

**DISABILITY  
EQUALITY  
SCHEME  
2006 - 2009**

**YEAR ONE  
REVIEW**

## **Availability of the Disability Equality Scheme 2006-2009 Year One Review**

This Scheme is available in a range of other alternative formats by contacting us as follows:

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Copies of this scheme are also available electronically on our website at [www.gwent.police.uk](http://www.gwent.police.uk)

### **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 A Disability Equality Duty was introduced for the public sector in December 2006. This created a basic requirement for the force to have due regard to the following when carrying out its functions:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination 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

There was also a requirement to publish a Disability Equality Scheme, including an Action Plan which would last for three years, after which a further action plan must be developed.

1.2 Gwent Police published its Disability Equality Scheme at the beginning of December 2006.

1.3 In accordance with the Disability Equality Duty, public authorities must produce an annual report on progress that has been made in meeting the duty and this is the purpose of this report.

## **2.0 Progress against the Action Plan**

2.1 The Force's Confidence and Equality Board (CEB) is responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of the steps which are set out in the Action Plan. While some progress has been made, most notably in relation to the actions related to human resources management, further work is required to achieve the level of performance we aspire to. The Action Plan is attached at [Appendix A](#).

2.3 In its Disability Equality Scheme, the Force recognised that it needed to strengthen and improve its mechanisms for gathering information which would enable it to understand the extent to which the services it provides and the functions it performs take account of the needs of disabled people. This has been developed via the Independent Advisory Group, the Training Group and Your Voice Counts initiative. The CEB has recognised that the operational delivery issues needed further development in the Action Plan and a lead group has been set up to drive forward improvements in this area.

## **3.0 Other initiatives taken to promote disability equality in 2006-07**

3.1 In addition to the work areas highlighted in the action plan, the Force has been engaging in other initiatives in last 12 months in order to promote disability equality. Examples of these initiatives are:

a) In April 2007, Gwent Police took part in the Employers' Forum Disability Standard. This took the form of a self-assessment, which enabled the Force to measure its performance on disability and plan further actions in order to improve performance. Performance was self-assessed by members of the Force against the following areas:

- Employment
- Customer Services
- Occupational health and health and safety
- Premises and the built environment
- IT systems
- E-commerce and e-recruitment
- Accessibility of goods and services
- Outsourcing and procurement
- Corporate responsibility and brand reputation

The audit enabled the force to compare its performance against other private sector / public sector organisations. The Force ranked 104<sup>th</sup> overall out of a total of 116 public and private sector participants. While the results were disappointing, the Employers' Forum on Disability has provided the Force with a Disability Diagnostic Report resulting from our audit. This report outlines the force's key successes, identifies risks and priorities and identifies further actions, which are currently being incorporated into the DES.

The Head of Human Resources attended the 2007 Disability Standard Benchmark for Action Conference in London on 2 November 2007. The

Conference marked the end of this year's Disability Standard process and saw the launch of the Benchmark Report 2007. The focus of the conference was to help members to use their participation in the Disability Standard to best effect, to learn from other organisations and to build action plans for business improvement. The EFD has observed that there is a cause for celebration even among Disability Standard participants who did not score highly across the survey. The EFD is keen to recognise the level of work organisations are putting into their disability confidence and the commitment they have shown by simply signing up to the Disability Standard. Awards were presented to those organisations which had scored well in the diagnostic survey and these included several police forces. It was also notable that most of the award winners had taken part in the first audit in 2005 and therefore, were further along the development path than first time around participants, such as Gwent Police.

b) In September, the Force was involved with Autism Cymru in the launch of ID cards to help emergency services respond to the needs of individuals in the community who have an Autistic Spectrum Disorder. There are over 2000 individuals in Gwent who have autism. A database of card holders and who to contact in a emergency is held by Autism Cymru and this enables officers to find out quickly whether someone has autism. It also helps individuals to communicate their needs to the emergency services.

The cards are available from Autism Cymru on 07778 503739 or by e-mailing [buu@autismcymru.org](mailto:buu@autismcymru.org).

c) The Force has launched its SMS (Short Message Service) texting facility in order for the Deaf community to be able to contact the Force in an emergency. They are being advised to register to use the scheme to ensure that if a text message is received and the information is limited, there are other ways to access certain information, which may assist officers to locate a distressed caller. The registration scheme will assist in making officers aware that they are attending an incident involving a member of the Deaf community as the call operator will automatically be notified of the occupants of an address and/or incident. Internal processes have been developed for dealing with calls from the Deaf community to ensure that callers are provided with an effective service. This includes follow-up visits so that the caller can be updated in relation to any progress or support required.

#### **4.0 Next Steps**

In October 2007, the CEB agreed that there was a need to reassess the Action Plan and to prioritise actions with the plan being revisited to establish what areas need to be addressed to ensure that the Force delivers the most important improvements and then identify new dates for delivery. Updates were provided to the CEB on 23 January 2008, as a result of which further improvements and amendments have been made, including actions identified through the EFD feedback.