

Appendix 7

Supporting documentation- Disability Equality Scheme (DES)

DES Appendix 7.1	The Disability Equality Duty and Wealden District Council: A report on a project completed by East Sussex Disability Association for Wealden District Council- Executive Summary.
DES Appendix 7.2	Eastbourne Borough Council's Disability Equality Scheme Engagement Event: Feedback Report.

The Disability Equality Duty and Wealden District Council: a report on a project completed by East Sussex Disability Association for Wealden District Council

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

'The Disability Equality Duty is a new way for public authorities to tackle disability discrimination in a practical way by introducing policies that actively promote opportunities and so prevent discrimination taking place. By taking an organisation-wide approach you can achieve tangible outcomes and improvements for disabled people'. Bert Massie, Chair, Disability Rights Commission, 2005.

Wealden District Council has demonstrated by this project that it is taking seriously the need to implement the update to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), the new Disability Equality Duty (DED) for all public authorities.

Wealden District Council commissioned East Sussex Disability Association (ESDA), a leading local organisation of disabled people, to carry out an investigation into how disabled people view Wealden District Council as a service provider and a potential employer.

The recommendations in the project report apply to every single member of staff working for Wealden District Council in every department and in every location. Disability Equality is not an optional extra to be dealt with solely by equalities staff but a logical, fair and inclusive philosophy as well as a legal requirement for the Council as a whole and for individuals working at all levels within the Council. It also follows on from previous successful work by Wealden District Council in seeking to eradicate discrimination against other "minority" groups and represents further progress towards developing an inclusive organisational culture that seeks to remove institutional discrimination.

A key recommendation in the report is to adopt the Social Model of disability:

"A Social Model approach states that people with impairments are disabled by physical and social barriers. The 'problem' of disability results from social structures and attitudes, rather than from a

person's impairment or medical condition. This approach has influenced a rights based view of equality for disabled people and represents the key to understanding and implementing the Disability Equality Duty, the aim of which is to understand and dismantle the barriers which exclude and limit the life chances of disabled people". **Disability Rights Commission, 2006**

Over 400 disabled people contributed their views on Wealden District Council in one or more of three ways; questionnaire, focus group, one-to-one interviews. While there was a strong message from the consultation process that WDC staff should not make assumptions or patronise people, in general there was a positive feeling that WDC were actively seeking the views of disabled people, and also that many Wealden residents had received a good service from WDC. Participants were forthcoming with their views and experiences, both positive:

"I have been very well treated by Wealden Council when I was able to go to the offices and now that I cannot get around much, I have to phone them. I still get very well treated I cannot fault them in any way"

"I find if there is a problem with the flat, or anything to do with my disability... or my benefits, I find Wealden Council to be very helpful"

and negative, covering a variety of issues such as transport, adaptations and attitudes:

"Make it possible for all residents of Wealden District to get out into the community, not just the privileged few!"

"Ramp access to improve mobility has been delayed"

"I can't talk over the phone as I'm hard of hearing and need to look at who I am talking to. A couple of times the person behind the desk doesn't understand and has a bad attitude to me"

In conclusion:

“Treat them (disabled people) as complete people with equal rights, the right to live as normally as anyone else and respond when needed, instead of thinking or rather treated like a minority.”

The following table illustrates the key issues raised, with a ranking, although a “low” ranking does not reflect lack of importance, simply the frequency with which the issue was raised.

Issue	Level of importance	Evidence	Recommendations
Attitudes/ Disability Equality Training	High	Questionnaire Focus group Interviews	8,9,10,11,13,14,15, 16,17,18,20,24,25, 26,51.
Transport And parking	High	Questionnaire Focus group Interviews	32,37,38,39,40
Information in a range of formats	High	Questionnaire Interviews	1,21,22,23,26,56
Access improvements in community	High	Questionnaire Focus group Interviews	32,33,34,35,36,50
Information provision	High	Questionnaire Focus group Interviews	1,24,28,49,52,56
Employing disabled people at WDC	Medium	Questionnaire Focus group Interviews	20,57,58,59,60,61, 62,63,64
Policies and procedures	Medium	Questionnaire Focus group Interviews	4,7,9,10,19,47,48, 53,54,55
Engaging with disabled people in community	Medium	Questionnaire	1,2,3,4,5,6,20,27,29, 30,31,33,45,56
Training in effects of impairments	Low	Questionnaire Focus group	12,18
Accessibility of Council buildings	Low	Questionnaire Interviews	41,42,43,44

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1.1 Recommendations are aimed at encouraging the removal or alteration of institutional structures, cultures and processes that discriminate against disabled people within Wealden.

8.1.2 The recommendations are ordered as far as is possible to reflect the priorities of disabled people involved in this process, with the first three aimed at ensuring a continued dialogue between disabled people and WDC.

8.2. Providing feedback and maintaining contact

1. Plan ways of publicising this report to all those who took part in the information gathering process by, for example, putting the executive summary on the website and also disseminating it to local community groups such as ESDA, and ensuring that it is in a range of formats, including Word (to enable use of text to speech software).

2. Ensure that consultation with disabled people is not perceived as “political correctness” but as a fundamental objective that will initiate real change, with disabled people driving that change forward.

3. Be aware that some disabled people can feel anxious about attending meetings of any kind (for example, if they have mental or emotional health issues), so it is necessary that engagement with disabled people is maintained in a variety of ways.

4. Develop a process for maintaining a dialogue with disabled people who demonstrated an interest through this survey (the reference group of disabled people) as well as setting up regular meetings basis as well as when reviewing all policies & practices (not just those focusing on disability issues).

5. Develop relationships with key generic disability organisations within Wealden to help facilitate dialogues with disabled people.

6. Use free newspapers/ community magazines to advertise consultation groups and meetings to ensure maximum readership.

7. Ensure a sufficient and formalised budget is available to support the timely implementation of the recommendations

8.3. Behaviour and attitudes

8. Formally and publicly adopt the Social Model of Disability as a commitment to amending or removing institutional structures and policies that discriminate against disabled people. Ensure that the Council embraces the Social Model of Disability in its services, information and employment.

9. Further, ensure that the definition of the Social Model, and what this means in practice, is included in WDC's Equal Opportunities Policy.

10. Cultural and institutional change to be led visibly by senior Council management.

11. All Council staff at all levels to receive disability equality training, delivered by skilled disabled people, with a priority for reception and front line staff.

12. Extend the number of Council staff with skills in communicating with D/deaf people, e.g. all frontline staff to receive training in BSL.

13. Disability equality training, delivered by skilled disabled people, to be part of induction training for all new staff.

14. All Council staff at all levels to receive information and guidance covering disability equality issues.

15. All new council staff to receive information and guidance covering disability equality issues in their induction process.

16. Listening and empowering skills to be included in training.

17. Make clear to all within WDC the importance of setting a good example in their general conduct and with disabled people.

18. Set standard processes for finding out what access needs someone has, which should be applied to all situations – in an inclusive way that does not single out disabled people; rather than

asking “What’s wrong with you?” ask, for example, “Do you need any particular support? What access requirements do you have?”, e.g. level access, BSL Interpreter etc.

19. WDC’s commitment to inclusion reflected in performance; ensure Equality and Diversity issues are reflected in competencies and Individual Performance Plans to include measures of performance on diversity.

20. Appoint a Disability Officer – this could be part of a generic Equal Opportunities post - with a dedicated telephone line/fax/email address, as a first point of contact, who would also be responsible for:

- a. developing and maintaining links between disabled people in the community and WDC
- b. keeping up to date with relevant legislation and other developments
- c. developing training strategies and programmes to ensure disability equality is embedded in all staff training
- d. commissioning disability equality training for all staff
- e. ensuring the sustainability of the initiative
- f. dealing with the day-to-day issues of disabled residents; this may involve signposting to the appropriate person

This potentially generic Equal Opportunities role would incorporate an element of advocacy work, with the Officer in post dealing with disability issues (as outlined above), and other issues regarding minority groups, e.g. BME, LGBT etc.

8.4. Communication and information

21. Have a range of well-advertised ways to contact WDC to include both voice telephone and textphone, email, fax, mobile phone, including SMS text. This should include complaints procedures, with alternatives to written complaints being available.

22. Provide information and forms in jargon-free plain English (with pictures to supplement text as necessary), without acronyms, and have some alternative formats available, as well as the means to transcribe into Braille, and other languages as necessary.

23. Improving the accessibility of the WDC website should be an ongoing priority.

24. Introduce the barrier free call routing guidelines designed by the Employer's Forum on Disability (see Appendix 6).

25. Train those receiving calls to ask the right questions and to be patient with those who take longer than average.

26. For people who are unable to fill in forms due to impairment issues, consider alternatives, for example, going through the form with them and writing as people dictate their answers. It would be useful to link with local advocacy groups for this service as well.

27. Information on accessibility of local services also needs to be integrated into existing information sources where possible.

28. Ensure that disabled people are consulted with in the planning of new buildings and services.

8.5. Contact with the community

29. Make and maintain links with organisations of disabled people, including local groups and access groups.

30. It is fundamental that the views of disabled people are heard and acted upon in the development of services which affect them and that disabled people are confident that this happens.

31. Corporate research with disabled people in Wealden to gauge current opinion about local issues; the reference group will be a good starting point.

8.6. Physical access to community

32. In partnership with the County Council and other relevant agencies, make improvements as necessary to:

- Street lighting
- The general condition of pavements
- Parking
- Signs encouraging drivers to slow down for pedestrians
- More speed limits on busy roads

33. This list is not exhaustive; it is imperative that access within the community for disabled people is an ongoing priority, with regular consultation with local disability groups and the reference group about further access improvements. A timetable should be made for the implementations.

34. It is important to note that improvements to access actually make things easier for everyone, for example, people with pushchairs, heavy shopping etc., and clear signs also improve access for everyone.

35. In the instances where residents do not have enough time to cross pedestrian crossings before the audible and visual signals stop, liaise with relevant organisations (for example County Council/ the Highways Agency) to try and increase the timings.

36. To make it easier for disabled people to plan their journey, a map of where accessible public toilets are located should be disseminated on the website and via community groups.

8.7. Transport and parking

37. Disabled people often need to plan further in advance and need more knowledge and security that all 'links in a chain' are complete before using a service.

38. Issue maps with locations of blue badge spaces to Council staff and disseminate the same map to people in their Council Tax bill, and display information on community notice boards.

39. Review current public transport routes, and in partnership with relevant agencies and the reference group, identify where the biggest need is for accessible transport and formalise plans and funding for implementation.

40. Publishing a map with current accessible bus routes would be beneficial as a first stage process – this map should then be disseminated to community groups and on the website.

8.8. Access to Council buildings

41. To make the Council's buildings more accessible to disabled people and to increase their ease of use for both customers and employees
42. Carry out access audits of all WDC buildings
43. Set standard for access to be met by set deadline
44. As part of a corporate social responsibility, WDC should advertise accessible facilities that they currently have and share them (for example a meeting room with an induction loop).

8.9. Housing and adaptations

45. Ensure that the needs and requirements of disabled people are considered when arranging housing and adaptations.
46. Maintain communication with residents at different stages of housing, adaptations (and equipment) applications so that people are aware of what stage the process is at.
47. Clear policies, procedures and information about housing, adaptations, equipment and funding to be available in different formats.

9.1. Refuse collection and recycling

48. Ensure that there is a clear method of communicating to refuse collectors which residents are covered by the provision granted to those who are unable to place the wheelie bin out at the boundary of their property for collection.
49. Publish clear, jargon-free guidelines about what can be recycled and what cannot.
50. Review accessibility of the refuse tip, for example are there enough accessible parking bays? Are staff available to help where necessary?
51. Waste management supervisors should receive disability equality training.

52. Ensure that people are aware of how incontinence pads should be disposed of, for example clinical waste/ household waste. The frequency of the collection of incontinence pads should also be assessed.

9.2. Reporting complaints

53. Report harassment and discrimination of disabled people

54. Ensure current WDC systems report impairment-related incidents.

55. Ensure that the views of disabled people are recorded, understood and acted upon:

- Complaint reporting forms to ask if complainant is a disabled person
- Annual complaints monitoring report to include summary data
- Ensure that action is taken to improve barriers identified by complaints

56. Be clear about how people can make a complaint about WDC staff or services, and offer alternative ways of communicating that complaint, for example, not just written complaints.

9.3. WDC and Employment

57. Seek to increase the recruitment and retention of disabled employees in WDC.

58. Draw up procedures to encourage work placements for disabled people.

59. Work with organisations that offer supported employment and with Jobcentre Plus to find most effective ways to secure employment for disabled people.

60. More information should be given to job applicants in both the application pack and at interview about access and equality of opportunity for WDC employees.

61. Employment terms, job descriptions and person specifications should be more flexible to encourage disabled people into work.

62. Regarding the use of the Two Ticks “Positive About Disability” symbol:

- Are all 5 commitments being addressed?
- Are short-listing panels aware at the time of short-listing that the applicant is a disabled person or a Job Interview Guarantee Scheme applicant? This may, consciously or subconsciously, lead them to looking at the essential criteria more stringently?

63. Detailed data will need to be collected covering:

- Job applications received applying
- Applicants being short-listed
- Successfully recruited staff
- Retention rates

(with all of these there is a need to compare disabled and non-disabled people’s percentage rates)

64. Ensure that managers and employees on interview panels are trained in the importance and practicalities of making ‘reasonable adjustments’, as well as having knowledge about Access to Work.

9.4. Areas needing further investigation

9.4.1. Carry out further work with people who have mental health issues and/or, learning difficulties, communication impairments and other particularly challenging issues.

9.4.2. Carry out further work with younger people within Wealden District to ensure that their needs are also being met.

9.4.3. Ensure that engagement with disabled employees of WDC is part of the next step to further identify barriers and solutions.

9.5. Conclusion

To conclude, developing a culture of self examination by WDC staff is fundamental; instead of trying to fit the customer to the service, fit the service around the customer by asking “is there another/better way...?”



Eastbourne Strategic Partnership
working together

Disability Equality Scheme Engagement Event

Feedback Report

Monday 9th October 2006
Eastbourne Borough Council, Town Hall

Introduction

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 has been amended by the DDA 2005, so that it now places a duty on all public authorities when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- 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
- take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities , even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons

The totality of this duty is referred to as the 'disability equality duty'.

In addition to this general duty, the Act also sets out the specific duties to prepare and publish a Disability Equality Scheme, implement the scheme via an action plan and annually report progress.

Disability Equality Scheme

It would be impossible to prepare a scheme without consulting with disabled people. Disabled people need to be involved at the outset and how public authorities go about this should be straightforward and effective. With this in mind the statutory partners of the Eastbourne Strategic Partnership came together to facilitate a joint involvement event with disabled people.

The event was held at the Town Hall and was sponsored by Eastbourne Borough Council.

The engagement event

An event was held on 9th October, 2006 in the Court Room of Eastbourne's Town Hall. The decision to hold such an event was influenced by the feedback from the Disability Equality Duty Conference, organised by the East Sussex Disability Association in July 2006. This suggested that disabled people wanted the opportunity to raise local issues with public authorities and have influence on each of our schemes, with public authorities working together to avoid overloading disabled people with varied and numerous consultation exercises.

The event was planned to cover half a day, this also gave consideration to the time and commitment needed from individuals themselves, but also from community and representative organisations whose resources are already stretched.

Participants were split into four groups and the event was split into two main sessions. The first session enabled each disabled person to raise the issues particularly affecting their lives in Eastbourne. They were then asked to agree

three main issues to take forward to the next session. The second session asked disabled people to list possible solutions to these issues, as it is recognised that disabled people often have practical solutions to the issues they face every day, but are very rarely asked for them. These solutions, where practicable, would be turned into objectives and actions either in individual public authority schemes, or objectives taken forward to be worked on across a number of authorities.

The final part of the event was a plenary session where the main issues and solutions were presented, providing a further opportunity for further comments to come forward.

The event came to an end with lunch being served.

Who took part?

Forty organisations and individuals were invited to attend the event. Over thirty individuals and representatives of varied organisations took part on the day. Several organisations and individuals who could not attend expressed interest in receiving feedback, and draft schemes. The organisations taking part are listed below:

Eastbourne and South Wealden MS Society
Shinewater Court
Hearing Dogs for Deaf People
Care for the Carers
MORE Club
Rethink
Chalk Farm Project
Homecall
East Sussex Disability Association
The Chaseley Trust
Age Concern

The authorities facilitating during the event are listed below:

Eastbourne Borough Council
East Downs and Weald Primary Care Trust
East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service
East Sussex County Council – Children Services
Sussex Police
Wealden District Council
Eastbourne Homes Ltd

What did you tell us?

The issues raised during the first session tended to focus on a number of key areas being: public and private hire transport; getting around the town and parking; access to public places; attitudes and training and awareness of disability specially hidden disabilities i.e. mental illness; communication; access

to services and information; lack of adapted and suitable housing; and general comments.

The comments taken from each group have been placed together under the relevant heading, so they may not appear exactly how they were phrased. However, care has been taken not to lose the context or inference of the original comment. The issues raised are as follows:

Public and private hire transport

- Difficulties with the timetables for buses etc
- Taxis not always user friendly
- Lack of community transport – withdrawal of funding so service was cut altogether
- Lack of accessible taxis that can accommodate a wheelchair, have improved but difficult to pre-book especially during peak times
- Eastbourne buses have gone downhill
- Buses don't turn up at all and/or only cover part of the town, always been the case
- Taxis are too expensive
- A lot of taxi drivers appear to be reluctant to pick up wheelchair users
- If some with an accessible vehicle have the day off there is no facility for wheelchair users
- You have to tend to book in advance and the fare is more expensive for this facility, not aware of many accessible vehicles in fleets. Have been assured that one company allows two accessible vehicles but these could be in use when you call.
- Rear access cab – can we encourage them to purchase – easier to get into and more importantly get out of – some vehicles you are dropped off into the road and this is dangerous
- I do not know where to go to access a bus pass for free travel in East Sussex
- Buses usually have steps and these are a problem for many disabled people and those with pushchairs of course
- There are no adequate seats at bus stops
- Understanding the public transport system and how to use it is a worry for people with learning difficulties

Getting around the town and parking

- Pavements are a problem with tree roots/trunks pushing them up and cracking them – especially Victoria Drive, Northiam Road and in Meads – tarmac over roots
- Drop-kerbs not clearly designated and often not aligned or in an inappropriate place so you have to scan for where they are. Wheelchair and scooter users struggle because of parked cars and have to go into the road. Could drop-kerbs be given a colour? This may deter people parking their vehicles across them
- Inconsiderate parking across drop-kerbs is a major issue and little enforcement appears to take place
- Pavements and/or roads aren't flat and you might have a half mile walk to bus stop
- Why wait till next year for bays outside disabled persons home to be shaded, why can't this be done now

- Blue badge parking – there are few spaces in Hyde Gardens and accessible parking for disabled drivers is not good in Eastbourne.
- The parking scheme should consider the needs of disabled people
- Height restriction at the Arndale Centre car park prevents some cars using this facility which does affect some disabled people
- Bus routes aren't good, never have been, no-one asks us so getting across the town can be really difficult if you can't afford a taxi
- Overhanging branches/brambles very dangerous for disabled people especially visually impaired with branches and thorn scraping faces

Access to public places

- Accessibility to shops, GP's and public buildings is the worst
- Access to health services, primary care and hospitals for those with learning difficulties is a particular issue and relatively ignored
- Lack of access to restaurants and eating places – only fish and chips type cafes – very few restaurants with ramps
- Access to most places whether public or private is poor – Access group should lobby for better access
- Shops – some are impossible to access owing to lack of space in aisles and between goods
- Access to hotels is poor/appalling and using conversation area as an excuse not to make adjustments is just an excuse or saying applied for a ramp is a stalling process
- Langham hotel is brilliant
- Need to lobby hotels association
- Some ramps or slopes still have a ledge/obstacle at the bottom – very difficult and sometimes dangerous. Small wheel of wheelchair catches
- Refused access to a fish shop in Albert Parade with my hearing dog by one waitress on her own, I have been accepted twice before with no problems – waitress said we only take guide dogs which showed a lack of awareness – I have sent a letter to the owner to complain
- Access to small shops is bad
- If I cannot gain access to a shop, I do not shop there; they don't get my business

Attitudes and training and awareness

- Training is needed for those with learning disabilities and mental health issues
- Training for staff to deal with those with mental illness – Sussex Police particularly bad at identifying mental illness and providing appropriate action as a result, they don't do this well
- Attitude and awareness of public is improving – people try to help you when you don't need it but at least they ask otherwise people don't have the time to get involved
- People need to take more time to understand and learn about disability, take more time to understand people who may have great difficulty speaking you can understand if you take the time to listen
- People need to be more informed
- Give respect to everyone – its easy to be patronising
- There needs to be more recognition of people who are suffering from drug and alcohol misuse and associated problems
- There appears to be a lot of intolerance towards visual impairment

- Unfortunate attitude towards disabled people from private and public landlords
- Taxi and bus driver attitudes are often not customer focused
- Discrimination does exist in the workplace
- Private sector, schools and colleges are not sympathetic especially to people with MS
- Attitudes of staff working in restaurants
- Not enough 'can do' attitudes. This is what we need
- Health care workers particular poor attitude on occasions especially GP's
- Go to hospital or your GP because you are unwell you don't then want to be made to feel a burden because you can't make yourself understood or the time allowed for the consultation is not enough
- GP's say they don't have to supply an interpreter
- GP's do not appear to want to spend time with a disabled patient, use inappropriate language on occasions and sigh

Communication

- Hospital is still not good at dealing with people with sensory impairments – called in waiting rooms when can't hear, numbers when can't see
- People just can't be bothered to spend time communicating effectively with you if you are disabled
- Be respectful, if you don't understand me, say so
- Acoustics in public places is not good
- Telephones – too many numbers to press before you speak with person in an organisation – hard for people with visibility problems
- Difficult to use public telephones – not many of them – have to pay to get a number
- More communication on services available please
- Communication is hard with Doctors and hospitals. They don't provide an interpreter, so hard to explain. Need to have information about an accessible college – the Council only provided an interpreter once over the telephone

Access to services and information

- Length of time taken to receive service (e.g. deaf hearing assistance, wheelchair service and assessment)
- Wheelchair clinic isn't working, it took eighteen months to get assessed
- Public services are delivered during office hours when disabled people work too and find it difficult to access these services during the day
- Access to workplace is often a problem and to accessible toilets (if there is one)
- Access to hotel and leisure services is not good, negative towards wheelchair users
- Access to a lot of banks and building societies is poor
- Accessing some hospital services is difficult i.e. wheelchair assessment at the hospital, need to call between 9 – 5.30pm
- Poor access to college/educational places
- The DDA definition of reasonable adjustment is still woolly until it is working and seen to be working, very little will change
- Insufficient information about ESCC registered disabled card – communication issues. Where do you get it? Some people do not know this exists and this card helps you get a bus pass

- More leaflets on services available please
- Eastbourne is not very good at informing people of what they can apply for – maybe a notice board in the shopping centre
- You need to join an organisation if you want to find out about things and you may not want to. Put things in the local paper
- Agencies need to share information more and improve across sectors – everyone has a job to do and doesn't think about other issues, if they did things would improve

Lack of adapted and suitable housing

- Lack of support in housing for those with mental illness – need specialist floating support workers
- Shortage of appropriate housing and a lack of accessible accommodation in the area
- Standards change – adaptations need to move with technology – increased use of scooters/buggies and not storage space
- Need for more specialist housing like Shinewater Court
- Need recognition that there may be two disabled people living in a house i.e. husband and wife could both be disabled and have different needs
- It is not just about bricks and mortar but support as well
- Need to work with landlords – more Housing Plus schemes
- Need more appropriate accommodation to meet needs
- Shared ownership – turned down on income
- Retirement Housing – why the age restriction when could be used for disabled residents
- Availability for help for daily living – i.e. light bulbs that need changing – no family. Would be good to have an accessible handy person service
- Waiting four years to move to an adapted property. Too long to wait. Not treated as others.
- Private landlords need targeting. Often young people with mental health issues or a disabled person can't get a job so on low income and have no choice but to live in a bedsit, or are placed in an HMO, these are often dreadful places
- adjustments are good and Eastbourne Homes are good at this
- adjustments are made following referrals from Occupational Therapists
- Wait too long for occupational therapist assessments

General comments

- My office base has steps at back, no accessible toilets, so I have to be accompanied to the toilet in another building up a steep hill, this is a good example of the difficulties disabled people face
- Need appropriate diagnosis of problems
- Employment and contributing to society in some way – social gain for disabled people, voluntary work and training etc
- Need positive reaction to reasonable adjustments
- Lack of materials for someone with upper body disability e.g. showers
- General concerns regarding older people in Eastbourne – 'contractor call' – age concerns
- Workplace discrimination particularly in private areas, schools and colleges
- A disabled person can sue and using the legal route has the positive outcome of getting the issues resolved but is also negative as it takes so long

- Training at work used to be much better, I used to work for Seaboard and was shown how to lift weights and health and safety etc

Session 2 feedback

During the second session people were asked to concentrate on three main issues and discuss solutions. These solutions will need to be discussed further by the public authorities involved and actions proposed for inclusion into schemes.

Due to the fact that groups were asked to concentrate on three main issues the headings below will not wholly reflect those above, and as above, comments have been placed together and care has been taken to ensure they accurately reflect what was said. The comments are listed below:

Employment and activities

- Equal opportunities and diversity schemes should be embedded in the culture of an organisation, not a tick box exercise
- Advertising of jobs should not be restricted to the local newspapers as some disabled people do not purchase the paper or cannot get to an outlet
- Advertising of jobs could be done via ESDA newsletter, other voluntary community organisation newsletters/groups, EAVS newsletter
- Consideration should be given to the recruitment process timetable which could be longer for disabled people
- Support through the recruitment process should be available to assist with application, interview and induction phases
- Continued support at work with reasonable adjustments should be freely and happily provided and not left to the disabled person to constantly ask for. Also they should not be made to feel uncomfortable all the time, not just by lack of adjustments but attitudes of staff around them – it is the responsibility of the manager to ensure the team know what to expect and how to assist without being patronising or adversely affecting the disabled persons dignity
- Sickness, stress management, cost of support, time and resources are all considerations for employing a disabled person but are reasonable adjustments and should not be seen as an excuse or barriers – particularly important for people with mental health illnesses
- More exploration of flexible working and home working as this suits a lot of disabled people
- Support for out of hours and weekend activities should be offered – it appears most community support workers have been cut – they are needed
- Workstation risk assessments should be done regularly
- Don't offer support for special needs if not prepared to deliver – don't raise expectations
- Encourage volunteers – match volunteers with need of disabled person
- Explore time banks and promote (research PCT involvement in this (B Hardcastle))

Attitudes and Health

- Training and diplomacy/democracy
- Allow sufficient and appropriate time to communicate effectively (listen)
- Be aware of difference and the diverse range of disabilities

- Decision makers should always consider the consequences for disabled people when they agree cuts or efficiency savings – all decision makers should have awareness training and the whole process should be transparent. If held to task over decisions they should stand up and explain the reasons to disabled people
- Decision makers should consult with the groups who will be most affected before making any decisions at all, this aids the transparency
- Consideration should also be given to the family unit and friends who will also be adversely affected by decisions – look at the whole situation and the whole person
- Cutting finances in one area saves money but creates more demand in another – this should be considered also and whole process joined up with all stakeholders involved
- Work more with VCS, give them more support – not necessarily financial – Value their contribution and what they can provide
- Use income generated from new initiatives such as rubbish and recycling to provide improved services for disabled people
- Airbourne is inaccessible – it can be intimidating and you can't get onto the beach to park so have to walk further to enjoy the event for those that do – dislike or fear of crowds are a significant factor for some mental health conditions – however the attitude appears to be that the event is accessible! People forget mental health and learning difficulties
- Officers think their services are accessible when they are not – the loop system in this room isn't working
- Consultation should take place with disabled people to walk through events – this is a good way to make them accessible
- Could we have a positive award scheme – high profile ceremony – there is an award scheme for hearing dogs for the deaf already – could this be investigated – perhaps use Herald for publicity and have a local authority award for shop of the month or something similar - award scheme must not be seen to be patronising to disabled people – people should do the right thing and provide equal opportunities for disabled people, not do it because they might be rewarded, however, if an award scheme is looked at it should be for treating disabled people equally
- More investment in attitudinal training in workplace – management particularly
- Understand and communicate the spending power of disabled people – not all are on low incomes
- Develop a standard across agencies – and work with disabled people to create the standard
- Use information from specialist organisations and incorporate this into your own training
- When bus services are revised or cut there is no consultation with disabled people and no account taken of anyone views – ask disabled people how it may affect them. Routes aren't designed in consultation with people, this is essential as getting around is a nightmare. Makes bus company look arrogant
- Attitudes of private landlords needs attention, possibly include them in training
- Attitudes towards age is also an issue especially in private organisations – can public authorities look at how they might influence private organisations to be more positive – perhaps through publicity that public authorities have made reasonable adjustments and have positive attitude towards disability through

action not just words – also highlight companies who do take a positive approach i.e. B&Q

- More emphasis on training and awareness for the hidden disabilities would help change attitudes
- GP's need a change of attitude, respect and the language they use – could attitudinal and awareness training be compulsory
- Hospital workers/health workers need to change their approach to people with hearing and visual impairments – be respectful and make a note of the person's impairment when they arrive and alert colleagues that the person needs to be approached when their appointment is due – not called or need to look out for a visual display – it should be very easy to implement this change in culture
- Food in hospitals, if the patient hasn't eaten their meal the nurse or someone should raise this with the patient, it might be because the food was left in an inappropriate place or the person needed to have the food cut up, or be fed – not enough care is taken and people get malnourished
- Flexibility in the appointment process for disabled people should be looked at – disabled people often need more time to explain and health workers should be sufficiently aware and respectful to take the time to listen
- The possible changes to hospitals will have the most impact on disabled people, especially those who do not have their own transport – having the travel to Hastings is not a reasonable option
- The disabled person should be treated holistically as a whole person not concentrate on their disability – they are people
- Length of time waiting for appointments or special assessments it appears OK to make a disabled person wait months and sometimes years to receive a specialised service – this needs further investigation – perhaps better communication and co-operation between the agencies concerned would speed the process up – prioritise resources and identify why lack of resource and whose (i.e. local, Central Government) – excellent example of this is occupational health assessments – why so long, who can make improvements
- Access officers could be used to carry out surveys of shops and restaurants which look at attitudes as well as access/egress
- Publicise good practice/businesses and boycott bad
- Explain access fully and widely across Eastbourne
- Include private organisations in training provided by public agencies and cascade through management
- Promote 'disability pound' and strong business base
- Improve communication between service deliverer and user in ways that the user needs
- Encourage complaints – learn through this process
- Accept that you should supply an interpreter where the person's first language is not English, including British Sign Language and promote that this is available
- Use Eastbourne Strategic Partnership to promote disability equality

Transport and getting around

- Accessible buses do not cover every route and so there is no consistent service – Eastbourne buses could provide information about times and routes taken by accessible buses – these should be available in different formats

- Outskirt areas also need adequate bus routes not just getting into the town centre so need accessible transport to other parts of the town too – consult with disabled people when routes are revised or to be cut
- Drivers not keen to get out and pull ramps out – a possible solution could be that when new buses are purchased they all need to be as accessible as Brighton Buses are (electric ramps)
- Trains are good example of good practice – however have to book in advance if wheelchair user
- Bus shelters aren't designed very well – no seats, no wheelchair accessible – these need to be looked at
- There is a Scooter and Wheelchair Action Group (SWAG) 11am Friday
- Pavements need constant attention so there should be someone who inspects the pavements regularly, not left for someone to report a fall – use tarmac around roots so slabs aren't lifted – officers trained in awareness or walk routes with a wheelchair user to have a much better understanding of the difficulties faced by disabled people using pavements – also people with pushchairs
- Look at proper bays for car/taxi to pull in to then ensure passenger is safe when getting out of car – there are issues about taxis dropping off or picking up people in the bus lanes – this should be considered when the plans for the new town centre are drawn up – also better access for taxis
- People should have one number to call to report faults on pavements
- Drop-kerbs should be clearly marked
- Set up a user group/reference group to call upon when planning something new. Explain plan and ask for thoughts – builders too
- Planning committee should ask disabled people their views before saying yes
- On getting around the town make sure there are notice boards for disabled people to go to for information about public services and who to contact etc – especially in town centre
- Better access to Shopmobility – could they provide someone to take someone shopping who needs this level of assistance? (Representative from one organisation also works within Shopmobility and answered that there are people who provide this assistance if it is asked for)

Co-ordination of multi-agency working

- Eastbourne Borough Council and Eastbourne Homes Limited should look at jointly funding an occupational therapist post to speed up process of assessments which are currently unacceptable
- Having to deal with many agencies can be frustrating to the client – a possible solution is to have one point of contact that can facilitate all those – perhaps a workshop conference for all East Sussex agencies could establish a working group
- More joined up training an awareness between private, public and voluntary sectors
- Funding problems for delivery of services could be looked at across all the agencies
- Prioritise resources across agencies to speed up service delivery to the individual
- Jointly agencies could lobby government on issues
- Highways should work with specialised agencies or disabled people, representative organisations to improve pavements and better design areas

for drop-kerbs, drop off bays etc and work with others to ensure adequate enforcement action will be taken for inconsiderate parking etc

- Agencies should facilitate more joint consultation exercises and also produce joint leaflets with all benefits, goods and services that are available to disabled people

The issues raised and solutions put forward will now be discussed with partner authorities, not just in Eastbourne, but across East Sussex. Following these discussions proposed objectives with associated actions will be devised for inclusion in public authority schemes. Participants expressed which schemes they wish to receive and all public authorities have been made aware of this. You will be able to discuss the schemes further with each public authority once you receive their scheme.