
**Minutes of the Disability Equality Duty Steering Group
held at 6 Middle Street, London EC1A 7JA
on Wednesday 10 May 2006**

Present

Dolores Keane, Acting Chair, Steering Group Coordinator
Bryan Davey, Director, Public Liaison
Jo deBank, Communications Officer
Tracey Proudlock, Member
Virginia Rounding, Member
Greg Hargest, notes

1. Apologies and Introduction

Apologies were given for those who were unable to attend on this occasion:
John Cartledge, Lisa Egan (?Ron Brewer)
The Chair thanked those present for their attendance and said the main purpose of this meeting was Jo's subject of communications.

2. Discussion of action points from the meeting of 12 April 2006

Introductory remarks:

Action points to be reviewed at end of meeting.

SMT would need to check budget issues and work with CPF (who own the building) on DED issues.

It was said that registration for disability no longer exists, and that assessment for help under the Access to Work scheme was by medical report and assessment of work needs.

April action points:

- The main point on budgets will always be carried forward. A request will be made to the GLA which will be recorded, whatever the outcome.
- Liaison with GLA: DK attending the City of London Access Group, Police etc.
- Implications for the External Relations Panel will be discussed by Jo.
- HR – Training. Will look at the brief to choose the best training. TfL training was seen as good, but weak on disability ‘equality’ as opposed to ‘awareness’.
- There appeared to be a clear need for training with concerns such as diabetes, back ailments and multiple disability.
- Fire safety procedures: The need for an evacuation chair was reiterated, and that a decision would be made dependent upon whether CPF acquired some for the building.
- Modifications to equipment: SMT is looking at budget implications

3. Specialist staff-led discussion / presentation:*Jo deBank: Internal and external communications of London TravelWatch*

Jo said relevant aspects of her work included communications with the press on accessibility issues (no national contacts), presentation of meetings, style of publications etc. We should advertise the presence of hearing loops.

Jo outlined the need for an expanded booking guide for external meetings as our present guide is inadequate to meet the requirements of the Duty, merely specifying that the room and toilets should be “accessible”. Some doors at external venues are too heavy.

DK confirmed she had previously said to Rufus Barnes that there should be a consistent method of booking accessible venues. Problems were foreseen with last-minute alterations to venues, or with an accessible building not being near a station, for example. At present LTW does not have ‘one person’, or a qualified Access Officer, to oversee disability issues. Some venues would be ruled out because of cost, so staff need to be made aware (and empowered by Rufus) of both the budget available and the minimum requirements to meet the Duty.

Publications and presentations need to be accessible for people who are deaf, blind or who have learning difficulties. Print format for visually impaired people was discussed, and that style had to be considered before the production of a report. There are budget issues with implementing changes, as publications are produced on a very tight budget already. There would be little cost implications in the reformatting of general documents, forms and questionnaires, and large print production.

It was mentioned that Braille was used less than before. It may not be our direct financial responsibility to provide specialist equipment as this could be supplied to the disabled person through Access to Work, for example. TP mentioned a box of magnifiers and other aids could be obtained and kept at Reception. We could consider providing a laptop computer and a tape recorder for meetings (for staff or Members only). Telephone conferencing was now available, once training was fully in place.

It was mentioned that for a talk with slides, presentations need to be carefully matched for speed and content.

The needs of hearing-impaired people and those with learning difficulties were discussed, and the need for a policy on the deployment of hearing loops. These issues could be included in meeting agendas, and people could contact us if they have specific needs.

Jo will be attending the September meeting to provide an update on communications issues.

4. Discussion: the way forward

It was stated that if a guide were produced, then it should be published and made available on request. It is important that we publish a disability Action Plan (on the website), with an understanding that the policy would be ongoing and gradually improved. We need to clarify how the policy is to be published, which has to be by 4 December 2006.

Tracey said that, provided there was a commitment to implementing the Duty, she would be prepared to devote 2 or 3 days to conducting a walk-through audit of the building to evaluate the changes that would have to be made for compliance. PK will liaise and report back.

TB will attend in June to talk about previous publications. He has made a table of these, with comments. We need to know about forthcoming research projects. Research partnerships will be discussed. Bryan said we will not need to spend budget on areas covered by another organisation.

5. Next and future meetings

See reverse of Agenda for June meeting.

6. Any other business

No further items were raised.

Meeting concluded.

Summary of Action Points carried forward from this meeting

Action Point	Owner
1. Budget implications to be discussed. Funding submissions by July	Paul, SMT
2. Liaison with GLA and other bodies, e.g. DfT, DiPTAC, City Police, etc,	Dolores & Patti
3. Implications for External Relations Panel	Jo deBank, Gail Engert
4. Human Resources update in July	Patti
5. Training for relevant staff in dealing with disability issues	Patti, SMT, Line Managers
5a. Training for members in dealing with disability issues	Patti
6. Update fire safety procedures	Adam, Jane
6a. Discussion on the acquisition of an evacuation chair	Bryan and Patti
7. Estimation of modifications needed for fixtures and fittings	Paul, SMT
8. Production of information sheets for disabled visitors	Jo, Bryan
9. Portable induction loop procedures	Bryan
10. Screen readers for blind people and website accessibility	Bryan
11. Compliance of public areas of the building, discuss with Group	Paul, CPF
12. Discussions on the production of a disability Action Plan for the website	Jo, Group