation's functions/priorities; and the views of disabled people. Putting all these factors together, and discussing these at a senior level, should lead to a set of key objectives which cover all areas of the organisation.

**Using the objectives is to set the actions.** The objectives, once formulated and agreed, should provide the structure for the action planning. For each objective a series of actions, often broken down by team/function, should be put together. It's essential that those people who will be delivering the actions are closely involved in devising them. These actions must reach across the

organisation, right into the corners and the areas where disability equality is not the most obvious issue.

**Making sure the action is effective.** Any action plan needs key elements such as clarity about what the action is aiming to achieve, timeframes, milestones where appropriate, measurements of success and ownership. An action plan relating to promoting disability equality is no different. Targets, and building this into the organisation's performance framework, is likely to lead to improved outcomes.

**Don't keep all that work a secret.** Public bodies need to let people know exactly what they've been doing to promote disability equality, both disabled people and others. This means publishing the evidence, the outcomes of the involvement, the objectives, the actions and the outcomes. People will not read this if it's hidden at the back of the website or inside another huge report. It's important to make the information easy to find, easy to read and easy to see the benefits. Bringing all of this together in an equality scheme can ensure that the information is easy to find and interpret.

**Review and report annually.** Just identifying objectives and actions and not reporting on progress is pretty pointless. Public bodies should report on an annual basis on progress in relation to their action plan and ensure that disabled people and others can readily access this report.

### Case study

#### Isle of Wight College – Targets on Staff

The Isle of Wight College identified they had a very low disclosure rate in relation to staff and disability and their staff were very reluctant to declare that they had a disability. They set out a clear set of actions and their target was to increase the disclosure rate to 5% in the first year.



The college raised awareness of the Disability Equality Duty and its importance for staff through disability equality training, which was conducted by a disabled member of staff at Isle of Wight College, at its continued professional development day, through the staff intranet and through the college's equality and diversity newsletter.

A letter was sent from the equality and diversity manager to all staff outlining why the college was asking staff to disclose, informing them about the Disability Equality Duty and educating them about changes to the legal definition of disability.

All staff were asked to fill in a questionnaire about disability and to return it to the equality and diversity manager. This questionnaire included questions about the barriers that staff felt existed for them and ways that the college could improve the culture when it came to disability.

Staff were able to make an appointment if they felt it was appropriate with the equality and diversity manager to discuss any support that they needed.

## Case study

The disability staff forum was used as a mechanism to involve disabled staff, to seek their views and enable them to work with the college on removing some of the barriers that existed for disabled staff. Staff names were kept anonymous when requested.

The equality and diversity manager reported back to staff about the impact that their involvement was having, changes the college was making and how barriers were being removed.

Through these steps the disclosure rate at the Isle of Wight College increased from 0.5% to 4.9% in just two months.

### Case study

## The Open University – Practical Actions



The OU monitors staff and student numbers by the different diversity strands and reports on them regularly in their Equality and Diversity Annual review. Looking

back at the data they discovered that there had been a slight decline in the proportion of new undergraduates declaring a disability. To address this, the OU took the following action:

- Online campaign to encourage individuals with specific disabilities to apply.
- New disability marketing leaflet produced.
- Pilot of 'open to your needs' carried out in order to increase declaration.
- Research planned to identify the proportion of paper registering students that do not answer the question which asks for a declaration.

The effective monitoring of data also found that there was a higher level of dissatisfaction among disabled students. To address this, the OU have planned action on a full equality impact assessment on the student service strategy and will promote a more consistent approach to identifying and documenting adjustments at course level.

“Using equality monitoring data is a key component of delivering an effective equality and diversity strategy. Our annual progress review provides a reality check, ensuring our policies have the impact we intend.”

Derek Child, Head of Equality and Diversity, the Open University (OU).

## Case study

### City College Norwich – More Favourable Treatment

The Disability Equality Duty allows public bodies to take actions which treat disabled people more favourably. In order to support learners with autistic spectrum disorders to access further education, City College Norwich built a dedicated centre known as ‘the RUG (Really Useful Group) room’. The RUG room, which was designed with learners, is a safe haven for students with autism as well as a social learning space.

Learners with autism often find small, enclosed spaces very calming and so the computers have ‘sails’ over them, which helps the students feel safe but also still keeps the space open.

“I am really proud that we have been able to establish this innovative regional centre for learners with autistic spectrum disorders. It plays a vital role in ensuring that these learners can have equal access to courses at the college while having a safe space dedicated to their needs. The Really Useful Group (RUG) Room has been so successful because learners were involved from the beginning, working with the designers to create an exciting and innovative space which meets the very specific needs of young people with Asperger’s Syndrome.”

Dick Palmer, Principal, City College Norwich.



Learners were also allowed to design a social seating area. Many students with autism find socialising difficult but they designed a space that made them feel comfortable talking to each other and staff.

## What Disabled People Expect – Action Planning

### **A strong focus on practical improvements for disabled people**

Whether public bodies plan their work on promoting disability equality through the framework of an equality scheme or other mechanisms, disabled people expect it to lead to practical improvements either directly for them or in terms of promoting disability equality more widely.

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### **Public bodies to show strong leadership**

The public sector should show leadership, not only within communities or sectors but also within their own organisations. The public sector should be leading the way in promoting disability equality and disabled people expect to see clear evidence of this.

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### **Promoting disability equality across the organisation**

Disabled people know that if public bodies just focus on the traditional areas where they have worked on disability then progress will not be made. They expect to see disability equality taken up as part of core business by the whole organisation.

**To be effectively involved**

Involvement in defining objectives and actions on disability equality by disabled people should be inclusive, influential and effective. More information is included in the last section.

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**Public bodies to accept the legal principle that they can treat disabled people more favourably**

The Disability Discrimination Act makes it very clear that in promoting disability equality public bodies can treat disabled people more favourably. Many disabled people see this principle that you do not necessarily create disability equality by treating people the same as highly effective.

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**To be able to easily find out what has gone on and what is going on**

The plans that a public body has to promote disability equality should be easy for disabled people to access. There is an expectation that these will be clear, easy to find and easy to assess in terms of whether they are working. Disabled people also expect public bodies to regularly report on progress and for this to be equally easy to find.





## Assessing Impact and Achieving Results

### Case study

#### **Department of Health – Cancer Strategy**

The Department of Health undertook a strategic review of its Cancer Strategy in 2007 and this was accompanied by a lengthy equality impact assessment.

This identified a significant range of evidence in relation to disability and cancer and identified or put forward actions to address a wide range of issues. For example, concerns were identified about the expansion of cancer screening through mobile screening units, which were often not accessible for some disabled people.

Actions have been put in place in relation to offering any disabled person who found the mobile units inaccessible an appointment within the same timescale at a static unit and longer appointments to deal with their particular needs (particularly for disabled women having breast screening).

They also produced information leaflets on breast, cervical and bowel screening for people with learning disabilities. The leaflets were in a “books beyond words” format of easy to understand pictures, with text for each picture for use by carers if required. The leaflets were developed with Professor Sheila Hollins at St George’s Hospital Medical School, and women (and men for bowel cancer) with a learning disability were on the development and design groups.

## Case study

### Case study

#### London Development Agency – Compete For

The London Development Agency (LDA) was building a major new procurement portal called ‘Compete For’ to allow businesses to identify and apply for Olympic business opportunities. The comprehensive equality impact assessment (EIA) identified that there was potential for the design of the website to have a negative impact upon some groups in terms of usability and accessibility. To mitigate this, the service specification required the solution to be compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act so that the portal was equally accessible by disabled people. Pages had to conform to level Double-A of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0, including all Priority 1 and Priority 2 checkpoints defined in the Guidelines.

Additionally, marketing, through their business enterprise strategy, would be particularly focused on groups who may have a lower IT usage including disabled people.

An identified example of the success of this scheme was Catering2Order, which was recently awarded a contract by the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) to provide catering services to the Olympic construction site in

east London. The small business based in Southwark offers a breakfast and lunch menu for approximately 150 office and construction workers.

John Charles, who set up the company after developing a visual impairment, established Catering2Order in July 2007. Catering2Order’s team of 15, many of whom are also visually impaired, currently service a portfolio of small public and private sector contracts in southeast London.



Photo: Jody Kingzett

John was informed of the catering contract, advertised on Compete For, by the Canary Wharf Group's business development organisation, of which John is a member. He registered immediately and applied for the contract the same day. Using a screen reader to access Compete For, John found the process extremely accessible and straightforward. Catering2Order was shortlisted for the opportunity and, after providing some additional documentation on hygiene and health and safety, was awarded the contract.

### Case study

#### **In Southwark Involvement is Boundless**

In the London Borough of Southwark equality impact assessments are presented to a Diversity and Equality Panel (EDP), made up of local people. When cultural services presented their equality impact assessment, an EDP member suggested that a festival for disabled people would be a positive contribution to equality work across the borough; the Boundless Festival grew from this. Boundless, now in its second year, has rapidly become an annual event as an inclusive festival. It showcases disability arts, sports and culture to all, taking place within accessible venues and spaces across Southwark.

“Southwark is one of the most diverse boroughs in the country and we value equality impact assessments as an invaluable aid to effective service review and planning, service improvement and being responsive to our customers. Without the specific focus an equality impact assessment brings, we feel our services would be much less well able to meet the needs of all our residents.”

Sarah Totterdell, Social Policy Officer,  
Southwark Council.

## Assessing

Assessing the equality impact of any significant policy or procedure and taking action to mitigate any negative impact or make relevant improvements is key to better policy-making in the public sector. Many involved in equality issues, either as practitioners or campaigners, see this as the most important way of making real change in terms of the public sector promoting equality.

Ensuring that both policies and procedures better promote equality is not just good for equality groups but can significantly improve the performance of the public sector organisation and even save money! This is because it will ensure that equality is built in from the beginning rather than having to retrofit a policy or procedure to promote equality. Retrofitting, particularly when it involves major changes in the way of services delivered or a contract is configured, can be time-consuming and expensive. Equality impact assessments can help avoid this.

Assessing impact on equality needs to become part of the mechanism of developing and implementing policies, procedures and functions. It is a positive process, which should lead to real and practical improvements. All new policies should be considered for assessment and if any existing policies have not yet been considered this needs to be done with some urgency.

The focus must be on outcomes, improvements and real results not on process. The process is merely the means to identify the actions and improvements, which will take organisations forward. However, the process is necessary because it is the means to reach the outcomes.

Having results without any level of process would be like expecting to go on holiday and reach your destination without going on a train or a plane! The transport mode is just a process by which the destination is reached but you cannot get there without it...

## The Key Elements – Evidence, Involvement, Action

**It's all about results.** The whole point of going through an equality impact assessment is to improve the policy (or service, procedure, strategy or new initiative) and achieve better outcomes and results. If this doesn't happen then something isn't working properly.

**Improvements don't just happen by magic.** Achieving improvements to a policy in relation to how it contributes to promoting equality is necessarily easy. Evidence will need to be gathered and questions will need to be asked but this should be rewarded by a strong action plan, a better policy and improved outcomes and results.

**Equality impact assessments should be part of mainstream policy-making.** Systematically considering a policy from an equality perspective and identifying actions to improve it is something which should be built into developing a policy or a procedure rather than bolted on at the end. A clear and short set of questions to consider when doing the assessment really can help. Guidance and staff training are also essential.

**No one wants a load of bureaucracy.**

There must be a clear focus on the outcomes to avoid getting lost in the process. That focus needs to be kept on actions and outcomes throughout the assessment.

**There is no point assessing the impact of everything.** Some kind of filter or screening needs to be applied to ensure that a sensible approach is taken to assessing equality impact. Any filter should ensure that only major relevant policies/procedures or minor policies/procedures which could have a significant impact on equality are fully assessed.

**Start with the big stuff.** The best approach to assessing equality impact and achieving improved outcomes is to start with the overarching policies and strategies. Rather than assessing every facilities management decision, start by doing an equality impact assessment on the facilities management strategy. Rather than assessing every small decision about, say, regeneration, start by assessing the impact of the regeneration strategy and looking for ways to improve outcomes.

**The starting point should always be the evidence.** This assessment is about ensuring that policies and procedures are developed utilising the equality evidence. This leads to better policy-making and better outcomes. Equality evidence can be gathered from a range of sources, including previous equality assessments, data, research, organisational statistics or information such as complaints.

**At some point evidence collection must stop.** There needs to be enough evidence, and the right evidence, to assess the equality impact of the policy or procedure at hand. Collecting evidence should not turn into an industry or a PhD thesis. The assessment must stick to the relevant stuff and this must cover all the equality groups being considered.

**When looking across equality don't forget about disabled people.** Most assessments of equality impact consider a range of equality groups but it is important to ensure that disability equality and disabled people are clearly included. This also needs to go beyond the obvious – it's not just about accessible websites and toilets. Organisations need, for example, to consider what the impact of a policy or procedure may be on people with mental health problems or those with learning disabilities.

**Involving disabled people may be useful and improve outcomes.** In many situations it may be helpful to involve disabled people in assessing the impact of a policy or procedure on disability equality. They may be able to bring more information to support evidence or help to identify negative impact or missed opportunities. Most importantly, they may be able to help identify actions to improve the policy or procedure.

**Don't just focus on the negative.** When assessing the impact of a policy on equality identifying negative impact is only half of the story. The assessment should also look for missed opportunities or ways that the policy or procedure could be improved to better promote equality.

**The whole point of the assessment is to identify actions.** Compiling evidence, involving disabled people and identifying impact/missed opportunities is pointless unless it leads to clear actions which produce outcomes and results. These actions need to mitigate negative impact and to turn missed opportunities into positive improvements.

**Sometimes not everything can be achieved.** There will be occasions when every negative impact cannot be fully mitigated or every missed opportunity cannot be completely turned round. On rare occasions negative impact may be justifiable. However, in the majority of cases there should be tangible improvements to the policy because of the assessment.

**Actions turning into outcomes.** Each assessment should produce an effective and detailed action plan. Clear responsibilities, timescales and monitoring need to be built into this action plan to ensure success in making those actions turn into practical improvements, results and outcomes.

**Tell people what has improved.** The results of the assessment must be published and, where organisations have achieved real change, improvements and outcomes, why not shout this from the rooftops!

### Case study

#### **Climate Change – A Complex Assessment**

As part of the development of its significant Climate Change Strategy, Waltham Forest Council undertook an extensive EIA to assess the potential impact of the eight key priorities on people from each of the main equality groups. The final assessment of nearly 50 pages long explored the impact of proposals relating to transport plans, water metering, recycling, alternative energy and cycling strategies. Usually EIAs undertaken in Waltham Forest are shorter and less complex than this but this was a very substantial and long-term strategy.

The assessment provided extensive qualitative and quantitative evidence gained from desk-based research, national and local information. It also took information from a range of local engagement including the general consultation on the strategy, a workshop of equality stakeholders and one-to-one interviews with key equality organisations.

“By using both equality impact assessment thinking at the beginning and a robust assessment method we were able to see the opportunities, barriers and constraints of the Climate Change Strategy. It was hugely helpful to refine the strategy in light of the equality impact assessment. We had much more confidence in its ability to deliver its aims and also saw how it could deliver on equality and good relations. It was a win-win.”

Jane Brown, Head of Equality & Diversity,  
Waltham Forest Council.

Using a matrix to analyse the data, the assessment of the Climate Change Strategy identified a very significant number of both positive and negative impacts as well as opportunities to promote community cohesion. Each negative impact was mitigated with an appropriate action/way forward.

Some examples of these are:

Travel plans. These were seen as having a potentially positive impact on a range of groups across the community, opening up the pedestrian environment and encouraging community interaction. Some potential negative impacts were identified, particularly for those who would not feel safe at all times utilising non-motorised transport. This may include women, disabled people, young people and older people. In order to mitigate this, proposals were put forward to encourage and facilitate organisations responsible for travel plans to include projects for people travelling in groups or in organised activities.

In relation to public transport the overall aim of increasing usage of public transport was deemed to have a positive impact.



However, various potential negative impacts were identified in relation to the barriers still experienced by some disabled people, parents with pushchairs and those who did not speak English as their first language. The EIA concluded that further work was needed to ensure that accessibility improvements to public transport continued and were publicised and that lobbying was undertaken to ensure that training for staff operating public transport included issues around equality. For example, training around how to, and the need to, utilise the accessibility features on buses and improved customer care.

A detailed equality action plan set out issues around transport, energy, waste and biodiversity. This identified each action, the responsible officer, key milestones, timescales and resources. Monitoring was also put in place.

### Case study

#### **Hull Council – Lifetime Homes**

A review of the local authority's planning guidance was included as part of the council's EIA programme, supporting the council's objective to create an accessible city. Hull Access Improvement Group (HAIG) is a practitioners' group of disabled people trained in reading planning documents and able to provide training to other disabled people.

Following the revised planning guidance, the regeneration partnership (Gateway) undertook extensive public consultation (including consultation with HAIG), and agreed to a significant change in policy: to incorporate 'Lifetime homes' standards into the planning requirements for the redevelopment. Concerns about resistance from developers did not materialise; they did not object to implementing these standards provided the requirement was built in at the design stage of any new project.

The council have a strong commitment to embedding disability equality within regeneration and involving disabled people.

What Disabled People Expect ...  
From Assessment to Action

**Assessments of the impact on equality which focus on actions**

For disabled people it's essential that any assessment of a policy, service or procedure from an equality perspective leads to some tangible actions. These actions should in turn lead to improvements in outcomes and results.

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**Disability equality to be at the heart of the assessment**

Most assessments of equality impact will focus on a range of equality issues. Disability equality must be clearly assessed in its own right within that assessment. Clear actions should be identifiable relating to improvements for disabled people.

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**Disabled people not to be treated as a homogenous group**

Disabled people can have very different experiences. Any assessment needs to take account of this. Disabled people have different impairments, are of different genders, may have different sexual orientations, are different ages and come from different BAME groups.

## What Disabled People Expect

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### **Public bodies to involve disabled people in assessing the impact on their policies on disability equality**

Usually, the best people to ask about the impact of a policy on disability equality are disabled people. This involvement should be planned, focused and influential.

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### **Feedback and information about the improvements which were achieved**

Providing feedback on how a policy (or service, procedure or strategy) was improved in relation to disability equality is essential. Disabled people want to see what the results were and want to make sure that the outcomes are sustained.

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## Appendix – Summary of the legal framework for the Disability Equality Duty

At least 45,000 organisations carrying out public functions across Great Britain are covered by the Disability Equality Duty (DED), which came into force in December 2006.

The DED requires that public authorities (which are defined as organisations carrying out functions of a public nature) when carrying out their public functions give due regard to:

- eliminating unlawful disability discrimination
- eliminating harassment of disabled people
- promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and others
- promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people
- encouraging participation by disabled people in public life.
- taking steps to take account of people's disabilities, even where that involves treating them more favourably than others.

'Due regard' means that authorities should give due weight to the need to promote disability equality in proportion to its relevance.

There are some organisations within the public sector which are absolutely key to improving equality for disabled people. They have a specific duty which is a clear framework for meeting these responsibilities and includes the requirement to produce a disability equality scheme.

Those public bodies must involve disabled people in developing the scheme and also need to report annually on progress.

## Appendix

The essential elements that the disability equality scheme must include are:

- a statement of how disabled people have been involved in developing the scheme
- arrangements for gathering information about performance of the public body on disability equality
- an Action Plan
- arrangements for assessing the impact of the activities of the authority on disability equality and improving these when necessary
- details of how the authority is going to use the information gathered, in particular in reviewing the effectiveness of its Action Plan and preparing subsequent schemes.

The scheme must be published and authorities will need to ensure that this is accessible to the whole community.

Some authorities have produced combined equality schemes and there is nothing within the legislation to prevent this. However, the evidence relating to disability, feedback from involvement of disabled people, disability-related objectives and actions must be clearly identifiable and presented in such a way as to enable all interested stakeholders to readily access and identify them.

Public authorities have an obligation to revise the disability equality scheme at least every three years. For many public bodies this will mean a revision in 2009.

The revision should take into account the information gathered, and what that information indicates, as well as what areas need to be focused on in the following three years. In addition to making use of the evidence gathered, the impact assessments carried out, and the involvement of disabled people, authorities can draw on the reports produced in 2008 by various Secretaries of State on progress on disability equality within their policy sectors for indications as to what should be incorporated into their scheme.

The Disability Equality Duty remains in force until superseded by the new single Equality Duty in the Equality Bill which should be in force by April 2011. The nuts and bolts of the new Duty may differ from the DED and are the subject of intense discussion at the time of writing. However there will remain an emphasis on involvement, taking action and taking into account evidence of impact on equality in decision making and service design. Specific duties will be placed upon public authorities in relation to public procurement – making it clearer that they should be using this to drive equality.

### **Disclaimer**

The information in this guidance is based on the law but its main purpose is to help authorities to comply with and make the most of the Disability Equality Duty. The Statutory Code of Practice on the Disability Equality Duty provides further detail of the legislation. This is available from the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com).

The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission.







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