

**Supporting organisations to implement
the requirements of the Duty to
Promote Disability Equality**

Project Framework

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Section 1: Introduction

Background

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995, which has now been amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, places a duty, known as the general duty, on all public authorities to promote disability equality. In addition, there are also specific duties placed on listed public authorities including education providers and the LSC, HEFCE, Ofsted and ALI. These organisations are required to produce a Disability Equality Scheme.

This legislation builds on current DDA requirements but at the same time involves a new approach. The new duty brings a shift from a legal framework which is about individual rights to one in which public sector organisations positively promote change and address discrimination and institutional barriers that prevent full participation by disabled people. The duty provides a framework for performance improvement towards greater equality.

The DRC have published a draft code of practice. The final version of this Statutory Code of Practice for England and Wales should be available from December 2005 and it is likely that organisations will need to publish their first Disability Equality Scheme by Dec 2006

Aims and Objectives of the Project

The overall aim of this project is to support organisations within the post school education sector to respond to the DDA new duty on public sector bodies to promote disability equality in a way which does not merely seek compliance but actively promotes opportunities for disabled people.

The project will work in partnership with a range of organisations working in and with the Learning and Skills and Higher Education sectors, who will participate in different ways.

The project has four main objectives:

- To analyse the specific requirements of the Duty to promote Disability Equality
- To develop, with partner organisations, models of how best to respond to the duty
- To draw up guidelines for organisations illustrated by case studies*
- To develop a strategy for disseminating the guidelines*

* These objectives apply particularly to the Learning and Skills sector.

Summary of strategy

The approach will involve working in partnership with a number of organisations that will have responsibilities under the Duty to Promote Disability Equality. It will build on what has been learned from the implementation of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, with which there are some similarities yet distinctive differences. The centrality of disabled people throughout the process is critical and the project has an advisory group to inform the development and outcomes of the project. The approach will involve briefing participating organisations, helping them to consider the requirements of the general duties and the specific duties in the legislation, offering support in drawing up a Disability Equality Scheme and so meet the requirements of the Duty to promote Disability Equality.

These organisations will come together in a series of seminars to act as critical friends, working together to explore issues. They will have the opportunity to consider how to go about creating their own draft Disability Equality Scheme, in their own context. Their progress will then be shared in order to pull together generalisable messages for implementation. This will include ideas about the processes involved, the main principles, key points, and practical examples. This legislation will require participants, as employers, to review their own staffing profiles and human resources policies, procedures and practice. It will also require organisations to reflect critically on their practice in relation to disabled learners and/or other disabled people with whom they work.

Collaboration with other organisations

The project will be managed by the Consortium led by the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) including Skill and NIACE and working with the support of the Disability Rights Commission (DRC).

Research and development will be carried out in collaboration with a wide range of partner organisations. There are 3 strands of main activity:

1. Public sector organisations in the Learning and Skills sector that support providers (including the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA)).
2. Education providers in the Learning and Skills sector (including FE, sixth form and specialist colleges, and Adult Community Learning providers)
3. Providers of Higher Education in partnership with the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) and the National Disability Team (NDT)

Other key partners, such as the Adult Learning Inspectorate, OFSTED, and the Higher Education Funding Council for England may also wish to participate.

Benefits that will be gained as a result of this project

We hope that the work that is carried out by this project will be of great benefit to all participants. One of the strengths of this project is that a wide range of organisations are involved and different organisations will contribute in different ways.

The Learning and Skills sector will benefit from advice and examples to promote disability equality generated through the project which may also be of value to other public sector organisations. This is intended to achieve positive outcomes for the full range of disabled learners and employees and to assist providers in moving from avoidance of discrimination and passive compliance to active promotion of disability equality.

Participating organisations will have the benefit of mutual support in developing their Disability Equality Schemes from the DRC, the project team and other participating organisations. The outcomes of the project will be of benefit to the post school education sector by producing a range of support materials with practical examples together with a strategy for wider application.

Section 2. Partners

The following organisations have been invited to be partners:

Public sector organisations that are not education providers

- Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI)
- Equality Challenge Unit (ECU)
- Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)
- Learning and Skills Council (LSC)
- Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA)
- National Disability Team (NDT)
- Ofsted (observer)

Education providers in the Learning and Skills sector

- Blackpool & Fylde College
- College of West Anglia
- King George V Sixth Form College
- Milton Keynes Council
- Morley College
- National Star College
- Oaklands College
- Somerset College of Arts and Technology
- Thomas Danby College
- The Working Men's College
- Wakefield College

Higher Education providers

- Anglia Polytechnic University
- London School of Economics and Political Science
- University of Central Lancashire
- University of Durham
- University of Newcastle upon Tyne
- University of Plymouth

Section 3

Ways of working

We are hoping that partners, in the main, will work collaboratively and provide peer support to one another. This will involve acting as a critical friend and sharing information, progress and problems regularly with other partner organisations. Opportunities to share will be structured around 3 seminars and partners may also wish to set up visits, meetings, videoconferences, teleconferences, or contact by email and telephone. We may want to set up an email group to facilitate networking and this will be discussed at the first briefing seminar in May 2005

Support will be provided through the seminars and networking between partners rather than through visits from the project team. However, if specific issues arise, the point of contact for HE organisations will be Liz Sutherland at ECU for employer facing issues and Yvonne Dickinson at NDT for student facing issues. The contact for other partners will be Christine Rose.

Timescales

The project will run from May 2005 to March 2006, and may involve subsequent dissemination activity. Partner organisations will be invited to be involved throughout.

Modes of participation

Partners will contribute in different ways.

Education providers in the LSC sector will be contracted to

- Attend each seminar
- Submit a project plan (see below) to demonstrate how they intend to carry out the work within their own organisations by **30th June 2005**
- Engage in collaborative working and active peer support with other partners
- Keep a log of progress throughout the project. This will help to reflect on progress when writing interim and final reports; successes, what worked well, difficulties and the ways in which these were addressed, how disabled learners and staff were involved, data, the processes followed – all will help inform the development of guidance materials and the dissemination activities of the next phase.
- Produce a progress report by **24th Nov 2005**
- Produce a final report by **3rd March 2006**

HE partners, and partners other than education providers in the LSC sector, will be entitled to attend all briefing seminars and engage in the mutual support

provided by the project. Whilst not being obliged to carry out the activities reporting mechanisms described above, they may nonetheless find it beneficial to work within this structure. This will help them in moving forward with their Disability Equality Scheme planning. Keeping reports and records will also mean that they are building evidence of forward planning for the new duty for their Scheme.

Partners may wish to allocate resources to support the project work through their own organisation's funds.

Project focus

All partner organisations of this project will be required, under the Duty to Promote Disability Equality, to produce a disability equality scheme and an accompanying action plan by December 2006. Partners will be encouraged to work with staff within their own organisations in order to progress this within their own context. Within the timescale of this project, partners may wish to identify a particular focus, such as a focus on impact assessments, monitoring, partnership working, or the use of champions to aid mainstreaming.

Learning and Skills providers will be asked to produce a project plan and it would be helpful if the project plan reflects the focus you have selected and ensures that the objectives are achievable. Appendix A provides a template for a project plan, to assist in planning for this project. Project plans should be completed and sent to Al Lockhart Smith by **30th June 2006** (ASmith@lsda.org.uk). Other partners are also welcome to use the template and may find it useful to produce a project plan.

Project outcomes

For partners, will have had the opportunity to make significant progress in developing an organisational Disability Equality Scheme and accompanying action plan.

For the project as a whole, outcomes will vary according to sector. For example, for the Learning and Skills sector, case studies, examples of good practice, issues and how these have been resolved, and the overall lessons learned, will be collated together to inform practical advice which will be disseminated. HE sector organisations will work with each other to determine what might be appropriate outcomes for them.

Section 4: Project Framework

This framework is for the project as a whole and deadlines and milestones apply particularly to Learning and Skills sector providers. Other partners may wish to follow the same structure.

First Phase

Stage 1 preparation (May - June 2005)

Partners to confirm commitment to project



First Briefing Seminar (London, 24th May 2005)

Partners to discuss focus with staff within organisation

Complete and submit project plan
to **Al Lockhart Smith - Milestone 1 by 30th June 2005**



Stage 2- research and development activity (June –Nov 2005)

Begin the project

Partners to work with staff within organisation and also contact other partner organisations for mutual support

Partners to reflect on progress and prepare to present a brief update at second seminar on developments, including any lessons learned, materials produced and knotty issues encountered



Second Seminar (Coventry, Wed 2nd or Thurs 3rd Nov 2005)

Partners complete and submit interim report - **Milestone 2 by 24th Nov 05**



**Stage 3 research and development activity continued
(Nov 2005 – Feb 2006)**

Research and development activity within own organisations continues. Partners work with staff within organisation and also contact other partner organisations for mutual support

Project planning team begins developing a range of supporting materials with examples and case studies

All to reflect on progress to date and prepare to contribute to third Seminar



Third and Final Seminar
(London, Wed 1st or Thurs 2nd Feb 2006)



Partners to complete and submit final report
(Milestone 3 by 3rd March 2006)

Project planning team to collate, publish and disseminate materials for the Learning and Skills sector

Appendix A

Completing the Project Plan

You may find the following notes useful when completing your project plan

Step 1

Think about who will support you in your own organisation and the focus you wish to take within the timescale of the project. You will find it helpful to discuss and make notes on the questions that were considered during the first briefing seminar (Appendix B).

Step 2

Consider your overall goals and list the key objectives and tasks.

Step 3

Think about how you will recognise that you have achieved your goals and objectives. List any criteria or measures you can use to indicate success.

Step 4

Discuss your ideas with key individuals. These could be senior / executive managers, disabled learners and staff, staff in partner organisations etc.

Step 5

What revisions do you need to make to your project plan, in the light of step 4?

Step 6

Complete the project plan proforma on the next page – use more than one sheet if necessary. Include attendance at briefing seminars and interim and final reporting processes. **Submit your proforma to Al Lockhart Smith by 30th June 2005** (ASmith@lsda.org.uk)

Column 1 - Action required.

This is where you can provide the detail on how you will go about reaching your aims and objectives. It is helpful to put in as much detail as possible so that your actions are specific and measurable – and it will also be helpful to make sure that your actions are appropriate and realistic, given the timescale of this project. Please ensure that you have specified how disabled learners and staff will be involved, and how senior staff will provide support and demonstrate involvement to this project.

Column 2 - Responsible person.

This column should have the name of the person who is responsible for pursuing this action. This should be one person only per action.

Column 3 - By when.

Write down the agreed (and realistic!) date that you have agreed to complete these actions. Please put in specific dates, rather than month of planned completion.

Column 4 - Resources required.

This is where you can specify what materials or other resources, such as time, specific colleague help, rooms, computer or paper resources are required.

Column 5 - Evidence and evaluation.

This column provides the opportunity to note all the ways in which you will be collecting data for evidence and for evaluation of what you have done in this action point.

Project Plan

Implementing the Duty to Promote Disability Equality

Organisation name:		Name		Date	
Overall aims/goal/focus:			Success criteria:		
Action required:	Responsible person	By when	Resources required	Evidence and Evaluation	

Appendix B

The template on the following pages are to assist partners to complete their project plan. The questions will be discussed during the first briefing seminar in May 2005

Template for discussion

The following questions are to help focus discussion. It would be helpful if your conclusions to these questions are clearly demonstrated within your project plan

‘Hot potatoes’	
Questions to consider	Outcomes to inform project plan
Who needs to be part of your team within your own organisation? (This is not about you doing it all – it is about how your organisation is going to do this)	
Who needs to be informed and / or consulted? How will you make sure that staff at a senior level are actively involved?	
How will you ensure that disabled people are actively involved, and not merely consulted, from the start and all the way through the development of your scheme? (consider disabled staff, learners, other stakeholders, disabled people’s organisations, and consider how you will ensure different types of involvement, how you will set this up etc)	
Other questions to consider	
Are there things that you need to look at before you can establish the focus of your project?	
What have you already done that you can build on? What might hinder your progress in this project?	

<p>What will be your focus within the timescale of this project? You might want to consider, for example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data monitoring (staff and /or learners) ▪ Impact assessments – identifying priorities ▪ Partnership working ▪ Identifying outcomes /equality targets ▪ Using champions to facilitate mainstreaming ▪ Publishing annual results of monitoring activities <p>Remember that the time we have together is quite short, so it is helpful if you can be as specific and focused as possible. Remember to include this focus within your project plan</p>	
<p>We want case study examples and models from you on how best to respond to the duty, including examples of good practice and the pitfalls to avoid. So how will you 'log' actions, reflections, successes, lessons learnt, in order to inform this project?</p>	
<p>How can you best exploit the network framework outside of the seminar days?</p>	
<p>What will be your priority actions for moving forward?</p>	

You may also like to consider the grid on the following page

	Identifying ways of engaging in a meaningful way	Improving base line data	Outcomes to improve experience
Disabled Staff			
Disabled Learners			
Other Disabled People			

Overview of project management

The Project Partnership

The project comprises a wide range of partner organisations, who will participate in different ways. These include

- Public sector organisations in the Learning and Skills sector that support providers, including the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA)
- Other key partners, such as the Adult Learning Inspectorate, OFSTED, and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) may also wish to participate
- Providers in the Learning and Skills sector, including FE, sixth form and specialist colleges and Adult Community Learning providers
- Providers of Higher Education in partnership with the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) and the National Disability Team (NDT)

Project Advisory Group

The role of the Advisory Group is to inform the design, development and outputs of the project and to offer advice on the project as it progresses

The membership of the Advisory Group include

Sue Kelley	Consultant
Mike Adams	National Disability Team
Yvonne Dickinson	National Disability Team
Kevin Connell	Royal National Institute of the Blind
Liz Sutherland	Equality Challenge Unit
Marilyn Walker	Consultant
Steve Williams	Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service
Kit Roberts	Learning and Skills Council
Kathleen Jameson	Disability Rights Commission
Dianne Keetch	Disability Rights Commission
David Swindells	Consultant
Dave Morris	Greater London Authority
Sarah Lewis	Coventry University
Sophie Corlett	MIND

Project Planning Team

The project planning team will

- receive advice from the project advisory group
- provide a lead on the planning and implementation of the project
- support the project partners in implementing the aims of the project
- report on project progress and outcomes.

The project planning team includes

Christine Rose	Consultant and project lead
Sally Faraday	Research Manager, LSDA
Liz Maudslay (until Sept)	Policy Director, Skill
Barbara Waters (from Sept)	Chief Executive, Skill
Liz Sutherland	Equality Challenge Unit
Kathleen Jameson	Disability Rights Commission
Dianne Keetch	Disability Rights Commission
Gill O’Toole	Researcher, LSDA
Al Lockhart Smith	DDA Administrator, LSDA

Project Executive

The Project Executive has overall responsibility for the strategic management and monitoring of the project. The project executive include

Sally Faraday	Research Manager, LSDA
Christine Rose	Consultant
Liz Maudslay (until Sept)	Policy Director, Skill
Barbara Waters (from Sept)	Chief Executive, Skill
Christine Nightingale	NIACE
Lisa Doyle	Senior Researcher, LSDA
Gill O’Toole	Researcher, LSDA
Chris Hewitson	Project Manager, LSDA
Al Lockhart Smith	DDA Administrator, LSDA