

DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended, Tayside Contracts is among the public authorities subject to a General Duty to promote disability equality. In carrying out its functions, it must have due regard to the need to

- eliminate unlawful discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity and
- eliminate harassment of disabled people, promote positive attitudes and encourage the participation of disabled people in public life.

1.2 Tayside Contracts also has a Specific Duty to:-

- have and publish a disability equality scheme
- have in place arrangements for involving people with disabilities in producing the scheme
- have in place arrangements for monitoring its employment practices by reference to disability.

1.3 Tayside Contracts takes these responsibilities seriously and is committed to ensuring that they are met, within a general context of equality and opportunity. This document sets out how it intends to do so.

2 ACTION PLAN - DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME

2.1 The Disability Equality Scheme must include an action plan stating how Tayside Contracts intends to meet its duties to promote disability equality.

2.2 In its Disability Equality Scheme, Tayside Contracts is required to identify those of its functions and policies, or proposed policies, which it considers relevant to its performance of the General Duty outlined in 1.1 above. The Scheme must go on to identify Tayside Contracts' arrangements for:-

- involving disabled people in producing the scheme
- assessing and consulting on the likely impact of its proposed policies on disabled people
- monitoring its proposed policies for any adverse impact on disabled people
- publishing the results of its assessments, consultations and monitoring
- ensuring public access to information and services and
- training staff in connection with its general and specific duties for the promotion of positive attitudes towards disabled people.

This information will allow Tayside Contracts to produce an action plan for the next three years, at which time the Scheme will be reviewed.

3 ACTION PLAN - EMPLOYMENT MONITORING

3.1 Tayside Contracts already has in place systems which will facilitate monitoring by reference to disability the number of:-

- (a) employees in post
- (b) applicants for employment, training and promotion.

- 3.2 The results of the monitoring detailed in 3.1 above require to be published annually.
- 3.3 Tayside Contracts is currently developing further its monitoring systems to ensure the responsibility to monitor the required areas and the results of the monitoring can be reported to the Joint Committee annually.
- 3.4 Tayside Contracts recognises that it is important to analyse the information obtained from the monitoring in order to identify any potential problems/difficulties and will investigate the processes that have resulted in any differences and take the necessary action to address barriers or failings.

4 ACTION PLAN - FUNCTIONS

4.1 General

The principal function of Tayside Contracts is to provide catering, cleaning and roads and winter maintenance services throughout Tayside. Tayside Contracts has considered which of its functions are relevant to the general duty to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and how relevant they are to it. These functions, along with the action which Tayside Contracts intends to take are detailed below.

4.2 Functions and Actions

Employment of Staff

Tayside Contracts is currently accredited with the Positive about Disability 'double tick' symbol by the Employment Service. The disability symbol has been developed so that employers can show their commitment to good practice in employing disabled people, it also enables disabled people to know which employers will be positive about their abilities.

Employers, such as Tayside Contracts, who use the symbol make five commitments relating to recruitment; retaining employees who become disabled; consulting disabled employees; developing greater awareness of disability and reviewing progress.

The commitments are:

- ✓ to interview all applicants with a disability who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and to consider them on their abilities
- ✓ to ensure that there is a mechanism in place to discuss, at any time, but at least once a year with disabled employees what can be done to make sure they can develop and use their abilities
- ✓ to make every effort when employees become disabled to make sure they stay in employment
- ✓ to take action to ensure that all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed to make our commitments work
- ✓ each year, to review the five commitments and what has been achieved, to plan ways to improve on them and let employees and the employment service know about progress and future plans

Tayside Contracts will also continue to identify any additional measures it can take with a view to further promoting equality of opportunity in its recruitment and selection process.

Tayside Contracts will establish a monitoring regime as set out in Part 3 above.

Service Provision

Tayside Contracts requires all aspects of service provision to be reviewed to identify any adverse impact on equality groups and a full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) to be completed where appropriate. A group comprising senior managers from all areas of service provision within Tayside Contracts will be established in January 2007 and will review the disability equality impact of service provision on an ongoing basis in conjunction with service users and equality groups. The group will determine priorities and develop action plans as required.

Complaints

The existing methods for raising complaints will be reviewed and a recommendation made on the most effective methods for raising and dealing with complaints in respect of disability equality issues. To date the disability status of a complainant has not been monitored, nor have issues regarding disability been raised. In future, complaints will be monitored to identify whether a complainant has a disability and whether complaints involve disability equality issues. The monitoring information, together with any other relevant information will be provided annually to Tayside Contracts Joint Committee.

5 ACTION PLAN - TAYSIDE CONTRACTS' POLICIES

5.1 Tayside Contracts regulates its meetings and other aspects of its internal administration by means of standing orders, financial regulations and agreed procedures. In addition, Tayside Contracts has a range of employment policies regulating the employment of its staff. For the purposes of this Scheme, all of these are considered to be Tayside Contracts' policies.

5.2 Tayside Contracts believes that its policies in relation to standing orders, financial regulations and agreed procedures are applied in a fair and consistent manner and are in no sense inherently unfair. They will continue to be monitored, including consideration of whether they could be improved with a view to promoting equality of opportunity.

5.3 Tayside Contracts requires all new policies to be screened for adverse impact on equality groups and a full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) to be completed where appropriate. It is also committed to screening all its policies and practices to determine priorities for EQIA and develop actions plans. An initial screening of existing policies will be completed by January 2007.

5.4 Tayside Contracts is required to identify and put in place arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of its proposed policies on the promotion of disability equality. Tayside Contracts recognises that the steps required in respect of each policy will vary depending on the nature of the policy and the surrounding circumstances. Tayside Contracts will require that all reports presented to it proposing policies that have any significant relevance to disability equality include details of

- an assessment of the impact of the proposed policy on people with disabilities
- any consultation carried out in conjunction with that assessment and
- any action (including monitoring, where appropriate) proposed in consequence of that assessment and consultation.

Tayside Contracts will consider these matters in reaching its decision on the proposed policy.

6 ACTION PLAN - TRAINING

6.1 Tayside Contracts is required to identify and put in place arrangements for training its staff in relation to its duties to promote disability equality and positive attitudes towards disabled people. Tayside Contracts will ensure that all staff will receive adequate training in these areas.

6.2 Tayside Contracts considers it important that members of the Joint Committee receive training in its obligations with regard to disability equality, and will ensure that current and future members participate in training programmes provided by its constituent authorities.

6.3 Tayside Contracts will ensure that information on the Disability Equality Scheme will be included in all induction programmes for new employees.

7 PUBLICITY

7.1 Tayside Contracts is required to identify the arrangements it will make to publish the results of any assessments, consultations and monitoring it carried out to establish whether its policies have any impact on disability equality. Anything that might reasonably be regarded as a policy will be the subject of a public report to Tayside Contracts' Joint Committee, as will the results of any monitoring of the impact of policies. These reports will also be posted on Tayside Contracts' website.

7.2 Tayside Contracts is also required to identify the arrangements it will make for ensuring public access to the information and services it provides. Tayside Contracts will draw on the expertise of its constituent authorities in this matter and consider what action it requires to take to develop public awareness.

7.3 This Scheme will be published and circulated to all members and employees of Tayside Contracts. Copies will also be available from Tayside Contracts, Contracts House, 1 Soutar Street, Dundee, DD3 8SS. The Scheme will also be placed on Tayside Contracts' web-site at www.tayside-contracts.co.uk. Translations will be made available on request using the services of locally identified translators.

7.4 The document will also be available in alternative formats, e.g. Easy to Read, Large Print, Braille, audio tape, on request.

8 DURATION AND REVIEW

This scheme is intended to cover the period from 4 December 2006 to 3 December 2009. Tayside Contracts may, if considered appropriate, review the Scheme or any part of it at an earlier date in response to comments made from individuals or organisations or consultations with other bodies.