

**TAYSIDE CONTRACTS JOINT COMMITTEE- 26 JANUARY 2009**

**Report by the Managing Director**

Subject:        **DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME (2007/ 2010) ANNUAL REPORT**

**ABSTRACT**

**This report informs the Tayside Contracts Joint Committee of the progress made in implementing the Tayside Contracts' corporate Disability Equality Scheme 2007/2010.**

**1.        RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Tayside Contracts Joint Committee notes the progress made in applying Tayside Contracts' corporate Disability Equality Scheme 2007/2010 and approves the appended Disability Equality Scheme Annual Report 2008.

**2.        INTRODUCTION**

Reference is made to the approved Joint Committee Report JC 45/2006 which detailed content of the corporate Disability Equality Scheme, published on 4 December 2006 to enable Tayside Contracts to meet its statutory Disability Equality Duty.

**3.        INFORMATION**

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

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
- to publish and report annually on the application of the Disability Equality Scheme

The appendix to this report provides a review of the progress made in respect of Tayside Contracts' Disability Equality Scheme.

**4. DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

This report details measures taken to date and proposed future actions in respect of the Disability Equality Scheme accord with equality and diversity legislation and are consistent with Tayside Contracts commitment to equality and diversity in employment.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

**6. CONSULTATION**

The Clerk and the Proper Officer to the Joint Committee have been consulted on the preparation of this report.

**7. CONCLUSION**

Tayside Contracts has fulfilled its statutory duties to date in respect of disability equality. The Action Plan in the attached report and the revised post of Equalities and Personnel Projects Manager will enable a more systematic, co-ordinated and sustainable approach to ensure that future objectives are achieved.



**IAIN C WADDELL  
MANAGING DIRECTOR**

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

No background papers were relied on in preparing this report.

## **DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME (2007/2010) ANNUAL REPORT 2008**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This is Tayside Contracts' Annual Report 2008 on our Disability Equality Scheme which was first published on 4 December 2006.
- 1.2 This report is Tayside Contracts' response to the Disability Equality Duty under the Disability Discrimination (Public Authority) (Statutory Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2005.
- 1.3 This report provides a review of the progress made on the Action Plan to improve disability equality in Tayside, as a result of Tayside Contracts' Disability Equality Scheme 2007/2010.

### **2. Review of Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan**

#### Reviewing Policies and Functions

Equality screening and Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) are now embedded within Tayside Contracts' service planning process. They are considered by all Units in drawing up their Service Plans and the equalities screening process is undertaken in respect of all internal reports to the Corporate Management Team and in all reports to the Tayside Contracts Joint Committee. This in effect ensures an ongoing review of the list of functions, policies and proposed policies relevant to equality and the general statutory duties.

#### Developing Good Practice and User Involvement

A fundamental part of the Disability Equality Duty is that for the first time ever public authorities have a statutory requirement to involve disabled people in achieving disability equality.

Involving disabled people increases the likelihood of success, thus increasing our chances of reaching our strategic objectives. Tayside Contracts continues to promote consultation and involvement of disabled people by raising disability issues and good practice awareness through team briefings and training for operational managers.

#### A More Accessible Website

Tayside Contracts' website has been redesigned to make it more accessible and user-friendly. Following further consultation, it is intended that the site will include a 'browsealoud' facility which reads text for people with visual or literary difficulties, as well as improved search facilities.

#### Using Positive Images of Disability

Tayside Contracts has retained its accreditation from the Employment Service as a 'Positive about Disability People' employer. This allows Tayside Contracts to use the 'double tick' symbol in job advertisements and other published material.

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.

Tayside Contracts has also continued to keep up to date with links to existing image bank development, this supports our own priority to provide access to more positive images of disability and we have extended our bank of positive images on disability to include in published material.

Elimination of harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability

Tayside Contracts continues to work with its partners to empower disabled employees to ensure that we help eliminate the harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability.

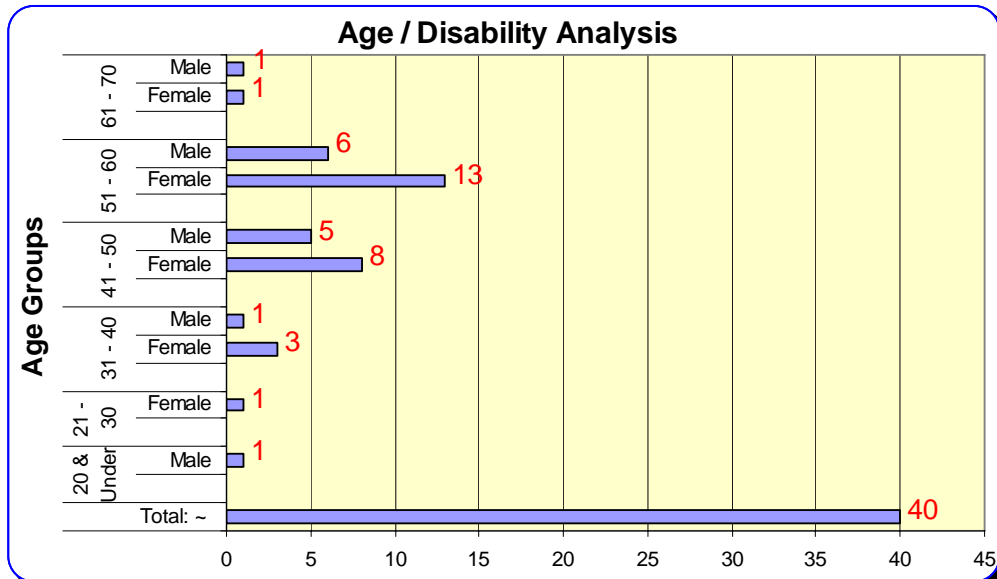
Items still requiring action:

- Further consultation with people with disabilities and engaging in partnerships with representative groups
- Engage in the implementation of good practice on accessible information and communication for disabled people which is to be taken forward by the Equalities and Personnel Projects Manager
- Make available published examples of EQIAs

### 3. Workforce Equality Monitoring

Tayside Contracts' 'Race Equality Scheme 2005/2008', 'Disability Equality Scheme 2007/010' and 'Gender Equality Scheme' set out how Tayside Contracts plans to meet the requirements of employment legislation. All of Tayside Contracts' equality schemes give a commitment to equality monitoring.

A profile of Tayside Contracts' workforce by disability and age is detailed below:-



Equality monitoring allows Tayside Contracts to highlight possible inequalities, investigate the underlying causes and remove any unfairness or disadvantage in employment and recruitment. Monitoring also allows us to check that Tayside Contracts' equality policies are working.

From Census data it would appear that national and local figures are inconclusive on the "number of people available for work, who have a declared disability", and therefore at present it would be difficult to draw conclusions or set targets.

The former Disability Rights Commission commissioned research into Disability Identity which suggested that 50% of people covered by the DDA did not think of themselves as being disabled and about half of them felt "insulted" by the tag. Things have moved on to some degree but there are still issues for people with health conditions (e.g. cancers) who do not consider themselves as disabled despite the legal coverage and some groups such as people with mental health issues who see themselves often as "patients" rather than consider themselves as being disabled.

The Equal Opportunities section of Tayside Contracts' Application for Employment form has been amended to ensure that Tayside Contracts will be in a position to improve its monitoring information. This has been achieved by inserting a question on whether the applicant is applying for a promoted post; a breakdown of disability into a number of classifications; the addition of a further age band to capture information in relation to applicants/employees aged over 65; and a question covering religious belief.

#### **4. Training**

- 4.1 The Personnel Services Unit continues to provide advice, training and guidance to operational managers in order for them to further develop or establish systems where training requests and activities can be profiled by each of the equalities strands, including disability.
- 4.2 Operational managers and front-line employees continue to engage in programmes to raise awareness of the needs of disabled people.

#### **5. Future Action**

- 5.1 Tayside Contracts intends to introduce a redesigned post of Equalities and Personnel Projects Manager in response to equality and diversity legislation moving towards a single equality duty. This new role will work closely with all Unit Heads as Chair of a standing Equalities Group to ensure a more systematic, co-ordinated and sustainable approach to identifying and achieving our equalities objectives. Areas for cross-strand co-ordination include:-

- 1. Co-ordinated Equality Impact Assessments
- 2. Service Monitoring
- 3. Employee Monitoring
- 4. Consultation Framework
- 5. Information and Communication Strategy
- 6. Web pages continuing to be developed in line with Clear Print Guidance Delivery Equality Duty

- 5.2 An analysis of current employees by earnings in respect of each of the equalities strands will be provided by Equalities and Personnel Projects Manager and considered by the Corporate Management Team.
- 5.3 Tayside Contracts is currently reviewing where it advertises vacancies. The purpose of the review will be to ensure that every reasonable step is taken to encourage all sections of the community to apply for Tayside Contracts' job vacancies.
- 5.4 Tayside Contracts' other Disability Scheme priorities for 2009 include:
- Employment issues for people with sensory loss
  - Further promotion of Positive Actions
  - Easy Read/Read Aloud Version of the Disability Equality Scheme Annual Report
  - More Positive Action on employment for people who are visually impaired and deaf/hard-of-hearing people – including texting services
  - More evidence of jobs taken up by disabled people