

WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT

DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME

2006-2008

Summary of Consultation Responses

03 August 2006 – 13 October 2006

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (referred to as 'the Act' throughout this document), requires Public Bodies to promote disability equality.

1.2 Most public authorities, including the Welsh Assembly Government also have to adhere to a set of specific duties which include:

- Publishing a Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan
- Involve disabled people in producing the Scheme and Action Plan
- Demonstrating that they have taken actions in the Scheme and achieved appropriate outcomes
- Reporting on progress
- Reviewing and revising the Scheme.

1.3 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 asked disabled people what the important issues and

priorities were for them. In all more than 100 people attended these events.

1.4 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, and would participate.

1.5 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 was used by the Welsh Assembly Government to develop our Disability Equality Scheme and departmental action plans which were released for public consultation on 3 August 2006.

1.6 The consultation ended on 13 October 2006. This document summarises the main issues raised and Annex A lists the organisations and individuals who responded (excluding those wishing to remain confidential or who did not provide their personal details. A full Welsh Assembly Government response will be made available shortly once the Welsh Assembly Government has had sufficient time to consider the issues in detail.

2.0 Summary of Responses

2.1 The Welsh Assembly Government is grateful for the considered views expressed by all those who responded. Overall, the Welsh Assembly Government's Disability Equality Scheme was broadly welcomed as a "...comprehensive scheme with appropriate sections and a good description of the scope of the Welsh Assembly Government's role and duties" (Care Council for Wales).

2.2 However, a number of issues were raised for the Welsh Assembly Government to consider. These issues are outlined below.

Accessibility

2.3 Several consultation respondents commented on the length of the Scheme. In particular they asked for the terminology to be simplified and for the scheme to be shortened.

2.4 Respondents including the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) also advised that that the scheme must be easily accessible and locatable on the Assembly Government's website.

Action Plans

2.5 A number of respondents felt that the draft department action plans were helpful in giving an overview of each department. However, several responses also commented that the action plans should include performance measures and dates of when objectives are to be achieved. In particular they suggested that the use of tabular action plans rather than narratives could improve the clarity and robustness of the scheme.

2.6 A few respondents, including the DRC, also suggested that details of the screening process which departments completed to help them identify areas of high priority should be included in the scheme to further improve transparency. The scheme should also clearly state which Assembly Government departments will produce action plans.

2.7 Finally, it was suggested that the action plans should indicate if sufficient funds have been secured in order to support the promotion of disability equality.

Engagement and Involvement

2.8 Involving disabled people is one of the specific duties placed on some public authorities including the Welsh

Assembly Government. Consultation respondents suggested that the inclusion of quotes from the Engagement Events would provide robust evidence of the involvement that has taken place with disabled people in the development of the Assembly Government's scheme.

2.9 The Assembly Government should expand on how the DAAS group were involved in the engagement process and provide more information on the operation of the Critical Friends Network. Departments should also state more clearly how they intend to involve disability organisations and disabled people in the review of their practices and policies.

BSL Futures

2.10 One consultation response recommended that BSL futures should be more prominent in the scheme and moved out of Planning Events and Meetings.

Social Model

2.11 Disability Wales work with the Welsh Assembly Government on the 'Disability Equality in Action' project and have recommended alternative wording to describe the project and its aims.

Impact Assessment Tool and Integration Tool

2.12 A respondent asked for a timescale to be inserted into the section on Impact Assessments giving a date when the Impact Assessment process will be piloted.

2.13 A section detailing the criteria used by the Assembly Government to determine which of its strategic policies go out to consultation and are in turn are required to include a completed integration tool was also called for.

Communication and Publication

2.14 One respondent commented that the wording used to describe different formats is not consistent in the report e.g. tape/audio. The DRC also suggests that references to alternative formats are made explicit and that the scheme incorporates a detailed contents page which includes hyperlinks to each section. More generally, it is imperative that the scheme can be located with relative ease.

Carers

2.15 One respondent commented that it was regrettable that the proposed scheme did not include discrimination faced by carers on the grounds of their caring responsibility.

Relationship between the Welsh Assembly Government and Public Authorities in Wales

2.16 A number of potential actions identified in the Assembly Government Scheme will be delegated to other organisations e.g. local authorities. One respondent commented that it was not clear from the Scheme how these actions will be delegated and funded. It was also commented that it was not clear if this was a scheme for Wales as a whole or just for the Welsh Assembly Government.

2.17 It is important to clarify that the Disability Equality Scheme is a Welsh Assembly Government document which sets out the actions and priorities that we as an organisation will pursue during the lifetime of the scheme. The Welsh Assembly Government does have a strategic influence on public bodies in Wales and as such our scheme will influence other public bodies and the development of their Disability Equality Schemes.

Annex A:

Eight consultation responses were received from individuals who did not provide their personal details or organisational details.

Aerospace Wales Forum

Care Council for Wales

Carers Wales

Disability Rights Commission

Disability Wales

Head of Quality Assurance, Visit Wales, Department for Department of Enterprise, Innovation and Networks

RNIB

Skills Wales

Swansea City Council



