

E A S T • A Y R S H I R E • C O U N C I L

DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME



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1. Introduction to the Disability Equality Scheme

Introduction

This Disability Equality Scheme has been produced in accordance with the terms of the Disability Discrimination (Public Authorities) (Statutory Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2005 and statutory guidance provided by the Disability Rights Commission.

The Disability Equality Duty (DED) came into force in December 2006 and it required public authorities to promote the equality of disabled people. Instead of individuals making complaints about disability discrimination, the duty as with Gender and Race places the legal responsibility on public authorities to demonstrate that they treat people fairly. The duty affects policy making, public services, such as transport, housing and employment practices.

The General Duty

The General Duty requires that every public authority in carrying out its functions should:

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

The Specific Duty

The Specific Duty requires public authorities to produce and publish a disability equality Scheme, demonstrating how it intends to fulfil its general and specific duties. In accordance with the statutory requirements the first Scheme was published by the Council on the 4th December 2006. A fully revised Scheme will

be provided every three years thereafter. The Scheme will contain information about:

- How disabled people were involved in the development of the Scheme
- How policies will be assessed for any adverse impact on disabled people
- The disability/equality action plan
- Arrangement for gathering information in relation to employment, and where the appropriate the delivery of education and it's functions
- How the action plan will be reviews and subsequent disability equality Schemes prepared.

Benefits of the Scheme

The Disability Equality Duty those for Gender and Race aims to make equality central to the way the Council works in order to create:

A better informed decision making and policy development

A clearer understanding of the needs of service users

A better quality of services which meet varied needs

A more effective use of talent in the workforce

Better results and confidence in public services

Disabled people are frequently disadvantaged by policies that do not recognise their greater needs.

This revised Scheme is in addition to but does not replace the revised Scheme which will be produced following the three yearly statutory review which will be carried out in 2009.

Disability

The Council acknowledges that disability is a consequence of barriers that prevent many people from maximum participation in society. Barriers take little or no account of people who have impairments and may be:

- Attitudes of people
- Built environment problems

- Information and communication issues
- Organisation and institutions' rules and policies

This is the Social Model approach to disability and was developed by disabled people. It makes a clear difference between an impairment and disability.

Impairment is an injury, illness or congenital condition that causes, or is likely to cause, loss or difference in the way the body or mind works.

Disability is defined as the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in society on an equal level with others, due to barriers in society or the environment.

Disabilities may be:

- Physical
- Sensory
- Learning
- Mental health issues
- Unseen

Society disables people who have impairments because the way it is set up prevents them from taking part in everyday life:

- Some people have more than one disability
- Some people have disabilities that cannot be seen
- The popular misconceptions such as people with disabilities always use wheelchairs are inaccurate

Using the social model to tackle prejudice and discrimination where it occurs can lead to choice, empowerment, equality of human rights and integration.

2. East Ayrshire profile



East Ayrshire is situated in West Central Scotland, approximately thirty miles south of Glasgow.

The authority covers an area of four hundred and ninety square miles. East Ayrshire has a population of approximately 119,400 * of which 57,550 are male (48%) and 61,850 female (52%) living in a total of 50,346 households. There are twenty three main communities and settlements in a diverse geographical area, embracing both rural and urban settlement. The main population centres are Kilmarnock, Cumnock, Stewarton, Galston, Hurlford & Crookedholm, Mauchline and Auchinleck.

East Ayrshire has a high quality environment with good quality services, including health, education, social services and a strong community spirit, however, East Ayrshire as a whole has significantly higher levels of poverty than the Scottish average and compared to other authorities in Scotland, as a proportion of the relevant population, for example East Ayrshire has the:

- third highest proportion of unemployed people claiming benefit
- sixth highest proportion of children of families claiming benefit
- fourth highest proportion of lone parents claiming benefit
- the highest proportion of carers claiming carers allowance

• *Source: General Register Office for Scotland (2005 Mid Year Estimates of Population) 2006

East Ayrshire Council is the largest employer in the area with a workforce of around 6,800.

It is estimated that the overall population in East Ayrshire is likely to decline by 0.98% up to the year 2014. This will be an uneven decline with the decline of the population of people aged 30-49 years declining as much as 12% with an estimated growth in the relative percentage of people in the 65 to 74 years group to increase as much as 17.23%.

There are high levels of poor health in East Ayrshire, both those regarding themselves as having life limiting illness and those unemployed due to ill health and high levels of carers, particularly those providing high levels of care.

22% of the population of East Ayrshire Council stated that they had limiting long term illness, nearly 2% higher than the national average. Of people of working age, 17% stated that they had limiting long term illness, also higher than the national average. The percentage of the population with long term illness has increased by 7.3% since 1991.

The numbers of people identified in the census as having a long term illness indicates that there are higher numbers of physically disabled people in East Ayrshire than the Scottish average.

People with physical disabilities or sensory impairment

Statistics calculated by the Office for Population, Censuses and Surveys indicate that 5680 people within East Ayrshire have a range of disabilities that, as a result, may require a limited or extensive level of service.

People with learning disabilities

The number of people with learning disabilities is difficult to estimate as census information and population estimates do not specifically count people with learning disabilities. However, using the prevalence rates from the Health Needs Assessment report, the estimate of adult population of East Ayrshire who have significant learning disability in 2001 is as follows:

Prevalence of Learning Disability Adults within East Ayrshire

	Males	Females	Total
16-20	15	13	28
21-25	12	12	24
26-44	62	63	126
45-64	34	37	71
65+	10	14	24
Total	177	184	361

People with Mental Health Problems

Similarly to learning disabilities, there are no accurate population counts of people with mental health problems. However, prevalence does indicate;

Estimated Prevalence of people experiencing some distress (median estimates)*

	2004	2011
The Community	27623	25906
Total Mental Morbidity – attenders in Primary Care	22490	21092
Mental disorders identified by doctors	9925	9308
Total Mental Morbidity – identified by doctors	2034	1907
Psychiatric in patients	332	312

However, these figures do not take into account the effects of within the Council area, with mental health illness likely to be as much as twice as high among people who were not economically active compared to those in full-time employment.

National Context

There are currently no accurate population prevalence figures available identifying the number of people with learning disabilities. According to “The Same as You”, a national review of services for people with learning disabilities in Scotland:

- 16 adults out of every 1,000 have a mild or moderate learning disability
- 2 to 3 adults out of every 1,000 have a profound or multiple disabilities.

Thus, estimates of the number of adults in East Ayrshire with a learning disability (based on an adult population of 120,000) are:

- 1,900 adults have a mild to moderate learning disability
- 300 adults have profound or multiple disabilities

The population of adults with learning disabilities is likely to increase by 1.75% per annum over the 10 years.

*Goldberg D and Huxley P “Common Mental Disorders: a Bio- Social Model 1992

The Scottish Needs Assessment Program has identified that between 20% and 30% of the adult population is likely to suffer from mental health problem, with 2% suffering significant disability.

3. Our guiding principles

East Ayrshire's guiding principles which are detailed in the Community Plan will direct how we identify and prioritise what needs to be done and plan, co-ordinate and deliver action to meet identified priorities. By planning together, working together and achieving together East Ayrshire Council will:

Promote social justice and social inclusion

The Social Justice principles of equality and social inclusion are about making sure that women, men, people with a disability, or from a minority ethnic group, no matter what their life circumstances, have opportunities and choices.

Build sustainability

East Ayrshire Council is committed to making sure that the outcomes of social, economic and environmental improvements are sustainable and will stand the test of time. A sustainable community is one which makes sure today's decisions do not have a negative effect on the future and where actions will have a long-lasting effect.

Succeed in joint working and involving people

East Ayrshire Council acknowledges that the major problems facing the area cannot be dealt with by public agencies working in isolation within their own limited budgets. We need to work together and involve disabled people, communities, voluntary organisations and the private sector more effectively to get the best value from the public money that is invested in the area and to deliver real and lasting change for disabled people.

Ensure effective engagement in the planning of local services

East Ayrshire Council recognises the importance effective engagement in the planning and development of local services. By working together, involving and consulting and involving disabled people, we will plan and develop services tailored to the needs of disabled people living and working in East Ayrshire.

Ensure quality and accessibility

East Ayrshire Council recognises many disabled people who use public services need access to more than one agency at a given time. Making sure our services are high quality, accessible, efficient and effective involves joining up our services to meet all of the needs a disabled person might have rather than sending people from one agency to another which is how services have traditionally been offered. By listening and involving disabled people receiving services and using what they tell us to influence how we develop services, we

will make their needs the focus of policy making to tailor services to the needs of users.

Deliver continuous improvement and best value

East Ayrshire Council will develop a set of standards against which we can measure our performance; disabled people will be able to see how we are achieving the targets set out in the action plans which form part of the community plan. We will track our progress by monitoring a range of socio-economic measures, for example, the levels of reported crime or the levels of unemployment. By comparing these with our starting position, we will know whether we are making a real difference. We will report regularly to the people of East Ayrshire on how well we are doing and the progress we are making towards meeting our targets.

4. The Community Plan

The Disability Equality Scheme takes account of and will contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Community Plan which sets out the overall vision:

“East Ayrshire will be a place with strong, vibrant communities where everyone has a good quality of life and access to opportunities, choices and high quality services which are sustainable, accessible and meet people’s needs.”

The six key themes of the Community Plan which have been developed with our partners are:-

Promoting community learning

Community learning offers the chance to develop potential and improve the quality of lives for disabled people. It also offers an opportunity for people to take an active part in local community life and in making decisions which affect their lives.

Improving opportunities

East Ayrshire Council aims to improve opportunities for disabled people by growing existing business and supporting inward investment, making sure that education providers and businesses work together to give the best start to young disabled people.

Improving community safety

East Ayrshire Council is committed to creating safe places for disabled people in which to live, work and play by reducing crime, improving public safety in neighbourhoods and homes.

Improving health

East Ayrshire Council is committed to improving the health and well-being of disabled people by reducing risk bringing about change to tackle the worst health problems, making sure that services are fully accessible, helping disabled people of all ages live healthy lifestyles.

Eliminating poverty

East Ayrshire Council will work to tackle poverty by working to attract good quality jobs, increasing employment rates for disabled people in relatively disadvantaged in the economy, supporting carers, tackling links between poor housing and ill health etc.

Improving the environment

East Ayrshire Council is committed to protecting, improving and using our natural and built environment in an environmentally friendly way that will benefit disabled people.

The Community Plan seeks to ensure that all of East Ayrshire's citizens can contribute to the life of the community free from barriers both structural and organisational.

The Council in seeking to the meet the aims of the Community Plan is keen to ensure that the needs and wishes of disabled people are taken account of in all aspects of its service delivery.

The Council and its Community Planning Partners have recently reviewed the Community Plan which is underpinned by measurable Action Plans. This can be viewed on www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk

5. Disability Equality in Education Scheme

In addition to the duties placed on public bodies to comply with disability equality, there are distinct services within the Council which require to publish a specific Scheme and associated action plan.

In this respect therefore the Council, as an Education Authority requires to set out in the Disability Scheme how it will meet the general and specific duties in respect of disability.

The Education Authority has published a Disability Action Plan which sets out its key priorities not just within the context of school based education but also in relation to Community Learning and Development Services. A Model Equalities Policy has also been developed for all educational establishments, which sets out the duties placed upon educational establishments in meeting the specific and general duties of the legislation.

The Model Policy for educational establishments, including Partner Providers sets out the arrangements for educational establishments to gather information and evidence how policies and practices are affecting the educational opportunities available to children and young people with a disability.

It very much focuses on how the evidence will be used to improve outcomes for children and young people who have a disability. The key performance data will be monitored and analysed on an annual basis and the educational authority will ensure compliance in respect of this through the role of its Quality Improvement Team.

6. Employment

We are committed to ensuring that our workforce is representative of our community. Currently 0.8 per cent of our employees identify themselves as being disabled. The Act requires that the Council make clear its monitoring arrangements in relation to all aspects of employment and to publish annually the results of any such monitoring. Employee Relations recognises that it has a key role to play in meeting the duties contained in the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 particularly in relation to employment practice.

The primary focus of the Employee Relations Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan for 2006-2009 will be to meet the statutory requirements of the Act in relation to monitoring current employees, applicants for employment and those who:

- apply for formal training
- participate in formal training
- apply for promoted posts
- raise a formal grievance
- are the subject of disciplinary action
- benefit or suffer a detriment as a result of performance assessments
- raise a complaint under the terms of the Council's Fair Treatment at Work policy
- leave the employment of the Council

Information on the background of those who apply for employment and those who apply for promoted posts is currently collated and available for analysis. The information will be analysed on a quarterly basis and areas of inequality addressed.

The Council will continue to use information obtained through monitoring employment practices to build a workforce that reflects the diversity of our local community and to ensure that employees receive equality of treatment. The Council recognises that this will not happen through monitoring alone. Employment procedures and practices will continue to be reviewed and amended, where unlawful, discrimination or adverse impact is shown. This will require flexibility in the action plans and priority areas relating to employment.

Double Tick Disability Symbol

East Ayrshire Council has signed up to the Employment Service's Double Tick symbol 'positive about disabled people' which demonstrates to disabled job seekers and disabled employees that it has agreed to make 5 commitment

designed to ensure that people with a disability have the opportunity to access employment and develop their careers with the Council. The commitments are as follows:

- To interview all applicants with a disability who meet the essential criteria for a job vacancy and consider them on their merits
- To ensure there is a mechanism in place to discuss at any time, but at least once a year, with disabled employees what you and they can do to make sure they develop and use their abilities
- To make every effort when employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed to make your commitments work
- Each year to review the five commitments and what has been achieved, to plan ways to improve on them and to let employees and Jobcentre Plus about progress and future plans

7. Procurement

Procurement is a function of most public authorities and may be relevant to the General Duty. The General Duty does not override other legislation or regulations on procurement; it may be relevant in three areas:

- Services provided under contract or agreement
- Contractors equal opportunities policies and practices
- Contract opportunities for businesses owned or run by disabled people.

The Council will be responsible for meeting the General Duty and specific duties when:

- Any of the Council's functions or services are carried out by a private company or voluntary organisation under a contract or some other arrangement
- The duty to promote equality for disabled people applies to those functions or service.

The Council has recently developed procedures to build disability equality considerations into the pre-contract evaluation, in contract conditions and post contract monitoring. This will enable the Council to check that those providing services on our behalf do so fairly and equitably.

8. Disabled Employees Consultative Forum

East Ayrshire Council has a long established Disabled Employees Consultative Forum. The remit of the group is both to allow disabled people to identify issues for discussion relating to employment and also to discuss issues relating to the Disability Equality Scheme and its implementation.

The Forum has developed over a number of years and has allowed members of staff to voice concerns and raise issues.

The Forum has developed information on the Council's Intranet for all staff employees to access information on disabilities and to raise the profile of the group and the work achieved.

The Council will continue to support and develop the Forum, which meets quarterly.

9. Achievements since December 2006

DisabledGo

In September 2007 the Council and Community Planning Partners approved funding for the development of an access guide through an organisation called DisabledGo.

DisabledGo is a social enterprise company who offer a web-based access guide on a wide range of specific venues in local areas to empower disabled people to enjoy the benefits of – and make contributions – to their local community and wider society.

DisabledGo with the Council will be organising community consultation of all local groups and individuals to ensure that the local guide meet local needs. Local people with disabilities will be given the opportunity to contribute to the research process and if they can commit to 4 months availability, then DisabledGo will train local people to conduct the research, inputting and quality control.

Using this methodology will allow disabled people to be in control of their local guide.

See Me Pledge

The See Me Pledge is a national anti-stigma campaign relating to Mental Health which aims to make people ‘see the person and not the label.’

In June 2007 the Council along with NHS Ayrshire & Arran and North and South Ayrshire Council pledged their commitment to work with the See Me Pledge to tackle the stigma and discrimination experienced by people with mental health problems.

The Council is already committed to supporting the well-being of its employees and service users by promoting good mental health and providing support to those experiencing mental health problems.

This pledge will confirm the work the Council does and will support the Council in developing more opportunities for both employees and service users with mental health problems.

VIP Partners

In December 2006 the Council in partnership with a local carers action forum called KIN hosted two consultation days called 'Making Good Things Happen.' These days brought together people with learning disabilities, families, carers and key partners to examine practice and improve services for people with learning difficulties in East Ayrshire.

KIN held a vision of a working partnership which could lead work from the two day consultation, from this vision VIP Partners was formed – East Ayrshire's Learning Disability Forum.

VIP Partners has also be a driving force for the development for East Ayrshire's Partnership in Practice Agreement. The agreements will outline the plans for developing and commissioning services for adults and children with learning disabilities over a 3 year period.

The Forum has developed several sub-groups working in partnership with the Council in order to progress key issues identified.

Merge

Merge was set up in 2007 to deliver training and raise awareness of the issues that people with learning difficulties face.

The training is delivered by people who all have learning difficulties and have first hand experience of the lack of awareness from service providers.

They have delivered training in schools and GP practices.

Community Learning & Development Disability Action Plan

In 2007 Community Learning & Development published their 'Disability Plan' with people with disabilities, groups that represent people with disabilities and carers.

As a result of the work outlined this process will ensure people with disabilities will be able to access learning opportunities provided by a range of agencies in East Ayrshire.

Community Learning and Development Disability Plan will undertake to carry out the following:

- Produce a list detailing aids/adaptations available within Learning Centres/Libraries for disabled people.
- Compile a database/directory detailing the range of services and voluntary organisations for disabled people.
- Disseminate models of good practice to partners which will increase the learning opportunities to disabled people.
- Develop user friendly formats of the plan to meet the needs of a wide range of disabled people.

To measure the success of this Plan and build information for future Plans, a series of activities will take place each year. These will include:

- Ongoing consultation and involvement with disabled people and their organisations.
- Regular reports will be made to the East Ayrshire Community Learning & Development Partnership.
- A progress report, which will detail the success of the Plan.

10. Our Progress and Challenges

What Steps Have we Taken to Fulfil our Equality Duty

In 2006 the Council set 12 Objectives to fulfil over a 3 year period in accordance with the disability equality duty.

We have fulfilled in the main our commitments set out in our action plan (Attached as Appendix 1). However, we acknowledge that we have work to do to maintain progress achieved to date.

We are presently reviewing our community engagement structures to ensure that disabled people are not only involved but understand the processes of involvement and why they need to be involved in policy development and service delivery as it affects them.

We have a number of initiatives to develop in the coming year from DisabledGo to the development of a Disability Network that will allow the Council to involve disabled people through a number of forums. This will be involvement at a number of levels from children and young people through to adults and carers.

We have also taken steps to develop our corporate action plan for 2007-2008 which will be supported by individual Service Unit Action Plans that sets out our intentions to meet our duty with measurable indicators of progress towards those outcomes with lines of accountability. (Appendix 2)

The Results of the Information-gathering which we have carried out

Our commitment was to monitor the effect of our policies and practices on the recruitment, development and retention of its disabled employees

The above information has been analysed and accordingly some aspects of our monitoring forms have been amended to capture data required. Results have been published on our website. www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk

Added to this an internal report was commissioned in November 2007 to develop and analyse policies and practices on the recruitment, development and retention of all our employees in order to increase our workforce diversity. We will involve our Disability Employee Consultative Forum in the development of this report and hope to have results published by Summer 2008.

What have we done with the information gathered?

As stated in our Scheme the information gathered will be used by services in their performance management arrangements and regular reports will be submitted to the Chief Executive's Equalities Strategy Group and Cabinet.

In addition, the information gathered will be used in identifying priorities and actions within the Community Plan and will be monitored by the Community Planning Partnership Joint Officers Group and by the Partnership Board.

11. Responsibility for the Scheme

The following levels of responsibility for the Disability Equality Scheme and its related Action Plan are in place:-

- East Ayrshire Council through Cabinet has responsibility for approving and maintaining the Scheme and for ensuring that Services meet their obligations as laid down in the Scheme and its accompanying Action Plan
- The Chief Executive and Executive Directors are responsible for ensuring the Scheme is implemented effectively throughout the Council's Services
- The Equalities Strategy Group, which is chaired by the Chief Executive and includes all Executive Directors, will ensure that Elected Members and Chief Officers receive current advice on best practice relating to Disability issues

12. Assessing, Consulting and Involving

East Ayrshire Council values the role that consultation plays in formulating and delivering appropriate services and improving public confidence and trust. We are constantly striving to develop and improve services to meet the needs of the people we serve. We provide information, consult about existing and developing services and engage in active partnership with local people. We use a range of methods, including our community planning forums, residents' panels, newsletters, engagement with community groups etc. The Council has also endorsed the National Standards for Community Involvement.

As we have mentioned the biggest challenge has been the meaningful involvement of disabled people not only in the Scheme but in the development of our services.

Although the Council has formal links with a number of groups representing disabled people and some of these groups were involved with the development of the Scheme through attendance at workshops, it was felt that these links needed to be strengthened to meet the requirements of effective for involvement.

The Council will therefore be developing new structures to engage and involve disabled people at all levels. A Disability Network will be established in early 2008 which will feed into a newly established Equality Forum.

It is envisaged that the Network will become the main forum for involvement and engagement within the Council, although not exclusive, as we recognise that not all disabled people/organisation will feel comfortable being involved in this process and mechanisms will be developed to engage and involve disabled people/cares in other methods such as one to one meetings, through correspondence etc.

13. Action Plan

A revised Action Plan, which is contained in Appendix 2 details the actions which will be carried out over the coming year to ensure the Council meets its General Duty. Specifically:

- Each Department has produced individual Action Plans and identify the priorities for people with disabilities through established consultation and involvement arrangements;
- The strategic priorities of the Council including business milestones and major projects to be implemented over the timescales of the Scheme;
- Evidence of where problems and priorities lie and action which will be taken as a result; and
- Specific outcomes which the Council wishes to achieve to promote Disability equality set against a realistic timetable.

14. Integrated Equality Impact Assessments

The Council will implement a system for carrying out Integrated Impact Assessments. The system will allow policies, procedures and proposed changes to be assessed to ensure that the Council's decisions and activities do not disadvantage any one group. It will allow the Council to identify where it might better promote equality of opportunity people with disabilities and where different parts of the Disability equality duty might be built into these policies and practices.

Lead staff operating in each service area will carry out impact assessments on relevant policies. Each service area will prioritise its functions and policies for review and indicate in which year the review will be completed. That is, year one, high priority, to be completed 2006/07, year two medium priority, to be completed 2007/8 and low priority to be completed 2008/9.

The findings from the assessments will be reported to the relevant Head of Service for information and action by the lead policy officer. The results of integrated impact assessments will be published.

15. Publishing the results

East Ayrshire Council is committed to governance undertaken with integrity and in the public's interest. Our decision making processes are open, honest and accountable, involving and extending awareness of our activities.

The Council will use existing methods of disseminating information on assessments, consultation and monitoring. Full reports of individual Integrated Impact Assessments or consultations will be available on request from relevant service areas. Summaries of these results will be available on request from relevant service areas and will be published within three months of the full impact assessment and annually as part of the review of the Disability Equality Scheme. Information on equality impact assessments, consultations and monitoring results and actions will be published widely in a variety of Council publications including:

- Headlines Newsletter
- Newsletters
- Annual Reports
- Local Media
- Internet and Intranet

Information will be put into various accessible formats on request, for example:

- Braille
- Audio-tape
- Translations into community languages

All service areas will also update the internet and intranet to keep our customers and employees informed of the outcomes of the integrated impact assessments undertaken.

16. Reviewing the Disability Equality Scheme

The Equalities Strategy Group and the Equality & Diversity Officer will be responsible for driving forward the Disability Equality Scheme and monitoring progress. Reports from the Equalities Strategy Group be considered by Cabinet. As part of its review of political management arrangements the Council is currently considering the establishment of a range of Forums including those with Equalities focus. Once established these Forums will also contribute to the review of the Scheme.

The Scheme will be reviewed annually using the Equality and Human Rights Commission's framework standards and guidance.

Staff and members of the public will be kept up to date on progress made in promoting Disability equality through newsletters, the internet, intranet, annual reports etc.

17. Comments and Complaints

Comments or complaints relating to the Disability Equality Scheme in either employment or service delivery will be dealt with under the Council's existing arrangements.

Reporting on how complaints have been dealt with will form part of the annual review of the Disability Equality Scheme. The Equalities Strategy Group and departmental equality groups will also consider individual complaints where appropriate to identify areas of improvement.

Complaints by employees will be dealt with under the Council's Grievance Procedures.

If anyone has comments on the Disability Equality Scheme please contact the Council's Equality and Diversity Officer at:

East Ayrshire Council
Council Headquarters
London Road
Kilmarnock
KA3 7BU
Tel: 01563 576244
E-mail: alyia.zaheed@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME 2007-2010**CORPORATE ACTION PLAN TO MEET GENERAL
AND SPECIFIC DUTIES**

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	ACTIONS	TIMESCALE	Progress
1.	Engagement and involvement with disabled people	Review current arrangements to ensure representative forums throughout the Council area	February 2007	Proposals on new community engagement arrangements including disabled people will be considered by Cabinet in December 2007
2.	Accessibility to Council premises	Review current targets and establish action plan for improvements	April 2007	Buildings are evaluated on an ongoing basis for accessibility. Any major developments including Council Projects are visited by Access Panels to ensure accessibility
3.	Information gathering, collation and analysis	Review current arrangements and ensure that information gathered is taken account of in policy and service development	February 2007	A number of forms will be revised to ensure that the Council monitors and tracks contact with people with disabilities to ensure we provide an accessible service to all our customers.

4.	Impact Assessments	Implement impact assessment process	April 2007	The Impact Assessment process is currently under review and will be adopted in December 2007 after initial pilots have been concluded
5.	Assessments, consultation and monitoring	Ensure that relevant publications contain information relating to all aspects of the Disability Equality Scheme and actions arising from it.	December 2007	Information relating the Scheme is published as and when required and published on the Council's website, publications and Intranet. Information is made available on different formats on request.
6.	Publicising information relating to the Disability Equality Scheme	Review existing publicity and information arrangements.	December 2006	The Disability Equality Scheme was published and distributed through Libraries Local Offices and internally to employees. An easy read format is to be developed and alternative formats are available on request.
7.	Participation in public life	Review current arrangements to ensure that all groups supported by the Council are open to membership by disabled persons	April 2007	Structures have been developed to ensure Council run groups and events are accessible to people with disabilities.

8.	Residents Survey	Review structure of Survey to include specific questions on disability	April 2008	The residents survey will be circulated in 2008 and arrangement are under way to incorporate specific disability questions
9.	Transport costs and travel expenses	Investigate scope for meeting travel or transport costs for individuals attending meetings of groups or consultative forums	April 2007	Travel costs will be met for reasonable expenses incurred for individuals and groups attending meeting for Council business
10.	Ensure that information about services is provided effectively	Review current arrangements for publicising service information	April 2007	Arrangements for publicising service information will be met through individual service unit action plans.
11.	Ensure that elected members and employees receive appropriate training and development in relation to disability issues	Establish a specific disability awareness training program	April 2007	Elected Members will receive training in December 2007. The roll out of training for all employees has commenced with members of the Extended Corporate Management Team. Training for other employees will be rolled out during 2008

DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME 2008-2009

**CORPORATE ACTION PLAN TO MEET GENERAL
AND SPECIFIC DUTIES**

Objective	Action	Outcome	Timescales	Lead Officer/Service
Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons	To re-evaluate the Corporate Equality & Diversity Course to ensure the requirements of the DDA (Amended) 2005 are met	Employees will be aware of their duties in relation to the DDA (Amended) 2005	January 2008 Onwards	Training & Development /Equality & Diversity Officer
	To involve disabled people in the training of front line staff	Staff have first hand experience of issues affecting disabled people when accessing services and are therefore able to provide client centred service	April 2008 Onwards	As Above
Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the DDA	Ensure disability equality is embedded in all Council policies and strategies	Council is compliant in all aspects.	February 2008 Onwards	Executive Directors
	Ensure the Council's Procurement Policy is compliant	As above	February 2008 Onwards	Head of Legal

	To ensure the Scheme is made available via the Council's website and summary information published via the Council's publications	Increased awareness of the Council's commitment to eliminate discrimination and promote equality	February 2008 Onwards	Equality and Diversity Officer
Eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disability	Re-evaluate training material to ensure employees are aware of the meaning of harassment	Training is updated	February 2008 Onwards	Training and Development Manager Equality and Diversity Officer
	To ensure employees are aware of their actions when harassment related disability is witnessed	Employees are equipped with the tools and knowledge necessary	As above	As Above
Promote Positive attitudes towards disabled persons	To provide training to all employees	As above	As Above	As above
	To provide inclusive services for all members of the community	All service users are able to access services equally	March 2008 Onwards	Executive Directors
		Channels of communication and engagement are available to disabled people	As above	

Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life	To establish a Disability Equality Network within the Council structures	Disabled people are equipped with the tools and knowledge to participate effectively	December 2007 Onwards	Head of Personnel, Equality and Diversity Officer
	To support people to actively take part in the Forum	As Above	As above	As Above, Disability Awareness Officer
	To ensure that barriers to participation are removed when consultation events are organised e.g. loop systems, access, signers etc.	AS Above	As Above	As Above
Meet disabled persons' needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment	Include specific arrangement for disabled people when organising Council events	As Above	AS Above	As Above
Information Gathering	To ensure that all service units gather appropriate information that will inform and enhance practice	Services are appropriate to the needs of people with disabilities	February 2008	Appropriate Service Managers
Involvement of disabled persons	Establish a Network for disabled people to ensure meaningful involvement of the disability equality Scheme	Disabled persons are involved throughout the process	December 2007 Onwards	As Above

