

# Disability Equality Scheme

December 2006

## Introduction

The Disability Equality Duty (DED) is an important new duty aimed at promoting disability equality across the public sector. The DED, also referred to as the general duty, sets out what public authorities must have due regard to in order to promote equality of opportunity.

Most public authorities are also covered by specific duties, which set out a framework to assist authorities in meeting their general duty. All public authorities covered by the specific duties must:

- publish a Disability Equality Scheme (including within it an Action Plan)
- involve disabled people in producing the Scheme and Action Plan
- demonstrate they have taken actions in the Scheme and achieved appropriate outcomes
- report on progress
- review and revise the Scheme.

In response to the Disability Equality Duty, this document aims to set out how Redditch Borough Council is genuinely committed to addressing disability inequality in the Borough.

It recognises the issues that impede disability equality and makes links to the wider work of the Council. It also demonstrates that the Council's work on equality will be subject to regular scrutiny.

It is part of the Council's work to reach the Equalities Standard for Local Government.

This document will be updated regularly.

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## **Part One - Strategy**

### **1.1 Commitment to Disability Equality**

The Council is committed to working with stakeholders, including residents, staff and partner organisations, on:-

#### **a) STANDARDS**

Reaching a shared understanding of the standards and policies that the Council should have in place to support the whole community.

#### **b) RESOURCES**

Providing clarity over responsibilities within the Council, in partner organisations and in the community for working to eliminate discrimination, promote equal opportunities and promote good relations.

#### **c) SHARED OWNERSHIP/INVOLVEMENT**

Reaching agreement on how the Council can work together with residents and also partners to meet shared targets.

#### **d) ACTION FOR IMPROVEMENT**

Providing a concrete action plan, with measurable targets, and realistic deadlines.

#### **e) MONITORING**

Ensuring that systems are in place to make sure that the work of the Council is accountable to everyone it serves, and that work and achievements on disability equality are recorded and scrutinised.

### **1.2 Overall Strategic Objective**

The Council has stated its commitment to Disability Equality within the Redditch Community Strategy and the Council's Corporate Plan, with commitments to work towards:-

- a) the provision of suitable access to public buildings and facilities for people with disabilities;
- b) the provision of improved access to healthcare and social services;
- c) increasing the percentage of pedestrian crossings with facilities for the disabled;

- d) improvements to systems facilities and communications to allow everyone to be able to access services easily in person or remotely if they wish;
- e) implementing a local transport plan that ensures consideration of the needs of vulnerable groups;
- f) improving the health and quality of life of people with disabilities.

The Council is also committed to meeting the Equalities Standard for Local Government, which provides a wider framework for combating discrimination on a range of grounds, and the Disability Equality Scheme is an important part of this work.

### 1.3 Disability Equality as a Strategic Theme

Disability Equality is at the heart of a number of the Council's key strategic themes.

Some examples of how the Council's Strategies have an impact on disability equality are set out in the Table below.

Strategic Theme	Impact on Disability Equality
<b>Housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council makes specific provision of sheltered and very sheltered accommodation to meet the housing needs of disabled people who require support to live independently.</li> <li>Through the Care and Repair Agency and the Equipment and Adaptation services the Council provides essential adaptations to enable people with disabilities/mobility problems to remain independent in their own home.</li> <li>Ensuring that new dwellings meet Building Regulation requirements as to accessibility.</li> </ul>
<b>Environment and Transport</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public and community transport is crucial to social inclusion, enabling disabled people of all ages to access shopping, health services, social, recreational and learning activities. The Council is committed to working in partnership to address transport needs in the town.</li> <li>The Council's Concessionary Fares Scheme offers free travel to the disabled. It is under review to ensure that it provides wide access to people wherever they live in Redditch. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disabled people are users of the Dial a Ride and Shopmobility services because of the incidence of disability and mobility problems among people of all ages.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Local Economy - Skills and Jobs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council, the largest local and an equal opportunities employer, offers a range of traineeship opportunities and Modern</li> </ul>

	<p>Apprenticeships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Human Resources Support functions enable the Council to keep disabled people in work with adaptations or enable them to be employed in other work.</li> </ul>
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<b>Cross Cutting Service Issues</b>	<p>Monitoring service provision to profile users, decisions etc (Not undertaken systematically at present).</p> <p>Ensuring equality of access to services.</p> <p>Engaging groups and communities that are currently hard to reach through consultation at the policy formulation stage.</p> <p>Having a model for fair enforcement in relation to all aspects of service delivery, for example planning, environmental health, housing benefit etc.</p> <p>Building consideration of equalities into the Council's work at the stages of community planning, corporate planning, objectives for services and individuals and in the policy review process.</p> <p>Respecting Human Rights across all areas of operation, and appropriate use of enforcement, surveillance etc.</p>
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## Human Resources Strategy

The Council is committed to addressing disability discrimination in its own workforce through its policy on disability.

The Council will work towards complying with the Disability Discrimination Act. This will include meeting standards covering:-

- Employment
- Access to goods facilities and services
- Buying or renting land or property
- Education
- Public transport
- Other

The Council will work towards disability friendly working practices, and an organisational culture which values diversity.

Consideration of the Equalities impact of all new policies will also be considered at policy formulation stage, with a requirement on all reports for approving policies to consider specifically any equalities issues.

## Part Two - Action

### 2.1 3 year action plan for reviewing services

Services will be subject to an impact assessment, and those with high impact will be subject to an Equalities Review, measuring up against the Equality Standard for Local Government. This means a thorough assessment of how the service performs in meeting best practice on Equalities.

Functions covered by the Disability Equality Scheme

<b>Transport Services</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concessionary Travel Passes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dial-A-Ride service</li> <li>• Shopmobility service</li> </ul>
<b>Licensing Services</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Licensing (e.g. Public Entertainment, Cinema and Theatre Licensing, Premises &amp; Personal Licensing, Small Lotteries, Amusements with Prizes, Dangerous Wild Animals, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Elections</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electoral registration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct of elections/referendum management</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental Services</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The collection of recycling of domestic waste</li> <li>▪ Cleaning of streets and public places</li> <li>▪ Environmental Health services</li> <li>▪ Community Safety</li> <li>▪ Landscape maintenance</li> <li>▪ Removal of abandoned vehicles.</li> <li>▪ Maintenance of the Borough's landscape e.g. mowing hedge cutting etc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monitor atmospheric pollution and noise from non-domestic premises and investigate complaints</li> <li>▪ A range of public protection activities, e.g. safety of premises such as petrol stations, entertainment centres and shops</li> <li>▪ Provision of recycling centres at local supermarkets etc</li> <li>▪ Cemeteries and Crematorium</li> </ul>
<b>Planning Services</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prepare all statutory plans regarding land use and development</li> <li>▪ Advice to developers to help ensure developments take place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Scrutinise and approve planning applications and building regulations</li> <li>▪ Investigate contraventions of planning approvals and building regulations and take appropriate action</li> </ul>
<b>Central Services</b>	

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial Management</li> <li>• Audit Services</li> <li>• Policy Development</li> <li>• Legal Services</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications</li> <li>• Democratic eg Neighbourhood Groups</li> <li>• Information Technology</li> <li>• Human Resources</li> <li>• Asset Management</li> </ul> |
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## ***Business***

- Economic Development
- Redditch Market

## ***Cultural and Recreational Services***

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Arts, music, theatre</li> <li>▪ Sports &amp; leisure facilities,</li> <li>▪ Library services – including mobile libraries</li> <li>▪ Museums and heritage services</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community centres</li> <li>▪ Grant aid to local voluntary groups</li> <li>▪ Manage parks and open spaces – woodland and allotments</li> </ul> |
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## ***Housing Services***

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|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support and management of Council owned homes</li> <li>▪ Housing maintenance of Council owned home</li> <li>▪ Housing Advice</li> <li>▪ Housing applications from homeless people</li> <li>▪ Managing homeless hostels</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Grants for disabled adaptations to homes</li> <li>▪ Sheltered housing</li> <li>▪ To identify and meet the current and future housing needs of local citizens</li> <li>▪ Property management</li> </ul> |
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## ***Community Services***

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lifeline emergency alarm system</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community Wardens</li> </ul> |
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## ***Revenues and Benefits Services***

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collection of Council Tax</li> <li>▪ Collection of Business Rates</li> <li>▪ Collection of other revenues</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Housing benefit claims</li> <li>▪ Council Tax benefit claims</li> <li>▪ Preventing fraud and error in benefits claims</li> </ul> |
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The review programme will be set on an annual basis, taking into account the needs and views of communities, and the main work areas of both the Council and its partner organisations. The review programme will be approved by the elected members of the Council.

## **2.2 Description of review process**

This will be part of the Corporate Equality Action Plan. This review process guide will act as a flexible guide to everyone involved in reviewing services and is subject to regular review and improvements in order to keep it relevant, accessible and consistent with the needs of everyone involved.

## **2.3 Training for staff**

The standards to be achieved through training are as follows:-

### **For all staff**

- a) To understand the forms that disability discrimination can take, and the impact it can have.
- b) To appreciate the legislative framework and relevant Codes of Practice.
- c) To gain awareness of disability discrimination and how it affects people, and celebrate the diversity of communities in Redditch.

### **For managers**

- d) To be fully trained on the legislative framework and the Codes of Practice on Disability.
- e) To appreciate the relevance of managing issues relating to disability, and identify (and avoid) “hotspots” for managerial discrimination.
- f) To understand and identify the equalities impact of any new policies.

### **For those engaged in Equalities Reviews**

- g) To understand the requirements of the Act and Codes of Practice.
- h) To understand what the Equalities Review consists of.

- i) To identify how their services impact upon the disabled, as well as the issues that are more commonly experienced by them.
- j) To challenge existing practices (formal and informal) and identify practical steps to promote equality.

The Council will use a range of methods, including formal training sessions, e-learning and one-to-one coaching to ensure these standards are met.

The impact of this training on perceptions will continue to be monitored via staff surveys.

These training requirements will be monitored on an annual basis by the Human Resources Team, with Managers taking responsibility for incorporating these requirements into training planning for employees.

## **2.4 Disability Equality Monitoring**

Consideration of disability equality statistics will be built into the work plan of the relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committee, which will also generate auditable action plans as a response to these statistics.

The list of measures will be reviewed by the Committee in the light of each year's Equality Reviews.

## Part Three - Involvement and Review

### 3.1 Involving the public and telling them about progress

The methods used will depend on the groups and services in question and will be in line with the Council's Communication and Consultation Strategy. Any general consultation undertaken by the Council will ensure that the approach and methods are fully inclusive of all groups, and that the views of specific groups can be identified.

The Council will ensure that all venues used for consultation are fully accessible, that transport and mobility needs are catered for, and that the needs of people with sight and hearing disabilities are addressed.

The Council already supports and works with some key groups who will need to be involved on a regular basis in contributing to the reviews of services and checking progress. They include:-

- *Student Council*
- *Redditch Disabled Access Group;*
- *Disability Access Forum;*
- *Redditch Tenants' Panel and local tenants groups at sheltered schemes.*

The Council will also draw on a range of specific consultations already undertaken or planned for the future including from the above groups among whose representatives are included people who are knowledgeable and experienced in disability issues.

Communications will be undertaken through the range of methods set out in the Communications Strategy.

### 3.2 Involving staff and telling them about progress

Examples will include:-

• Workshops	• Displays	• Contact magazine
• Booklets/leaflets	• Briefings	
• Email	• Intranet	

### 3.3 Complaints mechanism

It is accepted that the normal complaints mechanisms may not be sufficient to deal with complaints of disability discrimination.

The additional elements will be built into responses to complaints of potential disability discrimination.

- a) All complaints which are identified as potential disability discrimination, either by the complainant or by the Manager receiving the complaint, will therefore be handled personally by the Director of the work area.
- b) The Director can request another Director to provide a senior level review of the investigation, to double check for any discrimination, direct, indirect, deliberate, inadvertent or institutional.
- c) If possible, complainants will also be given details of possible external support contacts to provide them with extra information, etc.
- d) Normal timescales will be used as a target, and any more lengthy processes due to deeper investigations will be explained to the complainant with the opportunity to comment or challenge provided.

Details of how to complain can be obtained from the Complaints Officer on (01527) 64252 or from the website ([www.redditchbc.gov.uk](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk)).

### **3.4 Process for reviewing the Disability Equality Scheme**

The review of this Disability Equality Scheme will be built into the Corporate Plan for 2009.

The review of the scheme will be formatted on the basis of feedback through the three year rolling programme

- Disability Rights Commission
- [www.drc-gb.org/rights/index.asp](http://www.drc-gb.org/rights/index.asp)
- [www.disability.gov.uk](http://www.disability.gov.uk) Civil Rights - In England

Using the Disability Discrimination Act

This information applies to England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

#### **What does the Disability Discrimination Act cover**

The Disability Discrimination Act deals with the discrimination faced by disabled people in various areas of their lives. Many common examples of discrimination, however, will not be covered by the Act. The Act will be fully

implemented over a number of years. This information covers the areas in force at the time of writing.

The following areas are currently covered by the Act:-

- discrimination in employment (this includes discrimination in recruitment and selection, terms and conditions, and dismissal and redundancy) but only in firms which employ 15 or more people
- access to goods, facilities and services (this includes most goods and most services provided direct to the public either commercially or through local/central government although there are some important exemptions) (see under heading [Access to goods, facilities and services](#) )
- letting or selling land or property (but there are limitations) (see under heading [Buying or renting land or property](#) )
- educational services (although this provision only applies to providing information about accessibility and services for pupils/students) (see under heading [Education](#)).

### **What the Act means by 'disability'**

The Act covers discrimination against people who are disabled or who have been disabled in the past. The Act says disability means a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

The definition of 'impairment' includes sensory impairments, such as sight and hearing, or mental impairments, including learning disabilities and clinically recognised mental illnesses.

The disability must have a substantial and long term effect. Although a minor impairment may not, on its own, count as 'substantial', you may have a number of minor impairments which together may be held to have a substantial effect.

'Long term' means:-

- that the disability has lasted for at least twelve months; or
- that the disability is expected to last for at least twelve months; or
- that, in the case of a person expected to live for less than twelve months, the disability is likely to last for the rest of their life.

Some special rules have been made about what is or is not to be classed as a disability for the purpose of the Act. Some severe disfigurement is classed as disability. Some conditions that can worsen over time such as multiple sclerosis and

HIV/AIDS, are covered as soon as symptoms start to appear, even before the symptoms start to affect day to day activities.

The following do not currently count in themselves as impairments under the Act:-

- addiction to alcohol, nicotine or any other substance not medically prescribed, but damage to health caused by the addiction may be covered
- hay fever
- certain personality disorders (for example exhibitionism, voyeurism or a tendency to steal, set fires, or physically or sexually abuse other people)
- tattoos and body piercing.

Usually, even if medical aids or treatment are used to help control or remove the effects of an impairment, the impairment is still viewed as a disability. In such case, the treatment is ignored and the impairment is taken to have the effect that it would have had without such treatment. Examples of this might be the use of an artificial limb or medication to control epilepsy. However, visual impairment corrected with glasses or contact lenses is not considered to be a disability. If an impairment stops having a substantial effect, it can still be regarded as an impairment if there is a reasonable likelihood of the condition recurring, for example, epilepsy.

‘Day to day activities’ means normal activities which most people carry out on a regular basis. An impairment will be treated as affecting your ability to carry out normal day to day activities if it affects at least one of the following:-

- mobility
- ability to use hands, for example, for writing or cooking
- physical co-ordination
- going to the toilet
- the ability to lift, carry or move ordinary objects
- speech, hearing or eyesight
- memory, or the ability to concentrate, learn or understand
- being able to recognise physical danger.

## Employment

It is important to remember that rights disabled people have through the Disability Discrimination Act are in addition to any other statutory or contractual employment rights that they may have.

It is unlawful for an employer with 15 or more employees to:-

- discriminate against a disabled person in recruitment and selection unless this can be 'justified'
- give a disabled person less favourable treatment (including access to promotion, training and transfers, as well as dismissal and selection for redundancy) unless this can be 'justified'
- fail to make 'reasonable' adjustments to the work environment to enable a disabled person to work.

### **Access to goods, facilities and services**

It is important to remember that the rights disabled people have through the Disability Discrimination Act are in addition to any other statutory or contractual rights that they may have. For example all people, disabled or not, have a statutory right that the goods they buy are of satisfactory quality.

It is unlawful for a provider of goods, facilities and services to discriminate against a disabled person. This applies regardless of the size of the service provider's organisation.

Examples of the types of goods and services covered by the Act include:- services provided by hotels, banks, building societies, solicitors, local authorities, advice agencies, pubs, theatres, shops, telesales, transport termini (such as railway stations), churches, doctors and law courts. It does not matter whether the service is free or has to be paid for.

## **Education and transport vehicles are not covered by this part of the Act**

Insurance is covered by the Act, but insurers are allowed to treat disabled people less favourably if this treatment is based on reliable information about risk.

## **What you can expect from providers of goods, facilities and services**

Under the Act, a provider is discriminating unlawfully against you if, for a reason connected to your disability, they treat you less favourably than they would treat a person who is not disabled and they cannot show that the treatment is justified.

An example of less favourable treatment is where a hotelier refuses a booking from a person with a hearing impairment, stating the hotel never accepts disabled people because it is not suitable.

A provider also discriminates unlawfully if they fail to make reasonable adjustments in relation to a disabled person and cannot show the failure is justified. An example of making reasonable adjustments is providing another service, such as providing information on audio-tape instead of just in writing.

Providers do not currently have to alter or adapt their premises to enable disabled people to have access to a service, although in the future they will be required to take reasonable steps to do so. In the meantime, providers have to make reasonable adjustments. For example, a small hardware shop is located in an old building with a narrow entrance at the top of a flight of stairs. The shop is willing to serve disabled customers by bringing goods to the customer at the entrance to the building. This is likely to be a reasonable step for the store to take.

A Code of Practice has been produced by the government which is a statement of good practice and not part of the Act itself. It is not legally enforceable, but could be used when negotiating with the provider. In any case which goes to court, the Code must be considered in arriving at a decision.

A copy of the Code is available on the internet ([www.disability.gov.uk](http://www.disability.gov.uk)).

## **Buying or renting land or property**

It is important to remember that a disabled person's right to be protected against discrimination is in addition to their other rights, for example, as a tenant.

It is unlawful for someone who is selling, managing or renting land or property to discriminate against a disabled person. Discrimination includes:-

- refusing to sell or let a property or offering a property for sale or rent on worse terms to a disabled person
- treating a disabled person less favourably on a housing waiting list or register
- unreasonably preventing a tenant from using benefits/facilities or not allowing them to use these facilities in the same way as a landlord would allow other tenants to do

- evicting a disabled tenant for a reason connected with their disability or harassing them for that reason.

Landlords who are renting out accommodation in their own homes are not covered by the requirements of the Act.

The Disability Discrimination Act does not require people selling or letting property to disabled people to physically alter existing premises in order to make them more accessible.

## Education

In England, Wales and Scotland, changes to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 make it unlawful for any school or provider of further education, higher education, adult and community education, to discriminate against disabled pupils (both current pupils and prospective pupils).

### Schools

The changes to the Disability Discrimination Act apply to all schools in England, Wales and Scotland, including independent schools and pupil referral units. These are in addition to their duties under the Special Educational Needs Framework and new planning duties which require local education authorities to develop plans to make schools accessible to disabled pupils.

A school might discriminate against a disabled pupil in two ways:-

- less favourable treatment. If a school treats a disabled pupil, or prospective pupil less favourably than another because of their disability, this will be unlawful discrimination unless the school can justify it. For example, a school might tell a parent who wants their daughter with epilepsy to go to a primary school that the school cannot take her unless she stops having fits. This is likely to count as less favourable treatment for a reason related to the child's disability. If the school cannot justify it, it will amount to discrimination
- failing to make a reasonable adjustment. This can count as discrimination if it places disabled pupils and prospective pupils at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled pupils. For example, a deaf pupil who lip-reads is at a disadvantage if teachers continue to speak while facing away to write on a whiteboard. There may be justification for failing to make a reasonable adjustment. See heading Do schools have to make 'reasonable adjustments' to buildings and the physical environment of the school under the Act for information about making schools accessible to disabled pupils.

It is unlawful for schools to discriminate in the following ways, unless they can justify the less favourable treatment:-

- admissions. Schools must not discriminate against a disabled person in the way they decide who can get into the school, including any rules they use when a school is over-subscribed, in their terms for offering a place at the

school, or by refusing an application from a disabled person for admission to the school

- education and associated services. This includes all aspects of school life such as education and school trips and extra-curricular activities
- exclusions. It is unlawful to discriminate against a disabled pupil by excluding them because of their disability. This applies to both permanent and fixed-term exclusions.

### **Justification for less favourable treatment**

In some cases, a school can treat a disabled pupil 'less favourably' if it can justify this. Its justification must be substantial and relevant to the particular circumstances. A school can justify less favourable treatment if it is because of a permitted form of selection. For example, a child with learning difficulties applies to a school that selects its intake on the basis of academic ability and fails the school's entrance exam. Even though the reason for her performance in the exam was a reason related to her disability, because the school has used objective rules, the less favourable treatment (that she is not offered a place at the school) is likely to be justified.

### **Justification for failing to make a reasonable adjustment**

If a school does not make reasonable adjustments to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage, it can justify this if it has a substantial reason which is relevant to the particular circumstances.

### **What is 'reasonable'**

The Disability Discrimination Act does not say what 'reasonable' means. It will depend on the circumstances of the particular case and will be decided by the tribunal or appeals panel. However, in deciding what is 'reasonable', a school can take account of:-

- its need to maintain academic and other standards
- money available
- the practicalities of making the particular adjustment
- the health and safety of the disabled pupil and others
- the interests of other pupils.

### **What is a 'substantial disadvantage'**

The Disability Discrimination Act does not say what a 'substantial disadvantage' is. It will depend on the circumstances of the particular case, and a tribunal or appeals panel would decide what it means. However, in deciding what a substantial disadvantage is, a school can take account of:-

- the time and effort it would take the disabled child if the school does not take certain steps to help the child, and how much of a disadvantage this is to the child
- the amount of inconvenience, indignity or discomfort a disabled child might suffer
- the disabled child's possible loss of opportunity or lack of progress compared to other non-disabled children.

### **Do schools need to provide aids or services to disabled pupils**

Schools do not need to provide aids or adaptations for disabled children under the Disability Discrimination Act. They may, however, be under a duty to provide such aids to children under the special educational needs framework. This might include services such as information available in Braille or audio tape, or personal assistance.

### **Do schools have to make 'reasonable adjustments' to buildings and the physical environment of the school under the Act**

All local education authorities in England, Wales and Scotland must have accessibility plans to make their schools more accessible to disabled pupils. Maintained schools, independent schools, and non-maintained special schools must produce their own accessibility plans. The plans must be in writing and publicly available.

### **What can you do if you feel that your child has been discriminated against**

Depending on the circumstances of the case, you can take a case to a Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal or, in certain cases, to an Admissions Appeal Panel or Exclusion Appeal Panel. In Scotland, you can take an appeal to the Appeal Committee of the local education authority. If you do not agree with the Appeal Committee's decision, you can appeal to the sheriff within 28 days of the Appeal Committee's decision. Parents and schools can both use the Disability Rights Commission's conciliation service if you both agree to conciliation.

### **Further and higher education**

All of the information provided under the heading 'Schools' also applies to further and higher education establishments in England, Wales and Scotland. The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) has detailed guidance on how further and higher educational establishments should put these changes into effect.

### **Public transport**

The Disability Discrimination Act gives the government powers to make regulations about the design of and access to newly built public transport vehicles, taxis and services.

Although public transport vehicles are not yet covered by the Act, public transport termini are and so, for example, a deaf person could complain about the lack of Minicom or other accessible information at a train station.

### **The Disability Rights Commission**

The Disability Rights Commission is a national body, which may be able to help you take a case under the Disability Discrimination Act. It may also be able to give advice on the Act to disabled people, employers and service providers.

You can write to The Disability Rights Commission at:-

DRC Helpline  
Freepost  
MID 02164  
Stratford-upon-Avon  
CV37 9BR

For telephone queries about the Act, and advice on how to take a case, contact the DDA helpline (details given below). The DDA helpline will refer callers to the Disability Rights Commission if it considers this appropriate.

Tel: 08457 622633 (8am - 8pm; local call rate)  
Textphone: 08457 622644 (8am - 8pm; local call rate)  
Email: [enquiry@drc-gb.org](mailto:enquiry@drc-gb.org)  
Website: [www.drc-gb.org](http://www.drc-gb.org)

### **Equality Commission for Northern Ireland**

Equality House  
7-9 Shaftesbury Square  
Belfast  
BT2 7DP  
Tel: 028 9050 0600  
Fax: 028 9033 1544  
Textphone: 028 9024 0589  
Email: [information@equalityni.org](mailto:information@equalityni.org)  
Website: [www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org)

The Equality Commission may be able to help a client who wants to take a case under the Disability Discrimination Act by investigating alleged discrimination, applying to a court to prevent discrimination from continuing and by arranging (in some cases) for a disabled person to be legally represented. The Commission can also provide conciliation for you if you believe that you have been discriminated against in access to goods, services or premises. For cases involving discrimination in employment, the Labour Relations Agency provides a conciliation service.

### **Discrimination Law Association**

The Discrimination Law Association's members work in the areas of race, disability and sex discrimination. The Association can provide names of member practitioners in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Most members are likely to be solicitors in private practice and will charge for their services if publicly-funded legal services (legal aid in Scotland and Northern Ireland) are not available. Its contact details are:-

Discrimination Law Association  
PO Box 20848  
London SE22 0YP  
Tel: 020 7450 3663  
Fax: 020 7450 3664  
Email: [info@discrimination-law.org.uk](mailto:info@discrimination-law.org.uk)

