



# **Disability Equality Scheme**

**2009 - 2012**

Taking action to ensure disabled persons of all ages have the same freedom, rights, choice, dignity and control as other citizens.

This document is available in English and Welsh and a variety of accessible formats including easy-read, large print, Braille and on audio cassette or computer disk.

Wrexham County Borough Council is committed to improving the quality of life for all citizens.

# Wrexham County Borough Council

## Disability Equality Scheme 2009 – 2012

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If you would like a copy of this scheme in an accessible or easy read format, in a language other than English or Welsh or would like someone to explain it to you please contact the Equality Manager, Wrexham County Borough Council, Lambpit Street, Wrexham. LL11 1AR.

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## 1. Foreword

Welcome to Wrexham County Borough Council's revised Disability Equality Scheme. It has been produced to help us meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and provides a focus for integrating disability equality across all we do and improving the way we work for the benefit of all citizens. This Scheme sets out our plans for improving access, opportunities and the life chances of disabled people.

Through this scheme we set out a series of key objectives that we will address over the next three years designed to turn our commitment into positive outcomes and improve the quality of life for all citizens.

We are very grateful to the many people who have helped us to revise our scheme in particular members of the Disability Equality Scheme (monitoring and review) Group. Ensuring disabled people have a voice locally is a key feature of our long-term approach.

As the local Council for Wrexham we are committed to providing equality of opportunity for all and to challenging inequality and discrimination in any forms. We believe that addressing disability equality improves Wrexham for the benefit of everyone.

Equality and fairness are the corner stones of public services. As a provider of services, an employer and a community leader we recognise our important role in improving the quality of life for everyone in Wrexham.

Equality is at the heart of our values as an organisation and a key theme running throughout council policy.

We are committed to:

- Providing high quality services that are accessible to everyone and meet the diverse needs of our customers.
- Making sure Council buildings are as accessible as possible.
- Providing information about our services in accessible formats such as large print, Braille, on audiocassette or computer CD and providing information in languages other than English or translators, including British Sign Language interpreters, where they are needed.
- Promoting inclusive communities that have a shared sense of belonging and pride in Wrexham.
- Challenging unfairness and discrimination wherever it exists.
- Engaging with the diverse communities of Wrexham to ensure their needs are identified and met.

- Valuing and supporting the important contribution the community and voluntary sector makes to Wrexham life.
- Working in partnership to share good practice and promote a consistent approach.
- Valuing and training our staff to deliver services fairly, efficiently and effectively.
- Actively seeking feedback to continually develop and improve our approach.

We are taking action to promote equality of opportunity, combat discrimination and remove barriers including those that are environmental, physical, economical and attitudinal that disadvantage disabled people.

Councillor Aled Roberts  
**Leader**

Isobel Garner  
**Chief Executive**

## 2. Introduction

### Purpose of the Scheme

The purpose of this Scheme is to provide a framework for Wrexham County Borough Council to meet the disability equality duty as set out in the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 which require public authorities to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons.
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful.
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons.
- Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life; and
- Take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

This Scheme will help us to address all aspects of disability inequality, disadvantage and social exclusion. It is part of our journey to a fair and just society and will help us to integrate best practice across all departments and functions of the Council.

We have made good progress since the publication of our first Disability Equality Scheme in 2006 and will continue to improve through mainstreaming equality into our systems, working practices, policies and training programmes to ensure that we are an accessible and inclusive organisation.

Each and every employee and Councillor has a role to play in delivering this Scheme and improving the life chances of disabled people across the Borough.

Through this Scheme we aim to develop an enabling and inclusive approach – focussing on addressing different needs and preferences to enable disabled people to enjoy the same rights, freedom, choice, dignity and control as other citizens.

## **Our Key Objectives**

In accordance with the Council's ongoing commitment to fully meet the equality duties it has set out very clearly its priorities as six objectives.

The six objectives are interconnected and provide a framework for mainstreaming disability equality across the Council, the focus of this our second Disability Equality Scheme.

- 1: Train staff in accordance with the Disability Equality Duties
- 2: Maintain effective arrangements for carrying out equality impact assessments
- 3: Maintain effective equality monitoring arrangements
- 4: Engage with and encourage participation of disabled people
- 5: Develop arrangements for addressing disability harassment and hate crime
- 6: Maintain effective arrangements for monitoring performance against the disability equality duty

Feedback from the DES Group and staff survey has played an essential part in determining the Council's arrangements for delivering our DES objectives.

## **A Snapshot of Wrexham**

The population of Wrexham consists of over 130,000 people and approximately 21.5% of the total population of Wrexham (16.5% of working age) has a disability or long term condition that has an impact upon their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

This includes people who have physical and sensory impairments, poor mental health or life limiting illnesses or conditions such as Cancer, HIV.

## **Defining Disability**

According to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 *“an adult or a child is disabled if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has an effect that is “substantial, adverse and long term (lasting or expected to last for at least a year) on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities” the term “physical or mental impairment” includes sensory impairment, e.g. loss of hearing, or sight.*

Although this is the legal definition we recognise that many people who are protected from discrimination by this Act do not consider themselves to be “disabled” and do not wish to be described as such.

## **The Social Model of Disability**

The Social Model of Disability is based upon the principle that the poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion experienced by many disabled people is not the inevitable result of their impairments or medical conditions, but rather stems from attitudinal and environmental barriers. The Social Model of Disability has been constructed by disabled people themselves and because of this the Council has adopted this as its basis for implementing the Disability Equality Duty.

Adopting and working to the Social Model of Disability, a key objective of our first scheme, we are working to promote greater understanding of disability and how unwitting discrimination and exclusion can occur so that it can be avoided.

According to the Oxford dictionary “to disable” means “to deprive of some ability”. The term “disablism” describes the systematic disregard of non-mainstream needs.

For example Deaf people (those who use British Sign Language (BSL) as their primary means of communication) are not hearing people with an impairment; they are a linguistic minority because they communicate using sign language. Enabling people to communicate in their own language means that people, in this case Deaf people, are empowered to represent themselves proactively, in order to establish equality.

Deaf people see themselves as members of a community of people, who share the same attitudes, culture and language. British Sign Language is a language in its own right and is an integral part of Deaf culture - a major distinctive feature of the Deaf community.

The failure to acknowledge linguistic and other differences or needs promotes a tendency to address only “mainstream” needs and this “one size fits all” approach puts many people at a disadvantage. Many people are not in positions where they can access or contribute to society because society's systems and structures are based on mainstream norms, and are inadvertently exclusionary.

The same principle applies in the case of the wheelchair user. It is not reason for a persons' reliance on the wheelchair that disables them (i.e. their impairment or condition) it is the steps, narrow doorways and other similar physical features that are obstacles that prevent or make it unreasonably difficult for the wheelchair user to gain access to services provided within an inaccessible building.

## **Progressing and Mainstreaming Equality**

Since producing our first Disability Equality Scheme in 2006 we have developed and strengthened our partnerships with local disabled people and representative organisations and are working to eradicate the systematic, environmental and attitudinal discrimination that disables people.

We believe that addressing equality and diversity alongside the ongoing and continual improvement of services promotes independence and enables disabled people of all ages to play a full and equal part in the life of Wrexham and will improve outcomes for ALL citizens.

Mainstreaming is a recognised tool to achieve equality. More widely associated with gender equality its principles are just as effective across all strands of equality – including disability, race, gender, sexual orientation, age and religion and belief.

We recognise that training, awareness raising and improving the skills of our workforce to enable them to deliver inclusive services equitably are key factors that underpin all of the objectives and plans set out within this scheme and is ultimately what will bring about the biggest changes.

We will carry out equality impact assessments on all proposed policies and undertake effective equality monitoring as set out in the Council's Equality Impact Assessment Schedule.

We will develop a small number of performance measures and ensure that all departments include equality objectives within their service plans.

Building upon our earlier scheme and our long-standing commitment to mainstream equality the Council has made a number of important changes including the following -

- introduced a robust method for carrying out Equality Impact Assessments and new equality monitoring arrangements to ensure policies promote equality and meet the needs of local people
- provided a wide range of training and learning opportunities on disability and other equality, diversity and human rights issues
- introduced new equality monitoring arrangements to ensure our employment practices promote equality of opportunity
- established the Disability Equality Scheme (monitoring and review) Group to involve local disabled people and partners and ensure this Scheme is a living document
- reviewed the terms of reference of the Accessible Wrexham Group and as a result this has developed and grown into an effective, local forum where disabled people and key Council officers have worked together and

- Adopted carers as a distinct equality strand

## **Support for Employees**

Increased promotion of the “Access to Work” scheme there has resulted in a significant increase in the number of number of job applicants and staff who have benefitted from this Jobcentre Plus scheme. The Council works closely with the Jobcentre Plus disability employment advisors to actively promote the Access to Work scheme.

Human Resources staff have all benefitted from disability and equality training and equality is a regular item on both the Human Resources Officer Group and Human Resources Departmental Management Team agendas.

## **Employing Disabled People Group**

The Council is committed to increasing the number of disabled job applicants and staff. This was one of the objectives in our initial scheme. To help us achieve this we have established the “Employing Disabled People” (EDP) Group, to help the Council recruit, develop and retain a more diverse workforce. The group draws together key Council staff, Remploy, Scope and Jobcentre Plus and are currently developing an action plan.

## **Service Delivery**

The Council gathers a range of information about customers and service users and is taking steps to further develop its approach to service monitoring.

Equality monitoring is not about simply gathering information it is also about analysing it using it to improve our understanding of the experience of our customers.

Information and equality monitoring data gathered is used to inform policy development and initiatives to promote inclusion and equitable treatment and helps to target resources.

## **Engaging Disabled People**

Central to the success of this Scheme is the DES (monitoring and review) Group. The group draws together service users and key officers.

Following adoption of the scheme in December 2006 the Disability Equality Scheme (monitoring and review) Group was established to ensure that the

people who had helped produce the Scheme would have an opportunity to influence and observe how it was being delivered.

Currently the DES Group currently has over 70 members including groups and disabled service users' who receive regular updates and are invited to attend quarterly meetings for the purposes of monitoring the scheme and giving feedback on how the action plan is progressing.

Their role is to

- Monitor and review the Council's Disability Equality Scheme
- Monitor and provide feedback to Wrexham County Borough
- Advise the Council on the structure and content of the Disability Equality Scheme
- Help monitor the DES Action Plan including performance against agreed targets and the impact the Scheme has on service users
- Monitor the Councils approach to the Disability Equality Duty.
- Help develop a strong service user network of local groups and individuals and engage in sharing relevant information, experiences and suggestions
- Assist in producing an annual monitoring report regarding the progress the Council is making in relation to their action plan targets.
- Provide advice and support to WCBC departments in developing, refining and revising their action plans
- Advise on developing monitoring arrangements
- Assist the Council in reviewing and revising the DES

When the Council's first Scheme was being produced in 2005/6 the Council consulted and engaged with many local disabled people, groups and partner organisations who helped establish ten key objectives.

Building on our previous success in engaging disabled people the Council works with and supports a thriving network of local community and voluntary sector groups spread across the Borough. We greatly value the contribution to local life made by the hundreds of people who work within this sector.

We have established the Accessible Wrexham Group to provide a forum for members of the public to raise any access issue. The AWG is well attended and has benefitted from a continually growing membership. It is chaired by an

Elected Member and it is responsible for a number of changes and improvements across the Borough.

We believe that service users should **NOT** be financially disadvantaged by their membership of council led groups and in 2009 introduced new Service User and Participant Reimbursement Guidance. This guide sets out the arrangements for paying out of pocket expenses to service users, carers and other citizens who are involved in service planning and development.

## **Partnership Working**

We recognise the value of working in partnership and that as an organisation we will be much more effective in delivering our equality aims if we work with others. We recognise that we also have a role to play in supporting and working with our partners to deliver equality.

The Council has established links, relationships and a number of excellent networks with local groups and organisations, and will continue to build on this. Our role in many cases is to facilitate, support and empower the development of the community and voluntary sector. Their engagement is vital in helping all groups and communities to have a voice within the local community.

The Wrexham Local Service Board has recently established a network for equality staff working within partner organisations across the Borough. We will work in partnership wherever appropriate to deliver our equality objectives and seek to identify areas where partnership working will add value and strengthen our approach.

## **Procurement**

We recognise the importance of addressing equality through public procurement and will implement systems to ensure our equality aims and objectives are consistently met whether we deliver the service ourselves or via a third party.

We are working to achieve consistency in our approach across all departments and are currently working to review the procurement function. As this takes shape we will provide further training and guidance for staff responsible for contracts. In addition we include guidance on equality in the Procurement Strategy.

As we work to mainstream equality within the procurement processes we will use equality impact assessments to help us assess the relevance and appropriateness of contracts, associated policies and procedures.

## Our Equality Aims in Procurement:

- To ensure that all contracts are delivered in a way that is non-discriminatory, and promotes equality of opportunity for staff, the general public and businesses.
- To ensure that goods, works and services provided by contractors cater for all users' needs
- To ensure that there is no difference in satisfaction rates of users or staff, from different groups
- To ensure that where appropriate contractors are representative of the local population, of the area from which the businesses are drawn
- To ensure that contractors work with us on a voluntary basis to promote equality of opportunity beyond the scope of the contracts

### 3. The Framework for Disability Equality

#### Disability Discrimination Act 1995

According to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 95) an adult or a child is disabled if he or she **has a physical or mental impairment that has an effect that is “substantial, adverse and long term (lasting or expected to last for at least a year) on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities”** the term “physical or mental impairment” includes sensory impairment, e.g. loss of hearing, or sight. It includes disfigurement and protects people from discrimination who have Cancer, HIV or other life limiting conditions from the point of diagnosis.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 was designed to stop disabled people being treated unfairly and outlaws discrimination in respect of access to goods, facilities and services and the selling/letting of property, transport and education.

Since the introduction of this Act changes in the law have extended protection from discrimination to carers because they can experience discrimination on grounds of their caring connection to disabled people.

Employers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of disabled people and job applicants – this includes existing employees, job applicants, interviews and access to facilities.

It is also unlawful to offer a poorer quality of service to a disabled person because of their disability. The DDA is designed to ensure that disabled people are not prevented from obtaining the same goods and services as other people.

Service providers must take reasonable steps to ensure that they have taken account of the needs of disabled people. Service providers are obliged to review their policies, procedures and practices to improve access for disabled customers and prevent discrimination.

The DDA 1995 states:

- It is unlawful to refuse to serve a customer on the basis of their disability
- Disabled people should not receive a lower standard of service
- Disabled people should not be offered less favourable terms because of their disability.

## The Disability Discrimination Act 2005

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005 came into effect in December 2006 and placed upon public bodies new statutory duties to:

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

The DDA 2005 Duty comes in two parts:

**General duty:** public authorities to have due regard to promotion of disability equality in relation to all policy and practice including: planning and policy making, service delivery, regulation, monitoring and enforcement, employment, future decisions, address consequences of poor quality past decisions.

**Specific duty:** publish Disability Equality Scheme no later than 4 December 2006 (Schools in Wales by 1 April 2007). Demonstrate actions in the scheme have been delivered and achieved appropriate outcomes. Report on progress every year. Review and revise scheme every three years.

The Disability Equality Scheme must set out how the Council intends to fulfil its general and specific duties. The Council is required to involve and engage disabled people in the development of the scheme which must include a statement of:

- The way in which disabled people have been involved in the development of the scheme.
- Methods for impact assessment.
- Steps which the authority will take towards fulfilling its general duty in the form of an action plan.
- Arrangements for gathering information in relation to employment and where appropriate, its delivery of education and its functions.
- Arrangements for putting the information gathered to use, in particular reviewing the effectiveness of its action plan and in preparing subsequent Disability Equality Schemes.

The DDA 2005 works in conjunction with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and sets out a framework to assist public bodies in planning, delivery and evaluating action to meet the general duty and to report on those activities.

## **Changes to the Legal Framework 2010**

The Equality Bill is currently making its way through Parliament and it is anticipated that this will come into effect during 2010. The new Act draws together over 100 Statutory Instruments and key pieces of legislation including the DDA 1995 and 2005 into one single piece of legislation. The legislation has been changed to ensure everyone has a fair chance in life. This is important to individuals, for a strong society and a competitive economy.

The new legislation will help to promote equality, fight discrimination in all its forms, including age discrimination, and introduce transparency in the workplace which is key to tackling the gender pay gap.

The Act aims to promote fairness and equality of opportunity; tackle disadvantage and discrimination; and modernise and strengthen UK law to make it fit for the challenges that society faces today and in the future.

### **The main elements of the 2010 Act are:**

- Banning age discrimination in the provision of goods, facilities or services and public functions. Things that benefit older people, such as free bus passes, will still be allowed.
- Increasing transparency in the workplace. If inequality remains hidden, we can't measure it and make progress;
- Making Britain fairer through a single equality duty, which will require public bodies to consider the diverse needs and requirements of their workforce, and the communities they serve, when developing employment policies and when planning services;
- Extending positive action measures to allow employers to make their organisation or business more representative;
- Allowing political parties to use all-women shortlists beyond 2015;
- Reducing nine major pieces of legislation, and around 100 statutory instruments into a single Act, making the law more accessible and easier to understand, so that everyone can be clear on their rights and responsibilities.

## **Equality Improvement Framework**

The Equality Improvement Framework (EIF) framework was introduced in January 2008 to replace the Equality Standard for Local Government in Wales which was withdrawn in 2008.

The EIF was developed by Edgehill University and the Welsh Assembly Government to provide a systematic means for developing and mainstreaming

equality and as a means for identifying equality risks for local authorities in Wales. The EIF is also an effective performance management tool for equality.

The EIF provides a framework for the development of equal opportunity as a value within local government and has been designed to improve equality outcomes for race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion and belief and Welsh language. In addition the framework supports effective achievement of equal opportunity under relevant acts including the Government of Wales Acts 1998 and 2006 and the Welsh Language Act 1993.

The Council adopted the EIF in 2008 and following completion of our internal self assessment during 2010, will produce a detailed action plan covering all strands of equality.

## 4. How the Scheme Was Reviewed

Reviewing the 2006–2009 Scheme began with a special workshop event hosted by the DES Group, our service-user expert panel, who went on to host a further workshop with members of the Accessible Wrexham Group and the Physical, Sensory and Neurological Impairments Group.

A further workshop was arranged for Council staff and a staff survey was undertaken. This has helped us to gain a good understanding of what we need to include in our new Scheme.

The outcome of the workshops and results of the staff survey were considered at a special meeting of the DES Group who made a number of recommendations that were submitted to the Senior Management Team along with the revised Scheme to show how those recommendations had been included within the draft Disability Equality Scheme and action plan.

The Disability Equality Scheme (Monitoring and Review) Group have played a key role in reviewing the 2006 – 2009 Scheme and developing a revised Scheme for 2009 - 2012. The group have made a number of comments and recommendations and these have been incorporated into the revised Scheme.

### Summary of DES Group Comments and Recommendations

- 1. The DES 2006 – 2009 is an excellent document and still valid and relevant, a number of actions are noted as outstanding. Resource implications need to be considered to enable delivery of a new and revised DES.**

It is recommended that although the DES does require some updating the focus of change now should be to updating the action plan, securing adequate resources for its delivery and thus improving the ability of the Council to meet the legal requirements and deliver the action plan.

- 2. Whereas a number of objectives have received attention and progress has been made overall a number of actions have still not been achieved.**

It is recommended that outstanding actions that are still relevant and important should be carried over to the next DES.

- 3. The Equality Act 2010 will effectively remove the disability equality duty but does not come into effect until 2011.**

It is recommended that the revised DES action plan provides a framework for the next 18 months.

- 4. Training and awareness underpins the whole scheme without this it is difficult to see how the Council will succeed in achieving a “whole Council” approach, as the law requires.**

It is recommended that training for staff and Elected Members on the equality duties is prioritised and mandatory. It is further recommended that local disabled people are involved in the design and delivery of this training and that this is carried out in a co-ordinated way. The Council should consider producing a “local voices” DVD featuring disabled service users.

DES ACTION PLAN REFERENCE: 1.1

- 5. Senior Council officers should update the group directly on how they are progressing with the actions they are responsible for within the DES action plan:**

It is recommended that those officers are invited to DES Group meetings to update the DES Group directly and that a programme for 2010 is prepared and agreed. The Local Service Board Co-ordinator, and a Senior Policy Officer should be included in the programme.

DES ACTION PLAN REFERENCE: 6.1

- 6. WCBC should take steps to improve co-ordination of work on disability issues and improve communication across departments.**

It is recommended that the Councils Corporate Equality Group leads on this and ensures that departments are aware of and give adequate priority to the DES within their service plans.

DES ACTION PLAN REFERENCE: 4.1 / 4.2 / 6.2

- 7. WCBC should take steps to improve connections and communication between existing groups.**

It is recommended that the DES host a special meeting to discuss with the Neurological Alliance, PNSI Group, AWG Group and the DES Group ways they can co-ordinate and add value to each others work thus avoiding any duplication and promoting efficiency and effectiveness.

DES ACTION PLAN REFERENCE: 4.1

- 8. The various Groups working on disability and access issues should produce a joint newsletter rather than all circulate separate minutes communicating highlights of meetings in a more user friendly and accessible way.**

It is recommended that a disability equality newsletter summarising key issues from each group is produced for circulation via email and is made available via the Councils website.

DES ACTION PLAN REFERENCE: 4.2

- 9. Service users want more assurance that Council departments are prioritising disability equality and are making changes the Council agreed in the DES:**

It is recommended that service users within the Groups should work together to carry out a “mystery shopper” exercise to see if Council departments really are considering the needs of disabled people in the way they should.

DES ACTION PLAN REFERENCE: 4.7

**10. Disability hate crime is not currently part of “One Wrexham” or the Community Safety Strategy. The law requires public bodies to address disability harassment.**

It is recommended that WCBC begins to look at this with local partners as part of its overall Community Safety strategy. It is suggested that an initial local conference would be a positive first step.

DES ACTION PLAN REFERENCE: 5.1

**11. Disabled people would like to celebrate their diversity in Wrexham on international day for disabled people every year and to have a range of events that are linked and promote a shared message.**

It is recommended that partners on the Local Service Board work together to share a programme of relevant events and celebrate the international day for disabled people in December each year.

DES ACTION PLAN REFERENCE: 4.8

The Disability Equality Scheme was considered by the Councils Senior Management Team along with the recommendations and feedback from the DES Group, prior to its submission to the Corporate Governance and Policy Scrutiny Committee.

The final Scheme has been formally adopted by the Council’s Executive Board.

## 5. Method for Impact Assessments

Equality impact assessments ultimately help us to improve services and ways we deliver those services.

An impact assessment helps us to identify the possible impact or potential consequences a proposed policy or action could have if it were introduced. Comparing the various ways different groups of people (including Black and minority ethnic groups, older people, younger people, disabled people) might be affected, before we begin to implement our policies means that we are able to make changes or remove anything that might put a group of people at risk of disadvantage.

Once a policy has been introduced it is the on-going monitoring by ethnic group, gender, disability etc that helps us to understand how different groups of people are actually affected.

Many people may experience discrimination on a variety of grounds, for example an older gay man who uses a wheelchair may experience multiple discrimination which further disadvantages him.

It is for this reason that we have developed a process for carrying out generic impact assessments across all strands of equality. This helps us to look at wider issues rather than focussing on one group of people in isolation.

In practice an equality impact assessment is a two-stage process where a structured assessment is undertaken to see if the aims of a function or policy, including how it is delivered or implemented, could result in unlawful discrimination because some groups may receive (or there is reason to suggest they may receive) less favourable treatment or outcomes as a result.

Upon completion of the impact assessment the policy writer is required to produce a record of the assessment and any changes that have been made to the draft policy as a result or any changes that are planned for the future.

A summary of the assessment is then published on the Council's website.

For further information about equality impact assessments refer to the Council's Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit and Impact Assessment Programme.

## Supporting Documents and Arrangements

- **Equality Impact Assessment Schedule** - appendix to this Scheme. This document sets details of which existing Council policies will be assessed and when. In 2008 an assessment of all statutory and non-statutory functions of the Council was carried out to ascertain which of those functions were relevant to the equality duties. This initial assessment informed the Equality Impact Assessment Schedule (Appendix One).
- **Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit** – this document provides guidance on how to carry out an equality impact assessment. All new, proposed and revised policies are assessed in accordance with this toolkit. This contains guidance on initial screening arrangements and how to carry out a more detailed assessment. Assessing the impact of a new, proposed or existing policy or function involves going through a series of stages and answering questions on different strands of equality (disability, age, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation and race). We are currently working on a revised toolkit that includes Welsh.
- **On-line Equality Assessment System** - we are currently developing a new on-line and dual language system to record and store our completed equality impact assessments. The Equality Assessment System & Index (EASI) will go-live during 2010.
- **Guide to Equality Monitoring** – we have in place a guide to equality monitoring to help departments gather, store and analyse information and data about job applicants, the workforce and service users to ensure our approach to equality and fairness continually improves and that we are responsive to the changing needs of our customers and residents.
- **Staff Training** – all staff have access to equality impact assessment training and support to ensure equality impact assessments are carried out in a consistent and effective way.

## 6. Methods for Equality Monitoring

### Employment Monitoring

The Council has in place arrangements for monitoring staff by racial group, gender, age and disability. Information is gathered on job applicants, existing employees and people leaving the organisation. We also monitor grievances and those people who apply for and undertake training.

This information is collected on equality monitoring forms and stored in a secure computerised system managed by the Council's Chief Human Resources Officer. Data is analysed periodically and an equality monitoring report is published annually by the Chief Human Resources Officer. Human Resources DMT receive regular updates and an annual report is considered by the Council's Executive Board.

This data helps to assess and inform employment related policies and initiatives and to design measures to improve equality for existing employees, job applicants and contracted staff.

The Council was re-accredited under the "Positive about Disabled People" scheme in 2009 and uses the Two Ticks symbol on letterheads, job adverts and job application packs. Through this scheme a disabled job applicant is guaranteed an interview provided that they meet the essential criteria for the post. Take up of the scheme is closely monitored.

In 2009 the Council's Human Resources department reviewed its equality monitoring arrangements and has introduced improved equality monitoring arrangements for recruitment and selection. A new equality monitoring form has been introduced and explanatory notes are included within the application pack.

In addition a discreet method for disabled job applicants to request adjustments to the interview arrangements was introduced to ensure that an individual's status is not available to people responsible for short-listing.

The Council monitors the number of staff and job applicants by disability. This is not a straightforward task as many people are reluctant to provide this information. In addition many people who have physical or sensory impairments do not identify themselves as "disabled". As a result it is difficult to produce meaningful statistics about the experience of disabled people within the organisation.

We respect each individual reason for not providing this information; however we also recognise that without this information we are unable to identify where things are going well and if there are areas where further action is required.

We will continue to raise awareness of the importance of equality monitoring across the workforce and will undertake an awareness raising exercise in 2010 before embarking upon an exercise to update the records of existing staff.

## **Monitoring Customers and Services**

The Councils internal Equality Improvement Group established a sub group to improve equality monitoring in 2009. The monitoring group have completed an initial assessment of existing arrangements and is currently working to improve and strengthen equality monitoring across a number of key areas. Equality monitoring arrangements have been improved in a number of services – including housing applications, adult social care services, grants, complaints, fostering and adoption and education services. In addition the Customer First centre carry out valuable equality monitoring that is used to improve access to services.

We will continue to implement new or revised arrangements across the Council to help us understand the experiences of our customers and local people.

Many of our customers are reluctant to provide us with this type of information. To allay concerns we have introduced a leaflet for customers outlining the reasons why we are gathering this type of information, how it will be used and stored.

Training for staff has also been provided and further training will be made available.

## **7. Arrangements for Monitoring and Reviewing This Scheme**

The Disability Equality Scheme Service User Group is responsible for general monitoring of progress and for reviewing this scheme, acting in an advisory capacity. We will also engage with employees, elected members, Trades Unions, key partners and stakeholders.

The Performance and Improvement Unit will monitor the performance of individual departments and their Departmental Service Plans.

The Corporate Equality Strategy Group will receive regular progress reports and provide guidance and progress reports from each department.

The Council's Corporate Governance and Policy Scrutiny Committee will receive regular progress reports.

This Scheme will be reviewed no later than 2012 and is subject to the introduction of the Equality Act 2010.



# Meeting the General Duty Action Plan

2009 – 2012

**This action plan sets out our priority areas for 2009 – 2012. The six priority areas focus upon mainstreaming equality across the whole authority.**

1. Train staff in accordance with the Disability Equality Duties
2. Maintain effective arrangements for carrying out Equality Impact Assessments
3. Maintain Effective Equality Monitoring Arrangements
4. Engage and encourage participation by disabled people
5. Develop arrangements for addressing disability harassment and hate crime
6. Maintain effective arrangements for monitoring performance against the disability equality duty

Delivering this action plan is everyone's business - however responsibility for delivering the actions and ensuring that these are included within relevant departmental service plans, rests with Chief Officers. (An explanation of the abbreviations contained within the action plan is set out below). They will determine which officer(s) within their department will deliver that action and how it will be managed and resourced. Setting out a designated lead Chief Officer does not mean that they will work in isolation to deliver the action; interdepartmental working and working with external partners is to be actively encouraged.

CASCO	Chief Adult & Social Care Officer	CLDSO	Chief Legal & Democratic Services Officer
CEDO	Chief Economic Development Officer	CLAO	Chief Learning & Achievement Officer
CEO	Chief Environment Officer	CLLCO	Chief Leisure, Libraries & Culture Officer
CFPO	Chief Finance & Performance Officer	CPIO	Chief Prevention & Inclusion Officer
CHRO	Chief Human Resources Officer	CPO	Chief Planning Officer
CHPPO	Chief Housing & Public Protection Officer	CSSO	Chief Safeguarding & Support Officer
CISO	Chief Information Systems Officer	CTAMO	Chief Transport & Asset Management Officer

**OBJECTIVE 1: Train staff in accordance with the Disability Equality Duties**

<b>DES Ref.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Officer / Coordinator</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Resources</b>
<b>1.1</b>	Produce equality and diversity training and awareness plan for the whole organisation setting out clear objectives and mandatory training requirements according to job role and priority.	Equality Manager	2010	Existing Training Budget Allocation
<b>1.2</b>	Develop a network of staff to deliver the training plan and cascade training and awareness raising sessions throughout the organisation	Learning and Development Manager	Commence 2010	
<b>1.3</b>	Develop a “toolkit” range of training & learning aids, reference materials and resources in conjunction with the DES Group to support delivery of the training plan including: a) DVD featuring local people and places b) Power Point presentation c) Disability etiquette guide d) Valuing Diversity guidance notes e) Disability awareness fact sheets f) Briefing notes	Equality Manager	Launch Toolkit 2010	
<b>1.4</b>	Integrate disability equality training and awareness sessions within Elected Members core training plan	CLDSO	Annually from 2010	In-House Trainer

**OBJECTIVE 2: Maintain effective arrangements for carrying out Equality Impact Assessments**

<b>DES Ref.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Officer / Coordinator</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Resources</b>
2.1	Update Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit and Guide	Equality Manager	2010	Staff time
2.2	Launch on-line Equality Assessment System (E. A. S. I)	Equality Manager	2010	WCBC Intranet
2.3	Review arrangements for the publication of completed Equality Impact Assessments on the Council's website	Equality Manager	2010	www.wrexham.gov.uk
2.4	Integrate the equality impact assessment schedule within all Departmental Service Plans	ALL CO's	2010 onwards	Fynnon
2.5	Develop a range of training and support resources for policy writers and those involved in the impact assessment process	Equality Manager	2010 onwards	Staff time WCBC Intranet
2.6	Establish the Equality Impact Assessment Panel as a sub group of the Equality Improvement Group	Equality Improvement Group	2010	Departmental Equality Co-ordinators

### OBJECTIVE 3: Maintain Effective Equality Monitoring Arrangements

DES Ref.	Action	Lead Officer / Coordinator	Timescale	Resources
3.1	Publish Equality Monitoring Guide with template equality monitoring forms	Equality Manager	2010	WCBC Intranet
3.2	Review equality monitoring arrangements and produce departmental action plans (linked to service plans) prioritising those services assessed as "high" relevance to the disability equality duty	Equality Improvement Group	2011	Departmental Service Plans
3.3	Publish annual equality monitoring reports as part of existing business reporting systems	CHRO	2011 onwards	<a href="http://www.wrexham.gov.uk">www.wrexham.gov.uk</a>
3.4	Produce a range of training resources and support for staff and departments new to equality monitoring	Equality Improvement Group	2011	WCBC intranet
3.5	Undertake publicity and awareness raising exercise (workforce, job applicants and service users)	Equality Manager	2011	<a href="http://www.wrexham.gov.uk">www.wrexham.gov.uk</a> WCBC intranet Recruitment Pack

## OBJECTIVE 4 : Engage and encourage participation by disabled people

DES Ref.	Action	Lead Officer/ Coordinator	Timescale	Resources
4.1	Arrange a special meeting between local disability focussed groups including the *DES Group, *AWG, *PNSI Group, Neurological Alliance, Deaf Forum, Visual Impairments Forum and Wrexham Over Fifties Forum to look at ways they can add value to each others work and avoid duplication and confusion.	Equality Manager	July 2010	Within existing resources
4.2	Produce an email newsletter for circulation highlighting Key agenda issues	Equality Manager	Commence mid 2010	Within existing resources
4.3	Present the Councils Participation Strategy to the DES Group and the AWG	CASCO	15 September 2010	Neutral
4.4	Raise awareness of the Council's "Reimbursement of Volunteer Expenses " arrangements (AWG/DES Group)	CEDO	2010	Neutral
4.5	Engage the DES Group and AWG in disability equality impact assessments	Equality Improvement Group	Commence 2010	Within existing resources
4.6	Review the *PAG terms of reference and take steps to increase the number of disabled people engaged in reviewing planning applications.	CPO	2010	Within existing resources
4.7	Enable DES and AWG Group members to carry out a mystery shopper exercise and feedback constructive comments to departments	Equality Manager	2010/2011	DES & AWG Groups
4.8	Working with local partners and groups celebrate "Annual Day for the Elimination of Disability Discrimination" on 4 December each year.	Equality Improvement Group	Annually 4 December 2010	Glyndwr University

DES (Disability Equality Scheme Group)  
 AWG (Accessible Wrexham Group)  
 PAG (Planning Access Group)

PNSI (Physical, Neurological and Sensory Impairments Network)

**OBJECTIVE 5 : Develop arrangements for addressing disability harassment and hate crime**

<b>DES Ref.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Officer/ Coordinator</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Resources</b>
<b>5.1</b>	Organise a Disability Hate Crime Conference for partners in Wrexham engaging Local Service Board partners	Equality Manager	2010	Community Cohesion Funding
<b>5.2</b>	Integrate arrangements for reporting and handling disability hate crime into existing arrangements for recording and responding race and homophobic hate crime.	CEDO	2010	One Wrexham
<b>5.3</b>	Programme in a presentation to the DES Group on the "One Wrexham" Charter	CEDO	15 September 2010	One Wrexham

**OBJECTIVE 6 : Maintain effective arrangements for monitoring performance against the disability equality duty**

<b>DES Ref.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Officer/ Coordinator</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Resources</b>
<b>6.1</b>	Develop a programme for Chief Officers (to attend the DES Group and outline their proposals and plans for meeting the disability equality duty and contributing to delivery of this Scheme.	Equality Manager	Commence delivery 2010	DES Group
<b>6.2</b>	Introduce local performance measure to monitor performance of each department against the Equality Impact Assessment Schedule	CHRO	2010	Fynnon
<b>6.3</b>	Introduce local performance measure to monitor mandatory training programme	CHRO	2010	Fynnon

## 9. Useful Contacts and Local Groups

Celia Hart  
Equality Manager  
Wrexham County Borough Council  
The Guildhall  
Wrexham  
LL11 1AY

Telephone 01978 298365  
Email [equality@wrexham.gov.uk](mailto:equality@wrexham.gov.uk)

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Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) Wales Office  
3rd floor, 3 Callaghan Square, Cardiff, CF10 5BT

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

EHRC Helpline Details:  
Telephone: 08456 048810  
Text phone: 08456 048820  
Fax: 08456 048830

Non-helpline Calls:  
Telephone: 02920 447710  
Text phone: 029 20447713  
Fax: 02920 447712  
Email: [wales@equalityhumanrights.com](mailto:wales@equalityhumanrights.com)

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## 10. Feedback Form

We welcome feedback at any time during the lifetime of this scheme. We are grateful for the views and comments shared with us and for the time taken to do this.

Feedback will help us develop our approach to disability equality over time and ensure that we are responsive to local needs.

Your name.....

Contact details.....

.....

(you do not have to tell us who you are if you prefer not to, but if you want us to respond on any point then we can only do this if we have your contact details.)

Please let us have your comments here.

It would be helpful if you can indicate what page you are referring to if your comment is very specific. If you need to please continue over the page or on a separate sheet.

Page number	Your comment

### Thank you

Please send your comments to the Equality Manager, Wrexham County Borough Council, The Guildhall, Wrexham, LL11 1AY