

The Forestry Commission

Disability Equality Scheme
2009 – 2012

Consultation Paper

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the Forestry Commission's (FC) second Disability Equality Scheme. The first covered the period 2006–2009. Accordingly, the FC's Diversity Team has taken this opportunity to revise and update the content of the Scheme and its Action Plan.

As a result, it is considered that this Scheme helps the FC meet its moral, social and legal obligations by putting equality and diversity at the heart of everything we do, including how we plan and deliver our customer services and treat our staff.

In line with all other public bodies, the FC is governed by the duties and responsibilities of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 which provides the legislative basis for disability equality policies in Great Britain. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005 amended the 1995 Act. This means that we have legal requirements to promote equality in the areas of disability, gender and race. These are generally referred to as the general duties to promote equality and diversity.

To help us meet these general duties, we have specific duties to comply with. This includes the production and publication of either three separate schemes for race, disability and gender or one multiple equality and diversity scheme that covers all three strands of diversity.

The FC has decided that it will continue to produce three separate schemes until it considers that the equality and diversity agenda is robustly embedded and mainstreamed throughout the organisation. However, with regard to Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) the FC will assess across all six equality and diversity themes those being race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation and religion/belief.

Therefore, our Disability Equality Scheme sets out what we will do throughout England, Scotland and Wales to meet the general and specific disability equality duties, extending our remit to include race, gender, age, sexual orientation and religion/belief in respect of the EqIA process.

The Scheme is linked not only to our business and strategic plans but also our Human Resource strategies, reflecting our dual role of being a service provider and employer.

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

The Disability Equality Scheme contains a detailed Action Plan. From this our main priorities for action can be summarised as follows:

- Review existing EqIA guidance in context of user feedback and feedback from Level 4 Diversity Training (EqIA) and make necessary amendments.

- Publish Disability Equality Scheme (DES) annual monitoring report and develop action plan with actions identified via statistical analysis.
- Approach DIAL UK initially with a view to assisting local FC managers in the first steps of building a network of local disability organisations.
- Initiate reviews of existing facilities, including car parking and toilet facilities for customers with a disability and put into production detailed guides.
- Discuss with the web team the potential to widen the use of cctv to bring wildlife encounters closer to people.
- Develop proformas to allow for effective feedback from those customers with a disability who have used our services or been involved in consultations and engagement.
- Forest District teams to start to build their networks of local disability organisations and engage to promote existing services provided and development of new services and recruitment exercises.
- Improve the FC's self declaration system and processes, prior to the implementation of the Two Ticks Scheme once this work is complete and no later than 2011.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME (DES)

This DES has been compiled by the Diversity Team with input and participation from the Diversity Technical Group, wider FC colleagues (including the Internal Staff Equality Forum) and Pearn Kandola, an independent consultancy.

The scope of the document and the potential priorities for action with regard to external services was also discussed with organisations representing the interests of people with disabilities during an initial engagement and involvement exercise. This is described in more detail on pages 13 -19 of the DES.

FORMAT OF THE DES

The Scheme is structured in the following way:

- Foreword by the Forestry Commissioners
- Introduction

- The Forestry Commission's Structure
- Legal Obligations
- Key Elements of the FC's Disability Equality Scheme
- Systems for Mainstreaming Disability Equality
- The Forestry Commission as a Service Provider
- The Forestry Commission as an Employer
- Disability Equality Action Plan
- High Priority Actions
- Appendix 1 – FC functions relevant to the General Duty.

SUMMARY

All of us at the Forestry Commission have a role to play in putting our Disability Equality Scheme into practice. As such, we need our staff, customers and potential customers to let us know their views of what we are doing and how we are doing it.

Your views on our proposals are important to us. Please take some time to consider the contents of our draft revised Scheme and let us know what you think about the areas we have prioritised for action.

We look forward to hearing from you.

CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

Invitation to respond to the Forestry Commission's Disability Equality Scheme.

Please send your views and comments via e-mail, letter or fax to the address below **by 27 November 2009**.

Contact address/numbers:

E-mail: diversity@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Letter: **Diversity Team
Forestry Commission
Silvan House
231 Corstorphine Road
Edinburgh
EH12 7AT**

Fax: **0131 314 6174**

If you have any queries, please contact Val McHale on 0131 314 6575.

You are welcome to comment on all aspects of the proposed Disability Equality Scheme. However, we have provided a series of detailed questions on which we would appreciate your comments, outlined in this consultation document. When you respond it would be helpful if you could indicate clearly the specific questions to which your answers relate. Where possible please provide an explanation and examples to support the comments made.

This consultation can be viewed online [here](#).

Handling your response

We need to know how you wish your response to be handled and, in particular, whether you are happy for your response to be made public. Please complete and return the attached Consultee Response Form as this will ensure that we treat your response appropriately.

If you ask for your response not to be published we will regard it as confidential, and will treat it accordingly.

All respondents should be aware that the Forestry Commission is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act and would therefore have to consider any request made to it under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation exercise.

Next steps in the process

Where respondents have given permission for their response to be made public, these will be made available on the Forestry Commission consultation web pages by end November 2009.

We will check all responses where agreement to publish has been given for any potentially defamatory material before placing them on the website.

What happens next?

Following the closing date, all responses will be analysed and considered along with any other available evidence to revise as appropriate the proposed Disability Equality Scheme.

If you have any comments about how this consultation exercise has been conducted, please send them to the address above.

Responses should reach us by no later than 27 November 2009. Earlier responses would be most welcome.

CONSULTEE RESPONSE FORM

**RESPONSE FORM FOR THE CONSULTATION PAPER ON THE
FORESTRY COMMISSION'S REVISED DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME**

RESPONDENT DETAILS:

Name:

Organisation:

Address:

Telephone/Fax/E-mail:

PLEASE RESPOND BY 27 NOVEMBER 2009, TO:

Name: Diversity Team

Organisation: Forestry Commission

Address: Silvan House, 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh, EH12 7AT

E-mail: diversity@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Fax: 0131 314 6174

**Please tick this box if you are requesting non-disclosure of your
response**

1. The following areas have been prioritised for action:

- **Review existing EqIA guidance in context of user feedback and feedback from Level 4 Diversity Training (EqIA) and make necessary amendments.**
- **Publish Disability Equality Scheme (DES) annual monitoring report and develop action plan with actions identified via statistical analysis.**
- **Approach DIAL UK initially with a view to assisting local FC managers in the first steps of building a network of local disability organisations.**
- **Initiate reviews of existing facilities, including car parking and toilet facilities for customers with a disability and put into production detailed guides.**
- **Discuss with the web team the potential to widen the use of cctv to bring wildlife encounters closer to people.**
- **Develop proformas to allow for effective feedback from those customers with a disability who have used our services or been involved in consultations and engagement.**
- **Forest District teams to start to build their networks of local disability organisations and engage to promote existing services provided and development of new services and recruitment exercises.**
- **Improve the FC's self declaration system and processes, prior to the implementation of the Two Ticks Scheme once this work is complete and no later than 2011.**

As a member of staff, stakeholder or customer of the Forestry Commission what are your thoughts, considerations or suggestions on these areas?

2. Do you think these are the correct areas to be focussing on?

Comments:

3. Would you prefer us to focus on other areas, and if so, what are these?

Comments:

4. Do you have any suggestions on when, where and how you would like to see us tackle our suggested areas of priority or your alternative areas of priority?

Comments:

5. Do you have any other considerations you would like us to look into?

Comments:

LIST OF CONSULTEES

Consultation List for the Forestry Commission Disability Equality Scheme
Action for Blind People
Arboricultural Association
Arts Council England
Associa Employment
Association for Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus
Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland
Association of National Park Authorities
Association of Sign Language Interpreters
Bangor University
British Council of Disabled People
British Deaf Association
British Deer Society
British Ecological Society
British Geological Survey
British Heart Foundation
British Horse Society
British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
British Trust for Ornithology
British Waterways
Business in the Community
Business Link in London
Campaign to Protect Rural England
Cam Sight
Canine Partners
Capability Scotland
Cardiff and Vale Coalition of Deaf People
Carers Scotland
Carers UK
Carers Wales
Celf O Gwmpas (arts experience for adults with learning disability)
Centre for Alternative Technology
Certified Network Professional Programme (Network Information Technology)
Children's Rights Alliance for England
Coedcymru – Woodland Management Charity Wales
Commission for Rural Communities
Communities and Local Government
Communities First Information Centre (Wales)
Communities Scotland
Community Service Volunteers
Community Woodland Association
Confederation of Forest Industries (UK) Ltd
Consumer Focus
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
Crofters Commission

Cycling Scotland
David Bower (individual)
Deaf Action
DeafBlind Scotland
Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform
Department for Children, Schools and Families
Department for Culture
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Department of Health
Derby City Council
Dial UK (national organisation for a network of 140 local disability information and advice services run by and for disabled people)
Disability Wales
Enable
English Forestries Industries Partnership
English Heritage
Environment Agency
Equality and Human Rights Commission
Equality Network
Farming and Countryside Education
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
Field Studies Council
Fieldfare Trust (Promoting Countryside Access for Disabled People)
Forest Stewardship Council
Forum for the Future (Sustainable Development Leading Think Tank)
Friends of the Earth
Friends of the Earth Scotland
Government Equalities Office
Green Alliance
Green Space (Charity to improve parks and green spaces)
Groundwork (building sustainable communities in areas of need)
Guide Dogs for the blind association
Health and Safety Executive
Highways Agency
Home Builders Federation
Homes for Scotland
Inclusion Scotland
Institute for Outdoor Learning
Institute of Chartered Foresters
Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment
John Muir Trust
Joint Nature Conservation Committee
Journeys (toward recovery from depression)
Land Restoration Trust
Landmarks (provider of non-residential education for people with special needs)
Learning and Skills Council
Linking Environment and Farming UK

Liverpool City Council
Local Government Association
Mencap (Voice of Learning Difficulties)
Mental Health Foundation
Mind (National association for mental health)
Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland
Mountaineering Scotland
National Alliance of Governing and Representative Bodies of Sport and Recreation
National Children's Bureau
National Council for Voluntary Organisations
National Youth Agency
Natural England
NHS Health Scotland
North Flathead Yacht Club
NTS.org (Online search company in partnership with Active Audience)
Open Spaces Society
Paths for All Partnership
People First (for people with learning disabilities)
Planning Inspectorate, Wales
Plantlife International (The Wildplant Conservation Society)
Play Scotland
RADAR (the disability network)
Ramblers
Redwood Health Service
Remploy (Employment Services to people with disability and barriers to work)
Ridgeway Partnership
Roughriderz (Four wheel mountain bike club)
Royal Association for Deaf People
Royal College of Speech Language Therapists
Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland
Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors
Royal London Society for the Blind
Royal National Institute for Deaf People
Royal National Institute of Blind People
Royal Scottish Forestry Society
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Royal Town Planning Institute
Rural Development Initiatives
SAMH (Scotland's leading mental health charity)
SASLI (Scottish Body for training and qualifying British Sign Language Interpreters)
Scope (Disability Organisation in England and Wales whose focus is people with cerebral palsy.
Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs
Scottish Athletics
Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability (SCLD)
Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations
Scottish Council on Deafness (SCOD)

Scottish Crofting Foundation
Scottish Disability Equality Forum
Scottish Environment Link
Scottish Federation of Housing Associations
Scottish Government
Scottish Government (Central Enquiry Unit)
Scottish National Heritage
Scottish Orienteering
Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society
Scottish Tourism Forum
Scottish Wildlife Trust
Scottish Youth Hostels Association
Sector Skills Council for Active Leisure and Learning
Sector Skills Council for Environment and Land Based Industries (LANTRA)
Sense (For deafblind people)
Sense Scotland
Sensory Trust
Sheffield Hallam University
Signature (Charity promoting excellence in communication with deaf people)
Small Farms Association
Small Woods Association
Speaking Up
Sport England
Sport Scotland
Sustainable Development Commission
Sustrans (Sustainable Transport Charity)
The Association of National Parks Authorities
The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
The Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
The Countryside Alliance
The Countryside Foundation for Education
The Crown Estate
The Disabilities Trust
The National Forest
The National Trust
The Royal Forestry Society
The Royal Parks
The Runnymede Trust
The Stroke Association
The Timber Research and Development Association
The Tree Council
The UK's National Cyclists Association
The University of Nottingham
Timber Trade Federation
Town and Country Planning Association
UK Athletics
UK Council on Deafness

United Kingdom Forest Products Industry
University of Wales, Newport
Update (Scotland's National Disability Information Service)
UPM Tihill (UK's leading forestry and timber company)
Values into Action (Learning Difficulties)
Visit Britain
Visit Scotland
Visit Wales
Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire
Volunteering England
Wales Council for the Deaf
Wales Council for Voluntary Action
Welsh Assembly
Welsh Local Government Association
Whizz Kidz
Wildlife and Countryside Link
Wildlife Trust
Woodland Trust
World Wildlife Fund
Youth Hostels Association
Internal Consultees:
Forestry Commissioners
Executive Board
Human Resources Service Board
Diversity Technical Group
Human Resources Management Board
Staff Equality Forum
Social Policy Advisers
Forest Research Agency Social Research Team
Forestry Trade Unions Team
Diversity Team
All staff (via internal newsletter)