

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 25 MAY 2004

DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT (1995) POST 16'S ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY FOR COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Members of the Education Committee for the Post 16's Accessibility Strategy for the Community Learning and Development Service.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) which became effective from September 2002, requires local authorities to make reasonable adjustments in relation to the provision of auxiliary aids and adaptations for Post 16 services including Community Learning and Development.
- 2.2** The Act applies to people who are disabled according to the definition of disability in the Disability Discrimination Act (1995), namely: "a disabled person is someone who has a physical or mental impairment, which has an effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities. That effect must be substantial, long term (12 months) and adverse".
- 2.3** At the Education Committee of 11 November 2003, Members received a report informing them of progress made in complying with the requirement set out in the Disability Discrimination Act for Post 16 Education Services. This report indicated that a further report would be submitted to Committee regarding an Accessibility Strategy for the service.

3. COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY

- 3.1** The overall aims of the Accessibility Strategy are to:
- see the person before the disability;
 - breakdown unnecessary barriers and exclusions by promoting informed understanding;
 - responding to those diverse learning needs;
 - overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups;
 - encouraging and developing inclusive practises;
 - respond to the choices expressed by learners;
 - promote equal opportunities to education for all

3.2 In developing the Strategy, consultation took place with recognised disability groups within the East Ayrshire area including East Ayrshire Elderly Forum, Kilmarnock Forum on Disability and East Ayrshire South Forum on Disability. In addition to this questionnaires were sent out to current learners with a disability. In general, feedback was very positive and all organisations had some experience of learning opportunities through the service. Issues requiring further attention included the physical environment and support for people with a sensory impairment.

3.3 There are eight overall themes which will be progressed as part of the Strategy. These are:

- how people currently access the service
- access to the physical environment
- improving communication and the delivery of information
- information and communication technology
- auxiliary aids and services
- enrolment for courses and classes
- centralised support services
- training and development

A copy of the Strategy is available at the Members Library.

4. MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 The Accessibility Strategy will be monitored through routine feedback from service users; the monitoring of the implementation of the Strategy through the Community Learning and Development Service Plan and self evaluation as a tool for continuous improvement.

5. FINANCIAL/PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The implementation of the Strategy will be met within the services existing resources. The Corporate Working Group will continue with it's work regarding access to buildings.

6. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Although there is no specific statutory obligation to produce an Accessibility Strategy for Community Learning and Development, the service had developed one as an integral part of its approach to continuous improvement.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Members of Education Committee are asked to:

- (i) approve the Accessibility Strategy

- (ii) invite the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services to report on progress and;
- (iii) otherwise note the content of the report.

John Mulgrew
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

JM/KG/SR
5 May 2004

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Disability Discrimination Act (1995)
2. Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act (2000)
3. Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001)
4. Education Disability Strategies and Access Pupils Records (Scotland) Act 2002
5. Education Committee: 11 November 2003 Disability Discrimination Act (1995) Post 16's Accessibility Strategy and Action Plan for Community Learning and Development

Members wishing further information should contact Kay Gilmour, Head of Community Support, Tel: (01563) 576104 or Bill Hunter, Acting Principal Officer (Communities), Tel: (01563) 572929.

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: KAY GILMOUR

A copy of the Strategy is available at the Members Information Point.