

CHAPTER 4: OUR PLAN OF ACTION

Our action plan focuses on the three broad groups who are affected by the work we do and the ways in which we do it:

- **AMs and their staff**
- **APS Staff**
- **The public**

Feedback from these groups will provide important evidence of whether our actions are making a difference. We will seek feedback through:

- A short visitor survey
- A disabled staff forum which we hope to establish
- Established and developing relationships between APS branches and disability organisations
- Contact between the APS access advisor and disability organisations
- Internal staff surveys
- Publicising our Scheme on our website and inviting comments

- Informal feedback provided to members of out visits team
- AMSS feedback group
- AM surveys

The APS Disability Equality Scheme will only run until May 2007 when the Assembly Commission will be established. We will review the progress made in our action plan by April 2007 and produce a summary report and recommendations for the Assembly Commission which will be established in May 2007.

APS SERVICES AND WAYS OF WORKING WHICH IMPACT ON ALL GROUPS			
Area of work	What we are already doing to promote equality	How we'll know if we're making a difference	APS Lead
Provision of accommodation and facilities which are secure, accessible, available, fit for purpose and safe.	Maintenance of accessible accommodation	Positive feedback from disability groups and disabled individuals through our visitor questionnaire and feedback given to our access advisor through contact with organisations and individuals. Feedback from AMs and staff via the disabled staff forum we hope to establish.	OSFM / Access Officer
	Security and other front line staff all have equality awareness training.	Feedback from front-line staff and disabled	HR / APS

		people	Access Advisor
	The equipment needs of all staff are assessed annually and on request and any adaptations made.	Staff feedback to APS Health and Safety team	OSFM
	Hearing loop availability. In addition to the permanent systems installed in key rooms, we now have a mobile unit.	Feedback and equipment testing	OSFM
	Our room booking system should alert us to any requirements of disabled people, e.g. for a disabled parking space, wheelchair access, induction loop.	Feedback. Changes made in response to any problems encountered by disabled people	OSFM
	New actions we plan to take to promote equality	How we'll know if we're making a difference	APS Lead
	<p>We have received feedback from disabled individuals and organisations who have suggested a range of improvements which could be made to the Senedd building and Assembly Office to make them more accessible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearer signs in Braille, large font and pictorial representations at the entrance to the Senedd • Clearer visual markings on the steps and terraces 	The House Committee will decide what actions might be taken in response to this feedback before May 2007. Where potential actions are likely to be taken forward post May 2007 we will	Access Advisor / OSFM

	<p>and barriers on wheelchair ramps to avoid accidents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Manifestations' (e.g. etchings or markings) on internal glass • Automated or magnetised doors in the Assembly Office and the chamber public gallery • Monitors available to visitors using the wheelchair spaces in the public gallery • Ensure that the reception desk in the Senedd is accessible to staff or potential staff with mobility impairments <p>Some of these issues remain the responsibility of the Assembly Government New Build Team at present although responsibility may be transferred to the APS House Committee before May 2007. Post May 2007 these issues will fall within the domain of the newly established legislature.</p>	<p>ensure that the Commission has information about costings and options when it is established</p>	
	<p>Tender exercise for post separation website included criteria for DDA compliance and a track record in finding innovative ways of ensuring accessibility.</p>	<p>Feedback from staff, AMs and the public. Use of e-democracy forum</p>	<p>ACS / MRCS</p>

ASSEMBLY MEMBERS AND THEIR STAFF			
Area of work	What we are already doing to promote equality	How we'll know if we're making a difference	APS Lead
Delivery of research and information services	Research briefings are provided to Members to assist them in scrutinising the arrangements made by the Assembly Government and APS to promote equality. Legal advice is available to Members on equality related issues	Feedback from Members Members requesting and using information provided	MRCS Legal
	Advice to members on financial support available to make their constituency offices accessible	Members are aware of this funding opportunity and make use of it	Fees Office
	Informing Members of their responsibilities as regards the Disability Equality Duty through briefing to House Committee, Equality of Opportunity Committee and through the provision of an information note to all Members	Members' provision of feedback and suggestions and support for suggested actions to promote equality	MRCS / Clerk and Deputy Clerk's Office
	New actions we plan to take to promote equality	How we'll know if we're making a difference	APS Lead
	See section above on what we plan to do which will		

	impact on all groups		
	We will run an AM awareness raising session on the Disability Equality Duty before May 2007	Member attendance and feedback	MRCS

APS STAFF			
Area of work	What we are already doing to promote equality	How we'll know if we're making a difference	APS Lead
Recruitment, training and development of staff	Staff are generally recruited to the APS on the basis of their ability to demonstrate their skills and competence in various areas. Formal qualifications are an 'essential criteria' only where necessary. This ensures that people who have had less opportunity to gain formal qualifications are not excluded from working within the Assembly	Disabled people apply for posts and are successful	HR
	All new staff and all existing frontline staff have equality awareness training which includes a focus on ensuring disabled visitors and members of staff are treated appropriately and with equal respect	Feedback from staff and visitors	Access Advisor / HR
	A number of staff have been supported to undertake advance study to increase the capacity of APS to promote equality, e.g. one member of staff is currently studying for an MScs in Access and Equality	Advice and suggestions provided by those staff who have been supported which lead to improvements	HR / staff who are being supported to study

	Training on key Assembly policies such as attendance management address disability issues	Absence of poor management and harassment of disabled staff	HR
Employment policy advice to staff.	The Assembly operates flexible working policies such as flexi-time, part time working and home working arrangements which can help to meet a range of staff needs.	Requests for and take up of flexible working arrangements, staff feedback	HR and individual branches
Internal communications	The APS intranet news page and e-magazine, 'The Slate', have been used to promote awareness of the Disability Equality Duty and to encourage staff involvement in the preparation of the Scheme	Staff involvement in the preparation of the Scheme. Around 20 members of staff have played an active role in assessing the work of their branch and identifying positive actions which might be taken in the future to promote equality for disabled people	MS
	New actions we plan to take to promote equality	How we'll know if we're making a difference	APS Lead
	See section above on what we plan to do which will impact on all groups		

<p>Collation of data about the make up of the APS staff and those who apply for jobs within APS to inform actions and policies to ensure equal opportunities</p>	<p>A new system of staff data collection and management will be introduced post May 2007 which will allow staff to enter information about themselves directly. Although the system will be introduced beyond the timeframe of this Scheme, we will make preparations by using our intranet pages and e-magazine, <i>The Slate</i>, to raise awareness that the Disability Equality Duty legislation is inclusive in its definition of disabled people. We will explain that the reason we'd like disabled people to feel able to identify themselves as such is so we can ensure that we're meeting the needs of all staff to enable them to do their job and so we can encourage feedback.</p>	<p>Existing staff who have not previously identified themselves as disabled will do so if they wish and feel able to provide feedback on their experiences and make suggestions for improved working practices.</p>	<p>HR</p>
<p>Review of job advertising practices</p>	<p>We will ensure that our review of job advertising practices considers how we might increase disabled people's awareness of our organisation as a potential place of work generally and of specific job opportunities.</p>	<p>Feedback from disability organisations who have been asked to inform the review in terms of the targeting of disabled people. Increase in the number of disabled people who apply for jobs.</p>	<p>HR / MS</p>

Development and review of employment policies	We will establish a forum of disabled staff who will be asked to provide feedback on issues which may impact on disabled people, including the development of new policies.	Staff forum established and feedback on a range of issues provided by the members.	HR
	We will ask for feedback from disability organisations when policies are in development	Feedback from disability organisations	HR
	A suggestion has been made that including a photo of each member of staff on the APS intranet will assist staff with visual impairments to identify colleagues. We will look at options for doing this either pre or post May and take appropriate action	Feedback from staff.	ICT
	We will continue to explore the use of voice recognition technology within our translating and reporting service. This has the potential advantage of opening up employment opportunities to people who have difficulties in using keyboards or impairments which make headphone use difficult.	If the technology and other considerations allow, we will be able to offer this way of working to current and potential members of staff	ICT

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC			
Area of work	What we are already doing to promote equality for disabled people	How we'll know if we're making a difference	APS Lead
Provision of information and education about the Assembly	Assembly educational publications are available in a range of formats	Take up of alternative formats and feedback	PIE
	Guided tours and CD audio tours of the Senedd, exhibition and visitors centres	Take up of these services and feedback gained through the visitor questionnaire	PIE
	Changes have been made to publicity material to ensure that the pictures used reflect the diversity of Wales.	Feedback	PIE
Supporting the involvement of groups and individuals in the work of Committees	The Assembly's Equality of Opportunity Committee established a disabled young person's reference group to advise them in their review of services for disabled young people. In response to feedback from the young people a number of changes have been made to enhance their experience and increase the effectiveness of the reference group, e.g. use of innovative forms of communication involving video and puppets and ensuring the young people have an opportunity to make the points they wish to make at	Feedback from disabled young person's reference group and other disabled people who provide feedback to Committee clerks will request feedback after each meeting.	MRCS / PIE

	<p>the beginning of the meeting.</p> <p>Hearing loop provision in Committee and Plenary meetings. BSL provision on request (with 14 days notice)</p> <p>We use an accessibility check list to ensure that all external venues used for Assembly buildings are accessible.</p>	<p>Request and take up of BSL and other formats from disabled people who wish to access and engage with Assembly business.</p> <p>Disabled people attending Assembly proceedings in external venues</p>	
Promoting awareness of the work of the Assembly through the media	<p>We promote the work of the Assembly through a broad range of media including radio, television, newspapers and special interest publications and internet sites. We have worked with a number of disability organisations to provide information and plan to seek advice on how we might target disabled people more effectively through the media.</p>	<p>Feedback from disability groups</p>	MS
	New actions we plan to take to promote equality	How we'll know if we're making a difference	APS Lead

	See section above on what we plan to do which will impact on all groups		
	Guidance on the provision of Committee and Plenary services and information in BSL and other formats is currently in production	Request and take up of BSL and other formats from disabled people who wish to access and engage with Assembly business.	