



# Disability Equality Scheme 2007 / 2010

Draft July 2007

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# Our commitment

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## Tigrinya

ናትና ፖሊሲ ንኩሉ ሓደ ዓይነት ሓበሬታ ዝረኽቡሉ መንገዲ ኢና መብጽዓ ኣቲና።  
ሓበሬታ ብኻልእ ቋንቋ ወይ ቅርጺ እንተደሊኹም በጃኹም ሕተቲና።

## Amharic

የኛ ፖሊሲ ሁሉም ኣንድ ኣይነት መግለጫ እንዲያገኙ ለማረጋገጥ ነው።  
በሌላ ቋንቋ መግለጫ ከፈለጋችሁ ወይም ቅርጽ እባካችሁ እኛን ጠይቁ።

## Farsi

ما متعهد هستیم به سیاست دسترسی برابر به اطلاعات  
اگر این اطلاعات را به زبانی دیگر و یا در فرمتی دیگر میخواهید لطفا از ما درخواست کنید

## French

Nous nous engageons à une politique d'accès égal aux informations.  
Si vous souhaitez des informations dans une autre langue ou sous un autre format,  
veuillez nous le demander.

## Kurdish

ئیمه به ئه‌رکی خو‌مانی ده‌زانین که سیاسه‌تی ده‌سراگه‌یشتنی یه‌کسان به زانیاری بو‌هه‌موان جیبه‌جی بکه‌ین  
ئه‌گه‌ر زانیاریت به زمانیکی که یا به فۆرمیکی که ده‌وی تکایه داوامان لی بکه

## Polish

Wyznajemy zasadę równości w dostępie do informacji.  
Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo uzyskać informacje w innym języku lub  
w innym formacie prosimy dać nam znać.

## Urdu

معلومات تک مساوی رسائی کی پالیسی پر ہم عمل پیرا ہیں۔  
اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے پوچھئے۔

CD



Braille



In large type

Abc

Any other format



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Wakefield and District Housing  
Draft July 2007

# Disability Equality Scheme

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## Foreword

Welcome to the first Disability Equality Scheme (DES) produced by Wakefield and District Housing (WDH). Here at WDH we are fully committed to working to achieve equality for all across all our service areas.

Disability in particular, is especially important in our district. The 2001 Census indicated that nearly a quarter of residents in the area (22.4%) have a long term illness, health problem or disability. Coupled with the fact that an estimated 42% of housing association households in England contain a member with a long term illness or disability, it means WDH needs to consider disability equality an absolute priority in conducting its business.

In November 2006, WDH conducted its first full diversity census on our 31,500 properties. Initial results (as at May 2007) indicate that 33% of our households contain someone who has a disability and 1,782 people (13% of returned sample) have requested that they receive information in a different format (such as larger font and so on.). These figures are based on a 44% return rate to the census. WDH is committed to using this information to develop and improve the way it operates in order to become fully inclusive and remove the barriers that disabled people face in the housing sector. As a major employer in the district, WDH also needs to promote disability equality in employment as disability has major implications in an individual's ability to participate in the labour market – figures show that the unemployment rate for disabled people is up to twice the figure for non disabled people and also far more likely to be long term unemployed.

WDH is therefore ready for the disability equality challenge and welcomes the improvements to the quality of life that this can only bring for our customers.

Kevin Dodd  
Chief Executive

Margaret Wood  
Board Diversity Champion

## 1. Introduction

The Disability Discrimination (Amendment) Act 2005 placed a duty on all public authorities to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people.
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the act.
- Eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disabilities.
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life.
- Take steps to take account of disabled peoples' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people.

WDH welcomes the additional responsibility the duty places on public authorities, although WDH is not a public authority, it is governed by the Housing Corporation who are expecting housing associations to develop their own disability equality action plans.

The 2005 Act also places a duty on public bodies to develop a DES. This needs to show how disabled people have been involved in developing the scheme, and have an Action Plan setting out how priority issues will be dealt with, how information will be gathered and how the information will be used.

The duties are intended to encourage organisations to embed disability equality into their business culture and processes, in other words to 'mainstream' disability into a general customer issue, rather than being seen as a 'special needs' issue. By doing this, WDH will deliver better services that respond to the individual needs of all groups and encourage participation by disabled people at all levels of WDH business.

## 2. Wakefield Disability Information

**Definition of Disability:** Under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA), a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial (more than minor or trivial), and a long term (more than 12 months) adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal daily activities. For example, a broken leg would not be classified as a disability as it would normally heal within 12 months. The 2005 Act also widened the definition of disability to cover conditions such as cancer, HIV and multiple sclerosis from the point of diagnosis.

**Statistical Information:** Disability issues are especially important in the Wakefield district as the 2001 Census indicated that 22.4% of our population have a long term illness, health problems or disability. This is significantly higher than our surrounding districts in West Yorkshire and England as a whole, as the table below indicates. This is in part a legacy from manual work in traditional industries, Wakefield having a long association with the mining industry.

<b>Area</b>	<b>Percentage of population with long term illness, health problems or disability</b>
Wakefield	22.4%
Bradford	18.5%
Calderdale	18.4%
Kirklees	18.0%
Leeds	18.0%
Yorkshire and Humberside	19.5%
England	17.9%
Source: 2001 Census	

The following table shows the percentage of the Wakefield population with a long term illness, health problem or disability by age:

<b>Age</b>	<b>Percentage of population with long term illness, health problems or disability</b>
Wakefield (overall)	22.4%
0 to 15	4.9%
16 – 17	5.3%
18 – 24	6.9%
25 – 34	8.9%
35 – 44	14.0%
45 – 54	23.8%
55 – 64	42.4%
65 – 74	52.4%
75 +	67.7%
Source 2001 Census	

In November 2006, WDH conducted its first full tenant diversity census, this has given us the preliminary disability profile information below:

Age profile of disabled tenants:

Age	Number of tenants in one person households	Number of disabled tenants	Percentage of one person households where tenant is disabled
75+	2786	1092	39.1%
65-74	1593	516	32.4%
60-64	634	226	35.6%
55-59	505	167	33.1%
45-54	582	183	31.4%
35-44	278	78	28.1%
25-34	116	18	15.5%
16-26	54	9	16.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6548</b>	<b>2289</b>	<b>34.9%</b>
Source: WDH Tenant Census 2006			

These figures are based on a current (May 2007) 44% return rate and for clarity only include tenants in one person households as the census did not ask tenants to assign each disability / condition in their household to a particular member of that household.

### Model of Disability

WDH uses the Social Model of Disability which starts from the premise that people are disabled by the barriers they face in their day to day lives. These barriers may be physical or environmental, organisational or attitudinal. Removing or addressing the barriers will enable disabled people to participate in society and live their lives as they choose. In contrast, the medical model of disability categorises people by their impairment or medical condition emphasising their incapacities rather than looking at the disabling effects of wider society.

## 3. Involving Disabled People

WDH is committed to involving disabled people at all levels of its core business activities. Current resident involvement data show that at a typical tenant challenge day, 64% of attendees indicate they have a disability, long standing illness or infirmity. In addition, at Board level, two out of fifteen Board Members have indicated they have a disability, which represents 13% of the Board.

As part of the consultation for this DES, a specific focus group of tenants with disabilities was established in January 2007 to work through the creation of WDH's first DES. This group will be a permanent tenant and stakeholder group, and will be responsible for providing an external quality check to the scheme and its yearly updates. A wider invitation to comment on this DES will also be published in the July 2007 Tenant Newsletter.

Internally, WDH set up a Disability at Work group in late 2005 for employees either with a disability or with a keen interest in disability issues. This group meets monthly and has been working hard at benchmarking and researching the information provided in this scheme. As at April 2007, 19 employees have declared themselves to have a disability, which represents 1.46% of the total workforce. This group will also act as an external verifier to the DES and monitor progress against targets set.

WDH also has about 40 'Diversity Champions' which are spread across all service areas and who are responsible for disseminating good practice and new ideas throughout the organisation. These 'Champions' were consulted on the draft version of this DES, and will also be involved in the yearly monitoring of it.

## **4. Assessing the Impact of Policies and Activities**

A DES must include a statement of the methods for assessing the impact of policies and practices on equality for disabled people. This is so that an organisation can identify where they might better promote equality.

In addition to all reports submitted to WDH's Executive Management Team (EMT) and the Board having a mandatory equality impact section, WDH has developed its own full 'Equality Impact Assessment' process. Impact Assessments are an audit tool which enable organisations to examine current or intended policies, practices and procedures and services for their impact on service users, employees and stakeholders. They are an essential part of achieving effective and people focused policies and services that meet needs and objectives in a fair and equitable way.

WDH commenced the Impact Assessment process in March 2007 on the Human Resources and Property Services areas of business. They will be assessing their practices and policies for a positive, neutral or negative impact against five diversity strands: age, disability, gender, race (including religion and belief) and sexuality. A full action plan for each area will thus be developed from any identified adverse or neutral impact which can not be objectively justified.

The programme will continue until June 2008, by when all service areas within WDH will have undergone this process.

## **5. Information Gathering and Performance Monitoring**

WDH already collects a wide range of diversity data, from the CORE lettings system, to Human Resources monitoring. However it was recognised that a full diversity profile of our tenants was incomplete. To rectify this lack of knowledge, a full Tenant Census was sent to all residents in November 2006. The goal is to achieve a 60% return, which will be achieved by the end of April 2008 through a telephone and door knocking exercise.

Disability was especially prominent on the census form, with residents asked to define any illness or disability into categories such as dyslexia, mobility, mental health, hearing impairment, learning disability, visual impairment, progressive disability / chronic illness and other. In addition, communication needs were asked, with residents asked to indicate their format preference for printed information from large print, Braille / Moon, Audio Tape / CS / MP3, sign language DVD / video, Plain English with symbols and different coloured paper.

In addition, the census form asked if anyone in the household was a wheelchair user and if illness or disability limited daily activities in any way. The information gathered will be used specifically to improve communication between WDH and its customers and to plan service improvement. Mystery shopping is also used to test the effectiveness of front line services in dealing with disabled customers.

Employees were also asked in the 2007 Employee Survey if they considered themselves to be disabled, if they had informed WDH about this impairment and if not, their reasons for non disclosure. This is an attempt to assess the true level of employee disability within our organisation as the declared numbers are very low (1.46% of total workforce as at March 2007). Diversity monitoring at all stages of the recruitment process (application, shortlisting, interview and offer) has also begun within WDH, as well as disciplinary procedures, grievances, promotions and resignations. The information gathered will be used to highlight and investigate any potential differences in treatment.

Other mechanisms for capturing information such as surveys, complaints monitoring and consultation exercises will be used as further sources of information regarding disability equality. WDH will use the information it gathers to set appropriate performance monitoring targets for itself and its partners in the Decent Homes works, which will be monitored accordingly.

## **6. Reviewing the Effectiveness of the DES**

The DES will form part of WDH's overarching Equality and Diversity Strategic Framework 2006-2010. This is monitored by the Equality and Diversity Group, which is made up of representatives across the service areas. The Disabled Tenants Focus Group will act as an external review team to the scheme, as well as the Disability at Work employee group.

Ultimate responsibility for implementing the action plan will lie with the executive management team and the Board of WDH.

An annual report will be produced each year to report and review against progress on the actions identified in the scheme's action plan. Any additional priorities or changes will be agreed in consultation with customers. The annual report will be published and available on the WDH website and in alternative formats on request.

## 7. Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan and Priorities

The following section details WDH's proposed actions needed in order to achieve full disability equality for its residents and employees. The plan has been divided into six parts to reflect the six parts to the disability equality duty. There are several actions listed under each section and these will be inserted and cross referenced into the overarching Equality and Diversity Action Plan.

As part of the consultation, participants identified the top priorities they would like to see WDH concentrating on. These consist of:

1. Aids and Adaptations.
2. Communication.
3. Building more homes which are accessible and have community facilities.
4. Specific services – expand and advertise them, for example:
  - Repair with Care.
  - Gardening service.
5. Anti social behaviour / Harassment.

These priorities will therefore be the initial priorities within the action plan and will be monitored closely by external and internal WDH Equality and Diversity Groups.

## 8. Disability Equality Scheme Actions

### **Part 1: Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people**

- Publish and promote Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan.
- Review Action Plan and performance against targets on an annual basis.
- All service areas to undertake and equalities impact assessment and formulate action plan to address any areas of negative or neutral impact which are not objectively justified.
- Achieve 'Positive about Disabled People' scheme every year.
- Support the 'Disability @ Work' employee group.
- Develop detailed monitoring and performance indicators relating to recruitment, development and retention.
- Ensure communication preferences from Tenant Census information is utilised effectively and WDH literature and website is accessible to all.
- Ensure customer services employees are fully confident in dealing with disabled people and aware of communication tools available, for example portable loops.
- Ensure new build programme incorporates homes designed specifically for disabled people as well as to lifetime homes standards.
- Maintain adapted property register.

## **Part 2: Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act**

- Ensure all Service Access Points and relevant sheltered housing schemes are fully Disability Discrimination Act compliant.
- Undertake regular tenant audits and mystery shopping programmes by disabled people to ensure WDH is accessible and non discriminatory.
- Ensure strategic partners carry out full needs assessments prior to Decent Homes works.
- Monitor service usage by disabled customers (for example Homesearch) and investigate any identified low usage (part of impact assessment process).
- Ensure all customer satisfaction surveys and other tenant surveys monitor disability and identified differences are investigated.
- Monitor complaints received by disability.

## **Part 3: Eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities**

- Raise awareness of harassment policy amongst tenants, in particular how to report disability harassment.
- Ensure all customers reporting harassment are asked for disability information.
- Monitor harassment incidents by disability and share good practice in dealing with issues raised.
- Consider easier methods of recording anti social behaviour and reporting of disability harassment for disabled people.
- Monitor anti social behaviour warnings / measures / orders by disability in order to avoid any potential discrimination.

## **Part 4: Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons**

- Provide Disability Equality training for employees as well as disability awareness and communication methods.
- Encourage tenants and residents associations to be as inclusive as possible in their activities.
- Ensure all new WDH promotional material includes disabled people as far as possible.

## **Part 5: Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life**

- Set targets for composition of Board and Local Management Committees.
- Continue to support the Disabled Tenants Focus Groups to be an external challenge to WDH on disability issues.
- Monitor Tenant and Residents Associations by disability and encourage involvement of disabled residents.

**Part 6: Take steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons**

- Ensure repairs service gives priority to disabled customers for emergency repairs.
- Provide additional funding for aids and adaptations and occupational therapy service.
- Maintain Care Link Service.
- Maintain Care with Repair Service for tenants in sheltered accommodation.
- Expand Gardening Service.
- Maintain Home Relocator Service for those moving into sheltered accommodation.
- Ensure all disabled applicants meeting shortlisting criteria are interviewed.
- Ensure any specialist equipment / reasonable adjustments needed due to disability are provided with minimum delay.
- Work in partnership with relevant organisations to utilise positive action schemes for employment within WDH.



## **Vision**

to create confident communities

## **Mission**

to inspire, transform and promote excellence

## **Values**

to be creative, inclusive and work with  
integrity

**delivering promises, improving lives**