



*Communities and Local
Government
Disability Equality Scheme*



Communities and Local Government Disability Equality Scheme

On 5th May 2006 the responsibilities of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) transferred to the Department for Communities and Local Government

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Foreword by the Secretary of State

There are 10 million disabled people in Britain. Disabled people face disadvantage on a wide range of issues: they are more likely to experience poverty and long term unemployment, more likely to face barriers to participation in civic life and to live in non-decent housing. The government is committed to changing this.

Communities and Local Government has an exciting remit to promote community cohesion and equality. As part of our vision for prosperous and cohesive communities, we are committed to ensuring that disabled people can play a full part in their neighbourhoods and in the workplace.

The department now has responsibility for equality policies on race, religion and belief, gender and sexual orientation, alongside our remit on housing, urban regeneration, planning and local government. In addition, the department currently sponsors the Commission for Racial Equality and Equal Opportunities Commission, and will sponsor the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights, which will start operating in October 2007. This will have responsibility for tackling discrimination across all equality strands.

The department will be working closely with the Department for Work and Pensions – who retain responsibility for disability issues – to ensure that we fulfill our commitment to taking disability equality beyond rights and policies and making it a reality in people's everyday lives.

Many of the policies which we have responsibility for are of critical importance to disabled people and have significant impact on their independence and opportunities. This includes: developing strong and accountable local government and leadership, measures to provide better homes and neighbourhoods, the regeneration in our towns and cities and encouraging increased engagement in public life.

The **Disability Equality Scheme** outlines how we intend to ensure that the needs of disabled people are central to this work. The scheme will help us ensure that all our functions, policies and services are delivered without discrimination and that the department is working to promote disability equality.

Our intention is to respond to the spirit as well as the letter of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. As Secretary of State, I have an additional duty under the Act to report every three years on progress towards equality in my policy sector, and proposals for future action in this area.

I want my department to use its new responsibilities to develop a wider role as the lead department on equality across government, and to take on discrimination and inequality in all their forms. This first Disability Equality Scheme does I believe provide an excellent tool to help us work towards delivering equality for disabled people.

Introduction: Peter Housden, Permanent Secretary

I am delighted to have the opportunity to endorse this Disability Equality Scheme. The department is committed to taking disability equality beyond rights and policies and making it a reality of our everyday life. We must ensure our policies, functions and programmes integrate disability equality at every stage of our work.

Disabled people experience poorer outcomes than non-disabled people across many indicators. A third of all households living in non-decent homes include someone with a long-term illness or disability. We want to change that. This scheme will guarantee that in future the decisions and policies we make consider the impact on disabled people in the communities we serve and helps us provide the opportunities disabled people need.

This is the first Disability Equality Scheme for the department and it includes an action plan showing what we are going to deliver over the next three years. The departmental Board and I are accountable for success. We will review progress in twelve months time.

1 Executive Summary

This report summarises the Communities and Local Government Disability Equality Scheme (DES), covering the period December 2006 to December 2009.

Our vision is of prosperous and cohesive communities, offering a safe, healthy and sustainable environment for all. There are ten million disabled people in Britain and it must be our mission to ensure they can play their full part in every community, in the workplace and in society as a whole. This requires us to justify and mobilise action to overcome barriers in a systematic way, and by so doing, to change the way people think about disability.

In Communities and Local Government our commitment will be to:

- Strive for equal opportunities and social justice for disabled people;
- Set standards for and provide better homes and neighbourhoods in which disabled people can live a full and active life;
- Develop strong and accountable local government and leadership where disabled people are directly involved in shaping its work.
- Provide a better environment and local services which are inclusive and respond to disabled people's needs;
- Promote regeneration and investment in our towns, cities and regions making the prosperity of disabled people central to our strategy;
- Build safe, tolerant and inclusive communities where disabled people are free to enjoy their lives.

1.1 How the Disability Equality Scheme was developed

The first Disability Equality Scheme for Communities and Local Government has used a developmental approach. Throughout, there has always been a clear focus on providing improved outcomes for disabled people, based on the Code of Practice for meeting the disability duty and the department's own experience of improving disability equality. The Disability Rights Commission worked with the department to learn from the production of our scheme.

The Disability Equality Scheme was devised by addressing the areas for improvement identified through the following methods:

- Issues known to policy areas which already had regular involvement with disabled people's organisations;
- Suggestions for change identified by staff during the assessment of policies, programmes and functions against the disability equality duty;
- Proposed actions from departmental disability policy leads identified during reviews of responses to the screening process;
- Policy issues identified by disabled staff in the department;
- Proposals from the department's Disability Equality Scheme Steering Group;
- Priorities proposed during a series of events involving disabled policy experts who represented a range of disability and equality interests;
- Priorities already identified following an earlier, major consultation with disabled staff.
- Issues identified by the Trade Unions;
- Issues in policies and programme areas raised for consideration during seminars on the disability duty.
- Existing commitments identified under the Cross Government Strategy, "Improving Life Chances Of Disabled People".

1.2 Priorities proposed by Disabled People

During the development of the Disability Equality Scheme, the overall themes, priorities and outcomes identified by disabled people remained strongly consistent throughout.

- In Communities and Local Government's external work the overall priorities are for: improving housing opportunities, encouraging inclusive environments, encouraging increased engagement in public life and increasing the accessibility of the department's communications;
- In the department's internal work the focus is for improving employment practice.

1.3 The department's Action Plan

Communities and Local Government recognises that these priorities should be the basis of its work on disability equality over the next three years. In our department's work on communities we will work towards providing better housing and local environments so that disabled people have greater access to the opportunities available in society. We will develop policies to ensure that local government will have fuller engagement with disabled people so they can participate in and shape the services they need. These improved opportunities will help disabled people be part of building stronger communities and form the basis for creating greater prosperity for disabled people.

To deliver disabled peoples' priorities, the department has worked with staff, Ministers and disability groups to devise an Action Plan. The plan contains over 100 actions which will make a major contribution towards realising the priorities identified by disabled people. The key actions which will contribute towards these priorities are summarised below.

Improving housing opportunities

The department will ensure that increasing numbers of disabled people can live in more accessible homes. This will be achieved, for example, by improving disabled people's access within homes by working with the Housing Corporation to ensure most new social rented homes will be built to the Lifetime Homes Standard from 2010. We will prepare guidance for social landlords on providing housing choices for disabled people. We will encourage Regional Assemblies to consider disabled people's needs when developing the long term housing needs of the regions.

Encouraging inclusive environments

The department recognises there is a need to build communities which are inclusive for all. We will promote Inclusive Design principles to improve disabled people's use of and access to local built environments. We will do so, for example, by encouraging the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) to promote the principles throughout the planning, design and building professions. We will include the principles in its development programmes, including the Thames Gateway and by promoting best practice in planning and inclusive built environments.

Encouraging engagement in public life

The department will be raising the profile of disabled people in public life and in our policy development. This will be achieved by local authorities having a new statutory Best Value Duty to engage with the public. In particular they will be required to give special consideration to engaging hard to reach groups such as disabled people's groups and take account of disabled people's needs even where this involves treating them more favourably than others. Understanding of disabled people's needs among councillors and senior managers in local authorities will be improved, encouraged in

neighbourhood management and in the Voluntary Sector Strategy. Disabled people will become more involved in our key policy-making processes and these activities will engage a diversity of disabled people.

Increasing the accessibility of communications

The department will make its internal and external communications easier for disabled people to use. Its website will be made accessible and web-based and other documents will be made available in alternative formats on request. We will actively seek the views of disabled people on how to improve our communications.

Improving employment practice

Communities and Local Government's employment practices will be improved to better meet disabled people's needs. In particular, the service providing reasonable adjustments for disabled staff will be made more effective and easier to use. The department's IT provider will improve the service for those disabled staff who use specialist software or need to occasionally work from home. Disabled staff will also be directly involved in improving employment policy within the department, its agencies and in the Government Offices.

1.4 Driving Change

To maintain progress in implementing the Action Plan, annual reviews will be provided to the department's Equalities Programme Executive, comprising senior officials from across the department and headed by the Permanent Secretary. It will also receive regular progress on those actions with an internal employment focus. The Equalities Programme Executive will oversee the preparation of the Secretary of State's report in 2008 on progress towards disability equality in the areas covered by departmental policy and the subsequent Equality Scheme.

Improving the evidence base

The department recognises that it needs to improve its information gathering procedures in order to compile an effective evidence base that will show the effect of its policies on disadvantaged groups, including disabled people. Communities and Local Government will, for example, improve and integrate data kept on the accessibility of social housing and access requirements of new tenants. Data kept on disabled staff within the department, its agencies and in the Government Offices will also be improved.

Promoting positive attitudes

Negative attitudes to disabled people often arise from ignorance. The department will help to promote more positive attitudes through using positive images of disabled people, for example in media briefings and press releases.

Impact assessments

The department will ensure that in future its policies, procedures and functions will be properly assessed in order to evaluate their impact on disadvantaged groups, including disabled people. To do this it is looking at the use of combined equality impact assessments. Current policies, programmes and functions will also be looked at, for example in the Thames Gateway programme, Housing Finance policy and Local Strategic Partnerships.

Training of staff

Communities and Local Government staff will be trained on the requirements of the disability equality duty, on managing disabled staff, on the relevance of disability to departmental procurement and how to do equality impact assessments.

2 About Communities and Local Government

Our vision is one of prosperous and cohesive communities, offering a safe, healthy and sustainable environment for all. There are ten million disabled people in Britain who reflect the diversity of our communities. We are making it our mission to ensure they can play their full part in every community, in the workplace and in society as a whole. This requires us to justify and mobilise action to overcome barriers in a systematic way, and by so doing to change the way people think about disability. We will build the information base we need to track our progress towards delivering our commitments on disability equality.

In Communities and Local Government our commitment is to:

- Strive for equal opportunities and social justice for disabled people. Our ability to integrate disability equality throughout the department's work will be the benchmark by which we are judged.
- Set standards for and provide better homes and neighbourhoods in which disabled people can live a full and active life. We will make a significant increase in the number of accessible homes to give disabled people the basis from which they can create new life chances.
- Develop a strong and accountable local government and leadership where disabled people are directly involved in shaping its work. We are integrating the need for engagement with disabled people in their local authority's activities into the new strategy for Local Government.
- Provide a better environment and local services which are inclusive and responsive to disabled people's needs. Our widespread promotion of Inclusive Design principles will make accessibility a cornerstone of future built environments so disabled people will be free to participate fully within their local areas and in service improvement activities, without barriers.
- Promote regeneration and investment in our towns, cities and regions making the prosperity of disabled people central to our strategy. We will provide the accessible infrastructure to enable disabled people to benefit from new opportunities wherever they arise.
- Build safe, tolerant and inclusive communities where disabled people are free to enjoy their lives. We will challenge current perceptions of disability through our promotion of positive images of disability in our own publications and by promoting good practice in disability equality throughout local government.

2.1 What we do

2.1.1 Better homes and neighbourhoods

It is central to Communities and Local Government's strategy that everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home at a price they can afford, in a place in which they want to live and work. The department aims to provide the well-designed homes and communities that people want, including:

- a step on the housing ladder for future generations,
- quality and choice for those who rent,
- the provision of high quality, mixed, thriving and sustainable communities,
- to continue to tackle homelessness and other acute housing problems.

Many aspects of the department's work in this area are highly relevant to disabled people, including the following:

- **Disabled Facilities Grant**

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are available to help disabled people pay for adaptations to help them remain independent in their homes. The grants, which are compulsory and often means-tested, are available from local housing authorities to disabled people in all types of housing. In 2006/07, local authorities are expected to spend approximately £200 million on DFGs, supported by a ring-fenced Communities and Local Government capital grant allocation of £121 million. In December 2005 a key recommendation from Bristol University's review of the DFG was implemented which abolished means testing for families with disabled children.

- **Supporting People**

Supporting People provides housing-related support services to over one million vulnerable people, including disabled people. The programme aims to ensure that disabled service users have the opportunity to live independently and have the support that they need to do this. Through working partnerships with local government, service users and support agencies, it promotes straightforward and reliable housing related services, which complement care services and support independent living.

- **Individual Budgets**

The Individual Budgets pilot project is a cross government initiative led by the Department of Health working in conjunction with the Department for Work and Pensions and Communities and Local Government. Individual budgets allocate recipients funding to provide for all their assessed needs which they can then use to choose the type of care and/or support they want. Unlike the existing direct payments scheme, recipients of individual budgets could choose to receive council services, use other providers, employ people directly themselves or a mixture of these. There are six funding streams within the Individual Budget pilot including two Communities and Local Government funded programmes: Supporting People and Disabled Facilities Grant.

- **Decent Homes**

The department's aim is to bring, by 2010, all social housing into decent condition, with most of the improvements taking place in deprived areas, and to increase the proportion of private housing occupied by vulnerable groups, that is in decent condition.

- **Buying, selling, owning a home**

The department runs a number of schemes designed to help people on modest incomes who cannot afford to buy a home without help, but who can meet the long-term financial commitment of home ownership.

- **Renting and Letting**

The department wants to offer greater quality, flexibility and choice to people who rent, whether from a local authority or housing association.

- **Increase Housing Supply**

To enable more families and young people to own a home and provide the level of affordable housing that is needed, Communities and Local Government needs to increase housing supply. There is a new commitment to increase housebuilding to a level of 200,000 a year by 2016. And over a three year period the department is delivering a 50 per cent increase in the completion of new social rented homes.

- **Housing Market Renewal**

Low demand and abandonment of housing can destroy communities in deprived areas. In the North and Midlands of England, Communities and Local Government is investing £1.2 billion over five years in nine pathfinder areas which have been hit hardest by market failure. By 2006 the nine local partnerships or Pathfinders intend to demolish 10,000 homes in their areas, but they will refurbish around 20,000 homes and build 3,000 new houses.

To ensure that the needs of all members of the communities are met, the department is working alongside the pathfinders and the Audit Commission to ensure that diversity features strongly in the 'scheme updates', which set out the next phase of plans for market renewal for each pathfinder.

- **Thames Gateway and Olympics**

The Thames Gateway is a national priority for regeneration and growth and is the first and biggest of the Government's four growth areas identified in the Sustainable Communities Plan, launched in February 2003.

The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympics Games will provide long-term regeneration benefits to the Lower Lea Valley and surrounding areas, part of the Thames Gateway growth regeneration area. These include new mixed tenure residential communities, excellent accessibility, high quality design and environmental and ecological benefits for both east London and to the Gateway as a whole.

2.1.2 Planning, building and the environment

Our goal is that places and communities will be planned, built, upgraded and managed in a way which respects and sustains the global, national and local environments. We are the government department responsible for building regulations and planning in England.

Good planning is critical to urban and rural regeneration and helps to ensure that people have decent affordable homes in well-designed accessible environments whilst safeguarding our countryside. It is essential to have an effective planning system to achieve the aim of creating sustainable communities.

Communities and Local Government is reforming the planning system to make it simpler, faster and more accessible. The policy statement *Sustainable Communities: Delivering Through Planning* sets out the Government's aims. The reforms seek to change the culture of planning, making it a positive tool to steer development actively to the benefit of everyone.

Some of the major workstreams in this area in relation to disabled people are:

- **Building Regulations**

Communities and Local Government is responsible for Building Regulations, which exist principally to ensure the health and safety of people in and around buildings. The regulations apply to most new buildings and many alterations to existing buildings in England and Wales, whether domestic, commercial or industrial. Part M of the building regulations deals with accessibility.

- **Code for Sustainable Homes**

In 1991 the Lifetime Homes concept was developed by a group of housing experts who came together as the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Lifetime Homes Group. Lifetime Homes have sixteen design features that ensure a new house or flat will meet the needs of most households.

Many local authorities now require house builders to use Lifetime Homes standards when building new homes. However, in order to further widen its use and encourage its uptake in the marketplace, the Government has decided to take forward Lifetime Homes standards through the Code for Sustainable Homes.

The principal objective of the Code is to become the single national standard for sustainable building that all sectors of the building industry will subscribe to and consumers demand. Consultation on the Code ran until March 2006, with national rollout planned for later this year. The baseline level of accessibility in the Code will reflect the current Government Building Regulations (Part M) standard but Government has invited views on the proposal that the Code will reflect even higher standards, including Lifetime Homes.

- **Protecting the Environment and tackling Climate Change**

Through its responsibilities for planning, housing, building regulations and local government, Communities and Local Government has a responsibility to protect and enhance the environment and tackle climate change. The review of Building Regulations, the new Code for Sustainable Homes and Planning Policy Statement on Climate Change should support the move towards low carbon and then carbon-neutral development and deliver more sustainable forms of energy. The department will bring in Energy Performance Certificates for every building to give owners and users of buildings the information they need to cost-effectively reduce emissions.

2.1.3 Local government

Communities and Local Government is responsible for national policy on local government in England. Local government makes a difference to everyone's lives by delivering essential services and making our communities better places to live. We are working to deliver better services by devolving decision-making to the most effective level, promoting high quality customer-focused local services and ensuring adequate, stable resources are available to local authorities through the recently published Local Government White Paper.

Councils will be provided with the powers and levers they need to ensure all local services work together to deliver personalised services tailored to meet the needs of communities, individuals and families, to reflect local priorities, tackle difficult issues and make better places where people are proud to live. That means enabling people to get things done in their neighbourhoods quickly and easily, with more say for local people, more responsive local services and more opportunities for communities to assume greater responsibility for, or even ownership of, community assets. Communities and Local Government will be working with the Home Office to explore the links between community policing and other neighbourhood services.

2.1.4 Cities and Regions

Communities and Local Government aims to create economically strong cities and regions which drive forward national prosperity and provide opportunity and social justice for all. We are working to narrow disparities in growth rates by maximising the economic performance of all regions, creating vibrant, diverse and attractive places where people want to live and work. The department will provide the right tools and powers at the right levels, to enable our cities and regions to compete better on the international stage, and meet the challenges of globalisation over the coming decades.

2.1.5 Places and Communities

Communities and Local Government is committed to ensuring that local communities have the powers they need to respond to challenging economic, social and cultural trends, and to creating cohesive, thriving, sustainable communities capable of both fulfilling their own potential and of overcoming their own difficulties, including community conflict, extremism, deprivation and disadvantage.

- **Homelessness**

The Government has set a challenging new target: to halve the number of households living in temporary accommodation by 2010. The departmental strategy document *Sustainable Communities: Settled Homes; Changing Lives* published in March 2005 outlines how the department will achieve this target and further reductions in homelessness

2.1.6 Equalities

As a society, we need to ensure that individuals in the UK can take a full part in the social, economic and cultural life of our country. To help achieve this, the department is working to reduce inequalities and build community cohesion, and taking the lead with other key departments in promoting equality and the aim of social justice and sustainable, economically viable communities.

The creation of Communities and Local Government brings together responsibilities for social and community cohesion and equality – including the Equalities Review which will report later this year. The department is leading a programme of work in response to the report of the Women and Work Commission, and will set out new measures in autumn 2006. Communities and Local Government seeks to reduce perceptions of race discrimination and leads the work on creating more cohesive communities, tackling racism, extremism and hate and promoting inter-faith activity and a shared sense of belonging.

Communities and Local Government currently sponsors the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission and will sponsor the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR), which will start operating in October 2007. CEHR will have responsibility for tackling discrimination across all equality strands including disability, and work on Gypsies and Travellers is also included in its remit.

2.1.7 Fire and Resilience

Communities and Local Government works with the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) to reduce the loss of lives and livelihoods through fire. The department has a target to reduce domestic fire-related deaths by 20 per cent and arson by 10 per cent by 31 March 2010.

The department works to ensure that firefighters have the leadership, equipment and training they need. It also supports changes being introduced by the Service to recruit, train and develop its workforce to better reflect the communities it serves. The department's work with fire and rescue services contributes to a wider agenda of social inclusion, neighbourhood renewal and cutting crime.

The Fire and Rescue Service works to ensure that it is equipped and trained for any disaster and that local organisations are fully prepared. The department works closely with other government departments, notably the Cabinet Office's Civil Contingencies Secretariat, to contribute to the government's wider resilience agenda.

3 Development of the Disability Equality Scheme

The Disability Equality Scheme has been developed using several parallel approaches to enable Communities and Local Government to ensure that it delivers real improvements for disabled people. The department encouraged policy areas to identify suitable actions during the screening process and organised a series of events where disabled policy experts met with departmental policy leads. The Disability Rights Commission worked with the department to learn from the production of our scheme. A group of senior managers formed the Disability Equality Scheme Steering Group to lead the development of the scheme and engage their policy sections.

3.1 Screening departmental policies, programmes and functions

A series of seminars on the disability duty were arranged to inform staff of the ways that the new duty would impact on their work. Briefing materials, bulletin articles and messages from the Permanent Secretary were widely publicised.

A screening questionnaire was piloted in one policy area and then all managers were asked to assess the impact of their policies, programmes or functions on disabled people. Advisory sessions were offered on a one-to-one basis where the disability policy leads gave assistance in undertaking the screening process.

Responses to the screening questionnaire gave information on:

- priorities of each policy, programme or functional area;
- the relevance to disabled people and any known information on impact;
- the monitoring processes and any current engagement with disabled people;
- any good practice, or examples of promotion of positive attitudes;
- any action that could be taken to promote disability equality.

The departmental disability policy leads assessed the screening responses. Draft actions were developed based on the suggestions from the policy areas from their judgement of the significance of those areas to disability equality. These draft actions then formed the basis for discussion with the policy areas in preparation for the Disability Equality Scheme.

Additional actions were identified from the policy and programme areas where the focus is on disabled people such as the Disabled Facilities Grant or Building Regulations. Actions that had already been agreed as part of Communities and Local Government's long-term commitment to the Improving Life Chances of Disabled People Strategy in 2005 were incorporated into the plan automatically.

3.2 Involvement of Disabled People

A series of events were held to involve disabled people who were experts in departmental policy, programmes and functional areas. A diversity of groups were invited, representing different disabilities and equality groups. People were invited to talk about the barriers that disabled people faced, any possible solutions and what they thought were the most important outcomes for the department to focus on. This was to inform the thinking of the department as it developed its Disability Equality Scheme and the priorities that were identified were turned into actions for development by policy areas.

There was considerable agreement in respect of the barriers faced by disabled people and the overall priorities that emerged were expressed in similar ways in each of the groups. These closely matched the issues anticipated by departmental staff. As a result, the department has a measure of confidence in the priorities that have emerged for its scheme and that meeting these will deliver the outcomes identified as important by disabled people.

The events focused on different aspects of Communities and Local Government policy areas. Participants were invited to raise any other policy area they considered needed improving to help the department work towards delivering disability equality.

- Assistance was provided by RADAR who organised two events on all departmental policy areas. They invited disabled people from the organisations which are part of their New Spirit Coalition with the addition of organisations representing disability and equality issues. Representatives either attended the events or provided written comments on the policy areas.
- The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, who provide advice to government on urban design, offered to organise a meeting of their Inclusive Environment Group. This group has a focus on planning, urban design and disability issues with a membership of disabled experts and organisations representing that policy area.
- The Disability Rights Commission provided contacts for disabled people with a strong interest in Housing issues and the department invited those individuals as well as additional contacts to a Housing policy event. Those unable to attend were interviewed by phone.
- The departmental group of disabled staff, DisAbility Network, arranged a meeting to discuss the Disability Equality Scheme and suggested approaches to developing the scheme. The majority of actions on employment issues were developed following a major consultation with disabled staff in 2005 and have been updated and incorporated into the scheme.

4 Disabled Peoples' priorities and Communities and Local Government Action

4.1 Priorities identified by disabled people

During Communities and Local Government's involvement events, disabled people identified overall themes as priorities to focus on in order to deliver disability equality and these had a measure of consistency throughout.

In Communities and Local Government's external work the overall priorities were for:

- Improving housing opportunities;
- Encouraging inclusive environments;
- Encouraging increased engagement in public life;
- Increasing accessibility of departmental communications.

In the department's internal work the priority was for:

- Improving employment practice.

4.1.1 Improving housing opportunities

The most frequently raised outcome was for improved housing opportunities. The most common barriers identified were unsuitable accommodation, difficulty in finding alternative properties within the housing market and an adaptation process that can be complex.

Suggested actions to deliver this outcome included:

- Increasing the percentage of new homes built to the Lifetime Homes Standard so that new homes include accessibility in their initial design, reducing the need for expensive adaptations.
- Update the Lifetime Homes Standard, to provide a common agreed definition for future building standards.

- Local authorities and housing associations to improve data kept on the accessibility of properties and tenant requirements in a shared data system. This improved information on the housing stock will be used to meet disabled people's needs. The need for Accessible Housing Registers may then be reviewed and the data used to provide data on housing need at a local and regional level for planning purposes.
- Implementing further recommendations from the Disabled Facilities Grant Review, as the availability and size of a grant makes a critical difference to resolving an individual's housing problem.

The department will ensure that increasing numbers of disabled people will live in more accessible homes. This will be achieved, for example by working with the Housing Corporation and English Partnerships to increase the percentage of social housing built to the Lifetime Homes Standard (LTH), in particular working with the Housing Corporation to ensure that most new build schemes will adopt the LTH standard from 2010; updating the Lifetime Homes Standard; supporting Individual Budgets pilots; preparing good practice guidance on Choice Based Letting for disabled people and guidance on taking account of the needs of different impairment groups in Regional Housing Strategies.

4.1.2 Encouraging inclusive environments

Integrating Inclusive Design Principles throughout the built environment was raised as a priority. Despite an increase the accessibility of housing, local buildings and public transport, these "islands of accessibility" are often not joined up. Steps, high kerbs or poorly maintained pavements may make it hard for disabled people to benefit from improvements in accessibility elsewhere.

Suggested improvements that would increase access to the built environment included:

- Using urban design and planning guidance, frameworks and development tools to promote inclusive design principles.
- New growth areas such as Thames Gateway to require that Inclusive Design principles are used throughout new developments.
- Promoting the principles of Inclusive Design to professionals in the design, planning and building professions.

Communities and Local Government will improve the use by disabled people of, and access to, local built environments through the promotion of Inclusive Design Principles. This will be achieved by encouraging the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) to promote the principles of Inclusive Design within industry, Government and in the design and planning professions. It will do this through guidance, the development of frameworks and tools and by encouraging these through departmental development programmes (funded and sponsored), including in new growth areas such as Thames Gateway and when developing public spaces. The department will assess the need to revise and reissue "Planning and Access for Disabled People" and identify further best practice in planning and inclusive built environments.

4.1.3 Encouraging increased engagement in public life

The priority outcome was to improve the opportunities for disabled people to become involved in governance and service development. Proposals that could work towards delivering this were:

- Ensuring local civic structures provided effective mechanisms to engage all members of the community;
- Involving disabled people in the department's policy-making processes.

Communities and Local Government will raise the profile of disabled people in public life and in its policy development. This will be achieved by encouraging local authorities to engage with marginalised and disadvantaged communities, including disabled people, under the new Best Value Duty to engage with the public. Understanding of the disability duty among councillors and senior managers in local authorities will be improved and encouraged in neighbourhood management and through the Voluntary Sector Strategy. In addition, disabled people will become more involved in the department's policy-making processes, including in housing policy; Inclusive Design policy; planning policy; and the Fire and Rescue Service's policy development, research and their Centre for Leadership. Disabled people will be engaged in the work of the Women and Equality Unit and the Cohesion and Faiths Unit. These engagement mechanisms will aim to reflect the diverse backgrounds of disabled people.

4.1.4 Improving the accessibility of communications

The priority outcome was to improve the accessibility of some aspects of communications further. Suggested improvements to improve the infrastructure were:

- Ensure that web-based publications are fully accessible to specialist screen readers.
- Print documents are in the most suitable fonts and formats.

Communities and Local Government will improve the effectiveness of its internal and external communication. This will be achieved by improving the accessibility of the website and intranet; providing full access to web-based publications, including planning documents and providing alternative formats on request. The department will provide print documents in appropriate fonts and layout, promote positive images of disability and involve disabled people in advising on ways to improve internal communications.

4.1.5 Improved employment practice

The priority outcome was to provide the correct infrastructure to enable disabled staff to work effectively. Suggested improvements to improve the infrastructure further were:

- A more co-ordinated approach to the Reasonable Adjustments service and an increase in budget to accommodate the changes in Access to Work funding;

- Ensuring that the new IT contract delivers an appropriate service for staff that use specialist software.

The department will streamline and improve its employment practice for disabled people by creating a one-stop-shop for reasonable adjustments. It will ensure that the IT contract provides an appropriate comprehensive and monitored service for staff who use specialist software and an improved arrangement for disabled staff who occasionally work at home. The department will monitor use of Accessibility guidelines for its headquarters buildings; auditing access to Fire Service College premises and involving disabled employees in improving employment policy in the department, Fire and Rescue Service, Government Offices Network and PINS.

4.2 Other outcomes

As well as these priority areas, Communities and Local Government will deliver improvements in other policy areas, as follows:

4.2.1 Improving the evidence base

In order to know how our policies affect different areas of society, it is vital that we build up an evidence base – this is also needed in order to spot at an early stage any areas or groups who might require special attention. The department had previously identified that it needed to overhaul its evidence gathering procedures to reflect the data needed to track improvements in performance on disability equality. It also recognised the need to establish the evidence base for the future Secretary of State's disability duty.

These changes will be achieved by improving the spread of evidence gathered in relation to the impact of the department's policies, programmes and functions on disabled people. In particular, we will provide advice on disability in research management guidance, working with others to streamline the definition of disability used in future surveys and finding ways to include the housing needs of people who live in communal accommodation. The department will improve data kept on the accessibility of the social housing stock and new tenants access requirements, enabling integration of the data. Communities and Local Government is also looking at ways of improving data collected by social landlords on participation in Choice Based Lettings. The department is considering ways to improve the new English Housing Survey, improve the monitoring of planning decisions and include disabled peoples' needs in relevant fire research projects. This will extend to improving further the employment data collection in the department, Government Offices, Fire and Rescue Service and in the department's agencies. A baseline of employment data has been taken during the process of developing the scheme which will be used to measure progress.

4.2.2 Promoting positive attitudes

Positive attitudes towards disabled people will be encouraged by promoting positive images in media briefings and press releases and by promoting good practice in Inclusive Design and in housing policy. A future topic for local government's Beacon Council Theme will be considered on good practice in implementing the disability duty and improving employment.

4.2.3 Impact Assessments

Communities and Local Government is considering a new approach of adopting a combined methodology for Equality Impact Assessments which would include the specific impacts on disabled people.

Current actions where the impact of existing policies, programmes and functions on disabled people will be considered include reviewing the Thames Gateway programme for ways to ensure inclusion of disabled people; Housing Finance Policy; the outcomes of the Review of Housing and Regeneration Delivery Mechanisms; the evaluation of the effectiveness of Local Strategic Partnerships and Local Area Agreements; and the employment policies of the Government Offices Network. More information on these policies can be found in Section 2 and in the Action Plan.

4.2.4 Training of Staff

Communities and Local Government staff will not only be expected to understand their duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 but to consider how policies and programmes can be tailored to meet disabled people's needs. Specific actions already identified include providing briefings, publicity and training on the disability duty, training on managing disabled staff, in particular in respect of staff with invisible disabilities and staff who need reasonable adjustments. Training will be developed on the relevance of disability within specific procurement exercises and on how to conduct equality impact assessments. These training activities will also be carried out in the department's agencies such as the QEII conference centre and its contractors, and the Fire Service College.

Section 5 – Action Plan

1. Corporate Delivery

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
1.1 Procurement¹. Gary Mankelov	Communities and Local Government staff are informed sufficiently to question if social aspects of sustainable procurement are relevant to their procurement requirement(s).	Amend procurement guidance to indicate to Communities and Local Government staff the need to question if disability and other social aspects of sustainability are relevant to their procurement requirement and if so, to ensure this is reflected in the Business Case.	Communities and Local Government will have considered the relevance of the issue and where appropriate, embedded suitable scope in individual procurements to address disabled people's needs and opportunities.	Procurement staff do not have to remind 'line' staff to question the relevance of different equalities duties.	01/12/06

- ¹how the contract will ensure reasonable adjustments will be made for disabled employees or citizens using the service
- how the contractor will treat disabled customers and make particular arrangements if required and positive attitudes will be promoted
- evidence of experience of providing services for disabled people or researching their needs etc
- requirement to see how disabled people's needs have been considered in the tender
- inclusion of improvements for disabled people into the success measures and monitoring requirements
- advertising contracts to disabled run businesses
- require staff to have been trained in disability equality
- Include representative numbers of disabled people in the customer feedback techniques.

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
1.2 Procurement. Gary Mankelow	If deemed relevant, and addressed at the commencement of the procurement cycle, ensure management of the contract addresses disabilities issues.	Checklist to be formed from the ODI's guidance on the disability equality duty.	Communities and Local Government will be consistently meeting its legal duty directly and indirectly through services executed on our behalf by Contractors.	Service providers undertaking contracts that have implications for disabled employees or citizens ensure that disability equality is addressed.	01/12/06
1.3 Procurement. Gary Mankelow	Inform DMs of the importance of questioning the relevance of different equalities duties to their proposed procurements.	Workshops developed with input from the EDU to train staff on checklist and impact assessments.	DMs are better equipped to ensure the relevance issue is addressed.	Procurement staff do not have to remind 'line' staff to question the relevance of different equalities duties.	01/04/07

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
<p>1.4 Procurement. Gary Mankelow</p>	<p>Identification of means to address disability equality in stages of the procurement cycle.</p>	<p><u>Guidance</u> Ensure guidance provides instruction and examples as to how disability equality might be addressed. <u>Stakeholder Engagement</u> If a Communities and Local Government procurement is identified as impacting on disabled people, guidance shall remind the line to ensure stakeholder groups incorporate representatives of Disabled Groups.</p>	<p>Promote disability equality more successfully through procurement related processes.</p>	<p>Development and embedding best practice of local examples of how to address disability equality in stages of the procurement cycle.</p>	<p>01/04/07</p>

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
1.5 Finance Advice and Policy. Chris Smith	To ensure that budget managers identify and manage cost implications of implementing outcomes from disability equality impact assessments.	Budget managers prioritise activities to ensure that resource is found to cover statutory impact assessment actions. If appropriate budget managers escalate to Board Executive via quarterly reviews.	Funding available to implement statutory actions.	Priority actions are implemented at the appropriate time.	Ongoing
1.6 Infrastructure Services Division. Caroline Cousin	Improve signage for partially sighted Communities and Local Government staff within HQ buildings.	The Open Space Works project to discuss improvements in directional signage to meeting rooms with partially sighted colleagues.	To ensure that partially sighted staff can navigate HQ buildings with as little difficulty as possible.	Positive responses from partially sighted colleagues to signage improvements.	31/03/08
1.7 Infrastructure Services Division. Caroline Cousin	Ensure that the standards set out in the Accessibility Statement are being met in full.	Establish a system to check that accessibility standards are being met in practice.	To ensure that the HQ premises are accessible to disabled people.	Regular, independent verification that accessibility statement is being followed.	31/03/07 and repeated annually

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
1.8 Infrastructure Services Division. Caroline Cousin	Investigate how effectively the needs of disabled staff are taken into account during job changes and office moves.	Include evaluation of the experiences of disabled staff in regard to job changes and office moves, as part of the review process as described in 1.7.	To enable disabled staff to be able to work effectively during job or office moves, and therefore meeting Communities and Local Government's legal requirements.	Positive responses to post-move feedback questionnaires.	Ongoing
1.9 ICTD. Brett Jarvis	Investigate whether the speed of IT contractor's response to calls by disabled staff to the helpdesk and resolution of IT problems matches the service level of non-disabled staff.	Communities and Local Government to establish user group of disabled staff; publishing actions requested and progress achieved.	Steria to ensure that the IT needs of disabled staff are being met effectively.	User group meetings to be arranged with presence from ICTD and Steria on IT related issues	Ongoing from 30/09/06
1.10 ICTD. Brett Jarvis	Desk side IT support will extend to provide full cover for specialist software users. (Current contractual requirement.)	Desk side support for specialist users will be available on every working day.	Disabled staff that use specialist software will be able to use IT facilities as effectively as non-disabled colleagues.	No reported problems raised by assistive technology users in relation to support provided by Steria.	Ongoing

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
1.11 ICTD. Brett Jarvis	The needs of disabled staff will be considered before and during the roll-out of new desktop packages.	All new IT packages will be tested before roll-out. Specialist software users will be involved in pilots and adequate staff will be available to re-configure users' software at the time of change.	The involvement of specialist software (SS) users in pilots and testing before roll-out will allow problems to be prevented.	All SS users software will be tested on new hardware platforms	Testing 31/10/ 06 Pilots by 31/11/06
1.12 ICTD. Brett Jarvis	Ensure that all desktop software is fully compatible for specialist software users. (Current contractual requirement.)	Desktop packages will allow all specialist users to access the full range of software, including PIMS, SAP, Outlook and Groupwise.	Disabled staff will be able to use desktop packages effectively.	All of the software will be tested in the 'test environment' to ensure there is no loss of functionality	Ongoing
1.13 ICTD. Brett Jarvis	Ensure that the IT provider makes appropriate provision for disabled staff working from home. (Current contractual requirement.)	IT provider will make available to new users and existing users (where necessary) the IT hardware and correct software to work from home, installed and supported there.	Disabled staff will have the appropriate IT facilities and support to work from home effectively.	Provided that there is a product that meets the required criteria from the assessment it will be provided by Steria.	Ongoing

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
1.14 ICTD. Brett Jarvis	Specialist IT support will be made available when required.	Spot contracts will be established with specialist providers for when particular problems cannot be alternatively resolved by the existing provider.	IT problems beyond the ability of IT provider to be solved will be dealt with by additional specialists allowing persistent problems to be overcome within the same timeframe as fault resolution for non-specialist users.	Confirmation required from Steria on whether contracts in relation to assistive technology have been transferred to Steria.	31/10/06
1.15 ICTD. Brett Jarvis	To provide effective co-ordination of IT related reasonable adjustments.	Steria and ICTD Service Operations Managers will be the named contacts to provide the links for IT related reasonable adjustments and co-ordinate responses to enquires. A new process needs to be established once issues have been identified.	Co-ordinated action in relation to reasonable adjustments in IT provision will provide an efficient service for disabled staff.	Steria to confirm what their process for reasonable adjustments is and Communities and Local Government to provide the shared co-ordination.	31/10/06 31/12/ 06

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
1.16 HR Transformation. Jane Williams	Ensure that monitoring systems for recruitment, selection, retention, personal development programmes, and guaranteed interview scheme (GIS) meet the requirements of the DDA.	Assess monitoring systems for recruitment, selection, retention, and personal development programs. Improve these if necessary to meet legal requirements. Establish means to track staff applying under GIS through recruitment process	Systems for recruitment, selection, retention, and personal development will provide the evidence base to monitor the relative progress of disabled staff, as compared to their non-disabled colleagues.	Self Service in place for staff to record their data. Updated workforce data.	31/12/06
1.17 HR. Jane Williams	Raise awareness amongst line managers of their employment responsibilities under the DDA.	Building capacity of HR to provide briefings on reasonable adjustments, managing visible and invisible disabilities, and harassment.	Line managers will be able to manage disabled staff effectively.	Specialist advisor available to co-ordinate department's approach on RA.	31/03/07

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
1.18 HR. Jane Williams	Ensure that reasonable adjustments are being made for disabled staff on Communities and Local Government sponsored courses.	Evaluate on an annual basis feedback from the framework providers on their provision of reasonable adjustments to disabled staff on framework contract and external courses.	Learning and Development team will know that training providers are making reasonable adjustments for Communities and Local Government disabled staff.	Annual report showing reasonable adjustments were made successfully. Equalities Programme Executive board to meet and discuss report.	Review feedback 31/03/07 31/03/08 31/03/09
1.19 HR. Jane Williams	Improve the effectiveness of the return to work process for disabled employees.	Consider a review of the current return to work process for disabled staff, with particular regard to any re-assessment of equipment needs, adjustment to work duties and flexibility in working hours that may be appropriate. Assess user satisfaction with external occupational health service.	Aid the process of returning to work from long term absence for disabled employees and prevent potential discrimination.	Annual sample survey of disabled staff who have returned to work, including their experience of using the department's Occupational Health Advisor.	31/09/07

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
1.20 HR. Jane Williams Wendy Jarvis	Clarify the difference between disability related absence and sickness absence for all staff.	Provide guidance for staff on how differing forms of absence are to be recorded.	An effective separation between sickness and disability recording systems will enable disabled staff to benefit from the provision of reasonable adjustments, as defined in the DDA.	HR to look into the possibility of the Department having two separate sickness absence recording systems, one for disability related, and one for non-disability.	31/12/07
1.21 HR. Jane Williams Guy Points	Clarify working from home arrangements for disabled staff.	Review current arrangements with disabled staff, and make policy relating to working from home and equipment available when doing so clear.	Disabled staff will be unambiguously aware of arrangements for working at home and the equipment that they can expect to support them in doing so.	HR to review and agree this.	31/09/07

2. Programmes, Policy and Innovation

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
2.1 Research. Paul McCafferty	Ensure that revised cross-Departmental harmonised questions developed by National Statistics, reflecting the legal definition of disability set out in the DDA, are used consistently in Communities and Local Government surveys and, where relevant, qualitative research.	Analytical services to monitor and, where relevant, support ODI and NS in developing revised questions, based on disability definitions, and then require those questions to be used in all research commissioned or supported by the Department.	That consistent research data on disability is produced by Communities and Local Government and can be compared with other sources across government and local authorities, and meets legal requirements.	The adoption and use of revised harmonised questions developed by NS in Communities and Local Government research.	TBC (awaiting response from National Statistics).
2.2 Analytical Strategy and Co-ordination Team. Phil Bradburn	Providing advice and guidance on the impact of relevant policy and research on disabled people.	Include information and guidance on using DDA definition of disability as part of the commissioning process for programme research and surveys as appropriate.	Relevant policy and programme research uses the DDA definition of disability where appropriate.	Advice on disability to appear in the Research Management Guidance.	31/03/07

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
2.3 Data and Statistical Infrastructure. Mick Johnston Terrie Alafat Keith Wells	Gain information on the accessibility of social housing stock from local authorities and housing associations.	Encourage local authorities and housing associations to provide information on housing stock accessibility through NROSH data to Communities and Local Government and the Housing Corporation.	Information on accessibility of housing stock will be available nationally and provide Communities and Local Government with an evidence base. It will also provide a common template for Local Authorities and housing associations in implementing their own scheme.	1. Issue of a formal requirement.	31/03/07
				2. Accessibility data to be provided on all newly built or acquired social housing.	31/04/07
				3. Provision of all accessibility data on all social housing stock	31/03/10
2.4 Data and Statistical Infrastructure. Mick Johnston	Establish meaningful categories of access needs for new tenants.	Amend and expand the CORE disability definitions in line with the DDA.	Provide consistent national data on new housing tenants and their needs. It will also provide a common template for Local Authorities and housing associations in implementing their own DES.	1. Adopt the DDA general definition of disability. 2. Add broad categories of access needs.	01/04/07 01/03/08

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
2.5 Data and Statistical Infrastructure. Mick Johnston	Local authorities to provide the department with CORE data from 2007.	Encourage local authorities to provide access needs data through the CORE system from April 2007. (The requirement already exists for housing associations and more than half of Local Authorities are voluntarily providing CORE data).	The department will have the evidence base to enable more informed measures to assist disability equality in housing.	1. Issue a requirement to Local Authorities 2. Publish quarterly statistics	31/03/07 31/08/07
2.6 Data and Statistical Infrastructure. Mick Johnston	Integrate data on the accessibility of social housing with data on the access needs of new tenants.	Link dwelling accessibility data (NROSH) with tenant access needs data (CORE).	Data for Communities and Local Government on the match between the requirements for accessible housing and provision.	1. Publish quarterly statistics on lettings of newly built or acquired social housing 2. Publish quarterly statistics on all social housing lettings.	01/09/07 01/09/10

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
2.7 Thames Gateway Strategy Divison. Su Bonfanti	To maximise the opportunity that the Thames Gateway presents to the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of disabled people.	Conduct a review of the Thames Gateway programme to identify how the inclusion of disabled people can be achieved in the Thames Gateway programme and how progress will be monitored.	Regular monitoring of Thames Gateway policies will ensure disabled people's needs are included and can be compared against non-disabled people.	A completed review with monitoring framework in place.	30/3/2007
2.8 Olympics Branch. Ros Dunn Ralph Ward	To maximise the opportunity that the social, economic and environmental legacy of the Olympics and Paralympics provides and promotes the inclusion and wellbeing of disabled people.	Conduct a review of Communities and Local Government commitments towards the Games and its legacy to identify how the inclusion of disabled people can be achieved and how progress will be monitored.	That the planning and strategic oversight of the Olympics and Paralympics ensure accessible transport and access to employment, education and training for disabled people.	Joint strategic plan. A completed review with monitoring framework in place.	31/10/2008 30/3/2007

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
2.9 Thames Gateway and Olympics. Su Bonfanti Anona Vasquez Masson	Assess the success of departmental measures on delivering accessible housing and environments in specific programmes in the Thames Gateway.	Monitor the impact of the Code for Sustainable Homes on the Thames Gateway developments.	An overview of whether departmental measures to encourage accessible housing and environments within the Thames Gateway developments are successful.	The CABE audit of housing assesses continued improvement in the number of housing deemed accessible for disabled people.	Ongoing
2.10 Thames Gateway and Olympics. Stephen Stringer	Update funding requirement to take account of the DDA 2005 definition of disability.	In particular update the clause in funding letters to take DDA 2005 into account.	The requirement to include disabled people's needs under the Act will be included in funding programmes.	Funding letter updated.	31/12/06

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
<p>2.11 Thames Gateway and Olympics. Leona Patterson</p>	<p>Ensure that design of the Thames Gateway Environment promotes disability equality and Inclusive Design.</p>	<p>1 Include guidance on how to achieve disability equality through “Designing the Gateway” guidance.</p> <p>2 Promote good practice guidance on disability and design (e.g. on engagement of disabled people) to delivery partners and local authority planning departments.</p>	<p>Designers in the Thames Gateway will apply Inclusive Design principles when designing buildings and the public space in the Gateway.</p> <p>Local Planning authorities in Thames Gateway will know what to look for in Design and Access Statements.</p>	<p>Publication of design standards which includes coverage of disability equality.</p> <p>Published design standards to signpost good practice on Inclusive Design and disability equality.</p>	<p>31/06/07</p>

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
<p>2.12 Urban Policy Directorate. Canda Smith</p>	<p>ASC to promote Inclusive Design principles through its work to increase and improve skills for sustainable communities.</p>	<p>Ensure that ASC integrates Inclusive Design principles into relevant initiatives and training programmes it develops and delivers, and encourages its partners to consider the role of Inclusive Design in their own training programmes. ASC should work closely with CABE to adopt and integrate outcomes from CABE's work with the Inclusive Environments Group.</p>	<p>Greater numbers of people involved in creating and maintaining sustainable communities will recognise the role of Inclusive Design in their success.</p>	<p>Specific mention of Inclusive Design principles in relevant learning materials and programmes established by ASC, including joint programmes with key partners.</p>	<p>01/04/07</p>

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
<p>2.13 Housing and Communities Analysis Division. David Wall</p>	<p>Monitor moves towards disability equality in housing.</p>	<p>Establish an evidence base, identify gaps and changes required to provide a spread of data to allow successful monitoring. Consider how the questionnaire for the new English Housing Survey can be developed to provide this evidence.</p>	<p>The success of moves towards disability equality in housing can be effectively monitored and the need for changes to policies can be identified.</p>	<p>1. Reductions in numbers of people with a long standing illness, disability or infirmity who say that they need additional adaptations and say their accommodation is currently unsuitable.</p> <p>2. Reductions in percentage of households including members who have long term limiting illness or disability living in non-decent homes.</p>	<p>31/03/09</p>

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
2.14 Housing Strategy and Legislation. Sarah Phillips	Ensure that homelessness policy and practice reflects the needs of households including disabled people accepted by local authorities as unintentionally homeless and in priority need.	Review results of the major survey of homeless families and young people reporting in 2006. Analyse the findings and issues for specific groups, e.g homeless people with mental health problems, older people with longstanding illnesses etc.	Policy development within Communities and Local Government and with other government departments will be informed by robust evidence.	Survey results will be published by May 2007, together with an action plan to address the issues identified.	Final report 31/12/06 Publication 31/05/07
2.15 Housing and Communities Analysis Division. David Wall	Ensure that the housing needs of people living in communal accommodation are adequately assessed.	Work with ODI to develop methods to ensure that comparable information is collected for people living in communal accommodation and private households as part of the cross-government Longitudinal Survey of disabled people.	Better information about the housing needs of disabled people living in communal accommodation.	The needs of people living in communal accommodation will be included in future surveys about housing.	ODI feasibility study 31/03/08. Longitudinal Survey 31/03/10

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
<p>2.16 Housing Decent Homes Division/ Affordable Housing Division. Anne Kirkham/ Peter Ruback</p>	<p>Ensure that the Affordable Housing Programme takes into account the needs of different impairment groups.</p>	<p>Communities and Local Government guidance to Regional Assemblies on Regional Housing Strategies to include request that they ensure that the needs of different impairment groups are considered in setting their overall housing strategy.</p>	<p>Consideration by Regional Assemblies of needs of different groups should ensure that supply of housing suitable for different impairment groups is mainstreamed into assessment of priorities.</p>	<p>Explicit reference to needs of different impairment groups in Regional Housing Strategies.</p>	<p>31/12/ 07 (for guidance to Regional Assemblies). Regional Housing Strategies are prepared on timescales set by the Regions.</p>

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
<p>2.17 Housing Decent Homes Division/ Affordable Housing Division. Anne Kirkham/ Peter Ruback</p>	<p>Encourage greater adoption of Lifetime Homes Standards (LTH) in Communities and Local Government funded new housing developments.</p>	<p>Communities and Local Government will work with the Housing Corporation to set a target to ensure that most new build schemes will adopt the Lifetime Homes (LTH) standard from 2010. As a way of working towards 2010, the Corporation will actively seek to encourage bids to include LTH in their next bidding round for their 2008/10 Affordable Housing Programme (AHP).</p> <p>Assess progress in incorporating LTH standard into English Partnership's quality and price standards to date.</p>	<p>Communities and Local Government will expect the number of homes with the LTH in the 2008/10 AHP to better the Corporation's achievement of 23% of homes that met the standard in the 2006/08 programme.</p>	<p>Significant increase in percentage of LTH.</p> <p>Include LTH achievement in EP's standard price/quality procurement documentation. Encourage its wider use and review its effectiveness.</p>	<p>From 01/04/10</p> <p>Immediate</p>

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
<p>2.18 Housing, Private Sector Housing Renewal and Adaptations Branch. Jeff Hollingworth</p>	<p>Review the Disabled Facilities Grant scheme.</p>	<p>Improving Life Chances (ILC) recommendation 4.9, said that reform of the grant should be considered by 2005. Particular reference to how changes in existing eligibility could mitigate disincentives to paid employment. To date: Independent Bristol university report published 10/05; exemption of children from means test from 12/05.</p>	<p>More effective provision of adaptations for disabled people.</p> <p>The eligibility criteria for the Disabled Facilities Grant would not be a disincentive to disabled peoples employment.</p>	<p>Following the consultation process, implement recommendations as appropriate.</p>	<p>Consultation by 01/03/07</p> <p>Recommendations implemented – dependent on resources – by 01/04/08</p>

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
2.19 Housing, Private Sector Housing Renewal and Adaptations Branch. Jeff Hollingworth	Work towards a new approach of supporting independent living working with DH, DWP and DFES.	ILC recommendations: 4.9 Improve the DFG – widen the provision, eg. provide moving grants, to make DFG more flexible to allow a broader range of housing solutions to enable independent living. 4.5 DFG is part of the piloting of individual budgets led by DH – trialling the delivery of a more transparent and individual centred approach across a number of funding streams.	Support for independent living will be improved.	Increase in number of disabled people living independently.	DFG Review recommendations implemented by 01/04/08 – dependent on resources – by 01/04/08 IB pilot results expected by 31/08/08
2.20 Housing Strategy and Support Directorate. Terrie Alafat	Consider the impact of Housing Finance policy on disabled people.	Carry out a Disability Equality Impact Assessment.	Information will indicate if any changes need to be made to Housing Finance policy.	Issues of relevance to disabled people will be identified, or confirmation that there are no significant issues.	31/12/06

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
2.21 Housing Strategy and Support Directorate Terrie Alafat	Gain direct feedback from disabled people on housing policies.	Establish links with disabled housing experts and organisations that can provide feedback on disabled people's experiences of housing policy and proposed initiatives.	Future changes to housing policy will be better informed in relation to the needs of disabled people.	Greater awareness of the implications of our policies for disabled people.	Ongoing
2.22 Housing Directorate Buildings Division. David Petherick	Establish an accepted standard for Lifetime Homes.	Encourage and support British Standards Institute to produce a Draft for Development: 'Accessible Housing – Lifetime Homes' to support the Code for Sustainable Homes.	The accessibility needs of disabled people will be improved in new housing developments.	Agreement to the Draft for Development.	31/06/07
2.23 Housing Directorate Buildings Division. Ian Lawrence/ David Petherick	To assess the impact lifetime homes could have on the housing industry and market in relation to the Code for Sustainable Homes.	To carry out a partial Regulatory Impact Assessment on Lifetime Homes.	Obtain information on the possible impact, such as cost on construction and the area required to build such homes.	An increase in the uptake of Lifetime Homes within the Code for Sustainable Homes.	31/05/07

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
2.24 Regional Policy Directorate. ERDF Valerie Campbell	All projects to be screened for disability equality in European Regional Development Fund criteria.	To include equal opportunities (including disability equality) as a cross cutting theme within programmes and part of the gateway eligibility criteria when appraising projects.	ERDF funded projects will have given consideration to equal opportunities (including disability equality) in their delivery and implementation, to include Operational Programmes and the agreed operations selection criteria.	Programmes approved by the EC and investment selection criteria approved by agreed date.	31/12/07
2.25 Planning Directorate. Larry O'Neil	To consider the revision and re-issuing of ' <i>Planning and Access for Disabled People: A Good Practice Guide</i> ' which was published prior to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.	To evaluate the usefulness so far of the current version, and to prepare a business case for the funding of additional research and revision of this publication to bring it up to date.	Local planning authorities, planners, developers, architects and everyone concerned with planning to use this guide to help build better and more inclusive environments which everyone, including disabled people, can enjoy.	More built environments providing access for everyone.	Evaluation of business case 31/03/07. If decision is to commence 31/03/08

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
2.26 Planning Directorate. Larry O'Neil	Identify best practice among local planning authorities in using the planning system to help create inclusive built environments which can be enjoyed by everyone, including disabled people.	Work with the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) on one or more good practice case studies of authorities that have been successful in helping to create inclusive environments.	The aim is for PAS to produce short and effective examples of case studies which could serve as good examples for other authorities to follow and/or build on.	More inclusive environments.	31/12/06.
2.27 Planning Directorate. Larry O'Neil	To ensure that disability issues are mainstreamed into planning policies.	Planning Directorate (PD) to identify more experts on disability and planning issues and invite them to join an external sounding board created to advise PD specifically on diversity issues. Consider a new structure for this group and how it might function in relation the new Planning Advisory Group.	Planning policies continue to evolve and PD are committed to ensuring that the needs of disabled people are covered in this guidance, and also circulars and other publications.	As above – i.e. local authorities and everyone who engages with the planning system should produce ever more inclusive environments.	31/12/06

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
2.28 Planning Directorate. Larry O'Neil	To ensure that all planning publications, circulars and guidance comply with the latest disability guidelines published by the RNIB and ensure that Cabinet Office policy on accessibility is complied with. Planning casework letters to members of the public also to comply.	Planning Directorate to identify good practice on access and work with the Directorate of Communication on a continuing basis to ensure published material is accessible. Where necessary, and where it is thought reasonable to do so, PD will produce text in alternative formats.	Everyone who wants to use PD published materials or read decision letters issued by PD should in future be able to do so.	PD should not receive criticism to the effect that published material cannot be accessed.	Ongoing
2.29 Urban Design. Canda Smith	Seek to ensure that Communities and Local Government funded and sponsored development incorporates principles of Inclusive Design.	Work with colleagues in department to ensure that Inclusive Design principles are disseminated to Communities and Local Government development programmes and agencies.	Inclusive Design principles are integrated into the outputs from Communities and Local Government sponsored programmes and agencies.	Materials produced by Communities and Local Government and by agencies have regard to Inclusive Design principles and these consequently feed into development on the ground.	Ongoing until 31/03/09

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
2.30 Housing Markets and Planning Analysis. Cath Shaw	Ensure that the implementation of the conclusions of the Review of Housing and Regeneration Delivery Mechanisms are assessed for their impact on delivering disability equality.	A full impact assessment is conducted on the outcomes of the Review of Housing and Regeneration Delivery Mechanisms. This will include the Thames Gateway, housing market renewal, affordable and key worker housing, and planning.	Disabled people's needs will be taken into account in the implementation of Housing and Regeneration Delivery Mechanisms, in particular in relation to ensure the delivery of Lifetime Homes.	Completion of impact assessment and drawing up of action plan based on recommendations arising from impact assessments.	30/04/07
2.31 Urban Policy Directorate Sustainable Urban Design. Canda Smith	CABE to develop principles of Inclusive Design and work with industry / government to ensure these are widely adopted.	Ensure that CABE uses its Inclusive Environments Group to form an informed view on Inclusive Design issues. Facilitate and monitor its work with industry and government to ensure that the resulting principles are adopted in policy development and action on the ground.	CABE leading the industry and contributing to policy development will improve access for disabled people to the built environment.	Publication and take-up of CABE's " <i>Principles of Inclusive Design</i> ". Over time, more buildings and spaces will be created that are fit for use by everyone.	Ongoing until 31/10/08

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
2.32 Neighbourhood Renewal Operation Directorate. Community Renewal and Liveability 4. Pablo Palao	Include specific references to encouraging disability equality in guidance requirements.	Review material in "Delivering Neighbourhood Management: a practical guide"	Guidance promoting disability equality would encourage greater support for disabled people within communities.	Widest possible dissemination of the guide to neighbourhood management practitioners.	05/09/06
2.33 Neighbourhood Renewal Operation Directorate. Community Renewal and Liveability 5. Tim Pope	Promote accessible public spaces through the Liveability programme.	Support research by CABE and I'DGO on disabled people's needs in public spaces and include in the "How To" programme.	Better understanding and application of inclusive environments principles among those responsible for delivery.	Involvement of disabled people in neighbourhood engagement.	31/12/07

3 Governance and Communications

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
3.1 Council Tax Policy Branch. Patrick Owen	Encourage disabled people who are eligible to take up the reduction in council tax band.	Provide clear and concise briefing note on the scheme and how to circulate to disability groups.	Eligible disabled people would receive the benefit of the reduction in council tax band to which they are entitled.	Good quality briefing note distributed to disability groups.	30/09/06
3.2 Local Government Policy. Michael Davis	For the Standards Board (SBE) and the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) to be aware of their statutory obligations with regard to disabled people and to fulfil them.	To scrutinise the corporate plans of the SBE and the LGO to ensure these bodies are aware of the requirement to take into account the needs of disabled people.	The SBE and the LGO to meet their statutory responsibilities.	For neither the SBE or the LGO to receive any justified complaints with regard to compliance.	SBE and LGO to meet any statutory timetable for compliance.

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
3.3 Local Government Policy. Cathryn Evans	Compliance with statutory obligations when appointing SBE members and LG Ombudsmen.	To take into account disability requirements when making appointments to the SBE and LGO, including employing recruitment consultants who follow appropriate practices with regard to disability.	To meet statutory requirements.	For the department to receive no justified complaints with regard to compliance.	As appointments are made.

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
<p>3.4 Local Government Quality and Performance Division. Maryanne Kelly</p>	<p>Encourage disadvantaged and marginalised communities, including disabled people, to be engaged in public life.</p>	<p>Encourage authorities, through statutory guidance, to target disadvantaged or marginalised groups and communities, such as ethnic minority, minority faith and disabled groups, when discharging the new duty to 'inform, consult, involve, devolve'. This may involve providing particular individuals or groups with information about services, engaging with them in relation to their needs and priorities, and providing support for them to get more involved in the design, delivery or assessment of services. Disadvantaged and marginalised communities are given</p>	<p>opportunities to participate in public life.</p>	<p>Anecdotal and case study evidence where available.</p>	<p>31/03/09</p>

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
3.4 Local Government Quality and Performance Division. Maryanne Kelly (continued)		The guidance will make reference to the provisions in the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 which allows authorities to take steps to take account of people's disabilities even where this involves treating them more favourably than other persons.			
3.5 Print, Publishing and Distribution. Neil Richardson	Improve the accessibility of all Communities and Local Government publications.	Provide all publications in fonts and layouts that are accessible, including the requirements for the new corporate identity, and by delivering full access to PDFs for specialist screen readers.	Publications will be accessible to the widest possible range of people.	Monitoring of use of alternativeformats@ and measuring speed of response.	31/12/06

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
3.6 Press Office. Charlotte Morgan Ben Wilson	Ensure that media briefings and press releases include disability press.	Consult with disabled organisations to consider media briefings and press releases.	Disability equality and a positive image of disabled people will be promoted through media exposure.	Monitoring of distribution lists and media contacts.	Ongoing
3.7 Publicity Desk. Richard Meakin	Undertake outreach to evaluate effectiveness of current communications programme and identify areas for improvement. Additionally, ensure that publications include positive images of disability.	Guidance on positive images to be drawn from the DWP's ODI website on disability images. Induct all staff on how to use this website. Additionally, set all staff within the publicity team an ODI objective and direct all outside agencies contracted by the department to consider how to incorporate images of disability in their creative proposals.	Areas for improvement within communications programmes will be established, while a positive image of disability will be promoted throughout communications.	All possible and appropriate publicity material will include positive images of disabled people.	31/05/07 and repeated annually.

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
3.8 E-Communications. Neil Williams	Provide more readily available information about publications in alternative formats.	Improve the availability and clarity of information about alternative formats on Communities and Local Government websites, and other communication routes where publications are available.	Greater information on alternative formats will allow a wider range of people to access publications.	All pages with publications in PDF format to carry standard statement on availability of alternative formats.	02/10/06
3.9 E-Communications. Neil Williams. Dominic Kingaby	Improve accessibility of Communities and Local Government websites and intranet.	Improve accessibility through the web rationalisation project.	Communities and Local Government 's online resources will be accessible to a greater range of users.	To be measured through the WebRaP project by various methods, eg usability workshops and evaluation of technical solutions against accessibility standards.	30/03/07
3.10 Internal Communications. Dominic Kingaby Coral Hill	Assess whether internal communications are widely accessible.	Establish a disability user/advisory group to routinely assess whether internal communications such as, ENS, online bulletins, and submissions are widely accessible.	Information on the accessibility of internal communications will allow informed changes to improve accessibility.	Group established. Achieve sign off for at least 99% of communications products as being widely accessible.	31/12/06 31/06/07

4. Places and Communities

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
4.1 Social Housing Management. Frances Walker Selvin Brown	Ensure that Choice Based Lettings policy (CBL) has a positive impact on disability equality.	(1) Develop and promote good practice/guidance on support for disabled users of CBL. (2) Consider ways to improve the data collected by social landlords about participation in CBL and lettings outcomes for disabled people (including through changes to CORE, see Actions 2.3 – 2.6).	Disabled people would be able to participate successfully in Choice Based Letting.	Increased participation in CBL by disabled people and better social housing outcomes.	(1) 31/12/07 (2) Issue statutory guidance on CBL 31/12/06

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
4.2 Social Housing Management. Frances Walker Selvin Brown	Establish whether and what the role is for Accessible Housing Registers (AHRs) within context of CBL and development of NROSH.	Consider ways to assess the effectiveness of AHRs within CBL context.	Finalise way of assessing effectiveness of AHRs.	Greater understanding of role of AHRs in CBL.	(1) By 31/12/06 initial scoping work (2) Assess effectiveness of AHRs, and if appropriate produce guidance for social landlords by 31/12/08
4.3 Local Agreements and Partnerships Division. Paul Downie	Provide better opportunities for the needs of disabled people to be addressed by local partnerships (the LSP model comprises a board with thematic partnerships feeding into the board); promote better local outcomes for disabled people through Local Area Agreements.	Evaluate impacts on disabled people as part of overall evaluation of the effectiveness of LSPs and LAAs.	Improved understanding of involvement of disabled people and their representatives in LSPs; improved understanding of how LAAs are helping to address the needs of disabled people.	Evidence of improved involvement in LSPs compared to previous responses to the LSP survey. Qualitative evidence of LAAs making a positive impact for disabled people.	Next round of LSP survey expected to be 2008. LAA evaluation commissioned 31/11/ 06

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
4.4 Local Government Intervention Division. Beacons Team. Ajay Jagatia	Promote good practice in meeting the disability equality duty and increasing the employment of disabled people.	Consider a Future Beacon Council Theme to incorporate good practice on meeting the DED and increasing disability employment. Assessment criteria will include a requirement to show how the DED has been met, particularly in relation to involvement of disabled people and increasing civic opportunities.	Promotion of good practice will allow other local authorities to improve.	The effective engagement of other authorities with the Beacon Councils with regard to this theme will indicate its success.	30/06/2007
4.5 Local Government Intervention Division. Paul Philpott	To promote skills, knowledge and understanding of disability equality performance issues amongst councillors and local authority senior managers.	Review the arrangements for capacity building engagement to ensure that these are promoting disability equality in local authority decision making.	Better local authority governance in relation to decisions to improve outcomes for and satisfaction of disabled citizens.	Percentage of councillors and senior managers registered for disability duty-related capacity building programmes.	By 31/10/2008

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
4.6 Government Offices Network. Nazneen Sunni	Assess the impact of employment policies upon disabled people.	Put together a timetable for impact assessments of internal policies and functions and implement necessary changes.	Internal policies will be adjusted to better suit the needs of disabled people.	The GO Network would anticipate improvements against key performance indicators such as recruitment and retention, training, grievances etc.	31/12/08
4.7 Government Offices Network. Nazneen Sunni	To promote a culture in which all staff have the opportunity to engage in promoting positive attitudes towards disability.	To consult and establish a process to engage all staff including the formation of a virtual reference group.	An established culture where all staff behave in ways that encourage and foster ways of fairness at work and respect for all colleagues.	Analysis from staff survey indicates that staff are respected for their abilities and no evidence of discrimination occurs in practices and policies.	31/12/08

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
4.8 Community Empowerment. Peter Matthew	Promote disability capacity building in voluntary sector support programmes and community empowerment work.	Communities and Local Government will develop a Voluntary Sector Strategy based on the principles in the Voluntary Sector Compact. Through this strategy Communities and Local Government will promote equality of opportunity for involvement regardless of race, age, disability, gender sexual orientation or religion.	Capacity building will enable greater engagement by disabled people in local communities, and be part of the Communities and Local Government's requirement to encourage disabled people's participation in public life.	Improved relationship between local government and VCS; Improved partnership balance in Local Area Agreements and Local Strategic Partnerships.	01/01/07

5 Equalities

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
5.1 Equality and Diversity Unit. Mark Carroll	Ensure that the Equality Impact Assessment methodology takes account of disability equality and is built into the policy processes of the department.	Identify mechanisms to ensure that Equality Impact Assessments are conducted at the appropriate point in the policy making process.	Improved assessment of the impact of Communities and Local Government policies on disabled people.	Annual progress on disability actions identified in assessments reported to Equalities Programme Executive.	31/12/07
5.2 Equality and Diversity Unit. Mark Carroll	Build internal capacity on disability equality.	Briefings and publicity to be provided for staff on the Disability Equality Duty.	Communities and Local Government policies and programmes will be more inclusive of disabled people's needs.	Annual review of DES demonstrates effective progress.	31/06/07

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
5.3 Equality and Diversity Unit. Mark Carroll	Prepare Communities and Local Government for the upcoming requirements of the Secretary of State duty.	Identify evidence required to report on the Secretary of State duty within the department and establish how this will be provided. Identify areas where cross Government implications exist and agree common approaches for evidence gathering and monitoring.	Communities and Local Government will be in a position to fulfil and support the Secretary of State's Duty.	Secretary of State report accepted by Parliament.	01/12/08
5.4 Equality and Diversity Unit. Mark Carroll and HR.	Improve the provision of reasonable adjustments within Communities and Local Government to deliver a streamlined, equitable, and effective service.	Project to be developed to improve the level of provision and provide a costing to Communities and Local Government Board. Providing clear accountabilities for funding and monitoring effectiveness. Include transportability of reasonable adjustments when staff change jobs.	Improved funding and the co-ordination of the provision of reasonable adjustments will allow disabled staff to work effectively and encourage disabled applicants to the department. Communities and Local Government will meet its legal obligations.	Delivery of a co-ordinated Reasonable Adjustments service.	31/06/07

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
5.5 Equality and Diversity Unit. Mark Carroll	To improve information provision for disabled people.	To work with ODI on its proposals for how central government can engage with local government to encourage and incentivise service deliverers to see information provision as a priority.	Options will be identified of how information provision can be improved via local government.	Feasibility of options to be considered by ODI.	31/03/08
5.6 Cohesion and Faiths Unit. Atul Patel	To ensure that the Cohesion and Faiths Unit obtains the views of disabled people.	Engage with stakeholder groups in a way which encourages disabled people and their groups to participate fully in CFU engagement activities.	Disabled members of CFU stakeholder groups are able to fully participate in its engagement processes.	Number of disabled individuals or groups participating in engagement activities.	Ongoing

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
5.7 Women and Equality Unit. Angela Mason	The needs of disabled people are reflected in work to modernise and create more effective mechanisms to deliver equality through the Commission for Equality and Human Rights, a Single Equality Bill and cross-Government equality PSA targets.	To provide the opportunity for a wide range of disabled people and their representative organisations to have input to policy and organisational development through inclusive stakeholder engagement arrangements.	The needs and views of disabled people are reflected in initiatives. Disabled people are represented within structures.	Positive feedback from disabled stakeholders.	Ongoing

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
<p>5.8 Civil Renewal Unit. Henry Tam</p>	<p>To increase the involvement of disabled people in local governance arrangements (including dealing with failures by service providers to address disability equality standards).</p>	<p>Identify ways in which disabled people can be empowered and involved in the new neighbourhood structures and in local governance.</p> <p>We will seek to encourage participation by disabled people in neighbourhood structures and local governance arrangements.</p> <p>Community Calls for Action available for use by the community or an individual if there is a failure by a service provider to meet equality standards e.g. failure to deal with complaints of discrimination.</p>	<p>Greater disability involvement in policy and service development and evaluation should lead to more appropriate service provision and increase the involvement of disabled people within their local communities.</p> <p>Ability to tackle failures by service providers.</p>	<p>As part of the Local Government White Paper, Communities and Local Government are looking at how a clear focus on outcomes for the most vulnerable can be provided for in the local government performance and accountability framework. Also, in terms of supporting good practice by councils, the use of information about citizens, such as segmentation, in local performance. This is being taken forward through the PSAs for CSR 07, and the White Paper.</p>	<p>Included in CSR 2007.</p> <p>With those elements in the White Paper taking effect from 01/04/08, with some elements from 01/04/09.</p> <p>On-going after that.</p>

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
5.9 Civil Renewal Unit. Henry Tam	Ensure that public community assets, (particularly public buildings) are required to meet the same accessibility standards as they are when under local authority management, when handed to communities or localised management.	As policy develops, have regard to the need for community assets to meet the same access standards while under community or localised management as they are while under local authority control.	Disabled people will have the same rights and opportunities to access community assets, regardless of the ownership of premises.	See action 5.8	See action 5.8

6 Fire and Resilience

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
6.1 Fire and Resilience Policy. Mike Reed Research, Statistics and Professional Advice. Cath Reynolds	Consider disabled people's needs in fire prevention initiatives and media campaigns.	Establish ways to involve disabled groups in advising on fire prevention initiatives and media campaigns.	Fewer disabled people injured or killed by fire.	Increased awareness among disabled community of fire safety issues.	31/03/07
6.2 Fire and Rescue Service Development. Teresa Clay	Improve recruitment and retention of disabled staff and delivery of services to disabled people by the FRS.	Include disability in the development of the new national Equality and Diversity Strategy for the FRS.	Increase in the number of disabled staff employed in the FRS across all disciplines; disabled people's needs taken into account in local service delivery.	FRAs have high quality Disability Equality Schemes and employment policies in relation to disabled people.	31/11/07 (planned publication of strategy)
6.3 Fire and Rescue Service Development. Teresa Clay	To involve and consult disabled people on delivery of services to and by the FRS.	Establish mechanisms by which disabled groups and individuals can be engaged in policy development.	Disability issues will be considered from the earliest stages of policy development and therefore improve the delivery of FRS to disabled people.	Disabled people feel that their views have been taken into account.	31/03/07 (as part of development of strategy)

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
6.4 Fire and Rescue Service Development. Teresa Clay	Monitor the impact of policy on employment of disabled people in the FRS.	Establish reliable monitoring and audit means to monitor delivery of employment targets.	FRAs and Communities and Local Government better able to focus the change programme.	FRAs recruit and retain more disabled people.	31/03/07 (to provide baseline for strategy)
6.5 Fire and Rescue Service Development. Teresa Clay	Support and encourage FRS to establish basis for the new FRS Disabilities Group to be supported.	Encourage FRS to identify financial resources to support the new FRS Disabilities Group.	The FRS Disabilities Group will be able to improve the working environment and career prospects for disabled staff and improve understanding of service delivery for disabled people.	Effective networking between disabled staff and engagement with FRS management and employers and Communities and Local Government to support and inform policy development.	01/04/07
6.6 Research, Statistics and Professional Advice. Cath Reynolds	Ensure that the Fire Research Academy is informed in regard to disability issues.	Ensure that the Fire Research Academy has a process to take on board the views and ideas of stakeholders and to invite a representative of a disability organisation to be part of the stakeholder process.	A well informed Fire Research Academy, in regard to disability issues, will better understand the needs of disabled people.	That the Academy regularly involves disability representative groups in project planning and all relevant research has been impact assessed with regard to disability.	31/12/07

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
6.7 Research, Statistics and Professional Advice. Cath Reynolds	Use the project initiation process to consider the potential relevance of each new project to disability equality.	Amend the project initiation process to include a requirement to consider the relevance of the project to disability equality.	Projects will reflect the needs of disabled people where relevant.	That where appropriate, research projects regularly involve disability representative groups in project planning. All relevant research has been impact assessed with regard to disability.	31/12/07
6.8 Research, Statistics and Professional Advice. Cath Reynolds	Include disabled people's needs in all relevant research projects.	Ensure that all relevant research projects e.g. Fire Risks and Vulnerable Groups, Smart Homes, explicitly identify disabled people as a target group.	The needs of disabled people will be known in the findings of relevant research projects.	Increased knowledge of disabled people's vulnerability with regard to fire risk and improved ways of addressing fire risk.	31/12/07
6.9 Fire & Rescue Service Development. Teresa Clay	To improve FRS understanding of disability issues in relation to improvement planning and Integrated Risk Management Plans.	Review guidance on improvement planning and Integrated Risk Management Plans to ensure it includes appropriate advice on meeting the disability equality duty.	Fire and Rescue Authorities will be better informed on how to consider and implement risk management issues in relation to disabled staff and disabled citizens.	Disabled people's needs will be included in the development of future planning and risk management.	31/03/07

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
6.10 Research, Statistics and Professional Advice. Cath Reynolds	To test potential for innovation which could radically reduce fire risk in housing for vulnerable groups, including disabled people.	Engage with Housing colleagues to provide low cost sprinkler systems as part of pilot trials in housing for vulnerable groups, in particular groups of older and disabled people.	Disabled people are often at high risk from fire. Prevent fire deaths by installing low cost sprinkler system as part of a pilot study, in at risk homes.	Housing colleagues are on project board for lower cost sprinkler system pilots. Systems installed in at risk homes.	Pilots for about 5 years from award of contract, approx 01/03/07

7 Agencies

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
7.1 Fire Service College Centre for Leadership. Gill Newton	To include disability equality in the work of the Centre for Leadership.	<p>1. Engage with disabled stakeholders to help develop the model of leadership for the service.</p> <p>2. To provide accessible leadership and management learning resources.</p>	<p>1. The Centre for Leadership will actively support disability equality through its work.</p> <p>2. The introduction of high quality accessible resources utilising open learning through the Ashridge Business School's Open Learning Resource.</p>	<p>1. Disability Rights Commission consulted on and actively participated in the development of the new leadership model.</p> <p>2. Ongoing take up of the resource by disabled stakeholders.</p>	<p>1. 30/03/06</p> <p>2. From 31/12/06</p>

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
7.2 Fire Service College. Gill Newton	Ensure that employee data monitoring systems for employment, recruitment, selection, retention, performance assessment, promotion, training, grievances and disciplinary action meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).	Assess monitoring systems for employment, recruitment, selection, retention, performance assessment, promotion, training, grievances and disciplinary action. Improve these if necessary to meet legal requirements.	Effective systems will provide the evidence base to monitor the relative progress of disabled staff, as compared to their non-disabled colleagues.	Workforce data can be disaggregated to meet requirements of the DDA.	31/03/07
7.3 Fire Service College. Gill Newton	Improve communications with disabled staff.	Establish a programme of improvements arising from recommendations made through annual consultation with disabled staff and report back on progress to the staff group.	College will be fully aware of staff disability issues and concerns, and better able to make necessary recommendations or adjustments.	Feedback from disabled staff.	31/03/07

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
7.4 Fire Service College. Gill Newton	Establish current state of access issues to College in relation to DDA requirements.	Undertake access audit of Fire Service College premises to ensure compliance with legislation.	To ensure College is fully compliant with DDA aspects relating to access to premises.	Final audit.	31/03/07
7.5 Queen Elizabeth II Centre. Ernest Vincent	Ensure that employee data monitoring systems for employment, recruitment, selection, retention, performance assessment, promotion, training, grievances and disciplinary action meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).	Assess monitoring systems for employment, recruitment, selection, retention, performance assessment, promotion, training, grievances and disciplinary action. Improve these if necessary to meet legal requirements.	Effective systems will provide the evidence base to monitor the relative progress of disabled staff, as compared to their non-disabled colleagues.	Workforce data can be disaggregated to meet requirements of the DDA.	31/09/07
7.6 Queen Elizabeth II Centre. Ernest Vincent	To better facilitate disabled customer's needs and requirements when visiting the conference centre.	Ensure that a training programme for staff and contractors is in place on meeting disabled customer's needs, including access.	Staff and contractors are well informed as to disabled customer's needs including access to the building.	Monitor success via responses from client questionnaires.	31/12/07

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
7.7 Queen Elizabeth II Centre. Ernest Vincent	To endeavour to capture accurate responses from users of the conference centre in respect of more precise information concerning satisfaction levels of disabled customers.	Establish means to estimate numbers, types of disability and satisfaction levels of users of the QEII Centre, in order to assess whether service provision is meeting people's needs.	Effective means to provide as much evidence as possible relative to the numbers, types of disability and satisfaction levels.	Monitor feedback from the revised format electronic client questionnaire sent to all customers that use the conference centre.	31/03/08
7.8 Queen Elizabeth II Centre. Ernest Vincent	Improve knowledge on employment practice as this relates to those with disabilities.	Join relevant expert forum (e.g Employers' Forum on Disabled People).	A well informed internal HR network fully equipped to deal with issues when they arise.	Compliant with DDA as it concerns employment practices.	31/03/08
7.9 Queen Elizabeth II Centre. Ernest Vincent	Review current emergency evacuation procedures.	Identify whether further improvements could be made to emergency evacuation procedures for disabled customers.	The procedure for emergency evacuation has taken into account the needs of those with disabilities.	Emergency procedures fully comply with the DDA.	31/03/08

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
7.10 Planning Inspectorate. Katrine Sporle	Ensure that employee data monitoring systems for employment, recruitment, selection, retention, performance assessment, promotion, training, grievances and disciplinary action meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).	Assess monitoring systems for employment, recruitment, selection, retention, performance assessment, promotion, training, grievances and disciplinary action. Improve these if necessary to meet legal requirements.	Effective systems will provide the evidence base to monitor the relative progress of disabled staff, as compared to their non-disabled colleagues.	Workforce data can be disaggregated to meet requirements of the DDA.	31/03/07
7.11 Planning Inspectorate. Katrine Sporle	To find out from disabled staff any areas for improvement on employment issues.	Establish staff disability network and identify programme of improvements based on recommendations.	Feedback from Disabled staff would provide PINS health check.	Contribution from network would help to formulate action plan.	From 01/01/07
7.12 Planning Inspectorate. Katrine Sporle	Establish means to identify if planning decisions have a differential impact on disabled people.	Ensure monitoring of planning decisions includes diversity data, and is assessed annually to identify any relevant trends.	To ensure that disabled people are not treated unfairly. Take remedial action if this is the case.	Data provided clearly demonstrates fair treatment for all. Also would help to formulate action plan.	From 01/01/07

Responsibility sign off	Objective	Action	Outcome	Measure of success	Timescale
7.13 Planning Inspectorate. Katrine Sporle	To enable disabled people to participate fully in planning inquiries.	Identify means to obtain feedback from participants/attendees at planning inquiries on the service provided on behalf of PINS, including whether disability access arrangements have been effective.	To ensure that disabled people feel that they have been fully involved in the Planning system.	Feedback forms and comments from parties, public and inspectors.	From 01/01/07

6 Driving change

The department realises that it is not enough merely to set out a plan of action to improve equality of opportunity for disabled people – it must also put in place mechanisms to monitor progress against the Action Plan and ensure that timetables for action are met.

The department also needs to improve its procedures for measuring the impact of its policies and procedures on disadvantaged groups, including disabled people. Without effective impact assessment, the work that the Government is doing to improve equality and community cohesion could be hampered by unforeseen and adverse effects of its policies.

6.1 Equalities Programme Executive

In order to ensure that progress on implementing the Action Plan is maintained, annual reviews of progress will be given to Communities and Local Government's Equalities Programme Executive, which is made up of senior officials and headed by the Permanent Secretary. The Equalities Programme Executive will also receive regular progress on specific actions which have an internal employment focus.

The Equalities Programme Executive will also oversee the preparation of the Secretary of State's report in 2008 on progress towards disability equality in the areas covered by departmental policy, as well as the subsequent Equality Scheme. This will set out new actions to improve disability equality and report on progress made against actions in the 2006 Scheme.

6.2 Approach to impact assessments

The department agreed in 2006 to develop a proposal for an integrated methodology for Equality Impact Assessment, partly in preparation for the new public equality duties on disability and gender equality. A simple procedure and guidance for Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) was needed to ensure that the department has a usable process of systematically analysing a proposed or existing policy or strategy to identify what effect, or likely effect, will follow from its implementation for different groups in the community.

The Integrated Methodology was achieved through:

- Discussion with a range of policy areas across the department
- Benchmarking with other government departments

- Analysing other integrated equality impact assessment methodologies
- Piloting and assessing the methodology for the department

The aim is to ensure that the equality impact assessment process is completed as part of mainstream policy development. The proposed methodology outlines all the various aspects that must be covered to guarantee disability equality. Under the initial Screening Process, it is proposed that the following stages must be covered:

- A clarification of the status of the policy stages
- Who is the owner of the screening process
- A description of the policy and its relevance to the equality and diversity duties (including disability)
- The evidence base for screening
- An identification of risks and opportunities from the requirement of the different equalities duties
- Proportionality and the rationale for final decision

If a Full Assessment is required, then the following protocols will be followed:

- The name of the policy
- The owner of the full assessment
- The scope of the assessment
- The evidence sources
- The data and research sources (with emphasis on dates and target areas)
- The consultation process (existing and new)
- Key insights for different equalities groups and within that the interests of different groups of disabled people
- Summary of assessment
- Monitoring and review process
- Action plan – to include:
 - a) Changes that have been made to policy as a result of the Impact Assessment;

- b) Areas where a policy may have a differential impact on certain groups and what arrangements are in place or proposed to mitigate these effects;
- c) Areas where a policy may impact negatively (but not illegally) on certain groups but mitigation is not possible (e.g. where there is an overriding societal driver for proceeding with a policy);
- d) Stating actions designed to maximise positive effects – i.e. where opportunities are identified for: promoting equality, good relations between groups or knowledge about groups; increasing democratic participation; or addressing inequalities.

One of the actions in the Disability Equality Scheme (DES) is to finalise the adoption of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) methodology.

Annex A: Disability Discrimination Act 2005

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 has been amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 so that it now places a duty on all public bodies, including Communities and Local Government, to have due regard to the need to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons;
- Eliminate discrimination that 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.

Requirements of Disability Equality Scheme

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 imposes specific statutory duties on Communities and Local Government as a public authority. This Disability Equality Scheme shows how the department meets its requirements under the specific duty, for example it:

- shows how disabled people have been involved;
- defines how the department will assess the impact of its actions on disabled people;
- sets out an action plan to implement the disability equality duty;
- sets out how the department will gather evidence on progress towards disability equality,
- it indicates how the department will use collected information to produce future Disability Equality Schemes. Including:
 - the recruitment, retention and development of disabled employees;
 - the extent to which the services and functions of the authority meet the needs of disabled people; and
- it shows how the scheme will be reviewed.

Secretary of State Duty

The specific duty regulations introduce a new duty on Secretaries of State, including Communities and Local Government's Secretary of State, from December 2008, to produce a report every three years. The report must give an overview of the progress made by the department operating in its policy sectors towards equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons. It must also set out the Secretary of State's proposals for the co-ordination of action by public authorities operating in that sector so as to bring about further progress towards equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons. Part of the Action Plan addresses the need to begin work on this new requirement.

Annex B: Glossary

Accessibility statement

Statement to be submitted with a planning application showing (for a building) how everyone can get to and move through the place regardless of age, disability, ethnicity or social grouping.

Accessible Housing Register

Register to be held by local authorities, containing details of housing accessible to disabled people in their area.

Beacon Council

Councils selected for their good performance in a particular policy area under a scheme run by Communities and Local Government.

Choice Based Letting

Process that seeks to introduce a far greater degree of choice, and matches prospective tenants to homes that they want.

Code for Sustainable Homes

A voluntary initiative, by Government and Industry, to actively promote the transformation of the building industry towards more sustainable practices.

Community Calls for Action

Mechanism proposed under the Police and Justice Bill 2006 whereby a councillor – as a result of information from individuals, community groups or their own observations – who becomes aware of an issue which is causing concern to the community can trigger a response from service providers.

Comprehensive Spending Review

Review of government expenditure, usually over a three year period. The next review will take place in 2007.

Design statement

Statement to be submitted with a planning application showing the design process that has been gone through and explaining it in terms of its use, layout, scale, landscaping and appearance.

Discrimination

This term is used here in the sense of unfair discrimination i.e. using information, which is unfair, or irrelevant to influence a decision on the way someone is treated.

Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)

This act is the main anti-discrimination legislation for disabled people. It came into being in 1995. It provides rights for disabled people in the areas of employment, access to goods and services and transport. The 1995 Act was amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005.

Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

Grant allocated by local housing authorities to make existing homes more accessible to disabled people.

Draft for Development

Draft British Standard which is open to comments from the public.

Equalities Programme Executive

Group of senior Communities and Local Government officials who manage the development of strategy on, and the delivery of the department's priorities on equalities.

English Housing Survey

A multi-purpose household interview survey with a sample of 20,000 responding households each year. It provides a comprehensive range of basic information on households and their housing.

Framework contract

A contract set up to deliver services with a number of suppliers. Suppliers are pre-vetted for quality, technical ability and financial ability, and have agreed to the customer's contract conditions. This enables the customer to make use of the suppliers without the need to undertake another formal tendering process.

General duty

The requirement on public authorities, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to: promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons; eliminate discrimination that 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 to take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

Government Office

Government Offices represent ten central government departments, and are the primary means by which a wide range of Government policies and programmes are delivered in the nine English regions.

Impact assessment

A procedure that looks at the impact that an organisation's projects, policies or procedures might have on certain groups, e.g. disabled people.

Inclusive Design

A way of designing products and environments so that they are usable and appealing to everyone regardless of age, ability or circumstance.

Individual budgets

Individual budgets are designed to enable people needing social care and associated services to design that support and to give them the power to decide the nature of the services they need. Its key features are transparent allocation of resources, bringing together a variety of streams of support and/or funding, from more than one agency, giving individuals the ability to use the budget in a way that best suits their own particular requirements, and support from a broker or advocate, family or friends, as the individual wishes.

Lifetime Homes Standards

A set of 16 design features to create a flexible blueprint for accessible and adaptable housing. Originally drawn up by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Local Area Agreement (LAAs)

LAAs set out the priorities for a local area, agreed between central government and a local area (i.e the local authority and Local Strategic Partnership) and other key partners at the local level. They simplify some central funding, help join up public services more effectively and allow greater flexibility for local solutions to local circumstances.

Local Government Ombudsman

Local Government Ombudsmen investigate complaints about councils and certain other bodies. They are independent, and investigate complaints about most council matters including housing, planning, education and social services.

Local Strategic Partnerships

Single, non-statutory, multi-agency bodies, which match local authority boundaries, and aim to bring together at a local level the different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors.

Longitudinal survey

Study looking at a particular group, taking place over a period of time, often over a number of years.

Procurement

The process by which a public authority enters into a contract with an external supplier to carry out works or provide goods and services.

Public Service Agreement

Agreements that set out the department's aims and objectives and describe how the department's targets will be achieved and how performance against the targets will be measured.

Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments are changes for example, to physical premises or working practices that remove the disadvantage they present to a person with a disability. There are no strict rules about what qualifies as a reasonable adjustment as every case is different and must be assessed on its merits.

Secretary of State Duty

The specific duty regulations of the Disability Discrimination Act introduces a new duty on certain Secretaries of State and the National Assembly for Wales from December 2008 to produce a report every three years. The report must give an overview of the progress made by public authorities operating in that sector towards equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons; and set out the Secretary of State or Welsh Assembly's proposals for the co-ordination of action by public authorities operating in that sector so as to bring about further progress towards equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons.

Smart homes

Homes containing a communications infrastructure that allows the various systems and devices in the home (e.g. central heating, fire, security alarms, televisions and lights) to communicate with each other, in order to make everyday tasks simpler or easier.

Specific duties

Certain public authorities are required to comply with specific duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 which are set out in the Statutory Duties regulations (known as the specific duties regulations). These duties are intended to assist authorities in complying with the general duty to promote disability equality.

Standards Board for England

A body whose main tasks are to ensure that standards of ethical conduct are maintained across a wide range of public authorities, and to deal with complaints of misconduct against individual members.

Steria

The company providing Communities and Local Government with IT services.

Supporting People

Supporting People provides housing-related support services to over one million vulnerable people, including disabled people.

Thames Gateway

Development area stretching for 40 miles along the Thames Estuary from the London Docklands to Southend in Essex and Sheerness in Kent. The Government's targets for the Gateway by 2016 include 120,000 new homes, high quality transport infrastructure, 180,000 new jobs, improved education facilities, and high quality healthcare.

WebRaP

Web-based playback.

White Paper

Statement of Government policy.

ACRONYMS

AHR	Accessible Housing Register
ASC	Academy for Sustainable Communities
CABE	Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
CBL	Choice Based Letting
CFU	Cohesion and Faiths Unit
CLG	Communities and Local Government
CORE	Continuous Recording System
CSR	Comprehensive Spending Review
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DED	Disability Equality Duty
DfES	Department for Education and Science
DFG	Disabled Facilities Grant
DH	Department of Health
DM	Divisional Manager
DRC	Disability Rights Commission
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EDU	Equality and Diversity Unit
ENS	Electronic News Service
EP	English Partnerships
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
EC	European Commission
FRA	Fire and Rescue Authority
FRS	Fire and Rescue Service
GO	Government Office
HR	Human Resources
IB	Individual Budget
I'DGO	Inclusive Design for Getting Outdoors
ICTD	Information and Communications Technology Division

ILC	Improving Life Chances of Disabled People
LA	Local Authority
LAA	Local Area Agreement
LGO	Local Government Ombudsman
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
LTH	Lifetime Homes Standards
NROSH	National Register of Social Housing
NS	National Statistics
ODI	Office for Disability Issues
PDF	Portable Document Format
PINS	Planning Inspectorate
PSA	Public Service Agreement
QEII	Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre
RA	Reasonable Adjustments
RADAR	Disability network (formerly the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation)
SBE	Standards Board for England
TBC	To be confirmed
VCS	Voluntary and Community Sector
WED	Working Environment Division