

VALE of GLAMORGAN



# Disability Equality Scheme

## executive summary



Vale of Glamorgan Council  
Equalities Section  
Chief Executive's Department

## Contact

To obtain a copy of this guide in a preferred accessible format, or for further information, please contact:-

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A copy of the full scheme can be obtained from the Council's website or by Emailing:  
[equalities@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)



## Introduction

The Vale of Glamorgan Council's Disability Equality Scheme is a strategy for making our services and our jobs more accessible to people who are disabled or who become disabled. We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity, to removing the barriers that disadvantage disabled people, to identifying and removing discriminatory practices in employment and service delivery, and to addressing the lack of disabled employees in the workplace. We want our services to reach all sections of the community and we recognise that this requires different approaches and methods in order to be achieved. Our Disability Equality Scheme outlines our overall equality vision and specific approach to disability equality, and it is accompanied by a realistic and achievable action plan.

## Purpose

The purpose of our Scheme is to identify ways to eliminate disability discrimination and to promote disability equality. It is not just about changes to buildings or adjustments for individuals but about being able to demonstrate a positive cultural change.

We have adopted the Social Model of Disability, which states that the



social exclusion experienced by many disabled people is not the inevitable result of their impairments or medical conditions but is caused by the attitudes of others and by environmental barriers.

Disabled people have been involved throughout the compiling of this Scheme. Meetings, run by Cardiff and Vale Coalition of Disabled People, were held to discuss such subjects as transport, communications, access to our buildings and other issues. These were followed by public meetings held at various venues throughout the Vale of Glamorgan. The issues raised during this consultation have led to many of the actions in the Scheme's action plan.

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## Legal

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 placed duties upon public bodies 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.
- take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons (for example the provision of an accessible parking bay near a building, where parking is not available for other visitors or employees).

There are also specific duties that require public bodies to publish a disability equality scheme showing how they intend to fulfil these responsibilities. Disabled people must be involved in these schemes and an action plan must be implemented that shows how the public body will specifically carry out its duties.

## Defining Disability

Broadly speaking there are five main impairment groups:

- mobility / physical impairment
- visual impairment
- hearing impairment
- learning difficulties
- mental health issues

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We recognise that some people do not like to identify themselves as being disabled, and that some disabled people are affected by more than one type of discrimination.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 defines disability as follows:

“A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 expanded on this to include anyone who has HIV, cancer, multiple sclerosis, or any progressive condition which is likely to change over time so that it has a substantial effect on their day-to-day activity.

## The Equalities Team

The Equalities Team has a role to eliminate unfair discrimination and to remove barriers to employment and service delivery throughout the Council. This work currently covers discrimination on the grounds of:

- gender
- disability
- race
- religious belief
- sexual orientation
- Welsh language
- age

## Equality Impact Assessments

We have a duty to consider the needs of both the wider community and our employees that may be affected by our policies and procedures. We therefore conduct equality impact assessments – a process that assesses the impact of our policies and practices upon relevant individuals and groups – on our new and existing key policies and procedures.



## Procurement

Equality related service specifications and terms and conditions are being developed to reflect our commitment to equality in any contracts that we engage in with external service providers. Key contracts will be reviewed on an annual basis.

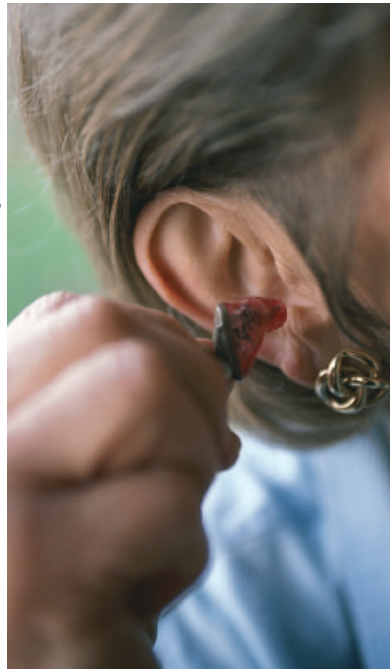
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## Employment

As an employer we aim to increase, retain and develop the number of disabled people we employ; and we aim to promote the social model of disability so that there is a positive culture towards disability.

We use Job Centre Plus's two ticks symbol on all of our job adverts, which means that we guarantee an interview to any disabled job applicant who meets all of the essential skills required for a job. We also have links with Remploy and Shaw Trust to help disabled jobseekers prepare for interview.

We provide reasonable adjustments to new and existing staff where required. We regularly obtain advice from Job





Centre Plus and use their Access to Work scheme to put those adjustments in place.

## Access

We have carefully examined our buildings to identify how easily they can be accessed by disabled visitors. Money has been identified to carry out improvement works according to the greatest identified demand. We have also produced guidelines on making our buildings more accessible for disabled visitors, and our building managers have received training in how to make improvements to access through general maintenance and improvement works.

## Service Delivery

As a public service provider, the Council aims to:

- improve access to and fairness in Council services;
- encourage disabled people to become more involved in public life;
- improve customer satisfaction for disabled members of the community.



## Communications

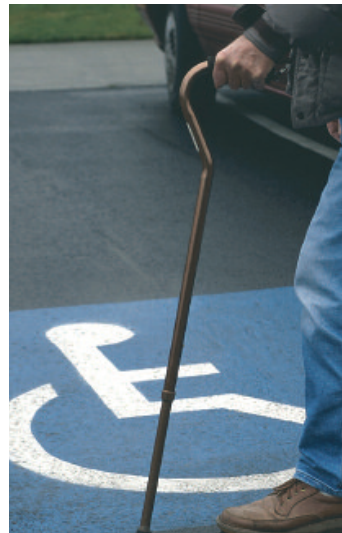
Specific information aimed at disabled people is available on our award winning website. Details can be found of our disability equality policies, our recruitment and employment practices (in terms of what can be expected as a disabled job applicant and as a disabled employee), the facilities and accessibility of our leisure centre's and libraries; and an account by a disabled employee of their personal experience of working for the Council.

For the visually impaired, our website has a choice of font sizes and a 'text only' option. This displays the text in a larger font with higher contrast colours.

## Contact Centre and one-stop shops

We have introduced a contact centre in order to transform the customer service that is received from the Council. Contact centre staff have received disability equality training and we intend developing specialised training programmes for these staff in the next three years.

We are also aiming to develop a number of one-stop shops in urban areas, in order to deliver improved access to our services. Disabled people will be involved in the design process to ensure that they can be accessed.



## Education

School governors are responsible for the compilation of school disability equality policies. A review will take place in 2010 and will be overseen by the Head of Service for Additional Learning Needs.

## Parking and Transport

In 2010 the Government intends to produce guidance for licensed vehicles to make them accessible for wheelchair users. We will then produce a policy to ensure that this occurs.

We currently provide a limited number of designated parking spaces for disabled people who drive. We will be reviewing this scheme to consider providing designated spaces for people who hold a blue badge on behalf of a disabled person. We will also consider the possibility of introducing civil enforcement of these designated bays where they are being abused.



## Sport and Leisure

A full-time Disability Sports Officer was appointed in December 2009 to take forward initiatives in sport and play. There are plans for further disability equality training for leisure centre staff as well as a coaching disabled performers course.

## Social Care

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Non-residential social services charges are currently based on the client's ability to pay and are calculated using Welsh Assembly Government guidance which is due to be reviewed. When the new guidance is available we will ensure that disabled people are involved in the consultation process. The appeals process for charging includes three levels, with the final level involving

representation to a panel of Councillors. This process will be reviewed as part of the action plan to ensure that the process is fair.



## Disability Equality Training

The Council provides disability equality training for staff. Deaf awareness, British sign language and visual awareness courses are also provided. Managers attending recruitment training are also required to attend disability equality training, and equality training is discussed at personal development reviews. We have recently launched mental health awareness training for key members of staff together with MIND in the Vale.

We will seek to improve attendance on all of our disability equality training, to increase awareness of disability and access issues in employment and service delivery; to promote awareness of the social model of disability; and to promote a culture of equality within the Council.

## Compliments and Complaints

If you feel that we have failed to comply with our legal obligations in terms of this Scheme, you should bring it to the attention of:

Nicola Hinton or Linda Brown

Corporate Equalities Officers

Vale of Glamorgan Council, Civic Offices, Holton Road

Barry CF63 4RU

Tel. 01446 709803

Email: [LJBrown@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:LJBrown@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

[NHinton@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:NHinton@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

In the case of a complaint regarding service delivery, we have a 3 stage complaint process. An initial complaint (which can be made in person, by telephone, in writing or by fax or Email) should be made with the relevant service department. Details of the full complaints procedure can be found on our website.

## Review

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This scheme will be reviewed every three years, and an annual update detailing progress will be published on our website.