

STOCKTON ON TEES BOROUGH  
COUNCIL

EQUALITY SCHEME 2007-2010

1<sup>st</sup> EDITION  
PUBLISHED DECEMBER 2006

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## **Purpose of this scheme**

This Single Equality Scheme sets out how Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council will meet its duties under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006.

It meets the requirement in each piece of legislation to develop a specific Equality Scheme, bringing the three areas together without losing focus on the specific needs of any community.

Though the Council is only required by law at this time to publish a scheme or schemes about race, disability and gender, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's commitment to equality is wider. It also encompasses age, religion and belief and sexual orientation. The Council's equal opportunities policy states that:

*"We will achieve equality of opportunity by removing direct and indirect discrimination wherever it exists. It is recognised that people may be disadvantaged because of their: age; gender; race, colour, ethnic, national, cultural or social origin; disability; religious belief, or non belief; marital status, family circumstances, or caring responsibilities; sexual orientation; class, level of income, or housing circumstances; membership or non membership of trade unions, or involvement or non involvement in trade union activity."*

We will report progress against the scheme by 30<sup>th</sup> June each year, in line with the publication of our performance against equalities related Best Value Performance Indicators.

*Insert signature*

**George Garlick**  
**Chief Executive**

*Insert signature*

**Councillor Bob Gibson**  
**Leader of the Council**

### **Note**

This is the first edition of the Council's Single Equality Scheme. At this time it focuses on the requirement to publish a Disability

Equality Scheme by 4<sup>th</sup> December 2006. The Council's Race Equality Scheme will be reviewed and incorporated by April 2007. We will also incorporate in the April 2007 edition, the Council's first Gender Equality Scheme following the recently issued (November 2006) guidance.

## **About the council and the functions that the scheme applies to**

Stockton-on-Tees is a diverse Borough located at the heart of the Tees Valley. It comprises a number of towns and villages, each with its own distinctive characteristics, including Billingham, Stockton, Thornaby, Ingleby Barwick and Yarm. The area has a population of over 186,000 (up from 175,000 in 1991) and this rise is projected to reach 189,200 by 2016. This growth is unevenly balanced across the area, being largely in the south of the borough, and particularly within the new Ingleby Barwick community. The overall growth disguises projected falls in the number of children over the next ten years, and a sharp increase in the numbers of those aged over 85. For the council this means that we are operating in the context of rising demand for some public services such as housing, planning and adults' social care, and infrastructure pressures in the south of the borough where most of the population growth is situated.

Across Stockton-on-Tees' communities there is a wide social and economic mix, with areas of significant disadvantage situated alongside areas of affluence. Some 2.8% of the population is made up of Black and Minority Ethnic communities and over 70 languages are spoken in the Borough. Whilst 15% of the Borough's population live within the top 20% of most affluent areas in England, 34% live in the 20% most deprived.

The Council Plan sets out the key objectives of the Local Authority for the next three years. It forms a business plan for achieving the Council's contribution to the Borough's Community Strategy which is the key borough wide medium term plan, agreed by the Council and its partners through the Local Strategic Partnership - the Renaissance Partnership Board. The Council Plan also forms the overarching framework for delivery of individual service improvement and delivery plans, which set out in detail how the Council will provide key services and contribute to the five key Community Strategy themes. We will deliver through effective partnership working with other public and private sector organisations, voluntary and community sector groups, local businesses and the residents of the Borough. The keynote theme of the Community Strategy is "promoting achievement and tackling disadvantage"

It is within the overall context of "promoting achievement and tackling disadvantage" that we work in partnership to eradicate the inequalities of resource and opportunity which prevent many of the people living in the Borough from participating in a culture of achievement.

Through effective partnership working we aim to improve:

- Services for children and young people
- Health and well-being of all residents
- Community safety
- Economic regeneration and transport
- Liveability (including the environment, housing and civic renewal).

The Council operates a Leader and Cabinet model with a Labour Cabinet and cross party Scrutiny Committees. It is organised into 3 main service groupings:

- Children, Education and Social Care
- Development and Neighbourhood Services
- Resources

The Council works in partnership with other public services within the borough, across the Tees Valley and beyond. Council housing is managed by an Arms Length Management Organisation, Tristar Homes Ltd and Leisure Services are provided by a Leisure Trust, Tees Active Ltd. This scheme applies to the Council's services only. A full list of the functions this scheme applies to can be found at Annex 2.

## **Our Equality Duties**

As well as delivering on its commitment to promote equality across all the six strands of diversity- age, disability, faith and belief, gender, race and sexual orientation, the council has a duty to comply with a large and complex suite of equality legislation including

- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976 (amended 2003)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (amended 2005)
- Gender Recognition Act 2004
- Equality Act 2006

Stockton Council first published its Race Equality Scheme in 2002 and revised it in 2005 to meet the requirement to review at least every three years. The deadline for publishing a Disability Equality Scheme is 4<sup>th</sup> December 2006 and the deadline for a Gender Equality Scheme is April 2007. It is vital that we have a joined up, proportionate and workable approach to meeting our duties in these three areas and one which is flexible enough to accommodate any future requirements to publish schemes on the other equality strands (religion/belief, age, sexual orientation). Therefore a single equality scheme has been developed.

The Single Equality Scheme approach means that we set out how we will meet the general and specific duties placed upon us in one document with a suite of linked action plans on each strand.

## **The Duty to Promote Disability Equality**

There are two duties which apply to councils. The first is the “general duty” which requires us to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
- Eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons

- Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life; and
- Take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

This general duty provides a framework for the council to carry out their functions more effectively and to tackle discrimination and its causes in a proactive way. It requires us to adopt a proactive approach, mainstreaming disability equality into all decisions and activities.

The second duty that applies to councils is to publish this Disability Equality Scheme, following the guidance in the Statutory Code of Practice. In addition we must, within three years of the scheme being published, take the steps outlined in the action plan and put into place our arrangements for gathering and making use of information. We must also publish a report containing a summary of the steps taken under the action plan, the results of our information gathering and the use to which we have put the information.



## **How the scheme has been developed (including involvement of specific groups)**

This scheme has been developed collaboratively and is the result of consultation and involvement with local people. Detail of how specific groups have been involved is given below.

### Disabled people

The council has actively involved disabled people in the development of the disability section of this scheme. This has included:

- A targeted questionnaire focusing on making contact with the council, visiting buildings, information, services, employment, and a section for open comments
- Face to face discussions with local representative groups such as Stockton Blind People's Voice, Diabetes Support Group, Stockton Helps All (learning disabilities), and Hartlepool Deaf Club.
- A "tell us what you think" event open to all disabled people providing direct access to council staff to discuss issues and experiences
- Work with disabled young people to identify issues and get ideas for how services can be improved
- A questionnaire to employees identifying themselves as disabled

The feedback received from disabled people has been used to form the Disability Action Plan which can be found in later in this document. We have set up a representative Disability Advisory Group to work with us on further developing and delivering the Disability Action Plan.

In addition the Council has or has access to a range of established mechanisms for seeking the views of and working with Disabled people. These include:

- Adult and Youth Viewpoint (our residents panels) where Disabled people are included in all our regular consultations as well as those specifically related to disability issues.
- Service user groups e.g. Stockton Helps All – self advocacy and consultation for people with learning disabilities; Creative

support – consultation forum for people with mental health problems

- Stockton Disability Forum
- Working with established disability groups including Stockton Blind People's Voice, Shop mobility, Stockton parent Support, North East Centre for Independent Living

## Equality objectives

Our Equality Objectives support the six themes of the Council Plan:

- Liveability
- Community Safety
- Economic Regeneration and Transport
- Healthier Communities and Adults
- Children and Young People
- Organisational Effectiveness

Council Plan theme	Equality Objectives
Liveability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide a range of accessible environment, planning and housing services that meet the needs of local people</li> <li>• To promote more cohesive communities</li> </ul>
Community Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide a safe borough for all residents regardless of their age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender or disability</li> </ul>
Economic Regeneration and transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To remove barriers to training and employment ensuring equality of opportunity for all</li> <li>• To ensure the transport network is accessible to all sections of the community</li> </ul>
Healthier Communities and Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To promote and enable independent living</li> <li>• To ensure that all residents have equal opportunity to participate in cultural and leisure activities</li> </ul>
Children and Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing of all children and young people</li> <li>• To ensure that children and young people are not subject to bullying, accidental or deliberate harm because of their ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, disability, religion, or any other reason.</li> <li>• To provide children and young people with an inclusive environment that enables them to enjoy and achieve</li> <li>• To enable children and young people to make a positive contribution to an inclusive and</li> </ul>

	<p>cohesive society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To enable young people to achieve economic wellbeing through access to equal opportunities in training and employment</li> </ul>
Organisational effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure our employment policies and practice are fair and equitable</li> <li>• To effectively consult and involve all sections of the community</li> <li>• To provide strong leadership which enables the principles of equality to be embedded across the council</li> <li>• To improve the accessibility of our services to all residents</li> </ul>

## **Service provision**

## **Arrangements for gathering information about and consulting on the impact of our existing and new policies and practice**

### **Impact assessments - existing policies and practice**

In line with the statutory requirement our equality impact assessment process will be applied to current practice and policy on an agreed programme. Impact assessments will be carried out covering all 6 equality and diversity strands (race, religion, disability, age, gender and sexual orientation) using a two phase process:

- Phase 1 is to consider whether there is likely to be a positive or negative impact on any group as a result of the way that we provide services or because of the policies we have in place.
- Phase 2 is to consider how a negative impact can be minimised or removed

Our approach of applying one impact assessment covering all six areas to current practice and policy will ensure that we come to a rounded view and that by altering our policy or practice to address the equality of one group we do not disadvantage another. It also reduces the potential administrative burden that could prevent impact assessments being effectively carried out.

The programme of impact assessments will be agreed by the council's corporate management team following discussions with appropriate representative groups on priorities.

### **Impact assessments – new policies and practice**

A similar process to that described above for existing policy and practice will be applied to new policies and practice, as required by the relevant statutory codes of practice. Where decisions require Cabinet approval, the outcome of the impact assessment will be included in reports. Where decisions require a “delegated decision” to be recorded the outcome of the impact assessment will be included on the appropriate record. Both reports to Elected Members and delegated decision records are available on the

council's website. Equality issues will also be embedded within the Council's constitution.

All impact assessments will be carried out by services, with appropriate support and challenge from the council's Diversity Team. The results of impact assessments will be published on the council's website.

### **Consultation and involvement**

The council's existing mechanisms for consulting local people include:

- Bi-annual independently carried out residents surveys
- Our residents panel (Viewpoint) which includes young people, disabled people and members of our Black and Minority Ethnic Communities. A range of surveys and focus groups is undertaken each year
- Specific consultations on key issues such as town centre re-developments

The council has published guidance on consulting with young people and disabled people and offers training to all staff across the council on these areas, as well as a general consultation course.

The results of our consultations are published on the council's website.

In order to increase the level of involvement that local people have in shaping services and ensuring they meet specific needs we are establishing a range of advisory groups. For example, a disability advisory group has been established to work with us on improving and testing services and we will consult this group on priorities and proposed actions relating to disability.

### **Gathering information**

We have processes in place to analyse information about the borough and its residents to develop "profiles" focused on disability, gender, race, and age. These profiles are published on the council's website and used by services to provide contextual information for developing and providing services.

We are seeking ways to improve the collection of meaningful data which will help us to understand the relationship between being within a minority group and other socio-economic data such as health, employment, and crime.

Feedback from residents and service users is collected via a number of mechanisms including the council's complaints system. Those providing feedback are asked to provide some information about themselves e.g. ethnicity, disability to enable a full analysis of the feedback.

We are also developing a range of local performance measures to help us monitor the impact of the improvements set out in the action plans and progress towards our objectives.

In terms of education we have an overarching Accessibility Strategy, together with individual School Accessibility Plans. These provide a framework for monitoring the impact of practices on disabled pupils and students. Guidance and training is provided to schools to assist them in this work. We also monitor School Ofsted inspections (which include a number of judgements relating to equality, diversity and inclusive practice) to help us assess the impact of schools' work on pupils with particular needs, including those with a disability. Value added analysis of outcomes for SEN pupils is undertaken annually. The impact of policies in relation to school admissions and school transport have considered the needs of disabled pupils and made appropriate provisions.

We will use the information described above to review this Equality Scheme and develop action plans. Progress against the action plans will be monitored through the Council's performance management arrangements



## **Arrangements for ensuring public access to information and services**

We are committed to ensuring that all residents and potential service users can access information and services.

A range of facilities are already available to help people access information and services from the Council:

- Telephone interpretation (over 150 languages)
- Face to face interpretation by prior arrangement, including sign language
- Transcription into a variety of formats such as Large Print, Braille and audio
- Translation of written documents on request

All services have access to face to face interpretation, transcription and translation services and an increasing number have been trained to use the telephone translation service (we expect 100% of services to be operational with this service by April 2007).

Training is key to ensuring equality of opportunity and access to services. Our arrangements for Equality and Diversity training are outlined in the next section.

The Council's Access to Services strategy and Customer First programme includes equalities and diversity issues. The Access to Services Strategy includes ensuring that new contact centres (both walk in and telephone) are fully accessible to all groups including Black and Minority Ethnic residents and disabled people.

The Customer First programme includes equality criteria which must be met in order to achieve each level of award. For example, in order to achieve Level 2, services must ensure that they have trained staff in using the telephone interpretation service and that the service is operational, that there is a hearing loop installed and working at each reception point, and that the appropriate reception points are fully accessible.

All council buildings have been audited for compliance with the accessibility criteria in the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act, using Document M of the Building Regulations as guidance' and remedial works have taken place. A second audit will take place by the end of 2007 in partnership with our Disability Advisory Group.

Actions arising from this will be fed into the council's capital programme and Disability Action Plan.

## **Arrangements for training staff and councillors in equalities**

The Council provides training to staff on a range of equalities related issues and will be introducing a revised programme of training during 2007. The programme will include:

- Diversity essentials for all staff
- Diversity for managers
- Diversity for councillors and co-opted members
- Specific courses on age, disability, gender, race, religion and sexual orientation

Training needs are identified through annual appraisals of all employees. Equalities and Diversity are being embedded in our revised organisational values and our new competency framework.

Equality and Diversity is included in the induction of new elected members. All Elected Members have signed the Model Code of Conduct which is based on the general principles of conduct both of which include obligations to promote equality

We evaluate the quality of our training through attendee feedback and are seeking ways to link training outcomes with customer satisfaction and behavioural changes in our staff.

# Employment

## **Equal opportunity policies**

The council has a range of employment related codes of practice and equal opportunities policies:

- Codes of Practice in employment, promotion and training
  - Avoidance of Age Discrimination
  - Disability Equality
  - Racial Equality
  - Religion and Belief Equality
  - Sex Equality
  - Sexual Orientation Equality
  - Transsexual Equality
  
- Equality and Diversity Policies
  - Aids / HIV policy
  - Dignity at Work Policy
  - Equal Opportunities Policy
  
- Service Codes of Practice
  - Disability Equality
  - Sex Equality

These policies are developed in line with the appropriate regulations and legislation in consultation with employees and Trades Unions. Full copies of our equal opportunities policy and codes of practice are available at [www.stockton.gov.uk](http://www.stockton.gov.uk)

## **Equal opportunity information**

We regularly collect equalities data from our employees and potential employees via:

- Regular data matching on employee data held by the authority
- Equal opportunity forms issued with application forms for jobs within the council

This information is analysed at least annually to tell us:

- The ethnic breakdown of the workforce
- The percentage of the workforce which considers themselves to have a disability
- The age profile of the workforce
- The gender profile of the workforce
- The pay profile of employees by ethnicity, age, gender and disability
- The ethnicity, age, gender and disability profile of those applying to work in the council compared to those appointed

All information is broken down into service areas as well as being available council wide.

We are seeking ways to improve our data collection and analysis to include areas such as take up of training opportunities by ethnicity, age, gender and disability, the sexual orientation of our employees and the impact of our absence management policy on different groups of staff.

## **Equal pay policy**

The Council supports the principles of equal opportunities in its employment policies and practices and is committed to ensuring that men and women receive fair and equal treatment in compliance with the Equal Pay Act.

The Council believes that it is good business practice to ensure that pay is awarded fairly and equitably and that each job within the Council is established through objective analysis of the job elements using a consistent scoring mechanism.

Additionally the Council will strive to ensure that its employment practices and arrangements are based on flexible arrangements that will support as far as is practical, specific needs and requirements of individual groups.

## **Action plans**



## **Disability Action Plan**

This action plan has been developed following discussions with disabled people. It details the key actions for disability that the council will take as part of achieving its overall equality objectives. The actions included in this action plan are also included in the council's service plans and Heads of Service will be held to account for their achievement through the council's performance management framework. Progress against the action plan will be reported annually.

For more information about the actions included in the plan, please contact the council's Diversity Team on 01642 528830 or [diversity@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:diversity@stockton.gov.uk)

## Liveability

Equality objective - To provide a range of accessible environment, planning and housing services that meet the needs of local people		
Key Actions	Who is responsible?	When will it be done?
Promote recycling and the refuse collection assistance service to disabled people	Head of Direct Services	Annual campaigns
Identify routes for actively promoting awareness of housing adaptations and Disabled Facility Grants	Head of Housing	March 2008
Involve service users in planning and remodelling their homes	Head of Housing	Ongoing
Ensure a range of accessible promotional materials are produced for housing schemes	Head of Housing	Ongoing
Develop a Housing Strategy for people with learning disabilities	Head of Housing	December 2007
Involve people with a disability in the development of the Local Development Framework	Head of Planning	December 2006

Involve people with a disability problem in the design stage of the new Billingham Town Centre	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development	August 2007
Involve people with a disability problem through a steering group in the design stage of the Thornaby Pavilion and Library refurbishment	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development	April 2007
Ensure that the design of the new leisure features of Billingham Forum meet the needs of disabled people and those with long term health problems	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development	Summer 2008
Incorporate planning accessibility and disabled parking facilities into new projects	Head of Integrated Transport and Environmental Policy and Head of Planning	Ongoing

Equality objective - Promote community cohesion		
<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>When will it be done?</b>
Promote participation in democratic processes by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enabling disabled people, parents and carers to get involved in partnership groups etc</li> </ul> Promote participation in public life and create opportunities for doing so by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with disabled people and representative</li> </ul>	All Heads of Service  Head of Democratic Services	December 2006 ongoing  March 2008

<p>groups to ensure participation in democratic processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively promote participation and engagement of disabled people and the wider community in public life</li> <li>Provide opportunities to build capacity enabling disabled people and the wider community to participate in public life</li> </ul>	Head of Democratic Services	March 2008
	Head of Democratic Services	March 2009

## Community Safety

Equality Objective - To provide a safe borough for all residents regardless of their age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender or disability		
Key Actions	Who is responsible?	When will it be done?
Ensure disabled toilets are clean, accessible and vandalism is minimised	Head of Direct Services	Ongoing
Ensure all pedestrian crossings have facilities for disabled people (in line with targets for BVPI 165)	Head of Integrated Transport and Environmental Policy	Annually
Promote the offensive incident procedure	Head of Community	April 2007

<p>Encourage landlords and agents to provide improved protection of their housing stock from burglary, particularly where burglary has occurred, and as part of the decent standards investment programmes</p> <p>Work in partnership with other public sector agencies (e.g. Police and Fire) to deliver consistent, high quality community protection services for disabled people</p>	<p>Protection/ Head of Policy and Performance/ Head of Performance and Business Services</p> <p>Head of Housing</p> <p>Head of Community Protection</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing through Safer Stockton Partnership</p>
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## Economic regeneration and transport

Equality objective – To remove barriers to training and employment ensuring equality of opportunity for all		
Key Actions	Who is responsible?	When will it be done?
Identify barriers to training and employment using the results of the skills audit	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development	Ongoing

Support business start-ups including enterprises created by disabled people	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development	Ongoing
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Equality objective - To ensure the transport network is accessible to all sections of the community		
Key Actions	Who is responsible?	When will it be done?
Involve disability groups in transport planning	Head of Integrated Transport and Environmental Policy	Ongoing as part of LTP review
Continue expansion of cycle paths ensuring meets the needs of people with a disability or long term health problem	Head of Integrated Transport and Environmental Policy	Ongoing as part of LTP review
Provide Blue Badge scheme information in alternative formats	Head of Integrated Transport and Environmental Policy	September 2007
Maximise technology such as Real Time to provide up to date transport information	Head of Integrated Transport and Environmental Policy	In place Dec 2006 and ongoing
Implement new on-line booking system for Dial-a-Ride and review overall service in conjunction with disabled people	Head of Support Services	April 2008

Ensure wheelchair access is addressed by bus service providers using the Bus Quality Partnership	Head of Integrated Transport and Environmental Policy	Agenda for first meeting in 2007
Support the Bus Quality Partnership to secure national funding initiatives like Urban Bus Challenge and Kickstart	Head of Integrated Transport and Environmental Policy	Ongoing
Provide easy to understand transport information in accessible formats	Head of Integrated Transport and Environmental Policy	September 2007
Support Connect Tees Valley to secure funding to expand bus routes after 6pm (Easy Rider scheme)	Head of Integrated Transport and Environmental Policy	Ongoing
Conduct feasibility study around access to railways stations incorporating needs of disabled people	Head of Integrated Transport and Environmental Policy	March 2008
Improve pavement maintenance throughout the Borough	Head of Integrated Transport and Environmental Policy	Ongoing
Ensure all bus stops are accessible for disabled people	Head of Integrated Transport and Environmental Policy	By 2010

## Healthier Communities and Adults

Equality objective - To promote and enable independent living		
Key Actions	Who is responsible?	When will it be done?
Develop the Supporting People Service Inclusive Forum to promote user involvement in the development of services	Head of Adult Strategy	2007-8 ongoing
Ensure disabled adult learners are not disadvantaged when registering or participating in adult learning activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the accessibility of information about adult learning opportunities e.g. providing materials in Braille or large print</li> <li>• Ensure accessibility of assessments for disabled adult learners</li> <li>• Improve access to learning areas provide full access to disabled people</li> <li>• Develop a wider range of entry level courses to promote independence</li> </ul>	Head of Adult Strategy	December 2006 ongoing
Implement recommendations of the Community Alarm Service review	Head of Adult Strategy	March 2007
Promote Direct Debit facility to disabled people	Head of Taxation and	March 2007



Improve benefit claim processes by working closely with the Department for Work and Pensions	Administration Head of Taxation and Administration	June 2007
Work with partner agencies to raise awareness that Council Tax bills and associated information is available in wide range of formats	Head of Taxation and Administration	June 2007

Equality objective – to ensure that all residents have equal opportunity to participate in cultural and leisure activities		
<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>When will it be done?</b>
Provide support for learners with hearing difficulties, including older learners in exercise classes	Head of Adult Strategy	2006-7 ongoing
Review and revise ICT courses and learner support facilities	Head of Adult Strategy	2006-7 ongoing
Improve library services to disabled people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the VIP (Visually Impaired People's) library service and registering system</li> </ul>	Head of Arts and Culture	March 2007

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote libraries as inclusive activity areas</li> <li>• Raise awareness and promote the use of the read aloud software</li> <li>• Liaise with RNIB to improve level of service for book users</li> </ul> <p>Provide events information in all formats and promote use of the Internet for event listings</p> <p>Improve the accessibility of the borough's parks and open spaces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review parks and countryside pathways network and maintenance programme to maximise access to leisure facilities</li> <li>• Improve signage to indicate level of accessibility of pathways and that information boards are at a height accessible to wheelchair users</li> <li>• Provide regular rest points and benches on walkways</li> <li>• Provide accessible refreshment areas in Country Parks</li> </ul>	<p>Head of Performance and Business Services</p> <p>Head of Direct Services</p>	<p>March 2008 March 2008</p> <p>March 2007</p> <p>September 2007</p> <p>March 2010</p>
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## Children and Young People

Equality objective – To promote the physical and mental health and well being of all children and young people		
Key Actions	Who is responsible?	When will it be done?
Review care pathways for ADHD to identify clear referral routes for services	Head of Children's Strategy	December 2007
Review services for children with complex needs	Head of School Effectiveness	December 2007
Improve access to services for young people aged 16-25 with mental health problems that are also able to support young people with dual diagnosis	Heads of Strategy (Children and Adults)	March 2009 and ongoing

Equality Objective - To ensure that children and young people are not subject to bullying, accidental or deliberate harm because of their ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, disability, religion, or any other reason		
Key Actions	Who is responsible?	When will it be done?
Develop and implement anti-bullying strategy	Head of School Effectiveness	April 2007

Equality Objective - To provide children and young people with an inclusive environment that enables them to enjoy and achieve		
<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>When will it be done?</b>
Develop and implement Play Strategy	Head of Children's Strategy and Head of Direct Services	Develop April 2007 Implement March 2010
Develop and commission new inclusive youth services	Head of Children's Strategy	December 2007
Develop systems for tracking progress of disabled pupils	Head of School Effectiveness	March 2007 and ongoing

Equality Objective - To enable children and young people to make a positive contribution to an inclusive and cohesive society		
<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>When will it be done?</b>
Increase involvement of disabled children and young people through further development of the PIC (Participation, involvement and consultation) network and the promotion of Stockton Youth Voice	Head of Children's Strategy	March 2008 ongoing
Further develop the involvement of parents and carers in service development and delivery and community life in general	Head of Children's Strategy	March 2008 ongoing

Promote and develop use of direct payments for children and young people with a disability	Head of Children's Strategy	March 2008 ongoing
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Equality Objective - To enable children and young people to achieve economic well being through access to equal opportunities in training and employment		
<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>When will it be done?</b>
Divert potential offenders and reintegrated offenders into society through appropriate education and employment	Head of Children's Operations	Part of annual service delivery plans for YOS/Connexions

## Organisational Effectiveness

Equality Objective - To ensure our employment policies and practice are fair and equitable		
Key Actions	Who is responsible?	When will it be done?
Re-launch Dignity at Work procedure	Head of Human Resources	December 2006
Ensure emergency evacuation procedures are identified for all staff	Head of Human Resources and Head of Policy and Performance	June 2007
Develop policy on collecting equality information about employees and elected members	Head of Human Resources	December 2007
Ensure that recruitment materials are available in all formats and needs are met at interview	Head of Human Resources	August 2007
Review Equality related Human Resources Policies (format, application and effectiveness). Stage 1 to review disability related policies	Head of Human Resources	May 2007(stage 1) October 2007
Promote flexible working approaches within absence management procedure	Head of Human Resources	August 2008

Equality Objective - To effectively consult and involve all sections of the community		
Key Actions	Who is responsible?	When will it be done?
Publish a revised Consultation Strategy / Framework including how to effectively consult with disabled people	Head of Policy and Performance	April 2007
Provide consultation materials in a range of accessible formats including maximising the use of E-based facilities	Head of Policy and Performance	April 2007
Continue to train council and partner employees in effective consultation techniques that take account of the needs of disabled people	Head of Policy and Performance	Ongoing
Ensure Viewpoint and Youth Viewpoint are representative and encourage the involvement of disabled people in the full range of panel activities	Head of Policy and Performance	April 2008
Establish Disability Advisory Group to inform and shape policy development and service provision	Head of Policy and Performance	April 2007
Investigate demand for a Disabled Employee Forum	Head of Human Resources and Head of Policy and Performance	April 2008

Equality Objective - To provide strong leadership which enables the principles of equality to be embedded across the Council		
Key Actions	Who is responsible?	When will it be done?
Roll out approach to Equality Impact Assessments	Head of Policy and Performance	April 2007 and ongoing
Ensure Equality and Diversity is embedded within the Council's revised organisational values and new competency framework	Corporate Management Team	April 2007
Develop and roll out Equality and Diversity training programme for officers and elected members, including a focus on disability issues	Head of Policy and Performance and Head of Human Resources	June 2007 and ongoing

Equality Objective - To improve the accessibility of our services to all residents and employees		
Key Actions	Who is responsible?	When will it be done?
Provide access to face to face interpretation, transcription and translation services for all departments	Head of Policy and Performance	April 2007
Carry out a second audit of the accessibility of council buildings in conjunction with Disability Advisory Group	Head of Operational Finance	December 2007



Launch and roll out Interpretation, Translation and Transcription service	Head of Policy and Performance	April 2007
Review and develop Internet and Intranet facilities to maximise accessibility	Head of Information and Communications Technology	September 2007 ongoing
Improve signage to ensure it is well positioned, in an appropriate font size and is well illuminated	All Heads of Service	March 2009
Revise the Customer First criteria in consultation with the Disability Advisory Group	Head of Performance and Business Services	December 2007
Ensure microphone and hearing loop systems are working at all reception points	All Heads of Service	April 2007
Review public evacuation procedures for all buildings	Head of Human Resources	April 2007
Ensure all food provided caters for a range of dietary requirements and is clearly labelled	Head of Direct Services	December 2007

# **Annex**

# Annex 1

## Results of consultation with disabled people



**Are you a Disabled or Deaf person who works for  
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council  
(including our partner agencies Tees Active or Tristar  
Homes Ltd)?  
How can we become more accessible, equal and inclusive  
as an employer?**

## **Disability Equality Scheme**

### **Executive summary of Employee Survey**

**October 2006**

**Research and Consultation Team**

## **Background**

- Surveys were distributed to employees of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, Tees Active and Tristar Homes Ltd in September 2006.
- Surveys were distributed via the internal intranet system.
- Heads of Service and third tier managers were asked to encourage employees to complete the survey
- The survey was made available via the Council's notice board.
- Paper based versions of the survey were available on request
- The survey was advertised via Message of The Day
- In total 40 surveys were completed
- The report that follows details the results of this survey

## **Working for the Council**

Staff rated the overall experience of working for the Council as seven out of ten.

When asked how likely respondents felt people with disabilities were to get jobs with the Council, twelve per cent felt disabled people were more likely to get jobs, fifteen per cent felt they were less likely and seventy three per cent felt it made no difference.

## **Disclosure of disability**

Forty three per cent of respondents felt the best time to disclose a disability was on the application form, with twenty two per cent at interview, and eleven per cent when a person was offered the job or had been in the job some time.

Reasons given for encouraging disclosure included:

- Colleagues and managers can be more supportive and understanding of needs
- Raising awareness of disabilities can help make working easier
- Policies encourage you to do so

Reasons for discouraging disclosure included:

- Fear of discrimination
- Feelings that it may hinder future opportunities
- People do not want to be treated differently and feel that people would not understand.

## **Information**

Eighty six per cent of respondents did not require information in any other format. Of those who did require information in other formats, six per cent got it all of the time and eight per cent only received it some of the time.

## **Safety and sickness**

Ninety two per cent of respondents were confident that they could safely exit their building in an emergency.

For those respondents who had been off for a period of sickness, fifty nine per cent said that on their return to work no adjustments were needed. Sixteen per cent were offered and given adjustments, nine per cent were offered adjustments but they were not given and six per cent were offered them but they were not given soon enough.

### **Barriers to working equally as a disabled person**

When respondents asked what they felt the biggest barriers were to working equally as a disabled person, the top three barriers were:

- Attitudes of other staff
- Lack of disability equality training for other staff
- Not being equally valued

### **How likely would you be to recommend Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council as a place to work for other disabled people?**

Never	Unlikely	Neither	Possibly	Quite likely	Definitely
0	6%	14%	26%	37%	17%

### **Harassment, bullying or abuse**

Over a quarter of respondents had experienced harassment, bullying or abuse, with the main perpetrators being identified as service users (42%) and managers/team leaders/supervisors (25%). Of those fifty per cent had reported the incident. Reasons for non reporting included

- I would have complained but I was worried about what would happen  
36%
- I would have complained but I did not think action would be taken  
27%

*"Because this has happened in the past - when things happen behind closed doors there is no evidence. So no action is taken, and it make life worse for the complainer"*

### **Priorities for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council to do to attract, retain and allow disabled employees to perform equally in their jobs**

#### **Recruiting and retaining disabled and Deaf people in the workplace**

- Support people who become disabled in the workplace
- Quickly provide reasonable adjustments in the workplace

#### **Partnership and team-working for equality**

- Involve disabled and Deaf staff and consult them in planning

- Train line managers in disability equality

### **Experiences of disabled and Deaf staff**

- Treat disabled staff with dignity and respect
- Treat disabled staff fairly as equal and diverse individuals

### **Summary**

Consultation with employees has highlighted a number of key areas that need to be addressed to improve working arrangements for employees with a disability or sensory loss. In summary these are:

- Attitudes of staff / managers
- Policies / issues linked to the disclosure of disabilities
- Making information accessible to all
- Safe exit of buildings
- Dealing with sickness / return to work
- Training and awareness of officers
- Equality and mutual respect
- Experiences and reporting of harassment, bullying or abuse
- Attraction and retention of employees



## **Disability Equality Scheme**

### **Executive summary**

### **Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council responses**

**October 2006**

**Research and Consultation Team**



## **Background**

- A survey was developed to cover services provided by Stockton Council, Tees Active Leisure, Tristar Homes Ltd, Cleveland Police and Cleveland Fire Brigade.
- The survey was distributed to over 4,000 people with disabilities who lived within the Borough, or were a service user within the Borough. The surveys were distributed throughout August and September 2006.
- Where it was not possible for individuals to complete a survey, support was offered.
- In total 310 questionnaires were returned completed.
- A full report detailing the complete findings is also available.

## **Technical note**

Net is calculated by subtracting those on the negative end of a scale from those on the positive end of scale e.g. those who are dissatisfied and very dissatisfied from those who are satisfied or very satisfied.

### **Section One                      Making Contact**

The first section of the questionnaire looked at making contact, with sixty seven per cent of respondents having made contact with the Council in the last year; the majority by phone. When asked if respondents had made their disability known either before or during contact, sixty one per cent of respondents contacting the Council had.

Positive comments focussed on respondents ability to get straight through to the person respondents wanted to talk to and helpfulness of staff. Negative comments focussed on respondents feelings that they got passed round a lot and that calls were not returned.

*"Easy to telephone and staff were helpful"*

*"Always seem to have trouble finding the right person to deal with"*

### **Section Two                      Visiting Buildings**

The most frequently visited buildings in the Council were Municipal Buildings, 16 Church Road, Central Library and the bus pass office on Church Road. Key issues raised by venue included:

#### **Municipal Buildings / Stockton venues**

- Doors – all need to be automatic (manual ones too heavy). There is a problem with clear glass as those with a visual impairment cannot distinguish a door if there is no contrast

- Parking – needs to be disabled parking directly outside
- Need access ramps to all buildings
- Toilets need to be accessible (particular problems for visually impaired in Central Library)

### **Billingham buildings**

- Public toilets are down stairs
- Kingsway /Queensway House – stairs access from town
- Need more room for wheelchairs in offices
- Need automatic doors
- Lifts in some venues often out of order

### **Thornaby buildings**

- No access ramp to Pavillion
- Too many stairs
- Lifts often out of order

## **Section Three Information**

When asked if respondents had received information from the Council in the last year, 199 had received information. Of those sixty per cent said it was easy to understand and the overall net accessibility (how accessible people felt the information was) was seventy seven per cent. Suggestions for improving communications included introducing talking bills and talking books.

### **Overall how accessible do you think the information you received is from Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council?**

Very accessible	Fairly accessible	Neither	Not very accessible	Not at all accessible	Do not know	<b>Net</b>
44%	38%	3%	3%	2%	11%	<b>77%</b>

## **Section Four Services**

The most frequently used services were social care, libraries and housing benefits. The overall net satisfaction with Council services was seventy five per cent.

When asked reasons for satisfaction the main reasons given were that issues were dealt with quickly and that staff were polite and helpful. Reasons for dissatisfaction included no communication, service no longer available and that things take too long to happen.

When asked how staff treated respondents:

Helpfully	78%
With respect	58%
They listened to me	60%
My needs were understood	55%

*"Calls I made were helpful and more importantly actually dealt with"*

*"I feel the Council listen but do not hear if what is said does not fall in line with their requirements. They understand only what suit them on matters of public concern – they treat me with no respect".*

When service users were asked satisfaction with individual services, the top three net satisfactions were:

Refuse collection	(89%)
Libraries	(85%)
Parks and open spaces	(80%)

The services with the lowest levels of satisfaction were:

Roads and pavements	(8%)
Support services for people with a sensory loss	(16%)
Public conveniences	(37%)

## **Summary**

Consultation with members of the public has highlighted a number of key areas that need to be addressed to improve service access and provision for people with a disability or sensory loss. In summary these are:

- Access to buildings and facilities
- Pavements (broken slabs, and kerbs)
- Disabled parking and blue badge schemes
- Staff attitudes and customer care
- Communications

## **List of applicable functions**

### **Resources**

Finance  
E Government  
IT  
Taxation and Administration  
Human Resources

### **Children, Education and Social Care**

School Improvement  
Governor Support  
Sports Development  
Pupil Attendance  
Pupil Exclusions  
Tees Valley Music Service  
SEN Assessment & Monitoring  
Educational Psychology Service  
Education Other Than At School  
Specialist Learning Support  
Safeguarding Services  
Children Looked After  
Children in Need  
Sure Start  
Connexions (Locality)  
Emergency Duty Team  
First Contact  
Youth Offending Team  
Pupil Admissions  
Teenage Conception Strategy  
Review Unit  
Youth Service  
Involvement and Participation  
Libraries  
Adult Education  
Museums  
Arts  
Stockton International Riverside Festival (SIRF)  
Community Transport  
Client Financial Services  
Customer Care and Complaints  
Community Care Services  
Residential/Day/Home Care

Integrated Learning Disabilities Service  
Welfare Rights  
Adult Protection  
Direct Payments  
Integrated Mental Health Services  
Supporting People  
Drug Action Team  
Strategic Planning  
Integrated Commissioning  
Partnership Development

### **Development and Neighbourhood Services**

Housing Benefits  
Parks & Countryside Services  
Homeless & Housing Advice  
Care for your area (street cleansing, refuse, recycling, parks and grounds maintenance, cemeteries)  
Registration Services  
Bereavement Services  
Events  
Waste Management  
Catering & Cleaning  
Highway & Winter Maintenance  
Registrars  
Community Safety  
Security Services  
Trading Standards & Licensing  
Public Protection  
Animal Welfare  
Development Control  
Development Plans  
Building Control  
Health & Environmental Improvement  
Waste Strategy  
Regeneration Projects  
European and External Funding  
Business Development  
Community Enterprise  
Traffic Management  
Transportation Planning  
Road Safety

Highway /Bridge Design and Maintenance  
Street Lighting  
Architectural Design  
Quantity Surveying  
Engineering  
Building Surveying  
Property Inspection  
Acquisition, Disposal, Valuation & Estates Management  
Care Call  
Concessionary Fares  
Blue Badge Scheme  
Car Parking

**Law and Democracy**

Electoral Services and community engagement  
Scrutiny  
Democratic support  
Member support  
Legal Services

**Policy, Performance and Communications**

Research and Consultation  
Performance improvement  
Communications  
Diversity  
Neighbourhood renewal  
Local Strategic Partnership (Stockton Renaissance)