

**NORTHERN JOINT POLICE BOARD**

**23 January 2009**

Agenda Item	
Report No	

**Disability Equality Scheme Annual Report**

**Report by the Chief Constable**

**SUMMARY**

This Report updates Members on action taken by Northern Constabulary to meet its statutory obligations to report annually on progress made towards meeting its disability equality duty.

**Background**

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, Northern Constabulary has a public duty to promote disability equality and prevent discrimination against people with disabilities. Part of this duty involves creating a Disability Equality Scheme. The appended annual report outlines the progress that we have made against the action plan that we published in 2006 and updated in 2007. This report is the second under our Disability Equality Scheme 2006-2009.

**Progress & Next Steps**

The Force's existing Disability Equality Scheme is due to be revised in 2009. This review will now take place as part of Northern Constabulary's Operational Development Objective to produce a Single Equality Scheme. The preparation of a Single Equality Scheme will prepare the service for the implementation of the Single Equality Bill.

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Board is invited to note the content of the annual report

**I Latimer  
Chief Constable  
14 January 2009**



Northern Constabulary

Annual Report on progress towards meeting the Disability  
Equality Duty

December 2008

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## Summary

In accordance with Northern Constabulary's Disability Equality Duty, this annual report outlines the progress the Force has made throughout 2008 with regard to the actions presented in our Disability Equality Scheme (2006 – 2009), the updated actions outlined in our report in 2007 and additional work that we have undertaken to improve disability equality.

This report and our ongoing monitoring work form a significant part of what Northern Constabulary are doing in order to meet their duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination against and harassment of, disabled people, and promote equality of opportunity in relation to disabled employees, disabled service users and disabled people generally in line with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. Our action plan sets out the following aims:

1. To eliminate unlawful discrimination
2. To eliminate unlawful harassment
3. To improve accessibility of the service
4. To promote equality of opportunity
5. To report progress annually

In 2008 Northern Constabulary has progressed a number of key actions regarding the involvement of people with disabilities at a strategic and operational level. The report outlines what we have done to advance and complete our updated action plan. Our key achievements include developing a new online reporting system for all types of hate incident, known as Hate Free Highland, establishing our Community Advisory Group meeting and improvements to making our services more accessible to people who are deaf and users of British Sign Language.

## **Progress with our Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan**

Our disability Equality Scheme Action Plan has been split into five key aims and within each of those are a series of objectives. The following update outlines the actions that were due for completion up until December 2008 and also includes the updated actions that were proposed in our last annual report. The final section deals with additional activity undertaken that we have carried out throughout 2008.

### **1.0 To eliminate unlawful discrimination**

#### **1.1 Objective 1: Prioritised plan for impact assessment of functions**

- Assess the effectiveness of the process

A review of the impact assessment process has taken place and a revised structure has been put in place.

#### **1.2 Objective 3: Personnel required to undertake EQIA have the appropriate support, contacts and sources of information**

- The Force's Human Resources Service Unit is ready to implement a new personnel database and work to improve confidence in the system is scheduled to take place so that we can encourage staff and officers to disclose their disabilities. Over time, we will be better placed to monitor the disaggregated data on disability and other equality strands.
- Complaints against the police on the grounds of disability continue to be monitored through quarterly meetings of the Diversity Progress Group.
- The staff survey has been developed to include monitoring of disaggregated data on disability. This survey will take place in December 2008 and the results of the process will be monitored through the diversity progress group.

### 1.3 Objective 4: Publish outcomes of the Disability Equality Impact Assessment

- Work is underway to improve the Equality Impact Assessment process across the Force. A revised action plan has been created and training will be delivered in early 2009. Key policy documents regarding the decision-making process, community engagement and others are being amended to reflect this new system.

## **2.0 Aim 2: To eliminate unlawful harassment**

2.1 Objective 1: Record and monitor incidents of harassment and discrimination of people with disabilities.

- The Force grievance policy enables disability related incidents to be reported and all disability submissions are monitored by our Personnel Advisor.
- The Force has a crime incident recording system, known as Impact; this system captures data on disability related crimes. The data recorded is disaggregated into physical and mental disabilities.

These actions were completed in 2007 and continue to be monitored.

### **3.0 Aim 3: To improve accessibility of the service**

#### **3.1 Objective 1: Identify and rectify barriers to access.**

- The website includes accessibility requirements for people with disabilities and the textphone number has been added for people who have hearing impairments or who are deaf.
- At a national level we are supporting work on the production of a dvd for British Sign Language (BSL) users regarding their custody rights and the option of providing BSL interpretation online.
- Our new online reporting system will also include BSL interpretation of how to complete an incident form.

#### **4.0 Aim 4: To promote equality of opportunity**

4.1 Objective 1: Staff and managers are aware of their responsibilities in line with the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (2005).

- Complaints against the police on the grounds of disability are monitored by Professional Standards and quarterly reports are submitted to the Diversity Progress Group. Since 1 April 2008 there have been no known complaints of this nature.
- The Diversity Level 1 programme has been reviewed and is now being rolled out across the Force. Further work is still to be done to review the engagement of people with disabilities in this programme.
- Involvement of people with disabilities in updating the Diversity Guide is ongoing and will be continued through the internal Disability Advisory Group.
- A programme of engagement with local access panels has begun. This includes an awareness raising session with Ross and Cromarty Access Group, a personal safety talk at a local residential unit for people with disabilities and the engagement of a broad range of community groups at our Community Advisory Group meetings.

## **5.0 Aim 5: To report annually on progress**

5.1 Objective 1: To provide open and transparent publication of outcomes.

- This annual report is sent to the Northern Joint Police Board (next meeting scheduled for 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2009) and will also appear on our website in line with the statutory deadline of 4<sup>th</sup> December 2008.
- There are plans to review the public performance report in 2009 and this will include the outcomes of all of our actions plans.

## **6.0 Review of actions updated in 2007**

### 6.1 Service Delivery Actions

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Northern Constabulary ACTIONS	Progress	Partnership ACTIONS	Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further analysis required regarding areas where service indicated as not available and waiting times.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More targeted interventions to be made regarding the inclusion of under-represented groups in the biannual Community Consultation Survey in 2009.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review joint tendering for one provider to supply information in alternative formats for all partners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Still to be progressed.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Audit access to Force Operations Centre in line with Call Management Strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The textphone number has been more widely publicised within the deaf community, including direct contact with community groups, a press release and greater prominence on our website.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a common accessible information policy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highland Data Sharing Partnership Information Sharing Policy has been developed and NHS Highland, Highland Council and Northern Constabulary are signed up to this.</li> </ul>
<p>Review Premises Audit in</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access compliance audits were initially</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review potential for joint audit of premises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A joint accessibility guidance document</li> </ul>

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<p>line with different impairment types.</p>	<p>undertaken by a specialist, outsourced consultancy. The audit framework developed for the initial audit will be used and applied in all subsequent annual audits for the foreseeable future. The Estate Office has a comprehensive record of the audit reports for each of Northern Constabulary's premises and is available for scrutiny on request.</p>	<p>alongside local access panels.</p>	<p>has been developed by NHS Highland and work is underway to roll-out the use of this document in a multi-agency setting. This is the first step to greater collaborative working. Local access panels are also engaged in our Community Advisory Group meetings and and there is potential to develop these two pieces of work.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review methods of communication to ensure that alternative formats to letters are made available to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently operated on a needs basis. Further work to improve the uptake of alternative formats is required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In association with disabled people, review potential for multi-agency disability awareness training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work in progress.</li> </ul>

those with sensory difficulties.			
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## 6.2 Discrimination and Harassment

Partnership Actions	Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Multi-Agency Racist Incident Strategy to include Disablist incidents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant work has been undertaken by partners to broaden the scope of our work across all strands of equality. The strategy has not been updated but this has been superseded by work being done to create the Hate Free Highland online reporting system for all types of hate incidents.</li> </ul>

### 6.3 Involvement Activity

<b>Police Action</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Partnership Action</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circulate local list of voluntary groups to Diversity Officers and area commands to ensure they make regular contact on policing issues that may affect them and to report progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action complete.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of the HWA to ensure that services are aligned in line with community planning requirements. Current Review of Community Planning is aimed to address this.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single Outcome Agreement is now in place.</li> </ul>

### 6.4 Actions from the community

<b>Police Actions</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Partnership Actions</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasise the Force Diversity Guide and circulate through Force Information Bulletin to all</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new ACPOS Diversity Guide has been produced with involvement of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In association with NHS Highland liaise with housing department and other relevant groups regarding community safety and health effects of housing criteria with regards to adults with</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal Safety talks are being delivered by community safety Unit in the Divisional Commands.</li> </ul>

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<p>staff that it is good practice to ask individuals if they have specific needs, including individuals with learning disabilities.</p>	<p>a wide range of disability organisations and groups. A hard copy of the booklet will be made available to all frontline officers and staff in January 2009.</p>	<p>learning disabilities and those experiencing mental health conditions.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include an input on Huntingtons Disease in Force Diversity Guide</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See above.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influence funding authorities to ensure that voluntary organisations have appropriate resources to continue to support ongoing work in line with a long-term sustainable cost/benefit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We currently engage with the Scottish Government and the Equality and Human Rights Commission regarding pressing issues for the Highlands and Islands including voluntary groups.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include section in diversity guide and in access manual at local stations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copies of the new ACPOS Diversity Booklet will be available in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify further opportunities to address public awareness raising</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Northern Constabulary were involved in sponsoring “Highlands R US”, a public celebration of diversity</li> </ul>

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<p>with regards to considerations associated with access of service from adults recovering from or experiencing mental health conditions.</p>	<p>every station and includes a section on mental health matters.</p>		<p>in the Highlands and Islands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are also planning a public launch event for the new online reporting system.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaise with HUG with regards to review of awareness training.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A representative of the Highland User Group has been invited to attend our Community Advisory Group meeting. We are also taking forward some work with regard to a report about mental health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify method of flagging databases to ensure that large print material is automatically mailed to those that have previously identified as a requirement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This work is ongoing.</li> </ul>

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	service users and their access to police services.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Deaf Action and Highland Society for the Blind to consider providing awareness training to front line staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being taken forward through the Community Advisory Group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revisit 'message in a bottle' concept initiated by Skye Community Safety partnership.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This work is ongoing.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review processes for accessing BSL interpreter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our policy on accessing interpreting provision is currently under review.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revisit report on access matters for visually impaired in Inverness town centre,.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work is ongoing.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review call management for deaf community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As highlighted above, we have made our textphone number more widely known</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with other emergency services to ensure 999 fully accessible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work is ongoing.</li> </ul>

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	through work with Deaf Action, Deaf Services and the Community Safety Officer of Highland Council.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review recruitment and retention processes to ensure that appropriate person-centred support is provided. Ensure services of Job Centre Plus are utilised in making reasonable adjustments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work is ongoing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with other emergency services and Social Work to ensure that information with regards to personal safety equipment is circulated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work is ongoing.</li> </ul>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take forward a programme of Senior Level awareness raising as a matter of priority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Continuing Professional Development Seminar was delivered to middle and senior management in June 2007.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review leaflets and posters to ensure they are 'easy read' together with graphics and pictures to communicate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This activity is being planned for 2009.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review joint contract for provision of BSL interpreters and videophones</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action complete. Deaf Action now holds the contract for BSL interpretation services in the Highland area.</li> </ul>

## 7.0 Additional work undertaken in 2008

In addition to the progress made against the actions set out in our action plan and the 2007 annual report, Northern Constabulary have driven forward additional pieces of work to improve disability equality. A summary of these is contained below.

### 7.1 Community Advisory Group

We set up a new Community Advisors Group in September 2008 as a primary way to include the views of a range of community, specialist and interest groups in strategic matters of police business. The group meets every second month. The members representing disability interests are:

Health and Happiness  
Highland User Group  
Inverness Access Committee

Members have the opportunity to feed into our Disability Equality Scheme, raise agenda items and give regular updates about strategic matters facing the groups they represent.

### 7.2 Hate Free Highland

In collaboration with NHS Highland, Highland Council, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and Highland and Islands Enterprise, Northern Constabulary are developing an online reporting system for all types of hate incident including disability related incidents. There has been in-depth involvement with disabled people during the first two phases of the project. These phases included developing advertising material that appealed to and met the requirements of people with disabilities and the second phase involved recruiting organisations and groups who are willing to act as third party reporting centres. The system will be piloted throughout February 2009 and we aim for it to go live by the end of Spring 2009.

## **8.0 How to contact us**

If you would like to comment on this report or provide feedback on any element of our Disability Equality Scheme or would like it in alternative formats, please use any of the options below.

By writing to:

The Strategic Diversity Advisor  
Northern Constabulary  
Police Headquarters  
Inverness  
IV2 3SY

By telephone: 01463 720364

By textphone: 01463 723325

By E mailing: [executive@northern.pnn.police.uk](mailto:executive@northern.pnn.police.uk)