

WORKING TOGETHER TO PROMOTE EQUALITY

Humberside Police Disability Equality Scheme

2006 – 2009



Foreword

I am pleased to present our first Disability Equality Scheme in which we set out the actions we intend to undertake in order to ensure our services are accessible to people with disabilities and our work environment is enabling for all our employees.

We recognise that every individual is different and therefore the way we provide our service should be tailored, wherever possible, to meet the needs of the individual. The duties placed on all public authorities by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 make sound business sense. In that they provide us with a framework and focus from which to develop a service and work environment that is accessible and responsive to the needs of the individual, which will ultimately contribute to efficient and effective policing.

I would like to emphasise that our Scheme and plan for action represents a starting point for us. Continued involvement of members of the public and employees is integral to the achievement of our overarching goal to promote equality of opportunity in the service we provide and the way we act towards our staff.

I would like to convey my thanks to those people who have and are continuing to contribute and reassure you of our commitment to listen and take action.



Tim S Hollis
Chief Constable

Foreword

Message from Chief Constable

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Section 1 – Introduction

Vision & Values

Humberside Police have particular responsibility in helping people both to be and to feel safe. We will do this by providing a service that is intended to protect, help and reassure all of our communities and we will deliver it in a way which treats all people fairly and with respect and dignity.

We recognise our responsibility to eliminate discrimination within the force and promote good relations and we take pride in providing a high quality service, responding professionally and appropriately to the needs of the public.

There are at least 8.5 million disabled people in this country who will be concerned about crime, be victims of crime, conversely they may be perpetrators of crime or employees of Humberside Police and it is essential that we ensure that that they do not face barriers or are disadvantaged when interacting with us

We are committed to:

- Treating everyone with fairness and respect
- Acknowledging that people have different needs, working together to meet those needs
- Improving accessibility to the services we provide
- Developing an enabling work environment
- Bringing about greater equal opportunity for people in society

Our Disability Equality Scheme core priorities, which form the basis of our action plan, are:

- Involving disabled people
- Impact assessment
- Access to buildings
- Service Delivery
- Employment
- Procurement
- Communications & Marketing

Our local policing priorities are:

- Reduce offences of burglary of the home
- Reduce offences of theft of and theft from motor vehicles
- Reduce violent crime
- Reduce offences of robbery, especially street robbery
- Increase the number of sanction detections

- Reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured in road traffic collision

Definition of Disability

The Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), amended 2005 defines a person as having a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Normal day to day activities are those which are carried out by most people on a fairly regular and frequent basis.

A substantial long term adverse effect is something which has lasted for at least 12 months, or is likely to last 12 months or more and goes beyond the normal differences in ability which might exist among people.

Social Model of Disability

Humberside Police have adopted the Social Model of Disability in the development of our Disability Equality Scheme.

The social model approaches disability from the view point that people are disabled by physical and social barriers which are a result of social structures, environment, attitudes and beliefs.

The medical model assumes that people with disabilities are unable to participate in society as a direct result of a medical condition, focusing on the condition and any individual limitations, rather than identifying and removing barriers to enable participation.

By adopting the social model we will ensure that we work inclusively with the public and our employees, identifying barriers to services or employment and proposing actions which will have the greatest impact on those barriers

Legal Context and Responsibilities

We fully accept our legal obligations and duties including those defined in:

- The Disability Discrimination Acts (DDA) 1995 and 2005
- The Building Regulations 2000 and Part M requirements
- Fire Precautions Act 1971 and Fire Precautions (workplace) regulations 1997 as amended

We will also work with guidance and future proposals from the

- Disability Rights Commission (DRC) and the Commission for Equality and Human Rights which will replace the DRC in 2007
- The DRC Statutory Code of Practice 'The Duty to Promote Disability Equality'
- The Equalities Bill

The DDA prohibits the following discrimination in employment:

- Direct discrimination, treating somebody less favourably on the grounds of disability where that person has the same circumstances, skill and abilities to do the job as a non-disabled person
- Failure to make reasonable adjustments when the disabled person needs these adjustments to carry out their job.
- Harassment on the grounds of disability
- Victimisation of somebody who takes action under the Act

It is unlawful under the DDA to discriminate against disabled people by:

- Refusing to provide a service without justification
- Providing a service to a lesser standard without justification
- Providing a service on worse terms without justification
- Failing to make reasonable adjustments to the way services are provided for disabled people
- Failing to make reasonable adjustments to the physical features of service premises to overcome physical barriers to access

The General Duty

The DDA 2005 places a general duty on all public authorities in carrying out all functions and activities to have due regard to:

- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- Eliminating discrimination that is unlawful under the DDA
- Eliminating disability related harassment
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encouraging participation by disabled people in public life
- Taking steps to meet the needs of disabled people even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than others

The Specific Duty

The specific duty came into force December 2005 and sets out how public bodies will be required to demonstrate their commitment to achieving the general duty and measuring their progress.

The specific duty requires public bodies to publish a Disability Equality Scheme in which they set out the arrangements they have made to

- Involve disabled people in the development of the scheme
- Impact assess policies and practices
- Fulfil the general duty (The Action Plan)
- Gather information in relation to employment and where appropriate delivery methods
- Use the information gathered to review effectiveness of the action plan

Publication

The Disability Equality Scheme, Action Plan and Annual Reports will be published on our website at www.humberside.police.uk.

The Scheme is a working document and will be reviewed and revised regularly in compliance with the legal requirement to revise 3 yearly Hard copies will be available from the Freedom of Information and Compliance Unit:

Information Compliance Unit
Police Headquarters
Priory Road Police Station
Priory road
Kingston Upon Hull
HU5 5SF

Informationcomplianceunit@humberside.pnn.police.uk

Alternative Format

Alternative formats such as large print, Braille or audio can be obtained by emailing DisabilityEqualityScheme@humberside.pnn.police.

Typetalk: If calling BT 18001 0845 60 60 222

If calling Kingston Communications 18002 0845 60 60 222

Minicom: dedicated line 01482 568352

Section 2 – Core Priorities

Involving People with Disabilities

We recognise the importance of involving disabled people in the creation and implementation of our Disability Equality Scheme and have used a variety of methods in order to engage service users, the wider community and employees.

Our first action plan has been developed from initial consultation and information already available to us, those people identified to lead the action have confirmed that they can deliver within the timescales given.

This initial plan will differ from subsequent plans, as we evaluate and prioritise the outcomes of ongoing consultation and involvement.

We fully expect that one of the outcomes will be evidence, which will give us information about some of the issues our customers and employees have to deal with. This evidence will help us to focus our attention and resources on those actions which will have the greatest impact on breaking down barriers.

We have adopted a variety of methods to raise awareness of our wish to consult and involve people with disabilities who are service users and members of the wider community we serve. These include; direct contact with support groups for people with disabilities and their carers, advertising the dates of consultation meetings in the local press and promotion of the events using posters. In addition, we have included our pre-existing consultative/advisory groups.

Employees of Humberside Police have been made aware of the consultation programme and asked whether they had experience of disability directly or indirectly and whether they would like to share their experience and advice.

Those who preferred not to attend focus groups, interviews or complete questionnaires had the opportunity to share their anonymous comments with us. Collection of views via questionnaires and interviews commenced in October and structured employee focus groups are planned for January 2007.

We have taken steps to ensure accessibility for all to engage in the consultation programme. Focus groups are continuing to be held in buildings which are accessible to and have facilities for people with disabilities.

Transport has been provided where needed, e-mails and questionnaires have been developed to ensure ease of access. One to one and telephone interviews have been arranged for individuals who wished to contribute but preferred to do so privately or were unable to attend events

It has been our priority to ensure that volunteers are treated sensitively with respect for their privacy.

The programme of consultation and involvement is ongoing and will be managed transparently and will be open to scrutiny. The responsibility for continued consultation rests with the Personnel Branch and Corporate Development Branch.

Impact Assessment

Humberside Police use the process of impact assessment to investigate whether a proposed or current policy or practice will affect all groups equally.

We carry out initial screening of the policy or practice and where significant issues are identified we undertake a partial or full impact assessment. To assist us in identifying adverse impact or unlawful discrimination when conducting partial or full impact assessments, we presently consider qualitative and quantitative data, including results of research and employment and service monitoring.

Where a negative impact, or missed opportunity to achieve a more positive impact is identified, we will look to undertake removal or modification of the policy or practice. It may be that, where appropriate, some of the actions arising from impact assessments will be incorporated into the disability equality scheme action plan.

In 2005 all Humberside Police policies and practices were prioritised for relevance with respect to race and assigned high, medium or low status.

Those policies and practices with high relevance were assessed for adverse impact across all diversity strands during 2005/6 and an action plan was agreed to complete the medium to low status policies and practices by 2008.

In order to comply with the general disability duty to promote equality of opportunity between people with disabilities and other people and eliminate discrimination all employment related policies, which were awarded medium to low status, have been reprioritised for relevance with respect to disability and those policies and practices which were deemed non relevant with respect race have now been reassessed against the General Disability Duty.

We are in the process of carrying out this reprioritisation exercise with respect to service delivery and operational policies, the target date for completion is December 2006.

The outcome of reprioritisation will be the compilation of a comprehensive list of policies and practices, classified by relevance, which will be used to develop and agree a plan for action and monitor compliance.

The process will be overseen by the Personnel Branch and Corporate Development Branch. It is the responsibility of the policy owner to ensure that impact assessment is carried out by a trained impact assessor who has appropriate knowledge and understanding of the policy or practice

Access to Buildings

The Humberside Police Estate comprises of 77 buildings providing a range of functions including police stations, specialist operational units, and vulnerable victim units and training facilities. Each building because of their age, location, design and condition provide numerous barriers to people with disabilities.

Currently 38 buildings within the estate provide a public foyer and it is these facilities which have been the focus of our investment in the last eight years.

Work has been undertaken to improve the public areas within the buildings with the aim of providing a point of contact which is accessible to all.

To date the improvements to these buildings with foyers have resulted in:

- 37 buildings which are accessible by wheelchair
- 35 have received foyer upgrades
- 38 have hearing loops at counters
- 32 buildings now have disabled WC's within the station.
- 9 buildings are accessed by automatic doors
- 8 have lifts which allow access to upper floors

All new buildings within the Local Police Team (LPT) building programme have included for provision of, or future access to all areas. All new buildings are designed to be fully compliant with the building regulations and as such provide a comparatively barrier free environment providing facilities such as lifts, toilets and showers for people with disabilities and hold open devices on doors.

Schemes undertaken within the LPT programme which have involved the refurbishment of existing buildings have improved access and facilities where practicable, but this has not always been to the extent that complete access is possible.

Humberside Police are presently working on a strategy for Custody Improvement and it is our intention that all new custody suites will incorporate facilities for users who have a disability. Facilities for people with disabilities are presently provided at Grimsby Police Station Custody Suite.

It is our intention to consider the needs of people with disabilities prior to undertaking further modifications and alterations to the Humberside Police Estate buildings and where appropriate and practicable incorporate modifications into the building scheme which will address those needs.

Service Delivery

It is our aim to take into account the needs of people with disabilities in the services we provide and the functions we perform. We have already anticipated the needs of disabled users and stakeholders by making adjustments with respect to access to buildings as outlined above. In addition we have introduced alternative communication methods including, Minicom and Typetalk.

We are in the early stages of consultation and involvement and it is our intention to use the information and suggestions gathered throughout this process to focus our attention on actions which will help us to further improve the service we provide, ensuring equality of access to service provision.

In addition we are embarking on the implementation of Citizen-focussed policing within Humberside. This concept effectively means reflecting the needs and expectations of individuals and local communities in decision making, service delivery and practice. The objectives of the concept are to improve public confidence, increase satisfaction of services users and increase public involvement in policing and we are working to embed the concept through all business areas

We will focus on

- Understanding and managing the expectations of the public
- Answering telephone calls swiftly and seamlessly
- Ensuring our enquiry office staff meet the needs of customers
- Adapting our style of approach to an incident depending upon the needs of the victim
- Responding appropriately to calls for service depending on individual needs and circumstances and keeping victims appraised of the action we have taken and why
- Quality assuring the work that we do

Employment

We are committed to the recruitment, development and retention of a diverse workforce. We recognise the importance of employing people from a wide variety of backgrounds who have varied and different experiences and therefore wish to become an employer of choice for people with disabilities.

Our selection processes are based entirely on merit and we currently ensure that should the need arise, all reasonable adjustments are given full consideration within the recruitment lifecycle. We work in partnership with specialist agencies to ensure that all decisions taken are informed and appropriate to the needs the employee.

As a result we have already made a variety of adjustments ranging from the purchase of additional or specialised equipment, to adapting the workplace to suit an individual's needs.

Each stage of the recruitment process is monitored to assess for adverse impact in relation to those applicants who declare they have a disability.

We adopt a flexible, enabling approach to the continued employment and retention of people who develop disabilities during the course of their employment with us and have already made a number of adjustments which include, reviewing and amending the job content, adjusting working hours, making alterations to the work environment and the purchase of aids and adaptations. Where adjustments cannot be made, which will enable employees to continue with their present role, we will consider the possibility of retraining and redeployment.

Our Occupational Health, Welfare and Safety Unit offer practical advice, medical expertise, guidance and support to both employees with disabilities and line managers.

We are committed to the provision of training and development opportunities for all staff and to ensuring they receive training specific to the needs of people with disabilities.

We ensure that our officers have experience in providing a service to people with disabilities by the recruitment of community volunteer role actors who assist in the delivery of scenario training and give feedback to officers on their performance.

We presently have 12 volunteers working with us on a regular basis, who have declared to us that they have a disability. Our objective is to ensure that our pool of volunteers represents the community we serve, therefore enabling our Police Community Support Officers and Police Officers to gain experience in helping all members of the wider community.

When practicable, we seek the input of volunteers with respect to training design.

Procurement

Humberside Police have a legal duty to ensure that public money is not spent on practices that lead to the encouragement of or actual unlawful discrimination, but is used to support and encourage equality and good community relations.

Where we employ private or voluntary agencies to deliver supplies and services on our behalf our Procurement Team will ensure compliance with the General Duty by:

- placing an expectation on our appointed contractors to share and deliver our equality and diversity goals;
- ensuring that disability equality along with other areas of diversity is taken into account when procuring goods, works or services from external providers;
- monitoring our contracts for compliance including the implementation of relevant terms and conditions and appropriate specifications;
- training staff involved in procurement work;
- liaising with Procurement colleagues within the service to identify, update and promote best practice.

Communication & Marketing

Communication, both internally and externally is essential to meet the objectives of our Disability Equality Scheme and wider diversity agenda.

Addressing the communication needs of different groups will be central to our Force Communication Strategy

We will ensure any documents we produce for internal and external purposes are done so in a way that reflects our understanding of disability equality issues and is accessible to the widest possible audience.

We recognise the importance of communication including British Sign Language, which we recognise as a language in its own right, and the rights of people to request information in alternative forms such as Communicators, Makaton Communicators and Lipspeakers.

Our Marketing and Media Liaison Department are presently involved in planning to meet the needs of the disabled community including appropriate, accessible signage, accessible media and alternative formats.

We will give consideration to the font size, contrast of colours and simplicity of designs. Our Graphics will follow good design practices, such as the RNIB guidelines, print and production will be outsourced initially, to ensure we have

tried-and-tested templates to deal with all aspects of print production including document translation.

Section 3 – Outcomes

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

We recognise the importance of monitoring and the need to combine this with further research to:

- Identify and eliminate barriers to equal opportunity
- Recruit the best people from the widest possible pool of talent
- Measure satisfaction levels of service users
- Identify potential opportunities to improve services

We presently report the outcomes of monitoring and subsequent plans for action by way of the following reports

- Recruitment, Retention and Progression - 6 monthly
- Grievance Analysis - 6 monthly
- Race Equality Scheme Annual Report

Disability monitoring currently covers police staff selection & internal promotion, grievance, harassment and bullying, leavers, assessment centres and probationers. We will extend our existing monitoring to reflect the guidelines issued by the Police National Diversity Team. It is our intention to incorporate monitoring outputs and evaluation which relate to disability within our existing 6 monthly reports.

We will evaluate and review the Disability Equality Scheme at least annually, publishing a report which contains a summary of the action plan, what has been done over the past years to eliminate discrimination, the results of information gathering, what has been done with the information and the actions we have taken.

We will continue to involve people with disabilities throughout evaluation and review of the Scheme. The Scheme will be monitored by the Personnel Branch and Corporate Development Branch who will be responsible for ensuring that annual review and evaluation takes place.

The report will be published as an Appendix in the Annual Policing Plan and the Annual Report, which is produced jointly with the Police Authority. It will also be available via our website, alternative formats will be made available on request.

A summary report will also be available internally on the Force intranet site and will also appear in our employee magazine and guidance document.

It is our intention to establish a Monitoring Scrutiny Board who will review all diversity data relating to operational and employment issues and take appropriate action to address the anomalies or give a sound explanation for the anomaly. The scheme will be made available to the board for scrutiny