

Renfrewshire Council : Education and Leisure Services

Disability Equality Scheme 2007-2009

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, every education authority must produce a disability equality scheme and action plan to respond to the general and specific duties laid down.
- 1.2 The principles of inclusion and equality are embedded within the sound ethos across establishments in Renfrewshire and provide the context for responding to the general and specific duties in relation to disability equality as well as the other equality strands : race; gender; faith and belief; sexual orientation; and age.
- 1.3 Within the 2005 Act, disability is defined as:
 - physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse impact on the ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Those with HIV, cancer and multiple sclerosis are automatically included in the definition. Also included are people with severe disfigurement and those who are blind or partially sighted.

2 Background

- 2.1 Education and leisure services' disability equality scheme has been developed within the over-arching context of Renfrewshire Council's Disability Equality Scheme 2006-2009 which was approved by the Leadership Board in December 2006.
- 2.2 The scheme acknowledges the importance of the Social Model of Disability and the loss or limitations of opportunities, due to the environmental and social barriers which prevent people who have impairments from participating in society on an equal level with others.
- 2.3 The scheme recognises the responsibility placed on education and leisure services to ensure that goods and services we procure from providers in the statutory, voluntary and commercial sectors meet the requirements of the Disability Equality Duty.

3 The Disability Equality Duty

3.1 The scheme has been developed as a result of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. This legislation places a general duty on all public authorities when carrying out their functions to have due regard to the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled and other people;
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act;
- eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability;
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- encourage participation of disabled people in public life;
- take steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than others.

3.2 In addition to the general duty, the authority is subject to specific duties which are laid down in the Disability Discrimination (Public Authorities) (Statutory Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2005. The Regulations set out the specific steps which must be taken to assist public authorities to fulfil the GeneralDuty. These specific duties are to:

- publish a Disability Equality Scheme;
- involve disabled people in the development of the scheme;
- carry out impact assessments;
- make arrangements for gathering relevant information;
- develop and implement an action plan within three years; and
- report on progress on an annual basis.

3.3 Education and leisure services' disability equality scheme and accompanying action plan, attached as annex A, have been developed to demonstrate how we intend to fulfil the general and specific duties set out.

4 Strategic Context

4.1 Education and leisure services' disability equality scheme has been developed within the context of Renfrewshire council's scheme.

4.2 Education and leisure services' disability equality scheme complements a range of existing policies and strategies:

- Promoting Race Equality in Education;
- Extending Support in Renfrewshire: A Partnership Approach for Additional Support Needs;
- Tackling Bullying in Renfrewshire;
- Admissions Policy;
- Prioritisation Policy;
- Transport Policy;
- Raising Achievement in Renfrewshire;
- Building a Learning Renfrewshire;

- Child in Need Policy;
- Education of Looked After Children and Young People;
- Physical Activity, Sport and Health Strategy;
- Sexual Health Policy;
- Parental Involvement Strategy; and
- Procurement Guidelines.

4.3 The disability equality scheme also links to other key legislation:

- Children Scotland Act 1995;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000;
- Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000;
- Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) (Scotland) Act 2002;
- Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004.; and
- Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006.

4.4 Key planning processes are also relevant, these are:

- Renfrewshire's Community Plan;
- Integrated Children's Service Plan; and
- Education and Leisure Services Service Plan.

4.5 Key priorities for education and leisure services, based on national priorities, underpin disability equality and the related duties:

- raising achievement;
- working for inclusion and equality;
- learning for life; and
- modernising and improving.

4.6 The key priorities, set in the wider context of education and leisure services' visions and values, inform service planning and school improvement planning.

4.7 Much good practice exists in Renfrewshire which will address the main aims of the disability equality duty to:

- focus on organisational change;
- ensure a more proactive approach to the promotion of equal outcomes; and
- demonstrate change through positive outcomes which can be clearly evidenced.

5 The Role of Establishments

- 5.1 Renfrewshire establishments provide a wide range of educational experiences for children and young people from birth to 18 years both in a mainstream setting and in specialist provisions.
- 5.2 Policy and practice to support the framework for additional support needs also makes a valuable contribution to promoting disability equality.
- 5.3 The corporate responsibility for Renfrewshire establishments is reflected within the scope of the action plan attached as appendix 1 and the details of the key actions and responsibilities included in the plan.
- 5.4 The key role of establishments is discussed in more detail in the sections which follow.

6 Involving Stakeholders

- 6.1 The importance of listening to the views of children and young people is acknowledged at national level through the role of distributed leadership in establishments, the lead role of the Children and Young People's Commissioner and the key role of advocacy on behalf of individual children and young people or particular groups of children and young people.
- 6.2 Recommendations from the research by the educational psychology service on consulting with young people are embedded within the authority's framework for additional support needs and the recommendations continue to inform practice across Renfrewshire.
- 6.3 The outcomes of current research in relation to young carers of parents with mental health issues and the associated stigmatism will be of future relevance.
- 6.4 The current good practice in Renfrewshire establishments has been used to ensure that a range of approaches have been adopted to include the involvement of children and young people in a meaningful way, based on their additional support needs, to avoid a tokenistic model of involvement.
- 6.5 Practice within Renfrewshire's special schools provides a benchmark to evidence the meaningful involvement of disabled children and young people. The following approaches are relevant:
 - the role of the Pupil Council and the use of Board Maker symbols to communicate identified priorities, actions and priorities to the wider school community;
 - discrete groups for health promotion, nutrition and post-school transition;
 - discussion within class groups to identify priorities for response;
 - sexuality and relationships education to promote self-advocacy, personal responsibility and personal safety; and
 - analyses of pupil surveys and questionnaires.

The above approaches complement approaches in mainstream establishments.

- 6.7 Renfrewshire's Pupil Forum includes representatives of special schools.
- 6.8 The model of involving disabled stakeholders in the development of the council's disability equality scheme will enhance current practice in involving disabled parents and carers in their children's education.
- 6.9 Implementation of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 acknowledges the important role parents and carers play in their children's education and the value added as a result. A range of approaches has been developed which are relevant to involving disabled parents and carers and parents and carers of disabled children and young people:
 - membership of the authority's working group;
 - witness sessions at authority seminars;
 - training sessions for parents, facilitated by community learning and development staff;
 - development of parent councils and parent forums; and
 - focus groups.
- 6.10 In special schools in Renfrewshire, there are very well developed mechanisms for consulting with parents and carers and involving them in a wide range of issues and these opportunities are also relevant.
- 6.11 Home link staff play an important role in facilitating the involvement of parents and supporting advocacy on behalf of parents.
- 6.12 Community learning and development staff make an important contribution to adult learning and community capacity building which support the general duties and facilitate the involvement of disabled people.

7 Impact Assessment

- 7.1 Central to the implementation of the disability equality scheme is the need to carry out disability equality impact assessments on all new and current policies, strategies and services.
- 7.2 Equality impact assessment is designed to anticipate and identify the consequences for different groups of particular policy initiatives and service delivery to ensure that as far as possible any negative consequences for a particular group are eliminated or minimised.
- 7.3 Implementation of equality impact assessment has been included in the council's scheme. Details are attached as annex B of the scheme.

7.4 Implementation will build on the work undertaken by education and leisure services in relation to race equality.

8 Gathering of Information

8.1 The Disability Equality Duty gives clear guidance on the information education and leisure services need to gather to fulfil the specific duties on disability equality.

8.2 Data is currently collected and analysed to quantify:

- the number of disabled pupils on the school roll;
- educational attainment at key stages within 5-14 national testing framework and Scottish Certificate Qualifications Framework;
- attendance; and
- exclusions from primary and secondary schools.

8.3 It will be necessary to disaggregate this data to quantify:

- the educational attainment of disabled pupils at key stages;
- the attendance of disabled pupils; and
- the exclusion levels for disabled pupils.

This will support an analysis of any differentials between disabled and non-disabled pupils.

8.4 Guidance will be issued to schools to ensure that the annual data collection exercise is robust and makes a meaningful contribution to the action planning process.

8.5 All data collected will be reported on with due regard to data protection legislation.

8.6 In addition to gathering quantitative data, qualitative data from a variety of sources will be considered:

- analyses of complaints or customer feedback;
- staff, pupil and parent/carer surveys undertaken to inform self-evaluation approaches and the external inspection process;
- research projects; and
- information from key partners in health and social work.

8.7 Qualitative data will also inform priorities within the action plan and successful outcomes to identify the range of barriers which disabled people face.

9 Implementation

- 9.1 The action plan attached as appendix 1 of the scheme will be the main vehicle for implementing the disability equality scheme between 2007 and 2009.
- 9.2 Monitoring of the action plan and implementation of the disability equality scheme generally will be undertaken by the Customer Support Manager, as lead officer, in conjunction with the Equalities Steering Group which will consist of representatives of education and leisure services, establishments, health, social work and parents/carers.
- 9.3 Monitoring and evaluation of the action plan will inform the annual reporting and the revision of the scheme and action plan in 2009 and thereafter on a three year basis. This will help to ensure that the disability equality scheme remains a live document which will inform our planning and service delivery.

10 Reporting

- 10.1 Progress on the action plan will be reported to the education policy board on an annual basis. The first annual report will be published in November 2008.

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Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan

Theme 1 – Promoting equality of opportunity for disabled children, young people, parents and carers

Outcome	Key Actions	Responsibility	Performance Indicator	Timescale
Children and young people are supported to be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, effective contributors	1.1 Implementation of A Curriculum for Excellence meets the entitlement of disabled children and young people	Head of Children’s Services, Heads of Establishments	Appropriate outcomes identified to measure individual achievement and set improvement targets	December 2007- December 2009
	1.2 Build on current good practice in work experience placements and employability skills	Designated Quality Improvement Officer, Heads of Special Schools, More Choices, More Chances Co-ordinator, Key Partners	Increase in number and range of placements and employment opportunities	December 2007- December 2009
	1.3 Review annual data collection exercise to desegregate levels of attainment and exclusion of disabled children and young people	Performance Manager	Establish baseline to identify improvement targets	December 2007- December 2009

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Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan

Theme 1 – Promoting equality of opportunity for disabled children, young people, parents and carers

Outcome	Key Actions	Responsibility	Performance Indicator	Timescale
Children and young people are supported to be safe, healthy, active, achieving, respected and responsible, included and nurtured	1.4 Implementation of the Integrated Assessment Framework meets the entitlement of disabled children and young people	Integrated Children's Services Manager		December 2007- December 2009
	1.5 Include a focus on the Disability Equality Scheme in the school review programme	Senior Adviser (Performance Management)	Overview of ratings of selected quality indicators from How Good Is Our School (3) and The Child at the Centre (2)	December 2007- December 2009
Children, young people and parents/carers feel more included	1.6 Review membership and remit of Inclusion Strategy Group to establish Equalities Steering Group	Senior Adviser (Policy and Planning)	Review reflects wider equalities agenda and supports monitoring and evaluation to inform annual reporting requirements at local and national level	December 2007- December 2009
	1.7 Identify and share best practice in developing mainstream links for children and young people in special schools and units	Senior Adviser (Children and Families)	Establish current baseline in relation to number and range of opportunities to inform future practice	December 2007 – December 2009

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Theme 2 – Eliminating discrimination that is unlawful under the Act

Outcome	Key Actions	Responsibility	Performance Indicator	Timescale
Disabled children, young people and parents/carers are not discriminated against	2.1 Review policies and practice to ensure compliance with legislation (authority and partner provision)	Senior Adviser (Children and Families)	Evidence of compliance	December 2007- December 2009
	2.2 Undertake impact assessment as outlined in the Disabilities Equalities Scheme	Customer Support Manager	Monitoring of agreed sample	December 2007- December 2009
	2.3 Revise school handbook guidelines to reflect Disability Equalities Scheme	Customer Support Manager	Monitoring of agreed sample	By December 2007
	2.4 Establish strategic links to School Estate Management Plan and Asset Management Strategy to inform monitoring procedures	Head of Resource Services	Evidence of reasonable compliance in establishments, community facilities and public buildings	December 2007- December 2009
Staff feel more confident to promote disability equality	2.5 Raise awareness of staff through briefing information/ briefing sessions	Customer Support Manager Heads of Establishments	% of staff involved in establishments and services	December 2007- December 2009

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Theme 3 – Eliminating harassment of disabled children, young people, parents and carers that is related to their disabilities

Outcome	Key Actions	Responsibility	Performance Indicator	Timescale
Disabled children, young people and parents/carers feel more safe and respected and have confidence in the related strategies and processes in place	3.1 Review "Tackling Bullying in Renfrewshire" to make explicit reference to disabled children, young people and parents/carers for implementation in establishments	Customer Support Manager	No complaints relating to disability discrimination	December 2007- December 2009
	3.2 Review annual data collection exercise to desegregate reported incidents of bullying of disabled children and young people	Customer Support Manager, Performance Manager	Establish baseline to inform future reporting	By April 2008
	3.3 Ensure incidents of harassment for reasons of disability are reported and dealt with effectively	Customer Support Manager	Satisfactory resolution of any reported incidents	December 2007- December 2009

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Theme 4 – Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people

Outcome	Key Actions	Responsibility	Performance Indicator	Timescale
Disabled children, young people and parents/carers feel more included and respected	4.1 Ensure that the ethos of education and leisure services promotes respect for individuals and that the Disability Equality Scheme is reflected in the improvement planning process	Senior Adviser (School Improvement)	All services and establishments are assessed as very good or excellent in related quality indicators within the inspection framework or school review programme	December 2007- December 2009
	4.2 Use feedback from inspections and reviews to identify capacity for improvement	Senior Adviser (Performance Management)	All services and establishments are assessed as very good or excellent in related quality indicators within the inspection framework or school review programme	December 2007- December 2009
	4.3 Identify and share best practice in education on diversity and tolerance	Principal Psychologist	Feedback from research in relation to stigmatisation of certain groups of young people to identify baseline and areas for improvement	December 2007- December 2009

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Theme 5 – Encouraging participation by disabled people in public life

Outcome	Key Actions	Responsibility	Performance Indicator	Timescale
Children and young people feel more respected and responsible	5.1 Further develop the role of disabled children and young people in pupil councils and Renfrewshire Pupil Forum	Designated Quality Improvement Officer	Establish baselines to identify improvement targets	December 2007 – June 2008
	5.2 Build on good practice in the participation of disabled children and young people in the annual Senior Pupils' Dinner	Customer Support Manager	Establish baselines to identify improvement targets	By January 2008
	5.3 Build on good practice established in Renfrewshire Special Games	Leisure and Cultural Services Manager	Establish baselines to identify improvement targets	December 2007 – June 2008
Parents and carers feel more respected and responsible	5.4 Review representation by disabled parents/carers on Parent Councils and other parent groups	Customer Support Manager	Establish baselines to identify improvement targets	December 2007 – June 2008
	5.5 Identify best practice within community experience programmes for young people	Heads of Special Schools	Establish baselines to identify improvement targets	December 2007 – June 2008

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Theme 6 – Taking steps to take account of disabled people’s disabilities even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than others

Outcome	Key Actions	Responsibility	Performance Indicator	Timescale
Disabled people feel more included and are provided with more opportunities for achievement	6.1 Audit current provision within universal services to identify criteria, range and quality of services for disabled people	Customer Support Manager in conjunction with the Equalities Steering Group	Establish baselines to identify improvement targets	December 2007 – June 2008