

Northern Constabulary

Annual Report on progress towards meeting the Disability  
Equality Duty

December 2007

## Summary

In accordance with Northern Constabulary's Disability Equality Duty, part I of this annual report outlines the progress the Force has made with regard to the actions presented in our Disability Equality Scheme (2006 – 2009). Part II highlights the results of the information-gathering we have carried out, what the results indicate and what we will do as a result of the findings.

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

Over the past twelve months Northern Constabulary has achieved considerable progress as regards the actions set out in our Disability Equality Scheme and we are committed to implementing the actions highlighted by our Disability Advisors during the term of the scheme. Our report highlights areas of strength, notably in the area of community engagement, involvement of people with disabilities and the commitment across the force to tackle inequality against people with disabilities. This is evidenced through our partner activities with the Highland Wellbeing Alliance (HWA), the results of our Investors in People assessment and the work done through our Equality and Diversity Progress Group.

There are also some areas for priority development such as embedding the process of equality impact assessment. We recognise that establishing this process is an ongoing, long-term piece of work and requires commitment across the Force's ranks. We are keen to take this challenge forward in 2008.

In summary, we report confidently that progress continues to be made in terms of laying the foundations for mainstreaming disability equality and diversity across all the Force's activities. A significant part of this work will be delivered when we finalise and implement our structural review in 2008.

## **Part I: Progress with our Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan**

### **Aim 1: To eliminate unlawful discrimination**

Objective 1: Prioritised plan for impact assessment of functions

- In collaboration with the internal Disability Advisory Group, the Force has identified a plan to address the functional assessment of priority areas through feedback from the Diversity Excellence Model.
- From this feedback it is clear that there is strong commitment to building on the work achieved so far and this group will progress the assessment of these functions as a priority in 2008. Local disability groups and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service in particular have contributed effectively to this plan.
- In recent months, coordination of the pilot of the first functional assessment has slowed due to the absence of a Strategic Diversity Advisor. We aim, however, to progress this immediately in January 2008.

Objective 2: All new and revised policies include outcome of the disability equality impact assessment.

- The Management Service Group has agreed the template for Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA)
- The process of integrating EQIA into the Force's decision-making structure is ongoing and there has been good progress in terms of finalising this through the Force Review. The outcomes of the Force Review are expected to be reported and agreed by the Northern Joint Police Board in January 2008. It is anticipated that the new structure will reflect the Force's commitment to mainstreaming equality and diversity across all its service units and business activities.

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

- There is now a central register of disability interest groups and discussions are ongoing with partners regarding the maintenance of this information.
- Service Unit Managers continue to engage proactively with local disability interest groups through the Community Planning structures.
- Work has begun to create a process for recording the details of local engagement and this will be carried forward in 2008.
- We have created a list of Highlands and Islands disability groups.
- The Force's Human Resources Service Unit is in the transitional phase of switching to a new personnel database. Once this is complete we will be better placed to ensure the collection of disaggregated data on disability.
- Performance data on disability related complaints are collected through the Force's complaints recording system, Centurion. This information

is reported annually to Audit Scotland and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary.

Objective 4: Publish outcomes of the Disability Equality Impact Assessment

- The Force acknowledges that development in this area needs to be prioritised and with the appointment of a new Strategic Diversity Advisor this will progress early in 2008. These outcomes will be published on the Force website and communicated to the Disability Advisory Group.

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

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.
- Work is currently being done in partnership with the Highland Wellbeing Alliance to create an online reporting system for all Hate Crime.

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

Objective 1: Identify and rectify barriers to access.

- DDA compliance in the built environment for both public access and employees is a continuous process. In each financial year a sum is allocated in revenue to fund the continuous improvement of facilities in police buildings. To date, all major area offices, section offices are compliant with the DDA requirements for public access. Some offices have been remodelled and adapted on a needs basis to accommodate users and employees with disabilities. The programme of works to make all single officer stations is ongoing with 60% complete and the remainder programmed over 2008/2009.
- Access compliance audits were initially 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.

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

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

- The Force's Solicitor gave a presentation to the Human Resources Practitioner Group on the responsibilities of the Force under the Disability Discrimination Act (2005). The Occupational Health Development Group continue to meet quarterly and feed back relevant issues to the Human Resources Practitioner Group.
- The Human Resources Service Unit has developed guidance for line managers about making reasonable adjustments. This guidance is available in our Redeployment Policy (Force Reference Document R24). This was also presented to the members of the Human Resources Practitioner Group.
- The Force Diversity Guide has been updated with the legislative and operational considerations of implementing the Disability Equality Duty. This guide is available for all staff on the Force Intranet.
- Involvement of people with disabilities in updating the Diversity Guide is ongoing and will be continued through the internal Disability Advisory Group.

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

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

- This report will be published as a stand-alone document on Northern Constabulary's website. Future annual reports will be incorporated into the Force's Public Performance Reports.
- Use of the website and discussions with our Media Services Unit will take place in early 2008.

## **Part II: Results from Information Gathering and Community Involvement Activities**

### **Sources of Information**

Throughout 2007 Northern Constabulary has undertaken a variety of community involvement and community engagement activities. These include; contracting an external consultant through the Highland Wellbeing Alliance to carry out an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of consultation and engagement with equalities groups; and assess their readiness to work together and with the Highland Wellbeing Alliance in order to promote common agendas and ultimately, to improve services.

The Force has also conducted our 2007 Excellence in Community Policing survey. This survey was developed by Northern Constabulary in collaboration with Highland Council, NHS Highland, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, the Scottish Court Service and the Procurator Fiscal Service. The findings from this survey are summarised in our revised action plan.

The Force also has an internal Disability Advisory Group that is involved in the creation of our Disability Equality Scheme and its action plan.

### **Results of Analysis**

The results of this data analysis and focus group feedback have been reviewed and a number of actions for Northern Constabulary have emerged. The service was already aware of some of the areas identified and have reflected these in our Disability Equality Scheme and we are happy to report on progress with regards to these. Some actions have also been suggested as partnership actions. These have all been agreed by the members of the Highland Wellbeing Alliance Equality and Diversity Strategy Group subject to some amendments with regards to language/presentation. The suggested actions are outlined below and will be shared with those that were involved to ensure they are fit for purpose. We intend to update our Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan with these new actions along with an allocated timescale and accountable personnel in early 2008.

### **Services**

One aspect of Section 5 of the questionnaire asked respondents to score how satisfied they were with features of the Police service which included: quality of service, staff attitudes, physical access, waiting times, not needed and not available. More than half of respondents had not needed the police service. Around a third of respondents reported using Police Services, the majority were very or fairly satisfied with the quality of service.

The Police generally received consistently high satisfaction ratings for the quality of service, staff attitudes and physical access to the service.

Satisfaction rates were high with regards to staff attitudes. Only 4% of respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied. Some general comments were made however that indicated that some respondents would like the Force to be more aware and understanding of the needs of disabled people.

Of significance is the 12% of respondents who reported that a Police service was not available to them. Of those that indicated a service was not available the majority came from Inverness. 67% of respondents were very or fairly satisfied with response times with 13% being very or fairly dissatisfied and just over a fifth neither satisfied or dissatisfied.

<b>Northern Constabulary ACTIONS</b>	<b>Partnership ACTIONS</b>
<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>• Review joint tendering for one provider to supply information in alternative formats for all partners.</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>• Develop a common accessible information Policy.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Premises Audit in line with different impairment types.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review potential for joint audit of premises alongside local access panels.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review methods of Communication to ensure that alternative formats to letters are made available to those with sensory difficulties.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In association with disabled people, review potential for multi-agency disability awareness training</li> </ul>

## **Discrimination and Harassment**

The Highland Wellbeing Alliance survey examined people's experiences of discrimination and harassment in Highland. Almost a quarter of respondents (23%) reported that they had at some point experienced bullying due to their disability. Men and women reported similar experiences. Of those that reported that they had experienced bullying/harassment 24% were those with physical impairments and half with mental health impairment.

With regards to discrimination, just one third of all respondents reported that they had never experienced discrimination. Those with learning difficulties indicated they experience discrimination more regularly than individuals with other impairments. This was coupled with discrimination on age, gender and ethnicity.

16% of respondents indicated that they had experienced an attack at some point because of their disability. Females were slightly more likely to have experienced an attack than males. Experience varied across Highland with 30% of respondents from Inverness and 33% from Skye indicating that they had been attacked due to their disability. Individuals with a physical impairment were least likely to report experience of an attack and individuals with a learning disability the most likely.

Only half of those individuals reporting that they had been attacked reported this attack to Northern Constabulary. The 'fear of making things worse' was reported as one of the reasons not to.

This evidence indicates a worrying picture in Highland with regards to Hate Crime Against Disabled People and an area of priority for Northern Constabulary, other agency partners and ACPOS.

Our Excellence in Community Policing 2007 survey highlights that reducing discrimination (66.4% of respondents) and recognising equality and diversity (64.7% of respondents) are rated as being top/medium priority. With regard to the fear of discrimination or abuse, physical disability was considered to be one of the main sources of worry over discrimination. The survey also asked respondents to prioritise actions for the Force and other partner agencies; discrimination was viewed as the least significant with only 0.2% of respondents believing discrimination should be a priority.

<b>Partnership Actions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review Multi-Agency Racist Incident Strategy to include Disablist incidents</li></ul>

### Common Themes across all Involvement Activity

- Improve staff awareness, attitude and communication through involvement of disabled people themselves in awareness training.
- Awareness raising among senior and middle managers vital (but at present lacking) to influence policy and development
- Improve communication by regular contact through voluntary sector organisation. Consultation must lead to action.
- Alternative formats of information should be co-ordinated so that a disabled user receives information automatically in the format required without having to make repeated requests.

Police Action	Partnership Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Diversity learning programme and other training to identify areas where disabled people themselves could be invited to input.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review a database approach where agencies can achieve economies of scale while ensuring alternative formats are automatically provided.</li> </ul>
<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>• Members of the HWA to continue to work hard to ensure that services are aligned in line with community planning requirements. Current Review of Community Planning is aimed to address this.</li> </ul>

### Specific Feedback

The following action relate to specific requests from our focus group and internal Disability Advisors.

Police Actions	Partnership Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasise the Force Diversity Guide and circulate through Force Information Bulletin to all staff that it is good practice to ask individuals if they have specific needs, including individuals with learning disabilities.</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 learning disabilities and those experiencing mental health conditions.</li> </ul>
<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>• Highlight to elected members difficulties associated with current Scottish Executive funding and</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>need for practical support to deliver on disability equality.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review input of HD awareness training in diversity training programme.</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>Include section in diversity guide and in access manual at local stations with regards to considerations associated with access of service from adults recovering from or experiencing mental health conditions.</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>Liaise with HUG with regards to review of awareness training.</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>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>Revisit 'message in a bottle' concept initiated by Skye Community Safety partnership.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review processes for accessing BSL interpreter</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>Review call management for deaf community</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>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 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>Take forward a programme of Senior Level awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take forward a programme of Senior Level awareness</li> </ul>

raising as a matter of priority	raising as a matter of priority
<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>• Review joint contract for provision of BSL interpreters and videophones</li></ul>

## **Results of the Highland Wellbeing Alliance's Enquiry into Involving Equality Groups**

Following the preparatory work to aid the creation of our Disability Equality Schemes, the Highland Wellbeing Alliance decided to continue its programme of inquiry into how best to engage with equality groups. The Strategy Group decided to outsource this work and agreed the following aims:

1. Design and implement a process to engage with equalities groups in respect of the draft strategic framework and action plan for equality and diversity. This builds on the work already undertaken in the preparation of Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes.
2. Consult with equalities communities, groups and individuals on their views on
  - the potential benefits and actions required to establish a structure and process for ongoing engagement between equalities communities and WBA partners on equalities issues
  - the strengths and weaknesses of mainstream consultation and engagement processes in relation to the specific needs of equalities groups.
3. Conduct an assessment of the readiness of equalities groups to
  - work together with other equalities groups on common issues and aspirations
  - work with WBA partners to improve services
4. Work with organisations undertaking related work in Highland to maximise the potential for their work to complement the aims of the WBA in respect of engaging with equalities groups.

The findings indicate a great commitment on the part of local equalities groups and the Highland Wellbeing Alliance Equality and Diversity Strategy Group members to work cooperatively together to further common goals in achieving equality for all. However it was recognised that success in this area depends largely on the capacity of some organisations to get involved. It has been suggested by the consultants that it may be helpful for “the WBA to support cohesion and capacity building within the individual strands before attempting to introduce cohesion across strands”.

In addition, the findings propose that the HWA Equality and Diversity sub-group is more likely to attract the interest of groups who have limited available time by working with them on issues and opportunities that connect more explicitly and directly to the priorities that groups have identified for themselves. These recommendations will be considered further within the Force as we update our action plan and continue our ongoing process of involvement.

## **Additional Actions Progressed in 2007**

- While a recommendation for a statutory aggravation in line with Race and Religion has not been agreed by Scottish Parliament, Scottish Forces recognise the considerable emotional impact such crimes have on disabled people's lives and are committed to progress a review of their approach to victims of 'disablist' incidents in line with other strands of diversity. This is reflected in the Diversity Strategy for the Scottish Police Service.
- In recognition of the likelihood that victims are more likely to report incidents to organisations other than the police, an action to take forward third party reporting mechanisms has been progressed in Force by the Community Safety Unit. Funding has been secured for this project and discussions regarding the design and testing of the web system will take place in early 2008.
- Police Systems have been updated to include recording of disablist incidents.
- Information regarding the textphone facility in the Force Operations Room has been circulated to Deaf Action members. A review is underway with regards to other forms of contact e.g. mobile phone texting.
- Contact made with HUG and Advocacy Highland. Opportunities for working together identified.
- Public Awareness event held 5<sup>th</sup> July in Falcon Square in association with HIEF and COPFS.