

## **DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT AND HUMBERSIDE POLICE AUTHORITY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. The Disability Discrimination Act was introduced in 1995. This was amended by the Disability Discrimination Bill in November 2004 and in May 2005 a new Equalities Bill was introduced which affords further opportunities to promote equality. Humberside Police Authority, like most other public authorities need to take their responsibilities seriously.

### **BACKGROUND**

2. Despite the above legislation the Government has recently announced the establishment of an Equalities Review, to inform the modernisation of equality legislation towards a single equality Act and to develop the new Commission of Equalities and Human Rights.
3. The amended Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA 2005) is welcomed by Humberside Police Authority as it will give greater equality of opportunity to disabled people, extending their civil rights and addressing the barriers they face.
4. The DDA 2005 will be enacted in stages and will introduce powers to tackle direct and indirect discrimination – otherwise known as ‘less favourable treatment discrimination’. Although this is already effective the so called reasonable adjustment duties will not come into effect until December 2006.

### **SUMMARY OF KEY PROVISIONS IN THE 2005 ACT**

5. Some of the key provisions are:
  - i. There will be a new duty on public authorities (including police authorities) to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people.
  - ii. The extension of part 3 of the DDA (access to goods and services) to public functions and the provision of reasonable adjustments to policies, practices and procedures introduced in relation to the provision of management and property.
  - iii. Discrimination by public authorities
  - iv. Widening the definition of disability
  - v. Extending protection from discrimination to areas of transport not previously covered by the DDA

## **WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR HUMBERSIDE POLICE AUTHORITY**

6. These new duties will mean that Humberside Police Authority need to be more proactive in ensuring that disabled people are treated fairly. It also means we need to build on the good work that has already been done to make changes to buildings and adjustments for individuals, and requires us to tackle the continuing disadvantages experienced by disabled people, by weaving equality for all, including disabled people, into our culture in practical ways. This means building disabled people and disability equality into everything we do.
7. To assist public authorities to take account of disability equality in the day-to-day work of policy-making, service delivery, employment practice and other functions the Disability Rights Commission has produced a Code of Practice. This Code of Practice gives practical guidance on producing Disability Equality Schemes and implementing the new duty.
8. The introduction of the new duty will sit alongside the duty to promote race equality (see agenda item 14) introduced by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. As such we are required to publish a Disability Equality Scheme by 4 December 2006.
9. A Disability Equality Scheme is simply a framework for the police authority to follow in order to meet the duty. Within the scheme we must set out the following:
  - i. The way in which disabled people have been involved in the development of the Disability Equality Scheme.
  - ii. Our methods for assessing the impact of policies and practices on equality for disabled people.
  - iii. The actions we will take to meet the new duty.
  - iv. Our arrangements for gathering information about our performance in relation to disability equality and how we will use the information collected.
10. Whilst getting the Scheme right is important, like the Race Equality Scheme it is only a means to an end. The whole point is to make practical improvements for disabled people to close the gaps in opportunity that disabled people face. Every year we must therefore publish a report detailing progress on the duty and identifying what outcomes we have achieved.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

11. It is recommended that the Committee:
  - i. Note the content of this report and the new duty facing police authorities.
  - ii. Utilise the Race Equality Impact Assessment Framework as a generic Diversity Equality Assessment Framework.

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Background Papers None