



## **THE FORESTRY COMMISSION'S DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME**

This is the Forestry Commission's first Disability Equality Scheme. It intends to build on the many local initiatives we are already taking to involve people with disabilities in the planning of recreation and access to our forests.

We welcome feedback on this document on an ongoing basis. Comments can be sent to the:

Diversity Manager (c/o Martin Muggridge)  
Human Resources  
Forestry Commission  
Silvan House  
231 Corstorphine Road  
Edinburgh  
EH12 7AT

Alternatively, comments and suggestions for improving local delivery in Commission forests and woodlands can be made to any of our Directors or Chief Executives, or our local managers, who are responsible for operational issues in their respective areas.

Contact details for our senior and local managers are available on our Internet site under each Country area.

**NOVEMBER 2006**

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## **The Disability General Duty**

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The Disability Discrimination Act, as amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, places a general duty on public authorities to promote disability equality. This means that the Commission must, in carrying out its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
- Eliminate discrimination unlawful under the DDA;
- Eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability;
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life;
- Take steps to meet the needs of people with disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably.

The duty applies to all the functions of public authorities, including:

- Employment and management of people;
- Policy development and research;
- Regulation;
- Procurement and Project Management;
- Providing services to the public and exercising public functions.

## **The Specific Duties**

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The 'specific duties' that are set out in the statute are intended to assist public authorities in meeting the General Duty. These include the requirements that:

- a public authority should publish a Disability Equality Scheme demonstrating how it intends to fulfil its general and specific duties;
- the authority should involve disabled people in the development of the Scheme;
- the Scheme should include a statement of:
  - how disabled people have been involved in developing the Scheme;
  - steps which the authority will take towards fulfilling its general duty (the "Action Plan");

- arrangements for gathering information about the authority's performance on disability equality;
  - arrangements for assessing the impact of activities on disability equality and improving these where necessary;
  - how the authority is going to use the information gathered, in particular in reviewing the effectiveness of its Action Plan and preparing subsequent Schemes.
- the authority must, within three years of the Scheme being published, take the steps set out in its action plan (unless it is unreasonable or impracticable for it to do so) and put into effect the arrangements for gathering and making use of information.
  - the authority must publish a report containing a summary of the steps taken under the action plan, the results of its information gathering and the use to which it has put the information.

## **The Aims and Organisation of the Forestry Commission**

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The Forestry Commission is the Government Department responsible for forestry policy and service delivery, directly and through partnerships, to a huge customer-base throughout Great Britain. We also have some regulatory responsibilities. We report directly to Forestry Ministers to whom we are responsible for advice on forestry policy and for the implementation of that policy.

We manage just over 1 million hectares of publicly owned forests and woodlands throughout Great Britain for many benefits, including timber production, recreation and open access.

Forestry is a devolved matter: the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has responsibility for forestry in England, Scottish Ministers have responsibility for forestry in Scotland and the National Assembly for Wales has responsibility for forestry in Wales. Each of the countries has its own strategy and mission, and delivers the forestry policy of each country through specific objectives drawn from the country strategies.

Each country is led by a Director, who is also a member of the GB Board of Commissioners. This Board has duties and powers prescribed by statute, consisting of a Chairman and up to ten other Forestry Commissioners, including its Director General, who are appointed by the Queen on the recommendation of Ministers.

Forest Research is the Commission's GB-wide executive agency, which aims to deliver high-quality scientific research and surveys, to inform the development of forestry policies and practices, and promote high standards of sustainable forest management.

We directly employ around 3,300 people throughout Great Britain, engaged in a wide range of front line work and support roles.

Through its powers and duties set out in the various Acts, the objective of the Forestry Commission for its Great Britain activities, is:

***'the sustainable management of our existing woods and forests, and a steady expansion of tree cover to increase the many, diverse benefits that forests provide to meet the needs of present and future generations.'***

The Forestry Commission's values are:

- Respect
- Professionalism
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Learning
- Creativity

### **Management of the Publicly Owned Forest Estate**

Our public forests, woodlands and other land in England, Scotland and Wales are managed by Forest Enterprise executive agencies in Scotland and England (led by a Chief Executive), and by FC Wales, as part of the Forestry Commission in each country.

### **Forestry: Sustainable Development and Social Benefits**

Climate Change is already happening and, through 'locking in' carbon and release of oxygen, forestry has a critical role to play in helping to halt the destruction of natural resources and pollution of the planet.

Sustainable forestry management is therefore a key component of wider sustainable development in many areas of the world and, in the UK, the requirements for this are set out in the UK Forestry Standard. The Forestry Commission has a central role in GB in leading and delivering in this area,

both in its own estate and in those in the private sector, for example by providing grants for implementation of specific woodland management objectives.

Forestry can bring a significant contribution in the wider social agenda. When publicly funded, woodlands must benefit people too. Woodlands offer an inexpensive way for people to become more active and to improve local environments in urban areas. Access and recreation within forests and woodlands, therefore, is a key activity for the Commission and increasingly complements the Government's desire to improve the health of the nation.

The social agenda for Forestry means that we are working with people and communities at local level and encouraging their involvement in the design and management of woodlands.

We also provide many opportunities for schools to engage children in their natural woodland environment and to develop an awareness of environmental issues. Many of our woodlands have 'Forest Classrooms'.

We are also increasingly contributing to the Government's rural development and regeneration policies.

## **Current Approaches on Equality for People with Disabilities**

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### **Our Employees**

As an employer we are committed to equality of opportunity and to creating a more diverse workforce. We currently have a range of policies in place that specifically benefit disabled employees and other employees with long term illness:

- We use occupational health professionals' advice to make reasonable adjustments when needed.
- Rehabilitation policies include allowing a spell of part time work for people who have been on long term sickness absence, as a means to supporting their return to work.
- We apply a 'fast track' management process for any sickness absence involving mental ill-health. This includes contact with the employee and early occupational health referral. The aim is to help prevent the onset of a chronic condition (possibly leading to a longer-term disability) that prevents a return to work.

- Recruitment application processes are accessible to disabled candidates and we operate a guaranteed interview policy.
- We 'equality-monitor' our recruitment competitions.
- Our open 'internal job market' means that any suitable employee can apply for transfer or promotion to another role.
- We obtain, monitor and analyse information on disabled staff.
- Auditory and other health checks are routinely provided where appropriate to the job in order to pick up early potential problems and prevent long term harm.

### **Involvement of Disabled People in our Public Functions**

To be successful, the Commission recognises the importance of, and has been working for some years towards greater community and public engagement in many aspects of its work. Indeed, we could not successfully deliver the many facilities and the range of recreation that we do without direct support and advice from community groups, partners, volunteers and the public.

The Commission, in tangible ways, is already seeking to deliver improved access on the ground by involving disabled people in the improvement of our facilities, which we plan to build on. For example:

- New Guidance was produced in 2004 for our English Woodland Managers to help make leisure and education services as accessible as possible. Working with disabled people locally is the main way to raise awareness of what we have to offer and to help managers better meet the needs of disabled visitors. We need to improve the monitoring of this involvement in future.
- The Commission provides grants to woodland owners and community groups to improve public access to woodlands. New research will be carried out to help assess the impact of the grant schemes on access for disabled people.
- Public Consultation on Issues Facing Disabled People at Jeskyns Farm near Gravesend (purchased by the FC for development into an area of community green space) was carried out. This enabled a number of practical solutions to be identified, which were taken into account in the design process.

- Special provision for people with disabilities is made at many of our forest locations. In many cases, we now regularly seek the help of people with disabilities to ‘road test’ new facilities, such as woodland trails in order to improve them. For example, involvement has included:
  - We used a DDA ‘Auditor’ who is a wheelchair user to assess our ‘all ability’ trails at Haldon. This resulted in changes to the design of parts of the trail.
  - We have built on our experiences in working with the Calvert Trust at Wistlandpound, which provides activity holidays for disabled and disadvantaged people.
  - At Penninham Pond and Whitefield Loch we set up a partnership to manage the resources and set up ‘all ability’ trails suitable for use by people with the full range of physical and sensory disability. The main project partners included Dumfries and Galloway Association for the Blind, Dumfries and Galloway Centre for Independent Living and the Wigtownshire Coalition for Disabled People.
  - We have been working with Highland Disabled Ramblers to test existing paths and new path developments.
  - Involvement of disabled people in the development of Visitor Centres at Nant y Arian and Coed y Brenin in Wales.
- We are currently contributing to a 3-year research project by Natural England testing methods for encouraging more people to visit the countryside. Physical access and problems encountered by people with disabilities, form part of this review. This research work is supporting DEFRA’s Diversity Review, which is a major piece of work that directly responds to the requirements of the diversity legislation. The Diversity Action plan commissioned by DEFRA is in response to Government concerns about the lack of diversity of people using the countryside for recreation. The research work we are supporting is aimed at enabling the under-represented groups identified to take advantage of outdoor recreational facilities.

## **Development of Contacts**

We have well-established links with a wide range of organisations, stakeholders and partners in the areas of access, recreation and community involvement. However, we acknowledge that we need to improve our network of contacts on disability issues. The **research projects** described later in the document seek to significantly improve our capability in this area.

## **Policy Development and Business Planning**

Each of our Country management teams work towards delivering a Country based Forestry Strategy, developed with Government Ministers.

We recognise the need to better capture and reflect the Equality Scheme requirements in policy and business planning, though we assess that actual work on the ground to engage and involve disabled people is developing quickly in practice. This is in large part due to the devolved nature of our organisation, which enables local managers to take the lead on initiating local developments and contacts and building partnerships with other organisations.

## PART 2: THE DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME

### Introduction

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Our structure allows the Forestry Commission to focus more clearly on delivering the policies of the individual administrations while still having the ability to take a GB-wide approach to "cross-border" issues. Our Disability Equality Scheme therefore aims to build on existing processes and activities and be flexible enough to respond to different policy priorities set by the English Ministers, Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly.

The Forestry Commission recognises that for the implementation and delivery of its Disability Equality Scheme to be a success there must be clear leadership and accountability. To that end the Forestry Commission has appointed a Lead Official who has overall responsibility for reporting on the actions taken by the Commission in its Disability Equality Scheme. That official is the **Director Human Resources**.

However, it is clear that managers at all levels will be required to be involved in the delivery of our **Action Plan**, which places specific responsibilities on key managers in operational and policy areas. Each **Country Director, Service Director and Chief Executive** will therefore have responsibility for ensuring that appropriate managers take action to meet the requirements of the scheme and our action plan.

The development of new strategies for delivery and policies is the responsibility of the Forestry Commissioners and the Executive Board. As mentioned earlier in this document, much of the work of the Forestry Commission has an impact on members of the public, since the Government's policy is to maximise the social and economic benefits of forestry and access to woodlands.

The Forestry Commission is, therefore, committed to improving our record on making disability equality a core element of the development of new plans for areas such as recreation, access and community engagement, which are of particular relevance to disabled people in the community.

All our managers at the operational front line will have responsibility for implementing the equality duty in their dealings with customers, partners and each other. From April 2007, all our **Senior Managers** will include action on and support for diversity and equality issues in their personal objectives, with outcomes required to be reported within their personal performance reports.

Our Disability Equality Scheme will be brought to the attention of our employees and included within training programmes, so that the requirements become a core part of the Forestry Commission's way of working.

## **Involvement of Disabled People in the Development of the Scheme**

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Our Trade Unions and some employees with disabilities were invited to contribute ideas for the Action Plan and comment on the effectiveness of what we do.

As detailed in this document we have commissioned 3 new research projects, which are due to be finished during 2007-08. We see the development of our Scheme as an ongoing process and this new research will form a main plank of our efforts to involve people with disabilities in evaluating our performance and identifying actions that will enable us to improve.

## **Initial Assessment of Functions and Policies**

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We have carried out an initial assessment of our core functions and policies to determine their potential impact, or potential differential impact, on disabled people for their relevance. Our Executive Board and Trade Unions were asked to review the assessment.

The assessments are shown in **Appendix 1**.

Those deemed to have the greatest impact will undergo a fuller assessment as a priority. Medium impact functions will be assessed in years 2 and 3 of the Disability Equality Scheme.

## **Action Plan**

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The steps that the Commission plans to take towards fulfilling the general duty in the next 3 years are shown at **Appendix 2**.

## **Access to Information and Services**

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Under this requirement those public authorities which are subject to the requirements of a Disability Equality Scheme are obliged to set out their arrangements for ensuring that the general public have access to information and services.

We already publish a great deal of information locally and on our Internet site at [www.forestry.gov.uk](http://www.forestry.gov.uk)

We will also:

- Identify the information services being provided, and which of them need to be supported by accessible information systems, geared to the needs of disability groups;
- Determine whether any of the information needs identified should be provided in other formats;
- Consider whether the information is available at the right time and in the right place;
- Provide for consultation with communities on the services they need and on how they would like them to be provided.

## **Impact Assessment**

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The purpose of impact assessment is to identify and act on the need to modify policies and practices to have better regard to the need to promote disability equality. Those with highest relevance to disability equality will be given priority for assessment and action.

We already know that most of our recreation and access policies and facilities on the ground will have an impact on disabled people in the extent to which proper provision is made.

Local managers will be required to assess the impact of new development plans and consider how best to include disabled people in the planning process.

In doing so they will:

- Seek appropriate advice that enables the Commission to identify the barriers faced by disabled people;
- Identify influential stakeholders from the wider community as well as employees, customers and potential service users;
- Set priorities for action plans;
- Identify ways in which disabled people can assist in planning and evaluation activities and surveys;
- Monitor and evaluate the success of initiatives undertaken.

Assessment will also involve, for example, the use of historical data; existing or new survey/feedback arrangements, population data (including census findings); or specially

commissioned research. We have many established stakeholder consultation networks, which we will also use for assessment purposes.

For example, we already carry out many surveys locally on our recreation services and these are publicly available at <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/statistics>. These help us to evaluate our performance. However, we recognise that the quality of our monitoring is not sufficiently detailed or systematic enough for the purposes of the Scheme. This will need to be improved to meet the needs of equality monitoring.

Local management units will be required to capture the actions they are taking locally and any resulting improvements and to report to their Chief Executives annually.

Employee management policies will be assessed for potential impact by the lead HR Manager and Diversity Manager. Employee Surveys are already carried out but will be tailored to provide adequate information from disabled employees, in order to assess the impact of our people management policies.

Our corporate communications and information services will be similarly assessed, since their effectiveness is of high relevance to this scheme.

### **Gathering and Using Information for Improvement**

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In addition to the measures taken by local staff to involve disabled people in the planning of local provision of recreation and access, the following will assist the Commission to continuously improve:

- Employee surveys, which are normally undertaken every two years;
- Forest/Customer Surveys;
- Feedback from staff and unions via Staff Councils and complaints;
- Commissioning new research;
- Improved employee data developed by HR.

Reviewing and using the results will be the responsibility of the appropriate manager. Monitoring and review will include:

- Levels of participation- under, or over-representation of people with disabilities, including analysis by different impairment categories;
- Levels of satisfaction, that is whether or not all disability groups receive an equally good service;

- Relevance- whether the service or policy actually addresses the real needs of disability groups; and
- Appropriateness- that is, whether the service meets needs and is delivered in a way that is sensitive and respectful.

If this monitoring identifies that a policy or service has, or is likely to have, an adverse impact on those with disabilities, those responsible for that policy or service will need to consider how best to take action on the differential, or potentially differential, impact.

### **Publishing Monitoring and Evaluation Data**

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The Forestry Commission already publishes monitoring data in its Departmental Annual Reports and we will use our Internet and internal Intranet to publish appropriate news releases and in-house notices (for employees) whenever appropriate. Surveys and statistics are published on our Internet site.

The level and nature of publication of results will be proportionate to the exercise undertaken and the scale of what is being reported on. For example, if the subject of a consultation exercise is wide-ranging, for example, a departmental annual report may be appropriate.

In the case of assessments, an explanation of the criteria and review procedures will be given.

The Commission will publish a report containing a summary of the steps taken under the action plan, the results of information gathering and the use to which it is has put the information. We plan to report annually.

### **Data on Employment**

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Data on many aspects of our workforce is already analysed in many ways, including disability, age and gender. The types of information available include sickness absence, time in job, salary, type of contract, educational and professional qualifications, performance-related bonuses.

We are currently introducing a new self-service e-HR, which will enable employees to check/update many of their personal details.

However, some new mechanisms for gathering evidence on the Commission's performance in relation to disability equality will need to be put in place, as follows:

- Establishing accurate employment data is hampered by the fact that disability figures for employees are based on self-declarations. We currently have a self-declaration rate of only 2.4% of employees. We believe that there is a significant level of under-declaration and we need to work on this by gaining an understanding of how best we can capture accurate information from our staff. Reassurance on confidentiality will be key, but has so far not produced results. We plan to review the way we collect this information, in particular to determine whether use of the e-HR self service facility could bring better results.
- Data collection on recruitment and termination is good but data on retention and training/development of disabled employees needs improvement. We currently have no accurate data on performance pay in relation to disabled employees, because of the difficulties in encouraging self-declaration.
- The information HR already holds on all formal grievance and discipline issues has not established any statistically significant differences in treatment of people with disabilities.
- We will conduct research into barriers that may exist to the development and progression of disabled employees and, if necessary, make changes to our internal job selection policy. Promotion data collection is currently hampered by the lack of accurate data on employees' disabilities.
- We will continue to seek feedback from disabled employees in the form of opinion surveys and work with our Trade Unions to identify and establish better ways of involving disabled people in the development and review of our people management practices;
- We will consult our people through disability support networks, trade unions etc on disability policies;
- We will audit regularly Forestry Commission employment policies against the DRC Standard disability equality for employers and take action to address areas of weakness shown to exist; and
- We will publish the results of employee disability monitoring.

## The Delivery of Public Functions: Reporting and Research

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The main public function that the Commission provides is access to its land and other recreational facilities, including visitor centres, trails for walking, horse riding and mountain biking, and many innovative local developments that are often achieved in partnership with local people and community groups.

As noted earlier, we already involve people with disabilities in planning and testing many of these facilities. However, a lack of hard data exists that would enable us to quantify and assess the level of participation and the effectiveness of this.

For this reason, each local Forest District will be asked to report annually to their Chief Executive on the extent to which they have involved people with disabilities in the provision and development of access/recreation facilities. Each Country will then provide a report summarising the results. Composite results and conclusions will be presented to the Commission's Executive Board.

Evidence suggests that disabled people do not participate in countryside recreation as frequently as able-bodied people. Under-representation may be the result of informed choice. It may also, however, be the result of a lack of availability, accessibility, and awareness of countryside recreation services and facilities.

In order to improve our understanding of this, our Forest Research Agency's Social Research Unit has commissioned 3 research studies, which are due to be completed during 2007. These will be on different aspects of enhancing and assessing the extent of Equal Access for Disabled People to Recreation, Goods, Facilities and Services in our Woodlands. The research is potentially significant and therefore forms part of our Action Plan, shown at Appendix 2.

The research will:

- Assess the duties placed on the forest sector to provide equal access for disabled people by the 1995 and 2005 Disability Discrimination Acts and relevant government policies.
- Record current knowledge and skills of forest recreation staff for promoting disabled access.
- Identify the need for any training or other activities that would raise awareness and capabilities of forest recreation managers to promote equal accessibility to recreation goods, facilities and services.

- Collate management guidance, tools and case studies of best practice in disabled provisions especially in the forest/countryside recreation sector. Develop new case studies of good practice, particularly in the forest sector. Provide recommendations for the development of new guidance, tools and case studies.
- Identify and describe existing digests of contacts of groups of disabled people and groups/organisations representing disabled people.
- Using the findings from the above tasks, develop training materials and, in collaboration with Forestry Commission Training Services, pilot disabled accessibility training events for forest managers.
- Develop a methodology for evaluating recreation/access strands of land management grant schemes, as they affect people with disabilities.

Although two of the research projects will be focussed on Scotland, the work will seek to maximise opportunities for continuity and shared learning across the forestry sector, both public and private across GB. In particular, there will be an emphasis on making the work useful for forest managers in the public, private, community and NGO spheres.

A third research project will explore disabled peoples' perceptions of forest recreation and is due to be completed by early 2008. Its scope will be GB wide.

We anticipate that this research will contribute important findings and recommendations for the future and will be highly relevant to our ability to deliver in real and tangible ways for disabled people.

### **Grants to Private Woodland Owners**

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One of the Commission's roles is to provide grants to outside bodies, such as private woodland owners and to those within the voluntary sector. In giving these grants the Forestry Commission will comply with the general duty of the Act. However, as noted above, we are undertaking new research which will aim to assess the contribution of forestry grants to equal access for disabled people to recreation, goods and services in privately owned woodlands.

## Partnerships and Procurement

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The Forestry Commission will require its partners and those contracted to provide services and functions to or on behalf of the Forestry Commission to work within the standards set by the Act.

The Action Plan requires specific review by our Procurement Manager of current approaches and contractual requirements.

## Training of Employees on the Scheme

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This is a key area of our Action Plan. We want to improve our equality training to ensure that it is 'embedded' in relevant management and recreation development training. The research described above will assist us in improving the training of recreation managers.

We are redesigning our in-house Social Forestry and Engaging People in Forestry training courses and updating our Intranet web-site to recognise the objectives and impact of our DES.

## Review of the Equality Scheme

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Evidence gathered in relation to the "Action Plan in **Appendix 2** will be used as the baseline to develop a structured monitoring system and timetable for actions on an ongoing basis.

We will review progress on the Action Plan every 12 months and carry out a full evaluation of the scheme in 3 years' time to help draw up a new action plan.

## Complaints in Relation to Compliance with the Act

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The overall responsibility for implementation of the scheme within the Forestry Commission rests with the Director General. However, it is considered important that suitable procedures are put in place to consider such complaints or concerns.

Complaints about the Forestry Commission's compliance with the legislation will be considered by the **Director of Human Resources**, with recommendations to the Director General or Country Director for action, where appropriate to the nature of the complaint.

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) has the power to enforce the specific duties imposed on listed public authorities and can serve a "compliance notice". This will require the authority to comply with its specific duties, and to inform the DRC, within 28 days, of the measures it has taken.

The DRC can also require the authority to provide written information verifying compliance. If, after three months, the authority has not complied with the notice, then the DRC can ask a county court or sheriff court (in Scotland) to order the authority to comply.

Individuals do not have the right to take legal action against a public authority, which has not fulfilled its specific duties. It is open to individuals, community organisations, trade unions and others to notify the DRC if they are concerned that a public authority has failed to comply with its specific duties.

However, the Forestry Commission hopes that if there are concerns about our compliance with specific duties, then, in the first instance, these concerns would be raised with the Forestry Commission itself (via the contact points on page 1).

**FORESTRY COMMISSION**  
**NOVEMBER 2006**

## Meeting the General Duty

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### Functions relevant to the General Duty

FC England, Wales and Scotland each have their own forestry strategy. The following represents a composite initial impact assessment of the main strands/themes of their strategies.

The 'headline' functions of the FC, across GB, are:

- Sustainable Management of our existing Woods and Forests.
- A continued expansion of our Woodland Area to provide more benefits for society and our environment.

Function or Policy	Relevance to DES	Level of Priority
<b>Programme or Policy</b>	<b>Degree of Relevance</b>	<b>High</b>
	<b>0= None</b>	<b>Medium</b>
	<b>1= a little</b>	<b>Low</b>
	<b>2= some</b>	
	<b>3= high</b>	
<b>Operations</b>		
Support Strategic Development of Woodland Resources	1	Low
New Planting and Community Planting	2	Low
Forest Protection and Maintenance	0	Low
Promotion of best practice in woodland management	2	Medium
Promote environmental improvements e.g. along transport corridors	1	Low
Countryside Rights of Way	3	High
Conservation	2	Medium
Development and expansion of Woodland Park/Community Forests	3	High
Contribute to landscape, soil, water quality	1	Low

Help to protect and enhance bio-diversity through better management frameworks and design and provision of best practice guidance	0	Low
Protection of Cultural Heritage	1	Low
Managing Habitats on FC Land	1	Low
Managing Species on FC land	0	Low
Timber Customer Services	1	Medium
Sale of Surplus Assets	0	Low
Forest Planning and Management	2	Low
Managing Non Forestry Assets	2	Medium

### Forestry for Economic Regeneration and Growth

Promote Forestry for Economic Re-generation e.g. former industrial sites	2	Medium
Forestry for Rural Development, including support for farm woodlands and the wider rural economy Regional Programmes	2	Medium
Develop a more efficient wood supply chain, including marketing and supporting businesses	0	Low
Promote wood use	0	Low
Encourage diversification (wood-fuel and short rotation coppice)	0	Low
Support woodfuel and bio-energy markets , forest and non-timber forest products or industries	1	Low

### Forestry for Access, Recreation and Tourism

Increase Access to Woodlands	3	High
Facilities Visitor Monitoring	3	High
Building on FC Walkers Welcome package to improve information on access	3	High

Develop FC's Woodland Park/Community network close to towns and cities	3	High
Improve recreational and other facilities through private-sector partnerships	3	High
Engage with the public to promote the benefits of trees, woods and forests	3	High
Promotion of Forest Tracks for cycling	2	Medium
Support research into economic contribution of forests to tourism, and potential of forest based tourism to benefit local communities	2	Medium
Promote and Develop forest tourism as part of sustainable rural development	2	Medium
Increase the contribution of forestry to local tourism by e.g. working with local businesses	3	High
Improve delivery of visitor's needs through research and training	3	High

### **Working with Communities**

Support Urban and Rural Development e.g. by improving links with community groups and local people	3	High
Enhance opportunities for health and enjoyment, through access and recreation via partnership working and liaison with primary health sectors	3	High
Maintain and enhance engagement with community groups in the development and management of forests close to where they live	2	Medium
Work with partners to maximise value of woods for local communities	2	Medium
Support the Forest Education Initiatives to promote woodlands as an educational resource by developing and improving networks of local groups and with education sector	3	High

## Management of our People

Recruitment, Selection Procedures		
Absence and Performance Management,	3	High
Pay and Conditions	3	High
Employee Assistance services	2	Medium
Employee Management Policies and processes, including job evaluation, flexible working.	3	High
Pensions and Retirement	2-3	Medium to High
Provision of Training and Development	2	Medium
Development of Management Development Programmes	3	High
Delivery of HR Services	2	Medium

## Other Internal services

Health and Safety Risk Assessment and Management	2	High
Building and Office Management	3	High
Information Technology:	2	Medium
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Front line support</li><li>• Developing new business systems</li></ul>		
Internal and external Communications Strategy and Internet/intranet	3	High
Plant Health Regulation	0	Low
Grants and Licences	2	Medium

Research and Development	2	Medium
Governance, International/EU relations and FC Board Support	1	Low
Economics and Statistics	2	Medium
Operations and Estate Support Services	1	Low
Internal Audit	1	Low
Finance and Accounting Services	0	Low

<b>Procurement</b>	<b>All activities</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Relationships with suppliers	2-3	Medium
Contract and procurement management/guidance	3	High

## Action Plan

Activity	Action to be taken	Responsible People	Target Completion Date
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## Action Plan for December 2006-December 2009

Disability Equality  
Scheme Review

Conduct impact assessments for areas of work identified with DE relevance factor of '3' (Annex 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant Business Managers</li> </ul>	Ongoing during 2007
Review local monitoring, assessment and reporting arrangements for involvement of/consultation with disabled people in FC activities and planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity Manager</li> <li>• Business Managers</li> <li>• Local managers</li> </ul>	May 2007
Ensure that managers are carrying out evaluation and reporting requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Managers and Diversity Manager</li> </ul>	Ongoing
Review progress on action taken in areas identified as relevant to the Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directors</li> <li>• Chief Executives</li> <li>• HR Business Partners</li> <li>• Diversity Manager</li> </ul>	Quarterly/ Annually

Publish results of information gathering on progress and use to which information has been put.

- Diversity Manager with Directors

Annually

**Policy Development and Business Planning**

Establish ways in which the DES requirements can be fulfilled in the development of new, relevant policies.

- Senior Managers
- HR Business Partners
- Forestry Policy Managers
- Policy Managers

August 2007

Consider and establish ways in which the DES actions can be 'captured' in the preparation of and reporting on Business Plans

- Senior Managers
- HR Business Partners
- Country/Agency Finance Directors

May 2007

**Access to Information and Communication Methods**

Research current communication tools and capability to recognise needs of disability groups to identify whether there is a need to present information in other formats for the public and employees. Produce guidance where needed.

- Head of Corporate and Forestry Support with Communications Branch
- Communications Managers
- Diversity Manager

October 2007

Publish summary results of research /monitoring on review of communications at local and GB level.

- Communications Managers
- Head of Corporate and Forestry Support

January 2008

**Community  
Engagement, Forestry  
Grants and  
Recreation/  
Access Developments**

Identify relevant stakeholders and devise methods of involvement and consultation. Share best practices across Countries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FDMs/Conservators</li> <li>• Relevant Policy Managers</li> <li>• Recreation/Access/Community Forest Managers</li> </ul>	Ongoing
Assess local plans for new developments and set in place ways for involvement of disabled people in relevant schemes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local managers</li> <li>• Advice from Diversity Manager</li> </ul>	Ongoing
Implement and monitor involvement of local people in decision making for local woodlands or new projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chief Executives, as delegated to local and /or operational managers</li> <li>• Advice from Diversity Manager</li> </ul>	Managers to report annually to CEs
Publish results of monitoring of local involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chief Executives, as reported by Local Managers</li> </ul>	Annually

**New Research  
Projects on Disability**

Manage the following three research projects:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FC Social Research team</li> </ul>	Reports to be completed by researchers July 2007- February 2008.
1. <i>'Assessing the Contribution of Forestry Grants to Equal Access for</i>		

*Disabled People to Recreation Goods, Facilities and Services in Scottish Woodlands'*

Review and publish summary thereafter.

2. *'Enhancing the Forest Sector's Contribution to Equal Access for Disabled People to Recreation Goods, Facilities, and Services in Scottish Woodlands'*

3. *'Exploring Disabled Peoples' Perceptions and the Role of Forest Recreation, Goods, Facilities and Services in Scotland, England and Wales'*.

Identify from research the key best practices, actions from research and make recommendations for managers to improve performance on DES.

- Social Research team
- Diversity Manager
- Recreation Managers

December 2007-  
March 2008

## Statistics and Surveys

Recommend methodologies for measuring levels of participation, satisfaction, relevance and appropriateness of FC functions relating to disability.

- Countries with FC Statisticians

Ongoing

Improve and develop new equality monitoring tools/data gathering.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity Manager with relevant professionals</li> </ul>	September 2007
Development of Guidance on how to produce accessible information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity Manager with relevant professionals e.g. Communications Branch</li> </ul>	September 2007
Maintain Public Opinion surveys of Forestry statistics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Managers</li> </ul>	Ongoing
Identify arrangements for publishing results of assessments, consultations and monitoring.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directors</li> <li>• Business Partners and</li> <li>• Diversity Manager</li> </ul>	Annually

## Employees

Incorporate new equality legal requirements into relevant management and operational training, to ensure employees have the skills to carry out specific duties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Forestry Training Services</li> <li>• HR Business Partners</li> <li>• Relevant Business Managers</li> <li>• Diversity Manager</li> </ul>	Ongoing during 2007
Ensure managers have relevant information about their duties the Scheme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chief Executives and Directors</li> <li>• HR Business Partners</li> <li>• Relevant Business Managers</li> </ul>	Ongoing during early 2007
Explore new avenues for delivering equality training at national or local level, including improved disability accessibility training events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Forestry Managers</li> <li>• Head of Forestry Training Services</li> <li>• HR Business Partners</li> </ul>	Ongoing during 2007-08

for forest managers.

Review recruitment and internal selection processes/policies for potential impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of HR Services with Diversity Manager and Policy Manager</li> </ul>	During 2007
Consider new ways to collect level of disability information amongst employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity Manager with e-HR system manager</li> </ul>	May 2007
Improve HR data collection on recruitment, retention, performance pay, internal promotion and training/development of disabled people (to better assess impact of policies on disability equality).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity Manager with e-HR system manager</li> </ul>	May 2007
Develop better links with Disability Groups both internally and externally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity Manager</li> </ul>	August 2007
Maintain disability monitoring information and publish.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity Manager</li> </ul>	Annually

## Procurement

Review current contract/ procurement processes/documentation to	Head of Procurement	May 2007
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ensure that they reflect relevant equality provisions.

Ensure procurement guidance for managers is updated where needed.

Head of Procurement

May 2007