

Spelthorne's Disability Equality Scheme 2007 - 2010



If you would like any further information or would like this scheme in any other format or language please contact:

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Introduction

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 was amended in 2005. The amendment places a general duty on all public authorities to have 'due regard' to the need to:

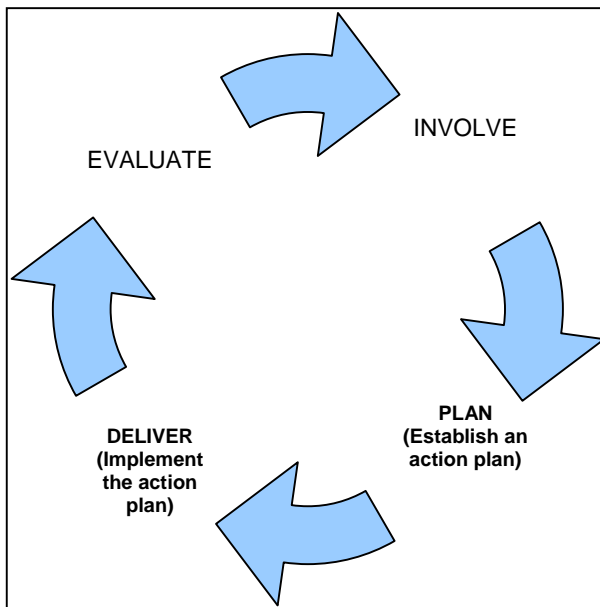
1. Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
2. Eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disability
3. Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
4. Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
5. Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life; and
6. Take steps to take account of disabled persons' disability, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favorably than other persons

The fundamental aim of the general duty is to eliminate unlawful disability discrimination in the way public bodies (including local authorities) carry out their functions. In order to achieve this aim public bodies will need to take a proactive approach in mainstreaming disability equality into all decisions and functions.

What is the Disability Equality Scheme?

The Disability Discrimination Act (2005) imposed both a general duty (as listed in the introduction) and specific duties on all Local Authorities. Developing a Disability Equality Scheme is one of the main specific duties Local Authorities need to comply with. The Scheme should detail how local authorities will meet their general and specific duties. An integral part of the Scheme is to publish a three-year action plan that details the work Spelthorne Borough Council will take to promote the various facets of the general duty. Diagram 1 illustrates the process used to formulate, deliver and evaluate the action plan. Each year we will evaluate the action plan to determine how effectively the points have been delivered. We will publish the results on the Councils website.

Diagram 1 – The process of establishing the Disability Equality Scheme.



For Spelthorne Borough Council the Scheme has provided us with the opportunity to understand what measures are already in place to involve people with disabilities. However, more importantly the Scheme has highlighted what measures need to be taken in order to increase involvement and improve service delivery.

Disability Impact assessments

An important element of the Disability Equality Scheme is to carry out Disability Impact Assessments (DIAs). DIA's allow us to establish systematically whether a proposed policy could have an effect on equality for disabled people. DIA's will be integrated into our current Equality Impact Assessment toolkit (on which relevant members of staff have received training). We will offer further training to staff on how to carry out DIA's as well as offering disability awareness training to frontline staff.

All new policies will be assessed as a matter of routine and the findings reported.

Existing policies/procedures will be identified during our annual service planning process for inclusion on a schedule of those existing policies/procedures that will require assessment.

Spelthorne’s disabled population

Many people may only have a limited definition of who is classified as having a disability. This narrows their perception of the number of people with disabilities. However according to a report from the Cabinet Office (2005) Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People, it estimates that 11 million adults and 770,000 children in the UK are disabled. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Information on the level of disability of the general public in Spelthorne is not readily available. The census does ask a question on the percentage of household with one or more members with limiting long-term illness, health problem or disability

Table 1 – Population and percentage of people with limiting long-term illness, health problems or disability.

	Spelthorne	Surrey	England
Population	90,390	1,059,015	49,138,831
All Households (Number)	38,392	433,176	20,451,427
Percentage of household with one or more members with limiting long-term illness, health problem or disability	27.16%	25.93%	33.55%

Stats obtained from 2001 Census data

However this is very wide definition and goes beyond the number of people with a disability. Better information is available from our Housing Needs Assessment and Stock Condition Survey. This gives a more accurate picture of the number of households where one or more members has a disability (as apposed to the census question above which covers limiting long-term illness, health problems or disability).

The survey indicates that 16.5% of households (over 6200 households) included a member with a disability. This compares with 15.6% (5990 households) when the previous survey was undertaken in 2001.

Spelthorne's commitment to disability equality

Spelthorne Borough Council is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for everyone in its services, training and employment and that no one receives a poorer service because of their age, gender, disability, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion, belief or any other differences.

As we have detailed in our Equality and Diversity Policy, We are committed to:

- Making sure our services are accessible so that everyone can benefit
- Ensuring that we consult and involve different communities in the design and planning of our services
- Tackling unfair discrimination in service delivery on the grounds of age, gender, disability, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion, belief or any other differences.
- Improving our equality and diversity practice by ensuring that appropriate training is provided to staff every year
- Monitoring and reviewing our strategy and service usage so we know how we are making a difference and that we are meeting our objectives
- Ensuring that our employment practices do not discriminate against anyone directly/indirectly.
- Publicising our progress to staff, Members and communities of how we have met our objectives.
- Fulfilling our duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (Amendment) Regulations 2003, Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and Equal Pay Act 1970

We consider this Disability Equality Scheme to be part of our overall Strategy on Equality and Diversity, making more explicit the actions we will take to achieve the above aims for disabled persons.

Our progress so far

Performance

Local Authorities annually report on Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's). These are set by central Government and allow Councils to assess how well we are providing services to the public. The BVPI's linked to disability issues are:

- BVPI 2a – The level of the Equality Standard for Local Government to which the authority conforms
- Spelthorne Borough Council has achieved Level 1 of the Standard (on a scale of 0-4 with 4 being the highest). Of all the eleven District Councils in Surrey, seven others have also achieved Level 1, whereas the remaining three councils are on Level 0. Similarly when compared with our “nearest neighbours” (a group of eleven councils, all with similar characteristics) six others achieve Level 1 whereas four are at Level 0.

Year	Actual	Target
2004/05	1	1
2005/06	1	2
2006/07		2

- BVPI 156 – The percentage of authority buildings open to the public in which all public areas are suitable for and accessible to disabled people

Year	Actual	Target
2003/04	20%	19%
2004/05	97.22%	100%
2005/06	97.22%	100%
2006/07		100%

Employment

- BVPI 11c – The percentage of the top paid 5% of staff who have a disability

This is a new indicator introduced in 2005/06. It uses the definition of a disability within the Disability Discrimination Act of a person who “has a physical or mental impairment which has substantial and long term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”. The figures are calculated from a staff survey which is expected to be undertaken at least every 2 years. Given the small size of our organisation, the top 5% relates to just 17 people and the scope for change relies upon movement within this group.

Spelthorne Borough Council Disability Equality Scheme 2007-2010

Year	Actual	Target
2005/06	0%	5%
2006/07		5%

- BVPI 16a – Percentage of staff with disability

This indicator uses the same definition of disability in BVPI 11c above.

Year	Actual	Target
2003/04	1.80%	3%
2004/05	1.74%	3%
2005/06	3.85%	3%
2006/07		3%

Figures for 2005/06 indicate that we are well above average for all District Councils for this indicator

- Identifying people with disabilities in our workforce

In August 2005 we undertook a staff survey to encourage individuals to report if they considered themselves to have a disability. We were pleased with the response we received. A number of members of staff reported that they considered that they had a disability. The Head of Human Resources met with all those that volunteered their names, to establish on a one to one basis any issues they felt hindered their ability to carry out their job. The majority of staff approached felt sufficient adjustments had been made to accommodate their needs.

- Recruitment adverts and literature

In 2005 we were accredited to use the 'Positive about disabilities' symbol (the 2 ticks symbol) on our recruitment adverts and literature confirming that Spelthorne is committed to good practice in employing and retaining disabled people. Disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria of a job are guaranteed an interview. In 2004/05 we were in the bottom quartile of all English councils for the percentage of staff with disability (BVPI 16a). However after receiving the 'two ticks' accreditation there has been an increase in the number of applications from applicants declaring a disability. Along with this, following the staff survey mentioned above, our 2005/06 figures show a significant increase (one that would put us in the top two quartiles of district councils).

- Work experience

We work in partnership with Queen Elizabeth's College, who work with disabled adults who are updating skills for employment and have provided work experience placements for two individuals.

We have also provided a school's Year 10 work experience placement for a disabled student.

Communications

- Over 20 large print copies and 24 audio format versions of the 'Borough Bulletin' are sent out as requested.
- Text messaging service is now available to those who have hearing impairments.
- The main Council website is:
 1. 'Read Speaker' accessible.
 2. Available in text only format
 3. Has a dedicated 'accessibility page, provide guidance on changing the formats of the website.

Housing

- Various groups are consulted on ways we can improve our Housing Options service to promote equality.
- Spelthorne Borough Council is part of Surrey Community Development Trust (SCDT). The SCDT help vulnerable clients to formulate their submissions for housing.
- Disability Facilities Grant (DFG's) – A DFG is a grant given by the council to help towards the cost of adapting an individuals' home to enable them to continue to live there. Of the budget we have allocated to fund DFG's, central government contribute 60% and Spelthorne Borough Council contribute 40%.

Waste Services

- We offer 'assisted collection' for refuse to any resident who is unable to carry their refuse to the edge of their property

Transport

- SPELRIDE – The council provides accessible door-to-door transport for disabled and elderly people living in the Borough of Spelthorne who cannot use conventional public transport.
- A disability user group has been set up to address issues they might have with the Spelride service.

Services For Older People

- Our recent review of services for older people has highlighted that older people's needs are changing, people generally live longer, lifestyles are changing with a move to more independent living. Therefore we need to allocate resources towards the frail older people.

Access

- One of the Council employees, as part of his duties provides advice on making facilities more accessible. We also consult a local group (Spelthorne Committee for Access Now) on relevant planning applications.

Leisure

- Dedicated disabled changing rooms will be built at Spelthorne and Sunbury Leisure Centre by the end of 2006
- We have set up a 'Spelthorne Disability Sports Club' for 5-25 year olds. This club has been developed following consultation and a successful taster session in July 2006. From October to December 2006 a 10 week programme has been developed to allow young people attending the opportunity to try a range of activities.
- We are part of the Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI), which is run at Spelthorne Leisure Centre. Not only is the IFI about providing equipment in training, it also about improving both communications and culture for disabled users.
- In Summer 2006 we ran 'Inclusive workshops' that allowed children with disabilities to participate in activities with their peers. A variety of events were set up, such as trampolining, African drumming and dance.

Health

- Walking for Health - The Spelthorne Walking for Health Scheme is part of the National `Walking the Way to Health Initiative. The initiative aims to improve the health and fitness of more than a million people, especially those who are not physically active and want to become more active. Information on the Scheme is sent to people with learning and mental disabilities.

Communicating the DES

The Disability Equality Duty (DED) and Disability Equality Scheme (DES) will be communicated to all levels of staff through various channels.

Staff newsletter

Articles were published in our Staff newsletter (GOSPEL) in the following stages:

1. To introduce the DES and the DED - In the article all members of staff were encouraged to provide us with suggestions on how the various elements of the general duty could be achieved in their departments
2. Before publishing the DES - This was primarily aimed to up-date staff on the key findings on any feedback received from the first article

Further articles will be published:

1. When the Scheme is published
2. 6 months (May 2007) after publishing the Scheme all staff members will be updated on the progress made in implementing the action points

Meetings

Meetings were held with Heads of Service, Team Leaders and Senior Management to convey the introduction and the implications of the DED and DES. In these meetings action points were established from the results and recommendations of the consultation.

Intranet

All articles published in the staff newsletter were publicised on the intranet homepage in the 'What's New' section.

A specific area was created on the intranet, which contains all GOSPEL articles on the DED and DES, where further information can be obtained regarding the DED and Spelthorne Borough Council's DES.

Councillors

All Councillors will be informed and updated about the DES via the members area on our website and the Members Information Bulletin. Also the Performance Management Committee will monitor progress on the action plan on a yearly basis.

External Communication

We will circulate the scheme to interested organisations and, more widely, by publishing it on our website. We will also publicise the scheme's existence through press releases, website and in our council magazine "Borough Bulletin".

Involvement

In preparation for this Scheme, we commissioned detailed research with people with disabilities. This was done to ensure that people with a wide range of disabilities were involved in determining what went into the scheme by prioritising what was important to them.

We were anxious to obtain as wide a representative view of people with disabilities, or their carers, as we could achieve. This we did in an attempt to obtain the views of those people who wouldn't normally be able, or have the opportunity, to make their views known.

We commissioned a series of 22 in depth interviews representing people with a wide range of disabilities, including those with physical, sensory, learning, psychiatric and neurological disabilities. Full details of those interviewed are given in the table below.

No. of depth interviews	Type of disability	Interviewee
5	Physical disability leading to use of a wheelchair	Person with the disability
2	Learning disability (1 x Asperger's syndrome, 1 x Down's Syndrome)	Carer
2	Psychiatric disability	Carer
3	Sensory disability – visually impaired	Person with the disability
3	Sensory disability – hearing impaired	Person with the disability
2	Neurological disability – physical	Person with the disability
1	Neurological disability – mental	Carer
4	Parent of child with a disability (1 x physical disability, 1 x learning disability, 1 x visual impairment, 1 x hearing impairment)	Parent

We asked them about:

- Did they feel discriminated against
- Experience in accessing council services
- Experience of communicating with the council
- What the council should do to promote equality and a positive attitude towards disabled people

Key findings from the research suggested that those with a disability do not currently feel that they have equality with other residents in the Borough. In particular they feel that:

- Certain services are less accessible to them than to other residents because of their disability
- They are not always able to communicate with the council in the way that they would like
- They do not always receive information from the council in a format that they can access
- It is difficult for them to find out about services/activities/events geared towards, or suitable for, those with a disability
- The council could do more to actively support their integration in the community (and integration is key to countering discrimination)

Full details of the research can be found on our website at http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/disability_equality_scheme_debrief_85003-3.ppt

The detailed findings of this research have been used to develop this scheme and to inform the Action Plan.

The findings of this work were discussed with the Spelthorne Committee for Access Now (SCAN) and their comments taken on board. These mainly related to ensuring that action was taken on the identified points

We will continue to collect relevant demographic information as well as information on take up or access to our services.

We regard this Disability Equality scheme as “work in progress” and will maintain the involvement of disabled persons in its review and development.

Spelthorne's Disability Equality Scheme
Action Plan 2007-10

Category	Action	Applicable to which department	Responsibility	Timescale
Accessibility of LA's buildings	BVPI 156 – The percentage of authority buildings open to the public in which all public areas are suitable for and accessible to disabled people	Asset Management	Dave Phillips	Achieve 100% - March 2007
Communications	Publicise the launch of Scheme internally, through our newsletter	Policy and Performance	Indy Gahir	Dec-06
	Improve the current information on the Disability Facilities Grant	Environmental Health and Building Control	Lee O'Neil	Feb-07
	Inform Heads of Service on our policy on Disability Impact Assessments	All departments	Indy Gahir	Dec-06
	Publicise the DES to various disabled groups and organisations	Policy and Performance	Indy Gahir	Jan-07
	Re-vamp the section on the intranet to improve information about obtaining documents in various formats	All departments	Indy Gahir	Jan-07
	To communicate the revised Accessible Transport Guide' to all Heads of Service. Who can then promote it in any meeting they have with people with disabilities or groups	People and Partnership	Joy Willshire	Jan-07
	As suggested, we will establish a database whereby people with disabilities can register their details so that we can keep them informed.	All departments	Indy Gahir	Mar-07
	Publish article in the Bulletin to publicise the Spelthorne's Disability Equality Scheme	Communications Policy and Performance	Indy Gahir	Mar-07
	Up-date staff on the progress made on the DES	Policy and Performance	Indy Gahir	May-07

Spelthorne's Disability Equality Scheme
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Category	Action	Applicable to which department	Responsibility	Timescale
Elections and Electoral Registration	Once database has been set up residents that are partially blind or blind will be sent a braille version of the electoral registration form	Elections and Electoral Registration	Jayne McEwan	April-07
	In time for the next Canvass, develop a guide to filling out the electoral registration form	Elections and Electoral Registration	Jayne McEwan	For next Electoral Canvass, August 2007
	In time for next Canvass, send to those identified as visually impaired the pass number in large print	Elections and Electoral Registration	Jayne McEwan	For next Electoral Canvass 01/08/2007
General	BVPI 2a – The level of the Equality Standard for Local Government to which the authority conforms	All departments	Indy Gahir	Achieve Level 2 - March 2007
Involvement	To further involve people with disabilities on the DES	Policy and Performance	Indy Gahir	Ongoing
Housing	Establish a register, that can be accessed by other services, of all those properties that have been adapted (using the Disabled Facilities Grant)	Housing Strategy Environmental Health and Building Control Housing Options	Greg Halliwell	Sep-07
	Produce a protocol up-dating properties that have been adapted	Housing Strategy Environmental Health and Building Control Housing Options	Greg Halliwell	Sep-07

Spelthorne's Disability Equality Scheme
Action Plan 2007-10

Category	Action	Applicable to which department	Responsibility	Timescale
Leisure	To include 15 children with disabilities into after school clubs within Spelthorne	Leisure	Anna Graham	Dec-06
	Organise a 'Walking for Health' event	Leisure	Lisa Stonehouse	On going
	The Council is currently promoting sports club to achieve 'Active Surrey Accreditation' (there are bronze, silver and gold). The gold accreditation means that clubs have a minimum of 1 coach who has attended an approved Disability Awareness course	Leisure	Simon Hards	Targets 07/08 - 2 clubs accredited gold 08/09 - 5 clubs accredited gold
	Leisure directory to indicate sports clubs with bronze, silver and gold Active Surrey Accreditation	Leisure	Dan Reynolds	January-08
	Play schemes - set up provisions to offer one-to-one support	Leisure	Anna Graham	August-07
	Communicate the play scheme provisions through various mediums	Leisure	Anna Graham	July-07
	Inclusive workshops to be held again	Leisure	Anna Graham	Summer 2007
Policy	Integrate Disability Equality Duty and the potential need to carry out impact assessments in all Service Plans	All departments	Bob Coe	Annually commencing in October
	All new policies and functions where relevant must conduct a disability impact assessment	All departments	Indy Gihir	On going
	Establish council wide monitoring guidelines	All departments	Indy Gihir	Feb-07
	Scrutiny committee to annually evaluate the action plan		Performance Management Committee	Every year
Procurement	Build relevant disability considerations into the procurement policy and process	Finance	Indy Gihir	Jan-07

Spelthorne's Disability Equality Scheme
Action Plan 2007-10

Category	Action	Applicable to which department	Responsibility	Timescale
Employment	BVPI 11c – The percentage of the top paid 5% of staff who have a disability	All departments	HR	Achieve 5% - March 2007
	BVPI 16a – Percentage of staff with disability	All departments	HR	Achieve 3% - March 2007
Training	An annual training programme is established on Disability Awareness for all those wanting to refresh their knowledge and to ensure all new starters have received training. To train 30 frontline members of staff annually on diversity and/or disability awareness. To train 12 members of staff in Disability Impact Assessments in 2007.	All departments	HR	On going
	To have at least two members of frontline staff trained in British Sign Language and/or establish alternative methods for providing this service	All, especially front line staff	John Foggo	Sep-07