



# DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME

## WARWICKSHIRE PROBATION AREA

### Annual Scheme Review

27<sup>th</sup> February 2009



## **1. Introduction**

Warwickshire Probation published its first Disability Equality Scheme on the 4th December 2006. This is a three year scheme which will be formally reviewed every year.

This report describes the progress over the second year of the scheme and includes details of the progress made against the original action plan.

## **2. Summary of progress**

### **2.1 Disability Forum and Staff Support Group**

One of the key actions for the first year was the establishment of a Disability Forum. This forum has been created to provide an opportunity for disabled staff and a number of other staff to identify issues affecting both staff and service users. At last year's review, it was agreed that a staff support group would be beneficial for disabled staff. At the time of this review, terms of reference for a Disability Action Group have been drafted, but the group has yet to have its first meeting.

### **2.2 Improvements for staff**

The Human Resources team have ensured that Warwickshire Probation retains the 'Positive about disabled employees award' (March 08).

A new Occupational Health provider was contracted in February 2007. Staff now have increased access to quality advice and support.

There is a National Disabled Staff Support Network for all staff working in Probation. This provides support and information to staff. It is also involved in providing feedback to policy developments. In addition there is an annual conference at which Warwickshire Probation disabled staff are represented.

A new sickness absence management policy has been implemented which provides additional disability guidance for staff and managers.

### **2.3 Training and Communication**

This remains a priority for achievement of the objectives of the scheme. A one day Diversity Training course was provided for

all staff during 2008. This placed disability within the wider context of diversity.

We launched our new Sickness Absence Management Policy in October 2008. A key component of this policy is the introduction of clear guidelines for managing 'Disability Absence'. This was supported by training for all managers.

## **2.4 Assistive Technology**

Over 7% of our workforce now use Assistive Technology to some extent in order to enable use of computer systems. Software tools include applications to assist with voice recognition, text reading and dyslexia support software. A wide range of hardware is used including: specialist laptop computers, computer screens, keyboards, dictaphones and headsets.

We have learned that not two installations are the same and the importance of careful implementation. We have identified a member of the Information Unit as the lead on assistive technology and she is part of the (probation) national assistive technology group. This ensures that as a small organisation we can benefit from the learning of a much wider group of users working in the same area.

## **2.5 Improvements for service users**

During the last year funding has been obtained to enable the Shaw Trust (a national charity which supports disabled and disadvantaged people to prepare for work) to send a worker into each Probation Office on a regular basis in order to help support offenders into appropriate learning/ skills/employment. The focus is with support for Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and learning difficulties.

A suggestion has been made to consider developing a resource pack including charities or groups working with the disabled. We will promote this as a proposal for a national development.

## **2.6 Physical Access to Buildings**

We have reviewed the status of our Building DDA Compliance. The Disability Forum have also been consulted on their views on the current buildings. Overall, the level of physical access provided by current buildings remains poor.

Service users can gain access to and receive a service from all our 'operational' buildings with the exception of the Kenilworth

Road Approved Premises and the Rugby Probation Office. However, in many cases the premises are far from user friendly and can involve alternative arrangements at the same office.

Staff access to office buildings is more problematic. Meetings and training are arranged to ensure appropriate accessibility.

Limitations of our current buildings are recognised by the National Probation Service and plans are in place to review the whole estate for its suitability and statutory compliance during 2009.

In the longer term out three main office locations will be in Nuneaton, Rugby and Leamington Spa.

- The Nuneaton office is a 'new' building completed in 2005 providing reasonably good access for both staff and service users.
- The Rugby office is an old building needing a lift. A location has been identified and subject to funding from the Ministry of Justice, a lift should be installed in 2009.
- Building work started in 2008 to create a new Justice Centre in Leamington Spa. This will be completed for occupation by December 2010. Disabled staff from all the agencies who will use the building have been consulted in relation to the design and fit-out of the new building.

## **2.7 Monitoring**

We have implemented a new process for ensuring that we identify and record and disabilities for both staff and service users (using the National Probation Service monitoring form). There are a number of examples of 'reasonable adjustments' for example using home visits when it would be problematic to travel to a probation office.

Warwickshire Probation has 19 members of staff for whom we have provided a range of reasonable adjustments (up from 13 last year).

The annual Staff Survey was completed by 70% of staff. There were 16 staff who considered themselves as disabled (13% of those who completed the survey). If this is a representative response, then there are around 23 staff who would consider themselves to be disabled within the meaning of the DDA. There remain some areas for improvement identified, for example around 7 staff (6% responses) stated that they had experienced discrimination because of their disability. This compares to 3% race and 8% gender.

Monitoring of disability for Offenders has indicates that we gain information from around 70% of offenders (with a target of 95%). This indicates that around 11% of offenders have a disability. We plan to introduce monthly reporting to include more detailed analysis of our service users.

### **2.8 Equality Impact Assessments**

New policies and procedures are now routinely being impact assessed. In most cases this uses and builds on the EIA which has been produced by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) prior to receiving notification of the change.

### **2.8 Working with the National Probation Service**

We continue to work closely with other Probation Areas and within the framework of the National Probation Service.

There is a National Disabled Staff Network which supports staff and influences service-wide developments. Currently the Regional Coordinator for the West and East Midlands is a Probation Officer working for Warwickshire Probation.

Unfortunately, our main probation specific IT systems (CRAMS and OASys) have a poor interface with most Assistive Technology. This issue has been recognised and a major programme of IT systems development projects has been established to implement improved information systems.

## **3. Priorities for the next year**

These broadly remain as developed by the Disability Forum during the previous year, and include:

- (a) Review working practices for identification of hidden disabilities for both staff and offenders. Making greater use of surveys, particularly to gain feedback from offenders.
- (b) More detailed analysis of monitoring of outcomes for disabled service users.
- (c) Launch disabled staff support group (Disability Action Group)
- (d) Continue to develop and deliver training, to consider delivering another round of disability equality training to staff.

- (e) Continue to share and identify good practice by working with other local and national organisations.
- (f) Organisational review of reasonable adjustments to identify organisational learning.
- (g) Continue to develop support for users of Assistive Technology including keeping up to date and pooling of knowledge in the region.
- (h) Review of Policies including: Diversity (review policy); Stress Management (review policy); and Reasonable Adjustments Policy (Post Implementation Review)

## 4. Review of action plan

### Warwickshire Probation Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan – (2006 – 2009)

The attached table, details the action plan from the DES which was launched on 4th December 2006

<b>Objective One Ensuring the Disability Equality Scheme is implemented</b>				
<b>Key Task</b>	<b>Time Scale</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>How will this be achieved</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Agree roles and responsibilities for implementing plan	Dec 2006	Area Executive Team	Detailed action plan	Completed.
Raise Awareness of the Scheme and compliance with the duty	2007	Chief Officer	Team Briefing. Training for Managers and Staff. Communication by the Disability Forum.	Training completed:  Disability Awareness Training for all staff (half-day).  Diversity training for all staff during 2008. (full day)  Training for Managing Disability Related Absence.  New training requirements to be reviewed annually.
Third-party partners and procurement.	April 2007 onwards	Assistant Chief Officer (Business Support)	As contracts and Service Level Agreements are reviewed, selection criteria will require evidence of a proactive Disability Equality Scheme.	Process identified. To be implemented as services are procured.

Review the Scheme annually	Dec 2007 and annually thereafter	Assistant Chief Officer (Business Support)	Reports to the Board Committee responsible for its implementation (Human Resources, Diversity and Communication Committee). Annual reports on progress to the Board and revise as appropriate.	Board formally reviewed the progress of the Scheme in July 2007, January 2008 and March 2009.
Evaluation of the Scheme	December 08	Assistant Chief Officer (Business Support)	Independent evaluation of progress.	Completed.
Revise the Scheme for 2010	October 2009	Assistant Chief Officer (Business Support)	Key disability equality priorities revised with involvement from disabled people. Incorporate national input from National Offender Management Service including priorities and lessons learned.	Completed.

<b>Objective Two Impact assessment for policies and functions</b>				
<b>Key Task</b>	<b>Time Scale</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>How will this be achieved</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Identify and prioritise all functions and policies relevant to the duty	December 2006	Assistant Chief Officer (Business Support)	Nationally: cross-unit working group established to assess all policies and functions for adverse impact  Warwickshire: Priority processes identified by Disability Forum and by Area Executive Team.	Nationally all key functions and policies have been assessed.  Detailed assessments being incorporated into major review of local policies and procedures.
Service Review to include Disability Equality	June 2007	Area Executive Team	Review of services to reduce re-offending against availability of these services to identify key	Ongoing. Disability and Diversity considerations are included in ongoing

			challenges and priorities.	programme of Best Value Reviews.
Detailed assessment of current procedures	2007	Area Manager: Offender Management  Human Resources Manager: Staff	Area Executive Team and Disability Forum to meet to identify priority procedures for detailed assessment and recommendations.	A policy review schedule is in place that ensures regular review of all policies. All reviews include Impact Assessments.
All new policies and functions are impact assessed before implementation.	Ongoing	Area Executive Team	Using the National Probation Service Equality Impact Assessment Template.	Ongoing.

<b>Objective Three Ensuring all buildings are accessible and compliant with the legislation</b>				
<b>Key Task</b>	<b>Time Scale</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>How will this be achieved</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Review Area compliance plan including interim contingency plans.	March 2007	Assistant Chief Officer (Business Support)	Reported to the Board. Communication of agreed contingency plans to all staff.	Building compliance reviewed. Current level of physical access remains poor (particularly in the South of the County).
Monitor plan for new offices in Leamington Spa and redevelopment at Rugby.	Annually	Assistant Chief Officer (Business Support)	Ensure that contingency plans are in place should either of these two projects not be completed on time.	Proposals for Lift in Rugby Office in development. Leamington Office will be completed in 2010.
Focus group to ensure DDA compliance for the new justice in Leamington.	March 2007	Assistant Chief Officer (Business Support)	Work with multi-agency project team (led by Warwickshire Police) to ensure that the new justice center meets the needs of disabled employees and service users.	Completed. Some significant improvements identified to building design. Plan in place to involve all Disabled Staff in finalising details.

<b>Objective Four Developing greater processes for authentic involvement of disabled people</b>				
<b>Key Task</b>	<b>Time Scale</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>How will this be achieved</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Establish a (staff) Disability Forum	December 2006	Assistant Chief Officer (Business Support)	Request from volunteers and request for representatives to ensure that all aspects of service are covered.	Group established during 2006. Group stopped meeting in 2008 as part of the transition to a staff support group (Disability Action Group)
Ensuring disabled people are involved in the development of new <b>national</b> policies and functions.	Ongoing	Assistant Chief Officer (Business Support)	Encourage staff to join the National Disabled Staff Support Network (NDSN)	Events such as the NDSN conference are published to the whole Area and staff are provided assistance in order to attend.
Ensuring disabled people are involved in the development of new <b>area</b> policies and functions	Ongoing	Effective Practice Manager – Service Users  Human Resources Manager – Employees	Discussing with existing disabled service users (usually 1 to 1).  Discussing with existing disabled staff in addition to usual consultation with unions and staff groups.	Ongoing. Two examples have been, the revised Sickness Absence Policy and the Process for Reasonable Adjustments Policy.
Ensuring disabled people are authentically involved throughout Warwickshire Probation Area.	Ongoing	Assistant Chief Officer (Business Support)	Ensuring that all feedback (staff surveys, exit reviews etc) monitor disability considerations.	Ongoing. The Chief Officer and Chair of the Board plan to meet, at least annually, with all staff support groups.

<b>Objective Five Ensuring equitable service delivery for disabled service users</b>				
<b>Key Task</b>	<b>Time Scale</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>How will this be achieved</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Implement monitoring of disabled offenders	Dec 2006	Assistant Chief Officer (Offender Management)	Monitoring using the nationally agreed categories.	Completed. Need to monitor trends to ensure that service meets needs of all disabled service users.
Monitoring performance against the NPD targets and measures for disabled offenders	Monthly from April 07	Assistant Chief Officer (Offender Management)	Results reviewed quarterly by the Diversity Advisory Group and the Board sub-group for Diversity.	Disability monitoring now included in monthly performance reports to all management.
Working in partnership with external organisations on the findings and recommendations of research that is significant to disabled offenders	Ongoing	National Offender Management Service	Reports to national Diversity Programme Board.  Locally, we will work to ensure that staff are trained and up to date with good practice in relation to service delivery. This will include use of the Area's intranet to collate relevant information in a more user friendly form.	Ongoing. The work started during 2008 with the Shaw Trust provides a positive impact to service users.
Ensure that procurement processes are equitable for disability organisations	Ongoing	Assistant Chief Officer (Business Support)	Ensure all new Service Level Agreements are impact assessed and that appropriate evidence is required relating to Disability Equality.	Ongoing. For example this was included in a recent contract for provision of an Accredited Programme to Drink Impaired Drivers.

<b>Objective Six Attracting, Recruiting, Retaining and Career Progression of disabled employees</b>				
<b>Key Task</b>	<b>Time Scale</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>How will this be achieved</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Implementation of new process for supporting disabled staff	March 2007	Human Resources Manager	Guide for staff and managers. This will be reviewed by the Staff Care Group and Disability Forum.	Pilot process trialed with a number of staff.
Retain the 'Positive about disabled employees award'	Annually	Human Resources Manager	Application to renew. Implementation of any agreed actions.	Award retained in February 2008.
Implement monitoring of disabled employees	Dec 2006	Human Resources Manager	Monitoring using the nationally agreed categories. Inclusion in half-yearly HR report to the Board.	Data now communicated to national staff database and included in national benchmarking reports.
Ensure all employees have access to high quality Assistive Technology.	Ongoing	Human Resources Manager	Monitor all Reasonable Adjustments and evaluate the success of all Assistive Technology implementation.	A wide range of Assistive Technology is now in use. The most significant barrier is currently the poor AT interface with the Case Management software. This issue is being tackled by the national service as this case management system is used by many probation areas.