

Vale of Glamorgan Council Disability Equality Scheme 2010-2013

Annual Update Report 2010-11

Introduction

In 2010 the Council produced a revised Disability Equality Scheme. The Scheme was compiled with the help of a Steering Group and focus groups of disabled residents and staff. The Council's scheme outlined key priorities for the 3-year period of 2010-2013 along with an action plan of steps the Council will take to achieve these targets. The scheme has been developed on the principles of the social model of disability aiming to remove the barriers that society has put in place that prevent disabled people from accessing services and employment opportunities.

This is the first annual report on the scheme.

Progress with the action plan

▪ **Communication**

A page has been developed on the Council's website to provide content for disabled people. Relevant information is provided on employment, access to services, services in leisure and libraries, and the personal experiences of a disabled employee. Disabled applicants and service users are informed of what they can expect from us and the measures we undertake to make our jobs and services more accessible.

An executive summary was produced outlining the key points in the scheme and this was distributed widely to all interested parties and to all the main Council information outlets in July 2010. Copies are available for further distribution during 2011 via the Council's website, all main Council buildings and by request.

Actions from the scheme have been incorporated into the Service planning process by means of the Council's internal Vale Equality Scheme. The Vale Equality Scheme requires all service areas to meet standards in equality such as ensuring that documents are available in accessible formats, or that the needs of those attending meetings are taken into account in the choice of venues.

▪ **Corporate Issues**

An on-going programme of equality impact assessments is being undertaken by the Council as policies are reviewed, as well as additional equality impact assessments as required by issues such as budget saving measures.

A new "challenging disablism" course was introduced aimed initially at senior managers and front line staff. The course has proved to be very popular and effective at encouraging staff to reflect on existing attitudes and practices, with a view to identifying improvements

As the result of comments from our consultation exercise an e-learning training module has been produced 'Introduction to Autism'. This has been placed on the Council's intranet site and has been widely accessed by staff. It has also been downloaded by nearly 70 other councils in just 3 months, and has won the prestigious Best Original Module category at Learning Pool's first Community E-learning Awards.

Managers attending recruitment and selection training are automatically sent on Disability Awareness training.

The Council has held meetings with ABCD Cymru which represents young disabled BME families and the Equalities Consultative Forum has received a presentation on their work. Plans are underway for ABCD to work with the Children and Young People's team in Social services.

▪ **Employment issues**

Working with Remploy the Council has been able to provide Work Experience to a disabled job seeker within the Partnerships team and it is hoped that further opportunities will be made available in the next year. Access is provided to internal vacancies during the period of the placement.

▪ **Education and Libraries**

Head teachers have received advice and guidance on disability issues. Briefing sessions took place in December 2010 and were facilitated by Cardiff and Vale Coalition of Disabled People.

Schools accessibility strategies have been reviewed.

▪ **Economic Development and Leisure**

Significant work has taken place in the Leisure department to promote activities for disabled young people. A Disability Sports Directory has been compiled and is updated on a regular basis. Other initiatives which have taken place include:-

- An Autism awareness course for sports centre staff and coaches
- An inclusive summer play/sports scheme for children with disabilities
- Sessions in karate/baseball etc in St Cyres school for disabled pupils

- 5-a- side football tournaments have been held in Colcot centre for clients of Amy Evans hospital
- Older pupils in Erw'r Delyn have been trained to coach younger pupils

Promotion of accessible facilities in leisure centres has taken place in the Press and in the Vale Sport magazine. A page on the council's website outlines the facilities in each leisure centre and also gives details of relevant activities.

▪ **Access to Buildings and Facilities**

Schemes are progressing for Cosmeston, the Civic Offices and Pendoylan playing fields. Training for building managers is provided periodically to ensure that access requirements are taken into account on a day-to-day basis.

▪ **Transport**

Information on Wheelchair Accessible taxis has been published on the Council's website in response to feedback received during consultation.

The Council has been able to extend it's designated disabled parking bay system to include the families of disabled people .i.e. in the case of a non-driving disabled person a bay will be allocated in the same way.

Dropped kerbs have been installed in 40 locations in the last year.

▪ **Housing**

The Accessible Housing Register is now part of the council's Homes4U choice based lettings scheme for all accommodation in the Vale. A new asset database has been commissioned, developed and is currently in the verification stages. Full uploading of information onto the database will begin in October 2011.

Priorities for 2012

Continue with supporting managers to achieve the Vale Equality Scheme
Continue with Impact Assessments.

Arrange for BSL courses and specific disability training.

Ensure that issues highlighted in consultation are included in the new equality objectives.