



# **WESTMINSTER ADULT EDUCATION SERVICE**

## **DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME 2006 - 2009**

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### DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME

2006 – 2009

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## **Executive summary**

*Westminster Adult Education Service (WAES) has a new public duty to promote equality and prevent discrimination in disability from December 1<sup>st</sup> 2006.*

*This requires the introduction of a rolling scheme and action plan that runs for three years that involves disabled people in its production.*

*WAES recognises the barriers to employment created by disability and it aims to increase the number of disabled people employed by WAES.*

*WAES also recognises that it provides excellent support to disabled adult learners but that it needs to improve its data gathering so that it can better understand learners needs.*

*More extensive consultation and involvement with disabled people and organisations representing them is required.*

*The action plan is very demanding and if successful will transform the experience of disabled people at WAES.*

*It is divided into four challenges:*

- *To improve the recruitment process for disabled people*
- *Communication, consultation and involvement*
- *The democratic process*
- *Buildings, access and the environment*

## **Introduction**

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005, places a statutory duty on all public authorities to promote disability equality. This duty, which is effective from December 2006, requires all local authorities to undertake actions, which actively promote equality of opportunity for disabled people.

This positive duty brings about a significant change for Westminster Adult Education Service (WAES) and demands that we build disability equality into the beginning of our processes rather than make adjustments at the end. It moves us into a position where we and all other public sector organizations` become the champions for leading change. WAES fully supports this change in emphasis, which provides us with the opportunity to make a real difference for disabled people in the City of Westminster and London.

WAES, when carrying out its functions must have regard to the need to:

- Promote equal opportunities for disabled people
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Eliminate harassment of disabled people
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people

- Encourage the participation of disabled people in public life
- Take steps to take account of a person's disabilities even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably

Central to fulfilling this duty is the development and introduction of a Disability Equality Scheme. WAES must involve disabled people in the scheme development. WAES must develop a three-year action plan identifying how we will assess the impact our actions have on disabled people and the monitoring process.

The purpose of this Disability Equality Scheme is to explain how WAES will respond to its duty in meeting the above objectives. The scheme will promote equality for disabled people and introduce measures that work towards the elimination of discrimination.

The involvement of disabled people in this process along with representatives from disability organisations and service users in the Borough is critical to the success of this plan. WAES recognises that it has work to do in this area and is putting in place the structures and processes to ensure that this happens.

This scheme is in three sections. The first section provides background information on the recent changes to the Disability Discrimination Act and what is meant by Disability. The section also provides information on the number of disabled learners in WAES and employment statistics for WAES.

Section two identifies how we have developed the scheme, the way in which we will monitor progress and the process for assessing the impact of existing and future policies and procedures.

Section three contains the action plan, which identifies the key tasks that WAES will undertake over the next three years.

### **Positive about Disabled People** √√

In addition to our commitments within the Disability Equality Scheme, the determination of the City Council to promote disability equality has already been recognised. The City Council has been awarded the 'double tick', symbol that is monitored by Job Centre Plus. This award means that WAES has made a commitment to:

- Interview all disabled job applicants who meet the minimum requirements of the job
- Seek the views of disabled employees on how their skills can be developed at work
- Make every effort to ensure that any employee who becomes disabled is able to remain in work with us
- Take action to ensure that all employees develop the awareness of disability issues to make our commitments work
- Review our commitments and achievements and plan ways to improve and to inform employees of our plans.

The development of a Disability Equality Scheme will assist us in the achievement of meeting these commitments.

## **SECTION ONE**

### **1.1 What is a disability?**

The Disability Discrimination Act defines a disability as ‘a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities’. The effect must be substantial, (more than minor or trivial) adverse and long term (that is, has lasted or is likely to last for at least a year).

This definition has now been in use since 1995, however, changes in legislation in 2005 broadened the definition and now brings legal protection to people who are diagnosed with HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer. Previously any person with these conditions was only protected from discrimination once the condition began to have impact on their daily lives. People with mental illness are now also afforded protection.

These definitions provide the legal framework, which provides protection against discrimination. WAES recognises that to make a positive difference for disabled people we need to adopt a wider definition. We recognise that disability is also the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the mainstream life of a community on an equal level with others due to physical and social barriers.

We believe that by embracing the concepts of this social definition we can change organisational attitudes. With this approach, we focus on the rights of individuals and do not allow physical and social barriers to restrict our desire for change. It is this concept that has helped to frame the Action Plan that we set out in section four.

### **1.2 Disability in Westminster**

Across the U.K., it is believed there are around 10 million people who have a disability and have rights under the Disability Discrimination Act. This roughly equates to 1 in 5 of the population. There has been no national survey of disability since 1988. No figures for Westminster or London are available.

## **SECTION TWO**

### **2.1 Development and Involvement**

At the heart of the Disability Duty for the public sector is the requirement to involve disabled people in producing a Disability Equality scheme and the resulting Action Plan. The involvement of disabled people is not only a requirement but does bring the benefit in being able to learn from personal

experience of disabled people. In WAES, we aim not to just consult with disabled people but involve them in the process, jointly identifying the issues and agreeing the approaches to tackling them.

WAES works in an extensive network of partnerships and services for disabled learners are specifically developed in conjunction with Westminster City Council Social Services Department and Westminster Employment Service. Other partners include voluntary organisations with a specific interest in disability.

WAES recognises that consultation and inclusion of disabled people in service provision and development needs to widen and lead to real changes in delivery.

## **SECTION THREE – Impact at WAES**

### **3.1 Disabled Staff within WAES**

The following table shows the number of job applicants to WAES during 2005/06, the percentage of those who are disabled and the numbers appointed:

	Non Disabled	% of total	Disabled	% of total
Applications				
Interviewed				
Appointed				

This table shows the disability profile of our staff:

Nationally, disability is recognised as a significant barrier to employment. Figures provided by the Shaw Trust illustrate this powerfully:

	<b>Non-disabled people</b>	<b>Disabled people</b>
Total	29,401,000	7,021,000
In employment	23,623,000	3,483,000
ILO unemployed	1,047,000	288,000
Economically inactive	4,731,000	3,250,000
Economically inactive who 'would like to work'	1,128,000	918,000

<b>Main impairment</b>	<b>% of all disabled</b>	<b>% in employment</b>
Diabetes	6	67
Difficulty in hearing	1	62
Skin conditions, allergies	2	65
Chest/breathing problems	11	64

Heart, blood pressure/circulation problems	12	57
Difficulty in seeing	2	50
Stomach, liver, kidney or digestive problems	5	56
Other health problems or disabilities	8	54
Arms or hands	6	53
Back or neck	16	46
Legs or feet	11	48
Epilepsy	2	52
Speech impediment	Less than 1	30
Progressive illness not included elsewhere	5	43
Learning difficulties	3	25
Depression, bad nerves or anxiety	7	24
Mental illness, phobias, panics or other nervous disorders	3	11

The data for WAES underlines our particular challenge of encouraging more disabled people to apply for jobs with us. We accept that of the XXX posts filled in 2005/06 more than X people may well have had a disability but declined to declare this. A question must be whether people feel that they will be discriminated against by declaring a disability and therefore believe that their job chances will be reduced.

### 3.2 Disabled Learners 2005/6

This table shows figures for 2005/6 relating to student success, retention and achievement, which is overall at the national benchmark success rate but lower than the norm for the Service.

Disability	% Success	% Retained and Completed	% Achieved	% Retained (completed and continuing)
Unknown	79	90	87	91
visual	75	90	83	90
hearing	46	85	55	85
mobility	70	80	88	80
physical	72	91	79	94
medical	75	96	78	100
emotional/behavioural	75	75	100	75
mental health	52	88	59	88

temporary	71	93	77	93
profound/complex	60	100	60	100
multiple	50	83	60	83
other	83	94	88	95
no disability	76	91	84	93
not known/not provided	70	89	79	91
	68	89	77	90

WAES recognises that there is a gap in its knowledge at the point of enrolment about its disabled learners with 39% of enrollers declaring an “unknown” disability and 58% either not providing and answer to this question on our enrolment form or not providing specific information. Only 2% firmly declared that they did not have a disability. Action is required to improve data gathering at this point, not least because the data seems to show that we appear to have a much higher level of disability in our learner population than we would expect and we have no substantial reason to believe this is true.

The second table shows detailed information about learners receiving additional support and their success rates. Although this includes a number of learners with disabilities within the meaning of the act, it is not an exact match. It does, however, provide a detailed review of WAES success in supporting learners with clearly identified need, with a success rate 11% above the norm for the college and 14% above the national benchmark. A comparison against those not receiving additional support is provided in the third table. In 2005/6, 4.08% of those starting learning received additional support. This suggests there may be more people in the learner population with a disability within the meaning of the act. However, we do not know if they would benefit from any of our support services.

NVQ Level	Learning Aim Type	Sum of Starts No-Xfr	Success Rate	Sum of Ret No Comp	Retention Rate	Sum of Ach No	Achievement Rate
1	Other: 24 weeks+	28	75%	26	93%	21	81%
	Other: short	189	67%	171	90%	127	74%
<b>1 Total</b>		<b>217</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>75%</b>
2	GCSE	2	100%	2	100%	2	100%
	Other: 24 weeks+	19	84%	17	89%	16	94%
	Other: short	95	78%	88	93%	74	84%
<b>2 Total</b>		<b>116</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>86%</b>
3	Other: 24 weeks+	6	83%	5	83%	5	100%
	Other: short	17	88%	17	100%	15	88%
<b>3 Total</b>		<b>23</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>91%</b>
4 + 5 + H	Other: 24 weeks+	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>4 + 5 + H Total</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
X	Other: 24 weeks+	8	88%	7	88%	7	100%
	Other: short	261	95%	257	98%	248	96%
<b>X Total</b>		<b>269</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>97%</b>

<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>626</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>590</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>87%</b>
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**Learners**  
**No ALS**

<b>NVQ Level</b>	<b>Learning Aim Type</b>	<b>Sum of Starts No-Xfr</b>	<b>Success Rate</b>	<b>Sum of Ret No Comp</b>	<b>Retention Rate</b>	<b>Sum of Ach No</b>	<b>Achievement Rate</b>
1	Other: 24 weeks+	515	85%	478	93%	439	92%
	Other: short	6525	56%	5345	82%	3683	69%
<b>1 Total</b>		<b>7040</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>5823</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>4122</b>	<b>71%</b>
2	GCSE	52	60%	34	65%	31	91%
	NVQ	39	51%	37	95%	20	54%
	Other: 24 weeks+	232	70%	182	78%	162	89%
	Other: short	1979	63%	1649	83%	1245	76%
<b>2 Total</b>		<b>2302</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>1902</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>1458</b>	<b>77%</b>
3	NVQ	21	62%	21	100%	13	62%
	Other: 24 weeks+	88	59%	61	69%	52	85%
	Other: short	363	78%	342	94%	283	83%
<b>3 Total</b>		<b>472</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>82%</b>
4 + 5 + H	NVQ	22	36%	22	100%	8	36%
	Other: 24 weeks+	15	0%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>4 + 5 + H Total</b>		<b>37</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>36%</b>
X	Other: 24 weeks+	44	64%	28	64%	28	100%
	Other: short	5427	96%	5394	99%	5192	96%
<b>X Total</b>		<b>5471</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>5422</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>5220</b>	<b>96%</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>15322</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>13593</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>11156</b>	<b>82%</b>

### 3.3 Monitoring

To ensure ongoing monitoring of the scheme members of the WAES Equality and Diversity Committee have agreed to act as a focus and reference group and will meet three times a year to audit the WAES progress against the action plan and to highlight areas for future development. Reports on progress will be made annually to the WAES Board of Governors and Senior Management team.

Each of the WAES Directorates will be required to identify elements within their planning processes that support the Disability Equality Scheme and the appropriate actions they will take to ensure the action plan is implemented.

### **3.4 Assessing Impact**

One of the key ways of embedding disability equality into the policies, procedures and activities of WAES is to systematically undertake equality impact assessments. We have been undertaking these in respect of Race Relations, as required under the Race Relations Amendment Act. We are also undertaking impact assessments under the six diversity strands, which include disability.

The purpose of these impact assessments is to ensure that an authority's activities do not disadvantage a particular section of the community in any way (either intentionally or not). Where the assessment identifies an adverse impact or a missed opportunity to achieve a more positive impact then the City Council will need to identify how this can be remedied.

An impact assessment is not an end in itself but is merely a process, which we will go through in order to identify and then act on the need to modify and change policies and practices to better promote, in this case, disability equality.

In support of the Disability Duty, we will ensure that Equality Impact Assessments are conducted within WAES.

## **SECTION FOUR**

### **4.1 Action Plan**

In many respects, this is the key area of the Disability Equality Scheme. We have developed jointly these targets for the Service. If met they will make a significant difference to disabled people in Westminster, particularly in the area of communication, representation and learning and employment opportunities.

Many of the targets may seem straightforward and achievable, however, to realize these aims within the timescales will not be easy. We have deliberately set ourselves many targets within the first year of the scheme; it is only by setting these challenges for the Service that we can aspire to seeing a real difference for disabled people in the City.

## Challenge 1: To improve the Recruitment Process for Disabled People

Ref	Subject	Action	Resources	Responsible Officer	Timescale
1A	Review of learners and staff recruitment and selection training	Ensure staff who are involved in the recruitment process are fully aware of their responsibilities under DDA and use best practice	Within existing resources and current commitments	Head of HR, Director of Student Support + Director of Curriculum + Quality	2007
1B	Develop positive action workshops	To see an increase in the number of disabled people applying for posts	See above	Head of HR	2007
1C	Identify disability champions	Champions in place in each directorate to take a lead in disability issues	See above	Head of Service	2007
1D	Ensure robust equality statement in procurement process and examine extent to which contractors promote the employment of disabled people	Ensure equality practices of external providers are monitored and comply with best practice	See above	Director of Finance and Information	2007
1E	Review of √√ symbol	Ensure the standards of the √√ are adopted and complied with. √√ info to be included in job information packs	See above	Head of HR	2007
1F	Audit job descriptions and person specifications for barriers	As each Job Description / Person Specification is updated, remove unnecessary barriers	See above	Head of HR	2007
1G	Review use of equality statement in recruitment	Positive statement to be adopted for all job advertisements	See above	Head of HR	2007
1H	Review learner and job application forms — consider DDA implications	Following consultation amend disability declaration on application forms	See above	Head of HR	2007

Ref	Subject	Action	Resources	Responsible Officer	Timescale
1I	Provide robust data for monitoring of learners and workforce	Undertake campaign to encourage self-reporting by employees using personnel system	Within existing resources and current commitments	Head of HR Director of Finance Information	2007
1J	Monitor planned E & D training	Senior Management Team to be involved in the development of disability awareness training	See above	Head of HR Head of Service	2006 – 07
1K	Increase the number of people with disabilities within the workplace	Candidates who meet minimum requirements to be given a non-competitive interview	See above	Head of HR	2007 – 09
1L	Identify work experience placements in Directorates	Each Directorate to identify a minimum of 1 work experience placement per year for people with disabilities	See above	Head of HR	2007 - 09
1M	Improve representation of disabled people on WAES part-time staff establishment	Undertake recruitment fair at Job Centre	See above	Head of HR	2007 - 09
1N	Develop disability awareness training for all staff	Directorates to identify all employees to be trained. Involve service users and appropriate groups in the delivery of identified training sessions	See above	Head of HR Directors	2007-09
1O	Increase awareness of Equalities issues in the procurement process	Plan and develop workshops for managers involved in the procurement process	See above	Director of Finance and Information	2007

## Challenge 2: Communication, Consultation and Involvement

Ref	Subject	Action	Resources	Responsible Officer	Timescale
2A	Ensure WAES literature is available in appropriate formats	Guidelines on publications and consultation to be incorporated into communications handbook and website	Within existing resources and current commitment	Publicity Manager	2006 - 07
2B	Ensure WAES Website is disability friendly and complies with AAA standards	Audit of website	See above	Publicity Manager	2006 - 07
2C	Identify key WAES information to be available on DVD with signer	Explore the feasibility of using screens in reception to show information by signing	See above	Publicity Manager	2007
2D	Improve the access to telephone services for deaf and hard of hearing people	Investigate the provision of a text messaging service for key WAES information lines	See above	Director of Finance and Information	2007
2E	Improve the access to information by ensuring audio provision in meeting rooms and reception areas	Provision of loop system in reception areas and meeting rooms. Training and guidelines to be developed.	See above	Director of Finance and Information	2007 – 08
2F	Ensure compliance with WAES House style	Develop programme of awareness and briefing workshops on communications protocols	See above	Publicity Manager	
2G	Improve access to WAES website by ensuring use of appropriate formats. (Including B.S.L.)	Establish and adopt best practice. Identify and agree key information, which should be provided using British Sign Language	See above	Publicity Manager	2007

Ref	Subject	Action	Resources	Responsible Officer	Timescale
2H	Any consultation conducted by WAES should be widely promoted and made fully accessible for anybody who wishes to participate	Using corporate consultation standards ensure full access for Disabled People	Within existing resources and current commitment	Publicity Manager	2007
2I	Development of staff attitudes towards genuine participation	Ensure that all relevant training and development programmes identify the benefits of involvement of disabled people in communication and participation processes	See above	Head of HR	2007
2J	Ensure that all policies, procedures, strategies and functions are subject to an impact assessment	All policies, procedures, strategies and functions that identify an impact on disabled people to be audited by DES Strategy Group	See above	Head of Service	2007 – 09
2K	Explore use of 'Browse Aloud' or equivalent for WAES websites	To promote and monitor usage of 'Browse Aloud' speech assisted technology	See above	Publicity Manager	2006 – 09
2L	Empower community and voluntary sector partners to engage in the consultation, development and scrutiny of the DES	In liaison with representatives identify training and development opportunities	See above	Director of Curriculum and Quality	2006 - 09

### Challenge 3: The Democratic Process

Ref	Subject	Action	Resources	Responsible Officer	Timescale
3A	Increase awareness of the role of councillors, governors and student representatives	Provide a range of information in appropriate formats including web flyer and	Within existing resources and current commitments	Head of Service and Chair of WAES Governors	2007
3B	Encourage disabled people to actively engage in the democratic process	Examine the possibility of setting up a mentoring programme for disabled people to 'shadow' a governor	As above	Head of Service and Chair of Governors	2007 - 08
3C	Conduct / monitor access audits WAES facilities and buildings	Ensure that buildings and facilities meet the needs of disabled people in terms of access and lighting.	As above	Head of Service and Chair of Governors	2007 - 08
3D	Ensure staff are aware of the needs of disabled people	Ensure that all staff receive appropriate disability awareness training		Head of Service and Chair of Governors	2007 - 09
3E	Increase involvement of disabled people in public appointment roles such as WAES governors	Develop programme to disabled people into taking up these posts		Head of Service and Chair of Governors	2007 - 09

## Challenge 4: Buildings, Access and the Built Environment

Ref	Subject	Action	Resources	Responsible Officer	Timescale
4A	Identify issues re access to WAES sites	Review previous surveys and update	Commission consultants	Director of Finance and Information	2007
4B	Evacuation procedures	Seek guidance from the Chief Fire Officer on appropriate evacuation procedures from WAES buildings in respect of people with disabilities.	Competent Fire Safety Officer to liaise with FO	Director of Finance and Information	Immediate and throughout 2006 - 07
4C	Access signage provision for visitors and employees in WAES buildings. To include floor textures for visually impaired people	Review previous access audit of WAES buildings to evaluate appropriate signing and to recommend improvements for this and floor textures	Commission audit to include lighting £2K	Director of Finance and Information  Publicity Manager	2007
4D	Audit of accessible toilets	Review audit of WAES buildings	In-house	Director of Finance and Information	2007
4E	Provide appropriate notices in meeting rooms	Ensure that all meeting rooms have notices that provide essential information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hearing loop</li> <li>• Accessible toilets</li> <li>• Evacuation procedures</li> </ul>	Cost of design and production of notices £500	Director of Finance and Information  Publicity Manager	2007
4F	Accessible parking	Review allocation of accessible parking for visitors and employees	In-house	Director of Finance and Information	2007
4G	New build	Ensure that EIA is carried out on project	Within existing allocation for project	Director of Finance and Information	2007