

Disability Equality Scheme 2006 - 2009

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Foreword

We are delighted to be introducing the Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council's Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan for the period 2006 - 2009. The purpose of the document is to promote access and equality so that all members of the community, including those with a disability, can use the services and facilities provided by Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council in its role as a purchaser, service provider, policy adviser, planner, regulator and a responsible employer.

The driving force behind compilation of this document is not simply that it is a legal requirement to produce one. The shared vision is for the Crewe and Nantwich Borough to be a place where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, where diversity is recognised as one of our strengths.

It is expected that the benefits of this Scheme and its Action Plan will be reflected in improvements and innovation in service delivery, more positive attitudes towards people with disabilities, more disabled people participating in public life, and equality of opportunity between disabled people and the rest of the community.

We are convinced that by working positively together we can empower and encourage the Council and its employees to achieve a real difference in making the Borough an even better and more welcoming place.

Cllr. Brian Silvester
Leader of the Council

Paul Ancell
Chief Executive

1. Introduction

1.1 Definition of Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) sets out the circumstances in which a person is "disabled". It says you are disabled if you have:

- § a mental or physical impairment
- § this has an adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities (mobility, manual dexterity, physical co-ordination, continence, ability to lift, carry or move everyday objects, speech, hearing or eyesight, memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand, understanding of the risk of physical danger)
- § the adverse effect is substantial
- § the adverse effect is long-term (meaning it has lasted for 12 months, or is likely to last for more than 12 months or for the rest of your life).

There are some special provisions, for example:

- § If your impairment has substantially affected your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, but doesn't any more, it will still be counted as having that effect if it is likely to do so again
- § if you have a progressive condition, and it will substantially affect your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities in the future, you will be regarded as having an impairment which has a substantial adverse effect from the moment the condition has some effect on your ability to carry out normal day to day activities.
- § if you have been diagnosed as having cancer, HIV infection or multiple sclerosis you will automatically be considered as 'disabled'.
- § if you are registered as blind or partially sighted or certified as blind or partially sighted by a consultant ophthalmologist, you will automatically be considered as "disabled".
- § people who have had a disability in the past but are no longer disabled are covered by certain parts of the DDA.

This is, however, only a narrow definition of disability because it concentrates on "personal" factors. There are also environmental and societal factors that have an impact, creating major barriers for people. At present disabled people do not have the same opportunities or choices as non-disabled people. The poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion experienced by many disabled people is not the inevitable result of their impairments or medical conditions, but rather stems from attitudinal and environmental barriers. This is known as the "social model of disability", and provides a basis for the successful implementation of the duty to promote disability equality.

Social Model of Disability is defined as recognition that "primarily it is the loss or limitation of opportunities, due to environmental and social barriers, that prevent people who have impairments from participating in society on an equal level with others."¹

¹ Disability Right Commission (www.drc.gov.uk)

The Disability Equality Duty requires local authorities to have due regard to:

- § Eliminating discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
- § Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- § Eliminating harassment of disabled people that is related to their disabilities
- § Encouraging participation of disabled people in public life
- § Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people
- § Take steps to take account of disabled persons` disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons

1.2 General Facts about Disability Equality in the UK²

Disabled people's participation

- § Disabled people represent 20 per cent of the population but have a particularly low representation in public appointments – currently an average of around three per cent across England, Scotland and Wales.
- § Only six per cent of all volunteers are disabled people. Central Government initiatives to promote "active" citizenship have tended to characterise disabled people principally as beneficiaries, rather than untapped contributors.

The employment gap

- § Of the total number of people of working age out of work in Britain, 40 per cent are disabled
- § At any given level of qualification a disabled person is more likely than a non-disabled person to be low-paid. The disability pay gap is ten per cent

Independent living - No-one is obliged to live in an institution

- § Nearly 300,000 people are currently in institutional care. Many of these people have learning difficulties, mental health conditions and physical or sensory impairment
- § Of adults with a learning disability living in the community, 52 per cent live with their parents and 12 per cent with other relatives

Safer Communities

- § Research by Mencap found that nine out of ten people with a learning disability reported having experienced harassment
- § The Social Exclusion Unit report 'Mental Health and Social Exclusion' found rejection, or the fear of rejection, by the community to be the most important cause of social exclusion amongst people with a mental health condition.

Promote children`s life chances

- § 55 per cent of families with disabled children are living in or at the margins of poverty with 84 per cent of mothers of disabled children not working compared with 39 per cent of mothers of non-disabled children.
- § Disabled 16 year olds are twice as likely to be out of work, education or training as their non-disabled peers.

Equality for disabled people may mean treating them "more favourably", which underlines the fact that equality of opportunity cannot be achieved simply by treating disabled and non-disabled people alike.

² Disability Right Commission (www.drc.gov.uk)

2. Commitment to Equality

The Council's Mission Statement

"The Council will identify and reflect the needs of all sections of the community in the provision of fair, effective and efficient services, and initiate policies designed to ensure the Borough's continuing prosperity within a safe, stimulating and sustainable environment."

Commitment

The Council wants everybody, who lives, works or visits the Borough to enjoy the experience. The Council recognises that this is best achieved when everyone feels that they have fair and equal access to: services, jobs and leisure opportunities.

The Council is committed to ensuring that all residents, visitors and Council employees are treated fairly regardless of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, gender, marital/civil partnership status, disability, age, trade union activity or religious or political beliefs, in any of their dealings with the Council.

The main objective of the Council is to mainstream the Equality and Diversity agenda into day-to-day work and to provide even better public services for everyone.

"Crewe and Nantwich - a good Council - and that's official!"

Corporate Commitment to Equality

The Council's commitment to equality is reflected in the clear divide of roles and responsibilities:

Councillors

A Board member holding the equality portfolio is the councillor "champion" responsible for overseeing the equality and diversity progress of the Council.

Management Team

has corporate oversight for the development and implementation of the Scheme and responsibility for equality performance

Heads of service

Have operational responsibility for the delivery of specific corporate equality objectives, ensuring that these objectives are integrated into their service (implementation) plans

The Equality and Diversity Working Group

co-ordinates the strategic management and implementation of Equality & Diversity objectives and the DES. Each directorate has nominated lead officers, reporting to the EDWG, to co-ordinate departmental contributions to the equality work and meet the targets set by the Disability Discrimination Act as amended and the Equality Standard for Local Government

The Equality and Diversity Officer

is a key person for ensuring the development and review of the DES and the Council's progress through the levels of the Equality Standard for Local Government

The designated Principal Human Resources Officer

is responsible for the employment duties, employee monitoring and the annual production of monitoring reports.

3. Developing and Implementing the Disability Equality Scheme

In developing the Disability Equality Scheme 2006 – 2009, the Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council has followed the guidance provided by the Disability Rights Commission in the Statutory Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Disability Equality. The Disability Equality Scheme consolidates the progress and past achievements the Council has reached under its general Scheme for Equality 2002 – 2005, and identifies areas of further improvement (the Action Plan, Appendix no. 3)

3.1 Objective: To involve disabled people in the development of the Scheme

In order to raise the confidence in our services by disabled people, to improve the way we deliver them and to develop and align our policies to meet their needs, we have consulted and will continue to consult, with the community through existing and new forums.

The Council has worked closely with a number of public sector bodies in the development of this Scheme and a multi-agency group has been established to facilitate joint working.

Various events were held with over 200 disabled people with a diverse range of disabilities. A list of people with disabilities who were involved in developing the Action Plan and all public organisations involved in the consultation can be found in the Appendix no. 1.

The main findings relate to the following areas:

- § Transport
- § Environment
- § Leisure
- § Housing
- § Community Safety
- § Care Services / Health
- § Education / Training
- § Physical access to public buildings
- § Contacting Public Organisations
- § Employment

Findings relevant to Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council are going to be addressed in the individual service-level action plans.

It is important to note that the consultation and involvement that took place to develop this first Scheme and Action Plan is only the first stage of a continuous dialogue with people with disabilities via the Cheshire Disability Equality Duty Group.

The Council will also continue to undertake specific consultation with groups in Crewe and Nantwich Borough (e.g. disability groups, local strategic partners, focus groups with disabled people) as a part of the on-going progress of the social inclusion activities

The Council commits itself in the comprehensive Consultation Strategy 2005 – 2008 to the following:

"...to communicate and engage with all sectors of the community. It will encourage active participation and will demonstrate how it has taken account of the views expressed. Particular attention will be paid to hard-to-reach groups."

"...to view all its actions and its processes from the viewpoint of the customer and citizen"

The primary aims of the Consultation Strategy include:

- § To provide information and opportunities for local people to be better informed and gain an understanding of the Council's policies or priorities.
- § To define issues and debate problems and solutions with local people.
- § To listen and learn from local people, and to help the Council understand better the needs and wishes of the community.
- § To monitor satisfaction, including changing levels of satisfaction over time, and identify causes of dissatisfaction.
- § To help set service standards and evaluate specific quality initiatives.
- § To reach those parts of the community which in the past have often had no voice.

3.2 Objective: Gathering evidence and using the information gathered

The Scheme has been developed based on contributions from departments across the Council. Services listed their current activities to promote equality for disabled people, initiatives, projects and their existing monitoring processes.

The information showed the Council has made a significant improvement in aiming to gather information, systematically monitor and apply the findings into practice by aligning and improving services it provides:

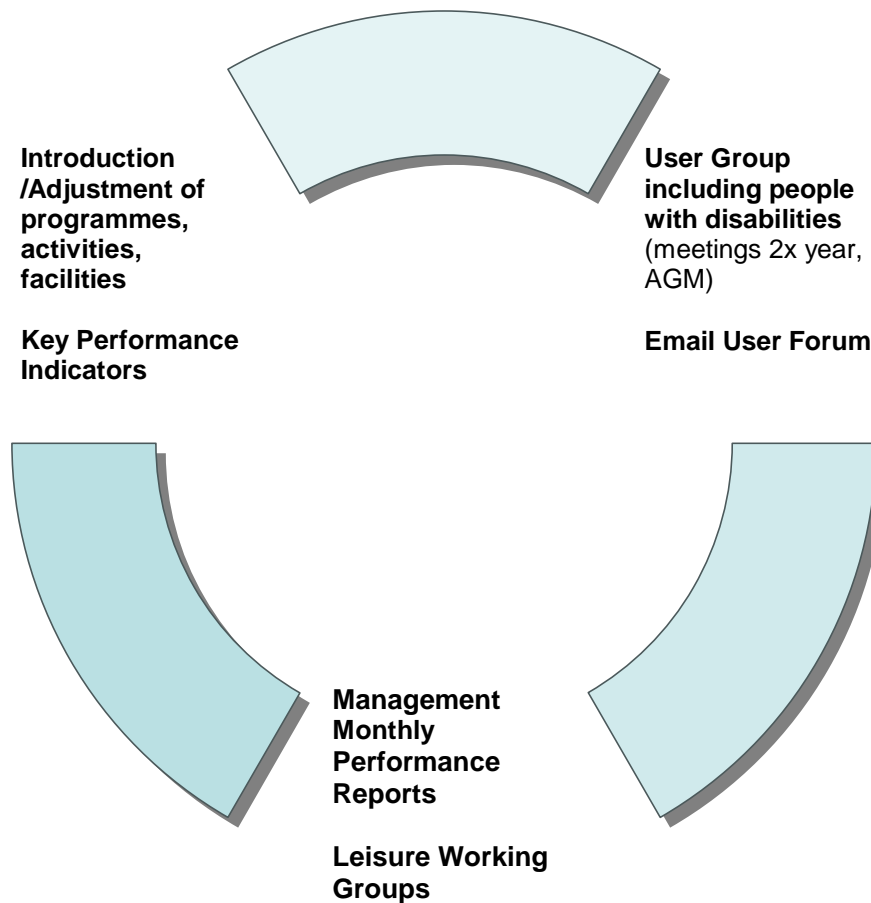
Fig. 1 below shows one of many examples how the Council gathers information about the services it provides via actively involving people with disabilities, and most importantly how the findings are applied into practice.

The example is from Leisure Services, which undertakes twice yearly user surveys designed to monitor use by potentially disadvantaged groups (the last survey involved responses from a minimum of 550 leisure facility users). Each leisure facility operates a Users Group, which includes members representing customers with disabilities. Each group meets at least twice per year, including one meeting that is designated as an AGM and is opened up to all users to attend. Furthermore, each leisure facility has an "E-mail user forum" in place. This is a new initiative encouraging feedback from the leisure centre users (over 100 members signed up to the leisure operations e-mail forum)

What happens with the information gathered?

The outcome of this feedback is fed into Managers Monthly performance reports and into working groups in leisure operations such as Customer Services and Marketing. Each facility is represented on these groups and they determine programmes, activities or facilities that could be provided as a result of the feedback received from users. Each facility also has a key local performance indicator ("LPI"), which requires a minimum of 10 improvements undertaken as a direct result of customer feedback. Progress against this LPI is also monitored via each facility monthly performance report.

Fig.1 Example of involvement disabled customers as an integral process of shaping and improving the services the Council provides – Leisure Services



Councillors` contacts and initiatives (e.g. Local Democracy week), partnership arrangements, co-operation with external agencies and bodies across the Borough (e.g. Citizens Advice Bureau, Wulvern Housing, IRIS, Hilary Centre, Anchor Staying Put), analysing customers` comments and complaints and systematic monitoring are the main channels for establishing mechanisms revealing the needs of our customers.

As a result the Council has made significant improvements across the whole spectrum of the services:

- § Loop systems for hearing impairment have been installed in Crewe Crematorium Chapel and also in the Cemetery Office reception area following consultation with the Cheshire Deaf Society
- § A wheel chair is available at the Crewe Crematorium Chapel for use by disabled mourners or anyone who may become unwell.
- § the Nantwich Customer Service Centre has been redesigned to comply with DDA legislation (i.e. automatic doors, loop system on cash desk, low counters etc.)
- § The Council provides assisted services (Where a benefit claimant/potential claimant is house bound we do home visits to ensure that they get the benefits that they are entitled to. We also assist with the completion of claim

- forms and this service will be enhanced by having electronic forms when the new mobile working system is introduced)
- § Self-service modules to the Council's revenues and benefits system will allow housebound customers to access information about their accounts at home through the Internet
 - § "Paypoint Scheme" allowing customers to pay their bills at retail outlets, including Post Offices, closer to their homes has been introduced.
 - § For refuse collection the Council offers so called "a pull-out scheme", which is designed to help elderly or disabled residents, who can have their wheeled bin collected from their property. The main reasons the Council chose wheeled bins instead of boxes was to make it easier for residents to wheel bins out for collection instead of bending, picking up and carrying (sometimes) heavy boxes. It is also better for the refuse collector due to Health and Safety reasons.
 - § Free for life bus passes are offered to people with disabilities
 - § Where a resident believes they may be entitled to disabled relief for Council Tax we have a trained officer who can visit and give full advice in this area. This is an entitlement if a resident has alterations to their house to accommodate a wheel chair/stair lift or an additional bathroom/ground floor bedroom for the use of a disabled person.
 - § The Council has improved the number of disabled-only car park bays to bring the total in the Borough up to 5% of all provided bays; moreover all blue badge holders can park free in ANY marked bay- not just the Disabled-only ones.
 - § The Shop-mobility service is operated from Victoria Centre car park
 - § The Customer Service section works jointly with the Pensions Service in advising on additional benefits e.g. attendance allowance. The Benefits Section undertakes joint visits with the Pension Service to the partners of recently deceased benefits claimants.
 - § The Council in partnership with the Hilary Centre provides healthy lifestyle advice to its clients (targeting customers with physical disabilities and learning difficulties) – supported swimming etc.
 - § The Council gives 100% Charitable Business Rate Relief where charity is for the sole benefit of the local area; for example IRIS (assisting residents with visual impairments).
 - § A policy has been developed with regard to definition of specifications of licensed Hackney and private hire vehicles, in particular Hackney carriages that are licensed by the Council for the carriage of wheelchair bound passengers. The policy is now ready for consultation with groups representing disabled customers

The Council is committed to continuous improvement in the way it communicates with residents and strives to be as inclusive as possible. Many of the Council's documents already correspond to the Crystal Standard. Upon request documents can be provided in alternative formats (large print, Braille, audio) and sign language interpreters can be provided if necessary. From January 2007 the Council website visitors with visual impairments will be able to listen to the website.

Although the Council has made substantial improvement in the way it monitors and subsequently applies information into practice, further developments are needed to ensure that a consistent approach is taken across the Council. Moreover, findings of the Cheshire-wide consultation exercise (as mentioned in the 3.1) confirm that scope for further improvement exists.

3.3 Objective: Link the Scheme to other performance management drivers

In order to mainstream the equality agenda into day-to-day activities the Council carries out, a number of drivers to support legislation are in place:

§ Planning

The Corporate Action plan is supported by service-level action plans designed to tackle issues specific to each function

§ Equality Standard for Local Government

The Equality Standard for Local Government identifies 5 levels of the equality Commitments, with level 5 being the top in achieving full mainstreaming of equality. The Council is committed to progress from level 1 to level 2 by 2008.

BV2a - the level (if any) of the Equality Standard for Local Government to which the authority conforms

2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009
Actual (Target)	Actual (Target)	Actual (Target)	Actual (Target)	Actual (Target)
level 1 (level 1)	level 1 (level 1)	(level 1)	(level 2)	(level 2)

§ Best Value

The Best Value process was introduced to enable continuous improvement in service delivery across all aspects of local government and equality forms a vital part. Best Value Performance Indicators most relevant to the Disability Equality Scheme include employment related BV 11c, BV 16a, BV 16b (developed further in the chapter below devoted to employment), BV 156 and LCH 105

BV156 – % of authority buildings open to the public in which all public areas are suitable and accessible to disabled people

2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009
Actual (Target)	Actual (Target)	Actual (Target)	Actual (Target)	Actual (Target)
71.4 (71.4%)	78.57% (78.6%)	(79%)	(79%)	(79%)

It is not possible for the remaining buildings to become Part M Building Regulation compliant due to lift shaft restrictions, listed building status etc. However, reasonable alternative access measures are being installed as part of the DDA programme work.

LCH 105 – Ranking in the Local Authority Website League

2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009
Actual (Target)	Actual (Target)	Actual (Target)	Actual (Target)	Actual (Target)
186/467 (N/A)	31/467 (top 100)	(in the top 80)	(in the top 70)	(in the top 60)

The Council seeks to make the contents of its website accessible to as many people as possible. This includes the four main groups of people who are likely to encounter problems accessing this website:

- People with a sensory impairment
- People with motor impairments
- People with a learning disability who may find lengthy or complicated sites difficult to use
- People without access to the latest, highest specification, computer hardware or software

The DDA makes it illegal for us to discriminate against a disabled person by refusing to provide (or deliberately not providing) any service which we otherwise provide to members of the public; or offering a lower standard of service to a disabled person or the manner in which we provide it; or in the terms on which we provide a service to a disabled person.

The e- Government Unit requires all government websites to conform to WCAG 1.0 level **AA**:

We aspire to a minimum of Level AA accessibility as set out by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) in the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0 (WCAG 1.0). All checkpoints within Level A and AA must be adhered to. The following are identified as being particularly important:

- A text equivalent for every non-text element (i.e. image or multimedia file) should be provided via "alt" (alternative text attribute) or if necessary the "longdesc" (long description attribute)
- Documents should be organised so they are readable without requiring an associated style-sheet
- Equivalent for dynamic content should be updated whenever the dynamic content is changed
- For data tables, mark-up should be used to clearly identify and associate data cells and cell headers
- Frames should be avoided
- Pages should be usable when scripts, applets, or other programmatic objects are turned off or are not supported, or an accessible alternative should be provided
- An option to skip navigation should be provided
- The site will not use technologies that require the downloading of new software, if this can be avoided. If this cannot be avoided an accessible version will be provided
- Content should be clear, concise and accessible to all
- The site should be tested using the following: keyboard only, JavaScript turned off, style-sheets turned off, linearised order, text only browser or screen reader

In order to ensure that we meet these standards we promote an understanding of what accessibility means for web pages throughout the organisation and continually check pages for A and AA compliance. When other sites provide services which the Council purchases links to those sites are only established once we are satisfied that they conform with a minimum level A accessibility. It is our aim to continue improving the level of accessibility of this website with the eventual goal of conforming to the highest W3C 'Triple A' standard in the foreseeable future.

For more information about accessibility of the Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council's website please see the Appendix no. 4.

§ Statement of Community Involvement

Sets out the Borough Council's policy for involving the community in the preparation and revision of all Local Development Documents and in development control decisions. It sets out who will be consulted, when and how it will take place

§ Community Strategy for Crewe and Nantwich

An overall plan to promote and develop the social economic and environmental well-being of the Borough over the next ten years.

§ Corporate Strategy for Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council 2006 – 2011

Sets out the Council's principal purpose and direction for the next five years

§ Homelessness strategy

Reducing homelessness through prevention is one of the key aims of this strategy.

§ Housing Strategy 2005 – 2008

also addresses the issue of People with Mental Health Needs:

"There are currently 108 units in Crewe and Nantwich where people with mental health problems receive support. Across Cheshire it is estimated that there will be 2,150 people with severe and enduring mental health problems however their specific housing needs is not well mapped locally.....Much of the housing support needed by this client group does not have to be a of a specialist nature. Low level housing support available to all vulnerable adults, properly sized and delivered would be sufficient to meet a large spectrum of mental health need, irrespective of diagnosis. The Cheshire Mental Health Supported Housing Group exists to co-ordinate access to such services and identifies gaps in need. "

The Council works with Anchor Staying Put to provide the Disabled Facilities Grant service, which allows residents with disabilities to continue living in their own home. The Council always looks at the adaptation requests and considers if a resident would benefit from moving to another property. In such cases assistance is provided via relocation grants. However, a resident always has the option of staying in the existing property.

Within the enforcement function, inspections are carried out on all homes and the residents' thoughts are taken into account, when deciding what action needs to be taken. It includes all residents with any form of disability.

§ Impact Assessment

is one of the key ways of embedding equality into the policies and activities of the Council. The purpose of impact assessments is to ensure that the Council's policies, procedures, functions and practices are free of discrimination and do not disadvantage any of the Equality and Diversity groups. The Council is currently in a process of developing guidelines and a toolkit for undertaking screening and impact assessment processes, which will be launched at the beginning of 2007 (for more information please see the Action Plan). Furthermore Impact Assessment training sessions are held to prepare key employees, who will be involved in the process.

3.4 Objective: Employment

The Council continues to be committed to ensuring equality of opportunity in all aspects of employment, including recruitment and selection, performance management, training and development and in the general culture of the organisation and the daily lives of our employees

We recognise that our ability to meet the diverse needs of the communities we serve is improved by having a diverse workforce which generally reflects the local population and which has the skills and understanding to achieve our service objectives. We commit ourselves to valuing diversity in our workforce and to developing and training our employees to improve their ability to meet the Council's goals.

BV11c – percentage of top 5% of earners who have a disability

2004/2005 Actual (Target)	2005/2006 Actual (Target)	2006/2007 Actual (Target)	2007/2008 Actual (Target)	2008/2009 Actual (Target)
N/A	11.49% (5%)	(10%)	(10%)	(10%)

Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council is a user of the Government's Disability Symbol. This is the logo illustrated by two ticks, which can be seen in our adverts. In using this symbol, we are stating our commitment to be positive about disabilities and give certain guarantees, the main one being the guaranteed interview. This means that any potentially suitable disabled applicant will be short listed and interviewed for the post. "Potentially suitable" means someone who meets the essential requirements of the job, as defined within the person specification, or who might reasonably be expected to do so with reasonable adjustments to employment arrangements, practices or premises. To enable continued use of the symbol, the Council is reviewed on an annual basis to assess if the criterion is still being met.

The Council's competency framework, which is designed to enhance existing processes associated with performance management, recruitment and selection, and training and development of the workforce has been in operation for 2 years now and reflects the Council's values together with current and future expectations of employees. The competencies specify the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to deliver quality services to the community.

Recruitment and Selection

At any stage of the process, the fair treatment of candidates with disabilities will be of paramount importance. Our current process is such that, in accordance with good practice recommendations, the question of disability only arises within the confidential monitoring form which candidates are requested to complete. The selection panel does not see this form and therefore a candidate's disability is unlikely to be brought to the panel's attention until a later stage, if at all.

For the purposes of equality monitoring, the 'Record of Short-listing Decisions' form is sent to the Human Resources Section, giving a summary of the reasons why applications have and have not progressed to the next stage of the process. It is at this stage that the monitoring forms will be checked to see whether any of the candidates for the position indicated that they had a disability. If any disabled candidates are not short-listed, the reasons recorded by the panel will be examined to ensure compliance with the criteria for the 'guaranteed interview'. The panel may

be contacted in relation to this, or any other candidate, whose status on the shortlist may require re-consideration.

All recruitment methods give due regard to those applicants who may have a disability. As mentioned above, the panel will often have little or no knowledge that a disability exists at this stage, and it may only become apparent at a later stage if the disability is visible or otherwise physically identifiable. We cannot, therefore, assume the disability status of any candidate and neither can we assume the right to be notified.

If a candidate does require alternative arrangements in relation to a disability, we are legally required to make reasonable adjustments to these arrangements.

Employment duties

Disability equality is likely to figure significantly in all aspects of employment policy and practice, including:

- § Recruitment
- § Induction
- § Training and organisational development
- § Promotion
- § Performance appraisal
- § Grievance and disciplinary
- § Employee relations

The Workforce

BV16a – percentage of local authority employees with a disability

2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009
Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual
(Target)	(Target)	(Target)	(Target)	(Target)
3.4%	4.21%	(6%)	(6%)	(6%)
(2.75%)	(6%)			

BV16b – percentage of economically active population in the local authority area who have a disability

2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009
Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual
(Target)	(Target)	(Target)	(Target)	(Target)
14.1%	14.1%	(14.1%)	(14.1%)	(14.1%)
(14.1%)	(14.1%)			

The last employee monitoring survey resulted in a 73% response rate. From a total of approximately 750 people (headcount) 4.5% of employees have indicated they have a disability, which is lower than the current census percentage of economically active disabled people in the authority area, which is 14.1%.

Leaving the Council's Employment

For the period 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006, all leavers have been monitored, although data is obtained through our central personnel records rather than requested at the time of leaving.

Reason for leaving	Total employees	Disability (Yes/No)
Voluntary	52	42 No, 1 Yes, 9 Unknown
Compulsory/Dismissed	4	1 Yes, 3 No
Deceased	0	0
Compassionate	0	0
Ill Health	1	Unknown
Retirement or Redundancy	5	2 No ,1 Yes, 2 Unknown
TUPE	3	No

Discipline, Capability and Grievance Proceedings

These are also to be monitored on an annual basis, and the results are as follows:

	Disabled	Not disabled	Undisclosed
disciplinary proceedings	1	3	2
formal grievances lodged	1	4	1
capability proceedings	2	3	

The Capability, Grievance, Disciplinary and Redundancy policies have recently been updated in order to reflect the changes in employment legislation and these are currently subject to consultation with the Trade Unions.

Development and awareness raising

The Human Resources Section has purchased an integrated HR and Payroll information technology system, which incorporates a training module. The training module went “live” in September 2006. Therefore, the system now in place for the collection and analysis of data relating to training and development activities will continue to be developed in line with the recommended approach from the Disability Right Commission and best practice.

The Council has a continuous rolling programme of training on diversity related issues. During the year 2005 - 2006 general awareness sessions (see the Appendix no. 5) were attended by approximately 380 employees and further sessions on Recruitment and Selection and Equality Impact Assessments are scheduled.

Employees are further developed through partnership with other organisations. For example, all customer services front-line employees have attended mental health awareness sessions run by the Wirral and Cheshire Partnership Trust. IRIS has also run sessions for front line staff across the Council to enable them to understand some of the problems associated with being partially sighted/blind.

Council employees are not always at the receiving end and frequently deliver training sessions focused on equality agenda. For a number of years, Sport Development has run workshops on the following ‘How to Coach Disabled People in Sport’, ‘Equity in your Coaching’ and ‘Clubs for All’ which aim to broaden the local knowledge base and extend provision. Whilst the workshops have been targeted at sports coaches, community groups have also attended this training (which can be tailored) and this has proved useful in terms of exchanging best practice.

3.5 Objective: Implementing the Action Plan

The Disability Equality Scheme action plan sets out the corporate level key actions which the Council will take to promote disability equality over the three years period. Actions have been set and linked to measurable time-bound indicators. (please see the Annex no.3)

Separate action plans for services will be developed to better address specific, relevant issues and to support the corporate-level action plan.

Progress against the action will be monitored regularly via the Equality Diversity Working Group.

Appendix 1
People with Disabilities involved in developing the Action Plan:

Date	Name of Group	Venue	Group Specification
19.9.06	One Voice	Guy Harvey Nantwich	Learning Difficulties
	A to B Access Group	Canal Street Chester	Physical Disabilities
21.9.06	Leonard Cheshire	The Hill Sandbach	Physical Disabilities
	Iris	The Resource Centre, Crewe	Visual Impairment
	Redesmere	Redesmere Day Centre, Wilmslow	Physical Disabilities
	Firdale Day Centre	Firdale Day Centre Northwich	Learning Difficulties
22.9.06	Flat Lane	Community Day Centre, Ellesmere Port	Learning Difficulties
	Link up Club	Scope Day Centre, Chester	Physical Disabilities
28.9.06	Day Service Network	Crewe Alex	Learning Difficulties
	Hebden Green School	Winsford	Physical Disabilities
5.10.06	The Hilary Centre	Crewe	Physical Disabilities

Organisations Involved in the Consultation:

Councils	Cheshire County Council
	Chester City Council
	Congleton Borough Council
	Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council
	Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council
	Macclesfield Borough Council
	Vale Royal Borough Council
Court Services	Cheshire Probation Service
	Her Majesty's Court Service
Disability Organisations	Cheshire Disability Federation
	Disability Resource Exchange
	Macclesfield Disability Information Bureau
	Vale Royal Disability Service
Emergency Services	Cheshire Constabulary
	Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service
	Cheshire Police Authority
Employment and Career skills	Connexions, Cheshire & Warrington
	Jobcentre Plus, Cheshire & Warrington
	Learning and Skills Council, Cheshire & Warrington
Health	Central Cheshire Primary Care Trust
	Cheshire West and Ellesmere Port Primary Care Trusts
	East Cheshire Primary Care Trust
	East Cheshire Hospitals NHS Trust
	Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Trust
Housing	Chester and District Housing Trust
	Dane Housing

Appendix 2

Relevant Council functions and policies

General policies and documents	
§ Codes of Conduct for both Elected Members and Council Officers as contained in the Constitution of Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council	§ Corporate Strategy for Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council 2006 - 2011
§ Freedom of Information Act 2000 publication scheme	§ Your guide to Council Services
§ Community Strategy for Crewe and Nantwich	§ Service Equality and Employment Policy Statement – Valuing Diversity
§ Comprehensive Performance Assessment	§ Procurement Strategy
§ Statement of Licensing Policy	§ Local Code of corporate governance
§ Consultation Strategy 2005	§ Homelessness strategy
§ Housing Strategy, Affordable Housing Scheme	§ Property accreditation scheme

Main Council Employment Policies	
§ Human Resources Strategy	§ Stress at Work Policy
§ Policy and Procedure for the Prevention of Harassment and Bullying at Work	§ Recruitment, Assessment, Selection and Appointment Policy
§ Service Equality and Employment Policy Statement – valuing diversity	§ Disciplinary Procedure
§ Corporate Employee/Member Development Policy and Strategy	§ Grievance Procedure
§ Policy Statement – working alone	

Relevant Council Functions	
§ Provision of and access to information	§ Leisure services
§ Access to buildings and services	§ Emergency planning
§ Administration of Housing Grants	§ Provision of corporate information
§ Empty Homes Strategy	§ Press and media
§ Licensing application	§ Communications
§ Internet/Intranet Development	§ Support Services for Councillors and Committee Administration
§ Elections and Electoral registration	§ Crime and disorder
§ Community Plan	§ Planning applications
§ Council Tax benefit	§ Concessionary travel
§ Housing benefit	§ Council Tax
§ Cemetery/Crematorium	§ Procurement and partnership
§ One stop shop	§ Building control
§ Business development (incl. parking and markets)	§ Planning Policy (Local Plan & Local Development Framework)

Appendix 3

Action Plan 2006 – 2009

	Objectives	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Outcomes
1.	Involving people with disabilities	<p>a. Active member of the Cheshire wide public sector group to ensure a partnership approach to respond to the disability equality duty</p> <p>b. Develop "Inclusive Communication" pack and promote inclusive communication across the Council</p> <p>c. Promote positive attitudes in all Council publications</p> <p>d. Publish "Access to Crewe and Nantwich" guide</p> <p>e. Centralised, systematic approach to conversion of document into alternative formats and other languages – proposal to EDWG</p> <p>f. Changing the CNBC accessibility statement</p> <p>g. Promoting E&D agenda and raising awareness through internal communication channels</p> <p>h. Continual improvement of the accessibility of the website</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>April 2007</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>May 2008</p> <p>12/06</p> <p>12/06,</p> <p>12/06, 1/07 - ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>EDWG</p> <p>E&D officer, Communication Manager</p> <p>EDWG</p> <p>Community Development Manager + E&D officer</p> <p>EDWG workshop</p> <p>EDWG workshop</p>	<p>promote dialogue with target groups, increase confidence in the services the Council provides</p> <p>Establishing a system that can be consistently applied across the Council</p>

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2.	Gathering information on the effect of Council policies and practices on people with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Produce a Screening guidance manual and a template to assist managers and Heads of services to maintain a consistent approach across the Council b. Impact Assessment Training attended by Managers, Heads of Services c. Brief heads of services on application of the guidance manual d. Review the existing list of relevant functions and policies stated in the Appendix no.2 e. Prioritising relevant functions and policies according to a grading system: high, medium or low dependant on how relevant they are to the General Duty f. Compile and consult employees on this list of functions and policies to determine a final list of priorities g. To undertake mapping of the Council's current performance on disability equality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1/07 10, 12/06, 1/07 1,2/07 1st quarter 07 (review yearly) by April 2007 by May 2007 January 2007 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> E&D officer; EDWG; approval by MT Principal HR Officer Managers, Heads of services E&D officer Heads of services Heads of services E&D officer, submission to EDWG, MT Services, EDWG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policies, procedures, functions free of discrimination improved performance on promoting disability
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		(against the findings of the Cheshire-wide consultation exercise), identifying priority areas for improvement, input into the service-level action plans			equality
		h. To review and improve the existing monitoring systems	Ongoing	Consultation Manager, EDWG	obtaining evidence
3.	Assessing and consulting on the likely impact of the proposed policies on the promotion of disability equality	a. Equality Impact assessment toolkit approved by Management Team	1/07		consultation targeted to relevant stakeholders
		b. Impact assess and consult on new and existing functions and policies rated as high (based on the screening process) – joint, planned approach across the Council	From May 2007	Consultation Manager EDWG	Increased number of stakeholder reference to improve statistical relevance
				Utilise and help to expand the existing Community Development, LSP network Consultation Manager EDWG	Greater public confidence in the Council's services, specifically among residents with disabilities
4.	Arrangements for using the information gathered	a. Service level action plans compiled (related to 2g)	From 1/2007	Heads of services, EDWG	Performance improvement
		b. Regular monitoring and reporting of	From	Heads of	Progress up to

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		progress against the action plans	December 07	services, EDWG	date, employees and customers aware
		c. Co-ordinate dissemination of data gathered to inform the impact assessment process and the review of the Scheme	From 1/07	Heads of services, EDWG	
5.	Methods for assessing the impact of policies and practices on equality for disabled people	a. Review all existing functions and policies rated as high (as identified based on 2e,f) b. Review all existing functions and policies rated as medium (as identified based on 2e, f) c. Review all existing functions and policies rated as low (as identified based on 2e, f) d. Improve existing monitoring systems based on early outcomes of the screening and subsequently based on the consultations and impact assessments	Mid 2007 Mid 2008 Mid 2009 From May 2007 ongoing	Heads of services Heads of services	Identification of adverse impact, improving policy outcomes
6.	Publications and review of the Scheme	a. Publish and promote the Council's first Disability Equality Scheme in accessible formats and other languages upon request b. Review and report on progress made with regard to the Disability Equality Scheme c. Full review of the Disability Equality Scheme	12/06 ongoing 12/07 12/2009	EDWG EDWG EDWG	Scheme reflects the priorities highlighted by disabled people and is widely publicised
7.	Link the Scheme to other	a. Mainstream disability equality in all	2008	Heads of	Level 2 of the

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	performance management drivers	services, policies and functions, as required by the Equality Standard for Local Government (link to BV2a)		Services, EDWG	Equality Standard for LG in 2008
8.	Employment	<p>a. Monitor the employment of CNBC staff with a declared disability (Recruitment and Selection, Induction, Training and development, Promotion, Performance appraisal, Grievance and disciplinary, Employee relations)</p> <p>b. Monitoring results as an input to reviewed DES</p> <p>c. Complaints of bullying, harassment or discrimination due to a disability – extend the existing hate incident reporting system</p> <p>d. Informal complaints about disability discrimination</p> <p>e. Develop employees focused disability group</p> <p>f. To collect and analyse statistical data, conduct research (via focus groups, questionnaires, intranet surveys, etc.) to gather information on the effect of the Council's policies and practices</p> <p>g. To identify barriers to access to</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>12/07</p> <p>from 1/07</p> <p>from 1/07</p> <p>1/2008</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>HR</p> <p>HR, EDWG</p> <p>HR, EDWG</p> <p>HR, EDWG</p> <p>HR + EDWG</p> <p>HR + EDWG</p> <p>HR</p>	<p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p>In-house consultation of employment policies</p> <p>Promote</p>

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		employment and to work with other public sector organisations to attract disabled people into the recruitment process			CNBC as an employer among the disability community (link to BV16a, BV16b)
9.	Employee training	<p>a. Impact assessment training</p> <p>b. Employees awareness training sessions – focus on various forms of disabilities (target group all front line employees)</p> <p>c. To provide key front line employees with Sign Language training</p> <p>d. Involving people with disabilities in employees awareness training (e.g. lunch-time talks)</p> <p>e. Consultation training – regular refresh sessions (workshops) with key members of staff involved in consultations</p>	<p>10/06, 12/06, 1/07</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Principal HR Officer</p> <p>HR + EDWG</p> <p>HR</p>	<p>Enhance employees` confidence, raise awareness</p>

Appendix 4

Accessibility of the Council's website

Text size

Should the Council's website visitors find the text size too small or too large for them to read comfortably, they can change the size of the text via their browser:

Microsoft Internet Explorer

If you are using Internet Explorer, go to the menu at the top of the browser page and select View, from the list of options, select Text Size. You will see a side menu open up; select the size you wish to view the website in.

Netscape Navigator

If you are using Netscape Navigator, please see the following keyboard short-cut information.

For a computer using Windows operating system:

- Full Screen: F1
- § Zoom Text Smaller: - Ctrl+- (minus sign)
- § Zoom Text larger: Ctrl+= (plus sign)
- § No Zoom (100%): Ctrl+0
- § View Page Information: Ctrl+I
- § View Page Source: Ctrl+U

For a computer using a Macintosh operating system:

- § Zoom Text Smaller: - Cmd+- (minus sign)
- § Zoom Text larger: Cmd+= (plus sign)
- § No Zoom (100%): Cmd+0
- § View Page Information: Cmd+I
- § View Page Source: Cmd+U

For a computer using a Linux operating system:

- § Full Screen: F1 may depend on window manager)
- § Zoom Text Smaller: - Ctrl+- (minus sign)
- § Zoom Text larger: Ctrl+= (plus sign)
- § No Zoom (100%): Ctrl+0
- § View Page Information: Ctrl+I
- § View Page Source: Ctrl+U

Text Only

A Text Only version of the website which does not show images, although the visitor will still be able to see any text associated with the image, is available. The "text only" version website: loads more quickly; is easier to copy from and is compatible with Screen Readers for people with visual impairments

If you would like to discuss the Council's approach to accessibility on the site, make a comment or pass on any suggestions, please fill in the "Tell Us What You Think" feedback form, or contact the Council's web team on webmaster@crewe-nantwich.gov.uk

Appendix 5

Promoting Diversity in Crewe & Nantwich Borough Council Awareness Training for Front Line and Support Staff

Aim

- To improve understanding of equality issues
- To improve services to customers and colleagues by implementing equality standards and incorporating into service delivery

Objectives

By the end of the session participants will

- Have a better understanding of the principles of diversity
- Be able to identify key equality challenges for the organisation
- Understand their responsibilities under the Race Relations Amendment Act and how it impacts on services
- Understand the differences between direct & indirect discrimination; positive action and positive discrimination
- Form an action plan relating to their services

Introduction & Welcome:

- Ground rules established

Is there a problem:

- Designed to explore perceptions on race and diversity generally.
- Groups identify how certain groups in society are discriminated against.
- What barriers people may face at work or accessing services. The importance of acting as an ambassador for the organisation.
- We look at the effects of prejudice and stereotyping on staff and customers.
- We look at the ethnic composition of Crewe & Nantwich and the effect this has on service provision, recruitment and the image of the organisation

The Legal framework:

- The legal background, updates on recent legislation in particular the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, law relating to religion and sexuality, and the Disability Discrimination Bill.
- We look at how people can be inadvertently discriminated against using practical exercises to illustrate the differences between direct and indirect discrimination. We discuss approaches to positive action
- The Equality Standard for local government and work being carried out in Crewe & Nantwich to mainstream equalities into service delivery and employment.

Video: "Face Values" - Cheshire residents talk about their experiences of being in a minority group and living and working in Cheshire

Action Planning: Staff consider their actions on return to the workplace

The course will be participative throughout and use structured group work, discussion and case study to achieve outcomes

Promoting Diversity in Crewe & Nantwich Borough Council Briefing session for Managers (one hour)

Aim

- To brief managers on the aims of the training programme and content
- To improve services by implementing equality standards and incorporating into service delivery

Objectives

By the end of the session managers will be:

- Aware of the training schedule and their role in sustaining and supporting the messages
- Familiar with the material/format of the training programme
- Updated on legislation
- Agree actions relating to their own services

What will be covered

- An overview of the training programme, approach and style of delivery
- An update on legislation: Race Relations Amendment act, Laws relating to religion and sexuality, Disability Discrimination Bill
- Practical examples to illustrate indirect discrimination
- Excerpt from “Face Values” Video
- Discussion of managers role in supporting and evaluating the programme and setting actions

Appendix 6

Tell Us What You Think

The Council will regularly review the Disability Equality Scheme's Action Plan to ensure that it remains relevant and up-to-date. Any comments, suggestions and recommendations you may have with regard to the content of the document and the appendices are very welcome.

(What do you think of the document? Do you think the document will help us to meet the needs of the community? Have we missed something?)

Your suggestions

Do you find the Crewe & Nantwich B.C.'s scheme helpful? Yes/No

Would you classify yourself as disabled? Yes/No

What changes would you like to see made to the scheme?

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Is there anything you believe the Council needs to add to this Scheme or its Action Plan?

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How can the service the Council provides be improved further?

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.....
.....

Any other comments?

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If you would like a response, please provide your contact details

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.....
.....

Please, complete this reply slip and send it to:

Petra Dexter Duskova, Equality and Diversity Officer, Democratic Services, Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council, Municipal Buildings, Earle Street, Crewe, Cheshire, CW1 2JZ.

Tel. 01270 537565 or email: petra.dexterduskova@crewe-nantwich.gov.uk