

**Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Disability Equality Scheme 2007-2010**

Objectives	Actions	Responsibility	Timescale	Required Outcome	Report on Progress	
1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity	1.1 Adopt and publish a Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan	Head of Human Resources and Equalities Officer	Dec 2006 Apr 2007 Revised & implemented Dec 2007, reviewed 2008		Scheme & Action Plan published on Comhairle website Equality and Diversity - Home	
	1.2 Review the Disability Equality Scheme and report on progress Annually	Equalities Officer	December 2008		Annual report for 2008 Published on Comhairle website	
	1.3 Develop working relationships with Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership and other agencies	Equalities Officer	Ongoing			
2. All policies and service functions will promote equal opportunities where possible and minimise adverse impacts on disabled people	2.1 Adopt an impact assessment toolkit	Equalities officer and a policy officer from each department	Jan 2009		New Equality Impact Assessment toolkit rolled out in July 2009.	
	2.2 Carry out impact assessments on all existing policies and functions identifying any incompatibilities with the aims and objectives of the Act	As above	Ongoing throughout 2009	All new and existing Comhairle policies, strategies, functions and services are impact assessed to identify any potential negative impacts for disabled people (all equality strands to be EQIA)	Equality Impact Assessments underway. Existing policies to be assessed when they come up for review/renewal etc.	

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	2.3 Carry out impact assessments on all new policies and functions as Above	As above	Ongoing as required		Underway. All new policies are now required to have an Impact Assessment.	
	2.4 Involve disabled people to assist with the impact assessments of policies which affect people.	As above	Ongoing		Comhairle nan Eilean Siar to look at using Challenge Panels for its Impact Assessments.	
3. Consult and involve disabled people with the development of a Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan	3.1 Review current arrangements	Chief Executive - Equalities Officer	July 2007		Scheme published 2007	
	3.2 Compile a list of disabled people, representatives of disabled people and disability partnership organisations within the Western Isles	Chief Executive - Equalities Officer	July 2007			
	3.3 Invite representatives to become involved in the development of Disability Equality Scheme	Chief Executive - Equalities Officer	Ongoing		Comhairle to move to a Single Equality Scheme for 2010.	
	3.4 Adopt a forum for disability equality and agree on regular meeting to review progress, e.g. quarterly meetings.	Chief Executive - Equalities Officer	Ongoing	An established forum of disabled people and representatives who will contribute to the development of Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan	Disability Equality Working Group established.	

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4. Increase disabled people's access to Council Services	4.1 Access to Building; Sandwich Road Offices:- - Improve front access to building - Improve back access to building (very steep gradient) - Improve lift facilities (need to meet recognised standards for disabled access) - Review access to Council Chamber as current doors are too heavy	Director of Technical Services	Ongoing throughout 2009	Reasonable adjustments completed to make the Stornoway offices accessible to disabled people Lewis Access Panel and disabled people to be involved in decisions regarding reasonable adjustments made	Back entrance completed although a second handrail has been identified as having a beneficial impact – Technical Services to investigate. Issues raised regarding access to the lift and to the Council Chamber were noted and will be investigated further.	
	Tarbert Offices:- - Internal building is not suitable for disabled access - Access audit was completed 18 months ago but no action taken to improve access	Director of Technical Services	Ongoing throughout 2009	Reasonable adjustments completed to make the Tarbert offices accessible to disabled people. Harris Access Panel to be involved in decisions regarding reasonable adjustments made.	Decision to be made regarding the suitability of the Tarbert offices for both the public and employees in terms of accessibility in light of the access audit that was completed (as advised by the Harris Access Panel). Any plans may be tied in with the refurb of the school.	
	4.2 Access to parking; Sandwich Road Offices:- More disabled parking spaces required.	Director of Technical Services		One additional disabled parking space to be provided at both the front and the back of the Stornoway building		
	Tarbert Offices: Car parking facilities must be available on the same side of the building (space is available)	Director of Technical Services		Appropriate disabled parking is available which meets the statutory requirements.	A disabled parking bay at the Tarbert offices has been marked out. Two other bays to be marked out.	

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	Provide disabled parking bays					
	Public Car Parks: Increase the number of disabled parking bays which meet the national guidelines (Audit Scotland SPI indicates that 5% of all parking bays should be disabled parking bays)	Director of Technical Services			Still ongoing	
	4.3 Access to public transport; Evaluate current supply of disabled access vehicles Measure the need for further service provisions for disabled transport Support voluntary agency initiatives eg Dial-a-bus	Director of Technical Services		Access to suitable transport for disabled people meets the demand	Identify any comments made in the Community Survey Project relating to transport for disabled people – there were no comments made in the survey held this year.	
	4.4 Develop a directory of services and provisions available for disabled people residing and visiting the Western Isles	Chief Executive Equalities Officer		A directory is published on the website with clear contact details and instructions on how to maximize benefits available to disabled people throughout the Western Isles Eg Blue Badge Scheme, Disability Benefits, etc	Harris Access Panel is near completion of a public access guide which provides information on all facilities in Harris. Lewis Access panel guide is published on their website.	
5. Improve communication and increase access to information for disabled people	5.1 Follow Comhairle procedures to ensure each piece of communication is acknowledged and responded to	All departments	immediate		All correspondence refers to corporate standards – there is now a single point of contact.	
	5.2 Adopt works programme to ensure that all Comhairle meeting rooms have Loop provisions	Director of Technical Services			Jan 08 – work to introduce portable induction loops in more Comhairle meeting rooms and reception areas	

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	available				has been agreed. June 08 – fixed portable loops have been purchased for the main reception desks for all Comhairle offices and will be fitted by the end of the month. Portable induction loops are also available to all meeting rooms within the Comhairle	
	5.3 Adopt the Comhairle's Local Accessible Information Policy to ensure that all information is available in the requested format eg Braille, large print, audio, etc.	Head of Human Resources and Communications Officer				
	5.4 Online information – Continue ongoing work to upgrade the Comhairle's web provision to ensure it complies with the WC3 Web Content Accessibility Guidelines	Head of I.T			The 'Browsealoud' service is now available on the Comhairle website. Users can download this facility using the icon on the front page of the website, this facility reads pages aloud for people who find it difficult to read information online.	
	5.5 Identify a single point of contact for disabled people to communicate through via the Disability Equality Working Group	Disability Equality Work Group (DEWG)		Disabled people have a single point of contact to communicate with for the three partners rather than being passed from partner to partner	Calum Russell – Strategic Diversity Lead (WIHB) agreed to be the contact for the partners. This arrangement will be reviewed on a regular basis.	
6. Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and educate regarding misconceptions	6.1 Set up targeted training for all staff and managers around disability in the workplace	Head of Human Resources			Working with customer services and manager to develop training.	
	6.2 Create a Disability webpage with links to DES and general information and training. Also include useful links to web pages & services available in the Western Isles.	Equalities Officer with assistance from I.T Unit			Equalities web page has been set up containing the equality schemes and action plans along with useful links. DESG minutes to be added to the page. Webpage is still under development – completion around early 2009.	

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	6.3 Prepare and circulate Disability Equality Awareness Guidance for staff briefing	Equalities officer		All staff have an awareness and are comfortable and confident in assisting disabled people.	Draft guidance prepared based on information provided by Capability Scotland, awaiting approval and agreement of when it should be issued.	
	6.4 Introduce disability equality awareness training in all staff induction programmes	Head of Human Resources			In development.	
	6.5 Public awareness exercise to provide information and education to the general public to address the ignorance and prejudice that is still experienced by disabled people	Head of Human Resources with assistance from DESG and OHCPP			Will provide link to Capability-Scotland guidance.	
7. Produce and publish an annual report on the progress of the Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan	7.1 Identify areas of improvement and areas where further work is required	Equalities Officer	Each Quarter	Action Plan updated accordingly	Event held in November 2007 Event held in March 2008 DESG & DEWG meetings running throughout 2008 and to continue.	
	7.2 Publish report annually on CnES website	Equalities Officer	Dec 07 Dec 08 Dec 09	Annual report completed detailing progress made	Dec 07 report published on the website – reviewed Dec 2008	
8. Review the scheme every three years	8.1 Identify areas of improvement and areas where further work is required and revise the scheme with the involvement of disabled people	Equalities Office	Dec 09	Revised scheme should be published in December 2009.		