



**South
Cambridgeshire
District Council**

Disability Equality Scheme 2009-12 (Review of 2006-09 Scheme)

November 2009

If you require this information in an alternative version, or help in understanding it in your language, please contact the Equality and Diversity Officer.

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1. Introduction and Context

1.1 The Legal Context

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 widens the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, and acknowledges that if society is to improve the life chances of disabled people the public sector must take a lead. The Council must promote equality for people with disabilities, those with physical, visual or hearing impairments, those with learning difficulties, with long term medical conditions which adversely affect their day to day living, and those with mental illness. In promoting opportunities for these traditionally overlooked groups it must 'have due regard' to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equal opportunities.

The Council must also consider the elimination of the harassment of disabled people, the promotion of positive attitudes and the need to encourage the participation of disabled people in public life. These duties relate to the provision of services, the employment of staff and in the buying of services. There is also a duty to publish a Disability Equality Scheme.

The general duty builds upon the duties of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 including the duty to make reasonable adjustments to make sure disabled people are not placed at a disadvantage when accessing (or receiving) employment, goods, facilities, services, functions and premises.

This is South Cambridgeshire District Council's (SCDC) second Disability Equality Scheme (DES). It takes account of:

- statutory requirements set out in the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005 (DDA) and the Code of Practice produced by the Disability Rights Commission on "The Duty to Promote Disability Equality" (see Appendix A for more details);
- issues raised by local disability groups and people with personal experience of disability issues in South Cambridgeshire;
- the views and experience of managers across the range of Council functions; and
- emerging good practice from the disability equality schemes being developed by other councils;
- the experience gained from developing and implementing the Council's Disability Equality Scheme.

This Disability Equality Scheme adopts the official DDA definition of disability:

A person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial or long – term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

1.2 What is a Disability Equality Scheme?

A Disability Equality Scheme sets out our plans for making equality happen for disabled people living in South Cambridgeshire. The Scheme also includes a number of things we must consider under the specific duty.

The purpose of our Disability Equality Scheme is to:

- Show how we have involved disabled people in decisions we have made.
- Find out what barriers are faced by disabled people and take steps to remove them.
- Find out disabled people's priorities.
- Make sure we meet our legal duties.
- Tell people what our responsibilities are. This includes telling: elected members (or councillors), managers, employees, unions, our partners in the public, voluntary and private sectors, as well as residents.
- Explain how we make things fairer for disabled people in planning our services and what we do.
- Show how the Scheme links to other equalities objectives and priorities.
- Provide information about our involvement, assessments and training arrangements.
- Work in partnership with other disability organisations to prevent ignorance and prejudice in the wider community.
- Show what has changed as a result of involvement and set out our three-year disability equality action plan on how we will put the Scheme into practice.
- Monitor and check what we are doing and report each year.

The Council provides many services to disabled people throughout South Cambridgeshire. Whilst we highlight a few initiatives, we see our Disability Equality Scheme as providing a framework through which our services can work to and within.

More information on what services are doing to meet their new duties will be reported in the annual review of this Scheme.

1.2 The South Cambridgeshire Context

There are an estimated 11 million disabled adults in the United Kingdom (1 in 5 of the total adult population) and 770,000 disabled children. Many of these disabled people often have less obvious or non-visible impairments.

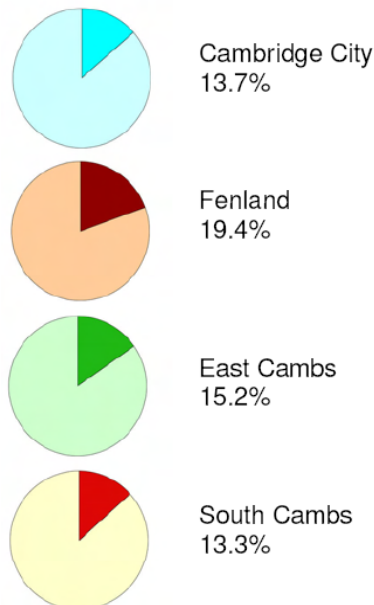
Disabled people have fewer opportunities than non-disabled people in many areas of life. For example, they are more likely to have fewer opportunities in terms of employment, income and education. Disabled people are also more likely to face discrimination and negative attitudes ('Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People,' Prime Ministers Strategy Unit 2005).

South Cambridgeshire covers approximately 90,168 hectares and is the second largest district in Cambridgeshire. It consists of 102 villages and has a total population of 130,108 (Census 2001). The district completely surrounds Cambridge City.

It shares its boundaries with Huntingdonshire, Fenland and East Cambridgeshire on the northern part of its boundaries. In the south the district has boundaries with Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Essex and Suffolk. Three rivers: the River Cam, the River Granta and the River Rhee run through the district. It is relatively rural with all the population living in villages or rural area – there are no towns in South Cambridgeshire. Sawston is the largest village with approximately 7,000 people.

1.3.1 Long Term illness

% of residents describing themselves as being disabled or having a long term limiting illness or condition.



Charts to show the percentage of residents that are disabled or have a long-term illness or condition. Source Disability-Cambridgeshire.

From the above charts you can see that proportionally South Cambridgeshire has the lowest percentage of residents that describe themselves as disabled or having a long-term illness or condition compared with other local authority areas in Cambridgeshire.

1.3.2 Cognitive Disability

One in four people will be affected by mental ill health in the course of their life. Mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety, now account for more incapacity benefit claims than back pain (Source: Mind)

Incapacity Benefit Claimants	South Cambridgeshire	East of England	England
Total Incapacity benefit claimants (persons)	2,195	160,720	1,955,155
Medical reason for claiming : Mental Health	41%	40%	41%
Medical reason for claiming : Diseases of the nervous system	9%	8%	6%
Medical reason for claiming : Diseases of the respiratory or circulatory system	5%	6%	7%
Medical reason for claiming : Musculoskeletal Diseases	17%	17%	17%
Medical reason for claiming : Injury or poisoning	4%	6%	6%
Medical reason for claiming : Other	25%	22%	22%

Table to show percentage of incapacity benefit claims related to causes.
Source: Office for National Statistics.

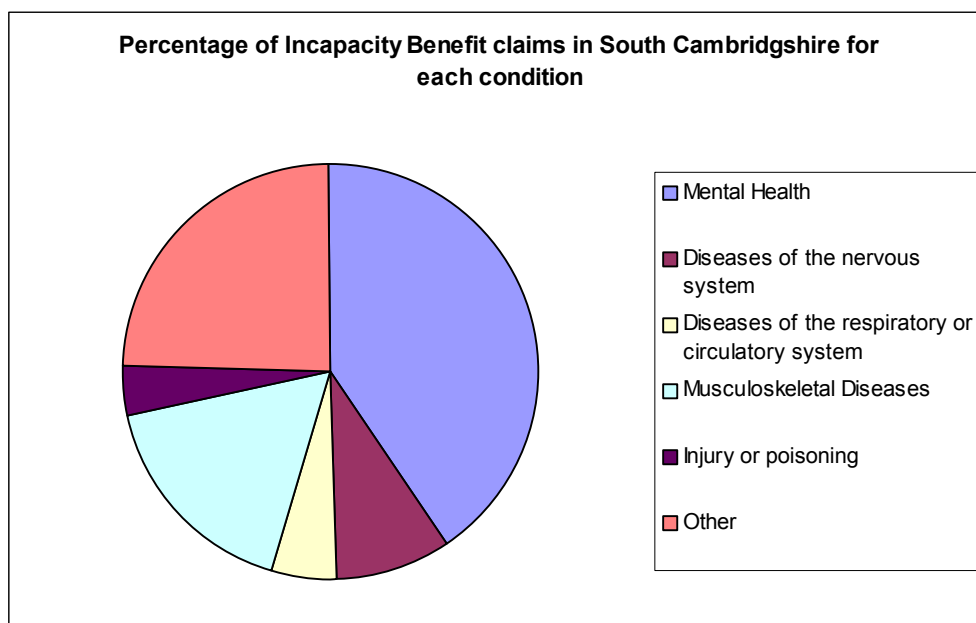


Chart to show the reasons for incapacity benefit claims as a percentage.

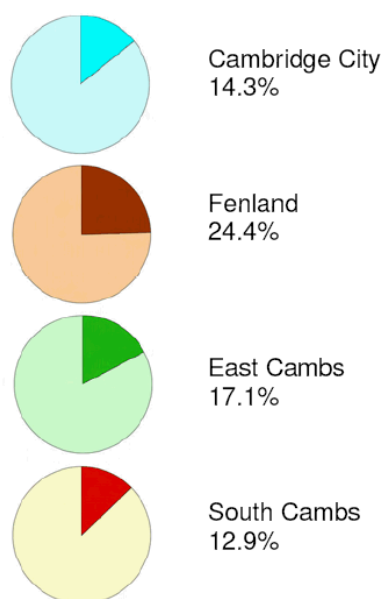
1.3.3 Disability and Caring

HEALTH & CARERS	Number	% Of total	County %
Resident population living in households	127,803	98.2%	96.4%
Resident population living in communal establishments	2,300	1.8%	3.6%
Number of migrants	15,488	11.9%	14.5%
Residents with good general health in the previous year	96,215	75.3%	72.5%
Residents with fairly good general health in the previous year	24,570	19.2%	20.9%
Residents with not good general health in the previous year	7,017	5.5%	6.6%
Residents with a limiting long term illness	17,260	13.3%	14.6%
Residents providing 1-19 hours of care per week	10,177	8.0%	7.1%

Residents providing 20-49 hours of care per week	957	0.7%	0.8%
Residents providing 50+ hours of care per week	1,651	1.3%	1.6%

Table to show the health and percentage of people with carers in South Cambridgeshire. Source: Office of National Statistics.

% of residents providing 50 hours or more of unpaid care per week



Charts to show the percentage of residents providing 50+ hours of unpaid care per week. Source: Disability Cambridgeshire.

The above chart shows that South Cambridgeshire has the lowest level of residents providing 50+ hours of unpaid care per week. This could be down to the fact that South Cambridgeshire also has the lowest percentage of people that consider themselves to be disabled or have a long-term medical condition.

1.3.4 Disability and Employment

	Non-disabled people	Disabled people
Total	29,710,306	6,941,935
In employment	23,871,969	3,450,982
ILO unemployed	1,257,765	332,437
Economically	4,580,572	3,158,516

inactive		
Economically inactive who 'would like to work'	1,118,308	906,424

Chart to show number of disabled people in employment compared to non-disabled people. Source Office for National Statistics 2006.

Nearly one in five people of working age (6.9 million or 19%) in Great Britain are disabled and only about half of disabled people of working age are in work (50%) compared with 80% of non-disabled people of working age. There are currently 1.2 million disabled people in the UK who are available for work and want to work.

Main impairment	% in employment
Diabetes	67
Difficulty in hearing	59
Skin conditions, allergies	63.3
Chest/breathing problems	62.8
Heart, blood pressure/circulation problems	58.7
Difficulty in seeing	48.5
Stomach, liver, kidney or digestive problems	59.7
Other health problems or disabilities	53.5
Arms or hands	52
Back or neck	48.7
Legs or feet	45.4
Epilepsy	43.6
Speech impediment	19.2
Progressive illness not included elsewhere	42.1
Learning difficulties	25.7

Depression, bad nerves or anxiety	25.8
Mental illness, phobias, panics or other nervous disorders	13.3

Table to show the percentage of people employed with different disabilities.
Source: Office for National Statistics.

Employment rates vary greatly according to the type of impairment a person has. Disabled people with mental health problems have the lowest employment rates of all impairment categories at only 21%. The employment rate for people with learning difficulties is also low at only 26%.

2. SCDC Disability Equality Scheme 2006 – 2009 Review

Main Achievements 2006 – 2009

2.1 Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people

- Wide range of information available on the Council's website (www.scambsgov.uk) including resizable fonts and an 'accessibility' page, which has been accredited by the Shaw Trust
- Access improvements at Milton Country Park
- Different features on green and black wheelie bins to help residents tell them apart
- Licensing service requires taxis to accept passengers with guide or hearing dogs
- Some private hire vehicles, licensed by SCDC, have wheelchair access
- On-going building works to ensure sheltered housing communal rooms are DDA compliant

2.2 Eliminate discrimination, which is unlawful under the DDA

- Accessibility features at the Council's offices benefit both visitors and staff with disabilities
- Specialist advice is available for people with a disability in the areas of planning, housing and building control
- New LDF development criteria on safe and convenient access
- Access statements required as part of planning applications
- Specific training on access issues and the planning system for planning officers

2.3 Eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability

- Disability awareness training for voluntary organisations and sports coaches
- Equalities training provided for Members and staff

2.4 Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people

- The Council has developed an Equalities Consultative Forum to work with other agencies who help disabled people

- The Council's Housing Advice and Homelessness Team are a member of Cambridgeshire's Disability Housing Strategic Network Group
- Grant support for local disability groups
- Funding fair and workshops for voluntary organisations
- Discretionary rate relief for charitable organisations supporting people with disabilities

2.5 Encourage participation by disabled people in public life

- SCDC information available in large print, Braille or in audio format, on request. The Council's choice based lettings scheme user guide is also being developed into a version of Makaton - **Makaton** is a system of communication that uses a vocabulary of "key word" manual signs and gestures to support speech, as well as graphic symbols to support the written word. It is used by and with people who have communication, language or learning difficulties.
- Sports development initiatives, such as Camboccia, to increase opportunities for disabled people
- Opportunities for tenant participation
- Polling stations are DDA compliant and postal voting is arranged on request
- The Council's Contact Centre is open 8am to 8pm Monday to Saturday
- Consultations publicised via the Council's website and South Cambs magazine, which also include the facility for online representations
- Reasonable adjustments are made for visitors with a disability who wish to attend Council meetings
- The Council's choice based lettings scheme holds an assisted bidders list to help vulnerable applicants to access the scheme. This could include sending applicants a personalised free sheet or making proxy bids on their behalf. Non-bidders on the housing list are also reviewed to determine whether specialist support is required to access the scheme.

2.6 Take steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities

- Availability of home visits
- Support for Mobile Warden schemes, helping elderly and disabled people live in their homes

- Assisted waste and recycling services
- Home Improvements Agency (HIA) and disabled facilities grants
- Priority given to housing applicants with a disability in the Council's lettings policy where their current housing has an adverse impact on their disability
- Applicants with specific disability needs are nominated to Papworth Trust properties
- Communications with individuals are adapted to take account of their particular disabilities
- Occupational health assessments and flexible working options are available to staff

3. SCDC Disability Equality Scheme 2009 – 2012

3.1 Corporately we commit to:

- Be more consistent and better at communicating with all our residents, to let them know what services are available and how they can access them.
- Ensure that we understand and meet the needs of our newest arrivals in the community, for example migrant workers from Eastern Europe and refugees and asylum seekers, as well as our long-standing Gypsy and Traveller communities.
- Develop our understanding of the needs of the disabled community and proactively address the issues and tackle the barriers that they face.
- Be more sophisticated in our methods of consultation, engagement and involvement, and ensure that all residents know how we have used their feedback to make changes to services or policies.
- Ensure that we are taking a consistent approach to disability equality monitoring to help us improve as an employer and service provider.
- Support our staff as they manage external contracts to ensure services delivered through others meet the needs of our diverse community.
- Ensure efficient and fair delivery of services through a well-trained workforce, knowledgeable about disability equality issues.
- Improve the representation of disabled staff at all levels and in all departments within the Council.
- Further develop the Council's approach to the scrutiny of progress being made on disability equality; and
- Strengthen our work with partners in the public sector to promote disability equality and to develop and share good practice.

3.2 At service level we commit to:

- Be more consistent and better at communicating with all our residents to let them know what services are available and how they can access them.
- Continue to undertake robust and effective Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA's) to enable us to better understand the needs of our diverse community.
- Improve our data analysis in order to better understand who is and who is not using our services and why.

- Better engage and involve the disabled community in the decision-making process.
- Use the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) tool to more effectively identify service level disability equality objectives and targets.
- Take positive action to make our workforce representative of our diverse community.
- Strengthen individual Service Plans to contain disability equality priorities for action; and
- Better promote the Council's message on disability equality so that all members of staff better understand their roles and responsibilities.

3.3 In relation to our workforce, over the next three years we commit to:

- Improve our communication with the workforce – in terms of both understanding their diverse needs and in terms of promoting the Council's message on disability equality.
- Build capacity in the workforce (through, for example, the duty to consider Positive Action measures) in order that all staff have the opportunity to realise their potential and progress within the Council.
- Monitor success rates for certain groups of people, such as members of the disabled community, who apply for Council jobs.
- Monitor and review the take-up of learning and development opportunities in order to take appropriate action to ensure all staff at all levels have access to these activities.
- Consider the introduction of a Disabled Workers Group, and work with this group to inform the Council's decision-making processes.
- Improve take up of disability equality learning and development activities for all staff; and
- Review employment policies and guidance to managers in line with the findings of the Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA's).

4. Action Plan

Disability Equality Scheme 2009 - 2012		
Tasks	Timescale	Lead Officer
ACTION 1: Demonstrable leadership and corporate commitment to disability equality		
Complete all Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) as indicated in the EqIA schedule, quality assure them and establish process for their scrutiny		
Cabinet reports to contain a section on EqIAs		
Staff to undertake equality and diversity training		
Elected members to undertake equality and diversity training		
Work with partners to strengthen consideration of disability equality issues in Partnerships		
All key partnerships will be encouraged to embed disability equality in working and activities		
Actively champion and raise awareness and understanding of disability equality issues in relation to employment and service delivery		
Support and organise activities and events to promote and celebrate disability equality		

Disability Equality Scheme 2009 - 2012		
Tasks	Timescale	Lead Officer
ACTION 2: Improved community engagement and accountability		
Establish more effective mechanisms to positively communicate the Council's messages on disability equality to employees, partner organisations and other stakeholders		
Identify current consultation with communities at risk of discrimination with a view to establishing new approaches to engagement and involvement to encourage active participation in the Council's decision-making processes		
Work with stakeholders to decide the right approach to scrutinising the Council's progress on disability equality		
Develop a thorough understanding of the needs of the disabled community through targeted research		
ACTION 3: Disability equality reflected in service delivery and customer care		
Actively promote the importance of reporting all hate crime		
Departments to better embed disability equality in service planning		
Ensure disability equality is embedded within the Council's procurement processes		

Disability Equality Scheme 2009 - 2012		
Tasks	Timescale	Lead Officer
Ensure a more consistent approach to equality monitoring across the Council and partnerships, and ensure such information is used to inform policy development and service delivery		
Improve access to information about employment and services to employees/potential employees and customers/potential customers		
ACTION 4: Employment practices and training to improve disability equality		
Monitor success rates for members of the disabled community, who apply for Council jobs.		
Build capacity in the workforce (through, for example, the duty to consider Positive Action measures) in order that all staff have the opportunity to realise their potential and progress within the Council.		
Ensure all elected members, managers and staff are trained on disability equality issues and their responsibilities		
Support and develop a Disabled Workers Group to enable them to become a crucial element of the consultation and service improvement mechanism, as well as improving links with communities		
Provide a voice for under-represented groups in the workforce		

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

This Scheme will be reviewed every three years. The Action Plan will be reviewed every year. Progress on the Scheme and Action Plan will be reported to the Equality and Diversity Steering Group, Chief Officers, Executive Management Team, Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Equality and Diversity and Cabinet on an annual basis.

In addition to the above we will also:

- Produce an annual Disability Equality monitoring report to the Cabinet, including progress on the Action Plan and monitoring of relevant performance indicators and targets.
- Advise all Service Heads on the specific actions from this Disability Equality Action Plan that they need to incorporate into their respective annual service plan.