



**Vale of Glamorgan Council**  
**Disability Equality Scheme 2006–09**

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## 1. Contact information

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2. **Foreword from Cabinet Member for Human Resources and Equalities and Director of Learning and Development**

Disabled people account for 19% of the Vale of Glamorgan’s population. We are committed to ensuring that they can enjoy the same opportunities and exercise the same choices as non- disabled residents. We want to ensure that disabled people in the Vale of Glamorgan can enjoy their full human and social rights free from discrimination. It is our vision that our employment practices and the design and delivery of our services will be inclusive and accessible. We can play a major role in encouraging staff, residents, contractors, partners and other employers to change attitudes and ultimately behaviour regarding disability.

The Council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and providing equal access to employment opportunities, services and facilities for everyone within the community. It will do so by enabling people to access their rights and to be treated fairly and with respect. In working towards this key commitment the Council aims to identify and remove discriminatory practices in employment or service delivery and to address the under-representation of minority groups within the workplace as well as ensuring that service provision takes account of the diverse needs of the community. The Council understands that in some cases to achieve equality of outcome different approaches and methods will be required.

As a Council 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 stems from attitudinal or environmental barriers. This Disability Equality Scheme has been prepared after extensive consultation with disabled people and aims to reflect the concerns of local people in the Vale. While this is a legislative requirement we see the scheme as essential in the efficient delivery of our services.

<b>Councillor Margaret Randall</b>	<b>Mr Bryan Jeffreys</b>
<b>Cabinet Member for Human Resources</b>	<b>Director for Learning and Development</b>

### **3. What is a Disability Equality Scheme?**

A Disability Equality Scheme is a strategy for making employment and services more accessible with a realistic and achievable action plan to people who are or become disabled. It outlines the Council's overall equality vision and specific approach to disability equality.

#### **3.1. Legal Context**

New duties relating to disability equality came into effect through the development of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. The Disability Equality Duty places a duty on all public organisations including local authorities to develop and publish, by December 2006, a three year Disability Equality Scheme and an annual Action Plan.

#### **3.2. Purpose of the Scheme**

The purpose of developing a Scheme is to identify ways in which unlawful discrimination can be eliminated and to be proactive in promoting disability equality. It is not necessarily about changes to buildings or adjustments for individuals. Moreover it is about being able to demonstrate positive cultural change. This means involving and empowering disabled people to ensure that disability equality is an integral part of the Council's ethos and decision-making process throughout the Council and promoting disability equality in the wider community.

#### **3.3 Publishing & Reporting**

The general and specific duties came into force on 4 December 2006. The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) provides a wide range of information for public authorities. They and the forthcoming equality body (Equality Council for Human Rights) will play a key role in enforcing the duty. The general duty can be enforced via a judicial review (via the High Court and Court of Session) but the specific duties are enforced through a compliance notice issued by the DRC.

#### **3.4 Enforcement**

The duty does not create individual rights for disabled people. However, a breach of the general duty can be the subject of a claim for judicial review

of a public authority's action (or inaction). If the specific duties are not met, the Disability Rights Commission can take enforcement action.

#### 4. Defining Disability

As an employer and service provider we recognise our duties and obligations as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act. In 2006 we adopted the Social Model of Disability. Broadly speaking there are five main impairment groups:

- Mobility / physical impairment
- Visual impairment
- Hearing impairment
- Learning difficulties
- Mental health issues

We acknowledge that there are issues for some disabled people regarding self-identifying as being disabled and that some disabled people are affected by multi-discrimination.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 defines disability as:

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

The inclusion of this definition replaced the requirement to be registered as disabled, with the previous method of registration no longer existing. This means that a person will no longer be 'registered disabled'. The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 expanded on this definition. Under the new legislation anyone who has HIV, cancer or multiple sclerosis will be identified as disabled from the point of diagnosis. People with a progressive condition which is likely to change or develop over time will also be included from the time the impairment has some effect on the ability to carry out normal day to day activities, if the impairment is likely to develop to have a substantial adverse effect. For example if someone develops a serious visual impairment that is likely to develop over time (e.g. glaucoma) the point they will be considered as disabled is at the point

the impairment has some effect as it will later have a substantial effect on day-to-day activities.

The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Family Resources Survey 2002 – 2003 estimates that over ten million people in the United Kingdom fall under the Disability Discrimination Act's definition of disability.

#### **4.1 Further advice on the legal definition**

When deciding if a person has a disability the DRC's code of practice offers the following advice:

- the person must have an impairment that is either physical or mental
- the impairment must have adverse effects which are substantial
- the substantial effects must be long-term; and
- the long-term substantial effects must have an adverse effect on normal day-to-day activities

A "substantial" effect is more than would be produced by the sort of physical or mental conditions experienced by many people which have only minor effects. A "substantial" effect is one which is more than "minor" or "trivial". For example:

- total inability to distinguish colours;
- inability to read ordinary newsprint;
- inability to walk safely without bumping into things
- loss of function in one or both hands such that the person cannot use the hand or hands;
- inability to hear and understand another person speaking clearly over the voice telephone
- intermittent loss of consciousness and associated confused behaviour;
- inability to walk other than at a slow pace or with unsteady or jerky movements;

The following examples are unlikely to be construed as having a substantial effect:

- inability to hold a conversation in a very noisy place, such as a factory floor;
- inability to read very small or indistinct print without the aid of a magnifying glass;
- inability to fill in a long, detailed, technical document without assistance;
- inability to undertake activities requiring delicate hand movements, such as threading a small needle;
- inability to carry heavy luggage without assistance

Further examples are included in **Appendix A**

In deciding what is a substantial effect the following issues can be considered:

- The way in which an activity is carried out
- The time taken to carry out an activity
- Cumulative effects of an impairment
- Effects of behaviour (including how far a person can reasonably be expected to modify behaviour to prevent or reduce the effects of an impairment on normal day-to-day activities).
- Effects of environment (Whether adverse effects are substantial may depend on environmental conditions which may vary; for example, the temperature, humidity, the time of day or night, how tired the person is or how much stress he or she is under may have an impact on the effects)

The Act provides that the ‘effect’ to be considered is the effect the impairment would have if it was not being treated e.g. if someone is using medication for epilepsy or a aid for hearing the effect to be taken into account when deciding if someone has a disability would be the effect of the impairment without this treatment. This would be the case even it the treatment means that the impairment is completely under control or not apparent (i.e. the person will still be ‘disabled’).

### **Meaning of long-term effect**

The Act states that, for the purpose of deciding whether a person is disabled, a long-term effect of an impairment is one:

- which has lasted at least twelve months; or
- where the total period for which it lasts, from the time of the first onset, is likely to be at least twelve months; or
- which is likely to last for the rest of the life of the person affected

For the purpose of deciding whether a person has had a disability in the past, a long-term effect of an impairment is one which lasted at least 12 months.

Further advice on the definition of 'long term effect' is included in Appendix A.

### **Meaning of "normal day-to-day activities"**

The term "normal day-to-day activities" is not intended to include activities that are normal only for a particular person or group of people. Therefore in deciding whether an activity is a "normal day-to-day activity" account should be taken of how far it is normal for most people and carried out by most people on a daily or frequent and fairly regular basis.

Examples of the effect that impairments may have on normal day-to-day activities is included in appendix A.

## **4.2. The Social Model of Disability Definition**

The Social Model of Disability defines disability as:

**“The disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organisation which takes little or no account of people who have impairments and thus excludes them from the mainstream of society.”**

The British Council of Organisations of Disabled People (BCODP)

In the early 1970s, disabled people separated the concept of 'impairment' from that of 'disability'. An impairment belonged to the individual, e.g. a medical condition; and 'disability', being the disabling environment. Poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion experienced by disabled people is not the inevitable result of their impairments or medical conditions, but rather stems from attitudinal and environmental barriers. The social model

views the environment as the disabling factor hindering social inclusion for disabled people.

#### **4.3. Self Identification**

Some people do not automatically identify themselves as being disabled. This is more likely to occur with older disabled people, but nevertheless, they face discrimination in their every day life. Many people do not automatically self identify as being disabled, after a diagnosis, an accident or with progression of a medical condition. This recognition occurs over time. It is a process, involving recognition of external barriers imposed by society. Not everyone with an impairment is disabled. For example, someone with a visual impairment that can be corrected by wearing glasses would not encounter discrimination.

#### **4.4. Multi discrimination**

Some disabled people face multi discrimination because they are female, older, from a black or minority ethnic community, gay or lesbian, a refugee or asylum seeker. It should also be recognised that the life experiences of disabled people including income levels, educational achievement and confidence and self-esteem levels vary.

#### **4.5. What does this mean in practice?**

Disability may mean different things to different people. In accordance with the social model of disability, in practical terms the Council recognises that disability occurs because barriers hinder people with impairments from taking a full part in the community. Therefore through the proper consideration of making reasonable adjustments, we will strive to break down these barriers to ensure that all disabled service users have equal access to our services and that all of our staff can reach their full potential.

The consideration of reasonable adjustments recognises our obligations and responsibilities as a service provider and employer, but also the obligations and responsibilities of those for whom the consideration is made. In practical terms this means an approach where:

- The individual advises the Council of their disability.

- The manager has a dialogue with the individual to consider what, if any, reasonable adjustments are required. (This stage may require clarification of the disability and a discussion with the Council’s Human Resources and/or Occupational Health service for disabled employees)
- Through discussion (and the involvement of Access to Work/Health and Safety Risk assessment), an agreement is reached as to how any necessary reasonable adjustments/adaptations can best be achieved following consultation with the employee and external agencies (e.g. SHAW trust, DWP). The provision of the service will be taken into consideration during the decision-making process.
- A process is put in place for ongoing monitoring and review.
- A record is made of the agreement in the individual’s record

This balanced approach, which we have built into our existing policies and procedures, takes into account financial and other constraints that we may face and provides:

- clear protection for all those who need it;
- fairness and reasonableness;
- a simple mechanism for identifying who has protection and requires reasonable adjustments
- a positive and systematic approach.

## 5. The Role of the Vale of Glamorgan Council

### 5.1 Corporate Priorities & Vision

The Corporate Plan outlines the vision and priorities for the Council. There are 6 high-level priorities:

#### **Community Leadership**

To work with partners from the voluntary, public, private and other sectors to deliver the shared vision for the future of the Vale and to ensure a co-ordinated approach to realising that vision.

#### **Lifelong Learning**

To provide high quality, accessible learning opportunities which meet the needs of learners of all ages to develop and promote a culture of lifelong learning for all.

### **Community Well Being**

To make the Vale a safe, healthy and enjoyable place in which individuals, children and families can live their lives to the full.

### **The Environment**

To achieve a quality environment through promotion and use of sustainable practices, and by making the best use of current and future resources.

### **Regeneration**

To encourage the development of a diversified and sustainable community and to work in partnership with others to promote regeneration and economic development.

### **Corporate Resources**

To manage the Council's workforce, money and assets efficiently and effectively in order to maximise its ability to achieve its service aims.

The Disability Equality Scheme, together with the Council's Corporate Equality Plan, Welsh Language Scheme and Race Equality Scheme will assist with ensuring that the Corporate Plan delivers improvements equitably.

## **5.2 The Role & Function of the Equalities Section (Human Resources and Equalities Department)**

The Equalities Section work towards developing an authority wide framework to eliminate unfair discrimination and remove barriers to information and facilities in employment and service delivery. This work covers discrimination on the grounds of:

- Gender
- Disability
- Human Rights
- Race
- Religious Belief
- Sexual Orientation
- Welsh Language
- Age

The service provides information on the Council's equality policies and on where to get impartial advice on equality issues. The Section also deals with discrimination complaints on the above grounds relating to Council employment or Council services.

### **5.3 Equality Impact Assessments**

The Council has a duty to consider the needs and requirements of the community and staff who are affected by its policies and procedures. The Equality impact assessment process was developed to ensure that relevant individuals and groups are neither directly or indirectly discriminated against in the planning, delivery and business of the Council in compliance with relevant legislation and good practice. Training on completing assessments has been provided to managers and staff and 113 policies and procedures have been assessed for impact on the grounds of race, disability, Welsh language and gender. The assessments were undertaken by service managers, and subsequently reviewed by a quality-check panel. The Council aims to publish these policies, and detail their impact on equality grounds on its internet site.

The Equality Section has developed an impact assessment questionnaire and guidelines, which is included on our web-site. This tool has been used to carry out impact assessments on the issue of race, disability, gender and Welsh Language on all policies originally identified as part of the Council's Race Equality Scheme. The tool is further used as part of the development of all relevant new and revised policies in order to consider equality implications as part of the development process.

Structures and mechanisms are in place to ensure proper consideration, monitoring and review of the assessments made and actions suggested.

### **5.4 The Role & Function of the Corporate Equalities Working Group**

The newly-formed Corporate Equalities Working Group comprises senior managers from key areas who meet on a regular basis to share good practice and to ensure that equalities actions are implemented within service areas as well as to provide valuable feedback to the equalities team.

When disability issues are discussed a member of the disabled employees group will be invited to attend the meeting.

### **5.5 Mainstreaming Equality**

The Council has adopted the Equality Standard for Local Government as a tool for improving performance. The standard provides a systematic framework for dealing with equality. The aim of the standard is to mainstream equality within all services. The cornerstone of the standard is the council's Corporate Equality Plan which will be revised to reflect the content of this scheme.

A chart of Equalities policies is attached in **Appendix C**

### **5.6 Procurement**

The procurement process plays an important role in ensuring that our policies and practices are not undermined or compromised by engaging suppliers who do not share our values and commitment to achieve the general duty.

In support of this, the Council's Procurement Strategy includes an undertaking to support the Council's Corporate Plan in the field of equality. The Council has standard procurement documentation that specifically introduces the topic of Equality and requires relevant response from potential suppliers. For example, the council's standard Pre Qualification Questionnaire ("PQQ") requires potential bidders to confirm that they comply with equality legislation and to show appropriate understanding and revision where there has been an historical lack of compliance. The council has also issued procurement guidance, which advises staff of equalities considerations that should be made when making a purchase.

### **5.7 Access to public buildings**

An access audit has been carried out on all Council buildings (including schools) that are accessible to the public. The Council has identified a budget to carry out access work on buildings according to the priorities identified. Work has been carried out on a 'twin track' approach both

reacting to requests/complaints/comments and carrying out pro-active work to improve access. Buildings managers have received training on providing accessible services, including making arrangements to provide accessible services when physical access is limited. The Council is carrying out a comprehensive prioritisation process with timescales for improvements. Guidelines will be developed for building managers on improving access through general maintenance work and good building management to promote access. A comprehensive programme for the next round of improvements will be in place by April 2007.

### **5.8 Complaints & Compliments**

When a member of the public believes that they have been directly affected by a failure of the Council to comply with the statutory requirements of this Scheme, or feel that their particular needs have been exceptionally met, they should bring it to the attention in writing or verbally to: Catrin Morgan/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) / [CAMorgan@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:CAMorgan@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

In the case of a complaint regarding service delivery (which can be made by telephone, in person or via our website) the Council will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing or a preferred appropriate format, which has been specified by the complainant, within five working days to discuss the most appropriate way to progress and deal with the issue. If the complainant is not satisfied with the initial response the Council should be contacted within 4 weeks and we will respond within 20 working days.

All complaints made in respect of this Scheme will be monitored and used to inform relevant impact assessments and subsequent reviews of this Scheme. Where a complaint relates to the actions of an individual member of staff, rather than a policy this will be dealt with in accordance with the relevant procedures, which may include discipline.

## **6. The Involvement & Development Process**

The Council has involved disabled people throughout the development of our Disability Equality Scheme. Disabled people have played a central role

by identifying disability equality issues and solutions in relation to employment and service provision. This allowed us to identify and focus on the key issues for disabled people. We also were able to draw on information collected from an event held in Cardiff in June 2006 'Access 360 degrees' which focused on Health and Social Care issues. The event was held in partnership with Cardiff Council and Cardiff and Vale Trust.

### **6.1 The Involvement Plan**

The Council contracted with Cardiff & Vale of Coalition of Disabled People to facilitate engagement events and collect evidence to identify disability equality issues and solutions relating to services and employment. The Scheme is a result of these events, held between June and November, with disabled service users, disabled employees and senior managers.

A timetable of involvement activities carried out is included in **Appendix D**.

#### **Internal Involvement Events (Detail in Appendix E)**

Interviews and focus group meetings were held with:

- Senior key managers as part of the Corporate Equalities Working Group.
- Managers from Corporate Policy & Communication, Highways, Property, Regulatory services, Strategy Planning, Housing & Community Safety, Strategy & Support, Economic Development & Leisure.
- GMB and UNISON trade union representatives and staff members of the Disabled Employees Group
- Members of the Disabled Employees Group

Minutes of the Disabled Employees Group were sent out immediately after the meeting and comments received and noted.

#### **External Involvement Events (Detail in Appendix F)**

Three external public involvement events were held: two involved individual disabled people and representatives from local disability organisations and one involved direct payment service users. These events were widely publicised and expenses were available, but we are aware that

in the main those who were able to attend were from the Eastern Vale. However the direct payments group was led by users from the St Brides area in the Western Vale. The purpose of these events was to identify disability equality issues that are important to and affect local disabled people. At these events participants were encouraged to provide ideas for solutions to these issues for inclusion in the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Disability Equality Scheme. The range of issues considered covered the following areas: Housing & Community Services; Organisational Change; Information & Communication; Buildings & Access; Transport & Highways.

Notes of each meeting were sent to attendees as soon as possible after the event. Notes were provided in accessible formats upon request. Participants were invited to give feedback on the notes of the meeting.

The majority of disabled people who attended two of our focus group discussion meetings were retired, over 40 years old and lived in Barry and Penarth. They either had physical and/or sensory impairments. The additional meeting with direct payment service users included younger disabled people. We also held one-to-one meetings and telephone interviews with people who have mental health issues and parents and advocates of children and adults who have learning difficulties.

We recognise in the future that the Council need to improve representation on the Critical Friends Group we of disabled people of working age, disabled people from the black and minority ethnic communities, disabled people who have mental health issues, disabled people who have learning difficulties and more disabled people from the rural communities of the Vale.

## **6.2 Monitoring Arrangements**

As a direct outcome of the external involvement events 35 local disabled people have formed a Critical Friends Group and will meet on a quarterly basis to monitor implementation of the Scheme and will assist with the development of annual action plans. The Council values their disability equality related expertise and is committed to ensuring all access requirements and reasonable expenses are met. At their request further external facilitation will be provided by the Council to assist them with this activity. The Council will look at the possibility of providing a Disability

Equality Training Course for group members and provide a venue for the meetings and any secretarial/admin support that is required.

As a direct outcome of the internal events 15 disabled employees have formed a Disabled Employee's Support Group and will meet on a quarterly basis to monitor the implementation of the Scheme and assist with the development of annual action plans. The Council values their experience and has encouraged line managers to provide paid time off for staff to attend these meetings. At the request of the group a specialised Disability Equality Training Course for disabled employees was set up for November 2006, but had to be cancelled as few members were able to attend .The Council will provide the group with secretarial support and a venue for meetings.

As a direct outcome of the meeting held with the trade unions, representatives from GMB and UNISON have been invited to join the Corporate Equalities Working Group to monitor implementation and assist with the development of annual action plans. In the future a Disability Equality Training course will be provided for trade union representatives.

## **7. Employment**

Regulation 2 (3) (d) (i) of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 states that an Authority must establish arrangements for gathering information on the effect of its policies and practices on disabled persons and in particular its arrangements for gathering information on their effect on the recruitment, development and retention of its disabled employees

### **Main employment aims of the scheme**

1. To increase, retain and develop the number of disabled people we employ.
2. To promote the Social Model of Disability so there is an attitudinal and cultural change regarding disability.

#### **7.1. Current Practice**

##### **Recruitment**

All vacancies are advertised internally and depending on the market expectation and specialist nature of the post may be advertised

concurrently both internally and externally. This includes advertising vacancies with Job Centre Plus, the Western Mail or South Wales Echo and specialist magazines. Job adverts, upon request, are sent to local voluntary and disability groups. The Council uses the Two Tick Symbol on all job adverts and operate a guaranteed job interview for any disabled job applicant who meets all the essential criteria for a job. Unsuccessful job applicants are not contacted if they have not been selected for interview. The Council's Human Resources & Equalities Operational Manager is involved, at a regional level, in strategic joint approaches and initiatives to assist job seekers in the Vale.

### **Retention, Redeployment & Medical Retirement**

When an employee, manager or the Occupational Health Nurse reports issues or concerns about a member of staff a colleague from Human Resources and Equalities engages in exploratory discussions to identify any suitable adaptations in working arrangements and equipment. The Council regularly accesses advice from Job Centre Plus to establish adaptations for new and existing staff.

In a recent Wales Audit Office report the Council was asked to consider a more robust approach to address levels of absence. The Council's Sickness absence policy performance indicator includes all absence regardless of whether the absence is due to pregnancy, industrial injury or disability. These indicators are not currently subdivided to indicate sickness relating to disability.

Over the past 24 months 5 disabled people have been retired on medical grounds. At least 25 disabled people have been assisted with adaptations to retain their employment.

### **Employee Support**

The newly formed Disabled Employees Group highlighted that they were aware of, and some had been assisted by:

- The Council's working from home policy
- Options open to job share or work part time,
- Access to Work (ATW)
- The Council's employee counselling scheme,
- Shaw Trust

### **Disability Equality Training**

Over the past five years the Council has provided an on-going Disability Equality Training Programme for staff. Deaf Awareness courses and Cultural Diversity training are also provided. More than 300 employees received Equality training courses during 2006–07.

### **Data Collation**

In a staff survey 2005/06, 63 (1.23%) employees declared having a disability from a total workforce of 4789. Since 2004, 250 disabled people have applied for posts, 77 were interviewed and 16 were successful in their applications. Three of the applicants were referred by Job Centre Plus. The Council does not currently record the number of disabled people who have received assistance and support by the Council or Access to Work.

### **Access to Premises**

The Council has carried out some access improvements. All Council buildings have been access audited and an improvement schedule is being developed.

Examples of recent improvements have been:

- The Civic Office: RADAR locks fitted to disabled toilets, emergency pull cords fitted to all but the ground floor disabled toilets.
- The Docks Office: additional disabled toilets have been installed on the second floor
- The Alps Block B: two disabled toilets have been installed on the second floor.

### **7.2 Improvements to Current Practice**

The Action Plan will identify improvements based on the consultation process. Views from the consultation exercise include the following and are included in Appendix E

- Recruitment
- Retention, redeployment and medical retirement
- Access to Work
- Self Identification and disclosure
- Disability training
- Access to Premises
- Parking

The steps we will take to achieve these goals have been agreed by managers and are included in the accompanying action plan.

Improvement to current employment practices is based on the following conclusions:

### **Recruitment**

The percentage of staff currently working for the Council does not reflect the percentage of disabled people of working age living in the Vale of Glamorgan. Measures have been included in the action plan to ensure positive advertisement of posts for disabled people and to ensure that disabled people's specific needs and requirements are taken into account throughout the recruitment and selection process. Actions included in the action plan will seek to improve the recruitment and selection process for disabled people in order to increase applications and improve access to work.

### **Retention, redeployment and medical retirement and access to work**

The Council's action plan will seek to improve the information available to employees when they become disabled in order to improve retention of disabled staff. This will include information on the Council's Intranet site and improvements to the sickness procedure to ensure that people's changing needs are acknowledged and provided for. This will in turn improve the retention of disabled employees and the support available.

### **Self Identification and disclosure**

The staff focus group identified as an issue the reticence of disabled staff to declare their disability to the Council as an employer. The action plan includes actions to increase confidence in the Council as an employer to enable staff to disclose their disability. This will be achieved through improved disability equality training and a positive approach to making reasonable adjustments. This is intended to improve disclosure of disabilities in order for the Council to improve retention of disabled staff.

### **Disability training**

The Council will seek to improve attendance on its Disability Equality Training for staff at all levels in order to increase awareness of disability issues in employment and service delivery, promote awareness of the social model of disability and promote a culture of equality within the Council.

### **Access to Premises**

In order to improve access to its employment opportunities and services, the Council has carried out an access audit on all its buildings and will implement a prioritised programme of improvements to develop an accessible environment for disabled employees.

### **Parking**

The action plan includes targeted actions to ensure that adequate parking facilities are available for disabled staff in order to ensure access to buildings for staff who are, or become disabled.

We will introduce the following measures to determine achievement of our objectives:

Performance indicators (incorporated into HR& Equalities Service Plan):

<b>PI Ref</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Performance 2006/07</b>	<b>Target 2007/8</b>	<b>Target 2008/9</b>
<i>L1</i>	Percentage of council staff who have recorded that they have a disability.	1.23%	1.5%	1.8%
<i>L2</i>	Percentage of departments achieving level 1 & 2 of the Council's Equality Standard (internal initiative)	New initiative	75% level 1	95% level 1 20% level 2
<i>L3</i>	Level of Generic Equality Standard Achieved	Level 2	Level 3	Maintain level 3

## **8. Service Delivery**

### **Main service delivery aims**

1. To promote the Social Model of Disability so that there is an attitudinal and cultural change regarding disability
2. To encourage disabled people to become more involved in public life
3. To improve customer satisfaction for disabled members of the community.

### **8.1 Current Practice relating to Disability Equality**

#### **Communication and Consultation**

The Equalities Consultative Forum meets quarterly and is a consultative body made up of key representatives of the local community including Race Equality First, the Police, WLGA, Cardiff Gypsy and Traveller Project and the Muslim Welfare Association. The Vale Centre for Voluntary Services is helping the Council to expand the membership of the group to represent all groups identified within the census. A promotional article will be included in the Centre's newsletter on a regular basis.

The Council's Consultation Strategy was adopted in 2003 and provides objectives which include developing strategies for hard-to-reach groups and recruiting more people onto the Citizen's Panel from under-represented groups. At present approximately 20% of members of the Panel describe themselves as disabled. There is also a Consultation section on the Council intranet which informs staff and elected members of activities taking place.

#### **Accessible Information**

The Consultation Strategy provides guidelines for staff in ensuring that information is available in accessible formats. The equalities team can provide advice and there is some internal provision.

## Equality Monitoring

Customer satisfaction information is collected and analysed as part of the Improvement Plan. This includes equality information provided by customers.

## Community Services

The Council provides a variety of support services for disabled residents of the Vale of Glamorgan and their carers. These include a 'short term intervention service' provided by the Home Care Team, which includes an occupational therapist remit and aims to give intensive support on leaving hospital to regain independence. New Horizons Day Service provides care and support for adults with permanent and substantial physical disabilities. Therapeutic and developmental activities are supported by New Horizons and the service works in line with the social model promoting equality, choice, independence, empowerment and personal development. Age Concern provides advocacy for older people in residential homes, Vale People First for people with learning difficulties, The Friendly Trust provides advice on making a will and legal representation for carers of people with a learning difficulty and Cardiff & Vale Coalition of Disabled People provide support and sometimes advocacy for their members. The Council is about to appoint Mental Capacity advocates as required under the new Mental Capacity Act. There have been significant changes in the charging policy of the Vale of Glamorgan in common with other authorities. The Council provides direct payments through a contract with Rowan who provides administration and support services for direct payment service users. 17954 disabled badges have been issued to Vale residents by Community Services.

## Housing

Accessible housing is advertised in the Homes 4 You advert in the local press and on the Council's website. Disability facility grants are provided by the Council.

## Environmental and Economic Regeneration

### Highways

The Highway Maintenance Division provides dropped crossings to assist disabled people. Priority is given to places where many can benefit such as shopping centres, health centres etc. Dropped crossings are available in

most streets at traffic signals and roundabouts. At roads works, particular provision is made for disabled people in wheelchairs. Also, street lighting is energised and adopted early in new developments so that people can walk in safety. Audible warning units, red/green visual indicators, tactile paving and rotating cones are provided at traffic signals to assist visually impaired residents. A new initiative has been launched where a bilingual large-print publication will indicate the location of these facilities. The leaflet is also available in Braille, cassette and CD format.

## Engineering Design

The Engineering Design Division provides disabled persons parking spaces on the highway in commercial and other areas for general use as required. The number of such bays are reviewed from time to time and augmented as necessary. Individual disabled parking spaces are also provided in residential areas where applications are received from disabled drivers satisfying specific criteria. Individual disabled persons parking spaces are available for any blue badge holder. The number of new bays provided each year is subject to resources available.

## Waste Management

The Waste Management service has area doorstep collections that are provided for residents with disabilities or with short-term illnesses that restrict them from depositing their waste at normal collection points.

## Leisure

Disability Sport Wales is a national sports development programme aimed at increasing the number of people with disabilities taking an active part in sport and physical activities and creating and supporting new and existing opportunities. The Leisure service also links with FDSW (Federation of Disability Sports Wales) to provide support, coaching and volunteer opportunities to identify potential talent.

This is a joint initiative between the Sports Council for Wales, the federation of Disability Sport Wales and 22 local authorities.

In the Vale clubs range from multi-sport to gymnastics and bowls. There is also a 'news' page run by the Disability sports officer. The Disability Sports

Forum consists of local community members who have an interest in disability sport.

The Sports Development Team provides inclusive opportunities to access sport and physical activity by means of Dragon Sport, rugby, football, arts and play.

Vale Leisure facilities offer opportunities for improved lifestyle such as GP referral scheme, 'active for life' and 'swimability'.

Information regarding leisure services is publicised to children and adults with disabilities via a network of links e.g. press releases, media coverage, mainstream and special schools, adult and children service providers, voluntary service and web-sites.

## **Learning and Development**

### **Lifelong Learning**

The Vale of Glamorgan Council's Community Learning Service asks learners to identify any disability and any support required. Those who are in receipt of benefits are charged a lower fee. A range of help is also available including large screens, loop systems and volunteer support.

### **Education**

The LEA has a number of initiatives in place to promote access and eliminate discrimination from its policies and procedures. The LEA has produced an Accessibility Strategy, which aims:

- To increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum;
- To improve the accessibility of the physical environment for pupils;
- To improve the delivery of information to disabled pupils which is already provided, in writing, to no-disabled pupils.

Children who require specialist equipment or extra assistance at school are able to access this via the special educational needs framework.

Schools are required to develop their own disability equality schemes by April 2007. The LEA will provide support and advice to Schools on

developing their schemes and will advise schools on linking their schemes to the access strategy.

### **Finance ICT and Property**

#### Access to the built environment

The Council is in the process of prioritising a programme of building work but also recognises that good building management is key to ensuring access. A set of guidelines are being produced for staff on managing access to buildings.

### **Legal and Regulatory**

#### Democratic Services

There are 47 Councillors representing the people of the Vale of Glamorgan with the Council, consisting of 14 women and 33 men. There is under-representation in comparison with the Vale's overall population in terms of gender, age, disabled people, and people from black and other minority ethnic groups.

#### Regulatory Services

The Council have licensed five accessible taxis. One company offers fax and e-mail during office hours to book a taxi. The same company is exploring the possibility of taking text messages.

## **8.2 Improvements to current practice**

The Action Plan will identify improvements based on the consultation process. Issues to be discussed from the consultation exercise are included in Appendix F and include :-

- Community & Housing Services
- Leisure
- Life Long Learning
- Communication and Consultation
- Accessible Information
- Public Life
- Transport
- Parking
- Access to the built environment

- Disability Equality Training
- Data Collation

The steps we will take to achieve these goals have been agreed by managers and are included in the accompanying action plan.

### **Community & Housing Services**

The action plan includes an action to research the availability of the advocacy service in the Vale of Glamorgan, with a view to implementing improvements to this service where feasible. The Council will also look to implement a number of actions to improve information relating to these services, in response to the issues raised by the consultation focus groups, in order to increase awareness of the grants and services available.

### **Leisure**

Under this Disability Equality Scheme the Council will seek to improve awareness and participation in its leisure services for disabled people, recognising the health and well being of sports participation for disabled people.

### **Life Long Learning**

Under its Disability Equality Scheme the Council will seek to improve access to its lifelong learning provision for disabled people. This will include highlighting the accessibility of the buildings where courses are held and seeking to improve the access to venues.

### **Communication and Consultation and Accessible Information**

The Council will look to improve the way we consult with disabled people to ensure that disabled people are involved in the decision-making process. The Council will also implement actions relating to improving accessible information in order to improve the way that we communicate with disabled people.

### **Public Life**

The Council will look to improve the way we consult with disabled people to ensure that disabled people are involved in the decision-making process.

## Transport

The Council has included an action in its action plan to work with public transport providers in order to improve public transport options for disabled people.

## Access to the built environment and Parking

In order to improve access to its services, the Council has carried out an access audit on all its buildings and will implement a prioritised programme of improvements to develop an accessible environment for disabled employees. The action plan includes targeted actions to ensure that adequate parking facilities are available for disabled people.

## Disability Equality Training

The Council will seek to improve attendance on its Disability Equality Training for staff at all levels in order to increase awareness of disability issues in employment and service delivery, promote awareness of the social model of disability and promote a culture of equality within the Council.

## Data Collation

The Council will be improving its collection of monitoring data relating to access to service and service satisfaction levels for disabled people to ensure that the Council can target improvements to relevant services and issues.

We will introduce the following measures to determine achievement of our objectives:

Performance indicators (incorporated into HR& Equalities Service Plan):

<b>PI Ref</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Performance 2006/07</b>	<b>Target 2007/8</b>	<b>Target 2008/9</b>
<i>L3</i>	Level of Generic Equality Standard Achieved	Level 2	Level 3	Maintain level 3
<i>L4</i>	Percentage of disabled people satisfied with the overall service provided by the Council	Not collected	70%	75%
<i>L5</i>	Percentage of disabled people who feel that they are able to influence decision-making	Not collected	30%	35%

## Appendix A: Defining Disability

The term "normal day-to-day activities" is not intended to include activities which are normal only for a particular person or group of people. Therefore in deciding whether an activity is a "normal day-to-day activity" account should be taken of how far it is normal for most people and carried out by most people on a daily or frequent and fairly regular basis.

The Act states that an impairment is only to be treated as affecting the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities if it affects one of the following:

- mobility;
- manual dexterity;
- physical co-ordination;
- continence;
- ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects;
- speech, hearing or eyesight;
- memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand; or perception of the risk of physical danger (Sch1, Para 4).

An impairment may also indirectly affect a person in one or more of these respects, and this should be taken into account when assessing whether the impairment falls within the definition. For example:

- medical advice: where a person has been professionally advised to change, limit or refrain from a normal day-to-day activity on account of an impairment or only do it in a certain way or under certain conditions;
- pain or fatigue: where an impairment causes pain or fatigue in performing normal day-to-day activities, so the person may have the capacity to do something but suffer pain in doing so; or the impairment might make the activity more than usually fatiguing so that the person might not be able to repeat the task over a sustained period of time.

Where a person has a mental illness such as depression account should be taken of whether, although that person has the physical ability to perform a task, he or she is, in practice, unable to sustain an activity over a reasonable period.

## **Examples of effect on normal day-to day activities**

### **Mobility**

This covers moving or changing position in a wide sense. Account should be taken of the extent to which, because of either a physical or a mental condition, a person is inhibited in getting around unaided or using a normal means of transport, in leaving home with or without assistance, in walking a short distance, climbing stairs, travelling in a car or completing a journey on public transport, sitting, standing, bending, or reaching, or getting around in an unfamiliar place.

### **Examples**

It would be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- inability to travel a short journey as a passenger in a vehicle;
- inability to walk other than at a slow pace or with unsteady or jerky movements;
- difficulty in going up or down steps, stairs or gradients;
- inability to use one or more forms of public transport;
- inability to go out of doors unaccompanied.

It would not be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- difficulty walking unaided a distance of about 1.5 kilometres or a mile without discomfort or having to stop – the distance in question would obviously vary according to the age of the person concerned and the type of terrain;
- inability to travel in a car for a journey lasting more than two hours without discomfort.

### **Manual dexterity**

This covers the ability to use hands and fingers with precision. Account should be taken of the extent to which a person can manipulate the fingers on each hand or co-ordinate the use of both hands together to do a task. This includes the ability to do things like pick up or manipulate small objects, operate a range of equipment manually, or communicate through writing or typing on standard machinery. Loss of function in the dominant hand would be expected to have a greater effect than equivalent loss in the non-dominant hand.

## **Examples**

It would be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- loss of function in one or both hands such that the person cannot use the hand or hands;
- inability to handle a knife and fork at the same time;
- ability to press the buttons on keyboards or keypads but only much more slowly than is normal for most people.

It would not be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- inability to undertake activities requiring delicate hand movements, such as threading a small needle;
- inability to reach typing speeds standardised for secretarial work;
- inability to pick up a single small item, such as a pin.

## **Physical co-ordination**

This covers balanced and effective interaction of body movement, including hand and eye co-ordination. In the case of a child, it is necessary to take account of the level of achievement which would be normal for a person of the particular age. In any case, account should be taken of the ability to carry out "composite" activities such as walking and using hands at the same time.

## **Examples**

It would be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- ability to pour liquid into another vessel only with unusual slowness or concentration;
- inability to place food into one's own mouth with fork/spoon without unusual concentration or assistance.

It would not be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- mere clumsiness;
- inability to catch a tennis ball.

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## **Continence**

This covers the ability to control urination and/or defecation. Account should be taken of the frequency and extent of the loss of control and the age of the individual.

### **Examples**

It would be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- even infrequent loss of control of the bowels;
- loss of control of the bladder while asleep at least once a month;
- frequent minor faecal incontinence or frequent minor leakage from the bladder.

It would not be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- infrequent loss of control of the bladder while asleep;
- infrequent minor leakage from the bladder.

## **Ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects**

Account should be taken of a person's ability to repeat such functions or, for example, to bear weights over a reasonable period of time. Everyday objects might include such items as books, a kettle of water, bags of shopping, a briefcase, an overnight bag, a chair or other piece of light furniture.

### **Examples**

It would be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- inability to pick up objects of moderate weight with one hand
- inability to carry a moderately loaded tray steadily.

It would not be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- inability to carry heavy luggage without assistance;
- inability to move heavy objects without a mechanical aid.

## **Speech, hearing or eyesight**

This covers the ability to speak, hear or see and includes face-to-face, telephone and written communication.

### **(i) Speech**

Account should be taken of how far a person is able to speak clearly at a normal pace and rhythm and to understand someone else speaking normally in the person's native language. It is necessary to consider any effects on speech patterns or which impede the acquisition or processing of one's native language, for example by someone who has had a stroke.

#### Examples

It would be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- inability to give clear basic instructions orally to colleagues or providers of a service;
- inability to ask specific questions to clarify instructions;
- taking significantly longer than average to say things.

It would not be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- inability to articulate fluently due to a minor stutter, lisp or speech impediment;
- inability to speak in front of an audience;
- having a strong regional or foreign accent;
- inability to converse in a language which is not the speaker's native language.

### **(ii) Hearing**

If a person uses a hearing aid or similar device, what needs to be considered is the effect that would be experienced if the person were not using the hearing aid or device. Account should be taken of effects where the level of background noise is within such a range and of such a type that most people would be able to hear adequately.

#### Examples

It would be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- inability to hold a conversation with someone talking in a normal voice in a moderately noisy environment;
- inability to hear and understand another person speaking clearly over the voice telephone.

It would not be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- inability to hold a conversation in a very noisy place, such as a factory floor;
- inability to sing in tune.

### **(iii) Eyesight**

If a person's sight is corrected by spectacles or contact lenses, or could be corrected by them, what needs to be considered is the effect remaining while they are wearing such spectacles or lenses, in light of a level and type normally acceptable to most people for normal day-to-day activities.

#### **Examples**

It would be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- inability to see to pass the eyesight test for a standard driving test;
- inability to recognise by sight a known person across a moderately-sized room;
- total inability to distinguish colours;
- inability to read ordinary newsprint;
- inability to walk safely without bumping into things.

It would not be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- inability to read very small or indistinct print without the aid of a magnifying glass;
- inability to distinguish a known person across a substantial distance (e.g. playing field);
- inability to distinguish between red and green.

### **Memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand**

Account should be taken of the person's ability to remember, organise his or her thoughts, plan a course of action and carry it out, take in new knowledge, or understand spoken or written instructions. This includes considering whether the person learns to do things significantly more slowly than is normal. Account should be taken of whether the person has persistent and significant difficulty in reading text in standard English or straightforward numbers.

## Examples

It would be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- intermittent loss of consciousness and associated confused behaviour;
- persistent inability to remember the names of familiar people such as family or friends;
- inability to adapt after a reasonable period to minor change in work routine;
- inability to write a cheque without assistance;
- considerable difficulty in following a short sequence such as a simple recipe or a brief list of domestic tasks.

It would not be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- occasionally forgetting the name of a familiar person, such as a colleague;
- inability to concentrate on a task requiring application over several hours;
- inability to fill in a long, detailed, technical document without assistance;
- inability to read at faster than normal speed;  
minor problems with writing or spelling.

### **Meaning of long-term effects**

The Act states that, for the purpose of deciding whether a person is disabled, a long-term effect of an impairment is one:

- which has lasted at least twelve months; or
- where the total period for which it lasts, from the time of the first onset, is likely to be at least twelve months; or
- which is likely to last for the rest of the life of the person affected

For the purpose of deciding whether a person has had a disability in the past, a long-term effect of an impairment is one which lasted at least 12 months. It is not necessary for the effect to be the same throughout the relevant period. It may change, as where activities which are initially very difficult become possible to a much greater extent. The main adverse effect might even disappear – or it might disappear temporarily – while one or other effects on ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities continue or develop. Provided the impairment continues to have, or is likely to have, such an effect throughout the period, there is a long-term effect.

## **Recurring effects**

The Act states that if an impairment has had a substantial adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities but that effect ceases, the substantial effect is treated as continuing if it is likely to recur; that is, it is more likely than not that the effect will recur. (In deciding whether a person has had a disability in the past, the question is whether a substantial adverse effect has in fact recurred.) Conditions which recur only sporadically or for short periods (e.g. epilepsy) can still qualify.

For example, a person with rheumatoid arthritis may experience effects from the first occurrence for a few weeks and then have a period of remission. But, if the effects are likely to recur, they are to be treated as if they were continuing. If the effects are likely to recur beyond twelve months after the first occurrence, they are to be treated as long-term.

Likelihood of recurrence should be considered taking all the circumstances of the case into account. This should include what the person could reasonably be expected to do to prevent the recurrence; for example, the person might reasonably be expected to take action which prevents the impairment from having such effects (e.g. avoiding substances to which he or she is allergic). This may be unreasonably difficult with some substances. In addition, it is possible that the way in which a person can control or cope with the effects of a condition may not always be successful because, for example, a routine is not followed or the person is in an unfamiliar environment. If there is an increased likelihood that the control will break down, it will be more likely that there will be a recurrence. That possibility should be taken into account when assessing the likelihood of a recurrence.

## **Appendix B – Vale of Glamorgan Facts & Data**

The main settlements are Barry, Penarth, Llantwit Major, Dinas Powys and Cowbridge. Barry has the largest population of 48,000 and is the Vale's administration centre and has a seaside resort and port. Cardiff International Airport is located at Rhoose, 3 miles west of Barry. The population of the Vale was recorded, in the 2001 Census, as 119,292. The numbers of children are expected to decrease and the number of older people to increase. In 2001, there were 23182 people of state pension age.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2000 showed the most deprived wards to be Castleland and Gibbonsdown in Barry. They were in the top fifth of Welsh wards in the index. A further three wards were in the second fifth: Buttrills, Court and Cadoc.

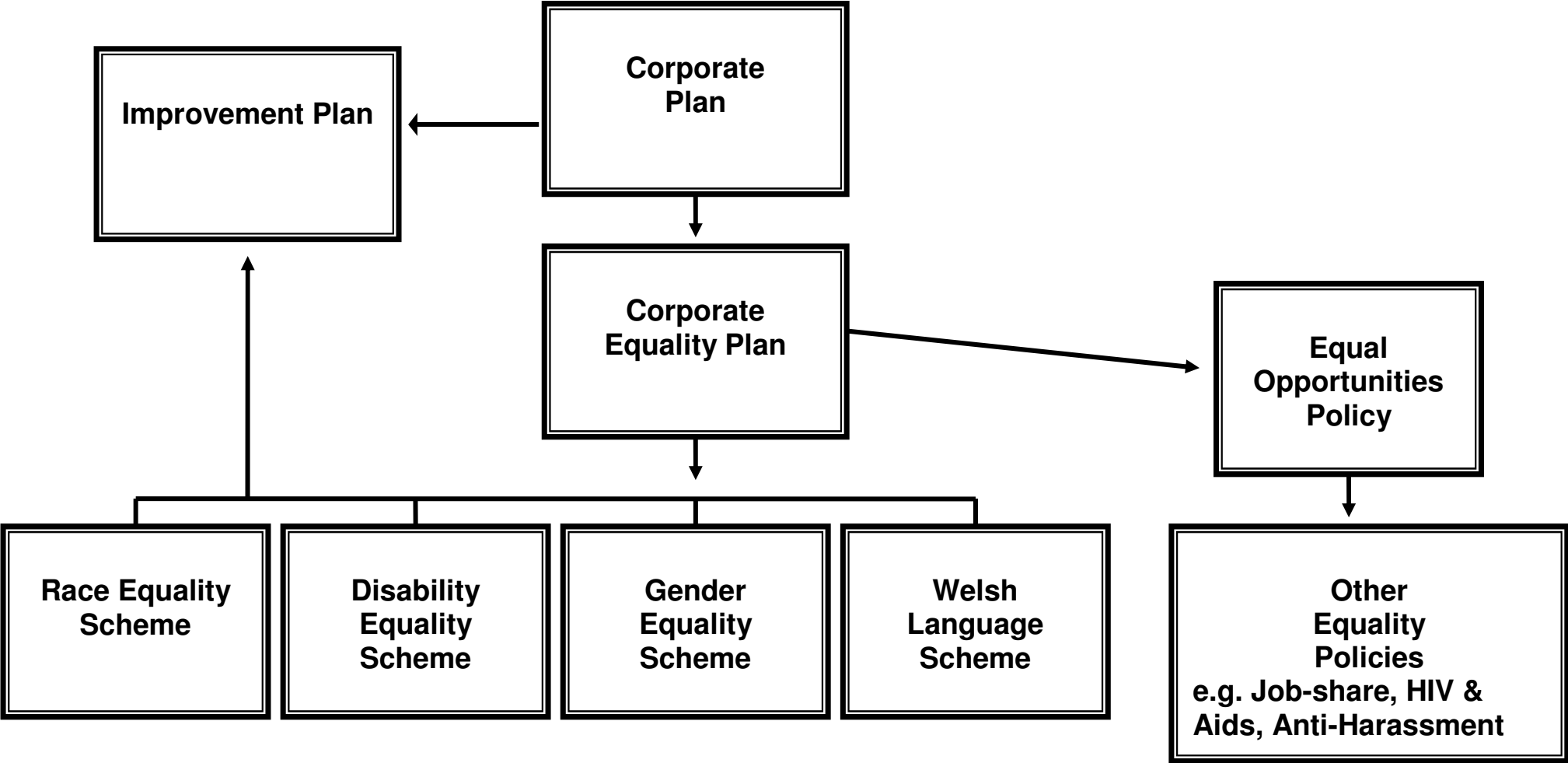
There are 53,579 domestic dwellings in the Vale. The majority of households are owner occupiers (77.7%); 4,320 households (8.9%) rent from the Council; 1,991 (4.1%) rent from a housing association or registered social landlord and 4,511 (9.2%) rent privately.

There are some 47,000 residents in employment with 20,640 leaving the Vale and 10,060 coming to work in the Vale each day. Unemployment in the Vale has declined in recent years. In March 2004 it was 2.3% (2.6% for Wales as a whole).

### **Vale of Glamorgan Census 2001 data**

<b>All People</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Welsh avg</b>	<b>Eng &amp; Wal Rank/376</b>	<b>Welsh Rank/22</b>
<b>119,292</b>				
Limiting long-term illness	19.9%	23.3%	116	19
Permanently sick or disabled	6.4%	9.2%	97	20
General health 'not good'	10.4%	12.5%	84	16
People providing unpaid care	11.6%	11.7%	29	11
Providing unpaid care 50 or more hrs/wk	2.6%	3.1%	66	18

Appendix C Equalities Plans



## Appendix D - Consultation Timetable

The timetable below details the involvement activities carried out as part of the development of this Scheme.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Date</b>
Meeting	C&VCDP & VOG Equalities Team	9.6.06
Meeting	Corporate Manager's Equality Group	12.7.06
Focus Group	VOG disabled employees	17.7.06
Focus Group	Critical friends	17.7.06
Meeting	C&VCDP & VOG Equalities Team	19.7.06
Focus Group	VOG disabled employees	21.8.06
Focus Group	Trade Union representatives	21.8.06
Interviews	Snr & Middle Managers	23.8.06
Meeting	C&VCDP & VOG Equalities Team	30.8.06
Focus Group	Critical Friends	4.9.06
Meeting	Corporate Manager's Equality Group	12.9.06
Meeting	C&VCDP & VOG Equalities Team	20.9.06
Focus Group	Direct Payment Service Users	21.9.06
Meeting	C&VCDP & VOG Equalities Team	25.10.06
Disability Equality Training	Disabled Employees (cancelled due to lack of uptake)	30.11.06

## **Appendix E –Consultation issues raised by disabled employees**

### **Recruitment**

A number of improvements were suggested during the consultation process. These included :-

- Improvements in the information provided to disabled applicants at the first point of contact
- Possibility of visits in advance of an interview
- Reviewing of job specification criteria to ensure fairness
- Automatic provision of feedback to disabled applicants

### **Retention, Redeployment & Medical Retirement**

Focus group discussions highlighted concerns in the following areas:-

- The need for consistency by managers in applying the Sickness Policy
- The need for disabled employees to be given special consideration as by managers part of the sickness management process

### **Employee Support**

The Disabled Employees Group highlighted the need for clear information to be given to applicants regarding Access to Work and that training opportunities should be made available to prospective and current disabled employees.

### **Self Identification & Disclosure**

Only 64 staff declared that they are disabled in our recent survey. We would suggest that there are likely to be more people who are disabled but perhaps fear being labelled and do not see any benefit in doing so. We would like to encourage more staff to do so because we fear that their access requirements may be unmet which can lead to stress and ill health. Indeed at discussion focus group meetings held with disabled employees they feared having to face detrimental consequences regarding career progression and changed attitudes of line managers and colleagues if they disclosed that they were disabled.

These discussion groups also helped us to appreciate that we should not have asked, in our survey, 'do you have a disability?'. We should have said 'do you consider yourself to be disabled?' and 'do you have any access requirements?' We will explain to our staff what we mean by the 'disability' and that it is based on the Social Model definition of disability.

### **Disability Equality Training**

The Council has just contracted Cardiff & Vale Coalition of Disabled People to provide a programme of Disability Equality Training aimed at front line staff and in response to the engagement events will be offering DET to disabled employees, our Critical Friends Group, Trade Union representatives and middle and senior managers. For the disabled employees we have tried to encourage more to attend by inviting any members of staff who consider themselves disabled in any way.

### **Access to Premises**

The main access concerns of disabled employees were the entrance doors to the Dock's Office, no toilets being Part M Compliant, doors on all floors (except floor 2) at the Civic Offices not being wide enough for wheelchair users and refuges not having two way means of communication. In recent years all accessible toilets have been fitted with RADAR locks. Whilst this stopped non-disabled people from using them it was noted that this was not ideal for disabled people who do not have a key. There are also associated dignity issues with having to ask for a key to use the toilet. Staff reported that accessible parking bays are often taken up by non blue badge users and they felt a clear and well managed parking policy was needed. They reported that in committee and meeting rooms there are no chairs with arms to aid getting up. They acknowledged that whilst they have good awareness of access improvements that have been carried out this would not be known to the public.

## **Appendix F Issues raised during External Consultation**

### **Chief Executive's Directorate**

#### **Communication and Consultation**

Disabled people were hard pressed to recall taking part in any consultations held by the Council on disability matters. Several could recall what they perceived to be a lengthy consultation exercise regarding the development of the local Health & Social Care Strategy but felt they had been not kept in the loop regarding feedback on outcomes. Also they had observed there were few disabled people in attendance and that the majority had been non-disabled people representing organisations. It was suggested that training would boost the confidence and skills of disabled people to be able to fully engage in such events.

#### **Accessible Information**

The cost of assisted technology, such as screen readers, is often prohibitive for blind or visually impaired people. It was thought more often than not, disabled people, despite having access to a computer, were not confident about using the internet. It was agreed that the Council's website is welcoming. However, it was noted that the information provided on it relating to disability information was limited and difficult to find. Under 'D' on the websites index there is only currently information on direct payments and applying for a blue badge.

#### **Data Collation**

The Council recognises that it needs to improve upon the methods used to collect data on disabled learners and service users. This will need to include information on experiences and perceptions, complaints and compliments.

### **Community Services Directorate**

#### **Community Services**

Focus group discussion meetings revealed that the increase in charges had led to some anxiety for service users and their families. It was thought that some front line staff, responsible for carrying out assessments, were not aware of the

Social Model of Disability. It was also reported that some disabled people would miss out because they would not be able to clearly explain their access requirements. Some individuals were asked during the assessment and appeals process whether they were 'really' disabled.

Concern was raised over the long length of time, for many, waiting for an assessment by Occupational Therapists. Gaps were thought to exist in the provision of advocacy services to assist service users, especially through the appeals and tribunal process. Concern from carers of people with learning difficulties was expressed about an apparent gap. The majority of disabled people who attended the focus group discussion had not heard of services such as direct payments, the RADAR scheme and disability facility grants. It was thought that getting information depended upon having a social worker. It was suggested that information should be made available by sending a leaflet with council tax demands and by publishing articles in Vale Waves and the Gem. Also all disabled people known to community services could be sent an information pack.

## **Housing**

It was suggested that there needs to be a register of public sector housing where adaptations have been made. This would increase choice for disabled people and would avoid the waste of resources that occurs when accessible housing becomes available and the adaptations are removed. Disability Facility Grants need to be promoted on the Council's website. Care & Repair are recognised as being a good provider of this service in Barry & the Vale. It was reported that often non level showers are put in houses. Level showers should be put in as standard in all houses.

## **Environmental and Economic Regeneration**

### **Transport**

Critical Friends knew of two accessible taxis with removable ramps and their fixed prices in Barry were thought to be commendable. It was noted that Barry, Penarth and Cowbridge do not have Shop Mobility Schemes. Disembarking from the train from Cardiff to Dinas Powys, Cogan and Cadoxton leaves you on the inaccessible side of the track. They asked if the council could exert influence to get these stations made accessible.

## Highways

The Council only provide 6 designated bays at disabled people's homes per year. There are currently 36 people are on the waiting list. Bays are allocated using no other criteria which could lead to extreme difficulties for some disabled people.

It was agreed that there is widespread abuse of accessible parking by non-disabled people. This occurs especially at supermarkets, in the evenings and at the Council's leisure centres. At the Barry Leisure Centre this is sometimes abused by workers. It was suggested that the Council should investigate ways to enforce correct usage and like in other parts of the UK to reserve a certain number of wide spaces for wheelchair users.

## Leisure

Information about the Council's Disability Sports Initiative is possible if you are engaged in a sport, that is, you attend a Leisure Centre or read the sports page of the local newspaper. This will not in itself inform and attract disabled people who are not currently engaged in a sports related activity. Swimming was seen as an activity that many disabled could participate in to keep fit. Access issues were raised about the changing rooms at the Hebron Hall, in Dinas Powys and doors often being too heavy in Leisure Centres and the need for audible bells (with a visual cue) to call for assistance.

## Learning and Development

### Lifelong Learning

Several disabled people reported, at focus group discussions, that they had either stopped attending or decided against enrolling in adult education classes, as a result of classes being held upstairs. A common response was that they didn't want to appear to be making a fuss or to inconvenience anyone. All agreed that adverts and brochures should include a statement about access to encourage disabled people to apply.

All of the disabled people who attended the focus group discussions did not know of any employment, training, education or leisure initiatives that aim to target and involve disabled people. To increase awareness of such initiatives it was agreed that information should be sent to doctor's surgeries, town halls, disability organisations and community centres paying special attention ensure disabled people living in rural communities have access to the information.

## Equality

Critical Friends thought that most councillors, managers and staff do not know what defines a disabled person. All agreed that the definition they prefer is the one provided by the Social Model of Disability and that Disability Equality training should be made mandatory.

## Finance ICT and Property

### Access to the built environment

Meetings held upstairs in the Cymin in Penarth and adult education classes held upstairs in the Old Hall in Cowbridge and upstairs at Barry Comprehensive School were given as examples of inaccessible venues used by the Council in the past. There was a lack of awareness that disabled people can request that meetings, courses and other events are held elsewhere within an accessible part of the building or at another venue.

It was recognised that the Local Access Group had worked without funding and by a few dedicated members for many years. The Local Access Group provides the Council with the opportunity to consult with disabled people with expertise in access issues affecting all impairment groups. It was suggested that perhaps it needs to be re-launched.

The issue was raised of there being no public toilets in Barry town centre. It is hoped this will be addressed in the redevelopment plans for the town centre. Elsewhere in the Vale and in the Civic Offices, accessible toilets have been fitted with RADAR keys to prevent non disabled people using them. The keys can be purchased from Housing & Social Services but you are asked to produce a letter from you doctor. However, it was accepted that there can be issues for disabled people about having to remember to carry what is a very large, the availability of a key holder and the whole ethos of having segregated toilet facilities. Ideally it was thought that all new build or refurbished toilets should be made fully accessible for disabled and non-disabled people.

## **Legal and Regulatory**

### Democratic Services

Most asked 'what does a Councillor do?' and said they were put off by considering becoming a Councillor by party politics. Some said they would be concerned about being able to manage their health and becoming a councillor. It was recognised that there needs to be an increase in the number of disabled councillors. They thought there was a need to encourage disabled people of working age to examine the possibility of becoming a councillor and this could be done through a mentoring/ shadowing scheme.



## Appendix G Issues arising from consultation: Summary Table and Proposed Actions

Vale of Glamorgan Council

Disability Equality Scheme 2006–2009

### 1.1. Employment – Recruitment

Considerations	Response / Comments
Include in information packs for all candidates information on support services for disabled employees	Action to be incorporated into Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan. HR to produce information and contact centre to include in job application packs.
Pre application visits for prospective disabled candidates to main place of work	Not feasible at application stage. It is considered appropriate and manageable for all job applicants invited to interview to be offered a pre-interview visit. Action in plan for HR to accommodate subject to the agreement of the recruiting manager / head teacher.
Consider access implications regarding essential job requirements (such as need to be able to drive) and amend	Some posts require the employee to be able to drive e.g. Refuse Vehicle Driver. Guidance will be given under the Recruitment and Selection Policy and Training.
Unsuccessful disabled job applicants to be invited to make contact to receive feedback	Currently all job applicants are given the option to apply for feedback.
Highlight successes in recruitment of disabled people	Action to be incorporated into the Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan for TransAct and Equalities to produce promotional material

<b>Considerations</b>	<b>Response / Comments</b>
All staff involved in conducting interviews to receive Disability Equality Training to ensure interviews are conducted in an accessible and appropriate manner	Action to be incorporated into Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan to review Recruitment and Selection Policy to include this recommendation
Increase awareness of the Disabled Employees Support Group	Action to be included in the Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan

## 1.2. Employment - Managing Absence

<b>Considerations</b>	<b>Response / Comments</b>
Review Sickness & Absence Policy to carry out impact equality assessment regarding disabled employees	Policy currently under review. This issue will be considered as part of the review.
Consider developing a Disability Leave Policy to distinguish between impairment related leave and absence due to sickness	Currently under consideration in consultation with union representatives
As part of current Special Leave review consider allowing for adjustments to changed personal circumstances due to having an impairment	Special leave policy currently under review. This is unlikely to be included as part of the new special leave provision but will be considered as part of the process of considering reasonable adjustments for individuals.

### 1.3. Employment – Support Services

Considerations	Response / Comments
Agree and promote awareness of the procedure for applying to Access to Work	Personnel Officers are aware of the provision and can provide advice on this. Action to be included in the Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan to produce information for the Internet/Intranet.
Ensure that the counselling service has counsellors trained in the Social Model of Disability	Action to be included in the Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan to ensure this is included under the SLA with external providers.
Develop a list that managers can access to determine what support has been provided and adjustments made for disabled employees	Managers are currently part of the authorisation process
Identify quiet no work areas for all staff (which can also act as a prayer room)	Not achievable under existing accommodation constraints.
All managers in Personal Development Reviews to consider the access requirements of disabled staff. Relevant question to be incorporated into the standard PDRS template	Action to be included in the Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan to update PDRS template
Disability Equality Training to be set up for all relevant staff	Programme to be continued

## 2. Service Delivery

### Chief Executive's Department Communication & Information

Considerations	Response / Comments
Improve Council web-site to ensure information aimed at disabled people is easy to find e.g. under 'D' for disability	Action to be incorporated into the Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan
Replace consultations with the principle of involving people throughout the development process	The Council will conduct consultation and engagement activities where appropriate

### Community Services

Considerations	Response / Comments
Identify gaps in provision of advocacy services by impairment group and geography	Further work to be undertaken to evidence base this issue
Reduce the waiting list to be assessed by an OT	A review is being undertaken of this service
Review the charging for home and day care policy	There is currently a national charging policy in place
Provide admin support to the direct payments user group	The Council is currently looking at alternative arrangements to promote independence
Provide information relating to disability facility grants on the Council's web site	To be included as an action in the DES action plan
Develop a housing register for suitably adapted properties	Action to be incorporated into DES action plan

<b>Considerations</b>	<b>Response / Comments</b>
Consider policy amendment to put level showers in all council owned houses as standard when replacing showers	This action is not considered as a priority in the current Welsh Housing Standard
Provide DET training (including information on the Social Model) to frontline Community and Housing Services Staff	Action to be incorporated into DES action plan
Improve information to disabled people on services e.g. direct payments, RADAR scheme, and disability facility grants (e.g. leaflet with council tax demands, article in ValeWaves)	Incorporate action into DES action plan to review information and communications strategy to ensure information reaches disabled people

## **Environmental and Economic Regeneration**

### **Accessible Transport**

<b>Considerations</b>	<b>Response / Comments</b>
Meet with railway authority to ensure platforms are made accessible	This will be addressed as part of Scheme development with Network Rail
Determine whether there is a need for shop mobility scheme in Barry	Feasibility investigation would be required.  Access issues are being considered as part of the Town Centre regeneration work currently being undertaken in Barry.

## Highways

Considerations	Response / Comments
Develop criteria (other than on length of time spent on waiting list) based on need for allocation of accessible home parking bays	Will be considered as part of the Scrutiny investigation into disabled parking bays
Seek ways to shorten the 36 month waiting list for above	As above

## Building and Vehicle Services

Considerations	Response / Comments
Develop a policy for managing accessible parking spaces at council premises for disabled employees and visitors	This issue is currently being progressed

## Leisure

Considerations	Response / Comments
Promote activities provided by the Council's Disability Sports Initiative to attract new disabled service users	This is being done as part of existing strategy. Action to be incorporated in the Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan.

## Finance ICT & Property

### Accessible Council Premises

Considerations	Response / Comments
Involve the Critical Friends Group & Disabled Employees Group in deciding priorities for access improvements for each annual action plan	A copy of the annual action plan for priority work will be provided to the Critical Friends Group & Disabled Employees Group for information/comments.
Review policy of using RADAR locks for accessible toilets	The policy has recently been reviewed and will continue to be monitored for impact.
Designate parking spaces appropriate for wheelchair users at Council Buildings	This will be picked up as part of the buildings access audits and addressed according to priority

## Learning and Development

### Lifelong Learning

Considerations	Response / Comments
Include a statement relating to building access in literature advertising adult education classes	Action to be incorporated into Disability Equality Scheme Action plan to amend current generic statement on access for 2007 brochure to include more detailed commentary on the main Adult Education Centres
Send information on lifelong learning opportunities for disabled people to doctors surgeries, town halls, disability organisations and community centres	This is part of the current arrangements for distribution of information to potential participants

## Equalities

Considerations	Response / Comments
Increase information on disability services and the rights of disabled people on the Council's website and distributing information to e.g. doctor's surgeries	Action to be included in the Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan
Provide access statement regarding where a service is located in all service promotion literature	Action to be included in the Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan for the Equalities to provide guidelines to managers

## Legal and Regulatory

Considerations	Response / Comments
Investigate enforcement regarding non blue badge holders using accessible parking bays	This has recently been addressed by the Council's Corporate Management Team and will be dealt with where appropriate under disciplinary procedures.
Develop a mentoring scheme and training to encourage potential councillors from under represented groups	Information to be developed aimed at underrepresented groups Research to be carried out to ascertain feasibility and potential uptake for a mentoring/training scheme for potential councillors

