

Oxfordshire County Council



DRAFT DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME 2010-2013



**OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL**

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Oxfordshire County Council

Draft Disability Equality Scheme 2010-2013

For Cabinet 19 January 2010

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Foreword...

Part 1: Why we want a Disability Equality Scheme & Information about Oxfordshire

1.1 The Council's Commitment

The council's obligation to disability equality extends beyond the requirements of statute. It is part of our commitment to fairness and is consistent with our ambitions for strong, cohesive and well-integrated communities across the county.

This is the County Council's second disability equality scheme and is intended to act as both a clear signpost to our commitment to disability equality and as a blueprint for its delivery. It makes disability equality central to the way the council works both in its service delivery and employment practices.

This scheme builds on the achievements of the first scheme and demonstrates an ongoing commitment to focus on improving outcomes for customers, employees and partners.

Oxfordshire County Council is committed to ensuring 'real choice'; recognition that residents have a right to expect services that are shaped to meet their needs

1.2 Disability Discrimination Act

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 places a statutory **general duty** on public authorities to actively promote disability equality. This means that in carrying out our functions we must have due regard to the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons;
- eliminate discrimination which 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 general duty builds upon the duties of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, including the requirement to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled people can access employment; goods, facilities, services and functions; and premises.

We also have statutory **specific duties**, which include the preparation and publication of a Disability Equality Scheme setting out the actions that will be taken to meet these requirements; the implementation of the scheme; and the publications of annual progress reports.

1.3 Disability Equality Scheme

The purpose of the Disability Equality Scheme is to:

- Ensure that we meet our statutory duties.
- Show how we have involved disabled people.

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- Identify and take steps to remove barriers faced by disabled people.
- Show how we are making things fairer for disabled people in relation to employment and in planning and delivering our services.
- Provide information about our equality impact assessment process.
- Show how the scheme links to other equality work.
- Monitor progress and report annually.

Oxfordshire County Council has adopted the social model of disability. This means that we recognise that primarily it is the loss or limitation of opportunities, due to environmental and social barriers, that prevent disabled people from participating in society on an equal level with other people.

1.4 Oxfordshire in Context

Oxfordshire has a population of over 635,000 people but it is the most rural county in the South East. Half of the population live in small market towns or villages with fewer than 10000 residents.

Oxfordshire scores highly as a good place to live and diversity is seen as integral to the county's attraction. The reputation of Oxfordshire's universities and a thriving high-tech sector attracts an unusually international population and workforce. However, affluence can mask areas of deprivation and high levels of mobility can also lead to a lack of community cohesion and isolation.

1.5 About Oxfordshire County Council

Oxfordshire County Council is responsible for the provision of a wide range of essential local services. These include schools, social services, libraries and museums, adult learning, waste management, trading standards, registration services, fire and rescue, roads, transport planning and land use planning. The County Council accounts for over 70% of expenditure on local government services in Oxfordshire with annual spending of almost £1bn. We employ around 20,000 people across more than 800 sites, including schools, libraries and fire stations. Around 60% of our employees work in schools and 80% are women.

Oxfordshire County Council has 74 elected councillors and is Conservative controlled.

The Audit Commission, which judges local authority performance, has assessed the Council as grade 'three out of four', which is defined as exceeding minimum requirements' and 'performing well'.

1.6 The Council's Objectives and Values

Our Four Strategic Objectives are:

- World Class Economy
- Healthy and Thriving Communities
- Environment and Climate Change
- Better Public Services in Oxfordshire.

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There is also a cross-cutting theme to reduce inequality and 'Break the Cycle of Deprivation'. This influences the way that we deliver services across the Council.

Our Principles

We are committed to:

- **Low tax** – we aim to reduce year-on-year the annual increase in council tax.
- **Real choice** – we will seek to provide services to meet the requirements of residents rather than fitting residents' needs to our services.
- **Value for money** for our council tax payers and service users. We will achieve this by finding new ways of delivering services, by tackling waste and inefficiency and by ensuring we provide cost-effective support services to reduce expenditure and maximise the resources available for front-line service delivery.

Our Values

Our work is guided by six underpinning values:

- **Customer Focus**
- **Honesty**
- **One Team**
- **Involvement**
- **Can-do**
- **Efficient and Effective**

1.7 Leadership

Within the council there is strong leadership on equality and inclusion issues. Political leadership is provided by the Cabinet Member for Safer and Stronger Communities in whose portfolio this lies.

The Council also has an established network of directorate equality groups, which contribute to the effective management and delivery of the council's equality and inclusion activities by:

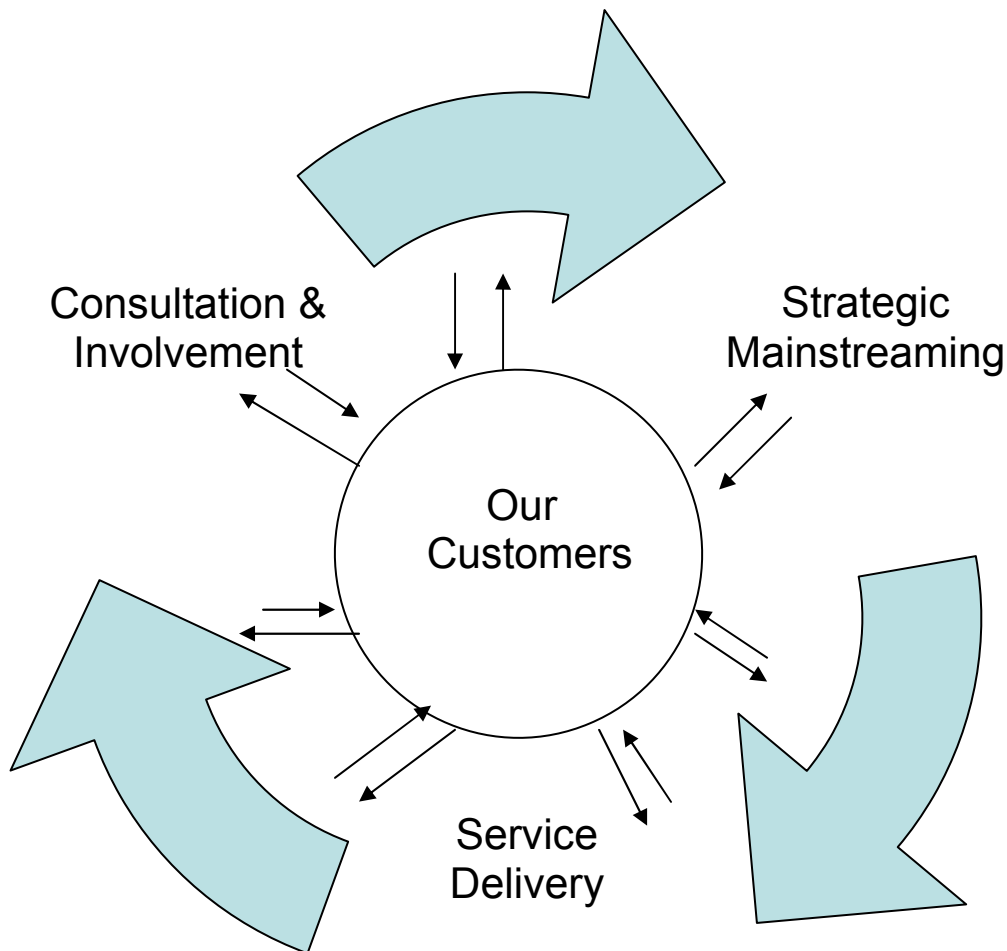
- applying strategic thinking to the promotion of equality and inclusion by the council;
- ensuring implementation of the Equality Standard and Equality Framework for Local Government and the council's equality schemes;
- overseeing operational implementation at service level of equality and inclusion activities within directorates; and
- supporting business management processes to ensure that directorates have appropriate implementation, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to support the effective delivery of the council's requirements in this area.

The Social Inclusion Reference Group, which consists of local voluntary organisations operating in this field, together with county councillors and council officers, provides essential advice to the council.

Part 2: Our Disability Equality Priorities

2.1 Our Approach to Disability Equality

Disability Equality Scheme January 2010 - 2013



Oxfordshire County Council's approach to disability equality follows clear principles:

- A focus on achieving real benefits and ensuring real choice for our customers and employees.
- Customer involvement in the design and the review of services.
- The mainstreaming of disability equality practices in all of our activities.
- Effective, high quality and value for money services that meet our disability equality priorities.

Our approach is centred on customers and their experience. In 2008 we achieved our target of becoming the first Charter Mark county council in the country, the government's benchmark test of excellence in customer service.

2.2 Involving Disabled People

From the outset in developing, implementing, reviewing and then revising our Disability Equality Scheme, we have endeavoured to actively engage with local disabled people, using a range of methods and activities. These included running a one-day event targeted at organisations of and for disabled people; holding three involvement sessions for our disabled staff, including staff with learning disabilities; and employing a consultancy with a particular expertise in disability issues to organise participatory workshop events with local disabled residents. We held a stakeholder event for local disabled people's organisations, entitled "Disability Equality - What does it mean to you?" We also took the opportunity of listening and talking to people with learning disabilities. Drop-in coffee morning sessions provided opportunities to identify and define our priorities and we have maintained continued engagement with disability, access and user-led groups.

2.3 Prioritisation

The following chart (next pages) sets out the specific outcomes and disability equality priorities we are aiming to achieve during the next three years, taking into account all the information we have gathered, relevant changes our business and organisation and what has been achieved so far.

Based on our engagement with disabled people, we have identified four specific priorities, which are key to delivering our desired outcomes. The priorities are well-related to the outcomes; clear; ensure disability equality; have a direct relevance to the lives of disabled people; are capable of leading individual action plans across the council and its partners; and are measurable.

2.4 How we are Achieving these Outcomes

- The framework set by the Equality Standard for Local Government / Equality Framework for Local Government provides an independent measure of our overall performance. External assessment/audit in October 2009 confirmed our position at Level 3.
- The council recognises the difficulty of multiple-discrimination, i.e. where an individual falls within more than one excluded group. To help avoid this we operate a Comprehensive Equality Policy, first adopted in March 2004, covering all aspects of the council's business. This commits the council to operate on the basis that it will eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and promote good relations, with respect to race, disability, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation, transgender status or gender reassignment, age, marital status and the responsibility for dependants.
- As one of the major purchasers of goods and services in the county, the council recognises the role it can play by ensuring that those with whom it does business also implement strong equality policies. Contractors are required to enter into contractual provisions that include the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity.

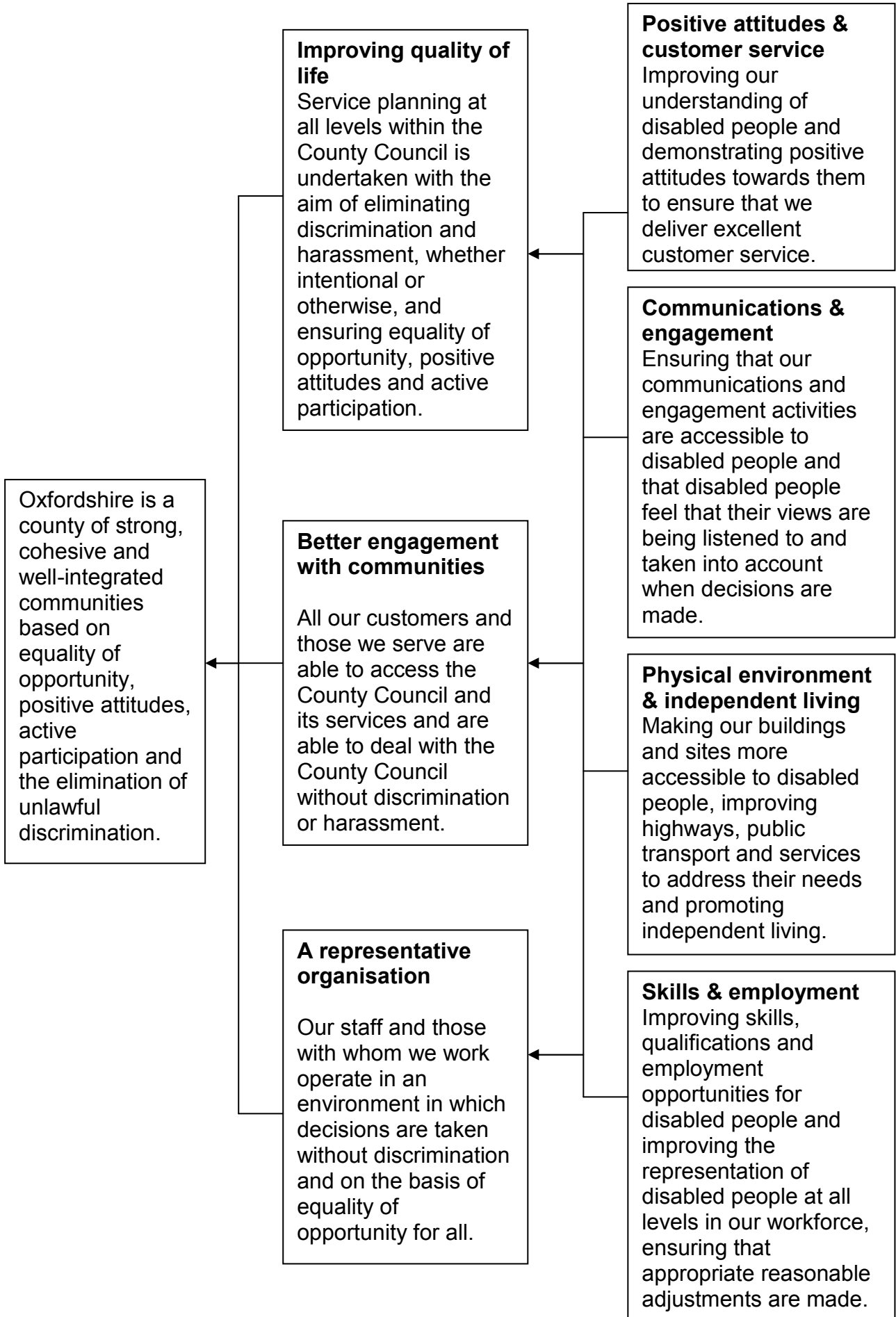
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- The council will not tolerate harassment at work or in service provision and will investigate and act on complaints and allegations. The Dignity at Work Policy is being reviewed to ensure that it continues to reflect best practice and that all employees are aware of the support and advice available if they experience any harassment.
- Training on equality and diversity issues is included within the council's training plan to provide managers and all employees with the skills and knowledge they need to ensure that equality remains part of our day-to-day activities.
- To ensure that services meet the general duty and can demonstrate continual improvement, the council has an established programme of statutory impact assessments (EQIAs), which include detailed consideration of disability and other equality issues.
- For some time, the county council has sought advice on disability and other equality issues from our Social Inclusion Reference Group. This group is comprised of representatives of voluntary organisations active in this area. The group's meetings are structured to ensure that it can make an active contribution through workshops to defining the outcomes and outputs of highest priority to equality groups.
- This scheme, however, also recognises that in achieving our overarching outcome the council needs to work with partners across the county in a way which is itself integrated and cohesive.

2.5 Chart:

DESIRED OUTCOMES

OUR PRIORITIES



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2.6 Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan

This action plan provides specific examples of how we will be delivering against our four specific priorities in order to achieve our desired outcomes. During the life of this scheme there will also be additional actions and improvement projects arising from the completion of our statutory equality impact assessments.

Priority 1: Positive Attitudes & Customer Service

Improving our understanding of disabled people and demonstrating positive attitudes towards them to ensure that we deliver excellent customer service.

Actions	Outputs	Target date	Responsibility	Outcomes
Ensure that staff have disability equality & diversity training	% new staff who receive equality & diversity induction training	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Strategic HR / Shared Services	Improving quality of life. Better engagement with communities. A representative organisation.
	% staff who complete e-learning and offline 'Respect for People' training	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Strategic HR / Shared Services	
	No. of equality & diversity training programmes delivered for Councillors and staff	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Strategic HR / Shared Services	
Ensure the mainstreaming of disability principles and practice in all our activities to deliver excellent customer service.	No. of meetings of directorate equality groups & % of targets in directorate equality actions plans delivered	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Directorate equality groups	
	Customer Relationship Management system will monitor disabled person comments & complaints	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Strategic HR	

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	Staff polls results demonstrate staff confidence in locating disability guidance, advice, information	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Strategic HR	
	No. of activities of staff groups, e.g. Working Careers' Group, that promote equality & diversity issues	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Strategic HR	
	Degree of compliance with the council's customer service standards in promoting disability equality	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Directorate equality groups	
Ensure that disability related bullying and hate crime is addressed and tackled.	Establishment and maintenance of MANTRA hate crime service.	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Community Safety	
	No. of disability related incidents reported, recorded and actioned.	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Community Safety	
	No. of disability related incidents of bullying in school reported and % of schools with targets for tackling disability related bullying in their school DES.	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Children, Young People & Families	

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Priority 2: Communications & Engagement

Ensuring that our communications and engagement activities are accessible to disabled people and that disabled people feel that their views are being listened to and taken into account when decisions are made.

Actions	Outputs	Target date	Responsibility	Outcomes
Ensure that disabled peoples' satisfaction and perception of being treated fairly across key Council services continues to improve.	% of published publications peer reviewed as meeting required standards to promote disability equality, such as Clear Print Guidelines	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Corporate Core – Media & Communications	Improving quality of life. Better engagement with communities. A representative organisation.
	Consultations peer reviewed as meeting the required standards to promote disability equality	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Corporate Core – Policy Unit	
	No of people involved in consultation processes who identify as disabled	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Corporate Core – Policy Unit	
	% of staff demonstrating confidence in using alternative formats from staff poll results.	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Corporate Core – Partnership Working	
	Satisfaction levels of the main strategic disability led customer representative groups	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Directorate equality groups	
Continue to make access improvements in ICT	No. of hits on the Readspeak website facility	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Corporate Core – Media & Communications	

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Priority 3: Physical Environment & Independent Living

Making our buildings and sites more accessible to disabled people, improving highways, public transport and services to address their needs and promoting independent living.

Actions	Outputs	Target date	Responsibility	Outcomes
Ensure that buildings and sites are increasingly more accessible	% of buildings that are Fit for Purpose (target 90% by 2015)	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Environment & Economy	Improving quality of life. Better engagement with communities. A representative organisation.
	No of cross-directorate information share meetings that improve the quality of access information obtained during access audits.	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Environment & Economy	
	No. of Access Statements submitted and % of relevant building projects with an Access Statement	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Environment & Economy	
Improve satisfaction with highways and public transport	No. of controlled and informal crossing points newly provided or improved.	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Environment & Economy	
	% of disabled people surveyed as satisfied with disabled parking provision	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Environment & Economy	
	% of bus stops with real time information displays	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Environment & Economy	
	No. of bus driver who complete disability awareness training NT	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Environment & Economy	
	% of accessible and low-floor buses which are used on subsidised and non- subsidised routes.	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Environment & Economy	
	% of disabled people surveyed as satisfied with bus services.	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Environment & Economy	
	% of young disabled people surveyed as satisfied with bus services. (Positive Activities Group).	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Children, Young People & Families – Youth Service	

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Increase the numbers of disabled people maintaining independent living	% of disabled people who feel they have more choice and control in self-directed support.	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Social & Community Services	
	Yearly assessment/consultation of Adult Social Care with different equality groups.	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Social & Community Services	

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Priority 4: Skills & Employment

Improving skills, qualifications and employment opportunities for disabled people and improving the representation of disabled people at all levels in our workforce, ensuring that appropriate reasonable adjustments are made.

Actions	Outputs	Target date	Responsibility	Outcomes
Ensure improvements related to disabled staff in the workforce	% of disabled staff as a proportion of the workforce	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Strategic HR / Shared Services	Improving quality of life. Better engagement with communities. A representative organisation.
	% of disabled staff in the top 5% of earners	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Strategic HR / Shared Services	
	Degree of improvement in annual employment equality duties report	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Strategic HR / Shared Services	
	Degree of compliance with the Two Ticks Standard	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Strategic HR / Shared Services	
	% of disabled staff in the Fire Service (Walk the Talk Strategy)	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Community Safety – Fire & Rescue	
	% of vacancies directed to the Oxfordshire Employment Service and % of those vacancies filled by a disabled person.	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Strategic HR / Shared Services	
	% of schools with disability employment targets in their school DES.	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Children, Young People & Families	
Ensure improvements related to people with Learning Disabilities & Difficulties in Education, Employment or Training	Improvements delivered under the CYP&F Aiming High for Disabled Children and Children and Young People's Plan	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Children, Young People & Families	
	No. of carved out posts and work experience opportunities designed to be appropriate for people with learning disabilities.	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Strategic HR / Shared Services	

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Improve the numbers of disabled young people with special educational needs with 5 A*-C GCSEs	Results of the Success Project	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Children, Young People & Families	
	% schools with Disability Equality Schemes	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Children, Young People & Families	
Ensure that reasonable adjustments are made	No. of new and existing staff in receipt of Access to Work funding.	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Strategic HR / Shared Services	
	% of disabled staff surveyed as satisfied with response to requests for workplace adjustments	Review Dec. 2010 / 11 / 12	Strategic HR / Shared Services	

2.7 Statutory Equality Impact Assessments

Since April 2005, the council has operated a combined impact assessment process covering race, disability and gender equality; these now also include the remaining equality strands, and social deprivation and human rights where relevant. The impact assessment process involves collecting information on the extent to which services and functions take account of the needs of different customers, segmented by equality group, and then uses the information gathered to make any necessary changes or modifications. This allows systematic consideration of the impact of existing and proposed policies and practices against the general duty to promote disability equality, including consultation, gathering and then using data.

The council recognises that, where discrimination occurs, it is usually unintended and may be the result of a range of differing needs not having been fully considered. The purpose of the impact assessments is to ensure that the council's activities and policies do not disadvantage; identify how they could better improve services for all; and make any necessary modifications or changes.

A screened and prioritised 3-year rolling schedule of impact assessments (EQIAs) is published separately and updated annually. It is also a requirement that impact assessments are completed for all relevant new policies and functions.

Improvements and actions arising from the completion of EQIAs are then included in the business planning process, as appropriate, and the necessary developments implemented, including as a range of improvement projects supported by the council's Disability & Equality Advisers.

2.8 Comments, Suggestions and Complaints

The council positively encourage customer comments and suggestions regarding any of our services and activities. We will maintain clear, transparent, fair and sensitive procedures for dealing with complaints.

For more information please contact:

- Write to Complaints and Comments, Freepost (SCE 7709), Oxford OX1 1YA.
- Or telephone 01865 815906.
- Or email complaints@oxfordshire.gov.uk
- Or visit our website for further information at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

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اشكال بديلة لهذا المنشور موجودة حسب الطلب. هذه تشمل لغات مختلفة و الطبعة البارزة وطريقة بريل و اشربة كاست و اقراص الحاسوب او البريد الالكتروني.

Arabic

আপনি যদি অনুরোধ করেন তাহলে এই পুস্তিকাটি বিকল্প ছাঁদে, যেমন, অন্য কোনও ভাষায়, বড় হরফে, ব্রেইলে, অডিও-ক্যাসেটে, কমপিউটারের ডিস্কে বা ইমেলের মাধ্যমে পেতে পারেন।

Bengali

“本刊物備有其他的格式可供索取。這些包括有其他語言版，大字版，盲人用版，錄音帶版，電腦磁碟版或電子郵件版。”

Chinese

प्रार्थना करने पर यह प्रकाशन दूसरे रूपों में प्राप्त किया जा सकता है। जिस में सम्मिलित है, दूसरी भाषाओं में, बड़े छापे में, ब्रेअल, सुनने की टेप पर, कम्प्यूटर की डिस्क पर या ई-मेल द्वारा।

Hindi

“ਇਹ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ। ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ, ਵੱਡੇ ਛਾਪੇ ਤੇ, ਬ੍ਰੇਲ ਵਿਚ, ਸੁਣਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਟੇਪ ਤੇ, ਕੰਪਿਊਟਰ ਡਿਸਕ ਜਾਂ ਈ ਮੇਲ ਤੇ।”

Punjabi

“اس اشاعت کو متبادل اشكال میں درخواست کرنے پر حاصل کیا جاسکتا ہے۔ اس میں دوسری زبانیں، بڑا پرنٹ، بریل (جسے اندھے چھو کر پڑھ سکیں)، آڈیو کیسٹ، کمپیوٹر ڈسک یا ای میل شامل ہیں۔”

Urdu

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Polish

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