

Equality Scheme

2010 - 2013

Section 3. Disability Equality



December 2009

3. Disability Equality

Background to the revised disability equality scheme

- 3.1 Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council published its first disability equality scheme in December 2006. This was incorporated into a combined, single equality scheme covering race and gender as well as disability in April 2007. A supplement to the scheme, covering age, religion and belief, sexual orientation and transgender, was added in June 2009 to provide a coordinated, comprehensive approach to promoting equality for the council.
- 3.2 This revision of the disability element of the single scheme is intended to meet the requirements of the legislation, but should be read in the context of the single scheme which sets out the council's overall arrangements for promoting and managing equality and contains actions covering more than one or all strands together.
- 3.3 The specific disability equality elements of the scheme may undergo some further revision as part of the wider review of the overall scheme in 2010. This will be particularly so, given that the Equality Bill is currently before Parliament and will make wide-ranging changes should it become law.

Introduction

- 3.4 Section 1 of the council's equality scheme explains the context to this specific section on promoting disability equality and sets out the council's overall approach to promoting equality. The council is committed to promoting disability equality and to meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation.
- 3.5 The council has adopted the 'social model' of disability and aims to apply this in the provision of all its services. It provides a large number of services specifically for disabled people, particularly through its directorates of Adult, Community and Housing Services and Children's Services, and has also taken a wide range of action over many years in order to fulfil its commitment across its other services and in its employment policies and practices.

The Legislation and national policy drivers

- 3.6 The Government has set out its vision for disabled people which is:

By 2025, disabled people in Britain should have the same opportunities and choices as non-disabled people to improve their quality of life and be respected and included as equal members of society.

This vision was originally set out in the report 'Improving the life chances of disabled people' (2006) which provides broad objectives to be achieved nationally. Many other national policy documents provide a direction for disability issues.

3.7 The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) issued on 27th October 2009 guidance on 'using your revised disability equality scheme to improve the lives of disabled people'. While this was issued too late for detailed consideration for most public authorities' revised schemes, many of the issues raised and actions expected are responded to in this scheme. In particular the EHRC, whilst expecting public authorities to tailor actions to meet local needs, anticipates action on areas relevant to local government, including:

- ensuring disability equality at work
- increasing levels of reporting and recording of disability hate crime; eliminating harassment and hostility faced by disabled people
- education: ensuring all pupils have full access to all aspects of a school's activities; eliminating bullying or harassment
- transport
- increasing participation of disabled people in public life and enabling participation in cultural, sporting and community events
- increasing the take-up of entitlements
- housing: improving standards, choice and options and enabling disabled people to live independently
- health and social care: improving access; ensuring no gaps in provision; improving communications

3.8 The key legislation on disability equality is set out in the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 gives disabled people protection against disability discrimination in a wide range of areas, such as:

- employment
- education
- access to goods, facilities and services
- functions of public bodies
- letting of premises.

3.9 The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 improved and extended the rights provided by the 1995 Act. The 2005 Act introduced a new duty, the disability equality duty, which requires public authorities to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people. In more detail, the 2005 Act places a duty on all public authorities, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
- eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities
- promote positive attitudes 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.

3.10 The Disability Discrimination (Public Authorities) (Statutory Duties) Regulations 2005 require authorities to produce and publish a disability equality scheme, demonstrating how an authority is meeting the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, to implement certain aspects of the scheme and to report on it. In summary:

- a public authority should publish a disability equality scheme demonstrating how it intends to fulfil its general and specific duties
- a public authority should involve disabled people in the development of the scheme
- the scheme should include a statement of:
 - the way in which disabled people have been involved in the development of the scheme
 - the authority's methods for impact assessment
 - steps which the authority will take towards fulfilling its general duty (the 'action plan')
 - the authority's arrangements for gathering information in relation to employment, and, where appropriate, its delivery of education and its functions
 - the authority's arrangements for putting the information gathered to use, in particular in reviewing the effectiveness of its action plan and in preparing subsequent disability equality schemes
- a public authority must, within three years of the scheme being published, take the steps set out in its action plan (unless it is unreasonable or impracticable for it to do so) and put into effect the arrangements for gathering and making use of information

- a public authority must publish a report containing a summary of the steps taken under the action plan, the results of its information gathering and the use to which it has put the information.

3.11 The Equality Bill, at the time of writing before Parliament, and specific duties arising from it, should they become law, will make a number of changes to these legal requirements.

Facts and figures

3.12 The 2001 Census recorded that 19.1% of the borough's population (58,265 people) consider themselves to have a long-term illness, health problems or disability which limits their daily activities or the work that they can do. This is higher than the English average of 17.9% but lower than the other three Black Country boroughs and Birmingham within the West Midlands county. The definition used in the Census is different to the legal definition of a disability but the figure gives an idea of the number of people in the borough that are relevant in considering the Council's duties.

3.13 The Dudley sustainable community strategy review 2010-13 identifies that the population of the borough is likely to age over the period to 2020, possibly with an additional 11,000 people aged 60 or over from 2006 to 2020. The prevalence of disability increases with age so this will have some impact on the planning of services in the long-term. The strategy also identifies an increase in the numbers of children and young people with additional needs and mental health issues who may need support. 10,087 children who attend the borough's schools have a disability or learning difficulty. Of these 1,473 have a statement of special educational need (school census January 2009).

3.14 The council's workforce is monitored by disability. On 1 April 2006, the percentage of employees that had indicated that there were disabled was 0.82% (1.39% taking out school employees). By 1 April 2009 this had risen to 1.8% (2.9%), which, while representing a considerable increase over the lifetime of the first scheme, is below the level of the better performers amongst local authorities.

Approach to promoting disability equality

3.15 Alongside the overall arrangements for promoting equality outlined in section 1 of the document, the council has in place specific organisational arrangements in relation to promoting disability equality and providing support to disabled people.

- 3.16 In terms of specific service provisions for disabled people, these are many and are integrated or provided in partnership with other public and voluntary and community sector bodies, particularly Dudley Primary Care Trust. These include:
- services to support adults with physical, sensory and learning disabilities provided through the Older People and People with Physical Disabilities Division and Learning Disabilities and Mental Health Division of the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services;
 - the Children's Specialist Services Division (Children and Families Division from April 2010) of the Directorate of Children's Services, which includes social care services for disabled children and young people in transition to adult care services, plus education support services which ensure that children with additional needs have access to educational provision across mainstream, special schools and early years settings
 - mental health services which are fully integrated between the local government and health sectors through Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust which was set up on 1st October 2008. The rationale here was to create an organisation which was solely focused on the provision of mental health and social care services, reaping the benefits of being a larger, mental-health focussed organisation.

3.17 There are a number of detailed strategies in place which set out the direction for these services including:

- the learning disability strategy for 2009-12
- the strategy for people with physical and sensory disabilities (2008-2010)
- the strategy for services for able adults with autism aged 16 and over in Dudley 2007 - 2010
- the Dudley carers strategy 2007-12
- the special educational needs strategy and action plan
- along with major elements of others such as the Supporting People five year strategy and the older people's strategy.

The Council also contributes to a number of partner-led strategies of importance to promoting disability equality such as the long-term neurological conditions strategy 2009-14 and the sexual health strategy (addressing HIV/AIDS).

3.18 A number of partnership boards are charged with taking the strategies forward, notably:

- the Physical and Sensory Disability Partnership Board
- the Learning Disabilities Partnership Board

- the Every Disabled Child Matters Board and the Young People with Disabilities Board within the Children's Trust.

3.19 There is a wide range of existing consultative and engagement processes for disabled people in place (see paragraphs 3.24 to 3.29). There is also a commitment to develop a 'user-led organisation' of disabled people in Dudley borough in accordance with recommendation 4.3 of 'Improving the life chances of disabled people'. These processes help both to shape direct service provision for disabled people and in ensuring universal services are accessible.

3.20 Improving physical access to council buildings remains an important issue although many improvements have already been made. Influencing best practice by developers is also important. These are taken forward through:

- a corporate property group which coordinates a programme of building improvements, both specifically for disabled access and general refurbishments which improve access
- in-house staff have been trained to undertake disability access audits and to advise on and design access improvements – all 112 schools and around 80 other key buildings have had full access audits
- disabled access information is recorded on the corporate land and property management system
- an access officer advises clients, developers and builders on the design and appropriateness of access facilities for new construction works
- building control powers are used to ensure that new construction work complies with the Building Regulations: Access to and use of buildings and the Approved document Part M and encouraging disability access best practice amongst developers, designers and builders
- planning powers are used to ensure that access for all people is made a material consideration in the planning process.

3.21 On employment:

- the council's human resources strategy is the key document for promoting equality for disabled employees. It contains actions aimed at improving the recruitment and retention of disabled employees responding to the figures for the percentage of disabled people in the workforce (see paragraph 3.14), issues raised by disabled employees and a review 'supporting people with disabilities' by the council's external auditors. These actions include:
 - develop an initiative for supporting employees with mental health issues

- build working relationships with Jobcentre Plus to establish additional support for disabled employees e.g. through the local employment partnership
- develop guidelines for managing employees with disabilities
- a human resources officer in each directorate to specialise in supporting disabled employees.
- there is a range of policies in place which are intended to respond to the needs of disabled and other employees e.g. on grievances, and harassment and bullying
- an Employees with Disabilities Group meets regularly to provide support to disabled employees and to influence and advise on council employment policies or practices, and is represented on the corporate equality and diversity leadership group
- a range of equality training is provided for employees and this is being reviewed
- the council is annually assessed by Jobcentre Plus against a number of criteria on the recruitment, retention and career development of disabled people in order to qualify for using the 'Positive about Disabled People' symbol on its recruitment literature.

Achievements/Good practice examples

3.22 As noted, in response to the DDA 2005, the council published its first disability equality scheme in December 2006. Annual reporting on progress with implementing the scheme and its action plan has been included in the council's 'annual review of equality and diversity'. While full details are set out in the annual reviews, some examples of progress on the action plan are given below.

- 2087 properties have now had 'Telecare' equipment installed (April 2009). This assistive technology provides alarm systems for accidents and emergencies linked to Dudley community alarms service helping to support potentially vulnerable people to live safely and independently in their own homes.
- The first part of the new access guides to council buildings has now been published and covers public buildings controlled by the Directorate of the Urban Environment such as leisure centres and public halls. The format of the guides has been agreed through consultation with disabled people, particularly Access in Dudley, a local voluntary group. Other directorate guides will follow over the coming months.

- Improved signage has been installed in Dudley, Crystal and Halesowen leisure centres, alongside major refurbishments, following consultation with Access in Dudley and Voices for Choice on a format for 'easy read' (pictorial) signs. Voices for Choice is a local group of people with learning disabilities.
- Mobile computing is used in Benefits Services so that disabled people who may have difficulty in visiting the benefits office can have claims completed on tablet PCs in their own homes.
- A programme of disability awareness training for hackney carriage and private hire drivers has been carried out to improve their service to disabled customers.
- The Learning Disability Partnership Board's communication strategy group has developed a set of standards for communicating with people with learning disabilities.
- The council continues to work with Mencap on the me2 award, a kitemark for inclusive play, leisure and childcare settings for disabled children and young people in the borough. Services are audited by a panel of disabled and not disabled young people to see if they have met the appropriate standards for being welcoming and accessible for all children and young people. Around 20 services across a range of different providers have now been successfully assessed for the award.
- Youth centres are working through the me2 award, with full, part time and voluntary staff undergoing appropriate training to improve the accessibility of the services. The Youth Service has a designated, full time youth worker for developing youth provision for disabled young people.
- Work has been undertaken on the duty to encourage participation by disabled persons in public life. A workshop on involvement and influence was included at the physical and sensory disability conference in July 2009 (see paragraph 3.26); and one exploring the barriers to disabled people taking part in a range of volunteering activity at the 'volunteering counts' conference in December 2008 organised by Dudley Council for Voluntary Service. Dosti, the local community empowerment network, has also been doing some work with the 'axis of influence', a tool which helps groups to review their experience and opportunities to have real influence over public bodies' decisions. Action for Disabled People and Carers was one of the first groups to use the tool.
- An action plan to respond to the relatively low percentage of employees with a disability has been drawn up with the involvement of the employees with disabilities group and incorporated in the human resources strategy, approved by the council's Cabinet in June 2009.

- A project to support more people with learning disabilities into employment is run through the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services with 7 people with learning disabilities now in employment with the Council through the scheme (April 2009).

3.23 The next sections cover the requirements in the legislation (see paragraph 3.10) to set out a statement about involvement, impact assessment, planned actions, gathering information and putting information to use.

Involving Disabled People

3.24 The council involves disabled people in a number of ways and across a wide range of service areas. These contribute directly to the scheme or through the particular strategy or service areas to which they relate

3.25 The council, together with Dudley PCT, funds Dudley Council for Voluntary Service to work with Action for Disabled People and Carers and a supporting network of groups of disabled people and carers (the community care project). The project is jointly managed through a stakeholders' group and has been involved in a wide range of issues and initiatives over the years. It was specifically involved in developing the first disability equality scheme and in revising it, through assessing services, sharing experiences and identifying barriers from the point of view of disabled people and carers. This helped to identify both particular issues or actions and overall priorities for services to undergo impact assessments, and the group has been involved in a number of assessments. Members of the ADC network of groups are also involved on other forums and provide links into and feedback from these.

3.26 A physical and sensory disabilities conference was held on 30th July 2009 to follow up the issues raised at the first conference in 2007 and included in the physical and sensory disabilities strategy, published in 2008. Workshops involving disabled people and professionals from a number of agencies considered housing, advice and support in the home; getting out and about and community safety; involvement and influence; benefits, employment and learning; and health and healthy living. Priorities and actions from these have been fed into the scheme.

3.27 The review of the borough's community strategy during 2009 included feedback from Dosti, the borough's community empowerment network, which held a number of sessions with its equalities group and outreach sessions with the me2 forum of disabled and not disabled young people and Voices for Choice. Again this has helped to inform actions in the scheme, with issues

around training, home adaptations, improved accessibility of leisure facilities - particularly information about their accessibility - transport and parking issues raised.

3.28 Other examples of involvement include:

- The council's Directorate of the Urban Environment's disability consultation group has been engaged in a range of service improvements including the re-development of Halesowen town centre; a process to report news items, including road works across the borough, in the talking newspaper, assisted collections and waste collection/recycling.
- Access in Dudley meets regularly with council officers, is funded to comment on planning applications and has been commissioned to undertake access audits of various premises, parks and open spaces and a 'street clutter' audit.
- The me2 award is judged by a panel of young people, including those with physical and learning disabilities, who receive training to help them to judge play and sports facilities against a range of criteria to ensure all children can be included in the activities on offer.
- The Learning Disabilities Partnership Board includes service user and parent/carer representatives. Carers of adults and young people with learning disabilities were involved in an event on the future of day opportunities for people with a learning disability held in March 2009.
- The Benefits Customer Focus Group includes disabled service users.
- The council-wide employees with disabilities group meets regularly to provide advice and support.
- Carers are involved in shaping future service design through the forums, conferences and other means. Over 70 carers attended a 'carers and personalisation' event held in January 2009 looking at how transforming social care will impact on and offer opportunities for carers. It is recognised that the needs and views of carers are not always the same as disabled people themselves, but it is felt to be important to provide support and involve carers in issues that affect them and the people they care for.

Methods for Impact Assessment

- 3.29 The council has produced a guide for its staff on how to carry out equality impact assessments (EIAs). This considers all aspects of equality together but can be applied specifically to assessing the impact of policies or services on disabled people if this is the particular area of concern. The Council's general approach, however, will be to look at all relevant aspects of equality together to avoid duplication.
- 3.30 Each council directorate identifies a list of EIAs to be undertaken during the year and includes these in its strategic plan and equality and diversity action plan. As previously noted ADC has been involved in a number of these assessments.
- 3.31 All new policies, while they are being developed, will need to consider their impact on promoting equality. All committee reports include a paragraph on 'equality impact' where report authors are required to report on details of the likely impact of the report's proposals on disabled people and other relevant groups.

Gathering Information

- 3.32 The council collects a wide range of information about its services and employment policies and practices. Mechanisms used to gather information include:

On employment:

- recruitment monitoring
- workforce personal data audit
- biennial employees survey
- feedback from the employees with disabilities group

On services:

- building access audits
- customer surveys
- citizens panel
- focus groups
- service specific forums
- carers groups
- representative forums
- impairment specific forums

- registers
- research projects

- 3.33 In relation to employment the council collects and publishes, together with analysis, in its annual review of equality and diversity, data on recruitment (at application, shortlisting and appointment stages) and the make up of the workforce broken down by directorate and grade showing numbers of employees who have indicated that they have a disability.
- 3.34 The categories used for gathering employment data relating to disability to date by the council have been restricted to 'disabled' and 'not disabled'. The council carried out a comprehensive personal data re-audit of its entire workforce in 2007/08. This asked employees for the first time to indicate the type of impairment that they may have. It was proposed that this assist in defining more detailed categories for collecting data, but given that the Office for National Statistics is engaged on comprehensive research and testing of the best categories to use the outcome of this work has been awaited.
- 3.35 In order to encourage as many disabled employees as possible to indicate that they have a disability so that the council has the best possible picture of the make-up of its workforce and can identify and undertake appropriate action in response, the form used for the personal data audit explained why the data was being collected and enclosed a leaflet about the legal definition of a disability.
- 3.36 The council also carries out a biennial employees survey. This covers a wide range of questions and includes ones on experience of discrimination within the organisation. An overall summary of responses from disabled employees is prepared so that this can be compared with the results for all employees.
- 3.37 A wide range of information is also gathered in relation to services. Again where questions are asked about disability this has usually allowed a respondent to indicate whether or not they consider themselves to be disabled rather than what type of impairment they have. Obvious exceptions to this are where disabled people receive specific targeted services related to their particular impairments.
- 3.38 In schools, a wide range of data is collected related to special educational needs and some related to pupils with other disabilities. The legal definition of a disability is wider than that used for special educational needs and there is therefore a need to continue to expand the coverage of the data collected by the Directorate of Children's Services and in individual schools. The

directorates has worked with schools to help them to develop their own disability equality schemes and to meet their wider statutory responsibilities in relation to disabled pupils.

- 3.39 The Directorates of Children's Services and Adult, Community and Housing Services maintain a number of registers relating to disabled people, such as the children's disability register, a register of people who are blind or partially sighted and a register of people with learning disabilities.
- 3.40 Many services undertake comprehensive needs assessments with partners in order to be able to plan their services, develop their commissioning strategies, etc. These assessments cover the needs of disabled people alongside other service users.
- 3.41 The specific strategies on services to disabled people also contain more detail of how information is gathered in relation to the areas that they cover.

Using the information

- 3.42 The council will use the information it gathers about employment to establish a baseline in areas where it does not already collect this information and trends where information already exists. This information will be analysed on a regular basis. Audit Commission best value performance indicators on employment and services have in the past been used to compare the council's position with other local authorities, although these indicators are no longer in place nationally. Where the information has indicated that the council compares poorly with other authorities, or where negative trends or barriers to disabled people are apparent, the council will examine ways to address the situation.
- 3.43 Headline data related to disability and employment will be monitored on a quarterly basis with a workforce profile by directorate produced at the end of each quarter for the council's Corporate Board. The full range of data will be published, together with an analysis and proposals for further action within the council's annual review of equality and diversity which is submitted to the Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education and the Cabinet.
- 3.44 The council will use information collected in relation to disabled people's use of, views on and complaints about services to plan or improve future service provision and draw up commissioning strategies, judge how well existing services are performing in meeting the needs of disabled people, particularly

as part of wider impact assessments, and in identifying any further action required to improve disability equality. The registers held by Directorates of Children's Services and Adult, Community and Housing Services are used to make information available to people who may benefit from particular services, although registration is not required in order to access these services. Aggregated, anonymous data is shared with other professionals to help to assess whether the council and other bodies are, in the case of the children's disability register for example, providing the kind of services that meet the needs of disabled children in the borough, to identify any gaps in provision and to help deliver better services for disabled children.

- 3.45 The council takes very seriously its responsibilities on data protection and information security, employs staff to develop policies and provide advice and trains its employees to meet their obligations in these areas.

Future priorities

- 3.46 While progress has undoubtedly been made, the council is committed to taking further action to promote disability equality. Feedback from disabled people has indicated that the council has improved substantially in the way in which its services meet the needs of disabled people. However, it is clear that more work needs to be done and a number of continuing priorities for disabled people remain.
- 3.47 Disabled people have told us, particularly through engagement with Action for Disabled People and Carers and the network of forums within the community care project, through the physical and sensory disability conference workshops, from Dosti's equalities group work on the community strategy, that their local priorities are for:
- improving the disability awareness of people who provide services – more training is felt to be needed covering more staff across public agencies in the borough
 - improving access to information – while much more information is available in different formats, there is still felt to be a lack of consistent standards applied
 - tackling issues around transport access and availability – despite improvements in the accessibility of public transport, initiatives such as disability awareness training for taxi drivers and the availability of ring and ride services, transport remains a key issue affecting the quality of life of many disabled people in the borough
 - improving home adaptations processes – lack of funding and delays in undertaking adaptations after assessments is seen as a problem.

- 3.48 Disabled people who receive support from social care services are also concerned about the 'transforming social care' agenda, which is changing the way adult social care services are delivered by putting clients in control and by ensuring that the needs of each person can be met in a way which suits their personal circumstances. This 'self-directed support' or 'personalisation' means that adults who may be in need of social care services will undertake a supported assessment to establish a personal budget to meet their needs in accordance with a validated support plan.
- 3.49 An external joint review of commissioning services for people with learning disabilities and complex needs carried out in 2008/09 highlighted a number of strengths with Dudley's services but also some areas for development, in particular around day services, on which proposals were approved by the Cabinet in September 2009. These have clear links with the transforming social care agenda.
- 3.50 The Dudley Children's Trust's children and young people's plan 2009-2012 has highlighted as a particular priority to improve all outcomes for children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. The plan builds on the original document published in 2008, through further understanding of children, young people and their families's needs, taking on board what external assessments of children's services in Dudley have shown.
- 3.51 The Heritage, Culture and Leisure Partnership has recognised that though there are very many cultural, heritage and leisure opportunities in the borough there are problems around co-ordination of information and marketing of these and participation levels in cultural and leisure activities are variable. This was an issue raised by disabled people, particularly young people, during Dosti's equalities group work.
- 3.52 The information set out in the section on involving disabled people demonstrates the wide range of ways in which disabled people are involved and can have a say. Comments, though, from the 'influence and involvement' workshops at the July physical and disability conference were that the amount of involvement and engagement methods and activities could be confusing alongside the large number of different organisations that there are in the borough of, or representing, disabled people. This suggests action is needed to map and better coordinate these activities in the future, where possible, and represents a challenge alongside the development of a user-led organisation of disabled people and its relationship with other organisations and activities which might cover similar ground.

- 3.53 A further issue on engagement that has been raised is the under-representation of disabled people from the borough's black and ethnic minority communities within some of these processes. There is a small number of groups of carers and disabled people from particular BME communities in the borough who are involved in some engagement activities although relatively few BME individuals are involved in some 'umbrella' groups.
- 3.54 The council's figures for employing disabled people, feedback from the employees with disabilities group and from the employees survey where disabled respondents had a lower overall satisfaction rating on aspects of the survey and the review undertaken by the council's external auditors indicate that there is more to be done in relation to the employment of disabled people. As noted a number of actions to respond to this have been included in the human resources strategy. The employees with disabilities group has also asked for more access information to be available, particularly for meeting facilities for staff, alongside the access guides being updated for council-owned public buildings.
- 3.55 As outlined in paragraph 3.7, the EHRC has indicated that there are national issues which local disability equality schemes should aim to respond to, taking into account local circumstances and priorities. For example, national research findings set out in 'Getting away with murder – disabled people's experience of hate crime in the UK' (Scope 2008) highlight that hate crime is an issue for many disabled people. Locally some disabled people have indicated that this is an area of concern – Voices for Choice received some funding from a Dudley Community Partnership small grants programme in 2008/09 to run a disability hate crime day – although there is little understanding of the extent of disability hate crime and levels of underreporting in the borough. The development of a hate crime strategy will help to start to tackle this.
- 3.56 The action plan below attempts to address many of these issues highlighted in the scheme, arising from the national priorities and policy drivers, progress with the first disability equality scheme, external assessments, what information collected and impact assessments have told us and most importantly what local disabled people have identified as priorities.

Action plan 2010-13

1. Complete the review of equality training for council employees, to include appropriate enhanced provision for disability equality training during 2010 (Assistant Director, HR and Citizenship)
2. Develop a council-wide disabled people's communication/information policy to ensure good practice is applied consistently across the organisation by March 2011 (Corporate Equality and Diversity Leadership Group)
3. Undertake work with disabled people to explore the issues and barriers around transport to try to find ways to address disabled people's concerns (Corporate Equality and Diversity Leadership Group)
4. Explore how improvements to adaptations processes can be implemented through a customer focus workshop during 2010 (Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services)
5. Continue to involve disabled people and carers in developing and implementing 'transforming social care' during 2010 (Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services)
6. Implement the plans for modernisation of day opportunities for people with a learning disability with the involvement of service users (Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services)
7. Work in partnership to assist in developing a user-led organisation of disabled people by December 2010, with an initial conference to be held in February 2010 (Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services)
8. Alongside action 7, map out during 2010 involvement and engagement mechanisms for disabled people to look at how these can be better publicised or coordinated and to achieve a greater diversity of people involved (Chief Executive/Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services)
9. Undertake further work with partners over the next three years on promoting disabled people's involvement in public life to build on that carried out in the first scheme (Chief Executive)
10. Improve 'Every Child Matters' outcomes for children and young people with learning disabilities or difficulties (Children's Trust executive board)

11. Improve progression and participation rates post 16 for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (Director of Children's Services)
12. Develop an Accessibility Strategy to increase disabled pupils' access to the school curriculum, improve the physical environment and provision of information to meet the new requirements set out in Part 6 (Education) of the Equality Bill, should this become law (Director of Children's Services)
13. Maintain an access improvement programme for the Council's buildings subject to available resources (Corporate Property Group)
14. Complete and publish the remaining access guides to Council buildings by the end of 2011 (Director of the Urban Environment)
15. Improve the ability for people to be able to easily access up-to-date and co-ordinated information about recreational and cultural activities and venues, focusing, for example, on disabled people's needs, over the three years of the scheme (Heritage, Culture and Leisure Partnership)
16. Increase participation of disabled people in leisure, recreational and cultural activities for learning, health improvement, socialising and personal growth over the three years of the scheme (Heritage, Culture and Leisure Partnership)
17. Encourage disabled people to apply for benefit entitlements for which they are eligible through the benefits take-up strategy, campaigns and the work of the Benefits Shop (Director of Finance, ICT and Procurement)
18. Develop a hate crime strategy during 2010 to include actions to raise awareness of and increase reporting of hate crime against disabled people (Chief Executive)
19. Continue work to implement the range of strategies in place in relation to specific services to disabled people
20. Implement the actions set out in the human resources strategy in order to improve the recruitment and retention of disabled employees and increase the percentage of council employees who are disabled from the 2009 baseline (Assistant Director, HR and Citizenship)

21. Alongside action 14, develop a guide for employees on access facilities to council meeting rooms (Corporate Property Group)
22. Adopt the Office for National Statistics guidance on data collection, as appropriate, for gathering information on the effect of policies and practices on disabled people in employment and services (Chief Executive)
23. Directorate equality and diversity action plans have also identified the following additional items to be actioned in 2009/10:
 - Complete review of parking spaces reserved for disabled people (Director of the Urban Environment)
 - To ensure that the process for dealing with Statutory Disabled Facilities Grants meets the needs of vulnerable clients in a timely and personal way - to deliver report to the appropriate Select Committee on progress made to date in bringing turn round time down and proposals for further enhancement of the service (Assistant Director Housing Strategy)
 - Ensure the Extra Care Housing Schemes at Russell's Hall and Whitehouse Street are fully aligned with the requirements of the relevant (disability) strategies (Assistant Director Housing Strategy)
 - To improve access to mainstream services and facilities in the community for people with learning disability and complex needs: arrange presentation to senior managers by 'expert by experience' from Learning Disability Joint Review; increase number of people able to travel independently to activities in the community; increase number of 'changing facilities' at community venues (Assistant Director, Learning Disability)

Review of the scheme

- 3.57 Progress with implementing the scheme will be reviewed on an annual basis and reported in the Council's annual review of equality and diversity. Subject to the requirements of future equality legislation, the scheme will be revised at least every three years and will form part of the Council's overall Equality Scheme. Individual directorates within the Council will also include details in their equality and diversity annual reports of how they are implementing the scheme in relation to their own service areas.