

Disability Equality Scheme 2009-2012

for

**Shetland Islands Council
Schools Service
Shetland College
Shetland Licensing Board
ZetTrans**

Introduction

This is a joint disability equality scheme for Shetland Islands Council (SIC), SIC Schools Service, Shetland College, Shetland Licensing Board and ZetTrans. It forms our revised scheme for 2009-2012. The scheme should be read in conjunction with the Equality Annual Report, which contains information on good practice initiatives, consultation and information gathering and the action plan. The Annual Report is available at www.shetland.gov.uk/equalopportunities.

Feedback on our last Disability Equality Scheme from disabled service users showed that they found it a very large and difficult to use document. The format of this Scheme has been changed to attempt to make it the document more accessible to service users. Therefore the action plan does not form part of the Scheme but is published annually in an Equality Annual Report. Evidence from information gathering and consultations can also be found in the Equality Annual Report, clearly aligning the evidence gathered with the action plan.

During the lifespan of the last Disability Equality Scheme, Shetland Community Planning Partnership has worked to increase its knowledge of the needs and views of Shetland's disabled population. During the coming year we will now use this knowledge to improve service provision for people with disabilities.

Context

National Context

Best Value

Within the 'Characteristics of Best Value Arrangements' included in Guidance on 'The Duty to Make Arrangements to Secure Best Value'¹ a local authority, which secures Best Value, will be able to demonstrate:

- A culture which encourages both equal opportunities and the observance of the equal opportunities requirements
- Measures are in place to meet the UK-wide equal opportunities requirements, e.g.
 - Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (2005)
 - Human Rights Act 1998
 - Adoption of the meaning of 'equal opportunities' as is set out in Schedule 5 to the Scotland Act 1998, namely, 'the prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between persons on the grounds of sex or marital status, on racial grounds, or on grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin or of other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions, such as religious beliefs or political beliefs'.

Equal Opportunities

The Scotland Act (1998) gives the Scottish Government power to encourage equal opportunities, particularly the observing of the equal opportunities requirements. It also has power to impose duties on Scottish public authorities and cross border public bodies operating in Scotland.

The Scotland Act defines equal opportunities as:

'The prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between persons on grounds of sex or marital status, on racial grounds, or on grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or of other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions, such as religious beliefs or political opinions.'

The Disability Equality Duty (DED)

From December 2006, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, places a duty on all public bodies to promote disability equality.

¹ Scottish Executive, Local Government in Scotland, Act 2003, Guidance on s1 (1): The Duty to Make Arrangements to Secure Best Value

The Disability Equality Duty requires the public sector to actively promote disability equality, and is similar to the duty to promote race and gender equality.

Local Context

Shetland's community statement contains the following objectives:

- We'll seek to create fulfilling, well paid jobs for all, whatever their talent
- We will foster confident, thriving communities across Shetland
- We will promote justice and equality, here and overseas
- We will expand knowledge, extend opportunities and improve access

The Community Plan priorities and targets contains the following:

- To make sure we are all able to enjoy living in Shetland as fully as possible:

“We will be internationally renowned by ranking in the top 5% on a European stage”.

“We will ensure that equal opportunities exist for all, no matter an individual's age, race, gender, faith, sexual orientation or disability and we will decrease inequalities.”

Shetland's Regional Transport Strategy

ZetTrans prepared a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) for Shetland following two periods of consultation with the people of Shetland and other stakeholders. The RTS was approved by the Scottish Government Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change in July 2008. Shetland's RTS includes, amongst others, the following interventions which are relevant to this Disability Equality Scheme:

- ZetTrans supports the principle that external air services and airports in Shetland are delivered in accordance with Disability Discrimination Act policy, recognising their importance in the transfer of those requiring health treatment
- ZetTrans will support the principle that external ferry services in Shetland Are delivered in accordance with Disability Discrimination Act policy

- ZetTrans will ensure all public transport services in Shetland are delivered in accordance with Disability Discrimination Act policy. This includes ensuring that public transport information is accessible and understandable (e.g. available in large print)
- ZetTrans will continue to ensure that ferry services in Shetland operate in accordance with Disability Discrimination Act policy
- SIC will provide dedicated parking for disabled users, appropriately sited and marked for their use, within local car parks and Lerwick
- ZetTrans will continue to provide free public transport travel for the elderly and disabled groups in accordance with the national transport concessionary scheme offered by Transport Scotland. ZetTrans will lobby for the extension of the national concessionary fares schemes to community transport

Shetland College

To ensure that,

Managers are aware of their responsibilities in line with the Disability Discrimination Act and the Disability Equality Duty

All College staff aware of Shetland College Disability Equality Scheme and action plan and their responsibilities

The college work towards there being no significant difference in the gaps between potential and achievement for disabled and non disabled students

We continue to impact assess all policies, functions and business processes

We continue to monitor and review student recruitment, selection and admission procedures

Students with disabilities are supported to take part in all aspects of College life and wider community activity

The college's estates strategy reflects awareness of DDA and disability equality issues

We continue to build on the already existing bank of assistive technologies to ensure meeting needs of students with disabilities

For the development of the Shetland College Disability Equality Objectives, outcomes from the various consultations with students, Disability Consultation Forum and Disability Shetland, were taken in to

consideration. The Shetland Disability strategy (2005-2020) was also considered.

Our Disability Equality Objectives

Shetland Islands Council

The Council's guiding principles and rationale for meeting the general duty are:

- Disability Balance within the workforce
- To fully assess the needs of people with disabilities living in Shetland
- To review current service provision, identify gaps and draw up an action plan to meet identified needs
- To ensure active, inclusive and meaningful consultation with service users and carers; service providers and the community in the development of the scheme and monitoring its implementation
- Review the information and advice that people with disabilities can get now and improve them where necessary, Make sure all information is in a format that is accessible by everyone
- To improve access to generic services for people with disabilities
- To ensure the Local Authority, Voluntary Services, Shetland College, Schools Service, ZetTrans and NHS Shetland work together to meet the above objectives

For the development of the SIC disability objectives, the outcomes from the Shetland Disability Strategy was taken into account to inform them and also the SIC Human Resources recruitment policy which monitors the level and status of disabled persons on the council workforce to ensure that the council is maintaining its policy of non discrimination.

Schools Service

- Ensure recruitment, selection and admission procedures are reviewed regularly
- All managers are aware of their responsibilities in line with the Disability Discrimination Act and the Disability Equality Duty
- All teaching staff are aware of their responsibilities with regard to disability equality
- All schools can demonstrate efforts to involve young people in meetings about themselves
- All school buildings are wheelchair accessible
- Disability related harassment does not occur

- Mobility advice for people with VI

For the development of the Schools Service's disability equality objectives, the outcomes from various consultations were taken into consideration such as head teachers, ASN cluster groups and sensory services. The outcomes from the Disability Strategy (2005-2020) were also considered.

Shetland College

- Managers are aware of their responsibilities in line with the Disability Discrimination Act and the Disability Equality Duty
- All College staff aware of Shetland College Disability Equality Scheme and action plan and their responsibilities
- Work towards there being no significant difference in the gaps between potential and achievement for disabled and non-disabled students
- Establish prioritised plan for impact assessment of existing policies and functions
- Impact assess all new policies, functions and business processes
- Student recruitment, selection and admission procedures reviewed
- Ensure that students with disabilities are supported to take part in all aspects of College life and wider community activity
- Estates strategy to reflect awareness of DDA and disability equality issues
- Create bank of assistive technologies to ensure meeting needs of students with disabilities

For the development of the Shetland College disability equality objectives, outcomes from the various consultations with SNAG, Disability Shetland and Shetland Link Up were taken into consideration. The Shetland Disability Strategy (2005-2020) was also considered.

ZetTrans

ZetTrans' objectives are included in the Shetland Transport Strategy. In turn, the Strategy was developed following an extensive consultation exercise to find out the views and requirements of the stakeholders. A second consultation exercise was carried out to obtain comments on

the draft strategy. The consultation reports can be found on www.shetland.gov.uk/transport/stp/strategy

Where Are We Now

A Disability Consultation Group has been set up. The group consists of representatives of all the community planning partners in Shetland and Disability Shetland. Other representatives from local disability groups have also been invited and are encouraged to attend.

In 2009, Disability Shetland undertook a number of consultations with local disability groups. The purpose was to record the views of disabled people on the service they received. The full report can be accessed at www.shetland.gov.uk/datashare. The main issues raised were:

- A concern about the transition from children's services to adults services
- Lack of a locally available BSL signer/translator

The Schools Service received positive feedback from the disability consultations:

"The quality of service provided by primary and secondary schools throughout Shetland was considered to be very high with Bells Brae Special Unit regarded as a local centre of excellence."

"There are good "vision services" for both primary and secondary schools throughout Shetland."

The consultation did raise the issue of the need for all staff (Schools, College and other agencies) working with young people who have a disability resulting in challenging behaviour, to have good prior knowledge of the young person's needs. The recent focus on improving transitions has taken this into account and should result in better information sharing at the post school stage.

The issues raised have been incorporated into our action plan for 2010, which can be accessed in our Equality Annual Report which can be found at www.shetland.gov.uk/equalopportunities

Impact Assessment

Following feedback on the equality impact assessment process, the Council's equality impact assessment tool is currently being restructured to make it more accessible for services to use. It will also be combined with a Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment.

In the interim period all service plans have been equality impact assessed to ensure that all actions have been impact assessed.

The revised Equality Impact Assessment tool will then be carried out on all relevant new policies, procedures and plans to ensure that equality of opportunity for disabled people is carefully taken into account.

Action Plan

The disability action plan for 2010 is set out in the Council's Equality Annual Report which can be found at www.shetland.gov.uk/equalopportunities

Action plans for each year of the life of the Disability Equality Scheme will also be published in an Equality Annual Report each year.

Reporting on Progress

Organisational Responsibility

Within the Council, responsibility lies with the Head of Organisational Development.

Responsibility for the Schools Service lies with the Head of Schools.

Responsibility for Shetland College lies with the Director of Shetland College.

Responsibility for ZetTrans lies with the Lead Officer for ZetTrans.

