



Implementing the Disability Discrimination Act and Equality Standard for Local Government in the Education Service

RECOMMENDATION

1. To note the progress being made in the Education Service on implementing the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) (DDA) and the equality standard for local government.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Education Service is the largest department in the City Council, covering a complex range of services and linking to many partners within and outside the Council. The service includes:
 - 104 schools with delegated management, exercising responsibility for all personnel, curriculum, financial and premises matters within guidance from the Council's wide range of school support services
 - adult learning services
 - youth services
 - early years and childcare services
 - sport and leisure services.
- 2.2 The total of all employees – from permanent full-time through to part-time, temporary and casual – is in excess of 8,000, about half of whom are in schools.
- 2.3 This report therefore seeks to give a broad overview of progress across these services, but it cannot encapsulate the full detail of our work. The information is set out under a number of sub-headings below.

Provision for Pupils with Additional or Special Educational Needs (SEN)

- 2.4 To assist schools in complying with the DDA, the Education Service has provided a model policy format for all schools. This has given them a structure to consider the three areas covered by the DDA:
 - buildings
 - curriculum
 - information provision.

- 2.5 Schools have been provided with information relating to the audit of their premises, and are expected to plan medium and long-term for pupils and outside users to access the school premises. In some cases it will prove very challenging to promote full access due to the age and layout of the school. However, the Education Service, with schools, is continually assessing priorities with the aim of providing the highest level of accessibility possible through the use of the schools' access initiative funding.
- 2.6 Schools also have a responsibility to ensure that all pupils can access the curriculum regardless of their disability. Schools are currently working on the process of 'provision mapping' so that they are clear about all the pupils' needs and how they access learning.
- 2.7 The planning format also offers schools the opportunity to consider how pupils and outside users access the information that they provide, and how to plan for the future in improving this element.
- 2.8 A number of strategies and plans are also in place, which support and improve provision for pupils with additional or special needs:
- Statement of Intent on Inclusion
 - SEN Development Plan
 - Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties Strategy
 - Behaviour Support Plan
 - Attendance Strategy
 - Education Development Plan
 - Access Strategy
 - individual team business plans
 - work is also in progress on a wider Inclusion Strategy.

Access to Buildings

Schools

- 2.9 The City Council has a duty to improve the accessibility of schools for disabled pupils. The Access Strategy has enabled a number of schools to be adapted to provide physical access for disabled pupils, as well as staff, parents and members of the community.
- 2.10 All Derby schools completed an access audit questionnaire in December 2002. The results of this survey were used to put all schools into one of three categories of wheelchair access – excellent, good or limited access. Nine schools in Derby have excellent access for wheelchair users, 53 have good access and 42 have limited access. This information will be published in the admission guides for parents from this year.
- 2.11 The main source of funding for developing the strategy to improve access to schools is the Schools Access Initiative. The Council receives an allocation of Schools Access Initiative funding each year from the Department for Education and Skills – DfES. Our allocation for 2004/05 is £427,760.

2.12 The Schools Access Initiative funding is allocated using the following priorities:

- to meet the needs of pupils already attending schools
- to meet the needs of pupils about to join schools
- to develop a network of accessible schools so that children can progress through their schooling with their peers, from nursery to secondary education.

2.13 Projects have been completed at a number of city schools to improve facilities for disabled people using the Schools Access Initiative funding. Most of the projects are to improve access for wheelchair users, such as the installation of ramps, lifts and wider doors. A number of projects have also been carried out to provide or improve disabled people's toilets. Appendix 2 gives a list of Schools Access Initiative projects for 2004/05.

2.14 Access issues are always considered in the planning of any work involving the alteration or improvement of school premises. Every effort is made to improve access for disabled people. This is not only access for wheelchair users, but also improvements for people with sensory impairments, for example colour schemes, improved acoustics. Schools also make reasonable adjustments to allow for the inclusion of disabled pupils wherever possible.

Middleton House

2.15 The Education Service's administrative staff are mostly based at Middleton House, 27 St Mary's Gate. These offices are extremely difficult to adapt fully for disabled people because of their layout, especially differences in floor levels. Facilities for disabled people include:

- three designated parking spaces for disabled permit holders
- an additional 12 designated parking spaces for staff with short or long term mobility difficulties
- ramp to up the main entrance
- automatic doors at main entrance
- low counter at the main reception
- induction loop in reception area
- a new lift that is accessible for wheelchair users
- disabled people's toilets on the ground floor.

Adult Learning Service

2.16 The Education Service is responsible for five adult learning centres. Some adult learning activities also take place at schools across the city.

2.17 A suitability survey of all adult properties was carried out in Spring 2003. This looked at how well the properties meet the needs of their service users. One of the criteria used in the suitability surveys was accessibility for disabled users.

2.18 Modifications have or are being made to the building and car parking areas at the Multicultural Centre, Allenpark, and the Rycote Centre. Deaf alerters and hearing loops have been installed, additional Braille equipment purchased and specialist chairs and tables ordered. The Rycote Centre will be our only adult learning centre with specialist hoist equipment. This is due to be installed later this year. Money has been bid for and secured via the LSC Minor Works/DDA fund.

Youth Service

2.19 The Education Service is responsible for nine Youth Centres. A suitability survey of all Youth properties was carried out in Spring 2003. This looked at how well the properties meet the needs of their service users. One of the criteria used in the suitability surveys was accessibility for disabled users.

2.20 The following developments have been supported by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act funding from GOEM.

Lancaster Sports Centre

- Contribution towards lift to main sports hall to improve access for young people with disabilities

The SPACE

- Automatic front door for information, advice and counselling service

Youth House

- Toilet and shower for disabled people
- Extra group work room on ground floor
- Ramp access at front of premises
- Visual fire alarm adaptation for deaf young people

Firs Youth Centre

- Toilet for disabled young people
- Internal ramp to improve access on ground floor

Southgate Youth Centre

- Special needs sports facility
- Toilet and changing rooms for disabled young people
- Storage areas and new equipment for sports facility

Sport and Leisure and Community Centres

2.21 The Education Service is responsible for six sport and leisure properties and nine community centres. There are sixteen community centres that are leased to voluntary organisations and the Service is currently assisting these community associations in applying for external funding in order to ensure that properties are DDA compliant.

2.22 A DDA Access Improvement Programme has been devised for the sport and leisure properties and to date funding of £319,449 has been invested in the programme. Approximately £60,000 of funding has been set aside for DDA work scheduled for community centres.

- 2.23 Improvements include: the installation of induction loops for people who have hearing impairments; the upgrading of lighting and signage for people with sight impairments; modifications of toilets, shower areas and changing rooms for people with mobility impairments; lift installations; pool hoists; automatic doors; parking bays; ramps and tactile paving; lowering of reception desks and handrails. Access issues are always considered in the planning of any work involving the alteration or improvement of sport and leisure and community centres and every effort is made to improve access for people who are disabled.
- 2.24 The Education Service is part of the Derbyshire & Peak Park Sport & Recreation Forum who is involved in developing the Breakthrough Project. This is a practical move towards the provision of high quality PE for pupils with disabilities. The aim is to develop a whole school approach to PE and sport for the greater inclusion of young people with physical and sensory impairments in mainstream schools through an effective strategy for inclusion underpinned by a more effective staff structure and better coordinated support services.

Fire Evacuation Procedures

- 2.25 Schools have been prompted to review provision and procedures as part of an audit questionnaire, raising awareness. This deals with issues such as:
- Do you have numbers of staff, pupils and regular visitors with disabilities?
 - Are your evacuation procedures adequate and allow for persons with disabilities to evacuate the premises safely?
 - Do all staff understand their responsibilities for pupils in their care and the need to assist in getting them out of the premises?
- 2.26 Fire risk assessments have been distributed to all educational buildings 2000/2002 and in October 2004 schools will be reminded of the requirements of the Work Places Regulations 1997.
- 2.27 Some examples of what schools have achieved in order to meet evacuation requirements of pupils with special educational needs:
- In some schools, pupils with mobility difficulties have had timetables altered so that all of their lessons are delivered in ground floor accommodation where premises have more than one floor.
 - At St Benedict – as this is a multi site and multi levelled property – Evac chairs have been provided for floors above ground level to aid in the evacuation of pupils with mobility problems. Fire alarm system has been installed with flashing lights for the hard of hearing.
 - Ivy House special school – Fire alarm system upgraded and zoned so that strategic areas can be evacuated first given the high dependency of some of the pupils.
 - Reigate Primary – Dedicated fire alarm system to meet needs of people with hearing impairments.

2.28 Fire risk assessments have also been carried out at Middleton House. Because of the extremely limited access to most offices for disabled people, fire evacuation for visitors and staff with severely limited mobility is not an issue. Personal evacuation plans for staff with disabilities are being prepared during September/October 2004, following the introduction of a new general fire evacuation policy. Because the recently installed fire alarm system does not appear to have considered the needs of those with hearing impairments, a 'buddy system' is being developed for staff and visitors.

Personnel

2.29 139 staff have informed us that they are disabled people. All employees can access disability leave in accordance with the Council's procedures and a range of reasonable adjustments have been made such as:

- A successful application to Access to Work to part fund the purchase of sophisticated Digital hearing equipment for a centrally funded teacher in one of our special schools. This has enabled the teacher to take a more active role within the school and particularly to follow the numerous meetings she is required to attend. Previously this had been particularly difficult, tiring and stressful for the teacher. 8 hours per day classroom assistant support is also provided.
- A centrally based member of the administrative staff has paid time off to attend therapy treatment twice a week for a depressive illness. The treatment very often leaves the employee physically and mentally exhausted and their workload is managed accordingly and supported by the rest of the office team.
- A non-teaching member of staff working in the Special Educational Needs Service returned to work on a phased basis following a period of sick leave with arthritis which caused hip and back pain. The duties and responsibilities were reviewed taking into account their physical limitations, specialist furniture was purchased and their work based changed to avoid the need to climb stairs.
- A senior member of the teaching staff at an Infant school has been given the opportunity to return to work on a temporary part time basis following a long depressive illness. They were able to relinquish their senior responsibilities for a period of three terms in order to successfully and gradually return to full time duties.
- A secondary school teacher with a voice problem has been equipped with a voice amplifier to ensure that children at the back of the class could hear them. The school arranged for several different pieces of equipment to be trialled in the first instance.
- A specialist phone handset was purchased for a centrally based member of the administrative staff with hearing difficulties. This enabled them to carry out their full duties that included a significant proportion of time answering telephone queries. The same employee suffered with asthma and their workstation was relocated by a window to improve access to fresh air to aid breathing.

Information and Communication

2.30 All Education Service documents can be provided in a range of formats for disabled people such as Braille and large print. We can also arrange to provide BSL interpreters if anyone needs this facility.

2.31 The Council website has an Education Service section which will have all policy documents and other information available. The Council is currently improving website access for disabled people by strengthening versions of web pages, including text only, in line with national and international standards. This will allow disabled people with 'assistive' technologies to access the information.

Other service developments

2.32 The Youth Service has appointed one of its full time workers as a disability coordinator to have overall responsibility for the development and coordination of work with disabled young people. The work concentrates on meeting their personal and social educational needs. Young people have opportunities to take part in a wide range of sports and arts and craft activities as well as individual and group sessions on issues which affect their lives.

2.33 The disability coordinator is responsible for supporting work across the city including the following new projects:

- St Clare's after school club
- St Martins after school club
- Mandela Centre Saturday club supporting young people mainly from the black and minority ethnic communities in the inner city

2.34 These initiatives have been developed with key partners in schools, Social Services, Connexions and the voluntary sector.

2.35 Within adult learning, we are able to draw down both Access Funds and Additional Support Funds to assist learners with disability attending qualification courses. As this funding is not available to adults on leisure courses, the Adult Learning Service runs a Learning Partners scheme where specially trained volunteers assist learners with disabilities who are on Leisure courses. In return, the volunteers also participate in these courses at no cost to themselves. If specialist equipment needs to be made available to learners on Leisure Courses then this has to be met from an already tight budget.

Equality Standard for Local Government

2.36 We are represented on the Equality Standards Task Group, and are currently reviewing the activities needed from the department to contribute to the Council's action plan to achieve level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government. Under this plan, the department needs to take five actions, three of which are currently awaiting further external development. The remaining two – establishing equality objectives and targets, and monitoring arrangements – are being addressed in the course of current planning for the next financial year.

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Background papers:

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Implications

Appendix 2 – Schools Access Initiative Projects 2004/05

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

- 1 Capital programmes for schools, other education services and Council buildings take account of DDA related issues, as noted in the sections above. As also noted, a variety of funding sources is brought together to seek to achieve the greatest possible progress.

Legal

- 2.1 Employment and access to buildings and services is covered by the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
- 2.2 The Council has a duty to promote race equality under the Race Relations Act 1976 as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Achieving the levels of the Equalities Standard for Local Government will help demonstrate progress on this.

Personnel

3. Included in the main report.

Equalities impact

4. This is central to the implementation of the DDA provisions.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 5.1 Work to implement the DDA in the Education Service responds to the Corporate Plan objective for education – where provision responds to people's needs so they can develop skills and knowledge all through their lives leading to better life choices and chances. It is vital that these services make a difference and extend opportunities to all citizens in Derby.
- 5.2 The work also responds to the objective of protecting and supporting people – through social, education, housing and healthcare services working together to protect vulnerable adults and children reducing health inequalities and helping people live independent lives in the way they choose.

SCHOOLS ACCESS INITIATIVE PROJECTS 2004/05

School	Details of Project	Estimated Cost
Brackensdale Infant	Installation of lift in dining hall. Conversion of men's toilet into disabled people's toilet.	£36,700
Breadsall Hill Top Junior	Installation of lift to allow access to first floor.	£28,500
Brookfield Primary	Installation of lift to allow access to first floor, ramp to playground and handrails to main entrance.	£56,550
Cavendish Close Junior	Conversion of PE store into lift, medical room and disabled people's toilet.	£71,500
Cherry Tree Hill Infant	Installation of lift in reception area and ramp to front entrance. Conversion of cloakroom into disabled people's toilet and changing room.	£30,000
Gayton Community Junior	Contribution to work to replace a corridor and make it accessible to wheelchair users.	£6,000
Grampian Primary	Installation of ramps and new external doors to hall.	£8,300
Moorhead Primary	Conversion of medical room into disabled people's toilet. Replacement of two sets of doors.	£7,500
Oakwood Infant	Conversion of old sandpit into soft-play surfaced area with frame that can be used all year round by visually impaired child starting in September.	£9,000
Rosehill Infant	Installation of ramps and new doors.	£4,100
Springfield Primary	Conversion of storeroom into disabled people's toilet.	£25,000
Wren Park Primary	Extension at the front of school for disabled people's toilet, installation of platform lift on library steps and ramps into main school building and reception class.	£57,474
Chellaston	Installation of lift from main entrance to library as part of the school's project to improve the school entrance. This will make the school fully accessible to wheelchair users.	£47,965
Murray Park Community	Conversion of disused boy's toilet and disabled people's toilet into physiotherapy and sensory room, remodelling of second disabled people's toilet and replacement of doors.	£38,700
Noel-Baker Community	Contribution towards lottery funded scheme to provide a Multi Use Games Area at the school – provision of disabled people's parking spaces, dropped kerbs, handrails and signage, and improved access from school entrance to sports centre entrance.	£4,418

