

Disability Equality Scheme

Executive Summary **December 2006**

treating everyone with
dignity and respect

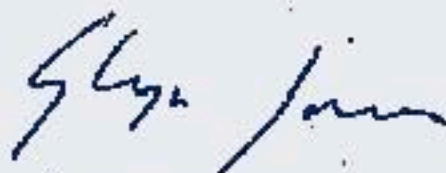
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Foreword

It gives me great pleasure to introduce to our first Executive Summary of Disability Equality Scheme (DES), which is one of a number of measures to promote equalities and diversity forming an integral part of the Council's Disability Equality Scheme. This is essential, as disabled people have said to me that it is very important that disability discrimination is taken as seriously as any other form of discrimination and that it will not be tolerated in any form. My vision is for Doncaster to be a place where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, where diversity is recognised as one of our strengths.

This Disability Equality Scheme sets out to show how we will promote equal opportunities and encourage good relations between disabled people and the Council in the delivery of our services and employment of staff. I strongly believe that by working positively together we can help to make our Borough an even better and more welcoming place in which to live, work and learn, respecting everyone for his or her differences.

It is important that this scheme has the full involvement of disabled people and given them and our partners an opportunity to tell us what we need to do better or differently. If you have a disability, we want to know what you think of this Executive Summary. The full scheme will be available on the Internet, published in December 2006, and will include a detailed action plan with timescales for completion.



Councillor Glyn Jones
Cabinet Member for Human Rights
and Equalities

Our vision

The vision is set out in 'Shaping Our Future - A Strategy for the Borough of Doncaster 2005-2010'. It states, "By 2010 Doncaster will be a major contributor to regional and national prosperity. The Borough will enjoy a high growth economy, supported by a substantial increase in educational attainment, the consolidation of commercial strength and widespread improvements in quality of life. Our communities will be vibrant and sustainable and Doncaster will be able to offer everyone living and working here the opportunity to achieve their full potential".

Over the last few years, there has been a great deal of positive change throughout the Borough of Doncaster. The Council has recently undergone a major reorganisation and reshaped the way in which we deliver our services. Our priorities are published in the Corporate Plan. At the heart of the Plan is building a 'Culture of Responsibility' as set out in the Local Area Agreement. The five themes of the Corporate Plan are:

Children and Young People - integrated neighbourhood based children's services that place the child at the heart of service delivery.

Safer and Stronger Communities - actively involving communities in making neighbourhoods safer, cleaner and greener.

Healthier Communities and Supporting Vulnerable People - targeting resources at those most in need across the Borough.

Sustainable Communities - making Doncaster an attractive place to live, work and visit.

Winning Council - an absolute focus on customers and excellence in delivery.

We are fully committed to a policy of equal opportunity and fair access in employment and service delivery. This reflects our overarching aims of promoting social inclusion and meeting the individual needs of everyone who lives, learns or spends their time within Doncaster. Our values are:

- We are one council
- We are winners
- We take responsibility
- We dare to be different
- We are proud

We recognise the importance of community engagement and partnership working and to demonstrate this we made the following commitments within our Corporate Equality Plan (2005), which addresses all areas of equality including disability.

What is a disability?

Under the Disability Discrimination Act, a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment (includes learning disabilities), which has a substantial (more than minor or trivial), and long-term (more than 12 months, rest of life, recurring condition) adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

It is useful to note however that the Government's 2005 report 'Improving the Life Chances of disabled people' identified that disability should be distinguished from impairment and ill health. The report defined disability as, "Disadvantage experienced by an individual resulting from barriers to independent living, education, employment or other opportunities that impact on people with impairments and or/ ill health (and identified that) Impairments are long-term characteristics of an individual that affect their functioning and /or appearance". Ill health is the short-term or long-term consequence of disease or sickness. Many people who have an impairment would not consider themselves to be disabled.

Responsibility for the Disability Equality Scheme

The Council's leadership has signed the Leading for Equality Charter, ensuring that equality issues are at the forefront of the decision making process. In 2004, the Mayor has appointed a Cabinet Member to take leadership for championing all equality and diversity issues.

All Councillors, managers, employees and sub-contractors have a clear duty to ensure that the principle of equalities is put into practice across the Council.

Involving disabled people

The Council is committed to involving and giving disabled people every opportunity to comment on how our services and employment practices are provided and developed. The Council recognises that it is important disabled people are represented in all the ways in which we consult.

We will involve disabled people on employment matters and the services we provide including:

- Finding out what barriers disabled people face and taking steps to remove them;
- Asking if disabled people are happy with the services we provide e.g. through satisfaction surveys, focus groups;
- Setting priorities and helping us to plan things;
- Looking at the impact of existing and proposed policies;

- Monitoring and checking how well things are done;
- Reviewing and revising the scheme and providing feed back on how disabled people's views have influenced our decisions.
- Using the database of disabled people developed as a result of the Doncaster Disability Questionnaire and focus groups as a starting point.

It is recognised that the involvement of disabled people and staff is critical to the success of this DES and, therefore, this will be an ongoing activity.

We also want to show how we will enable disabled people to become full and active members of the communities in which they live. The talent and potential of many disabled people is not always valued or recognised. We will ensure that when we deliver services we think about how we can meet the diverse needs of disabled people. We will continue to acknowledge the skills and abilities of disabled people who apply for jobs and are employed by the Council.

Action Plan

As part of a DES, public authorities we have produced a action plan which should reflect a number of things including the:

- Priorities of disabled people;
- Authority's strategic priorities; and
- Specific outcomes, which are to be achieved.

Impact Assessments

The Council developed its Equality Impact Assessment framework in 2003. We began looking at its policies and services in a systematic way with each service area having its own timetable for undertaking Impact Assessments. The purpose of an impact assessment is to ensure that the activities of the Council:

- do not disadvantage disabled people;
- identify potential barriers in advance; and
- best promote equality of opportunity.

Where the assessment identifies a negative impact or missed opportunity to achieve a more positive impact, then the Council will look at what it can do to remedy this and to take up this missed opportunity.

Implementing the Disability Equality Scheme

We are committed to making sure that equality is at the heart of all our service provision. This will be achieved through an Impact Assessment of our policies and services, to take action and to embed equality issues and objectives. This will result in improved access to our services for everyone.

