



GREAT YARMOUTH

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Disability Equality Scheme December 2006 – November 2009



Picture: The Mayor of Great Yarmouth Councillor Sue Robinson aboard the JST Tenacious during the 2006 Maritime Festival

Contents

Foreword	3
Introduction	4
Involving disabled people in developing the scheme	5
Definition of Disability	6
The Medical Model of Disability	6
The Social Model of Disability	7
Use of Terminology	7
Council Priorities and Customer Care Standards	9
Population	11
Performance Monitoring and Customer Satisfaction	12
Equality Impact Assessments	14
Employment with Great Yarmouth Borough Council	14
Disabled Employees	15
Limitations of the Scheme	16
How we are currently meeting the general duty	16
Action Plan December 2006 – December 2009 (How we will improve and continue to meet the duty)	18
Monitoring and Review	18
Acknowledgements	18
Contact Us	19

Foreword

As a local authority we strive to provide relevant and meaningful services to all our residents, businesses and visitors. However, more than 20 per cent of Great Yarmouth's population have long-term illness, health problems or a disability which limits daily activities or work. We are committed to providing the same level of service to these residents as we are to the rest of the community.

We are aware that many disabled people face inequality, disadvantage and discrimination and we will do our utmost to address this. When delivering services we will take into account how we can meet the diverse needs of disabled people. As an equal opportunity employer we will acknowledge the skills and abilities of the disabled people we employ and will actively encourage disabled people to work for us.

This scheme is a working document which sets out how we intend to meet our duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. We aim to ensure that the Scheme is reviewed on an annual basis and that all action plans, guidance and standards set out in the scheme are subject to monitoring and assessment by involving disabled people. To ensure that this happens we want disabled people and their carers to continually tell us what we need to do better or differently.

We would like to thank the Norfolk Coalition of Disabled People, the Norfolk Citizens Panel, the Great Yarmouth Disability Forum, local disabled people and staff of Great Yarmouth Borough Council for their help in producing this scheme.



Barry Coleman
Leader of the Council



Richard Packham
Chief Executive Officer

Introduction

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 requires all 'public authorities' to produce a Disability Equality Scheme, setting out how they will meet their duty in the Act to promote disability equality. As part of the Scheme authorities must produce a three year action plan. Legislation states that both the Scheme and Action Plan should only be produced after extensive consultation with disabled people. Great Yarmouth Borough Council has produced its own scheme, this document, and has worked in partnership with the County and other district councils, Norfolk Constabulary, Norfolk Police Authority, Norfolk County Association of Parish and Town Councils and local Housing Associations to produce a Norfolk Partnership Disability Equality Scheme.

The Borough Council's scheme should be read in conjunction with the partnership scheme, which sets out:

- Why we need a Disability Equality Scheme
- Why we worked together
- Who the partners are
- How we worked together
- Partnership promises
- Reporting and management arrangements
- Signatures of Chief Executives
- How we involved disabled people
- What we found out
- Partnership action plan
- How the action plan will be reviewed and reported on
- How the partnership scheme will be published

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 states under the general duty that:

"All public authorities, when carrying out their functions, must have due regard to the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other persons (A);
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act (B);
- eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities (C);

- promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons(D);
- encourage participation by disabled persons in public life (E); and
- take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons (F)."

In addition to the general duty as a public authority Great Yarmouth Borough Council is subject to other specific duties. These are:

- develop, produce and publish a Disability Equality Scheme detailing how we intend to fulfil our general and specific duties;
- implement certain aspects of the scheme; and
- report on the outcomes of the scheme on an annual basis.

This scheme is produced with regard to our specific duty and demonstrates how we will adhere to the general duty.

Involving disabled people in developing this Scheme

In July 2006 we held a conference with our partners and the Norfolk Coalition of Disabled People to seek the views of disabled people. The results of this event have not only helped to develop the partnership scheme but have helped with the development of Great Yarmouth Borough Council's own scheme.

Further consultation was undertaken in October with the Great Yarmouth Disability Forum and disabled residents and their carers. In November we held a consultation day with our own employees and information learnt from both these events has been incorporated into the scheme.

We will continue to involve disabled people in the implementation of this Scheme.



Photo: Members of the Great Yarmouth Disability Forum Steering Group

In writing this Scheme we have also used the recommendations made by the Disability Rights Commission's in their Code of Practice on 'The Duty to Promote Disability Equality'.

Definition of Disability

The definition of disability to which we are working is as provided by the Disability Discrimination Act, that is, a "disabled person" has "a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities." It covers a wide range of physical, sensory and mental disabilities, including chronic mental health problems, learning difficulties, HIV, cancer, multiple sclerosis and mental health service users. It is important to understand that not everyone who is disabled has a visible or easily recognisable disability.

The Medical Model of Disability

Under this model of disability, disabled people's inability to join in society is seen as a direct result of having an impairment and not as the result of features of our society which can be changed. The medical model of disability sees the disabled person as the problem. The emphasis is on dependence, backed up by the stereotypes of disability that call forth pity, fear and patronising attitudes. Usually the focus is on the impairment, rather than the needs of the person.

The Social Model of Disability

The social model has been devised by disabled people who feel that the medical model does not provide an adequate explanation for their exclusion from mainstream society - because their experiences have shown them that in reality most of their problems are not caused by their impairments, but by the way society is organised.

Society is shown to disable people who have impairments because the way it has been set up prevents disabled people from taking part in every day life. It follows that if disabled people are to be able to join in mainstream society, the way society is organised must be changed. Removing the barriers which exclude (disable) people who have impairments can bring about this change. The barriers can be:

Environmental	Systematic	Attitudinal
Information in inaccessible formats Inaccessible venues	Segregated services – no access to mainstream provision eg education, housing Inflexible organisational procedures and practices	Disabled people seen as requiring 'expensive' alternatives Disabled people seen as needy

Great Yarmouth Borough Council has adopted the social model of disability and is working towards removing or altering as many barriers as possible that continue to disable people.

Use of terminology

In this document the term 'disabled people' has been adopted. This phrase is empowering in that it acknowledges disabled people as a culturally diverse group that exists in society and includes everyone who considers themselves disabled. The term is rooted in the Social Model of Disability. However, we are aware it is not everyone's preferred term.

There are a number of negative terms used to describe disabled people many of which **do** not reflect how some disabled people see themselves. The following are a number of negative terms that should **not** be used

- **People with disabilities** The term 'disabled people' is the preferred term within the social model of disability. 'People with disabilities' suggests that the disability 'belongs' to the disabled person, rather than 'disabled person' which accurately infers that society disables the individual.
- **The disabled** There is no such thing as the disabled. Use the term 'disabled people'
- **Handicapped** This term is inappropriate, with images of begging and disabled people being cap in hand
- **Invalid** The term literally means not valid
- **Afflicted with** This conveys a tragic or negative view about disability
- **Suffering from** This confuses disability with illness and also implies that a disability may be a personal burden. Increasingly, disabled people view their disability as a positive rather than negative experience
- **The blind** Lumping everyone together in this way is felt by many to take away their individuality. The most appropriate term to use here is 'people with visual impairments', or 'blind people'
- **Victim of** This again plays to a sense that disability is somehow a tragedy
- **Cripple** or **crippled by** Use the term 'the person has ...'
- **Wheelchair bound** Disabled people are not tied into their wheelchairs. People are wheelchair users or someone who uses a wheelchair. A wheelchair offers the freedom to move around and is a valuable tool

- **Deaf and dumb** This phrase is demeaning and inaccurate. Many deaf people use sign language to communicate and dumb implies that someone is stupid. Use 'a person with a hearing impairment', or 'a deaf person', or 'sign language user'
- **Able-bodied** The preferred term is 'non-disabled'. 'Able-bodied' suggests that all disabilities are physical and ignores unseen disabilities, and that disabled people are not able



Photo: Delegates at the Community Cohesion Network Conference "Reaching out Involving Norfolk's Disabled People" 4th July 2006

Council Priorities and Customer Care Standards

The Disability Equality Scheme links with the Council's seven priorities with special reference to addressing inequalities and increasing prosperity. It also works along side our new Customer Care Standards.

The Council's seven priorities are:

- reshaping services around customer needs;
- developing the role and capacity of members;
- equipping staff to enable them do their jobs better;
- making streets and open spaces greener and safer;
- managing waste more efficiently;
- delivering major regeneration programmes;
- and addressing inequalities and increasing prosperity.

The Council Customer Care Standards states:

We require that our customers are:

- treated fairly, honestly, respectfully and in a polite and courteous manner;
- made aware that services are accessible to everyone;
- carefully listen to you when you are talking to us and we will ensure that we use plain English when we speak or write;
- made aware of our decisions with the reasons for them fully explained;
- understanding of our confidentiality procedures and that in certain circumstances statutory obligations may state that we share information;
- aware of our core competency in relation to the standards we expect in customer service.



Photo: Residents at Wherry Way Warden Controlled Housing Complex

We will do our best to provide services and information in ways that make them accessible for everyone, including the provision of:

- an interpreter for you to speak to us face to face or over the phone, including a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter
- information in a number of formats on request – for example, audio tape, Braille, large print or an appropriate language within two weeks;
- public meetings in accessible venues and the use of an induction loop or other suitable system for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. An interpreter is available if required;

Disabled people were consulted on the Customer Care Standards and their input was greatly valued.

Population

There are an estimated 11 million disabled adults in the United Kingdom (1 in 5 of the total adult population) and 770,000 disabled children. Many of these disabled people often have less obvious or non-visible impairments.

Disabled people do less well than non-disabled people in many areas of life. For example, they are more likely to do less well in terms of employment, income and education. Disabled people are also more likely to face discrimination and negative attitudes ('Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People,' Government Strategy Unit 2005)

The number of Disabled people as a proportion of the Great Yarmouth population is higher than the national average. The 2001 Census asked a question about "limiting long term illness" which covered any long term illness, health problem or disability which limits daily activities or work.

	Limiting long term illness	
	Percentage of all people	Percentage of working age people
England and Wales	18.23	13.56
East of England	16.21	11.40
Norfolk	19.36 (approx 158,000 people)	13.83 (approx 112,900 people)
Great Yarmouth	21.79 (approx 19,785)	16.43 (

The 2001 Census also asked questions relating to unpaid care provided, which covered looking after, giving help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of long term physical or mental ill health or disability or problems related to old age. In Great Yarmouth 10.62% of the population said they were providing unpaid care compared to the national average of 9.92%

	No of Hours %		
	1 - 19	20 -49	Over 50
England and Wales	6.81	1.08	2.03
East of England	6.95	0.92	1.97
Great Yarmouth	6.7	1.22	2.7



Photo: Lindsay Seward
 Chair Great Yarmouth Disability
 Forum



Photo: David Wilkinson
 Vice - Chair Great Yarmouth
 Disability Forum

Consultation with local disabled people found that many of the issues raised mirrored those expressed in the Norfolk Community Cohesion Network Partnership Disability Equality Scheme. These included transport, parking access to buildings and services, leisure activities and attitudes towards disabled people.

The issues will be addressed in both the partnership and our own Action plans.

Performance Monitoring and Customer Satisfaction

As part national requirements three-yearly Best Value satisfaction surveys are carried out. The satisfaction levels of a sample of residents are recorded. This sample includes disabled people. The survey contains statutory questions which are asked by all local authorities. The following table shows the results from the 2003/4 Best Value satisfaction and is broken down to show the percentage of all residents satisfied with services and also those who stated they had a disability or long-term illness.

Results from 2003/4 Best Value Satisfaction Survey	All respondents %	Those stating a disability %
Residents' overall satisfaction with Council's services	38	43

Results from 2003/4 Best Value Satisfaction Survey	All respondents %	Those stating a disability %
Residents' satisfaction with cleanliness standards in the district	43	49
Residents' satisfaction with household waste collection	76	79
Residents' satisfaction with recycling facilities	52	58
Benefit claimants' satisfaction with benefits service overall	77	74
Council tenants' satisfaction with housing service overall	79	N/A
Planning applicants satisfaction with planning service overall	82	78
Residents' satisfaction with sports/leisure facilities	37	36
Residents' satisfaction with parks/open spaces	57	59
Residents who made a complaint to GYBC in last 12 months	18	22
Complainants' satisfaction with the way the complaint was handled	31	31

Statistics supplied by Colin Rowland, Policy Officer, Corporate Services

The above chart shows that satisfaction levels of disabled people are similar to those of all respondents. We will closely monitor the areas where disabled people are less satisfied and if the same trend appears in the 2006/7 survey we will investigate further.

Results for the current survey 2006/7 will be available in March 2007. We will use the results from the current survey to assist us on updating our action plans.

Equality Impact Assessment

All Service Departments are undertaking Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) to ensure that all our existing policies and procedures have no adverse impact on disabled people in the community. We will continue to undertake EIA's to guarantee any changes we propose or new policies implemented are fully considered and the potential impact on disabled people is recognised.

All EIA's will be completed by April 2007 and any adverse findings will be included in our action plans. We understand the need for disabled people to be involved in the impact assessment process and we will work closely with the Disability Forum and consult with local people.



Photo: Three Local Residents

Employment with Great Yarmouth Borough Council

	Applicants received		Short listed Applicants		Interviewed Applicants		Successful Applicants		GYBC workforce as at 31 Dec 05	
	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No
Disabled	6.79	92	6.86	30	7.25	28	3.96	4	8.77	47
Non-Disabled	90.04	1220	89.24	390	88.34	341	91.09	92	91.04	488
Undisclosed	3.17	43	3.89	17	4.40	17	4.95	5	0.19	1

Data source: GYBC Human Resource Department

Application forms for all posts asks the following:

- Do you consider yourself to have a disability as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- If you consider yourself as having disability (a) give a brief description of any adjustments that you might require at the workplace or to the duties of the job (b) Are there any arrangements which could be made to make attending an interview easier for you? If yes please specify
- Would you like to be accompanied during the recruitment process by a person of your choice (c)

The form also states that it is the Council's policy that any person with a disability who meets the essential criteria will be offered an interview. If an applicant has indicated yes to (b) and/or (c) and are short listed they will be contacted prior to interview to confirm their precise needs and arrangements.

Disabled Employees

There are number of employees who have not declared their disability. We know that we need to do more so that disabled people feel confident that they can declare their disability and not face discrimination during the recruitment process, as our employees or in furthering their careers.

Focus groups held with employees found they had concerns regarding absences relating specifically to their disability, issues relating to carers, access issues and training. Some of these have already been addressed others will be addressed in the Action Plan.

Great Yarmouth Borough Council has a Best Value Performance Indicator BVPI 11c - Percentage of the top-paid 5% of staff who have a disability. The following table shows the results of this indicator.

Original target for 2005/2006: %.	Outturn result for 2005 /2006 %.	Target for 2006 /2007 %	Target for 2007/2008 %	Target for 2008/2009 %
7.59	10.96	12.79	12.79	14.62

On 31st March 2006, there were 27.36 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) employees in the top 5% of earners and 3.0 FTEs had declared a disability.

Limitations of the Scheme

The views of a diverse group of disabled people have been sought but we realise that we need to do more work regarding mental disabilities, including chronic mental health problems, learning difficulties and HIV.

How we are currently meeting the General Duty

This table shows some of the ways we are currently meeting the general duty (see page 4 for explanation).

Action	Duty
Providing BSL and lip speakers through our INTRAN partnership	A,C,F
Joint working with other agencies and the production of the partnership DES	A,B,C,D,E,F
Information available in a number of formats including Braille and audio on request	A,E
Portable Induction loops for counters, interview rooms etc	A,E,F
Supporting the Great Yarmouth Disability Forum	A,B,C,D,E,F
Adaptations of public buildings	B,E,F
Adaptations for Council Tenants	F
New licensing requirements for taxis and private hire vehicles	A,B,F
Accessible playgrounds	A,B,E,F
Sports development to increase opportunities for disabled people	A,E,F
GP Referral Scheme	E,F
Beach Wheel Chair Scheme	A,E,F
Discretionary rate relief for charitable organisation supporting people with disabilities	A,B,C,D,E,F
Proactive in making sure disabled people receive any entitlement to council tax discount and other benefits	F
Consideration of individual circumstances regarding discretionary awards or debt enforcement	F
Access statements required as part of planning applications	A,B

Action	Duty
Priority given to housing applicants from disabled people	F
Encouragement and opportunity for tenant participation	E
Provision of sheltered housing and support plans to identify needs of disabled tenants	A,F
Floating support to help disabled people sustain their tenancy	F
Supporting people partnerships enabling disabled people to remain in the community	F
Emergency Alarm System (YareCare) for people living independent lives	F
Mobile Warden Schemes to help elderly and disabled people live in their own homes	F
Housing policies that promote affordable housing and independence – Home Improvement Agency	A
Housing policies that help secure purpose built accommodation for disabled people	A,F
Payments to the Council can be made in a number of ways including the website	A
Exploring ways new technology and e-Government can help people with disabilities access services	A,E,F
Accessible Polling stations for Elections	A,E
Postal votes and alternative voting arrangements for Elections	A,E,F
Concessionary travel scheme for disabled people	A,E
Equal opportunity training for staff at induction	A,B,C,D
Deaf awareness training for staff	A,B,C,D
Occupational health assessments available for employees	F
Reasonable adjustments made to working conditions for employees	A,F
Flexible working patterns available for employees	F

Action Plan December 2006 – December 2009 (How we will improve and continue to meet the duty)

During consultation with disabled people they expressed two fundamental statements which they would like us to adhere to:

- disabled people wished to be treated with dignity and respect, and their views and comments listened to
- they did not want public bodies to make excuses but for them to be completely honest about what they can do.

Both of these statements are at the heart of this document and the action plan.

Actions within the plan have been drawn from consultation and feedback from disabled people, carers, employees of Great Yarmouth Borough Council, the Great Yarmouth Disability Forum and information obtained from the Norfolk Citizen's panel survey and the conference held on 4th July 2006. Issues identified in both Service Performance Plans (SSP) and EIA's have also help to shape the Action Plan.

The action plan is published as a separate document as it will be updated regularly during the three year life span of this scheme.

Monitoring and Review

This Disability Equality Scheme is a 'living' document and be kept under constant review and monitored to ensure its effectiveness. The Council will review the Scheme annually. All action plans, guidance and standards set out in the scheme are subject to monitoring and assessment against the Equality Standard for Local Government, the guidance from the Disability Rights Commission and from the feedback received from disabled people.

Acknowledgements

Great Yarmouth Borough Council is grateful for the assistance of all those individuals and organisations who have been involved in the development of this scheme. Special thanks go to the following

Colin Rowland
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Disabled people and their carers living in the Borough

Emma Parker
Employees at Great Yarmouth Borough Council
Great Yarmouth Disability Forum
Jane Beck
Joan Emerson – Policy Officer Norfolk County Council
Peter Dawson
Lindsay Seward
Norfolk Coalition of Disabled People
Norfolk Community Cohesion Network

Their input, advice and support have been invaluable.

We would also like to express our thanks and sincere gratitude to The Mayor of Great Yarmouth (2006/7) Cllr Sue Robinson whose representation of the borough has greatly contributed to promoting equality of opportunity for disabled people, promoted positive attitudes towards disabled people and hopefully encouraged other disabled people to participate in public life.

Contact Us

For more information on this scheme please contact

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