

Welsh Assembly Government

Disability Equality Scheme

2006 - 2008

Chapter 1: Introduction

This is the Welsh Assembly Government's first draft Disability Equality Scheme.

The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to promoting equality of opportunity, for all people in Wales, in all aspects of Welsh life. The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to challenging inequality and discrimination, in what ever form, including age, disability, gender, race, religion, and sexual orientation.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (referred to as 'the Act' throughout this document), requires Public Bodies such as the Assembly to produce a Disability Equality Scheme (DES).

The Scheme will be supported by annual action plans from each Assembly Government department. These action plans will outline how they will achieve their commitments towards disability equality. The Scheme is being created in partnership with disabled people throughout Wales. This involvement will be central to the scheme's success. The scheme will run to April 2008.

Who we are

Welsh Assembly Government

The Welsh Assembly Government is the devolved government for Wales. The Welsh Assembly Government (the First Minister and his Cabinet Ministers) is responsible for a wide range of devolved functions such as education, economic development, health, local government, social services, planning, transport, housing and industry.

With a budget of £13.2 billion and over 6,000 staff in the financial year 2006-2007, the Assembly Government provides – directly and indirectly – a wide range of public services and has a direct and indirect impact on the Welsh economy. The public and voluntary sectors in Wales are the main way in which the Assembly Government delivers public services. This includes local government, the NHS and Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies.

When the Assembly Government was elected in May 2003, they identified four priority areas: helping more people into jobs; improving health; developing strong and safe communities; and creating better jobs and skills. Working towards disability equality will help to meet these priorities.

In focusing on these priority areas, the Assembly Government is committed to: openness; partnership and participation; public services; equality; putting results first; listening to people and reflecting difference across Wales.

These commitments are set out in more detail in ‘Wales; A Better Country – The Strategic Agenda of the Welsh Assembly Government’, which can be found at: <http://new.wales.gov.uk/?lang=en>

Government of Wales Act 1998

Under sections 48 and 120 of the Government of Wales Act the National Assembly for Wales has a unique statutory duty to ensure that equality of opportunity is embedded in its work. This applies to all people and all the devolved functions of government. A full list of devolved functions can be accessed at Annex 3.

This means that elected representatives and Welsh Assembly Government officials are required to mainstream equality in all their work. This has led to the development of a distinctive and positive equality agenda in Wales which has had a major influence on our strategic policies.

Equality of Opportunity Committee

Much of the business of the National Assembly is conducted through its committees. At present there are eighteen permanent committees including seven subject committees, which have a role in developing policy as well as scrutinising legislation and the actions of Ministers and public bodies. All committees have been briefed on the requirements of the Act.

The National Assembly's decision to establish an equal opportunities committee as one of only two discretionary standing committees shows how important the Members feel equality is. The purpose of the Equality of Opportunity Committee is to ensure that the National Assembly has effective arrangements to promote the principle of equality of opportunity for all people in the conduct of its business and the exercise of its functions (sections 48 and 120 of the Government of Wales Act 1998).

The Committee is committed to representing minority and disadvantaged interests at all levels in the National Assembly. To help achieve this, a number of equal opportunities organisations, including the Disability Rights Commission, have standing invitations to attend meetings of the Committee as advisers. The Cabinet Minister with responsibility for equal opportunities, currently Jane Hutt, is not a member of the Committee but frequently attends.

The Committee meets once a month when the National Assembly is in session (nine times a year) usually in public. The Committee is required to submit an annual report to the National Assembly on the National Assembly and Welsh Assembly Government's equal opportunities arrangements and their effectiveness. Time is guaranteed for an annual debate on this report by the National Assembly as a whole.

In July 2004 the Committee published a report of a major policy review called *Mainstreaming Equality in the Work of the National Assembly*. The report made a total of 27 recommendations. These can be found at:

<http://www.wales.gov.uk/keypubassemequalcomm2/index-e.htm>

All subject committees will be provided with copies of this Scheme when it is launched in December 2006, and will monitor the Assembly Government's compliance with the aspects which fall within their responsibilities.

The Assembly Parliamentary Service

The National Assembly for Wales' Parliamentary Service exists to serve the elected members of the National Assembly and ensure its successful functioning as a democratic body. The Service operates without regard to the political affiliations of individual Members, under the guidance of the Presiding Officer. The Assembly Parliamentary Service takes direction from the all-party House Committee, to whom the National Assembly has delegated responsibility

for its 'parliamentary' functions – the services, facilities and accommodation that support the operation of the National Assembly. The Assembly Parliamentary Service staff are headed by the Clerk to the Assembly.

The Government of Wales Act 2006 (GOWA 2006) will replace the current National Assembly for Wales (which comprises the Welsh Assembly Government and the Assembly Parliamentary Service) with an executive (the Welsh Assembly Government) and a legislature (the National Assembly for Wales). The GOWA 2006 will also establish a National Assembly for Wales Commission to employ the staff of the legislature and to enter into contracts on behalf of the National Assembly for Wales. It is likely that the staff of the Assembly Commission will take on many of the functions currently provided by the Assembly Parliamentary Service after separation although they will also provide additional services, particularly in relation to the legislature's new responsibilities.

Chapter 2: Disability Equality

The Welsh Assembly Government wants to be recognised for providing an exemplary service to the disabled people of Wales by developing strategies and policies that are effective and outcome focused. Our vision for Wales is one of full social inclusion, where the social barriers prevalent in our society are dismantled and where everyone has access to the services they require and the opportunity to aspire to and reach their potential goals. The aim of our Disability Equality Scheme is to set out how we intend to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people when exercising our public functions.

Definition of Disability

The Act defines disability as:

A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Family Resources Survey 2002 - 2003 estimates that over ten million people in GB fall under this definition of disability.

Disabled people, like everyone, have multiple identities which can add to the

complexity of analysing and meeting their needs. There are specific problems for disabled people from ethnic minority backgrounds for example. These issues along with other identities such as sexual orientation need to be addressed by Welsh Assembly Government and other public bodies when developing policies and planning services.

The Social Model of Disability

In 2002, the Welsh Assembly Government adopted the social model of disability as the basis for all its work on disability. It is the model we have used to inform the work of our Disability Equality Scheme. The social model is based on the fact that disadvantage and social exclusion stem from the barriers disabled people face rather than from an individual's impairments. The Welsh Assembly Government has recently undertaken a project with Disability Wales to raise awareness of the Social Model of Disability among public authorities in Wales and to assist public bodies to understand and implement the model when planning their services.

Mainstreaming Equality

What we mean by mainstreaming

The Assembly has adopted the following definition of mainstreaming:

"'Mainstreaming' equality is about the integration of respect for diversity and equality of opportunity principles, strategies and practices into the every day work of the [National] Assembly and other public bodies. It means that equality issues should be included from the outset as an integral part of the policy-making and service delivery process and the achievement of equality should inform all aspects of the work of every individual within an organisation. The success of mainstreaming should be measured by evaluating whether inequalities have been reduced."

We have already made progress on the journey towards integrating equality and diversity in the development of our policies and programmes.

We have developed a Mainstreaming Equality Strategy, which has been agreed by Cabinet, and which spells out some of the challenges facing the Welsh Assembly Government.

Impact Assessment

Impact assessment is a way of supporting the mainstreaming of equality into the policy making and delivery process. At the heart of impact assessment is a way of thinking – placing equality and diversity considerations at the forefront of development work. There are many impact assessment tools available to help in this process. The Assembly Government is committed to impact assessment and is developing a tool which will help in the policy making and development process, looking across the various dimensions of equality.

Policy Development

We are mainstreaming disability equality into the way we make policy. An Integration Tool has been developed to make sure that staff develop and deliver policies that not only meet the Assembly Government's strategic agenda but do it in a way that fulfils our commitment to equality of opportunity. All strategic policies going out to consultation have to attach a completed Tool to the consultation document. The Tool will be refreshed following the next election and we will ensure that equality issues are fully reflected, as well as continuing to incorporate this high-level tool with a more detailed equality impact assessment.

All policy proposals to Ministers have to include a statement on compliance with statutory duties including equality of opportunity.

An in-house Policy Training course, with the Assembly Government's core values of sustainable development, equality of opportunity and social inclusion at its heart, has been developed to enable policymakers to design and deliver more effective 'Made in Wales' policies, by equipping them with the relevant skills, tools and information.

In addition to this the Assembly Government is mainstreaming disability equality into its financial planning.

How we are mainstreaming Disability Equality

Leadership

The Welsh Assembly Government's Senior Policy Director has taken on the role of Equality Champion for the Assembly Government's Senior Business

Team and is energetic in his promotion of equality and committed to driving the agenda forward. He attends the staff disability forum (DAAS) and is the Chair of the Mainstreaming Equality Task and Finish Group.

A project board made up of senior Assembly Government officials has been established to guide and monitor the development of the Assembly Government's DES. The project board is chaired by Helen Thomas (Head of Strategy and Equality Division). A project team has been established in the Strategic Equality and Diversity Unit to co-ordinate the production of the DES.

The development of the scheme has also been a regular item on the Senior Business Team Meeting agenda and for the Welsh Assembly Government Executive Board.

Equality Champions

Each Department within the Assembly Government has an Equality Champion who is nominated by and supported by their Director. Equality Champions meet regularly to support one another and talk about the equality agenda. The duties team are regular attendees at these meetings and have used them as a forum to agree the approach to the development of the scheme. A workshop was held for Champions to help them understand the detailed requirements of the legislation. We have also met with each champion and their Head of Department individually to ensure they understand their role and contribution to the scheme.

Inspection

The newly established Department of Public Services and Performance (DPSP) co-ordinates support for Estyn and the Food Standards Agency in relation to public service delivery and improvement and how the statutory duties, including the disability duty is being met. It liaises with the Wales Audit Office over its contribution to this, in close collaboration with the Assembly Government Finance Director. It acts as the liaison point with the UK central Government on such matters as environmental health, trading standards and better local regulation generally. It is also responsible for achieving significant progress with external and internal partners over the wider use of shared services across the public service in Wales.

DPSP is also responsible for three specialised inspectorates – Social Services

Inspectorates Wales (SSIW) Care Standards Inspectorate Wales (CSIW) and Health Inspectorate Wales (HIW).

For the 2006-2007 annual reports the three Assembly Government inspectorates will include a commentary covering how their inspection process covers all of the equality strands. With regards to disability the Welsh Assembly Government proposes that the commentary will highlight how their individual inspection processes have monitored the provision of services for disabled people by the providers they have inspected, and have engaged disabled people in the inspection and regulation process. This will help them to draw out any deficiencies identified by the inspection process and to consider how the inspection process can contribute to help rectify these deficiencies. This reflection will inform the process and annual reports for subsequent years.

Making the Connections – Customer Service Principles

The Making the Connections (MtC) Unit aims to encourage public services in Wales to become more responsive to the needs of individuals and communities, driven by a commitment to equality and social justice. This vision, supported by the recent recommendations of the Beecham review, is firmly grounded on a citizen centred model of governance and service delivery. One important stream of activity turns on the development of core customer services principles. These will have a strong focus on gearing public services to become more responsive to people with particular customer requirements, including disabled people. The MtC Unit will launch draft principles and good practice guidance for consultation in 2006, with the view to publishing final policy guidance in early 2007. The Unit plans to develop a policy on public engagement in a similar way during 2006-2007.

Consultation

Consultation plays a significant role in the delivery of public services and all Divisions within DPSP are responsible for consultation in some form. We will involve disability organisations in the review of our practices, so that all departments will by April 2007 be confident that they can involve disability organisations appropriately in their consultation processes. We will monitor the consultation responses received from these organisations to see whether this increases our engagement with them.

Communication and Publication

We aim to ensure that the public has access to information about Welsh Assembly Government policies, initiatives and programmes.

When considering publicity and publication methods, the diverse nature of the audience is key. We aim to adopt a best practice approach to the provision of information. This means taking into account issues such as format (e.g. print, braille, tape, website, face to face, and video using British Sign Language) and language (e.g. style, simplicity, Welsh and other languages).

Accessible Information

The Strategic Equality & Diversity Unit and the Strategic Communications Division has made a commitment to produce guidance for policy departments on the production of accessible information and publications, revising existing guidance and building on the requirements of the Act.

Print and design

The Welsh Assembly Government follows the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) 'Clear Print' Guidelines for making information accessible. We have adopted best practice to comply with the Act. 'Clear Print' is an approach to designing and producing material which focuses on design elements such as font, type size/weight, legibility, colour, contrast and page navigation.

Formats

Any alternative format can be made available upon request e.g. braille, large print, data CD, audio tapes. In partnership with the Strategic Equality and Diversity Unit, Strategic Communications has made a commitment to develop guidance on the use of 'Easy Read' when publishing documents to ensure that individuals have access to our policy documents and guidance.

Planning events and meetings

Due regard should always be given to the specific requirements of individuals attending meetings or events. The Welsh Assembly Government has produced 'Accessible Venues Guidance' in partnership with the DRC, Disability Wales, Wales Council for the Blind and the Royal Institute for the Blind that identifies best practice and is available for all departments to use when planning meetings or events. This guidance should be used as a tool for assessing how

best to meet the needs of disabled people and for providing a service that goes beyond the current legal minimum requirements set out in Part M of the building regulations. This guidance can be accessed at the following link:

http://new.wales.gov.uk/docrepos/40382/40382313/4038232/40382321/Accessible_Venues_Guidance_1.pdf?lang=en

In addition to this British Sign Language (BSL) is the first or preferred language of approximately 3,000 deaf people in Wales. The Assembly Government stated in January 2004 that it recognised BSL as a language in its own right and followed that statement by establishing a Task and Finish Group to investigate British Sign Language interpreter services in Wales.

In February 2006 Equalities Minister, Jane Hutt AM, announced that a total of £2.7million had been made available to support BSL Futures – The British Sign Language Interpreter Apprenticeship Scheme for Wales.

BSL Futures is the first scheme of its size in the UK. It will build a resource that public services in Wales can use to meet, in respect of citizens who use BSL, the expectations of Making the Connections: Delivering Better services for Wales in that "All public bodies in Wales should [...] develop the capability to [...] communicate effectively in English, Welsh and other languages of the communities they serve".

Marketing

Best practice is employed across all marketing and communication work, including positive images as a representation of disabled people in our advertising and information campaigns. We have employed the Whitehall 'Images of Disability' initiative. The Welsh Assembly Government has also established good examples of how it has successfully depicted images of disabled people in its communications work. Marketing strategies consider the target audience and take into account all requirements to enable the information to be readily available and easily accessed in all required formats.

The Disability Equality Duty

The General Duty

The Act is part of a new approach to equality legislation that is intended to drive forward a culture of positive change across the public sector and in doing so

remove many of the barriers disabled people encounter in their daily lives. The Act imposes a general duty on public authorities, when carrying out their public functions to have due regard to the need to:

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

The Specific Duty

In addition, those public authorities deemed to have a significant impact of the lives of disabled people, including the Welsh Assembly Government, will be subject to a specific duty requiring them to produce a DES from December 2006. The DES will set out the actions the Assembly Government intends to take in order to meet its general duty.

Chapter 3: What we are doing to develop our Scheme

In developing our DES we have made every effort to set a good example for the public sector in Wales. We have focused on engaging and listening to the views, experiences and aspirations of disabled people, and their representative organisations and have used this information to design our scheme. The issues and priorities that have been identified by the disabled people who have been involved with us has been the starting point for the development of our DES and the departmental action plans that underpin it. We believe that open and frequent dialogue will help us develop policies and services which better meet the needs of disabled people in Wales.

Involving Disabled People

Engagement Events

In April, May and June 2006 the Welsh Assembly Government ran a series of engagement events. These were held in Mold, Aberystwyth and Cardiff where we discussed the important issues and priorities for disabled people. In all more than 100 people attended these events.

Disability Wales and the DRC were both involved in the engagement events. In particular, Disability Wales helped us to contact disabled people from across Wales to ensure that as many people as possible were aware of the events. The invitations went to both disability organisations and individuals.

The "Engagement Events" were the first stage in what the Welsh Assembly Government hopes will become an ongoing dialogue with disabled people and their representatives in Wales. Each event provided the Welsh Assembly Government with a set of issues and priorities that were fed back to Assembly Government policy colleagues to inform the development of their action plans. Following the events a summary report was produced which captured the key themes that emerged during the events. This report was made available to all stakeholders and will go to the Welsh Assembly Government Equality of Opportunity Committee in the autumn of 2006. The Summary Report has been used by Welsh Assembly Government Departments to inform the development of our overall scheme and departmental action plans.

We have also worked closely throughout the engagement process with the Welsh Assembly Government Disability Advisory and Support Group (DAAS) which is a forum for Assembly Government staff. Members of the group have attended external engagement events as delegates and a specific event for the DAAS group was also held. The project team are regular attendees at DAAS group meetings using it as an opportunity to test out our progress towards the development of the scheme and to keep staff up to date with what we are doing.

Critical Friends Network

In addition to the "Engagement Events" a group of critical friends has been developed. This group comprises representatives of key disability equality organisations from across Wales who have assisted the Welsh Assembly Government with our draft scheme, and will have an ongoing support, advisory and monitoring role throughout the duration of the scheme.

Chapter 4: What our Disability Equality Scheme will do

Our DES will focus on achieving real outcomes and delivering tangible improvements for disabled people in Wales. We will achieve this by mainstreaming disability equality into our core business, functions and values. We will endeavour to assess every project, programme and strategy to ensure we have a clear understanding of how they impact upon the lives of disabled people. The DES will provide a snapshot of where we are now and where we are going in terms of promoting equality of opportunity for disabled people in Wales.

Departmental Action Plans

As part of the development of the Welsh Assembly Government's DES all of our departments have been asked to develop their own action plans which describe what they are going to do to address disability equality. As part of this process each department screened their strategic policies to decide how relevant and important they were to achieving equality for disabled people. Based on the results of this screening exercise and the Disability Engagement Event Summary Report, departments have prioritised the most important things they need to do over the next year. You can read statements from Welsh Assembly Government departments outlining the work they currently undertake and what they plan to do over the next twelve months at Annex 1.

When the DES is published in December 2006 the Welsh Assembly Government website will include the detailed action plans for each Welsh Assembly Government department which will be used to monitor departmental progress. The action plans will be updated each year as part of the Welsh Assembly Government operational management process.

Reporting on our Action Plans

We are going to review our action plans every six months as part of our operational management process and an annual report will be produced and published every year from March 2008 onwards in a range of accessible formats.

We will keep the DES and our action plans under review in the light of our annual reports. We will conduct a full review of the DES from April 2008 alongside our other schemes which deal with gender and race equality.

Chapter 5: Research and Statistical Information

The Welsh Assembly Government recognises the importance of having evidence to help us develop our DES, and deliver action plan objectives that will make a more positive impact on disabled people in Wales. We also need to gather information about equality more generally. To achieve this we:

have commissioned an Equality Audit which will provide an evaluation of the:

- extent to which the equality duty (s120 of the Government of Wales Act 1998) has been reflected in the Assembly Government's key policies and programmes; and
- extent to which the equality duty is embedded in Assembly Government decision making processes and impact assess the Assembly Government's work in selected areas using an impact assessment methodology.

are working on improving the statistical information available to support departments making policies and to inform the wider public debate on tackling inequality. We are developing statistical reports covering:

- Department for Enterprise, Innovation & Networks;
- Department for Health & Social Services;
- Department for Education, Lifelong Learning & Skills;
- Department for Environment, Planning And Countryside;

- Social Justice and Regeneration Department

These will be published on our internet site later this year and will contain statistics relating to the top five equality issues for each department. We will use existing statistical sources to get this information. This exercise will also enable us to identify statistical research and information gaps to be filled in the future.

A brief review of the current evidence regarding the scale of disability in Wales can be seen at Annex 2.

will build on the statistical reviews outlined above by reviewing all data sources and developing a comprehensive and accessible evidence base on equalities, including disability, to inform policy development and delivery. The project, which will be carried out over 12 months commencing in September 2006, will have the following outputs:

a series of concise and accessible briefing papers for key policy areas, which will cover disability issues;

identification of evidence gaps and input into central and departmental research programmes;

guidance to departments on how they should mainstream equalities issues throughout their research programmes, and advice on definitions etc;

potential equalities, including disability, performance indicators; and

a web-based information resource to help policy makers, researchers and others to locate and better understand relevant evidence.

To further improve the level of accessibility of statistical information available our Corporate Information and Services Directorate also plans to introduce electronic disability publications via StatsWales and to review the accessibility of the current internet site.

Communication and the Internet

The Welsh Assembly Government internet site was designed with the requirements of part three of the Act, which makes it mandatory for government websites to consider equality of access in the e-communications environment. The website includes:

- adjustable font size;
- compatibility with assistive technologies such as screen-readers, which read text of the site aloud for users; and
- alternative colour schemes for specific visual impairments.

Chapter 6: The Welsh Assembly Government as an Employer

The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to improving the representation of disabled people in its workforce to better reflect the society it serves. We are seeking to attract more disabled people to work with us so that we can more effectively harness the difference that people bring to an organisation and the benefits that result from diversity. We want all employees to feel that they work in an environment free from harassment, where discrimination has been eradicated and diversity is truly valued.

The Assembly management works closely with the recognised Trade Unions on disability issues through the established Partnership Agreement and the Joint Health and Safety Committee. We ensure that all health and safety statutory provisions are met and comply with the Act. Access to buildings and facilities are reviewed regularly to promote best practice. We ensure that any reasonable adjustments required are put in place promptly so that a disabled employee or prospective employee does not experience disadvantage. We also work with the Disability Awareness, Advice and Support (DAAS) staff group seeking their involvement in the development and review of Human Resources (HR) policies and practices.

We are active members of the Employers Forum on Disability, an employer's organisation that promotes good practice in employing disabled people. In 2005 the Welsh Assembly Government scored 66%, which is above the public sector average in the first comprehensive disability benchmarking exercise conducted by the Forum. We are working with Disability Wales as part of a three year project established by the Welsh Assembly Government to promote the social model of disability in the Welsh Assembly Government and the public sector in Wales.

The extensive diversity monitoring exercise which was undertaken in 2005 provides comprehensive baseline data so that we can monitor progress against targets set to address the under-representation of disabled staff; we have set a target for 3.2% for Senior Civil Service Disabled staff by April 2008.

The Social Model of Disability approach to recruitment practices was adopted in 2002. We have in place the 'Positive About Disability' Scheme and utilise the 'Two Ticks' Guaranteed Interview commitment as part of our recruitment practices.

The Summer Placement Scheme for Disabled Under-Graduates/Graduate Students has been in place since 2003. The Assembly Government has been commended for its commitment to the scheme, particularly as we are the second largest supporter in the Civil Service and the principal supporter outside of London. In 2005, there were 120 participants in the scheme, and ten of those were placed in the Assembly Government. Several participants have secured permanent jobs with the Welsh Assembly Government or other Government Departments as a direct result of their involvement with the scheme. In the summer of 2006, eight disabled students had the opportunity to work at the Assembly Government for eight weeks and the scheme will continue for 2007 and beyond.

We have a Dignity at Work policy, to tackle workplace bullying and harassment and we have trained staff as harassment officers to provide support and advice. This was updated in 2005 to ensure that it remains effective and takes account of ACAS best practice.

In January 2006, a shadow board was set up to help the Management Board of the Welsh Assembly Government to set the corporate direction of the organisation and influence management decisions. The shadow board recruitment process was designed to ensure that a diverse range of applicants

would be attracted. This has resulted in disabled people being represented on the board.

To improve communication with the estimated 3,000 citizens in Wales who use British Sign Language as their first or preferred language, a contract was awarded to the Royal National Institute for the Deaf in March 2006 to provide British Sign Language interpreter services for staff and attendees at Welsh Assembly Government organised meetings and events.

To raise the awareness of the new Disability duties, HR has been delivering "hot-shot" sessions across the regional offices; and new courses on disability awareness and equality are being offered to all Assembly staff by our training provider Eliesha.

The HR Learning and Development (L&D) team are committed to improving access to L&D activities for all staff, and are working closely with the core training provider, Eliesha, to ensure best practice in programmes and processes. Our action plan includes a range of commitments aimed at ensuring that all programmes are developed, delivered and evaluated with disability legislation and best practice in mind. There will be a planned programme for undertaking Access Audits of current and potential training venues, and training materials will be made available in any format required by participants.

To assist progress towards increased diversity at senior levels of the Service, the Welsh Assembly Government has produced a three year Single Delivery Plan on Diversity and Equality commencing summer 2006. This is in line with the Cabinet's Office's 10-Point Plan to recruit and promote under-represented groups.

Actions identified under the Single Delivery Plan include:

raising awareness among members of under-represented groups of employment opportunities offered by the Welsh Assembly Government. We are currently agreeing an annual programme of advertisements promoting the Assembly Government as an employer of choice and are hoping to develop a diversity microsite that will meet the AAA disabled web access standard;

providing placement opportunities to members of under-

represented groups – we are currently reviewing our placement schemes to put much greater emphasis on enabling disabled people to access longer term work experience. This will include liaison with several disability organisations;

providing positive action training to staff from under-represented groups. We are committed to working closely with Eliesha, the Assembly Government's core training provider, to identify opportunities to develop and deliver programmes aimed at actively supporting and developing under-represented groups. We will also support individuals, where possible, to attend suitable external events which will ultimately support this aim;

ensuring that management development programmes include additional positive action elements for members of under-represented groups; and

offering mentors from the Senior Civil Service to members of under-represented groups.

All actions within the plan will be monitored quarterly and progress reported to the Management Board.

The three key priorities within the Disability Equality Scheme which have been identified by HR include:

- Location
- Recruitment
- Training and Development

These priorities have been agreed following consultation with DAAS group colleagues and take account of the messages received from the external engagement meetings with disabled people.

The Assembly Government is opening new offices in Merthyr Tydfil, Llandudno Junction and Aberystwyth. The designs of these new buildings take account of the needs of disabled people. To improve accessibility, the Assembly Government will be working with transport providers to ensure that the buildings can be visited by members of the public.

To encourage disabled people to apply for posts in our new offices, the Assembly Government will hold workshops to ensure that disabled people have the relevant guidance to help them in producing successful applications. Any barriers to disabled staff seeking financial support to move home to work in a new office will be removed.

In November 2006, the Assembly Government plans to introduce e-recruitment as a method to recruit staff. Disabled people have been involved in identifying potential barriers and in testing the new system. Users will be monitored to inform change where necessary.

We plan to revise our recruitment policy in light of this new e-recruitment method to ensure that it remains fair and accessible to all job applicants both internally and externally. The revised policy will continue to take into account existing and new disability equality legislation.

Secondment Fair

Public Service Management Wales (PSMW) will organise a secondment fair to encourage secondment into the Welsh Assembly Government and public service providers across Wales. PSMW will ensure that disabled people are actively encouraged to attend the fair thereby improving access for disabled people to secondment opportunities. A report will be produced showing the number of disabled people that attended and the issues which were raised. This will be followed up by analysing the extent to which disabled people are taking up the secondment opportunities.

Chapter 7: How we do business

Procurement

How we deal with contracts with outside parties

The Government of Wales Act 2006 will implement the legal separation of the Assembly; contracts will be awarded by each organisation in their own right (i.e. Welsh Assembly Government and the Assembly Commission). Welsh Assembly Government and APS staff are currently reviewing with Corporate Procurement Services all the existing contracts that apply to both parts of the current organisation and the scope for separating each of those contracts will

be considered on its own merits. There are other contracts that only apply to one part of the organisation, which fall outside this process.

The work on separating contracts will continue as contracts come up for renewal between now and legal separation in 2007.

Value Wales

The internal arm of Value Wales is responsible for contract awards on behalf of the Assembly Government. The external arm facilitates collaborative contracting across the public service in Wales and this includes embedding sustainable development principles into all parts of the procurement process. An important part of this approach is to look at equality and diversity issues including disability, gender and race equality.

External Procurement

Value Wales will by April 2007 evaluate the different tender procedures used in consultation with representative organisations and look at how they can improve access for all parts of the community to contract awards opportunities. These improvements will then be made in 2007-08 for Assembly Government contracts, and guidance given to other public sector organisations via the Value Wales Procurement route planner.

Value Wales has also set up a sub group of the Business Procurement Task Force to explore opportunities available under the revised European Union Procurement regulations to reserve certain public sector contracts for Supported Employment organisations and is rolling out the principles outlined in "Opening Doors - The Charter for SME Friendly Procurement" to all small businesses in Wales. The objective is to make public sector procurement more accessible and to promote initiatives such as the Sell2Wales web site, which puts companies directly into contact with Public Sector buyers in Wales.

Internal Procurement

Procurement is relevant to the Assembly Government's duty to promote disability equality in three main areas: services provided under contract or agreement; contractors' equal opportunities policies and practices; and contract opportunities for businesses owned by disabled people.

The Assembly Government has introduced a voluntary Code of Practice for its procurement policies. The Code sets out the Assembly Government's business principles and core values with the aim of creating a database of suppliers prepared to support the Assembly Government's core values of equality of opportunity, sustainable development and social inclusion. While contracts must still be let on the basis of open competition, it is intended that suppliers who support the Code will be assisted with positive action such as guidance on ways to improve, and constructive feedback on unsuccessful bids.

The Assembly Government is working hard to make public procurement more accessible to all companies in Wales. A procurement web-site has been developed to improve access to Assembly Government business and improve the transparency of procurement arrangements. It has been commended in the Small Business Services report 'Small Suppliers - Better Value?' as an example of best practice.

To further promote disability equality in the way that it procures goods and services the Assembly Government plans to:

- explore opportunities to incorporate disability equality clauses into conditions of contract to ensure all relevant legislation is observed;
- develop a scheme to ensure disabled entrepreneurs have equal opportunities to tender for Assembly Government contracts; and
- liaise with disability organisations, Value Wales and DEIN to further promote the principles contained in "Opening Doors", the use of the Sell2Wales web site and, where appropriate, to arrange 'meet the buyer events' to provide targeted advice on future trading opportunities to disabled people.

Legal Services

The Legal Services Department is committed to achieving the actions in the Welsh Assembly Government's Equality Schemes, which are relevant to its

function areas and staff. This Statement should be read in conjunction with the disability regulations <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2005/20052966.htm>. An explanation of its applicability to the public sector is at

http://www.drc-gb.org/documents/psd_summary.doc.

The Legal Services Department will ensure that all legislation and legal advice prepared by the department is compliant with the Act. This will be achieved by maintaining a centre of expertise within the department and ensuring that all lawyers are conversant with the requirements of the Act through training. They will also be made aware of any new developments, such as case-law, with respect to them.

The Legal Services Department will also ensure that all its internal policies, practices and procedures are compliant with the Act by consulting as appropriate and necessary.

How we work with Local Authorities

Local Government

The two Local Government Divisions (Local Government Policy and Local Government Finance) provide financial support to Local Authorities in Wales and work with them to improve their capacity and capability to deliver their services.

Local Authorities deliver a range of services to the public in Wales, dealing with matters spread across the range of Assembly Government Ministerial Portfolios. The Assembly Government's relationship with Welsh local government is not therefore exclusively a matter for the Local Government Divisions, and other aspects of the relationship will be reflected in other areas of this scheme.

The Assembly Government does not have statutory powers to enforce compliance by local authorities with equality duties: those duties bind the local government in the same way as they bind the Assembly Government. However, we can and do reflect those duties and the principles that underlie them in all our work with local government: for instance, by making equalities assessments a required component of the Wales Programme for Improvement; including equalities-related measures in the local government performance measurement

framework; and providing financial support to the Welsh Local Government Association's Equalities Unit.

A key feature of the Assembly Government's relationship with local government is its negotiation of individual policy agreements with each of the 22 authorities. Each policy agreement contains 16 measures. Eight are prescribed measures, defined by the Assembly Government and common to all 22 agreements, and eight are local measures, which each local authority devise for itself and should reflect local needs and pressures. All local authorities have been strongly encouraged to include at least one equalities-related measure in their local measures. For instance, sixteen authorities have opted to include compliance with the Local Government Equality Standard. Others have included measures on, for instance, improving workforce diversity and increasing employment opportunities for disabled people.

The funding formula for local government, broken down into its constituent parts, allocates resources across Wales in accordance with the need to spend on each service area for each authority. For instance for Personal Social Services (PSS) there are separate formulae for children and young people, younger adults and older adults each of which use different indicators. In the recent work to update the formula for Younger Adults PSS a variety of indicators were investigated and found to be significant. These included claimant counts for Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA) and Disability Living Allowance (DLA), and numbers of non-white people aged 18 to 64. These now form part of the proposed formula for 2007-2008 onwards.

The new Performance Measurement Framework in Wales encourages authorities to use service-based performance indicators to collate disaggregated equality data to reveal any varying levels of service quality or delivery as between different social groups. This approach will support authorities to meet their statutory duties to monitor services and policies to determine whether there is an adverse impact on people according to their race (and in the future disability and gender).

We will ensure that equality issues including those relating to Disability are included on the agendas of the annual meetings between individual local authorities and the Local Government Minister. Progress on equality issues will also be discussed at regular meetings between the Assembly Government and the Welsh Local Government Association which meet at least three times a year.

The current round of policy agreements expires in March 2007. We will consider the possible inclusion of an equality-related measure as a prescribed component in any arrangements which replace policy agreements after that.

Chapter 8: Dealing with Complaints

External Complaints

The National Assembly for Wales has a 'Code of Practice on Complaints', to deal with complaints made by members of the public on Assembly administrative actions.

If a member of the public considers that the National Assembly is not meeting its administrative obligations under the general or specific duties as specified in the Sex Discrimination Act [date], and wishes to make a complaint, they should access the Code and follow the process contained therein. The Code can be found at

<http://www.wales.gov.uk/contacts/complaints/index.htm>

Internal Complaints

Complaints from staff can be dealt with through one or more of the Assembly Government's internal policies, including those on:

- grievance;
- dignity at work; and
- whistle blowing.

Union members may also approach their union representative for assistance.

Complaints about Individual Assembly Members

In accordance with Standing Order 16, the Presiding Officer may refer complaints about the conduct of individual Assembly Members to the National Assembly's Standards Committee.

Disability Rights Commission and Public Service Ombudsman

Members of the public and Assembly staff can approach the Disability Rights

Commission or the Public Service Ombudsman with any complaint they have regarding a breach of the general or specific duties. From October 2007 the Commission for Equality and Human Rights will supersede the Disability Rights Commission following which complaints should be addressed to, and will be taken forward by the Commission for Equality and Human Rights.

Annex 1: Departmental Statements on Proposed Disability Equality Priority Actions for December 2006 – December 2007

Department for Health and Social Services

What we do:

The Department for Health and Social Services, (DHSS), has the following responsibilities:

- advising the National Assembly for Wales in the setting of policies and strategies for health and social care in Wales
- contributing to the making of legislation in the field of health and social care
- providing funding for the NHS and other health and social care bodies
- managing and supporting the delivery of health and social care services
- monitoring and promoting improvements in service delivery

Designed for Life – a new strategic framework for health and social care

The aim is to ensure that future services are sustainable across Wales, and that everyone has access to high quality, safe services as locally as possible. As part of the framework there will be a redesign of acute services across Wales, new guidance on commissioning, and improvement in information systems, all of which should strengthen the ability to meet the needs of different groups.

Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities

A Strategy for Social Services over the next decade will be issued for consultation in the near future. It promotes the social model of disability and helping people to lead fuller lives whatever their impairment. This strategy will therefore be important to many disabled people. The Strategy will focus on

- making major improvements in systems, capacity and the workforce;
- making the voice of the citizen, the service user and the carer really count in making services more responsive and accountable to citizens in all their diversity;
- transforming performance management, improving information about performance and improving scrutiny;
- promoting better partnership and collaboration between councils and with other statutory and independent organisations; and
- championing disabled people so that other services recognise their needs and work to promote their inclusion.

GP Premises

All independent contracting GPs have been issued with guidance on meeting DDA compliance and will have to take this into account when submitting bids for funding to the Primary Care Estates Forum.

Expert Patients Programme (EPP)

This is an NHS self-management course for people living with any long-term condition, which provides individuals with skills to take more responsibility for their own health and well-being. The course has enabled individuals with support and advice to be removed from the incapacity register and start working again. Course materials have been developed in ten languages, including English and Welsh and eight ethnic languages. Braille, audio and an on-line

system is currently under development. In 2006-2007 it is planned to develop a programme for mental health and minority ethnic service users.

Public Appointments to NHS Bodies

We are committed to increasing the representation of disabled people on NHS public appointment boards, e.g. to NHS Trust Boards. Data from 2005-06 indicate that there were twelve disabled appointees.

NHS Centre for Equality and Human Rights

Established in 1994, the Centre works proactively to build the commitment and capacity of health service organisations to ensure staff and patients are treated fairly and according to their needs. To achieve this, it works in partnership with individuals and organisations to promote equality and human rights in the planning, commissioning and delivery of health services.

In 2005, the NHS Centre for Equality and Human Rights was commissioned to conduct a Patient Equalities Monitoring Project, which is due to be completed in August 2008. The aims of the project are to deliver a programme of change that improves the collection of equalities data within NHS Trusts across Wales, to enable the Service to assess the impact of health service delivery, policies and practices upon different groups of patients, according to their age, disability, gender race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

The NHS CEHR provides strategic assistance and practical support to NHS organisations to develop their DES, offering advice, awareness training and co-facilitating engagement events with the Disability Rights Commission.

What we are going to do:

Directed Enhanced Services

Three Directed Enhanced Services have been implemented in Primary Care GP Practices to address provision of general medical services for adults with severe learning disabilities, people with mental health problems, and to provide access to a member of the Primary Care Team. This is an enhanced service provided by Primary Care to meet identified, evidenced gaps in provision, and assist local partnerships to use enhanced services to deliver better pro-active healthcare to patients.

These three directed enhanced services commenced on 1st April 2006, and measurable benefits will include: development of local registers, systematic recall approach for patients for further appointments, annual health check provision, improved involvement of carers, support workers and family, and a whole system approach of care with local support services.

Annual reviews will be undertaken to measure the impact of the new Directed Enhanced Services.

In addition the Assembly Government is funding a disability awareness programme for GPs and practice staff which will include an assessment of how well they are developing disability aware systems. This will be a two-year programme, which will provide recognition for the Practices, which have successfully participated, and will measure the progress of the programme across Wales.

Community Health Council Membership

Current membership will be analysed and compared with local area data and a report will be produced by September 2006. Stakeholders will be engaged at the end of 2006 to develop an action plan, to improve appointment guidance and a programme of awareness by April 2007. An implementation plan will then be developed taking forward the action plan reducing/eliminating inequalities in CHC membership in 2008

Analyse membership data	August 2006
Compare membership data with local area data	September 2006
Engage stakeholders	December 2006 January 2007
Produce detailed action plan	April 2007
Implement Plan	During 2008

Manage and implement the National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services in Wales (10-year plan)

The National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity

Services (NSF) was launched on the 30th September 2005 and sets out the quality of services that children, young people and their families have a right to receive.

This is not just a strategy for health, but for education, housing, leisure, transport, and other local services, which strongly influence the health and well being of children.

The NSF contains 21 cross cutting standards and 203 specific and measurable key actions, which put children, young people and their families at the core of services.

Chapter 5 is dedicated to disabled children and young people and includes a specific standard to make effective transitions from childhood to adulthood. The ethos of the chapter is that disabled children and young people are entitled to be valued and have the same chance to succeed and participate in society as their non-disabled peers.

'My Orange Book' – an All Wales Hand Held Record for disabled children and young people with complex needs, launched by the Minister for Children in September 2005, was produced as a direct result of feedback from parents/ carers and children themselves during the consultation process undertaken for the NSF. It has been written in such a way that professionals and carers can have an understanding of the world through the eyes of the child and aims to improve co-ordination between professionals and families. To date over seven thousand copies of My Orange Book have been distributed.

Manage and implement the National Service Framework for Older People

The National Service Framework (NSF), launched on 20 March 2006 sets 10 national standards and an action plan to improve quality and to drive up standards for older people's health and social care services across Wales.

Challenging dependency is one of the national standards and sets key targets for community-based services, equipment and home adaptations. Issues regarding physical and mental health, advocacy, involvement, information and Intermediate care are also targeted.

The implementation plan for the NSF has been commenced together with a support programme co-ordinated by the Welsh Assembly Government, in

conjunction with key partners.

SAFF Targets 2006–2007

The Service and Financial Framework (SAFF) 2006-2007, sets out the delivery plans agreed by the Health Service to achieve Welsh Assembly Government priorities and requirements alongside local priorities, within the context of the financial resources provided, and are determined within the context of Designed for Life.

The SAFF includes targets regarding the planning of integrated processes and access to services including mental health services, long term care, medicine management and older people.

The SAFF targets reflect the targets as outlined in the National Service Frameworks, for Older People, Mental Health and Children, Young People and Maternity Services in Wales.

The SAFF is monitored on a monthly basis and any targets that have an impact on services for disabled people will be monitored in the DHSS Disability Equality Action Plan.

DHSS Approach to Equality

DHSS are committed to mainstreaming equality and diversity into the working practices of the department. A project approach has been adopted by DHSS to ensure this is realised. Appropriate training and knowledge support systems are being developed for DHSS staff to ensure their understanding and skills are attuned to enable the department to meet its health and social care agenda in Wales. A training needs analysis will be undertaken in September 2006.

Collaborative working with a wide range of organisations, such as NHS Centre for Equality and Human Rights, Disability Wales, Disability Rights Commission will continue to ensure the department undertakes its business in an involving, empowering, informative manner.

Environment Planning and Countryside

What we do:

The Department for Environment, Planning & Countryside is committed to creating a sustainable environment for the people of Wales and for future generations.

Planning

The Welsh Assembly Government provides the overall planning policy framework. The 25 local planning authorities in Wales undertake the planning function in accordance with the planning policy that we set. A new Local Development Plan (LDP) system has been designed to facilitate community involvement and build consensus on where future development should take place. LDP Wales, the policy of the Assembly Government on the new LDP system, covers the need for local planning authorities to comply with the general duties in the Race Relations Act (2000) and the Act when producing their development plans.

Recreation

We recognise that there are barriers to disabled people in accessing the countryside. We are developing new policies to improve access and through our funding, our partner organisations (Environment Agency, Countryside Council for Wales, and National Parks Authorities) are implementing these policies and taking the projects forward. As a result of this partnership we have recently successfully delivered a programme of new public access to some 20% of the land area of Wales. In the preparations for that we sought to take account of equality issues in a range of ways (for example, ensuring that the Minister's Countryside Opportunities Steering Group had 'countryside access and disadvantaged groups' in its work plan).

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 places a duty on local highway authorities to have regard to the needs of those with mobility problems in making improvements to rights of way.

New Rights of Way Improvement Plans are being drawn up now by local highway authorities which, will set out how they plan to cater for people with mobility impairments. The National Park Authorities are looking at ways to improve access to their parks for disabled people and have received additional funding in 2006-2007 from the Welsh Assembly Government for this purpose.

What we are going to do:

Planning

Planning Policy is set out in a suite of key documents: Planning Policy Wales, Minerals Planning Policy Wales, Local Development Plans Wales and a supporting series of subject specific Technical Advice Notes. These currently reflect the general duties in the Act. However, we will ensure that equality issues are reviewed when planning policy and technical advice notes are updated.

In addition, to ensure that the needs of disabled people are met in new developments, we will be introducing a requirement that planning applications submitted to Local Planning Authorities in Wales will require an access statement to be included with their proposals. This will set out the ways in which the proposal addresses the needs of disabled people.

Recreation

The delivery of our countryside access programme will continue in 2006-2007. A key action we will be taking during the year involves public consultation on statutory guidance for local highway authorities in Wales on how they should take account of the needs of people with mobility impairments in installing or improving 'furniture' on rights of way. We plan to issue the guidance in final form by March 2007.

Improving public access to the coast is also one of our objectives. A new programme was announced by the First Minister in June 2006 with the aim of improving access to the coast for communities and visitors to Wales via local footpath improvements. As part of this we also plan to secure improved opportunities for wheelchair access to the coast. At the moment some 3% of Welsh coast is accessible by disabled people and we plan to increase this to nearer 10% over the 4-5 years of the programme, i.e. by 2011.

We also wish to encourage greater participation in angling by disabled people. By March 2007 we will have reviewed the existing arrangements for disabled licence concessions with a view to incorporate additional groups. We will also be analysing our existing programme of participation events with a view to identifying how greater number of disabled people can be attracted to participate in the sport.

Culture, Welsh Language and Sport

What we do:

The Directorate for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport, CyMAL and Cadw develop and implement policies to:

- give everyone the opportunity to enjoy the rich and diverse cultural experiences that Wales has to offer; and
- maximise the health benefits that sport and physical activity can bring to the population.

What we are going to do:

Cultural Institutions

The National Library of Wales and Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales (AC-NMW) are focusing on ensuring that their staff, especially those dealing directly with the public and visitors, have been trained in equalities and disability awareness. By December 2006, 80% of National Museum staff will have received appropriate equalities training in preparation for the Disability Equality Duty coming into force.

The National Museum is taking forward a programme of gallery refurbishment. Work on the Origins gallery at the National Museum Cardiff will be complete by December 2007, and at Gallery 1 at St Fagans: National History Museum by Easter 2007.

By January 2007, AC-NMW will ensure that Access Audits are carried out at all their sites which have not been refurbished in the past ten years. They will seek advice on the audits from disabled people. In the light of the audits, the National Museum will prepare a prioritised implementation plan by the end of March 2007, to make improvements to access where necessary and as resources allow.

Historic Environment

Cadw's programme to improve access to monuments is being further enhanced this year by securing an additional £125k in 2006-2007 to implement proposals to engage with visitors with sensory impairments. It includes tactile and sensory

hands-on materials for furnished room settings at Castell Coch and Plas Mawr to enable visitors with visual impairments to experience and explore the fabrics and furnishings of both monuments. Tactile plans and interpretive information for blind and visually impaired visitors will also be installed at Tintern Abbey, Caernarfon Castle, Kidwell Castle, Rug Chapel and Criccieth Castle.

Cadw has already consulted on their Access Strategy of their main sites and has started work on implementing the Access Strategy - most notably addressing physical disability access issues at St David's Bishop's Palace and the works at Caernarfon Castle are continuing into 2007-2008.

CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales

CyMAL, the Assembly Government division for local museums, archives and libraries, has commissioned a research project "Quantifying Diversity: Mesur Amrywiaeth" to gather data on disability and other equalities issues in Welsh museums, archives and libraries. This will be complete by April 2007.

We will use this evidence to improve the way in which we build equality and diversity issues into the CyMAL grant schemes for museums, archives and libraries, starting with the next round of grant application paperwork in December 2007.

The Arts

The Arts Council of Wales has developed Moving Beyond, its strategy for Disability and the Arts. The Action Plan is being taken forward in partnership with Disability Arts Cymru. We will maintain a clear focus on this work, and will conduct an evaluation of the impact of this scheme to inform our disability Action Plan in 2008-2009.

Sport and Physical Activity

The Welsh Assembly Government's strategy for sport and physical activity, "Climbing Higher" recognises that Wales needs to be more physically active in order to be a healthier nation. It also encourages people across all ages, gender and social groups in Wales to take part in more sport and physical activity.

The Sports Council for Wales has established a partnership with the Federation

for Disability Sport to provide more opportunities for disabled people to engage in sport and physical activity. In particular, work on club provision has been consolidated with local development and is now focusing on encouraging active club membership.

The Sports Council works with the other UK Sports Councils, UK Sport and equality groups to further develop generic equality standards for national governing bodies of sport which will help in their continued modernisation programme. The Sports Council also works closely with local authorities to encourage equal access to sport and leisure facilities.

The Assembly Government is funding free swimming for children and young people and for older people aged 60 and over, across Wales as pilot initiatives to inform future government policy at a national and local level. Specific targeted structured activity sessions aimed at disabled people are a key feature of both schemes. We have been working in partnership with the Federation of Disability Sport Wales to ensure that the sessions are appropriate to the needs of the individual.

Cultural and Sporting Events

We will be carrying out research to measure participation in cultural and sporting events to identify problems of access and inclusion. The research will be complete by April 2007. We will use this evidence to improve the way in which we build equality and diversity issues into the conditions of grant for events starting in 2007-2008.

Department of Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DELLS)

What we do:

The Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DELLS) aims to improve children's services, education and training provision to secure better outcomes for learners, business, and employers. It helps empower children, young people and adults through education and training to enjoy a better quality of life.

Transition

In making progress towards resolving transition issues from secondary to

further and higher education, the Department has focussed on key disability areas. Firstly, DELLS has gathered evidence on transition issues for those with sensory impairments in Wales. It funded research and acted upon recommendations from this evidence to create a model for transition arrangements. In January 2006, the Quality Standards for Educational Services for Sensory Impairment report praised these arrangements. Furthermore, the Welsh Assembly Government's Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice sets out a transition process designed to support an individual's training needs. The Education Lifelong Learning and Skills (ELLS) Committee is presently undertaking a review of SEN. Phases 1 and 2 are complete. Phase 3 is currently looking at transition issues.

Curriculum Review

The Department is reviewing the 3-14 curriculum, which includes the PSE Framework. Guidance on the teaching of disability issues and disability awareness is to be incorporated into the PSE Framework as part of this review.

One of the priority areas for funding in the 2006-2007 Better Schools Fund is to develop staff expertise and provision for pupils with additional learning needs in line with the Inclusion and Pupil Support Policy Framework and the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales. The 2007-2008 document is being consulted upon.

Inspection

Estyn have been requested to report on the readiness of the schools and Local Education Authorities for the Disability Duty. This report is due to be completed by 2006.

Learning Materials

DELLS is developing an e-learning resource on SEN issues which is to be piloted in 2007. This course is designed to account for 30 credits towards a Masters degree, but also be suitable as a training resource for teachers e.g. in teacher training days.

Economic Inactivity

Many disabled people in Wales are receiving disability related benefits, and are not economically active. A significant proportion of these people do however

want to work, and there is strong evidence that being in work can help improve a person's health. The Assembly Government is committed to helping all those who want to work, to do so. The current Want2 Work pilots, which are a joint initiative between the Assembly Government and Jobcentre Plus, are proving successful in helping people who have been on disability related benefits, but who want to return to work, to do so, with support tailored to the needs of individuals.

The initiative started in January 2005 and is due for completion in 2007-2008. The intention is to engage with a minimum of 5,000 recipients, and of these, help at least 1,000 to find and stay in work. Delivery, through outreach provision in local communities, is targeted within the four local authority areas of Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Neath Port Talbot and Rhyl.

What we are going to do:

Transition

To widen and reinforce the evidence base, DELLS will be conducting a secondary analysis of 14 to 19 learning to determine key disability issues. This includes transition from secondary to further and higher education. It will also investigate models of improving transition arrangements inside and outside the UK, and engage with the organisations such as Disability Wales and the Disability Rights Commission. A report and recommendations will be drafted by April 2007. DELLS will use this evidence to inform reviews of the affected policies and the 2008-2009 Disability Equality Action Plan.

Curriculum Review

The Department will consult on the curriculum, including the PSE Framework, between January and March 2007. It will use Welsh Assembly Government contact networks to promote this opportunity to key disability networks from December 2006. The report on the consultation will include specific disability and inclusion issues raised in the exercise (i.e. areas for clarification).

Learning Materials

The Department will produce training and awareness raising materials on the duties for teachers, schools and Local Education Authorities, primarily on the requirements to promote equality and develop Disability Equality Schemes.

These materials will be provided by February 2007 in preparation for the requirement on schools to produce a Disability Equality Scheme by April 2007.

Economic Inactivity

DELLS will build on the Want 2 Work pilots, by seeking to harness the new round of European Union (EU) funding to extend help for disabled people and those with long term health problems to return to work. In doing this, DELLS will work with other departments across the Assembly Government, with the Department for Work and Pensions, Jobcentre Plus, and, via the Spatial Plan, with a wide range of partners in local authorities, business and the voluntary sector.

Office of the Chief Medical Officer

What we do:

The Office of the Chief Medical Officer has a crucial role in ensuring the health and well being of the people of Wales is protected and improved. A key element of our role lies in the prevention of ill health where the following action, in relation to disability equality, is being taken:

There are currently 62 projects supported by the Inequalities in Health Fund, one of which ' The Hearts and Minds' project in Wrexham is encouraging physical health and well being for people with learning difficulties and/or long term mental health problems.

What we are going to do:

All Inequalities in Health Fund projects produce quarterly questionnaire based reports and detailed annual reports. These reports have provided information on take up of the services by gender, age etc since inception. Specific questions will be added to the respective reporting requirements across all projects with the view to collecting information on take up of services by disabled people. This requirement will be added for the second quarter returns due in mid October 2006 and for the annual report due in April 2007. This information will be used to direct subsequent programme activity.

By March 2007 we will have undertaken a disability research programme resulting in the publication of an initial report. The report will be used to inform

future Health Promotion policy direction.

By March 2007 we will have revisited the criteria for the redeveloped Voluntary Grant Scheme to ensure that it is inclusive of all social demography of society. Actions will include:

- Developing criteria for grant application and award with reference to race, disability and gender issues.
- Organisations invited to submit applications for funding to include a proportion of those dealing with the disability agenda.
- All organisations funded to have diversity and equality policies in place.

Department for Enterprise, Innovation & Networks (DEIN)

What we do:

The Department for Enterprise, Innovation and Networks' vision is to work together for Wales to create a vibrant Welsh economy, delivering strong and sustainable growth by providing opportunities for all.

Entrepreneurship and Support for Job Creation

We have several positive action programmes in place aimed at removing barriers to disabled people in accessing support for Entrepreneurship and Job Creation. These include:

- working with mainstream providers of business support and advice in order to help them to become more able to support disabled entrepreneurs; and
- giving support to small and medium sized businesses in understanding the benefits of employing disabled people.

We are also taking action across our programmes to ensure that we, and those we work with, adopt good practice in addressing the needs of disabled people. For instance:

- the Regional Selective Assistance and Assembly Investment Grants appraisal process includes an assessment of companies` commitment to training and equal opportunities;
- equal opportunities, covering disability, is a cross cutting theme for European Structural Fund Programmes;
- we have conducted surveys on barriers experienced by people from under represented groups when growing or sustaining their business; and
- Business Eye collect data relating to numbers of customers describing themselves being disabled.

Public Transport

Buses

The Public Service Accessibility Regulations 2000 set out the standards that new buses and scheduled coaches must meet, together with end dates by which existing vehicles must meet regulations. Small buses will need to be accessible to wheelchairs by January 2015, large single deck buses by 1 January 2016, and double deck buses by January 2017.

Stations

The Act requires all station operators to take reasonable steps to ensure that they do not discriminate against disabled people. Since 1999 they have had a duty to review policies, procedures and practices, and to provide auxiliary aids. Where there are physical barriers to access they have had to take reasonable steps to provide a service which avoids them or provide the service through a reasonable alternative means. Since October 2004 they have had additionally to consider removing or altering physical barriers in or on approach to a building. All station operators already provide access to their services. However, what is judged as a reasonable provision today may not be in the future and station operators keep their provisions under review.

Trains

The UK wide Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (RVAR) came into force on

1 November 1998 and have applied to all new trains entering service since 1st January 1999. These have considerably improved access for disabled passengers and were drawn up in consultation with the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC). The Regulations cover accessibility and accommodation, including the requirements for on-board accessible toilets (where toilets are provided for other passengers), visual and audible information and accessible interior specifications including dedicated wheelchair spaces, appropriate handrails and colour contrasting.

Over 4,300 rail vehicles (train carriages) currently comply with the RVAR. In addition, many older rail vehicles, whilst not meeting full RVAR standards, already have wheelchair accommodation and other features, such as passenger information systems. Following changes introduced in the Act, it is proposed that from the end of 2006 rail vehicles being refurbished will also be subject to the RVAR.

From the 4th December 2006, Train Operating Companies (TOCs) will also be subject to the Part 3 duties for that element of the service which involves the provision and use of the train itself. They will have to address their policies, procedures and practices, tackle gratuitous discrimination and make available auxiliary aids, unless to do so would require physical alterations to the vehicles.

Disabled People's Protection Policy

All railway licence holders, including the TOCs and Network Rail are required to have a Disabled People's Protection Policy (DPPP) which describes how they provide a service to disabled passengers at the stations they operate. They are also required to describe the accessible features of each of their stations.

What we are going to do:

Entrepreneurship and Support for Job Creation

- awareness raising training has been provided to front line staff on providing services for disabled people; and
- action on business start-ups includes targeting under-represented groups

DEIN will in future ensure that all new policies and strategies will be disability

equality impact assessed, with disability baseline data used to determine future policy and strategy. In order to do this effectively, we need to improve our information about disability, about how disabled people access/don't access our services, and what barriers they may face. To build up our baseline information our Customer Relations Management Team will, identify current gaps in our customer data, and use this analysis to develop data collection methods and data use across the department. Amongst other demographic categories, this will include data relating to disabled customers and the extent to which disabled customers access and use our services.

Disability related data will be collected and used in developing, delivering and monitoring future European Union funded projects.

Data collected on businesses owned by disabled people will be reviewed and brought into line with corporate requirements for diversity data collection.

Training will be provided to staff on how to gather disability data effectively.

We will ensure that when we deliver all our events and activities for customers, they are held in venues which are deemed accessible and in line with the Welsh Assembly Government's Accessible Venues Guide.

All staff in the Department will undertake relevant equality and diversity training appropriate for their job.

Public Transport

Buses

A Public Transport Users Committee will be established that will include Disabled people, this committee will look to develop and implement integrated public transport in Wales. In addition to this the accessibility in terms of bus stops and kerb heights, low floor buses and the number of local authority passes issued will be reviewed and reported on.

Funding of £3 million over the next three years will be provided to support 15 community demonstration projects for disabled people who are not able to access low floor buses.

The operating contract with the Vehicle Operating Service Agency (VOSA) will

be revised to enable inspectors in Wales to ensure bus operators are complying with the regulations. This will be reviewed annually.

Trains

The Welsh Assembly Government is undertaking a programme of Station improvements, these include tactile paving, improved electronic information, help points and improved lighting. Passenger satisfaction on these improvements will be monitored.

All of Arriva Trains Wales (ATW) trains will have CCTV and all new ATW trains will comply with the Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations.

Social Justice and Regeneration

What we do:

The Department's four Directorates and their main responsibilities are:

Communities Directorate

Delivering and funding programmes for locally based regeneration and social inclusion; co-coordinating policy on social justice and child poverty.

Community Safety Division

Creating safer communities; reducing levels of crime and drug abuse as a cause of crime; tackling domestic violence; supporting Community Safety Partnerships.

Housing Directorate

Ensuring good quality, affordable housing; increasing domestic energy efficiency; planning for housing that meets the needs of older people; reducing homelessness; promoting fire safety.

The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service

Their powers and duties are set out in the Children Act 2004. They include advising Family Proceedings Courts in cases directly affecting children, making provision for children to be represented in court proceedings and providing

information, advice and support to children and their families.

The department has a range of policies that intend to impact on equality and diversity as part of delivering social justice and regeneration. Set out below are examples of programmes and grants where disability equalities are currently being supported:

Disabled Facilities Grants

Disabled Facilities Grants are mandatory grants, provided by Local Authorities, which are available to help disabled people to remain living independently in their own homes. In September 2005 the Welsh Assembly Government decided to abolish the means-test for parents with disabled children.

Disabled Persons Housing Service

Funding is provided to a project by the Charter Housing Association to enable a Disabled Persons Housing Service in South East Wales. The project aims to work with disabled people and housing providers to enable disabled people to achieve independent living through access to the right home at the right time in their lives.

Substance Misuse

The Welsh Substance Misuse Strategy includes initiatives, services and treatments specifically tailored to meet the needs of children and young people. Projects under the Substance Misuse Action Capital Fund have included provision for disabled people. For example, Prism in Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire has received funding to improve access to clients which included compliance with the Act.

The following policy areas have worked with key partners such as the Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) and the Royal National Institute of Deaf People (RNID) through the application of practical activities such as training and workshops, awareness raising on access to information communication technology (ICT) and producing design guidance for housing.

Communities First

Communities First is principally concerned with developing community participation in identifying local problems and their solution. There are 137

Communities First Partnerships across Wales taking forward a wide range of capacity building and community development activities. RNIB received a total of £752,401 under the Communities First Programme over six years (2001-07) to identify the main barriers to social inclusion for people with severe sight loss, and then develop the priorities for action to overcome these barriers.

Communities @One

Communities @One initiative seeks to achieve 'digital inclusion', which is social inclusion through the use of technology, in the most deprived areas of Wales. The rationale of the project is 'to enable communities and individuals to use ICT in ways relevant to them to enhance their quality of life, overcome difficulties and allow them to fulfill their social, economic and cultural potential.' The initiative was launched in January 2006 and is administered by the Wales Co-operative Centre on behalf of the Assembly Government.

Social Housing Management Grant Programme

The Welsh Assembly Government's Social Housing Management Grant Programme provided funding for research to be undertaken by RNIB Cymru and the Joint Mobility Unit (JMU) Access Partnership. The main aim of the project is to improve housing design, address issues and remove barriers to housing services for people with sight loss.

Home Energy Efficiency Scheme (HEES)

The Home Energy Efficiency Scheme (HEES) is our main vehicle for lifting Welsh households out of fuel poverty. Over 60,000 households have received energy efficiency measures such as cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, draught proofing, and central heating through the scheme.

Since the commencement of HEES in 2000, Eaga, who deliver the scheme, has worked closely with many representatives of RNIB. At operational level, RNIB has identified eligible clients and provided a facility for the production of material in user friendly formats such as braille and large print.

What we are going to do:

We will continue to develop policy and support services that assist disabled people to maintain their independence. With involvement from groups that

represent disabled people, we will maximise the effectiveness of specific programmes and grants by reviewing guidance and identifying barriers to access.

We have developed the following specific objectives to meet our commitment:

- We will review our grant scheme conditions to ensure that the grants we administer promote access for disabled people and compliance with the Act.
- By reviewing best practice guidance, we will ensure that Care and Repair services assist older disabled people to maintain their independence in their own home by delivering services effectively.
- In response to the Russell Commission recommendations, we will ensure that young disabled people are offered opportunities to volunteer, thereby increasing their self-confidence and skills and allowing positive contributions to be made by all.
- Through data analysis and the production of a report, we will take steps to ensure that disabled people have equal access to the Assembly Government grant scheme for adaptations in housing association property regardless of their landlord or the local authority area they live in.
- To identify barriers preventing disabled people with sensory impairment or mobility problems accessing supported housing services so that guidance can be produced or revisions to grant criteria can be made to remove barriers wherever possible.

Annex 2 - Disability and Long-term Illness in Wales

The Current Position

The proportion of disabled people and those with a long term illness living in Wales can be estimated from several sources. The 2001 Census, the Labour Force Survey, the Welsh Health Survey, the household interview part of the Welsh House Condition Survey, and the Living in Wales Survey are reliable

sources.

The estimate of people living in Wales with a disability or a long-term illness has varied from 1 in 6 of the overall population (from the Welsh House Condition Survey), to 1 in 3 (from the 1995 and 1998 Welsh Health Surveys).

The 2001 Census showed that that in Wales nearly 1 in 4 people (23.3 per cent) had a limiting long-term illness. For people of working age this was nearly 1 in 5 (18.4 per cent).

The comparable figures for England show that 17.9 per cent of all people had a limiting long-term illness, and for people of working age this was 13.3 per cent. The figures for Scotland were 20.3 per cent (all people) and 15.6 per cent (working age); and for Northern Ireland 20.4 (all people) and 17.0 (working age).

There were large variations in levels of long-term illness between local authorities in Wales. The highest levels (for all ages) were in Merthyr Tydfil (30.0 per cent), Neath Port Talbot (29.4 per cent), Blaenau Gwent (28.3 per cent), and Rhondda Cynon Taff (27.2 per cent). The lowest levels were in Cardiff (18.8 per cent), Monmouthshire (19.1 per cent), Flintshire (19.2 per cent), and the Vale of Glamorgan (19.9 per cent).

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is the largest regular household survey in the country. It collects information about the personal circumstances and work of everyone living in the sampled households.

The 2004 LFS estimates that there were 1,746,000 people of working age in Wales, and that of these 396,000 said that they were disabled, giving a proportion of 22.7 per cent. The 396,000 was made up of three groups of disabled people: those who considered themselves to meet the definition contained within the Act (78,000), those who considered themselves to have a work limiting disability (54,000), and those who considered themselves to have both (264,000). The proportion of working age people who said they had a work limiting disability (the 54,000 and the 264,000) was 18.2 per cent, which is close to the 2001 Census figure of 18.4 per cent.

The comparable figure for the UK gives the proportion of working age people who said they had a work limiting disability as 14.9 per cent.

As with the Census there were large variations in levels between local

authorities in Wales. The highest levels of work limiting disability (for people of working age) were in Merthyr Tydfil (32.0 per cent), Blaenau Gwent (30.4 per cent), and Caerphilly (30.3 per cent); the lowest levels were in Powys (16.3 per cent), Ceredigion (17.3 per cent), and Gwynedd (18.0 per cent)

The Welsh Health Survey (WHS) is a continuous health survey. The 2004 WHS estimated that 14 per cent of the adult population were being treated for arthritis, 13 per cent for respiratory illness, 10 per cent for heart disease (not counting high blood pressure), 9 per cent for mental illness, and 5 per cent for diabetes. 4 per cent were being treated (or had been treated) for cancer. 28 per cent said they had a limiting long-term illness. This is higher than the overall Census figure of 23.3 per cent because the WHS is limited to adults and the Census includes everyone (and children have low levels of illness and disability). The WHS figure of 28 per cent is within one percentage point of the Census figure for the adult population.

The 2004 WHS showed that, not surprisingly, levels of limiting long-term illness increased with age. 1 in 8 people aged 16 to 44 had a limiting long-term illness, a third of people aged 45-64, and half of people aged 65 or over.

The Living in Wales Survey (LiW) is now one of the main sources of information on households and the condition of homes in Wales. 18 per cent of the people surveyed said that they had a long-term illness, disability, or infirmity. 85 per cent of these respondents said that their disability limited their day-to-day activities in some way (that is 15 per cent of all the people surveyed).

As expected, the LiW showed that long-term illness increased sharply with age. The levels were similar for adult males and females, although over the age of 45 the proportion of males reporting having a long-term illness, disability or infirmity was one or two percentage points higher than females.

The long-term illness figures in the Living in Wales Survey were low compared with those in other surveys (the Welsh House Condition Survey figures were also low). One of the reasons for the lower figures could be that the question was not next to other health-related questions in the questionnaire. Also the survey excludes the non-household population (for example, people living in residential care) who have higher rates of long-term illness. The figure may also be affected by the fact that the survey respondents were reporting on the health of other members of the household not just themselves.

This means that other surveys (for example, the Census or the Welsh Health Survey) are better sources of estimates of illness and disability in Wales. The Living in Wales Survey is particularly useful for cross-classifying illness and disability with housing-related variables and others like benefits claiming.

The 2004 Family Resources Survey run by the Department for Work and Pensions estimated that 23 per cent of households in Wales claimed incapacity or disablement benefits. In England the figure was 15 per cent, in Scotland 20 per cent, and in Northern Ireland 24 per cent.

To summarise, in Wales nearly 1 in 4 people (23.3 per cent) had a limiting long-term illness and for people of working age this was nearly 1 in 5 (18.4 per cent). These are about five percentage points higher than the comparable figures for England; and roughly three percentage points higher than the comparable figures for Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Annex 3 – List of Devolved Functions

The Assembly Government has considerable power to develop and implement policy within a range of areas:

- § agriculture;
- § ancient monuments and historic buildings;
- § culture;
- § economic development;
- § education and training;
- § the environment;
- § health and health services;
- § highways;
- § housing;
- § industry;

- § local government
- § social services;
- § sport and leisure;
- § tourism;
- § town and country planning;
- § transport and roads; and
- § the Welsh language.

What does this mean in practice?

Examples of the important decisions the Assembly Government can make include:

- § developing education, training and lifelong learning in Wales;
- § developing and funding NHS services in Wales;
- § administering European funds including the Objective One programme;
- § administering funding for local authorities in Wales;
- § developing housing policy, including tackling homelessness;
- § sponsoring bodies that protect our environment and conserve wildlife and natural habitats;
- § developing an integrated transport framework for Wales;
- § promoting agricultural schemes and rural development;

§ developing schemes to promote the culture and heritage of Wales;

§ establishing schemes for sustainable development and equality of opportunity; and

§ developing information and communication technology in Wales.