



*Knowsl@y Council*

KNOWSLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME

2006 - 2010

Improving the life chances of Disabled people in Knowsley and  
supporting Disabled staff.

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## **THE KMBC VISION**

### **“TO BE AN EXCELLENT COUNCIL IMPROVING PEOPLES LIVES”**

In the context of confirming our commitments to progressing issues of concern for disabled residents and staff, the Knowsley Council vision reflects the intention to;

- Be a champion for equality for disabled and deaf Knowsley residents and staff
- Promote equality so that disabled and deaf people who live and work in Knowsley can enjoy their full human, social and political rights free from discrimination
- Challenge and work towards the eradication of discrimination against disabled and deaf people
- Provide responsive and accessible services for all Knowsley residents and staff

## **THE FOREWORD**

**Councillor Ronnie Round  
Leader**

**Knowsley is a diverse community and to ensure that the council delivers its services to all sections of the community it needs to have robust and responsive procedures in place. The council strives to create an environment where there are equitable processes and procedures in the services it provides for disabled people of all ages. This council recognises that disabled people are more likely to be socially excluded and denied opportunities to exercise choice or fulfil their potential. Empirical evidence consistently indicates that disabled people are more likely to experience poorer services, live in poverty, be in unsuitable housing, have fewer educational qualifications, be out of work, all compounded by additionally experiencing prejudice and abuse. This the first of Knowsley Council's definitive Disability Equality Schemes has been produced in order for us to work towards ensuring disabled people, irrespective of their age, race, gender, sexuality and nature of disability are fully integrated into the community we serve. To this end this document sets out the commitments the council will undertake when providing services to disabled residents, or catering for disabled staff.**

## **AN ADDITIONAL SPECIAL MESSAGE OF COMMITMENT**

**Sheena Ramsey**  
**Chief Executive**

### **Improving the life chances of disabled Knowsley residents and supporting disabled staff.**

Addressing issues of disability is not simply about making or considering reasonable adjustments, it is about empowering disabled people and the wider community so everyone can enjoy life equally.

To achieve this at Knowsley Council, we will facilitate and commission services to ensure that every effort is made so that both members of the community and our own employees receive fair and equitable services.

We will work towards embedding the issues, which affect disabled into all of our working processes. Our first Disability Equality Scheme will help us reach this aspiration.

This scheme not only complies with the requirements of the positive and general duty of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005, the scheme also reflects as a real commitment to disability equality.

The positive duty is modelled on the race equality duty as identified within the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000. The general duty compliance is also reflective, but alters the wording to be specific to disabled people. The Disability Discrimination Act states that every authority should :

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and others
- Eliminate unlawful disability discrimination and unlawful disability harassment
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- Take steps to take account of a person's disability, even where that involves treating a disabled person more favourably than other persons.

The Disability Equality Scheme will help the council to:

- To work towards achieving equality of opportunity for all Knowsley residents and staff
- To meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005 and set out our plans to improve disability access to employment and service delivery
- To ensure that we are taking the needs and views of disabled people, old and young into account, for example when we design and deliver services, make

access improvements or develop policies as part of all Knowsley council policy planning activities

- To continuously monitor and improve the ways in which we deliver services to disabled people as an integral part of the council's equality and diversity plan.

## INTRODUCTION

This scheme identifies what the council can do directly and through its influence, to improve the lives of disabled people.

The council subscribes to the social model of disability and is committed to working towards the representative model.

## SOCIAL MODEL

The social model of disability is focused firmly on the barriers put in place by society. Therefore the environment of the disabled person e.g. architecture, employment, medicine etc can be viewed as disabling barriers. The emphasis is placed on moving the focus away from the individual into being a Civil Rights issue. It places disability in the context of society's attitudes, behaviours, practices & structures - e.g. language, descriptions politics, media, planning, how people view disability. If attitudes, behaviours and views of disabled are negative this produces disabling barriers.

Disability therefore becomes a disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by society taking little or no account of people who have physical impairments and therefore excludes them from the mainstream of social activities.

## REPRESENTATIVE MODEL

The representative model is focused firmly on the concepts of self identification and includes considerations as to how the world is represented from the perspective of disabled people. It places the power of change squarely in the domain of disabled people and covers a range of issues encompassing spirituality, identity, belief, capability, behaviour and the environment.

Within the council we will identify the arrangements of education, transport, leisure facilities, public services and work which exclude disabled people and seek to change how people's attitudes may also demean and engender isolation. The council recognises that in many situations it is not an impairment that creates disadvantage, but the attitudes and responses of services and people that cause social exclusion.

Knowsley council's role in ensuring disabled people are included and services adapted to meet individual needs of all service users is key to this scheme.

## DEFINITIONS

In the use of the term "disabled people", the reference recognises that disability can affect all people whether they are young or old, all ethnicities, faith/religion, different genders, cultural backgrounds, gay and lesbian, those who have learning difficulties, physical impairment sensory impairment, or mental health difficulties.

The Disability Discrimination Act defines a disabled person as anyone who has a physical or mental impairment which has an effect on their ability to carry out “normal” day to day activities. That effect must be (a) substantial ( that is, more than minor or trivial); (b) adverse and; (c) long term ( that is, it has lasted or is likely to last for at least a year or for the rest of the life of the person affected). A physical or mental impairment includes any visible physical disability, sensory impairments, mental health issues, learning disabilities, conditions such as diabetes and epilepsy etc. The 2005 Act also extends the legal definition of disability to cover HIV, cancer and multiple sclerosis from the point of diagnosis.

In legal terms, disability discrimination occurs where;

- A disabled person is treated less favourably than someone else
- The treatment is for a reason relating to the persons disability
- The treatment cannot be justified

Discrimination can also occur when;

- There is a failure to make reasonable adjustment for a disabled person
- That failure cannot be justified

In accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005, the council will not;

- Provide services to a lesser standard
- Provide services on worse terms
- Victimise disabled people for exercising their rights
- Aid another person or organisation to discriminate against a disabled person

In addition we will take positive steps to ensure that we provide services according to individual needs and that we make reasonable adjustments to the physical features of our service premises to overcome physical barriers to access.

### EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY FOR ALL DISABLED PEOPLE

For Knowsley council equal opportunities is not just about meeting legal obligations. It is also about fairness, good sense and community cohesion.

- Fairness – because we are serious in keeping to our obligation to provide services to everyone living, working or schooling in this borough.
- Good sense – because if we recruit people fairly, we will get the best people who are best qualified and able to help provide good services.
- Community cohesion – because it is critical to the quality of life. All local authorities have a key role in facilitating a common vision and sense of belonging for all the individuals that make up the communities they serve and the people they employ to deliver their services. Whatever the local

circumstance, building cohesion is a necessary step towards improving the quality of people's lives and their opportunities to achieve their potential.

Knowsley council has many roles which include provision, commissioner of services, as an employer, as an enforcer, as a facilitator of partnerships and community working and as a regulator. We are committed to equality and diversity within all of these roles.

The council vision can be interpreted as working towards a cohesive borough where there are dynamic and strong relationships being developed between and with communities. We are committed to encouraging all communities to share a common vision and a sense of belonging so that the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated. This scheme is an intrinsic component of all of our other commitments to work with the local communities and our partner organisations within the borough to promote community cohesion and social inclusion.

Knowsley council recognises and values the fundamental human rights which can ensure equal access for everyone in both employment and service delivery. We acknowledge that disadvantage and discrimination are common and experienced by the range of people who make up our communities including black and ethnic minorities, white disadvantaged communities, lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender people, young and old, men - women, people of different faiths/religions and disabled people.

As an organisation we want to improve, we can only do so by demonstrating a continuous drive to identify any barriers that may hamper the achievement of equality in our service delivery or issues relating to employment. Our commitments reflect an intention to promote the benefits of valuing the diversity of the workforce and the community which it serves. We are striving to ensure that the principles of our equality and diversity policies and action plans are transparent and confirmed by process.

We recognise that different individuals have varying needs, however we aim to treat everyone fairly without discriminating and to eliminate unfair and unlawful discrimination. This council has consistently progressed an equality, diversity and community cohesion agenda, we will build on the good practices we have already implemented and develop further a mix of responsive and reactive challenges to all forms of discrimination wherever they exist.

The Knowsley council vision is supported by a range of targets focussed on equality of service delivery and employment, which have challenging timelines for the achievement of progressive levels of the Local Government Association Equality Standards. This scheme will help us to ensure that the needs of disabled users and staff are taken into account and will be measured through the processes and procedures of the Local Government Association Equality Standards.

One of our targets is to achieve Level 5 of the Local Government Association Equality Standards by January 2011. Interim targets have been set as; Level 3 January 2008, Level 4 by January 2009 or 2010. Through progressive achievement of the Equality Standards this council is demonstrating the acknowledgement and

recognition of the importance of fair treatment and equal access to local government services and employment. The standards have been developed as a tool to help councils to mainstream their equality and diversity agenda.

## GATHERING AND ANALYSING INFORMATION

Equalities monitoring must be an intrinsic and regular feature of all of the council's policies and services and is the reason why it is built into Knowsley business planning procedures.

Our collection, analysis and use of data around equalities groups contribute to a systematic way of developing an active anti-discriminatory approach to service delivery and workforce composition. It helps to monitor compliance with our localised commitments to equality, diversity and community cohesion, with legal and statutory duties and to build a comprehensive picture of performance against all relative indicators.

For Knowsley, the initial aim of equalities monitoring is to give an indication of the extent to which we provide a fair and equitable service to all residents. This is particularly important for service delivery, as if we cannot demonstrate that we are meeting the needs of all of our service users then we are not providing an optimum service.

Applied equality and diversity practice should demonstrate that the same service is not being provided for all service users, or treating them in the same way. It should reflect that services have been adapted to suit varying needs of diverse groups where appropriate. If the council is unaware of who it's customers are, it will not know whether disabled residents are using our services equally.

Equalities monitoring will enable the council to assess if services discriminate against certain groups and whether people are actually getting what they want and need. It is a means of ensuring high quality and appropriate service delivery.

Knowsley currently uses a variety of methods to monitor functions and policies for any adverse impact on different groups. These include;

- The Executive Directors across the council implementing policies within their directorates and having corporate responsibility for council wide activity.
- Executive Directors supporting directorate equality and diversity working groups, which are led by senior officers responsible for impact assessing their localised application of policy and function and developing a directorate version of the corporate equality and diversity strategy.
- Production of annual updates showing the progress we are making to meet the objectives of all equalities issues, which will now include the objectives of this Disability Equality Scheme.
- Using best value performance indicators and other national standards such as CPA, LGA and Ofsted, as tools for managing overall performance on disability within the council.
- Directorate programme management of service delivery assessments and any subsequent action plans.

The Corporate Equality and Diversity Strategy group undertakes quality control of these arrangements through reports received from Directorates, which are subsequently regularly reported to Corporate Management Team and Cabinet.

**FACTS AND FIGURES**

20% of the population of Britain (10 million people) have rights under the Disability Discrimination Act. Disability covers people of all ages and ethnicity, who for example may have heart diseases, diabetes, severe disfigurement, depression, schizophrenia, dyslexia, epilepsy, Downs syndrome and many other types of impairments. Disabled people are more likely to face discrimination and exclusion. For example if they are of working age they are twice as likely as non-disabled people to be out of work and claiming benefits. Disabled people are twice as likely to have no qualifications.

Information from the office of national statistics for the total Knowsley population 2006 mid year estimate is 149,400.

- 98.4% of Knowsley’s population is white
- 1.6% are from Black and ethnic minority communities
- 23.3% of school children have some form of identified special educational need taken from January 2006 Pupil Level Annual School Census
- 8.7% (13,000 people) are unable to work because they are permanently sick or disabled
- Over 5,000 people provide unpaid care for more than 50 hours per week
- High levels of obesity
- High rates of heart disease, cancer, respiratory disease and diabetes

The recorded data available (ons nomis 27 October 2006) on the number of disabled people of working age in Knowsley mirrored against the national statistics is as follows;

	Great Britain	Knowsley
% of working age who are disabled	6,629,500 (18.7%)	21,600 (24.2%)
% of working age males who are disabled	3,435,000 (18.9%)	10,400 (23.3%)
%of working age females who are disabled	3,194,500 (18.5%)	11,200 (25.1%)

Numbers in Knowsley in receipt of Disability Living Allowance - under 65 year of age	England & Wales	Knowsley
	4.5%	10.3%

Numbers in receipt of attendance allowance – over 65 year of age	England & Wales	Knowsley
	15%	19.7%

Numbers in receipt of Incapacity benefit	England & Wales	Knowsley
	7.3%	15.2%

## INVOLVING DISABLED PEOPLE

As with all other equality and diversity issues, this scheme should be considered as “work in progress”, but it will be informed by involving people across the council, service users, stakeholders, strategic partners and voluntary and community organisations, including specialist disability focussed organisations. All of these agencies, stakeholders and partners are key to ensuring that the refinement and development of the Knowsley Council Disability Equality Scheme, through peer review, focus groups and special interest contribution will be considered as a robust and structured action document.

To ensure that disabled people are comprehensively involved in the design and consultation of this scheme, at any and every stage of review, anticipated as an annual process, we will commit to a consultation timetable that includes all of the communication processes available to Knowsley Council. We intend for this scheme to be a living policy, which is effective, so constant review and monitoring will be a key feature. Knowsley Council will ensure that all action plans, guidance and standards set out in the scheme are subject to monitoring and assessment against the Equality Standards for Local Government, Best Value Performance Indicators and other national standards. Appendix A attached confirms the consultation fora which Knowsley Council used to inform this, our first Disability Equality Scheme.

## WHAT WE ARE DOING NOW

Although this is our first statutory Disability Equality Scheme, Knowsley Council has consistently demonstrated a commitment to service delivery and employment, which encompasses disability issues and health determinants which may lead to disability. Besides working across the borough to mainstream a range of issues which can support disability equality, whether the issues are access, communication or employment focussed, we have implemented robust actions that are all about countering imbalances that may be reflected as direct or indirect discrimination for disabled people. The following are a selection of these actions and activities.

- ✓ Access audits conducted on all KMBC properties.
- ✓ All remedial work completed to make the buildings accessible
- ✓ Knowsley employs an Access Officer
- ✓ The Access Officer is consulted on all planned work on footpaths
- ✓ Highways send out a schedule of planned work to the Access Officer which is disseminated to the Knowsley Access Group and the Talking Newspaper so that blind and other disabled people can anticipate bus route changes
- ✓ Knowsley employ a Disability Sports Development Officer
- ✓ Knowsley have an excellent library service for disabled residents
- ✓ Knowsley’s three town centres are pedestrianised
- ✓ Huyton has a new fully accessible bus station
- ✓ Halewood Leisure Centre has a fully accessible fitness suite with equipment bought with the assistance of a grant from the Inclusive Fitness Initiative. This

grant places a high standard of accessibility and inclusively on the Leisure Centre before awarding its grant.

- ✓ All impact assessments since 2004 have included considerations of adverse or differential effect on disabled people. Appendix B is the pro-forma document which all service areas use to review policy and functions relative to service delivery and employment.
- ✓ Service Needs Assessments include Older Persons Voice forum, Knowsley Disability Concern and Knowsley Disability Operational Workers Group.
- ✓ Corporate Equality and Diversity training programme roll out includes a blended approach to equality issues and includes disability equality.
- ✓ A resourced Disability Operational Workers group acts has an advisory capacity role for supporting policy review and development
- ✓ Workforce profiling includes disability monitoring
- ✓ Residents Best Value Performance survey is carried out annually, government minimum requirement is every three years
- ✓ The Knowsley Building Schools for the future programme follows Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment Design Quality Indicators.

In addition to following a range of central government policy recommendations to address health issues which lead to or exacerbate disability, this council has committed to an agreement between the political leadership and primary care trust board to support an integration agenda. The following are a selection of specific activities already in place to support and progress our work in this area;

2001- established joint posts at senior management level between Social Service Directorate and St Helens and Knowsley Health Authority

2002 – Director of Social Services appointed to a joint post combining the role of Director of Social Services and Chief Executive of the Primary Care Trust

The integration of leadership and management across both organisations includes the development of a joint business plan with shared priorities

2004 – Undertaken a Section 31 Agreement across the whole council and the Primary Care Trust, reflecting single accountability to service users and patients, dual governance and accountability to the council and the Primary Care Trust

These actions will support processes which can bring about better prevention services with earlier intervention initiatives. They are developed to afford people a wider choice and a louder voice and will be seen to offer more support for people with long term illnesses, but also demonstrate a progressive improvement on tackling any inequalities or barriers to community services.

### PUBLISHING THE SCHEME

This scheme and action plan will be published and available from December 2006 through the internet, libraries, one stop shops, Knowsley News, Spotlight Magazine and most council premises. The action plan will be reviewed on an annual basis and

a report published detailing the impact of the disability actions and how the council have implemented the scheme. The scheme and all associated reports will be available in a range of accessible formats. The following are the range of example communication vehicles we will utilise.

- All printed information available to the general public
- website and intranet
- Letters and e-mails
- Public meetings and events
- Public contact - reception, visitor's centre, telephone contact
- Merchandising (for example bags and T-shirts).
- Braille
- Audio cassette/CD
- Large print
- Electronic formats-floppy disk/CD-ROM/e-mail word/portable document format (PDF) and rich text format (RTF).
- BSL
- Format Web/Intranet

World Wide Web Consortium's HTML 4.01 Transitional or XHTML 1.0 Transition standards and the CSS1 standard

The council recognises that some people may have difficulty in accessing information. These may be people with disabilities, non English speakers, or young people. The council offers a translation service to those who may require it and we are able to provide information in audio and cd format and through the web in accessible formats.

## THE DISABILITY SCHEME ACTION PLAN

### ACTIONS WE WILL TAKE IN THE NEXT THREE YEARS

The following sets out the Knowsley council action plan activity, confirming what we intend to do to improve the delivery of services for the diverse range of disabled people resident within this borough.

The actions are organised into six areas:

- Accessibility within council premises including areas such as parks
- Communication with customers and staff and accessible formats
- Service delivery, including how we can make better use of technology
- Training for council staff
- Employment within the council
- Involvement with the democratic processes of the council

When all of the actions for consideration and development have been approved, during the next three years this council will work towards recording the detailed results of progress against each item. In order to ensure that the design and implementation of a more detailed set of actions is informed by residents and staff alike. This council will engage all of those considered as stakeholders, partners, residents and support agencies who may have contributions to facilitate practical implementation.

#### 1. Accessibility

The council have audited all its premises and sites and have developed an access audit and programme of works to increase accessibility for disabled people. The local authority aims to demonstrate an improvement on the percentage of disability access through the Best Value Performance Indicator process. Face to face customer care standards are already regularly reviewed, however all customer training will be developed to include taking into account barriers to access. This will obviously reflect as a positive action to ensure that all front line staff are delivering a high standard of customer care to all customers including those with disabilities.

The council accepts that where physical features in council buildings completely prevent or seriously hinder access, sometimes the only way of delivering a service may be through making alterations to buildings and equipment.

Physical features arise from design or construction of a building and any fixtures, fittings and equipment on the premises. This includes paths, signage, entrances parking, service counters, doors, toilets, stairs etc. The council undertakes audits to ensure all barriers have been identified and to introduce programmes of work to make reasonable adjustments where such barriers have been identified.

This council wants to consistently update and transform the customer experience by providing greater choices of how public services are accessed, in ways that make sense to the customer and provides value for money. We pay specific attention to

how excluded and deprived communities and individuals can access council services, for example we will explore the use of sign video in one stop shop contact centres for people who use the varied range and levels of sign language and piloting local access points according to identified area need.

Action plan considerations over the next three years for this scheme will be to look at developing;

- Service needs assessments which continue to include disability and age focussed groups, so as to inform service improvement plans
- Activities and funding streams which can support a wider programme of adaptations to facilitate access to buildings for service users and staff
- A sustained process of consultation with specialist agencies and residents through the use of cyclical best value surveys that exceed minimum national requirements
- The inclusion of planning professionals within all disability consultation exercises
- Capacity building the Knowsley council disability operational workers group, to support it's role as a specialist consultation forum

## 2. Communication

Communication and being informed are essential to the avoidance of isolation, however many forms of communication are either unsuitable or cannot be adapted for disabled people. Regardless, in many instances the adjustments can be fairly simple and cost free for example changing a document to a larger font can sometimes widen the potential recipient audience, which in turn may mean that a service becomes accessible.

Action plan considerations over the next three years for this scheme will be to look at developing;

- The installation of speech enable technology
- How we can learn from best practice around signing online and if possible/necessary multi media links with the varied range and levels of sign Language.
- Broader accessible issues and systems that can accommodate widening council service provision
- The deployment of advances in mobile technology to increase accessibility
- Working with internal and external disability focused groups to work up translation and interpretation services to update our website accordingly.

## 3. Service Delivery

There are currently around 10 million disabled people in Great Britain covered by the Disability Discrimination Act. This includes people with mobility, sensory and learning

difficulties and people with mental health and other health conditions. Britain has an ageing population with demographic trends showing over the next 20 years that there will be large increases in the numbers of older people. The number of people over state pension age is projected to increase by 11.9% from 10.9 million in 2002 to 12.2 million in 2011 and the population aged 80 and over is projected to grow from 2.5 million in 2002 to nearly 5 million by 2031. Obviously there are strong correlations between age and disability.

If communities are to be truly sustainable, they must be planned, designed and maintained to enable everyone to live, work, learn and participate in any activities they choose without being confronted by barriers that prevent them from doing so. This council is striving to achieve this through mainstream provision and an ever-decreasing reliance on special services. To perpetuate a culture of general and special needs provision not only segregates those excluded from the mainstream, it is also potentially unsustainable financially as it costs more, making it more likely that where cuts are needed the service will be withdrawn.

Action plan considerations for this scheme over the next three years will be to look at developing;

- How we make clear reference to specific disability access objectives, priorities and outcomes in service plans
- The equality impact assessment process on policies and procedures to demonstrate that where disabled people are adversely affected, plans will be put in place to redress any such imbalances
- How the mechanisms to facilitate flows of information gained from service needs assessments or front line service delivery can be implemented into service delivery plans
- Improvements to the content of our intranet sites to conform to standards such as double A of the web accessibility initiative
- How we ensure that our proposals for an equality framework for procurement ensure that any requirements set by the Disability Discrimination Act are part of all contracts and commissioning arrangements
- The introduction of compliance standards through training for all front line staff in reception and other service areas where users visit on an ad-hoc basis
- The wider promotion of areas where service users are enabled to access information, communicate or complete transactions through effective web access

#### 4. Training for Staff

Whilst many people have positive attitudes towards disabled people, some mistakenly express pity, fear, lack of respect and sometimes even contempt. These

attitudes are obviously hurtful and in some instances can lead to discrimination and can also place unnecessary restrictions on disabled people.

Action plan considerations for this scheme over the next three years will be to look at developing;

- We aim to provide staff training of the highest possible standards, with our intentions being to improve staff awareness and understanding of disability issues
- The social model of disability as the foundation for all training, awareness raising, learning and development
- How we can demonstrate practically, working towards the representative model for disability
- Disability equality training as a constant to be a consistent and mandatory part of induction for all staff
- How customer care training can include disability elements, without concluding in perceptions that it is merely an add on and not a mainstreamed requirement
- Training and learning to encompass all staff regardless of status, contracted hours or nature of contract. This includes the engagement of Councillors.
- Processes that can ensure management can clearly determine how all staff are meeting required standards
- Established clear links in all areas of health and safety, customer care and human resources
- How disability equality and awareness is monitored through Performance Review and Development sessions.

## 5. Employment within the Council

As a public authority we are well aware that we can make an enormous contribution towards removing barriers ( both environmental and attitudinal) towards supporting equality, diversity and community cohesion for disabled people. We will continue to do this through the ways in which we run our services and also how we employ people. We recognise that disabled people are not just those who use wheelchairs or guide dogs, there are many types of disability and it is not simply by looking at a person that you can tell they are disabled. The fact is like most good employers, we are already employing people who are protected by the Disability Discrimination Act.

This council is committed towards achieving a position where disabled people are represented at all levels of the workforce as a proportionate representation of the actual number of disabled people of working age in Knowsley. We actively seek to be an organisation where disabled people feel empowered as key contributing

employees. We also have clear standards around recruitment and retention policies to achieve this objective.

The following are a range of example areas which we have already progressed:

- the procedure for designing job descriptions and person specifications
- the design of application forms
- information sent to applicants
- the availability of alternative formats
- the procedure for shortlisting
- the operation of the minimum guaranteed interview scheme
- the procedure for interviewing and selection including a review of reasonable adjustments
- reviewing the effectiveness of recruitment training for managers
- reviewing occupational health procedures in relation to recruitment.
- improving access to work procedures to ensure all managers involved in recruitment can make best use of adaptation support mechanisms and associated finance
- supporting an operational worker group focusing on disability which can advise on policy development for staff and service users

Action plan considerations for this scheme over the next three years will be to look at developing;

- A continually updated database of employees profiles, to publish facts and help set targets for increased representation of disabled people within the work force year on year
- The organisational application of standards such as the double tick symbol on all job adverts. Demonstrating our commitment to such standards will ensure that at the very least we will meet national minimum standards, but also give us a platform to exceed baseline expectations
- How we can ensure our application form process is available in as many formats as possible, such as PDF, large print, on disc and tape on request
- Expanding the guaranteed interview process to widen the possibilities of obtaining employment with this council for a greater number of disabled applicants where they meet minimum requirements for posts
- The continued monitoring of trends in the type and number of applicants and our ability to act on the resultant information
- Improvements to our processes of reasonable adjustments to the working environment to facilitate increased appointments for disabled applicants

- How we can ensure that every support possible is given to employees who develop a disability

Mid year workforce profile 2006, detailing Directorate responses to employee self classification relating to disability

	Chief Executive Department	Department Corporate Resources	Department Children's Services	Department Health and Social Care	Department Neighbourhood Delivery	Department Regeneration and Neighbourhoods	Merseyside Police Authority	School Return	Council Performance
No. of Employees [Head count]	116	617	808	981	2388	302	23	3040	8275
No. of Employees who have answered the question	77	478	438	789	1053	224	11	2223	5293.00
No. of Employees Declaring a Disability	1	18	6	49	42	7	0	8	131.00

## 6. Involvement with the democratic processes

In many instances disabled people can suffer discrimination and harassment through not being able to influence council decisions, interact with council officers and members or even become a council member.

The general duty of the Disability Discrimination Act also requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to encourage participation by disabled people in public life. This is an action which will promote equality for disabled people as a general theme. Not only will disabled people bring valuable experience to public life, but their actively encouraged participation will engender positive attitudes towards disabled people and in some instances may lead to reductions in harassment. The authorities which succeed in promoting the participation of disabled people in their governing or advisory bodies are also likely to find that this will assist them in becoming a more disability aware organisation.

Public life is a very generalistic term, but in essence it covers areas such as, residents associations, neighbourhood forums, Citizens panels, public bodies market research focus groups schools councils, user groups for a service provided by a public authority, Local strategic partnerships and public appointments.

Action plan considerations for this scheme over the next three years will be to look at developing;

- Proactive approaches for consulting disabled people on how they would prefer to be involved in the democratic processes of Knowsley council
- Processes to ensure that disabled people are continually involved in the decision making processes from policy production to detail of operation
- The promotion of a culture where disabled people feel able to actively seek engagement through the Local Strategic Partnership
- Public meetings in such a way that they are held in fully accessible venues and at times which are likely to suit community members
- Public documents in appropriate formats, in plain english and jargon free, so disabled people cannot only understand them but easily access information/communications
- How we advertise democratic participation standards to the public and media to demonstrate organisational commitment
- The Chief Executive's office as a champion and example of good practice in the organisation
- The benefits of being involved in all aspects of the democratic processes

WE SAY- This council recognises and acknowledges not only the valuable contributions made by disabled groups and individuals. We take a proactive stance towards ensuring that all service delivery and employment represents Disability equality and where adverse effects can be determined via impact assessment or service needs assessments, this council will make every effort to redress any and all imbalances.

## PRIORITIES SUMMARISED

- prioritising and promoting disability equality and the social model;
- Working towards a Representative model
- improving the ability for disabled and Deaf Knowsley residents to get around the borough on an equal basis;
- improving access to the built environment;
- improving the availability of accessible housing;
- improving access to employment and education;
- improving facilities and services for Disabled and Deaf Knowsley residents and staff;
- improving access and support to facilitate independent living;
- improving access to health services.
- Improving employment access, policy and strategy for Disabled staff

## THE LEGAL CONTEXT

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 AS AMENDED 2005 places a duty on all public bodies to promote disability equality. This will affect all public bodies - from local councils to government departments, from universities to hospitals.

The Disability Equality Duty requires the public sector to actively promote disability equality, and is similar to the duty to promote race equality under the 2000 Race Relations (Amendment) Act.

The positive duty builds in disability equality at the beginning of the process, rather than make adjustments at the end. It brings about a shift from a legal framework which relies on individual disabled people identifying discrimination to one in which the public sector becomes a proactive agent of change.

The Act sets out what is known as the General Duty. This means we will have to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equal opportunities for disabled people. We will also need to consider the elimination of harassment of disabled people, promotion of positive attitudes and the need to encourage the participation of disabled people in public life.

These Regulations give key public bodies a Specific Duty which will define for them a framework to use to meet the General Duty. The main element of this is our requirement to produce a **Disability Equality Scheme**.

In the process of producing this **Disability Equality Scheme** as a key body we must:

- Involve disabled people in producing the scheme and developing the action plan.

- Identify how we will gather and analyse evidence to inform our actions and track progress.
- Set out how we will assess the impact of our existing and proposed activities on disabled people.
- Produce an action plan for the next three years.
- Report on our progress every year and review and make appropriate revisions to this scheme at least every three years

### How will it be enforced?

In relation to the Specific Duty and those bodies who will have to produce a Disability Equality Scheme, the DRC will have the power to issue compliance notices where it is satisfied that a public authority has failed to comply with its specific duties under the regulations, and can enforce the notices in the county or sheriff court.

### Disability Equality Scheme Summary

- (1) a public authority should involve disabled people in the development of its Disability Equality Scheme, the Scheme should include a statement of:
    - the way in which disabled people have been involved in the development of the Scheme
    - the authority’s methods for impact assessment steps which the authority will take towards fulfilling its general duty (the “action plan”)
    - the authority’s arrangements for gathering information in relation to employment, and, where appropriate, its delivery of education and its functions the authority’s arrangements for putting the information gathered to use, in particular in reviewing the effectiveness of its action plan and in preparing subsequent Disability Equality Schemes
  - (2) A public authority must, within three years of the Scheme being published, take the steps set out in its action plan (unless it is unreasonable or impracticable for it to do so) and put into effect the arrangements for gathering and making use of information
- A public authority must publish a report containing a summary of the steps taken under the action plan, the results of its information gathering and the use to which it has put the information.

## 2005 Act Summary

- (3) Section **49A General duty** - Every public authority shall in carrying out its functions have due regard to—
- (a) the need to eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under this Act;
  - (b) the need to eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities;
  - (c) the need to promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons;
  - (d) the need to take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons;
  - (e) the need to promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons; and
  - (f) the need to encourage participation by disabled persons in public life.

### Key contacts

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## Appendix A

### Knowsley Council Disability Equality Scheme Consultation

Knowsley Disability Concern

Merseyside Fire Service

Merseyside Police

Knowsley Council for Voluntary Services

Merseyside Society for Deaf People

Knowsley News

Knowsley Council Corporate Equality and Diversity Strategy Group

Knowsley Council Departmental Equality and Diversity working groups

Knowsley Council Disability Operational Workers Group

Knowsley Council Black and Minority Operational Workers Group

Knowsley Council Womens Operational Workers Group

Knowsley Council Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender Operational Workers Group

Association of Greater Manchester Authorities

Knowsley Local Strategic Partnership, Strategic Planning Group

Older Persons Voice

University of the third age

Knowsley Housing Trust

**APPENDIX B**

**IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROFORMA**

## PRO-FORMA FOR THE INITIAL ASSESSMENT

Directorate		Section:	Person responsible for the Assessment	
Name of the Policy / Function / Programme to be assessed		Date of Assessment		Is this a new or existing policy
1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the Policy/Function/Programme				
2. Are there any associated objectives of the Policy/Function/Programme, please explain				
3. Who is intended to benefit from the Policy/Function/Programme and in what way?				
4. What outcomes are wanted from this Policy/Function/Programme?				
5. What factors/forces could contribute/detract from the outcomes?				
6. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the Policy/Function/Programme?		7. Who implements the Policy/Function/Programme and who is responsible for the Policy/Function/Programme?		

<p>8. Are there concerns that the Policy/Function/ Programme <b>could</b> have a differential impact on racial groups?</p> <p><i>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</i></p> <p><i>Note: in any or all of these boxes there may not be empirical evidence merely anecdotal</i></p>	<p><b>Y</b></p>	<p><b>N</b></p>	<p><i>It is not enough to take a judgement on a policy and conclude that because “we treat everyone the same” there is no resultant adverse impact. For example, a swimming pool policy, which states that all sessions are open to everyone, can actually disadvantage women from particular ethnic communities who, due to their culture, can only participate in women only swimming sessions.</i></p>
<p>9. Are there concerns that the Policy/Function/ Programme <b>could</b> have a differential impact due to gender?</p> <p><i>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</i></p>	<p><b>Y</b></p>	<p><b>N</b></p>	<p>Consider whether females could be in some way discriminated. For example, if the policy is employment related then there should be some concerns. However, there should be processes in place ( legislative and perhaps organisational additions), which reflect a commitment to watch out for adverse or counter adverse effect. This should be noted</p>

<p>10. Are there concerns that the Policy/Function/ Programme <b>could</b> have a differential impact due to disability?</p> <p><i>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</i></p>	<p><b>Y</b></p>	<p><b>N</b></p>	<p>An example could be service delivery relative to emptying bins for people in wheelchairs. Consider the possibility of a service user requesting support to move the bin from their driveway by the refuse collector, or whether the service includes the concept of replacing all bins on the pavement in such a way so as to ensure passageway for wheelchairs or prams.</p>
<p>11. Are there concerns that the Policy/Function/ Programme <b>could</b> have a differential impact on people due to sexual orientation?</p>	<p><b>Y</b></p>	<p><b>N</b></p>	<p>If the service delivery relates to ensuring that particular groups are targeted, then this should be highlighted.</p> <p>There may be particular programmes running through the Department/council which are aimed at alleviating any adverse effect. An appropriate process to aid populating the text boxes with the right text is to itemise the programme and where necessary the relative action/s.</p>

<p>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</p>			
<p>12. Are there concerns that the Policy/Function/ Programme <b>could</b> have a differential impact on people due to their age?</p> <p><i>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</i></p>	<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>	<p>Once again, remember, it is not always sufficient to populate the box with text simply stating that everyone in the Borough receives the exact same service.</p>
<p>13. Are there concerns that the Policy/Function/ Programme <b>could</b> have a differential impact on people due to their religious belief?</p> <p><i>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</i></p>	<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>	<p>This is one of the boxes which is likely to require considerable thought as to how best to populate. In many areas there may be very few ( for example) Muslim or Jewish community members, so the response is probably in the affirmative but some reference to council relative strategies should be made.</p>
<p>14. Are there concerns that the Policy/Function/ Programme <b>could</b> have a differential impact on people due to them having dependants/caring responsibilities?</p>	<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>	
<p>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</p>			

<p>15. Are there concerns that the Policy/Function/ Programme <b>could</b> have a differential impact on people due to their offending past?</p>	<p><b>Y</b></p>	<p><b>N</b></p>	<p>The following text has been directly lifted from the draft ( 2005) KMBC Corporate Equality and “Diversity Policy.</p> <p>The Council recognises that people with an offending background can experience discrimination and is committed to make all efforts to prevent this discrimination or other unfair treatment against any of its staff or potential staff regardless of offending background, as long as this does not create a risk to children, vulnerable adults or other service users.”</p>
<p>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</p>			
<p>16. Are there concerns that the Policy/Function/ Programme <b>could</b> have a differential impact on people due to them being transgendered or transsexual?</p>	<p><b>Y</b></p>	<p><b>N</b></p>	<p>Usually a blank, trans gendered and transsexual are not very great in number ( or known)</p>
<p>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</p>			
<p>17. Could the differential impact identified in 8-16 amount to their being the potential for adverse impact in this Policy/ Function / Programme?</p>	<p><b>YES</b></p>	<p><b>No</b></p>	

18. Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group? Or any other reason	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>			
19. Should the Policy/ Function / Programme proceed to a partial impact assessment?	<b>YES</b>	<b>No</b>	20. If Yes, is there enough evidence to proceed to a full EIA		
			21. Date on which Partial or Full impact assessment to be completed by		

Signed (completing Officer)

Signed (Lead Officer) \_\_\_\_\_