

Denbighshire County Council Equalities Plan 2007 – 2009

Annual Review July 2008

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1. Introduction

Denbighshire County Council are pleased to present this Annual Report on the integrated Equalities Plan. It is a review of the effectiveness of our Plan and the actions. The Scheme was published in July 2007, circulated widely and included on the Council's Website. This report sets out and categorises our equality progress in relation to employment and service delivery.

It includes an account of the work we have done to positively remove the barriers people face when accessing employment or services, Strengths and weakness in equality practice will be identified, progress demonstrated and practice gaps highlighted to inform our future work plans.

Denbighshire have been successful in producing an Integrated Equalities Plan covering race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion and belief. This document should be read together with the full Integrated Equalities Plan which details what we plan to achieve.

Equality is not just about meeting a legal obligation; it is also about fairness and good sense, and a moral duty to challenge discrimination. The purpose of the Equality Scheme is to make a commitment to take the needs of everyone into account in everything we do, whether that's providing services, employing people, developing policies, communicating or consulting. This is called "mainstreaming".

The Council will continue to challenge the way it provides services, develops policies and employs people to ensure that all people in Denbighshire are treated fairly.

Executive responsibility for the Integrated Equality Plan and Welsh Language Scheme now lies within the Strategic Policy Unit. In September 2007 Karen Beattie joined the Strategic Policy Unit to take up the role of Corporate Equalities Officer.

After local elections held in May 2008, the new lead member for Equalities and Diversity is Cllr Rhiannon Hughes MBE who has a specific responsibility for Equalities as part of her portfolio.

1.1 Improvement Plan is an annual action plan that sets out each year the actions we will take to achieve our corporate plan objectives.

The Council recognises the diverse nature of the County and endeavors to ensure that employees, potential employees, contractors, partners, clients and customers are treated with dignity and respect. The Council opposes all forms of discrimination and undertakes not to discriminate on the grounds of sex, marital status, gender, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, language, disability, age, sexual orientation or religion or belief, responsibility for dependents, social or economic status or criminal record.

1.2 Business Planning

Denbighshire County Council offers a range of services to support the needs of our community. The work we are undertaking with our partners to deliver our Community Strategy will help us to ensure that we offer the best and most efficient services we are able to deliver to all members of the community.

1.3 Procurement

The duty to promote equality applies to procurement. Where a public authority's function is carried out by an external supplier on its behalf, the local authority remains responsible for meeting the duty.

Denbighshire's contracts include a request for information on suppliers, sub-contractors and working partners equality and diversity commitment but at this time no actions are taken if information is not supplied.

Any service and policy area improved as a result of this Integrated Equality Scheme will contribute towards our success in achieving these corporate objectives.

2. European Human Rights Commission

In October 2007, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) brought together the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), the Disability Rights Commission (DRC), and the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), took on their powers and gained new powers to enforce legislation more effectively and promote equality and also took on responsibility for age, sexual orientation and religion or belief, as well as human rights.

3. The Equalities Plan and Actions

3.1 Equality Improvement Framework

Equality Improvement Framework (EIF) launched by the Welsh Assembly and WLGA in January 2008. This will replace the local government equality standards which were voluntary and did not impact on local performance indicators. It has been developed to promote, manage and improve equality within local government and support local authorities in the delivery of their legal duties. The WLGA will be developing further guidance. The EIF is a management framework rather than an equality toolkit and must be integrated into the management structure of the authority.

The EIF brings together 7 equality improvement aims and 11 improvement elements. The framework allows flexibility for LA's to adopt different values and visions responding to different local circumstances while providing for external benchmarking and assessment.

3,2 Equality Impact Assessments

An equality impact assessment (EqIA) is a tool for identifying the potential impact of an all council's policies, services and functions on its residents and staff

There is a timetable for conducting equality impact assessment for all existing functions, policies and services. In line with the statutory requirement, the council must conduct impact assessments as soon as a relevant new policy, function or service is considered. It will be an integral part of policy development.

All new policies will need to be Equality Impact Assessed. Equalities Officer Group will undertake EIA training and lead on these actions within their directorates. All new strategies will have undertaken an EIA.

We had hoped to adopt and use the proposed Welsh Assembly Equality Impact Assessment toolkit. Unfortunately it is not available for public use and is presently a pilot document within the Welsh Assembly.

Education: Schools must assess the impact of all their policies on pupils, staff and parents from different groups. They must monitor the way their policies work and place a special emphasis on pupils; attainment levels.

Impact Assessments help us to:

- Improve services and make them more accessible and relevant to local need
- Promote equality of opportunity as an employer, provider of services and community leader
- Promote good community relations
- Develop a pro-active approach to equality and inclusion
- Combat discrimination
- Identify areas where there is potential for unfair treatment or discrimination to exist so that this can be addressed
- Integrate good equality practice into the policy framework and everything we do and how we do it

EIA's can help staff provide and deliver excellent services to residents by making sure that these reflect the needs of the community.

3.3 Consultation / Engagement Events

Public Authorities have statutory duties under Equalities legislation, these include consulting and involving people from all Equality areas.

Consultation methods have included questionnaires and surveys, focus groups. Engagement events have been facilitated and organised with other local authorities, Health Services and individual groups. (Nov 2007). These events were specifically aimed at helping to identify key issues, priorities and actions for our Disability Equality Scheme published in July 2007 and Race Scheme published in May 2008

It is good practice to involve as well as consult stakeholders, partners, service users and employees

3.4 Equality Policies

We now have specific Equality Policies, which outline our Corporate approach to Equality and Diversity. These will be published on the Equality and Diversity Webpage.

3.5 Action Plan

A review of the action plan was completed in July and shows what progress has been made to date against identified actions.

Legislation at a glance - This document provides a brief summary related to promoting equality and tackling unfair discrimination passed in the UK and EU.

3.6 Monitoring

Equality monitoring is the process used to collect, store and analyse data about people's backgrounds. Without monitoring we would not know if our equality policies and action plans are working and if all groups were being treated fairly.

We use monitoring as part of an ongoing process of analysis, asking questions, investigations and making changes that continually improve the quality of life for everyone, whether it is in our service provision or in our employment practices.

Six monthly Monitoring took place in April and October 2007 using the Corporate Equality and Diversity Monitoring Form to front line services. Members of the public were asked to complete monitoring forms in order to collect local information relating to the Equality Strands of:

race
gender
disability
sexual orientation
age
religion and or belief

Denbighshire have also included monitoring question relating to Carers.

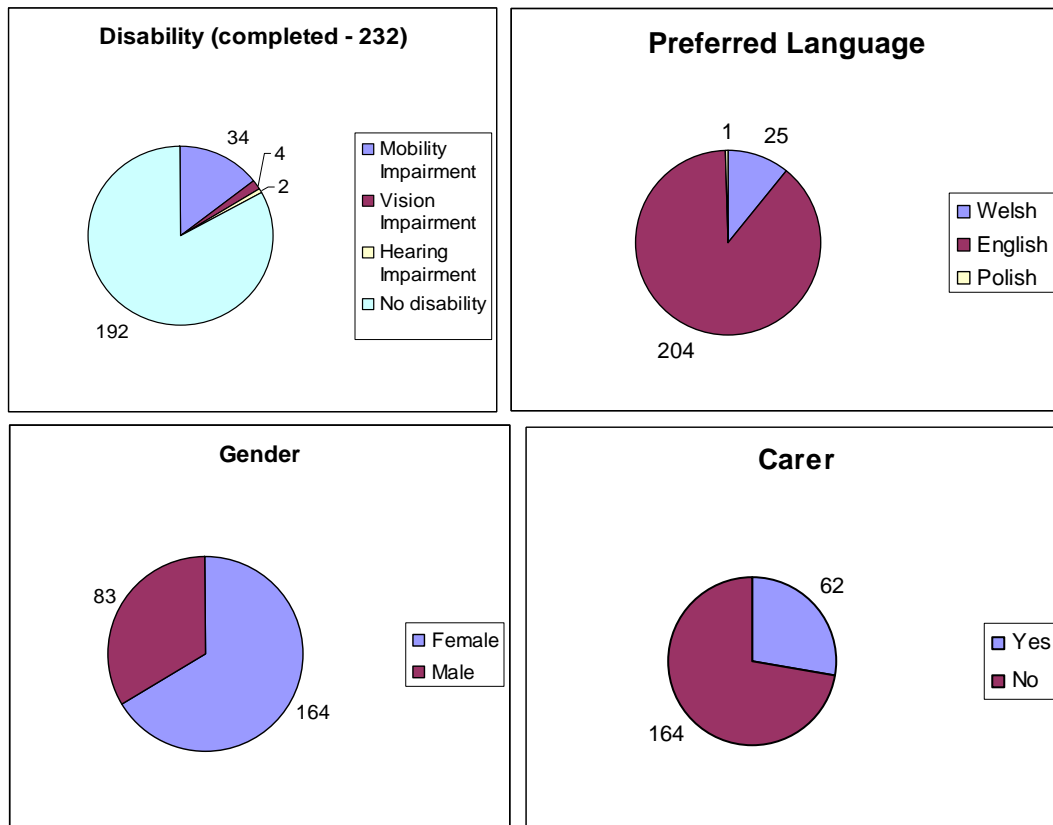
The monitoring task was supported using e-visit software, problems were experienced and lessons learned. Future monitoring will be supported with SNAP software which will provide more local data relating to Equalities information.

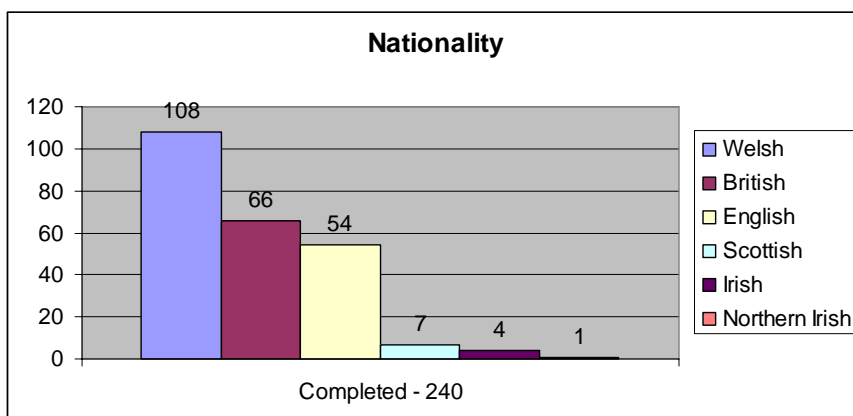
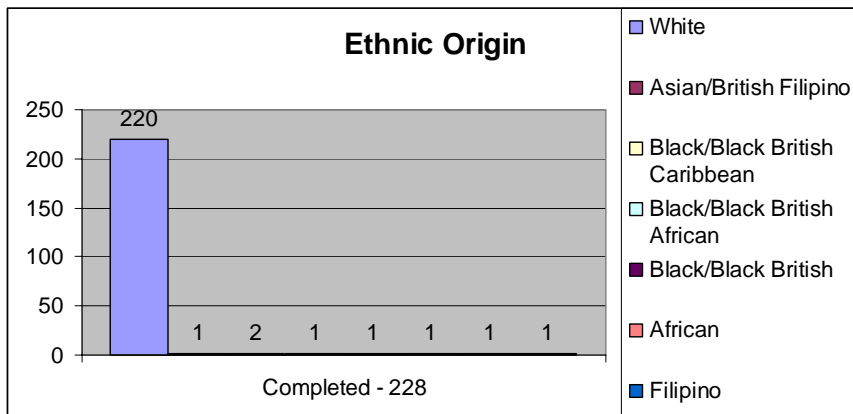
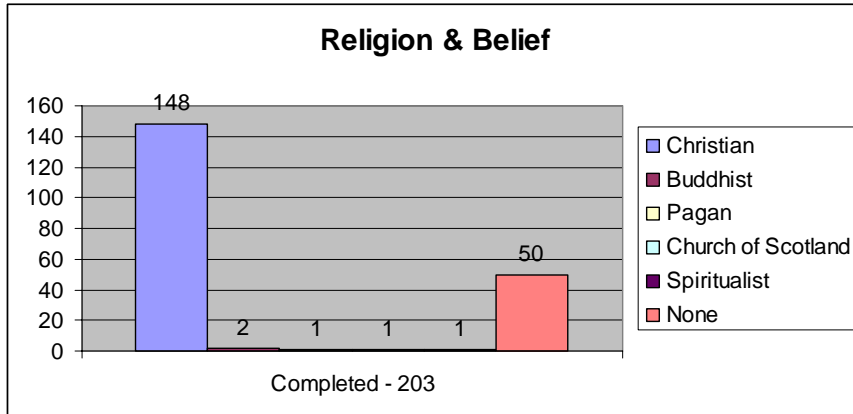
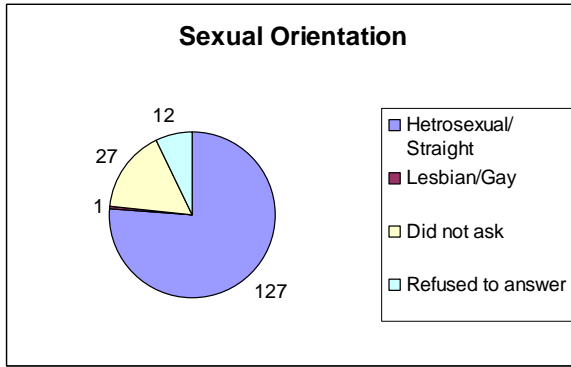
There is inconsistency in what data Services collect and even though a large number of services collect data, they very often do not publish the results or analyse the information.

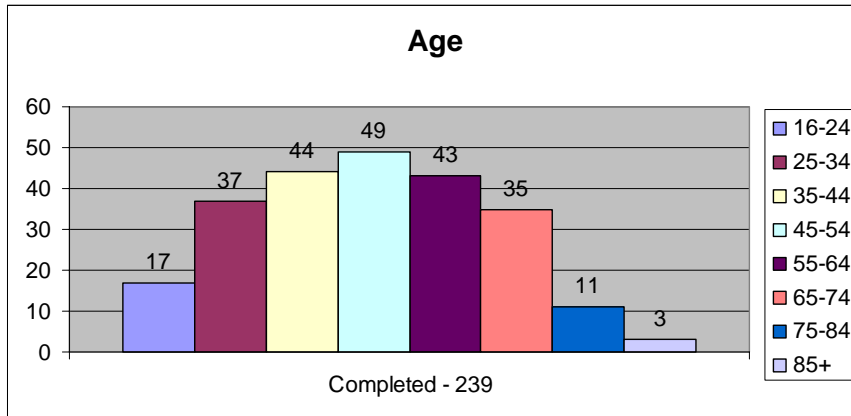
A corporate monitoring form has been adopted for use across all directorates within the Council. All directorates will be encouraged to use this equality and diversity form when collect data for their service.

Monitoring Form Results from October 2007

Total number of returned forms = 260







Leisure Services Equality Monitoring 2007

Age			Gender					Disabled		
Under 16	668	48%	Male	722	53%	Yes	254	19%		
16-25	193	14%	Female	633	47%	No	1117	81%		
29-49	331	24%								
50+	188	14%								
Total	1382									

Monitoring Services highlights good practice and areas for improvement

3.7 Heads of Service Interviews

Interviews took the form of a structured questionnaire which specifically asked questions relating to equalities.

A total of seventeen Heads of Service were interviewed during November and December 2007 to monitor how services are delivered to everyone.

The purpose of the questionnaire was to:

- Find out how services take into account: age; gender; race; disability; sexual orientation; religion and belief; and welsh language when planning how services will be delivered.
- Find out how services take into account: age; gender; race; disability; sexual orientation; religion and belief; and welsh language when employing staff to work in the service.
- Find out how services are promoting equalities and identify good practice which can be shared between departments.

- Work together to find out how we can gather equalities data and monitor service improvement.
- Go through the Corporate Equalities Action Plan, identify Directorate actions and report progress.

Heads of Service have supported the establishment of an Equalities Officer Group with the remit to identify key representatives from various Services who will monitor their actions in the Plan and champion equality strands.

Identifies how actions in the Equalities Plan have been transferred into departmental service delivery.

3.8 Internal Consultation Groups

a) Corporate Equalities Group (CEG)

The Council has a Corporate Equalities Group and a Members Bilingual Group and every possible step is taken to take into account the diverse nature of individuals and ensure that they are treated fairly and decisions on service provision and employment are based on objective criteria.

Nominated elected members representing all political parties in Denbighshire attend the group to address Equality & Diversity and Human Rights statutory requirements of Denbighshire County Council

b) Equalities Officers Group

Each Service has nominated a dedicated Equality Champion to oversee the development of the equality and diversity work within the Service as defined in the Action Plan.

a) Equalities Officers Group – The first meeting was held on 30 June 2008.

c) Officers will review progress on equality actions which relate to their department service delivery.

Department/Directorate Champions on Equality Issues

c) Employee Consultative Group

Personnel are in the process of establishing an employee consultative group. The group will provide staff with a forum to raise issues of concern related to equality issues. Personnel currently in discussion with the Trade Unions in respect of the terms of reference of the Group which will be open to all staff.

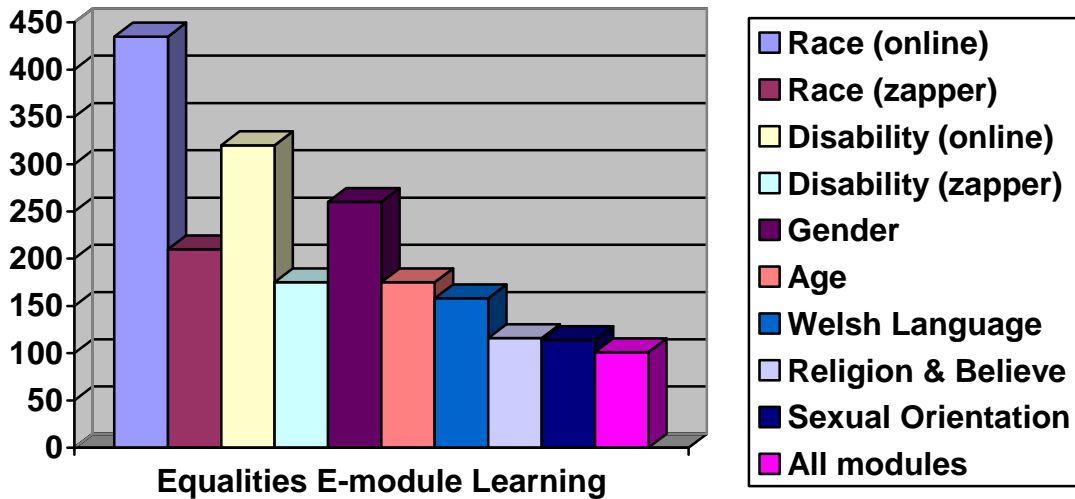
3.9 Equality and Diversity Training

During 2006 Denbighshire became a partner in the Engaging Diversity partnership to develop a suite of **7 e-learning equalities modules** covering Race, Disability, Gender, Age, Welsh Language, Sexual Orientation and Religion/Belief.

The pilot came to an end in December 2007. Human Resources are in the process of securing continued use of race, disability and gender modules. These modules are now mandatory training for council employees. Denbighshire employs over 4,500 staff, 107 have completed all e-modules. In order to reach everyone in relation to Equality training more training events need to be organised.

a) **Equality and Diversity completed e-module training**

			Average Score
1.	Race	460	92.63%
2.	Disability	340	86.59%
3.	Gender	281	93.54%
4.	Age	189	90.50%
5.	Welsh Language	168	88.81%
6.	Religion & Belief	125	91.20%
7.	Sexual Orientation	121	95.12%
8.	All modules	107	



Online: Individual Computer based 1 hour modules with multiple choice answer test

Zappers: Classroom style learning followed by multiple choice answers for staff to choose from.

a) Equality and Diversity issues are highlighted in new staff Induction training sessions and the Council's customer service training.

- b)** Senior Management Training – In March the Welsh Local Government Agency (WLGA) delivered training for senior management. ‘Creating Success Valuing Difference.
- c)** New member training on Equalities and Diversity planned for December 2008
- d)** Harassment and Bullying Course include information on equalities and diversity.
- e)** New Employee Induction Courses include a section on equalities and diversity.

6.7 Training and staff development

Although training has and is taking place throughout the Council, feedback indicates that further training particularly in relation to specific job roles e.g. front line staff, managers or to particular equality tasks such as equality impact assessment, is required to ensure staff have the understanding, capacity and confidence to implement the Council’s Integrated Equalities Plan and meet the Council’s statutory duties.

Training increases awareness and improves attitudes towards Equality and Diversity

3.10 Website

Denbighshire Council’s website includes a specific webpage nominated for Equality and Diversity and can be found on the homepage. Information relating to Equalities and Human Rights will be regularly added and updated, providing information on the Integrated Equalities Plan and action and provision of both useful external and internal links.

4. Race

We have published our revised Race Equality Scheme for 2008-2011. This Scheme sets the agenda for race equality in Denbighshire County Council for the next 3 years.

Language Line:- We are currently re-evaluating the effectiveness of the telephone translation service.

Have Your Say, a Race Equality Event with other public sector agencies. The event identified service areas DCC can improve upon and highlights areas we do well in.

Denbighshire provided a corporate response to the Pathway to Citizenship - Immigration Welsh Assembly consultation.

WAG have published the Race Equality Housing Action. The aim of the Action Plan is to promote equality of opportunity and achieve social inclusion for all people in Wales through the delivery of responsive and accountable housing and related services.

4.1 Gypsy and Travellers

i) Denbighshire County Council have established an officer group to identify and address key issues in ensuring we meet their needs whilst having regard to the wider community. The officer group has cross Directorate representation including Housing, Planning, Social Services, Property Services, Education and Strategic Policy.

The local housing market Assessment is a partnership between Anglesey, Conwy, Denbighshire and Gwynedd local authorities, the Snowdonia National park Authority and Bangor University and is undertaking a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) for North West Wales. A preliminary discussion forum was held in May and the steering group and wider forum are being established. First meeting of the steering group 3 June 2008. It may take around a year for the assessment to be completed.

The Welsh Assembly Government has reintroduced a requirement for Local Authorities to undertake a twice yearly count of Gypsies and Traveller sites within the County. The count made on 19 July 2006 identified only 4 caravans on a single site within Denbighshire and the latest count on 21 January 2008 identified no sites.

Conwy and Denbighshire plan to open a part-time centre for Gypsy Traveller children and are recruiting a Learning Support Assistant. It is intended to open the centre for 4 mornings per week offering placements to Gypsy Traveller children of secondary school age living in Conwy or Denbighshire. The aim of the provision is to re-engage and maintain these young people in accessing education and it anticipated that the centre will be in the Rhyl area.

<p>Completion of a sub-regional gypsy and traveller housing needs survey by March 2009</p>

4.2 Migrant Workers

Denbighshire is in a similar position to most other Welsh Authorities in not knowing the number of migrant workers in the County and unclear as to their intentions in terms of staying for a relative short period or settling in the area indefinitely.

Denbighshire has participated in an analysis of it's services to migrant workers in conjunction with the Wales Strategic Migration Partnership who are tasked in

identifying who is responding to migrant workers issues and how the work can be coordinated effectively.

The Welcome to Wales information packs have been distributed.

Every local authority in the UK has seen migration from the eight Eastern European countries that joined the EU in May 2004, a report from the Institute of Public Policy Research has revealed.

The pattern of migration has been unlike previous significant influxes because about half of those who came have already left the country, according to IPPR estimates.

The first column of figures is the cumulative total of migrants who registered on the Worker Registration Scheme between May 2004 and Dec 2007. The second column is the IPPR's estimated current number of migrants, per 1,000 of the local population. You can sort the data by each column.

	Total Migrant workers	Current estimate per 1000
Denbighshire	430	3
Conwy	625	4
Wrexham	3430	17
Anglesey	110	1
Gwynedd	630	4
Carmarthenshire	3235	12
Cardiff	2480	5
Methyr Tydfil	575	7
Rhondda Taff	370	1
Ceredigion	340	3
Vale of Glamorgan	260	1
Blaenau Gwent	120	1

All data relates to the "Accession eight" (A8) nations which joined the EU in May 2004. These are: **Poland, Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia.**

It is the Council's intention to produce a migrant information (or welcome) pack giving newly arriving migrants' information on how to access services and about their rights in Denbighshire's community.

5. Disability

Our first 3-year Disability Equality Scheme was published in July 2007. It sets out how we will meet the General and Specific Duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and to eliminating unlawful discrimination and harassment.

A Mystery shopper exercise took place in June 2008. Local partners, representing disabled people were contacted and asked to distribute questionnaires to their members. The questionnaire asked for feedback on services used within a two week period in June. Disabled people were asked to highlight how easy or difficult council services were to access.

Chairman, Councillor Raymond Bartley, Leader, Councillor Hugh Evans and Chief Executive Ian Miller joined thousands of people all over the country who put on their shades, sun visors or sun hats to mark the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association's for Shades Day (20 June 2008).

Cabinet papers and minutes are produced in Ariel font and minimum font size 12.

- Physical and Sensory Impairment Commissioning Strategy now available.
- A Joint Commissioning Strategy for Mental Health Strategies with a jointly funded Commissioning Manager is well into its implementation stage.
- The HSCWB Healthy Denbighshire website is being tested for ease of access etc. by Denbighshire Disability Forum.
- Services for People with a Learning Disability are now in their implementation stages.
- Commissioning Strategies for People with a Disability / Sensory Impairment and for Carers are currently out for consultation.
- All Strategies were developed with representatives of the various users groups as full members of the planning and project boards.
- Conwy and Denbighshire Adult Social Care and Mental Health Partnership has paid User and Carer representatives as full members of its Project Board. It also employs a User and Carers personal assistant to provide support to the representatives.

Scope: "Bridging the Gaps" project. A new and exciting project to recruit and train older volunteers from the black and minority ethnic community who are disabled or have a long term illness or condition to become actively involved with Disabled People's Organisations in Wales providing services as trained volunteers -19 May at Wellington Road, Rhyl.

BSL Interpreters

Denbighshire has supported 2 BSL (British Sign Language) student placements as part of the BSL Futures Scheme administered by the Royal National Institute for the Deaf. Lisa Doherty, one of the BSL students, ends her year-long placement with the Social Services' First Contact Team on 16th May.

Direct Payments

Direct Payments are cash payments to allow Social Services clients to buy their own support instead of it being provided by Social Services. This money can be used to employ personal assistants (PA) or an agency can be used to provide support staff. The scheme is supported by the Rowan Organisation, who provide help and support to clients who use Direct Payments. The Rowan Organisation also provide a free salary service to help Direct Payments clients provide wages for their employees.

Blue Badge parking permits will soon be available at One Stop Shops as part of a new initiative being introduced by Denbighshire County Council. Until now, it has only been possible to submit applications to obtain or renew a Blue Badge at One Stop Shops, it will now be possible to have them issued on site, making it easier and more convenient for the public to access the service locally.

Blue Badges are available on line as is a referral form for anyone wishing to self refer via the internet rather than in person or by phone.

Work Connections Project

Work Connections currently ceased, original funding has come to an end however a Convergence bid has been submitted which includes a Work Connections Scheme.

Assisted Bin Collections

Denbighshire offer **assisted collections** to households where occupants have a disability and are unable to wheel bins or lift boxes onto the street for collection.

Promoting Access To the Countryside

Denbighshire Countryside Service is promoting the use of the RADAR keys that enable wheelchair and mobility scooter users to access some of the county's countryside sites. Where possible new stile kissing gate are used, they function the same as a kissing gate but they also have a lock to enable the gate to open completely with the RADAR key to enable wheelchair and mobility scooters access. Previously these keys have been used to access toilets, but now they can be used in the countryside.

The following sites have the new stile kissing gates:

- Brickfield Pond, Rhyl
- Glan Morfa Community Woodland, Rhyl
- Coed Y Morfa, Prestatyn
- Prestatyn Dyserth Way
- Mount Wood, Denbigh

A sensory nature garden on land adjacent to Ysgol Mair, Rhyl, is due to be complete by the end of June 2008. The garden has taken two years to create and will be a resource for school children throughout the town

6. Gender

A North Wales Speak Easy event, hosted by Stonewall Cymru and the West Rhyl Young People's Project. To consult local lesbian, gay and bisexual people (LGB) on their experiences in communicating with and accessing local services.

International Womens Day 8 March 2008. The Day was highlighted internally on the Council intranet.

Denbighshire County Council introduced Single Status Pay on 1 April 2008

6.1 Single Status Pay

a) Working Arrangements

In order to support staff, the Council offers a range of flexible arrangements to assist individuals to balance work and personal life. The flexible arrangements in place are subject to legislative changes: however arrangements on offer are at least as good as legislative requirements and often better.

b) Work Life Balance options include:

Maternity leave, maternity support leave, adoption leave, paternity leave, parental leave, IVF treatment, carer's leave, compassionate leave, disability leave, study and exam preparation, reserve forces, volunteer fire fighters and special constables.

Further information available from personnel.

The intention is to create pay arrangements which are fair and equitable for all staff.

7. Age

Eight months before age discrimination legislation came into force, we changed our policies to allow staff to request to continue working beyond the age of 65 and we continue to grant the majority of these requests.

Older Person's Strategy complete.

Intergenerational Lunch 29 May 2008 – Young and older people from the local community providing lunch. Young people volunteering from Marsh Youth Group, Older people from the over 50's club and Vale Residents Association.

Older persons Champion Training Day held on 29 April 2008 in partnership with Local Health Board.

Older people who are deaf and use BSL have been asked to take part in the BSL Timeline, a partnership project run by Education Services and Library

Services. The aim behind the project, which has been funded by the Denbighshire's Older People's Strategy, is the revision of the national curriculum, which encourages the study of History at Key Stage 2 to look at contrasting periods from the 19th and 20th centuries and children will be able to learn about the experiences of the deaf community.

The Wales Council for Deaf People is providing training for a tutor to teach lip reading to adults with funding from Denbighshire's Older Peoples Strategy. The training ends in June this year, at which point the Wales Council for Deaf People will advise the local authority how best to deploy the tutor's services to benefit people with a hearing impairment in the community.

Extra Care Housing Scheme

Extra Care Housing - Rhyl ready Autumn 2008, Prestatyn build starts Autumn 2008

Night Rider Service

The Denbighshire Night Rider Volunteers who help older people are to pick up an award at the 2008 Wales Volunteer of the Year. This same group of volunteers picked up a 'Highly Commended' Award at the 2007 Wales Volunteer of the Year.

The Denbighshire Night Rider Volunteers provides an award winning transport service for older people unable to use public transport, giving up evening and weekends to take them out in the community and on day trips.

The passengers are unable to use public transport because they have a fear of crime or a physical or sensory impairment. The Night Riders enable these people who would otherwise not go out to take part in social events.

Pension Service

Benefits department undertaking joint training with the Pension Service in relation to delivering services to older people.

Commissioning Strategies for Older Peoples Services ready for implementation

8. Sexual Orientation

A North Wales Speak Easy event, hosted by Stonewall Cymru and the West Rhyl Young People's Project. To consult local lesbian, gay and bisexual people (LGB) on their experiences in communicating with and accessing local services.

At the March 2008 meeting of the Corporate Equalities Group it was agreed the Council would expand recognition of the group LGB to LGBT (Lesbian Gay, Bisexual and Transgender).

9. Religion and Belief

We recognise that for many people, religious identification is at least as important as their racial identity. We will take steps to engage with religious centres and faith groups.

Multifaith calendar available on the intranet for council employees

10. Good Practice Across Denbighshire

Welfare Rights Unit

The WRU secured £2.2m in extra benefits and tax credits for 742 clients during 2007/8 most of whom are Social Services Users (ie. older people, people with learning difficulties, mental illness, physical disabilities and children and families experiencing disadvantage and poverty. The WRU operates by home visits and freephone advice line.

Keeping Warm Affordably

Denbighshire County Council have been working with many other agencies to produce an Affordable Warmth Action Plan for Denbighshire. A contact list has been produced signposting people who might be at risk of fuel poverty to the appropriate help.

Housing

The council secured a record £7.5m in Social Housing Grant for 2009/10 to develop affordable housing. These include extra care schemes in Ruthin and Prestatyn;

The Denbighshire Young Persons Housing Options Panel

is a multi agency panel whose overall aim is to achieve suitable and appropriate housing options for young people in Denbighshire.

Client Group - Statutorily Homeless 16/17 year olds, Care Leavers 16-21, Prison leavers 18-25, Young people with physical and/or emotional disabilities, Young people at risk of offending. Challenging individuals who have been excluded from housing or have repeat incidences of homelessness.

Bus Pass and Concessionary Travel Scheme

The Denbighshire County Council Free Local Bus Travel Scheme provides free travel on local bus services for Senior Citizens and disabled who are permanent residents of Denbighshire.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

On 16th June Denbighshire and Conwy County Councils, North Wales Police, Age Concern and Conwy & Denbighshire NHS Trust held an event to raise awareness for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

A vulnerable adult is someone who is over the age of eighteen, but who, because of disability, age, or illness, is unable to protect themselves from harm or from being exploited. Abuse can include, physical, sexual, emotional/psychological, financial or neglect by paid or unpaid carers.

In 2007-2008, Denbighshire dealt with 206 referrals regarding possible abuse - an increase of over 50% on the previous year.

The Heather and Hillforts Project are testing a variety of different initiatives that makes the upland heritage of the Clwydian Range and Llantysilio Mountain more accessible. Initiatives include:

- a joint pilot with Barnados on developing countryside volunteer activity for young people with learning disabilities
- revamping the viewpoint area of Bwlch Pen Barras to enhance the experience of wheelchair users
- joint project with the Black Environment Network to help currently under-represented groups to access the countryside
- web accessible short film about the heritage of the area that will enable those unable to access the area to enjoy its special heritage
- audio tours that will be accessible either over the internet or a mobile phone.

Ruthin Craft Centre

The Arts Council of Wales Lottery funded transformation of Ruthin Craft Centre is now complete. July 28th 2008 will see the opening of the new Ruthin Craft Centre in a stunning new, contemporary building set against the backdrop of the Clwydian Hills.

Accessible for all - the new Centre, which is all on the ground level, is set around a courtyard and gives Ruthin Craft Centre three new galleries, a substantial retail gallery, a café, six artist studios and educational and residency facilities.

Social Care Week

A series of open days across Denbighshire during Social Care Week (June 16 – 20) to showcase job opportunities in social care. Information about volunteering, part time work, flexible hours, CRB checks, training, child minding, job vacancies and healthy living, as well as the real life experiences of those who work in social care or receive care services.

Social Services

First Contact Team in Brighton Road now offer an integrated reception and initial assessment services for Adult, Children's and Housing Services.

Education

Each school in Denbighshire has its own Scheme. This will reflect the way in which each school ensures that it promotes equality in both general and specific duties. It will take into account the equalities breakdown of its pupils and consider whether it has a bearing on performance and put in place actions to address any imbalances that are identified.

11. What we still need to improve on:

- Improve number of returns of the Corporate Equality and Diversity monitoring on people using Council Services
 - The Trent (HR) system has still not being fully implemented. When running it will be able to produce much more reliable equality data
 - Adopt local Equality Impact Assessment toolkit
 - Develop relevant local Performance Indicators for Equalities and Diversity
 - Equality Officer Group and relevant planning and policy officers to complete Equality Impact Assessment (EIA's) training
 - Identify Council strategies and services needing EIA's
 - Consider the next steps for corporate equality training for the authority.
 - Procurement - clear guidance of what is expected of our partners/contractors/agents with regards to equality and diversity when meeting legislative requirements
 - Complaints to be logged according to their equality strand
 - We will continue to improve our involvement and consultation mechanism on employment policies and service delivery
- On reviewing the Equalities Plan, it has been identified there are a number of '...we will' statements and priority actions which have not appeared in the action plan. In order for us to achieve outcomes these will now become part of the action plan.

12. Summary

There are still lessons to be learned, many Council services have been improved but progress has not been made in all areas we would have liked. This has been largely due to time delays in the introduction of Ffynnon and the Trent computer software system. There is now an Equalities Officer Group in place to promote and to assist their services in driving the Equality agenda forward.

The role of the Corporate Equalities Group and Officer Group is key to ensuring equalities is mainstreamed into all of the functions of the Council. This Report outlines the successes and challenges which we have to meet under equalities legislation and in our championing role as a major employer in the County.