



Uttlesford District Council

Uttlesford District Council Disability Equality Scheme



July 2007

If you require further information or would like this scheme in another format or language please contact:

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Uttlesford District Council Disability Equality Scheme 2007-2009

1.0 Contents page

1.1 Whilst the Disability Equality Scheme is a stand alone scheme for Uttlesford District Council, it is an integral part of the Equalities and Inclusion Policy and can be found at Annexe B in the policy document. Please also see section 11.0 within the policy document.

2.0 Foreword

2.1 Our vision is to be the pre-eminent small district council by 2011. Our commitment is that we will have maintained and built upon our record as an inclusive place, where all people whether resident or visitor are treated fairly, equally and with respect, where diversity is recognised as one of Uttlesford's key strengths. Uttlesford is a rural district which recognises the importance of social inclusion in all forms and works to ensure that a continuing community spirit is embraced.

3.0 What is the Disability Equality Scheme?

- 3.1 The Disability Equality Scheme demonstrates the commitment of Uttlesford District Council to ensure that disabled people within the community are treated equally and that equality for disabled people is embedded into the culture of the organisation.
- 3.2 The scheme is part of our wider commitment to equality and diversity issues, but focuses specifically on disability equality. It sets out our position on disability and confirms our commitment to implementing and promoting the Social Model of Disability.
- 3.3 The scheme identifies the ways in which we plan to influence practice, it complements our mainstream activities with regards to service provision for disabled people and provides a platform for us to identify;
- Our priorities in relation to disability
 - How we plan to improve the accessibility of services
 - The timescale to achieve improvements
 - What we expect the outcomes to be

4.0 Who is the scheme intended for?

4.1 The Disability Equality Scheme has been devised and developed in consultation with disabled people. Its intention is to inform the whole community on how the authority will deal with disability issues, including how we commission services, involve staff, voluntary organisations, disabled people and the public in the work of the authority. We are also

keen to monitor and evaluate in which areas the scheme is successful and those areas that require improvement.

5.0 How do we define disability?

- 5.1 We consider that the Government's report 'Improving the life chances of disabled people clearly recognises the issues faced by disabled people. It is in recognition of this, along with the definition within the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), that as an authority, we define disability.

'Disadvantage experienced by an individual resulting from barriers to independent living, education, employment or other opportunities that impact on people with impairments and or ill health.' (from the Government's 2005 report 'Improving the life chances of disabled people).

The DDA states that

a disability is a mental or physical impairment which has a substantial and long term effect or adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day to day activities. This also covers progressive conditions such as cancer, multiple sclerosis and HIV infection which are recognised from the date of diagnosis.

- 5.2 Disabled people can face a wide range of barriers. These might include:

- attitudinal, for example amongst employers, professional and service providers,
- policy design and delivery that doesn't take account of the needs of disabled people,
- physical barriers, for example the design of the built environment and transport systems
- and those linked to empowerment, as a result of which disabled people are not listened to, consulted or involved.

6.0 Uttlesford's Vision

- 6.1 This scheme provides a framework within which the authority can promote equality for and prevent discrimination against, disabled people as employees, as users of our services and as members of the community. The Scheme complements and supports the Council's Corporate Plan and is part of its key priorities.

7.0 Involving Disabled People

- 7.1 At the heart of the Disability Equality Duty is the requirement to involve disabled people in producing this scheme including the action plan. Uttlesford has an ongoing commitment to ensuring that this happens and has worked to give disabled people the opportunity to comment on how services are best developed and delivered.

'Participation Networks' are being developed as part of this process.

8.0 Plan of action

- 8.1 As part of the Disability Equality Scheme, Uttlesford has produced an action plan which will reflect the;

- Priorities of disabled people
- The authority's strategic priorities; and
- Specific outcomes which are to be achieved
- Time scales in which this can be achieved

A number of themes have been considered from information gathering exercises. From these themes a number of implementation plans have been produced. These plans acknowledge both the priorities of disabled people and the strategic priorities of the council.

The themes are;

- **Making sure that the views of disabled people are represented,** ensuring that the views are listened to, and are actioned.
- **Accessibility of Uttlesford's information, services, buildings and job opportunities;** This theme relates to equality and closing the gaps in disabled and non-disabled people's experiences and opportunities. Through this theme, we aim to remove the barriers to access that disabled people often experience so that information, services, buildings and job opportunities are equally available to everyone in the community.
- **Improving services to ensure that they are more inclusive;** this theme relates to how the Council will improve its services. It is about taking positive steps to eliminate discrimination and provide services which are sensitive to the needs of disabled people.

9.0 Equality Impact Assessments

- 9.1 In line with the Equality Standard for Local Government, the Council's Equality Impact Assessment framework will help ensure that activities of the Council;

- Do not disadvantage disabled people
- Identify potential barriers in advance and
- Best promote equality of opportunity

9.2 Uttlesford recognises that this is an area which requires a lot of commitment in terms of staff resources and time. To this end it has been agreed that each service area in the Council will have its own timetable for undertaking Equality Impact Assessments. Where the assessment identifies a negative impact or missed opportunity to achieve a more positive impact, the authority will look at what can be done to rectify the situation.

9.3 A summary of the results of the Equality Impact Assessment, the Action Plans and the consultation exercises will be reported as part of the annual review of the Disability Equality Scheme.

10.0 Evidencing Good Practice

10.1 This is the first statutory scheme of its kind relating to disability. The authority recognises that there are many opportunities where 'best practice' can be developed. Some work has already begun in the establishment of an Equality and Diversity Working Group and whilst it is recognised that this is only the beginning, the group is hugely enthusiastic in its role and recognises the importance and value of its work within the organisation and the community.

10.2 Uttlesford is enormously lucky in having a very proactive Access Group for people with disabilities. The Group has been in existence since 1993. This Group is completely independent of the authority although it does have employees of the authority on its committee. This group provides support, responds to consultation and suggests improvements to the authority's practices.

10.3 The authority is undertaking Disability Equality Training for all members of staff, particularly front-line staff with an emphasis on sharing information and good practice.

10.4 The authority is committed to the Social Model of Disability. This is explained over the next pages along with an Easy Read version.

The Social Model of Disability



Definition of the Social Model of Disability

The Social Model of Disability was developed in the early 1970's by Disabled People who used their personal experience of discrimination including being institutionalised, to show that it wasn't their **impairments** which caused the "**problem**", but the way in which society failed to make any allowances for their differences and therefore socially excluded them. This approach became known as "**The Social Model of Disability**".

It explains disability as the result of any behaviour or barriers which prevent people with impairments from having the same life choices as non disabled people. The social model does not deny the existence of impairments and physiological differences but addresses them without attaching value judgments such as "normal" and shifts the emphasis towards the aspects that can be changed and the need to focus on overcoming the **environmental, organisational, attitudinal and informational** barriers and not on addressing individual's impairments but to strive for genuine social inclusion.

The Disability Discrimination Act's definition of disability is said to be a "**Traditional Model of Disability**" approach, because the causes of disability are attributed only to medical conditions and where the focus is on the impairment rather than the needs of the person. The Social Model is not so limited and takes the wider view that the ability to undertake such activities is dependent upon social intervention.

E.g.: Your ears don't work and you can't hear = impairment but you cannot participate in meetings because you have no access to an interpreter therefore you have been disabled by a failure of social organisation.

The Social Model shows that the limitation of activity is not caused by impairments but is a consequence of social organisation. The fundamental principles of the model are as follows:-

Disability is a situation, caused by social conditions, which requires for its elimination the following:

- **That it is a combination of factors that contribute to disability and each cannot be treated in isolation.**
- **That Disabled People should have choice and control over their own lives with the use of independent advocacy if necessary.**
- **That professionals, experts and others who seek to help must be committed to promoting such control by Disabled People by using their expertise to empower them with choice and control.**

The Social Model of Disability approach embraces a process of change and can offer practical solutions and work to reduce discrimination whereas the Traditional Model approach is to find a cure or to provide care.



This is the Easy to Read Draft Disability Equality Scheme written by Essex County Council and based on the one done by Leicester County Council



What is a Disability Equality Scheme?

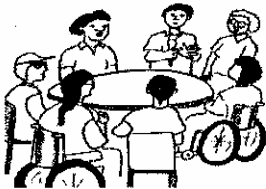
A Disability Equality Scheme says what the County Council will do to make sure disabled people have the same opportunities as everyone else who lives in Essex.



Why are we producing a Disability Equality Scheme?

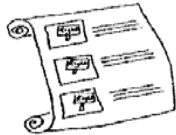
The Law says we must do this.

This law is called the Disability Discrimination Act 2005.



What are the main aims of the Scheme?

- Show how we have involved disabled people in what is decided
- Help the Council think about what is important to disabled people
- Help the Council to employ more disabled people



These are some of the things the scheme says that we will do.



•Making sure that our services meet disabled people's needs

•Making sure our information is easy to use

•Making sure our meetings are easy to understand by disabled people.



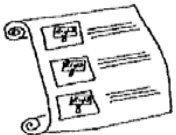
•Making sure we involve disabled people in telling us what they think of our services and jobs.



•Making sure our staff are trained so they know what is important to disabled people.

•Making sure we support the disabled people we employ

The Action Plan



Some of the things we want to do:

-Produce the Disability Equality Scheme by December 2006

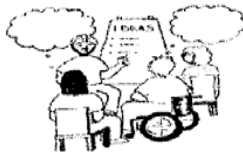
•Find out what are the most important services for disabled people

•Make it easier for disabled people to use our buildings and services

•Make sure disabled people who work at the Council or use our services are not harassed

•Improve how we communicate with people who use British Sign Language

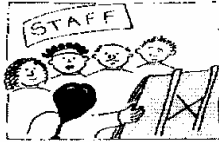
•Ask disabled people to check what we do





Employment

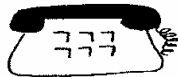
- Improve how we get disabled people into jobs
- Support our disabled staff
- Provide training about disability to staff



We will involve disabled people in developing this Scheme



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11.0 The Disability Equality Scheme seeks to

- Measure the promotion of disability within the employment field both within the organisation and the community.
- Encourage employers within the district to employ disabled people fairly.
- Support a Disabled Employees Network and monitor the authority's equal pay and equal employment policies in compliance with the DDA
- Ensuring procedures are in place to tackle disability hate crime and anti-social behaviour motivated by disabilities, by linking with organisations, the police and fire services
- Sign posting people to services and groups within the community.
- Ensure that the district council can respond to the information needs for anyone within its community with a disability. This might require a visiting officer to provide a service or ensuring that the information provided is in the correct format for the user.
- Continuing to provide accessible buildings to all members of the community
- Ensuring that all public and consultation meetings are provided in accessible buildings with induction loops to assist those with hearing impairments.
- Providing information in suitable formats to promote inclusion.
- Provide a link between the authority, the voluntary sector and grant officers, to signpost disabled members of the community and organisations in the community to access funding streams to maintain the work that they do in the community. This will assist with the funding for new projects as well as maintaining the work already being carried out.

12.0 Action Plan

Timetable in accordance with the consultation programme

Requirement	Evidence/Action	Who to do	Resource	Timetable
Initial consult on draft Disability Equality Scheme	Pass to Uttlesford Area Access Group and Saffron Sight	Sue Locke to liaise	Sue Locke and ESWG	02 March 2007
Public and internal consultation on Disability Equality Scheme	Suitable formats to be available, suitable venues, transport etc	Communications Group	ESWG	March 2007
Disability Equality Scheme	All amendments incorporated	ESWG, SMB	ESWG, SMB	July 2007 for full Council approval
Measure the promotion of disability within the employment field both within the organisation and the community	Link with Access to work, Social Services, Job Centre Plus, business and community organisations	Present through seminars, the Economic Group of the LSP, ESWG	ESWG and Communications Group	March 2007
Arrange further sub-groups to develop this on a quarterly basis	Continuing involvement with the above groups	Feedback through LSP and ESWG	ESWG to monitor	August, November, 2007
Ensure procedures are in place to tackle hate crime by linking with organisations and the fire and police services	Link with internal groups within the authority and the LSP	Evaluate feedback and organise questionnaires in the first instance to see if this is being embedded within community culture to ensure safety in the community	ESWG to monitor	May 2007

Signposting people to services and groups within the community	The Council for Voluntary Services Uttlesford has an officer who could assist with this work along with the work being done through u-connect and the CRM system	Information between the two areas needs to be shared for the benefit of both organisations and the community	ESWG, Claire Croft and Sue Sumner	May 2007
Ensuring that the District Council can respond to the information needs for anyone within its community with a disability.	All originating documents from the authority must show, 'if you require this information in an alternative format and/or language please contact...	All documentation to be reviewed. This will form part of the impact assessment work carried out by the authority. A strategy is already in place to support these requests. This will be monitored.	ESWG, H of D, Claire Croft	April 2007 and ongoing
Continue to provide accessible buildings to all members of the community	This is part of a best value indicator and is regularly reviewed. This analysis is part of the BV156 indicator.	Any changes in accommodation need to be reviewed to ensure that the needs of the community are met	Project Officer, Building Surveying and ESGW to monitor	March 2007 and ongoing
Ensuring that all public and consultation meetings are provided in accessible buildings with induction loops to assist those members with hearing impairments	More consultation work is being carried out in the community and the authority needs to recognise social inclusion	Communications Group and any other work groups involved in face-to-face consultation procedures	Communication Groups and ESGW to ensure that this is being met.	March 2007 and ongoing
Provide a central link for funding with the voluntary sector and the authority grant officers	This will enable disabled and community groups to access information for funding through either source	This will support groups in the community who are carrying out work that the authority cannot support through its own internal	H of D, Grant Officer and ESGW	May 2007

		grant procedures. Voluntary Sector in Uttlesford, Sue Sumner and the Grant Officer in the authority		
Impact Assessments	All policies and procedures to be impact assessed	H of D	SMB, ESWG	June 2007
Annual Review of Disability Equality Scheme	Statutory Requirement			