

# DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME





# **DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME**

## **Foreword**

All local authorities have to produce a Disability Equality Scheme and Kennet District Council welcomes this as an opportunity to show everyone how we will try and address the inequality, disadvantage and discrimination that can face disabled people during their lives.

The Council also wants to demonstrate how it will enable disabled people to become full and active members of the communities in which they live. The abilities and potential of many disabled people are not always valued or recognised so at Kennet we want to make sure that we deliver services which consciously try and meet the diverse needs of disabled people.

The Council has already taken proactive steps to make its buildings more accessible to the community and it employs a number of disabled staff. We want to further improve our employment practices by better acknowledging the skills and abilities of disabled people who both apply for jobs or who are already employed by the Council.

The Council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity in the way it employs its staff and the way it delivers services to, and consults with the people of Kennet. It recognises that different communities and neighbourhoods have different needs and aims to treat everyone fairly, without discriminating.

The Council sees its scheme as a new way to try and tackle disability discrimination in a practical way by introducing policies that actively promote opportunities and so prevent discrimination taking place. By taking an organisation wide approach we hope to achieve tangible outcomes and improvements for disabled residents and visitors.

**Cllr Humphries**

**Chief Executive**

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## **INTRODUCTION TO THE COUNCIL**

In April 2004 the Council rolled out its new Corporate Strategy which sets out our long term vision for the area with medium term goals as to how we will achieve our vision.

During 2006 the Council reviewed the corporate strategy to ensure it was still fit for purpose and also to ensure it integrated with our medium term financial strategy. This revised strategy has been drawn together after extensive consultation with Members, partners and the public and takes on board issues that have arisen since 2004.

### **20 YEAR VISION**

The Council will maintain sustainable communities; provide a clean, healthy and safe environment; and good access to council services. The Council will encourage the participation of residents in decisions about their communities.

### **ACHIEVEMENT OF OUR VISION**

To achieve this Kennet District Council will:

- Embrace the role of community leadership.
- Represent the interests of residents and use our influence and resources to enable the provision of services and facilities.
- Use the community planning process to shape our work and work with and through the local strategic partnerships (LSPs).
- Work in partnership with community groups, the voluntary and private sectors, and other public agencies (such as Wiltshire County Council, Wiltshire Constabulary, Kennet and North Wiltshire Primary Care Trust and the parish and town councils).
- Ensure that Members and senior officers put in place proper arrangements for the governance of the authority's affairs and the stewardship of resources at its disposal.
- Deliver our own services to the highest possible level within the resources available.
- Is customer focused in the design and delivery of services, in particular to use the Implementing e-Government Statement process, to improve contact with the public.
- Be committed to enabling the public to have ease of access to services, provided directly by the council and by other agencies. This is in terms of face to face access, electronic access, and access to public transport.
- Communication between the council and the public is seen as being of utmost importance and the council will work to improve the two-way communication.
- Enable elected Members to work for the communities that they serve in an effective and efficient way. They are in a position to promote the council and its aims and values to the community by the provision of help, advice and access to services. They also are in a position to present and promote the aspirations of the communities of Kennet to the council.
- Endeavour to support staff to be enthusiastic, energetic and dynamic. They will be encouraged through good training and development opportunities, employee-friendly policies and a good working environment, intended to enable the council to recruit and retain quality staff.

## Key Priorities

In order to achieve this vision, the council has four key priorities that it wants to address over the coming years.

- Community Leadership
- Stewardship of the Environment
- Developing Strong, Safe & Healthy Communities
- Improving Services

Furthermore we have achieved the following standards right across the authority:

- Investors in People
- Equalities Standard for Local Government Level 3
- New and updated Web content conforms to W3C/WAI's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0, Conformance Level AA\*
- Positive about Disabled People.

With regard to the latter, Kennet District Council has signed up to the Employment Service's "Positive about Disabled People" programme, commonly known as the "double tick" symbol, to demonstrate its commitment to promoting employment opportunities for disabled people. There are five commitments, which must be met, and regularly monitored in order to maintain the right to use this symbol.

- to interview all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and consider them on their abilities
- to ensure there is a mechanism in place to discuss, at any time, but at least once a year, with disabled employees what can be done to make sure they can develop and use their abilities
- to make every effort when employees become disabled to make sure they stay in employment
- to take action to ensure that all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed to make these commitments work
- each year to review the five commitments and what has been achieved, plan ways to improve on them and let employees and Jobcentre Plus know about progress and future plans.



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\* The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) develops strategies, guidelines, and resources to help make the Web accessible to people with disabilities. There are three standards WAI priority A, AA and AAA these cover web content in different levels of accessibility under four main principles: **Perceivable** - all content must be perceivable i.e. provide text for non-text content. **Operable** - Interface elements in the content must be operable i.e. access via a keyboard or keyboard interface. **Understandable** - Content and controls must be understandable i.e. text should not be ambiguous. **Robust** - Content must be robust enough to work with current and future technologies i.e. will work with old, new and future technology. Full guidelines are available on [www.w3.org](http://www.w3.org)

It is also important to note that in 2006 the Council invested heavily in improving its customer facilities at its main Browfort Offices where improvements to its reception facilities have delivered:

- 1** All doorways replaced with new ones built to Disability Discrimination Act specification – adequate width for wheelchair access with glass panels in each to improve visibility/safety.
- 2** The reception desk has a specially designed wheelchair access counter.
- 3** Personal Computers have been provided in the public access area with easy wheelchair access.
- 4** The main information and access signs will have Braille information on them.
- 5** A new disabled toilet facility has been provided.
- 6** The large metal support post in the centre of reception is being clad to ensure high visibility
- 7** Portable hearing loops are available
- 8** Deaf alerters, vibrating devices linked to the fire alarm system, will be available
- 9** Staff training has been provided on Lip Reading and staff training is being given in Signing for the Deaf.

# 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE SCHEME

1.1 The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 imposed a general duty to prohibit discrimination against disabled people broadly in relation to the following areas: -

- Employment and occupation
- Trade associations and qualification bodies
- Education and qualifications
- Housing
- The provision of goods and facilities and services
- The exercise of public functions
- The use of certain transport and vehicles.

1.2 The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 amends the 1995 Act and now places a duty on all public authorities, when carrying out their functions to have due regard to the need to: -

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the 1995 Act
- eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

1.3 The Disability Discrimination Regulations 2005 which compliment the 2005 Act require the Council to produce and publish a Disability Equality Scheme to promote equality of opportunity by removing environmental and attitudinal barriers to its buildings, services and employment practices which could exclude or disadvantage persons with disabilities. The Council also has a duty to consider how it can influence the wider community through its activities.

1.4 These duties are intended to assist the Council in meeting the General Duty imposed by the 1995 Act. In particular, by setting out what public authorities should do to plan, deliver and evaluate action to eliminate discrimination and promote equality. The core requirements are:-

- publish a Disability Equality Scheme (including within it an Action Plan)
- involve disabled people in producing the Scheme and Action Plan
- demonstrate they have taken actions in the Scheme and achieved appropriate outcomes
- report on progress
- review and revise the Scheme.

1.5 The purpose of Kennet District Council's Disability Equality Scheme is to:

- Show how we have involved disabled people in decisions we have made
- Find out what barriers are faced by disabled people and then take steps to remove them
- Find out what disabled people need and which of these needs are the most important to them
- Tell people what our responsibilities are. This includes informing councillors, staff, unions, partners in the public, voluntary and private sectors and residents
- Explain how we make things fairer for disabled people in planning our services and what we do
- Work in partnership with disability and equal opportunity organisations to prevent ignorance and prejudice in the wider community
- Show what changes have resulted from our work and set out our three-year disability equality action plan on how we will put the Scheme into practice
- Monitor and check what we are doing and report each year
- Make sure we meet our legal duties.

1.6 The general duty to promote Disability Equality will therefore become embedded in the Council's functions. It will be considered in planning, policy making, service delivery, regulation, enforcement and employment.

1.7 For information and advice from the Disability Rights Commission visit their website at: [www.drc-gb.org](http://www.drc-gb.org). You can also contact the DRC Helpline between 08.00 and 20.00, Monday to Friday.

Telephone: 08457 622 633

Text phone: 08457 622 644

Fax: 08457 778 878

Post: DRC Helpline  
Freepost  
MID 02164  
Stratford upon Avon  
CV37 9BR

## 2 INVOLVING DISABLED PEOPLE

### Definition of Disability

2.1 The definition of disability changes from time to time and it is the intention that the Council will always comply with the relevant statutory definition and this scheme will therefore be revised accordingly.

2.2 The current definition defines a disabled person as follows:

*A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.*

Further information on this definition and what this means can be found in **Appendix 1**.

2.3 The Council also acknowledges that disability is a consequence of barriers that prevent many people from maximum participation in society. These barriers take little account of people who have impairments and may be:

- Built environment problems
- The rules and policies of organisations and institutions
- Attitudes of people
- Information and communication issues.

2.4 This is the 'Social Model' approach and was developed by disabled people and it makes a clear distinction between an impairment and a disability. An impairment is an injury or physical or mental condition which causes, or is likely to cause a loss or difference in the way a body or mind functions.

2.5 A disability is a loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in society on an equal level with others, due to the barriers in society or the environment.

2.6 By focusing on the barriers, information can be gathered which empowers organisations to make meaningful changes which can lead to choice, empowerment, equality of human rights and integration.

2.7 Having defined 'disability' in two ways, how many disabled people are there? There are some statistics available on disability at a national level and these clearly indicate that people with disabilities make up a considerable proportion of the national population:

- There are 6.8 million disabled people of working age in Britain, one fifth of the total working age population. Fifty two per cent (3.5 million) are men and forty eight per cent (3.3 million) are women.

- There has been a gradual increase in the size of the working age disabled population over time, from 6.0 million in spring 1998 to 6.8 million in spring 2005 – a growth of fourteen per cent over a seven year period. Over the same period, the non disabled population increased by 0.6 per cent.
- Disability rates increase with age; whilst 9 per cent of adults aged 16-24 are disabled, this increased to about 44 per cent in the 50 to retirement age category.
- Many disabled people work or want to work. Half of disabled people of working age, 3.4 million people, are in work and 1.2 million disabled people without a job, want to work.

2.8 With specific regard to Kennet, figures for Wiltshire have not been systematically recorded but the information which is available is set out below:

**Table 1. Broad Impairment Categories in Wiltshire in 2005 for people under 65 reporting Disability**

**Estimated Population based on spread by district (annual population survey).**

	<b>Kennet</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>West</b>	<b>Wilts Total</b>
Musculo - skeletal	4715	7885	7177	7629	27406
Sensory	456	762	694	738	2650
Circulation / Digestion	2364	3954	3600	3826	13744
Breathing / Skin	1780	2978	2710	2881	10350
Diabetes	826	1382	1258	1337	4802
Mental Health	1424	2382	2168	2305	8280
Learning Difficulties	399	667	607	645	2318
Other	2279	3811	3469	3688	13248
estimated total population with disability	14244	23821	21684	23049	82798
District Population Totals 2004	76580	128070	116580	123920	445150
Median Disability Rate	18.6%	18.6%	18.6%	18.6%	18.6%
Disabled Population	14244	23821	21684	23049	82798

(Figures based on Annual Population Survey, Family Resource Survey & Labour Force Survey)

**Table 2. Figures for some categories from the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons register (as of August 06)**

	60 and Over	Under 60
Blind	1127	154
Partially Sighted	995	126
Hearing Impaired	264	185
Learning Disability	86	331
Mental Health	82	43

The total registered in all the categories is 13,481 and the distribution across the districts is as follows:-

Kennet	West Wilts	North Wilts	Salisbury
2433	3676	2869	4503

### **The way in which disabled people have been involved in the development of the Scheme**

- 2.9 In November of 2006 the Council's Equalities Steering Group sought the views of 151 individuals (disabled people and carers) on how it is progressing in its goal towards making its services and facilities accessible to everyone. In particular, the Council wanted the views of a cross section of disabled people and carers on any particular problems that they had experienced when they came into contact with the Council. It also sought views on how individuals would like the Council to change or improve services or buildings to make them more accessible.
- 2.10 The responses to the survey's generic questions revealed that the majority of people had no difficulties in contacting the Council or using services and that the information we provide is usually in a suitable format and easily understandable. When queries were made, however, there was a mixed response with a number of respondents being unhappy with the way the Council's staff responded to individual needs or enquiries. An identified failing here appears to be the non-return of telephone calls and dissatisfaction with the change from a 'switchboard' to a 'contact centre'.

- 2.11 The Council has also benefited from a survey of the facilities provided in one of its towns by a wheelchair user who then reported his findings. This pilot 'reality check' was extremely useful and actioning appropriate recommendations has been incorporated into the action plan. A summary of the reality check is attached as [Appendix 2](#).
- 2.12 A number of disabled residents of the district were also involved in Wiltshire County Council's Disability Equality Project Pilot Survey. This was set up to find out what can be done to make things better in Wiltshire for people with a disability. This project involved people with disabilities and people who support or help them.
- 2.13 The key actions were:
- to carry out a qualitative pilot survey with residents of Wiltshire who have a disability,
  - to provide a situation analysis from the customer point of view,
  - to use the analysis to question the way the County Council provides its services as a starting point for its Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan
  - to directly involve disabled people in the process.
- 2.14 The plan was to talk to a selection of about 40 individuals representing people with many different disabilities. In order for the discussions to give meaningful information and to identify common themes the disabilities were grouped as follows:

Mobility      Hearing      Vision      Hidden      Learning      Mental Health

- 2.15 These individuals then had the opportunity to continue the cascade by having similar discussions with colleagues with a disability and feeding the information back, or simply suggesting colleagues to talk to and seeking their agreement to take part.
- 2.16 The discussions were based on five questions chosen and adapted by members of the County Council's Staff Disability Forum. The idea was to initially extract the most annoying issue and to prompt creative thinking about possible solutions. This was followed by an invitation to propose a change that could be achieved at little or no cost.
- 2.17 The five questions:
- How does your disability affect your daily life?
  - Is there any issue or barrier related to this disability that you come across regularly or even daily that really annoys or upsets you?
  - Can you suggest a way this/these could be changed to improve your day-to-day life?
  - Can you think of something small which annoys you that could be put right very quickly without costing a lot of money?

- Again, thinking about this disability, is there something that is good practice that could be done in other places so that more people can benefit? This could be in your home, your community, or in a workplace.

2.18 Over 100 people volunteered to take part in discussions. These people were from:

- the County Council Staff Disability Forum and their contacts outside the Council
- individuals with a disability or their carer nominated by community groups
- service users who volunteered through County Council service providers
- other Wiltshire residents with disabilities who showed interest in the project.

2.19 Discussions were always 1:1, either by telephone or face to face. Email was used if verbal or visual contact was not practical. The community groups included:

MS Therapy Centres	Wiltshire and Swindon Users Network
Kennet Carers	Community Resource Centres
Wiltshire Deaf clubs	Wiltshire Blind and Partially Sighted clubs
MS Society Wiltshire branches	Mental Health support groups
Community Day Centres	Dyslexia Association

2.20 The main issues from the County Council's survey which have relevance for Kennet District Council were as follows:

### **Mobility**

The most prominent issues raised by people with a mobility impairment centred around physical access to shops, banks and pubs, which is not the direct responsibility of either the County or District Council. Blue Badge parking was raised as was the lack of policing, no link between badges issued and spaces provided and a lack of thought in placement of bays. The recent introduction of 'decriminalised parking' whereby the District Council is now responsible for the management of on street parking and the enforcement of parking restrictions has however provided an excellent opportunity for Kennet to take a proactive stance on this issue.

Of the 44 interviewed, five people had quite strong feelings about the length of time it took for necessary house adaptations, particularly when personal washing facilities were compromised.

## **Vision**

Blind or partially sighted people's issues were often based on thoughtlessness of other and people not understanding their difficulties about seeing obstructions. They feel that there are not enough clubs or special facilities where people are aware of their needs. An issue that irritates three of the 26 participating was transport costs; there is no equivalent allowance made for people who are eligible for free bus passes yet are unable to use buses because of their disability.

## **Hearing**

A major issue raised by Deaf people is that being Deaf doesn't mean that you have a disability; it means that you communicate with people in a different way, using a different language. There is a vast difference between the needs of person born Deaf and a person who has lost their hearing. There are therefore many issues around communication, people not understanding needs and not making an effort to communicate.

## **Learning**

Discussions with people with a learning disability were mostly between service users and the staff from many day centres around Wiltshire, but the issues were similar, around people's attitudes and awareness of people's individual needs. There was a strong feeling about the poor choice of facilities and activities.

## **Hidden**

Hidden disabilities cause stress and embarrassment amongst those affected because often nobody understands the condition or the need for assistance; people understand wheelchairs because they are visible.

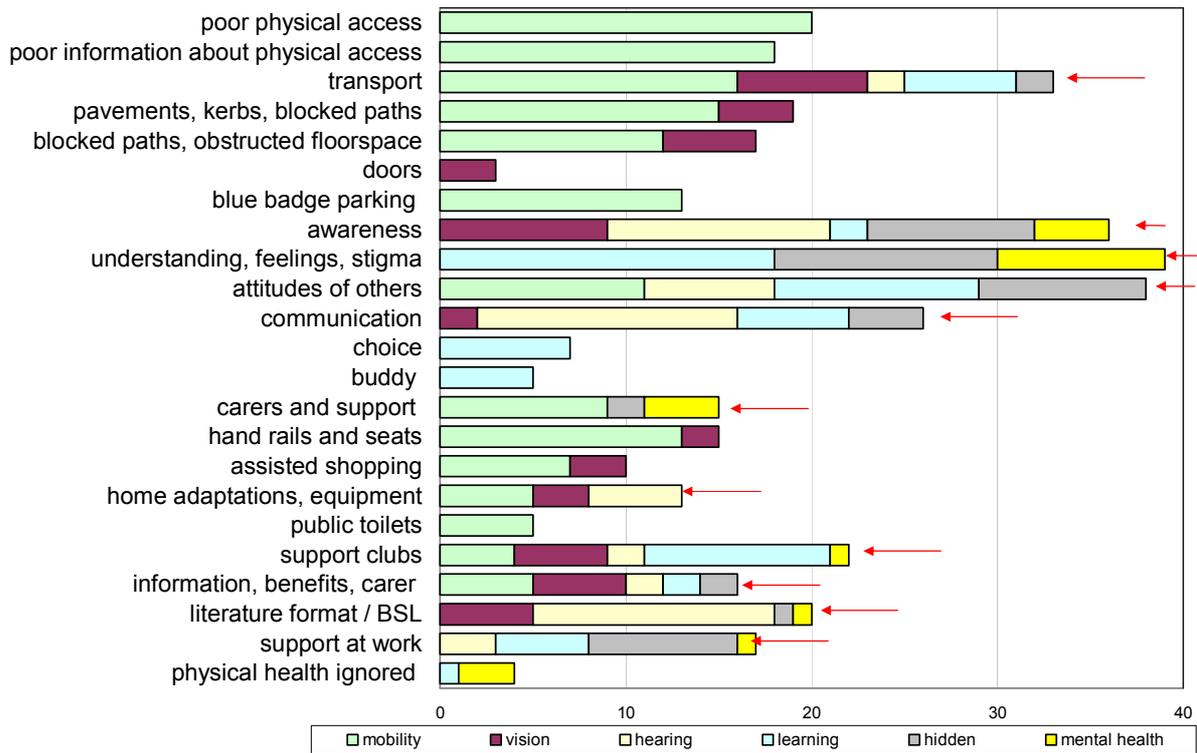
## **Mental Health**

In discussions with people with mental health disability it became very obvious that mental health covers many complex conditions; the barriers and issues cannot be categorised or analysed in a short period. The only valuable information taken from this survey is that there is a lack of awareness and understanding of mental health conditions amongst employers.

A summary of this very useful work carried out by Wiltshire County Council can be found in [Appendix 3](#).

In summary, with all disabilities there is an overwhelming need for better understanding and awareness of people's needs, and questioning our attitudes, especially if these needs are not visible. As the graph below shows, when you combine barriers or issues across the range of disabilities you can see that addressing an issue for one will benefit many.

**Graph 1. Common barriers and issues raised – each section in the bar represents a different category of disability**



It is obvious from the range of issues revealed by the work of the County Council that only some can be tackled by District Council's services. Others can, however, be addressed by the Council acting with partner organisations such as Wiltshire County Council or through internal cultural change.

### **3 KENNET'S METHODS FOR IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 3.1 An impact assessment must be carried out of all of the Council's existing and proposed policies and practices. To facilitate this, the Council has already produced a methodology in the form of its Diversity and Equalities Impact Assessment guidance.
- 3.2 Its purpose is to improve the work of a service or the outcome of a policy or strategy or project by making sure it does not discriminate and that where possible it promotes equality. It involves anticipating the consequences of policies and projects and making sure that, as far as possible, any negative consequences are eliminated or minimised and opportunities for promoting equality are maximised.
- 3.3 The guidance can be found at [Appendix 4](#).

### **4 GATHERING AND USING INFORMATION**

- 4.1 The council's principle arrangements for gathering information on the effect of our policies and practices on disabled people are outlined below.

#### **Employment**

- 4.2 The council gathers information on its staff through analysis of application forms, training requests and feedback from the annual Employee Development Reviews.
- 4.3 The Management Information System specifically holds data on disability by grade, and this data is reported on an annual basis to the Human Resources Committee.
- 4.4 It is suspected that there may be under reporting of disabilities amongst Council employees for a variety of reasons and this obviously impacts on the information available to management to make positive changes. As a consequence the Human Resources team have identified a need to produce a targeted leaflet for all staff, to raise awareness of the definition of disability and the Council's responsibilities under the 2005 Act. The leaflet will encourage staff to report any disability status for monitoring purposes to Human Resources. They will also be asked to make suggestions about improvements and express concerns confidentially about harassment issues.
- 4.5 Once the Council has a better picture of the number and distribution of disabled employees it will be better positioned to monitor the effectiveness of its recruitment, development and retention policies.

## **Service Delivery**

- 4.6 While the Council has been actively pursuing information via customer surveys across all services on 'ethnicity', and on the ranking of importance the services it offers and gaps in services, it has not systematically collected information specifically on the views and needs of disabled people. This obviously has to change and better information gathering has to be a key action in the Action Plan.
- 4.7 Research in the preparation of this Scheme has also shown that there is much to be gained from having some form of Disabled User Forum and again, this is something which will appear in the action plan.
- 4.8 The Council has recently participated in the Disability Awareness Event in Trowbridge organised by the County Council and supported by the four Wiltshire Districts. Staff from across all of the Council's services were asked to attend and the information gained at this event will also be valuable in shaping the future actions of the Council.
- 4.9 Information will also be gathered through the use of its Diversity and Equality Impact Assessment methodology.

## **Using the Information Gathered**

- 4.10 The Council will make effective use of the information it has, and which it is undertaking to collect in future. This information will be reviewed on a regular basis and fed into the action plan review process. It will also be used to monitor the effectiveness and outcomes of the steps set out in the action plan to ensure the Council is delivering meaningful improvements.
- 4.11 In addition, the Council's Equalities Steering Group will review this Scheme itself to ensure that it is consistent with current legislation and maintains progress against the action plan. This review will inform an annual report for the Human Resources Committee and the Council's Management Team setting out on the progress made in delivering greater equality via the action plan.

## **5 The Action Plan**

- 5.1 The Action Plan clearly sets out the steps that Kennet District Council will take to meet the general duty. It captures the key actions that the Council will take to promote disability equality over the three year period of the Disability Equality Scheme.
- 5.2 The action plan which follows is broken down under generic headings and clearly identifies what will be done, the expected outcomes, time scales and responsibilities for delivery.

## 5 THE ACTION PLAN – IMPLEMENTING THE SCHEME

### Leadership and Corporate Commitment

**Aim – To ensure compliance with the duty to promote equal opportunity by ensuring that disability equality is mainstreamed into all policies, services and strategies of Kennet District Council**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Outcome/performance Indicators</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
To raise the awareness of disability equality corporately and assess the likely impact on existing and proposed policies, strategies and service delivery	Produce a prioritised and timetabled programme of service and policy reviews using the Council's Diversity and Equalities Impact Assessment methodology	Completion by end of September 2007	Management Team and Service Managers working with partners
Conduct the reviews of services and policies to identify barriers and improvements that need to be made	Equality assessments take place systematically and are used to inform service and policy improvements/revisions. Barriers identified and improvements made	Reviews completed and improvements actioned by end of December 2008	Service Managers
Raise the standard of disability equality across the Council	Annual report to the Human Resources Committee and the Council's Management Team setting out on the progress made in delivery with a full scheme review in December 2009	Annually	Management Team, Service Managers and the Equalities Steering Group
Commitment to make finance available for consultation, engagement, training and publicity	Budget established	April 2008	Management Team and Finance Service Manager

<b>Action</b>	<b>Outcome/performance Indicators</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Kennet District Council to support the County Council and other Wiltshire authorities in organising disability awareness events regularly throughout Wiltshire.	Events organised and supported	Ongoing	All Service Managers

## Consultation, Community Development and Scrutiny

**Aim – To ensure that disabled people are involved in the planning and assessment of policies and practices and that the results of this consultation are transparent for disabled people and staff**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Outcome/performance Indicators</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
User satisfaction monitoring	Improvements in satisfaction as a result of Council actions monitored and identified	Annual	Equalities Steering Group and Policy Service
Development of a Disability Forum to support work of the Equalities Steering Group	The Forum is established and taking an active part in the Disability Equalities Scheme	July 2007	Policy Service and HR
Review all consultation exercises, focus groups and panels to ensure they are representative in terms of including disabled members who reflect the diversity of the disabled community	Consultation practices reviewed	October 2007	Policy Service and Equalities Steering Group

## Service Delivery and Customer Care

**Aim – To decide how changes in policies, strategies and service delivery affect disabled people and to take previously identified steps to improve service delivery**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Outcome/performance Indicators</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
To identify service needs of people with disabilities and barriers to accessing services	Improvements in satisfaction as a result of Council actions monitored and identified	Annual	Equalities Steering Group and Policy Service
To engage the Disability Forum in assessing service provision and policies and where practicable implement its recommendations	Actions/recommendations implemented and action plan updated as appropriate	Ongoing from July 2007	Equalities Steering Group and Policy Service
To ensure that all buildings and services are accessible and wherever possible accommodate the needs of people with disabilities	Access audits completed annually and service and policy reviews completed using the Council's Diversity and Equalities Impact Assessment methodology	Annually and by December 2008	Equalities Steering Group, HR and the Buildings Occupiers Group
To identify, benchmark and promote the Council Tax band reduction scheme to households that have had disabled conversion works carried out to their properties.	i) % of households receiving discount identified and benchmarked across Wiltshire ii) Specific leaflet produced aimed at households with disabled residents outlining financial benefits available	By December 2007	Financial Services - Revenue
Increase the number of people with physical disabilities re-housed into more suitable or adapted accommodation.	Fifteen people per annum.	Annually	Housing Service Manager

<b>Action</b>	<b>Outcome/performance Indicators</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Increase the number of frail or disabled people assisted to stay in their existing home through action by the Council.	Thirty people per annum.	Annually	Housing Service Manager and Environment and Protection Service Manager
Maximise use of Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant budget	a) 110% of grant budget committed b) 80% of grant budget spent by year end	Reported on a quarterly and annual basis	Environmental and Protection Service
Reduce the average completion time of Disabled Facilities Grants (from occupational therapist referral to works completion.	Reduction in average time to complete Mandatory DFG from the current level of 14 months to 12 months.	Reported on a quarterly and annual basis.	Partnership between WCC/KDC/Care and Repair
1. Consult and discuss internally the options available to assist people with disabilities to access information about planning services. 2. Consult Equalities and Social Inclusion Group. 3. Draft a procedure note on improving access and consult with appropriate user groups. 4. Produce agreed policy.	Planning Services Access Policy. An adopted procedure note and policy for assisting people with disabilities to access information about Planning Services, including access to plans, drawings, files, documents, all consultation/notifications and meetings. Production of Access Policy in accessible format. 100% agreement of access policy by appropriate user groups. Adoption of policy by target date.	Oct 2007	Planning Services
Consider the use of technology to assist communication with people with hearing disabilities	Improved communication channels for people with hearing difficulties. Capital bid made for any identified improvements.	December 2007 (capital bid)	Information Services
Ensure procurement activity	Ensure that external service providers to the	December	Information

Action	Outcome/performance Indicators	Time Frame	Responsibility
addresses disability equality issues	Council meet their Statutory equalities requirements	2007	Services
Incorporate where possible the conclusions/suggestions produced in both Kennet's 'Reality Check' and Wiltshire County Council's 'Involving People with Disabilities pilot survey' into service delivery plans	Each Service to analyse the Reality Check and pilot survey responses relevant to their service provision and identify areas that need a) Better publicity b) Re-investigation c) Further investigation and if justified, actions should be included in forthcoming service plans d) Addressing immediately because of safety reasons or if the cost is negligible and the impact substantial.	December 2007	All Service Managers
All new content on the Kennet website and intranet will be to WAI - AAA standard and old content where possible will be upgraded to AAA. Forms will be reviewed and converted to compliant Level AAA.  Other websites tourism, planning, documents will be upgrade (where required) to AA with a view to AAA by 2008	Content on the KDC website to meet new standards	By December 2007  By December 2008	

## Employment and Training

**Aim – To determine how policies, strategies and service delivery affect people with disabilities seeking employment or already employed by the Council. If there is evidence of a negative impact to take corrective action.**

Action	Outcome/performance Indicators	Time Frame	Responsibility
<p>To monitor the employment of people with disabilities with the aim of increasing the number of disabled staff employed to 2.8%.</p>	<p>Develop, promote and grow the existing programme to assist more disabled job seekers</p> <p>Offer work placements to disabled job seekers</p> <p>All new recruits to be asked to provide information on disabilities</p> <p>Report to HR Committee analysis of information on effect of policies and practices on disabled employees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment retention</li> <li>• Access to training</li> <li>• Number of disabled applicants</li> <li>• Number of disabled employees in post</li> <li>• Numbers of disabled people who leave</li> </ul>	<p>Annually in September</p>	<p>HR</p>
<p>Existing employees to be encouraged to provide information on disabilities</p>	<p>Steps taken to encourage existing staff to declare disabilities or impairments to enable the Council to obtain a true picture of staff</p>	<p>Information about disability</p>	<p>HR</p>

Action	Outcome/performance Indicators	Time Frame	Responsibility
	demographics	status to be requested from employees every two years as part of Data Verification. Next exercise in 2007.	
Provide tailored support for disabled employees with improvements such as provision of larger screens/reading equipment and software etc.	Equipment and software provided.	Ongoing	HR
Produce a targeted leaflet for all staff, to raise awareness of the definition of disability and the Council's responsibilities under the 2005 Act.	The leaflet will encourage staff to report any disability status for monitoring purposes to Human Resources. They will also be asked to make suggestions about improvements and express concerns confidentially about harassment issues.	By July 2007	HR
To identify barriers to the employment of disabled people with partners, community groups and the Disability Forum	<p>The Council's Diversity and Equalities Impact Assessment methodology will have been used to review the HR Service and actions implemented</p> <p>The results will have been reported to the HR Committee</p>	In line with the programme of reviews to be established	HR

<b>Action</b>	<b>Outcome/performance Indicators</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Incorporate the requirements of the Disability Equality Scheme into the Council's staff induction and general training programme for staff and Members	Both internal and external trainers incorporate equality issues into their programmes  Disability equality and awareness training reviewed and strengthened  Training programmes will be monitored	Ongoing from May 2007	HR
Improve training on interpretation, and human aids to communication	Improved training opportunities in place	December 2007	HR
Train planning staff on disability awareness and implementation of the new Planning Services Policy.	Access Policy and procedure note is fully implemented by all planning services staff. 100% of requests for assistance dealt with in accordance with Access Policy.	December 2007	Service Manager

## Monitoring and Review

**Aim – To ensure the Council makes effective use of the information it has, and which it will to collect in future**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Outcome/performance Indicators</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Review and report on progress made on delivering greater equality	Demonstrate that progress has been made on delivering on the actions set out in this plan and meeting the Council's legal duties.	December 2007, 2008 and 2009	Equalities Steering Group
Review and update the Disabilities Equality Scheme	The Scheme will have been reviewed and updated	December 2009	Equalities Steering Group
User satisfaction monitoring	Improvements in satisfaction as a result of Council actions monitored and identified	Annual	Equalities Steering Group and Policy Service
Monitor and review national and local best value performance indicators relating to disability	Improve access to buildings and services and the employment opportunities for staff with disabilities	Quarterly	HR and the Policy Service
To work with partners to collect accurate information on the numbers and location of people with disabilities within the County and District  (While the Council has sought information via customer surveys across all services on 'ethnicity', and gaps in services, it has not systematically collected information on the views and needs of disabled residents. This information gathering has to be a key action to inform future Action Plans)	An improved data base to be created which can inform the Council and its partners in planning service and policy development	August 2008	HR and the Policy Service

## Appendix 1

### THE MEANING OF DISABILITY

#### When is a person disabled?

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

#### What about people who have recovered from a disability?

People who have had a disability within the definition are protected from discrimination even if they have since recovered.

#### What does 'impairment' cover?

It covers physical or mental impairments; this includes sensory impairments, such as those affecting sight or hearing.

#### Are all mental impairments covered?

The term 'mental impairment' is intended to cover a wide range of impairments relating to mental functioning, including what are often known as learning disabilities.

#### What is a 'substantial' adverse effect?

A substantial adverse effect is something which is more than a minor or trivial effect. The requirement that an effect must be substantial reflects the general understanding of disability as a limitation going beyond the normal differences in ability which might exist among people.

#### What is a 'long-term' effect?

A long-term effect of an impairment is one:

- which has lasted at least 12 months, or
- where the total period for which it lasts is likely to be at least 12 months, or
- which is likely to last for the rest of the life of the person affected.

Effects which are not long-term would therefore include loss of mobility due to a broken limb which is likely to heal within 12 months and the effects of temporary infections, from which a person would be likely to recover within 12 months.

### **What if the effects come and go over a period of time?**

If an impairment has had a substantial adverse effect on normal day-to-day activities but that effect ceases, the substantial effect is treated as continuing if it is likely to recur; that is if it is more probable than not that the effect will recur.

### **What are 'normal day-to-day activities'?**

They are activities which are carried out by most people on a fairly regular and frequent basis. The term is not intended to include activities which are normal only for a particular person or group of people, such as playing a musical instrument, or a sport, to a professional standard or performing a skilled or specialised task at work. However, someone who is affected in such a specialised way but is also affected in normal day-to-day activities would be covered by this part of the definition. The test of whether an impairment affects normal day-to-day activities is whether it affects one of the broad categories of capacity listed in Schedule 1 to the Act. They are:

- 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.

### **What about treatment?**

Someone with an impairment may be receiving medical or other treatment which alleviates or removes the effects (though not the impairment). In such cases, the treatment is ignored and the impairment is taken to have the effect it would have had without such treatment. This does not apply if substantial adverse effects are not likely to recur even if the treatment stops (i.e. the impairment has been cured).

### **Does this include people who wear spectacles?**

No. The sole exception to the rule about ignoring the effects of treatment is the wearing of spectacles or contact lenses. In this case, the effect while the person is wearing spectacles or contact lenses should be considered.

### **Are people who have disfigurements covered?**

People with severe disfigurements are covered by the Act. They do not need to demonstrate that the impairment has a substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

### **Are there any other people who are automatically treated as disabled under the Act?**

Anyone who has HIV infection, cancer or multiple sclerosis is automatically treated as disabled under the Act. In addition, people who are registered as blind or partially sighted, or who are certified as being blind or partially sighted by a consultant ophthalmologist are automatically treated under the Act as being disabled. People who are not registered or certified as blind or partially sighted will be covered by the Act if they can establish that they meet the Act's definition of disability.

### **What about people who know their condition is going to get worse over time?**

Progressive conditions are conditions which are likely to change and develop over time. Where a person has a progressive condition he will be covered by the Act from the moment the condition leads to an impairment which has some effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, even though not a substantial effect, if that impairment is likely eventually to have a substantial adverse effect on such ability.

### **Are people with genetic conditions covered?**

If a genetic condition has no effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, the person is not covered. Diagnosis does not in itself bring someone within the definition. If the condition is progressive, then the rule about progressive conditions applies.

### **Are any conditions specifically excluded from the coverage of the Act?**

Yes. Certain conditions are to be regarded as not amounting to impairments for the purposes of the Act. These are:

- addiction to or dependency on alcohol, nicotine, or any other substance (other than as a result of the substance being medically prescribed)
- seasonal allergic rhinitis (e.g. hay fever), except where it aggravates the effect of another condition
- tendency to set fires
- tendency to steal
- tendency to physical or sexual abuse of other persons
- exhibitionism
- voyeurism.

Also, disfigurements which consist of a tattoo (which has not been removed), non-medical body piercing, or something attached through such piercing, are to be treated as not having a substantial adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

(Source: Disability Rights Commission publication "The Duty to Promote Disability Equality – Statutory Code of Practice" published 2005)

### **NOTES FROM PILOT REALITY CHECK FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AROUND THE COUNCIL AND DEVIZES – JULY 2006**

1. There are no signs on Kennet District Council's disabled toilets in the town to indicate where to get radar keys from. These are the keys that you need in order to be able to access disabled toilets. (They are available from the Tourist Information Centre [TIC], but the TIC is not open, other than normal office hours, and the only way to access the TIC, if you are disabled, is at the rear of the premises and there is no disabled parking bay at the rear of the premises which would facilitate this.)
2. The number of disabled parking bays to able bodied bays is not appropriately apportioned in the light of the estimates we have for disabled people within the district. There is a statutory ratio and this ratio has to be applied per car park. With on road parking, there is no quota, but it would be very helpful if in key locations, for example, chemists, TIC, etc, there was an 'on the road' disabled parking space.
3. When we are considering our disability equality scheme, we need to ensure that we have a mix of people reflective of all disabilities, i.e., blind, deaf, wheel-chair bound, learning disabilities, mental disabilities, multiple disabilities, carers of those with special needs and the elderly.
4. There was a 'safe routing scheme' which encouraged disabled people to use a clockwise route around a town and there was some advice and guidance regarding this which Kennet might want to consider when installing things like street furniture, etc.
5. The County Council is using different tactile paving, but that they weren't using it correctly, for example, there are different pavings for pelican crossings and zebra crossings, etc and these have been inconsistently applied within the town.
6. There are two disabled parking bays in the Market Place (the check took place on Market Day) which are not wide enough for ramps to be used against a vehicle, either at the side or at the rear to enable movement of automated wheelchairs. Similarly, disabled parking spaces ought, ideally, to be 'drive in' and 'drive out' spaces and not located amongst standard spaces. A lot of disabled people have difficulties reversing because they can't turn very well, so drive in drive out is much more sensible.

7. It was mentioned that the Council is about to construct two modern toilet blocks and that modern assisted toilets would be installed in their place. It was suggested that the Council might want to review the disabled toilet facilities for a number of reasons, for example, it is helpful to be able to turn a wheelchair within the space of the toilet; that non-slip tactile grab rails, rather than polished ones, were more appropriate; fold-down grab rails alongside the toilet were a no-no, as is the one in the ground floor of Browfort. The reason for this is they come out of the wall when people put weight on them and that could cause an accident. Floor standing ones are far more appropriate. The cords in the disabled toilets are similar and people with sight difficulties could get the wrong one. The toilet pan in the downstairs toilet should be six inches further forward.
8. Consideration of using Anti Social Behaviour Orders could be given for people who persistently abuse shop staff and disabled spaces.

Access could be made of the 'EU Disabled Grant Fund' which helps local authorities and other organisations to develop facilities for the disabled and that there is funding from the EU of up to 75 % of any initiatives.

9. The Council may wish to look at blue badges as the EU and the UK have different rules about their applicability and that we are being inconsistent. Perhaps the Council may want to lobby for a change on this.
10. The Council may want to consider putting in charging stations for electric vehicles. Some of these can be solar powered or they can be supplied by local organisations, or a local charity who might share some of the costs.
11. Another proactive action could be offering wheelchair classes, not only for wheelchair users, but for elderly scooter users. A day event, perhaps, emphasising safe use of these and also a tagging scheme for security.
12. The bus platform ramps could be dangerous. They could cause a hazard both for the able bodied and the disabled because of the slopes.

Linked to its licensing function, the Council may want to consider disabled awareness training for taxi drivers. One or two taxi drivers had said that they had not had any training and that they might welcome some. Also, if there are taxis with ramps, there is no high level platform or access for a disabled ramp. This again might be something the Council could address with partners.

Finally, disabled servicemen were discussed and whilst deaths get a high profile, for every person that is killed there are often three who are disabled. Disabled servicemen tend to get be required to leave army quarters and the services within 90 days. This means there could be scope for half-way house or rehabilitation facilities for servicemen within our area, given that we have a large garrison town in the District and a large army population locally.

**The Council would like to acknowledge the invaluable work carried out by Mr David M. Hughes in undertaking this Reality Check.**

## Appendix 3

### EXTRACT FROM WILTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S 'INVOLVING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES PILOT SURVEY RESULTS'

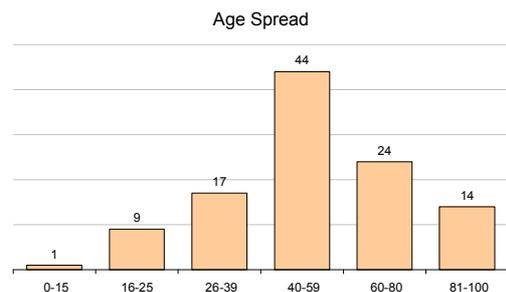
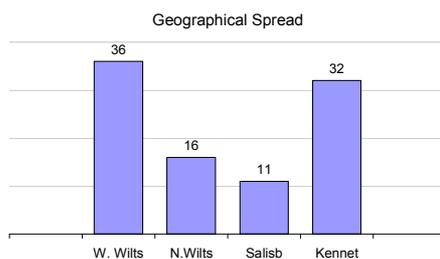
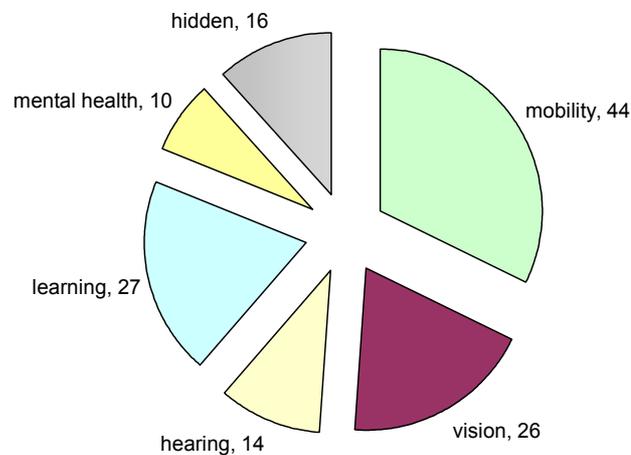
#### Participants

At this time (21-Feb-10) 105 people have participated in recommending areas for change and putting forward their suggestions, including 20 carers of people with a disability. Of these 105 participants, 22 are employed by WCC. The discussions are ongoing as this is a continuing project and the number of people participating increases daily.

As this is a qualitative survey, the proportions of disability categories participating do not reflect the national average figures or in fact the figures available for Wiltshire. The reason is that with some disabilities the issues are much less understood and it was necessary to involve more people with these expertises.

The total of all categories is greater than the total participants because of some having multiple disabilities.

disability category of those asked (105) at 14.8.06



The age spread (total participants 112) does not add up to 105 because three participants gave no age and when talking to carers - only the carer's age was recorded in five cases, only the disabled person's age in eight cases and seven recorded both ages.

## Issues Raised

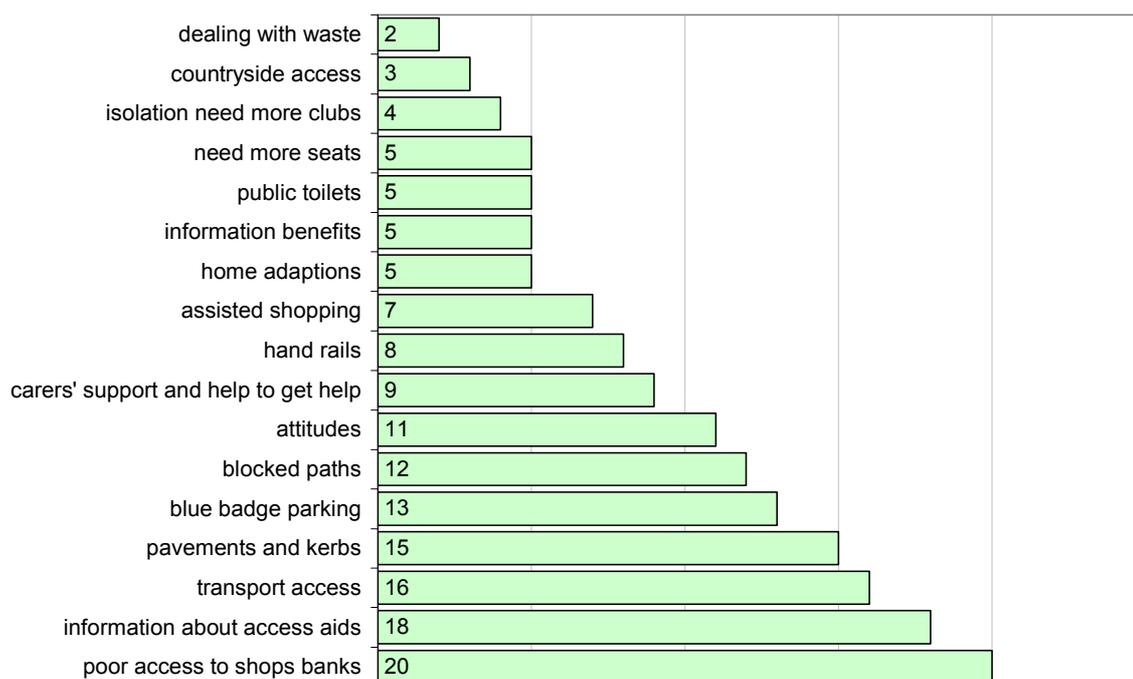
### Main issues raised by 44 people with a mobility impairment

The most prominent issues raised by people with a mobility impairment centred around physical access to shops, banks and pubs, which is not the direct responsibility of the Council, but the condition of pavements, kerbs, blocked paths and transport are. Blue Badge parking proved to be an emotional subject, with abuse, lack of policing, no link between spaces provided and badges issued and lack of thought in placement of bays. Several people were upset by the attitude or abuse from others when using a Blue Badge bay when not over 90 or in a wheelchair.

Of the 44 interviewed, five people had quite strong feelings about the length of time it took for necessary house adaptations, particularly when personal washing facilities were compromised. Others were critical of carers' support and felt that family carers were taken for granted such that their own health suffered as a result.

Issues such as handrails and seats can be more easily addressed and can make a big impact on someone's everyday life

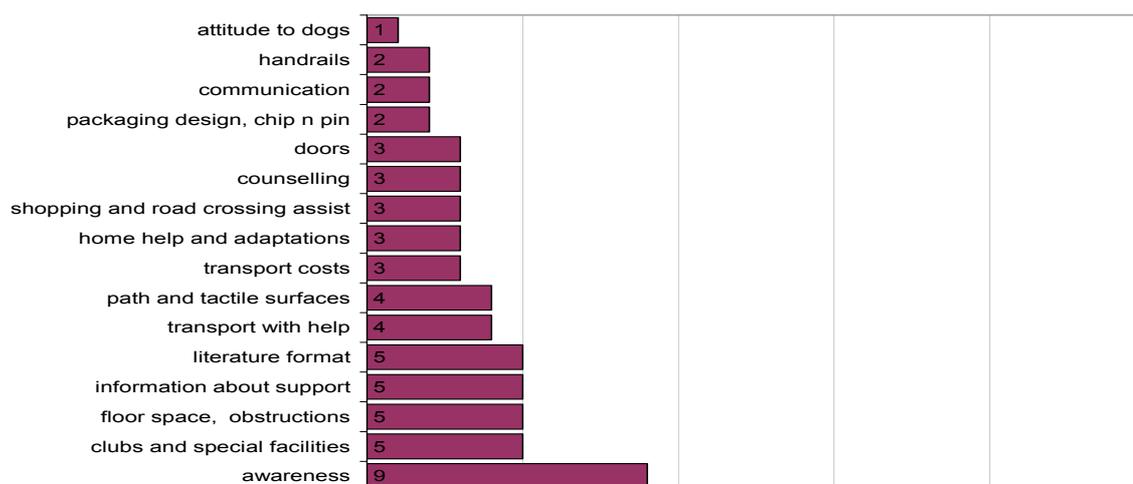
Graph 2.1. Main issues raised by 44 people with a mobility impairment



## Main issues raised by 26 blind or partially sighted people

Blind or partially sighted people's issues were often based on thoughtlessness of other and people not understanding their difficulties about seeing obstructions. They feel that there are not enough clubs or special facilities where people are aware of their needs. An issue that irritates three of the 26 participating was transport costs; there is no equivalent allowance made for people who are eligible for free bus passes yet are unable to use buses because of their disability.

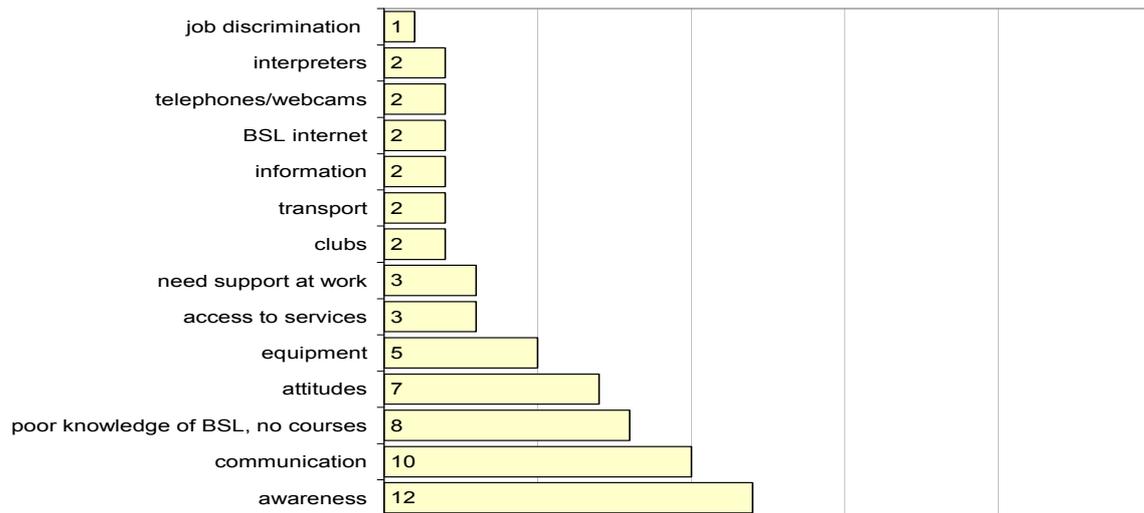
Graph 2.2. Main issues raised by 26 blind or partially sighted people



## Main issues raised by 14 Deaf or hearing impaired people

A major issue raised by Deaf people is that being Deaf doesn't mean that you have a disability; it means that you communicate with people in a different way, using a different language, just as a Polish person uses a different language. There are therefore many issues around communication and people not making an effort to communicate.

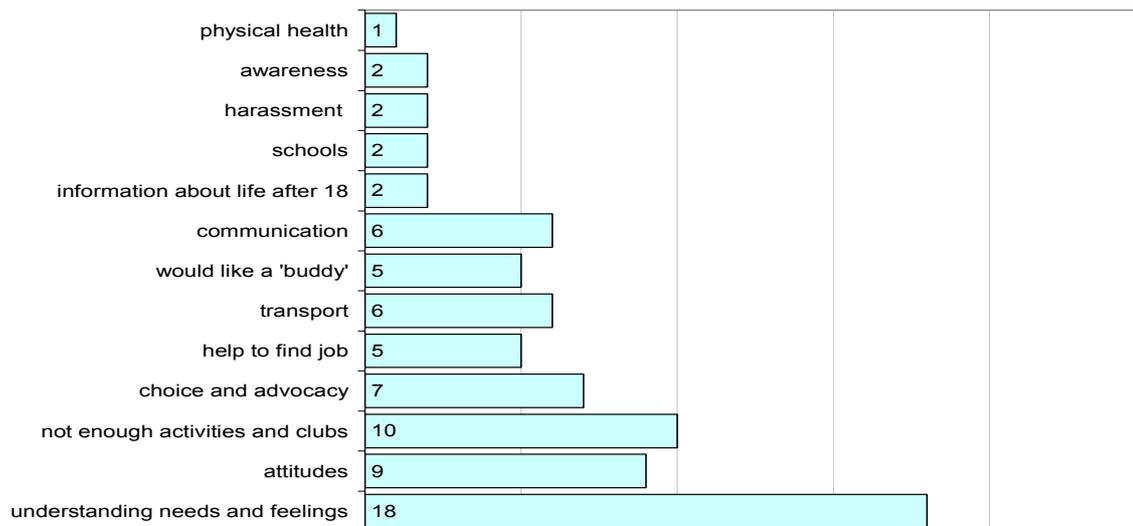
Graph 2.3. Main issues raised by 14 Deaf or hearing impaired people.



## Main issues raised by 27 people with a Learning Disability

Discussions with people with a learning disability were mostly between service users and the staff from many day centres around Wiltshire, but the issues were similar, around people's attitudes and awareness of people's individual needs. There was a strong feeling about the poor choice of facilities and activities.

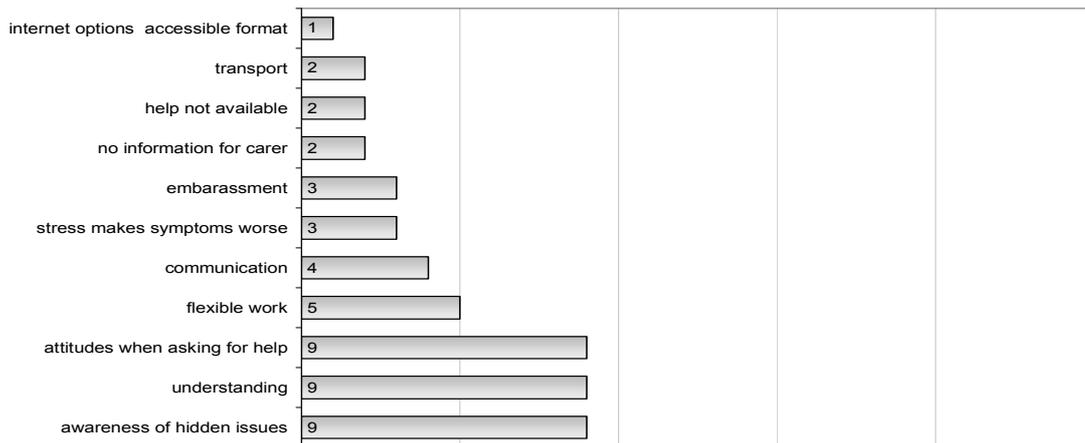
Graph 2.4. Main issues raised by 27 people with a Learning Disability.



## Main issues raised by 16 people with a hidden disability

Hidden disabilities cause stress and embarrassment amongst those affected because often nobody understands the condition or the need for assistance; people understand wheelchairs because they are visible.

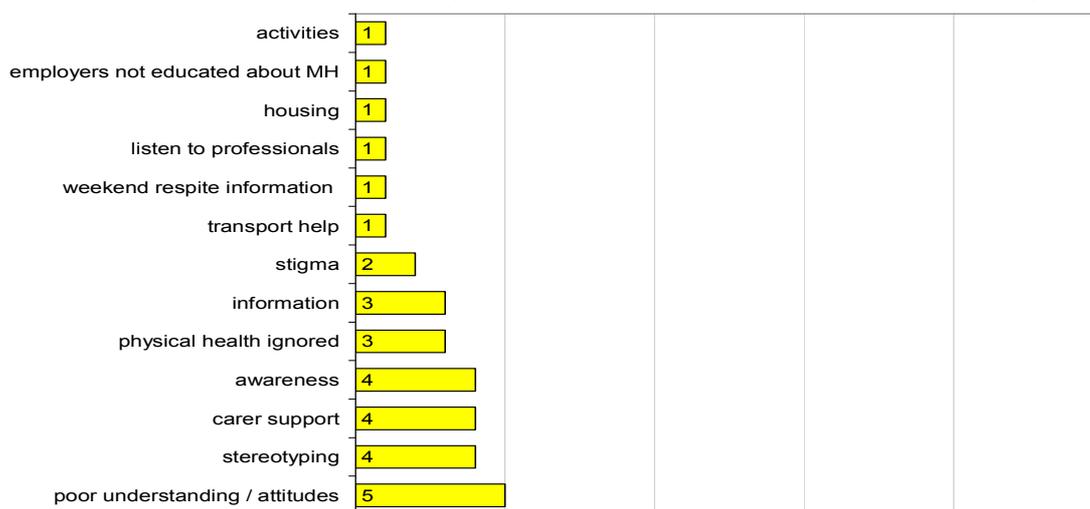
Graph 2.5. Main issues raised by 16 people with a hidden disability such as lupus, diabetes and many conditions that cause pain or fatigue.



## Main issues raised by 10 people with a mental health disability

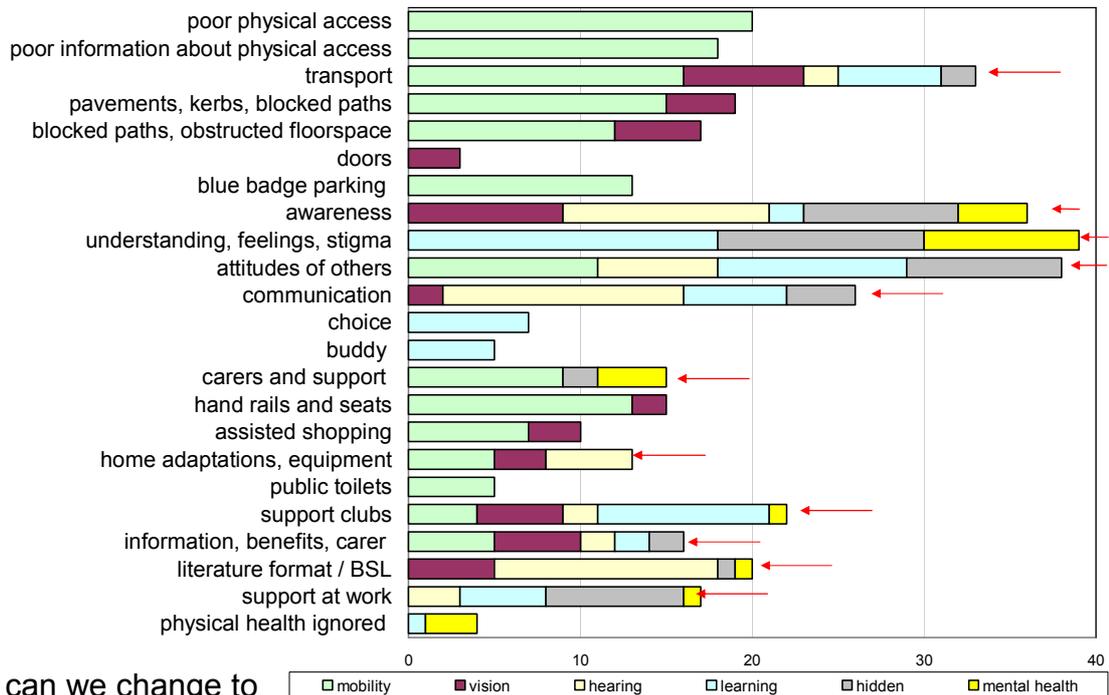
In discussions with people with mental health disability it became very obvious that mental health covers many complex conditions; the barriers and issues cannot be categorised or analysed in a short period. The only valuable information taken from this survey is that there is a lack of awareness and understanding of mental health conditions amongst employers.

Graph 2.6. Main issues raised by 10 people with a mental health disability.



In summary with all disabilities there is an overwhelming need for better understanding and awareness of people's needs, and questioning our attitudes, especially if these needs are not visible. As the graph below shows, when you combine barriers or issues across the range of disabilities you can see that addressing an issue for one will benefit many.

Graph 2.7. Main issues raised by combined categories of disability



How can we change to make things better?

Suggestions for improvement from those with a mobility impairment included:

- provide maps with w/ch accessible path routes;
- organise a local project to inform shops about ramps, handrails, seats;
- free access audits;
- access barriers against motorbikes with Radar locks;
- awareness campaigns; need to publicize good points and actions already taken;
- reserve place on council for disabled politician;
- teach equality and diversity in schools;
- double yellow line in front of dropped kerbs;
- dropped kerbs at all crossing points;
- encourage shops to report bad pavements outside their premise;
- improve standard of pavements by stopping cars and trucks parking on them;
- more handles;
- more seats;
- change design of ferrules on walking sticks so they don't slip in wet;
- blue badge renewals should include information stressing fairness of use;
- parking awareness campaigns; put architects, builders and road workers in wheelchairs, that's the only way they'll understand;
- a mailing list of help and support organisations;
- more clubs to encourage people to get out more;
- hand rails could be cleaned;

- hand rails on both sides of steps and stairs in CH;
- a public transport 'companion' idea, or volunteer bus conductors;
- supply a directory of guaranteed accessible public transport;
- change Wigglybus timetable to allow round trips

Suggestions for improvement from those who are blind or have a visual impairment included:

- awareness raising ... and not just for wheelchairs!;
- someone to push my w/ch – I can't have a scooter because I'm blind;
- a lollipop lady for older people as well as school children;
- regulations to keep floors clear;
- have literature on show in alternative formats to show you are aware;
- alternative bus pass for blind for peak hours;
- coloured stickers next to handles on glass doors;
- more clubs for blind and partially sighted people, and pay leaders to run clubs;
- tactile pavements should be kept clear; fill potholes;
- visible markings alerting to automatic doors with lines showing direction of opening;
- visible step edging;
- visible swipe card units would help; conductors on buses;
- reduced taxi fares to compensate for others having free bus travel

Suggestions for improvement from those who are Deaf or have a hearing impairment included:

- add 'signstation.com', 'finger spelling' card or 'don't panic pack' in payslips;
- reception staff should learn BSL;
- offer free local courses for Deaf awareness & BSL;
- I can teach sign language;
- schools should have Deaf awareness and BSL courses;
- you could learn BSL on Internet – costs nothing; put videophones, webcams and visual information screens in Libraries and publicise;
- a Council website for Deaf users; train people at the top (WCC) in BSL;
- access audits for meeting rooms with information on Intranet

Suggestions for improvement from those with a learning disability included:

- a 'Buddy' scheme with the service-user's interests in mind;
- words of support are not always enough – sometimes a hug should be acceptable;
- a central co-ordinator for 19+, suitable colleges and procedures involved;
- having somewhere to go like a 'drop';
- I would like a choice of where I go; I would like to work;
- people should understand what support I need;
- a good morning call reminder service 'have you taken your tablets?';
- use Makaton (sign language);

- Riding for the Disabled should be recommended and supported;
- taxi-share scheme to college;
- pay service users to do jobs done by contractors e.g. gardening, catering, cleaning

Suggestions for improvement from those with a hidden disability included:

- awareness course on citizenship for everybody especially starting with school children;
- could be bells to call for trained assistance rather than having to go and look for someone;
- make first-aiders aware of hidden disabilities – it might save a life;
- a phone call to check I'm OK;
- where there aren't hand rails, put some and where there are, clean them;
- make Link schemes more 'accepted', I don't like taking charity;
- awareness training for managers;
- should have a library of info about disabilities put together by staff with disabilities so managers can read up on subject;
- time off work to go to special needs support group during the day;
- home-working would avoid stress

Suggestions for improvement from those with a mental health disability included:

- I am happy to tell people about my problem on the phone but not to a group;
- awareness in schools;
- awareness in work experience situations;
- educate employers to remove barriers caused by stereotyping and stigma;
- listen to carers;
- recognise advocates;
- respite for short periods like a weekend;
- shared ownership housing allocation by someone who has sat in a wheelchair

**Source: Permission to use the research/information set out Appendix 3 was kindly given by Wiltshire County Council's Equalities Team which is located within Development Services at Wiltshire County Council, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire. BA14 8JN**

**Email: [equalities@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@wiltshire.gov.uk)**

**Telephone: 01225 713000**

## Appendix 4

### **KENNET DISTRICT COUNCIL DIVERSITY AND EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT - GUIDANCE**

People are at the heart of everything we do to improve the quality of everyday lives. Society is made up of diverse individuals of varying ages, different sexes and sexual orientations, ethnic backgrounds, abilities, and faiths. Different people may have different needs and may disagree about priorities, although diversity issues do not always result in many different demands being made. We are committed to service delivery, which addresses the needs of a population with diverse requirements. Often these needs will overlap, sometimes they will conflict, but everyone has a right to be heard and understood. Therefore the culture of service provision should recognise, respect, value and harness difference.

Practices that do not address the different needs of a diverse society are likely to amount to discrimination, even if that was not their intent, ignorance is not a defence. Equality and Diversity are not 'minority' or 'fringe' issues:

- They may now be material considerations in policies and decisions;
- They should be an integral part of everyday service delivery, not an "added extra";
- Positive action should be taken to ensure that their practice and policies are inclusive and do not result in systematic disadvantaging of some communities or individuals.

The effects of strategies, projects and policies should be monitored to see if they are achieving intended results and to identify any unintended impacts.

#### **What is an Equality Impact Assessment?**

Its purpose is to improve the work of a service or the outcome of a strategy, policy or project by making sure it does not discriminate and that, where possible, it promotes equality. It is a way to make councillors, officers, teams and individuals think carefully about the likely impact of their work on the community. It involves anticipating the consequences of policies and projects on these groups and making sure that, as far as possible, any negative consequences are eliminated or minimised and opportunities for promoting equality are maximised.

What are we trying to find out/ suggested lines of enquiry for the impact assessment:

It is important to consider whether the aims of the Service, strategy, policy or project comply with current legislation on equality and how these policies and aims fit within the Corporate Equality Policy. Some services may be targeted at specific groups in order to meet needs. These policies need to be understood and rationalised within the broad commitment to equality.

- Are the service, strategy, policy or project aims in conflict with the Corporate Equality Policy, equalities legislation or our commitment to social cohesion? Look at targets and priorities.
- Are there any aspects of the policy that could contribute to inequality? Look at location of facilities, access issues, language, translation and interpretation, dress codes, eligibility and rules etc.
- Does the service know what the needs of different people in the community are, and are they addressed in policy and decision-making?
- Are service users and hard to reach groups being asked in a structured way for feedback on how the service's policies and procedures are working?
- Is there sufficiently up-to date quantitative and qualitative information about the characteristics of who is in the community and how this might be changing?
- Are statistics sufficiently disaggregated and cross-tabulated and other information gathered in a way to analyse how different people have different needs?
- What sustained efforts have been made to engage with different people within the community, including people who don't usually get involved in the service? Do people understand what the service is and why it is important to their daily lives? Are they involved early enough to make a difference? How do their views influence results on the ground? Are staff acquainted with the wide range of methods of engaging with different people?
- Is information clear, accessible and understandable to different people in the community? Is there a need for translation, interpretation or action to help people with various disabilities? Have new forms of IT been considered?
- Has there been an audit of policies in terms of their effects on different people in the community?
- Is there a need for further research to understand the causes of adverse impact?

### **How do you define impacts?**

A negative or adverse impact - where the impact could disadvantage one group, or some equality target groups. This disadvantage may be differential, where the negative impact on one particular group of individuals or one equality target group is likely to be greater than on another.

An active impact – where there is a positive impact on one group or some equality target groups, or improve equal opportunities and/or relationships between groups. This positive impact may be differential, where the positive impact on one particular group of individuals or one equality target group is likely to be greater than on another.

## **Stages in the Impact Assessment:**

We have chosen to take a two-tiered approach to the impact assessments. In the first instance, the screening stage, you are assessing for obvious negative or positive impact or, importantly, gaps in knowledge about likely impact. If the likely impact on the different equality target groups is not known, then action needs to be taken to acquire that information. The best way to find out if a policy or project is likely to impact negatively or positively on equality target groups is to find out if research already exists or to directly consult representatives of those groups or relevant specialist organisations. At this stage the following resources could be made full use of:

- Project lead's and the project team's professional knowledge of the issue and/or personal experience;
- Previous consultation results;
- Analysis of previous complaints, comments, evaluations and monitoring;
- Research and reports;
- Library searches;
- Internet searches;
- Advice from internal and external specialists;
- Staff with previous involvement of direct implementation of a similar project/policy.

The second stage, the full assessment should only be carried out if you have identified obvious high-level negative impact to any group(s). Further information on the full assessment will follow.

## **The Diverse Communities:**

### **Age**

Increasing awareness of age-based discrimination, knowledge of ageism legislation and the importance of non-discrimination based on Age is of paramount importance but specific legislation on ageism will not become law until the final implementation deadline for age discrimination law set for 2 December 2006. For the purpose of the impact assessments officers should interpret 'older' or 'younger' as relevant to their service age.

### **Economic or Social Background**

For the purpose of the impact assessments officers should consider the various grades of socio-economic classification that commonly include: professionals, middle managers, all other non-manual workers, all skilled manual workers, semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers and those on benefit or unemployed.

## **Rural**

Indirect discrimination Isolation and access to services, specifically transport issues. According to Countryside Agency findings, social exclusion in rural areas is not just confined to people on low incomes. Those who are too young, too old or have permanent or temporary medical conditions which prevent them driving will not have full access to a car even if they live in car-owning households. Car ownership and use is high in rural areas – 40% of rural households have two or more cars and three-quarters of all journeys are by car but for the 16% of households without a car, the lack of mobility can cause real hardship. This is because: there is only limited public transport available – 50% of rural households live more than 13 minutes walk from a bus stop compared to nearly 90% for England as a whole. Twenty-nine per cent of rural settlements have no bus service at all. There has been a decline in the availability of rural services – in large part this is due to the fact that those with cars can choose to use more distant facilities and can choose to live in areas that are not accessible by public transport. The distances travelled are greater – rural residents travel on average over 40% further than urban residents each week because facilities and services are likely to be further away.

## **Gender**

Sex discrimination can be both direct and indirect on the grounds of sex, gender reassignment and marital status. Gender is defined as the state of being male or female. Sex is defined as the sum of the characteristics that distinguish organisms on the basis of their reproductive function. The transgender issue is considered to be an issue of an individual's assessment whereby they consider themselves to be (in general), not of the gender that they were born, but of the other. It is not a "biological" matter as such but it is more a matter of identity i.e., the "who" they consider themselves to be. (There are of course people who are biologically, somewhere in between, e.g. the hermaphrodites.) The issue is not an issue of sexual orientation, i.e., the preference for the type of sexual partner to which they are attracted and / or the sexual activity in which they wish to partake. i.e., the "what" they wish to do.

## **Sexual Preference**

Under the European Council Directive 2000/78/EC the United Kingdom was required to implement legislation in relation to discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation by 2 December 2003. The Directive gave three years to prepare the legislation, and the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations came into force on 1 December 2003. Although the legislation focuses on employment discrimination, there is a need to consider the wider implications of homophobia.

## **Disability**

Disabilities are not necessarily visible and can include impairments such as mental health conditions, diabetes and severe dyslexia. Disability would include any physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term effect on an individual's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. A person has a disability for the purposes of the Disability Discrimination Act if he or she has a physical and / or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. This, the "medical model" of disability has been challenged by disability activists who would define disability within a sociological framework. The "social model" of disability is defined as a view that disability is caused by the attitudinal, physical and communication barriers imposed on those with a disability, rather than the effects of the impairment. Combined, the "medical and social" models of disability offer a more comprehensive way of addressing the issues of impairment that exclude people from participation in mainstream social activities.

## **Race, Religion and Belief**

Racial discrimination can be direct or indirect. 'Discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably because of their difference, but more often when someone's difference and needs are not recognised'. (Equality in Managing Service Delivery, Rohan Collier, Open University, 1998). Racial grounds include the grounds of race, colour, and nationality - including citizenship - or ethnic or national groups. For the purpose of the impact assessments officers are to use the standard classifications of religion as used during the last Census, which are: Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, Sikhs, or other. Census standards classifications for race should also be used which are: Asian or Asian British, Black or Black British, Chinese or Other, Mixed race or White including Irish.

**KENNET DISTRICT COUNCIL  
SERVICE EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**



**Section 1  
Screening**

Name of Service:           Housing Services

Name of Officer  
Completing Assessment

Extension No:

Date of Assessment:

- 1 What is the main purpose of the service?
- 2 List the main activities of the service.
- 3 Who are the main beneficiaries of the service?
- 4 Use the following table to identify:
  - a) where you think that the service could have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups i.e. it could disadvantage them
  - b) where you think that the service could have a positive impact on any of the groups or contribute to promoting equality, equal opportunities or improving relations within equality target groups.

Diverse Community	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Nature of Impact	Scale of Impact (Numbers)	Political Priority/ Relative Importance	Gaps in Knowledge	Actions/Options
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Economic or social background	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Rural	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Sexual Preference	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Religion, faith or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					

- 5 If you have indicated there is a negative impact on any group, is that impact:
- |   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| a) Legal (i.e. it is not discriminatory under anti-discriminatory legislation)? | Yes<br>No<br>Low |
| b) Intended?  |                  |
| c) Level of impact  |                  |

If the negative impact is possibly discriminatory and not intended and/or have high impact you must complete section two of this form. If not, complete the rest of section one below and consider if completing section two would be helpful in making a thorough assessment.

- 6 a) Could you minimise or remove any negative impact that is of low significance? Explain how:
- b) Could you improve the service's positive impact? Explain how:
- 7 If there is no evidence that the service promotes equality, equal opportunities or improved relations – could it be adapted so that it does? How?

Please ensure that the Head of Service signs this form below, keep one copy and send one to the Equalities Steering Group c/o ???

Signed: .....

Dated: .....

**KENNET DISTRICT COUNCIL  
STRATEGY, PROJECT OR POLICY EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**



**Section 1  
Screening**

Name of Strategy, Project or Policy:

Name of Officer Completing Assessment

Extension No:

Date of Assessment:

- 1 What is the main purpose of the strategy/project/policy?
- 2 List the main activities of the project/policy (for strategies list the main policy areas):
- 3 Who will be the main beneficiaries of the strategy/project/policy?
- 4 Use the following table to identify:
  - a) where you think that the strategy/project/policy could have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups i.e. it could disadvantage them
  - b) where you think that the strategy/project/policy could have a positive impact on any of the groups or contribute to promoting equality, equal opportunities or improving relations within equality target groups.

Diverse Community	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Nature of Impact	Scale of Impact (Numbers)	Political Priority/ Relative Importance	Gaps in Knowledge	Actions/Options
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Economic or social background	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Rural	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Sexual Preference	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Religion, faith or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					

- 5 If you have indicated there is a negative impact on any group, is that impact:
- |  |      |
|--|------|
| a) Legal (i.e. it is not discriminatory under anti-discriminatory legislation) | Yes  |
| b) Intended?   | Yes  |
| c) Level of impact   | High |

If the negative impact is possibly discriminatory and not intended and/or have high impact you must complete section two of this form. If not, complete the rest of section one below and consider if completing section two would be helpful in making a thorough assessment.

- 6 a) Could you minimise or remove any negative impact that is of low significance? Explain how:
- b) Could you improve the strategy, project or policy's positive impact? Explain how:
- 7 If there is no evidence that the strategy, policy or project promotes equality, equal opportunities or improved relations – could it be adapted so that it does? How?

Please ensure that the Head of Service signs this form below, keep one copy and send one to the Equalities Steering Group

Signed: .....

Dated: .....