

# disability equality scheme

program r3wnych szans dla os3b niepełnosprawnych

ਨਿਰਯੋਗਤਾ ਸਮਾਨਤਾ ਸਕੀਮ

ڈس ایلٹی (معذوری) کی ایکوالٹی اسکیم

殘障平等方案



**The Wrekin**  
Housing Trust



# contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| a message from the Chief Executive      | 4  |
| introduction                            | 5  |
| disability legislation                  | 6  |
| social model of disability              | 7  |
| disability – national and local picture | 8  |
| the local context                       | 9  |
| our tenants                             | 10 |
| involving disabled people               | 11 |
| disability impact assessments           | 11 |
| some of the things we have done so far  | 12 |
| disability action plans:                |    |
| attitude and awareness                  | 14 |
| access to services and communication    | 15 |
| access to premises                      | 16 |
| policy development                      | 17 |
| asset management                        | 18 |
| aids and adaptations                    | 19 |
| harassment                              | 20 |
| allocations and lettings                | 21 |
| employment                              | 22 |

## a message from the Chief Executive

### aims

The Trust operates in a local and regional context. The Disability Equality Scheme applies to all our work: as an employer, service provider, landlord and partner.

Through the scheme we aim to:

- continue to involve and consult disabled people
- promote participation and fair access for disabled tenants
- promote greater awareness of disability among the whole community



### development of the scheme

We have involved disabled people in developing the scheme. In doing so, we have identified the barriers faced by disabled people and looked at good practice. Involvement is essential to ensure equality of opportunity and will continue throughout this and further schemes.

### summary of key actions

Involving disabled people has helped us to identify gaps in our services and areas we need to improve. In the action plan we have identified key outcomes.

Some of these are:

- continuing to improve access to our offices, communal parts of sheltered schemes and flats
- checking that all the leaflets, letters and other documents we produce are accessible
- working in partnership with all stakeholders to meet the needs of individual disabled families

### where do we start?

Publishing our scheme is the start of the journey. Now we need disabled people to help us identify the barriers to disability equality at the Trust. We need to work in partnership with disabled people to encourage real change.

We also welcome the support and commitment of all our staff in fulfilling our aims.

Please contact us if you'd like to be involved in any way.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'John Broadhead'.

John Broadhead, Chief Executive

# introduction

The disability equality duty came into force for public service organisations in December 2006. The duty challenged public bodies to develop Disability Equality Schemes outlining how they would work to improve equality for disabled people.

Our regulator, the Housing Corporation, said it expected each housing association to produce a Disability Action Plan by December 2006.

Following this, the Housing Corporation has placed a minimum expectation on housing associations to produce a Disability Action Plan by December 2007.

While we are not a public body we recognise the importance of producing a Disability Equality Scheme.

This publication is our first Disability Equality Scheme. It sets out our plans to ensure disability equality for our tenants and employees.

The action plan details the challenges we face and what we will do to ensure equal access and opportunity.

The scheme shows how we intend to meet the duty and how we have involved disabled people in developing the scheme.



## disability legislation

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 amendments required public bodies to eliminate disability discrimination. This is the disability equality duty. It says public bodies must:

- promote equality between disabled people and other people
- end unlawful discrimination
- stop harassment of disabled people that is linked to their disability
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- encourage disabled people to take part in public life
- meet the needs of disabled people, even if that means treating them more favourably than other people

The duty covers people who are defined as disabled under the original 1995 Disability Discrimination Act (DDA 2005). According to the Act, an adult or child is disabled if the effect of their physical or mental impairment is:

*“substantial, adverse and long term (lasting or expected to last for at least a year) on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”.*

Day-to-day activities include things like: walking, hearing, lifting and reading.

The DDA 2005 said that a mental illness need no longer be ‘clinically well recognised’ before it can count as a disability. The Act now also covers people who have HIV, cancer or multiple sclerosis from the moment of diagnosis rather than when their condition affects their ability to do normal day-to-day activities.



## social model of disability

Disabled people encounter barriers that can prevent them enjoying a reasonable lifestyle. These barriers can be physical or they can be based on people's assumptions about disability.

There are three main kinds of barrier. Broadly these are:

**medical** – disabled people are seen as having something wrong with them

**charitable** – disabled people are seen as victims who need help

**environmental** – disabled people feel that it's not so much their disability that disables them but the barriers placed in their way by society.

Our outlook is based on the Social Model of Disability – that the problems of disabled people lie in discrimination not disability – so we try to ensure that disabled people receive fair access to services. Many disabled people feel this model is the best way to view a disability.

The Disability Rights Commission describes the Social Model of Disability like this:

*“Disabled people do not face disadvantages because of their impairments but experience discrimination in the way we organise society. This includes failing to make education, work, leisure and public services accessible, failing to remove barriers of assumption, stereotype and prejudice and failing to outlaw unfair treatment in our daily lives.”*



# disability – national and local picture

## national context

There are an estimated 11 million disabled adults in the United Kingdom (one in five of the total adult population) and 770,000 disabled children.

*(DRC 2005)*

42% of social housing households contain a person with a disability or long-term illness.

*(MORI/Housing Corporation 2001)*

50,000 adults under 65 with a disability live in staffed residential or nursing care in England.

*(Department of Health 2002)*

The level of disability increases with age: only 13% of those aged 20–29 years have a current long-term disability or health problem compared with 31% of those aged 50–59 years.

*(Labour Force Survey 2003)*

26% of UK employees are over the age of 50.

*(Labour Force Survey 2005)*

It is estimated that by 2021 over five million people in the UK will be over 80 years old.

*(Social Trends 2001)*

One in four men and one in five women will suffer a critical illness before they are 65.

*(Health insurance: the online guide to critical illness insurance)*

Mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety, now account for more Incapacity Benefit claims than back pain.

*(Mind, Stress and Mental Health in the Workplace, 2005)*

30% of disabled working-age adults live in poverty, twice the rate for their non-disabled counterparts.

*(New Policy Institute 2005)*

A quarter of all disabled people say they have experienced hate crime or harassment, and this number rises to 47% of people with mental health conditions.

*(Prime Minister's Strategy Unit 2005)*

Nine out of ten families with disabled children have problems with their housing.

*(Prime Minister's Strategy Unit 2005)*

## the local context

Telford and Wrekin is a unique area. As a new town built in the 60s, Telford is still growing; in fact we are among the top 20 fastest population growth points in England (at the 2001 Census). The population was 158,325, a growth of 11.9%, or 16,825, since 1991. This growth is predicted to continue by a further 12%, or 19,000 people, over the next 12 years.



The area has been broadly successful over the last four decades in becoming a major focus for industry and commerce, high technology and leisure. There are, however, areas of deprivation and poverty. We are the 112th most deprived area in England and the eighth in the West Midlands; four wards feature in the 10% most deprived in England.

The key local population trends in relation to disability are as follows:

### age

The 2001 Census found that there were 19,628 people aged 65+ resident in the Borough, representing 12% of the population. The proportion has not changed over 10 years, though the numbers had increased.

At present Telford has a comparatively young community. However, over the next five years, the number of people over 65 in the Borough is expected to increase by some 4,200 (24%). The greatest change will be in the number of residents aged 90+, which will increase from 600 to 900, a 50% increase. Many of these residents are likely to depend on care and support services, so demand for such services will grow.

Of the 65+ population in 2001:

- 14,874 (76%) were aged between 65 and 79 years
- 4,121 (21%) were aged 80 to 89 years
- 633 (3.2%) were aged 90+
- there were more females (54.5%) than males (42.2%)

### age and ethnicity

In 2001, 5.2% of the Borough's general population, but only 1.9% of the 65+ population, were of a black or minority ethnic (BME) background. The national profile showed that 2.9% of the UK's 65+ population were from a BME background.

## people with a disability

The 2001 Census showed that there were 19,403 adults with a disability in Telford & Wrekin, including 17,269 with a physical or sensory impairment as their main disability. The 2001 Census showed that 6% of people (7,087) aged 16–76 living in Telford & Wrekin were not in employment as they were permanently sick or disabled. The proportion of people with a long-term limiting illness had increased from 12.2% in 1991 to 18% in 2001.

More up-to-date local details on disability are not available. However, the Disability Rights Commission (2006) estimated that 19% of adults between the ages of 16 and 64 had a disability, which would mean 20,085 disabled adults in Telford.

## our tenants

In 2001 we owned 12,251 homes, which was about 19% of the total number of homes in the Borough.

At 31 March 2007, we owned 10,862 homes, or 16.8% of the total.

### age

- 41% of all tenants are aged over 60
- in our general needs housing, 31.5% of tenants are over 60, and 6.7% (789) are over 80
- in supported housing, 34.5% are over 80, out of a total of 1,412 supported tenants



Different areas have their own profile. For example:

- Newport has 45% of tenants aged over 60
- Woodside has 17% of tenants over 60
- Donnington Wood has 65% under 40
- Hadley has 27% over 40

Therefore we need to cater for different needs in each community.

## disability

Our STATUS 2006 survey found that:

- 58% of respondents said someone in their household had a long-standing illness or disability
- 84% of these said it limited their activities
- 12% said their household included a wheelchair user

CORE Supported Housing New Lettings Summary Statistics April 2006 – March 2007 told us that 31% of new lettings included someone with a disability, of whom 4.7% used a wheelchair.

CORE General Needs New Lettings Summary Statistics April 2006 – March 2007 told us that 23.7% of new lettings included someone with a disability, of whom 4.7% used a wheelchair.

Since the introduction of our choice-based letting scheme (CYH) nine months ago, 24% of our new lets have had major adaptations at the property due to the tenant's disability.

215 customers are currently registered on CYH with an urgent need to move for medical reasons. This is 2.7% of the 8,078 CYH customers.

## involving disabled people

We have involved disabled people and disabled staff in developing our scheme and will involve them in monitoring our progress.



Publishing our scheme is the start of the journey. We need disabled people to help us identify barriers to disability equality at the Trust. We need to work in partnership with disabled people to encourage real change.

We also welcome the support and commitment of all our staff in fulfilling our aims.



## disability impact assessments

As part of our ongoing review in 2006, we introduced equality impact assessments, so that we could assess how our policies are working in relation to all aspects of diversity such as race, religion, gender, sexuality, age and disability. We will continue with these assessments and surveys.

## some of the things we have done so far...

**sheltered housing** – we provide basic support services to help older people (usually those aged over 65) and disabled people to maintain their privacy and independence in a safe and friendly environment.

**housing support service** – a free visiting service for people who are in danger of losing their home, have mental health problems or special needs, or are young and vulnerable.

**intensive housing management** – housing staff will spend more time with customers who may need things explaining a little more clearly, or who may prefer a home visit rather than just being sent a letter. We will provide information in different formats and will help people understand their tenancy and the services available to them in person.

**WATCH** – Wrekin Alarm Telephone Call Helpline, an alarm service for people who feel at risk in their home due to age, illness, disability or vulnerability. WATCH also provides smoke alarms, door openers and other environmental equipment.

**able living service** – we have redesigned our adaptations service. Now we assess the social aspects of living with disability, as well as the physical design of the home, and we give advice and support as well as arranging for aids and adaptations.

If you're disabled, we look at how suitable your accommodation is, what sort of support network you have among friends and family, and whether you need to move to a home where you will be more independent. This could be sheltered housing, a home with adaptations, or a level-access home elsewhere.

We get an average of 85 referrals a month. Since 2005 we have fitted about 300 walk-in and over-shower baths, some as part of our Decent Homes programme. The waiting list for showers has gone down from three years to one. We've also been able to cut waiting times for minor adaptations, and in 2006/07 we dealt with 745 requests. We always monitor targets for waiting times, installation times, and customer satisfaction.

We're always trying to improve the service and use resources effectively. For example, we buy temporary ramps, 'Lego' ramping systems and different styles of grab rail, and we advise on renting different stair lift schemes.



**chooseyourhome (CYH)** – is a choice-based lettings system. It aims to give you more choice and control over where you live. The key difference from a traditional housing waiting list is that available homes are advertised regularly and you choose a home that suits your circumstances in areas where you'd like to live.

CYH advertises all types of homes including adapted properties and supported housing, so everyone can choose where they live.

To ensure that we let specialist homes to people who need them, we write each advert to fit that particular home. For example, if the home has a walk-in shower we show the symbol for this on the advert. We use symbols so that if you have problems with reading or language you can still see what's special about the home. Also, we will only consider you for that home if you need a walk-in shower.

### how do I register for CYH?

You can register in several ways, whichever is easiest for you:

- online
- through our special call centre
- at any local housing office that shows the CYH logo

You can view the adverts:

- on our website, or
- at local housing offices, or
- in other ways – for example, we can post leaflets to you

If you have a support worker, they can register as a 'proxy user' and choose a home on your behalf, if you want them to.

**awareness raising** – 95% of our staff have received disability awareness training.



# DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2007–10

## Attitude and awareness

### objective:

Try to develop a culture in which we understand and value disability and are committed to ensuring there is no unfair discrimination on the grounds of disability anywhere in the organisation.

| specific task   | responsible  | timescale            | outcomes and measures   |
|---|--|----------------------|---|
| Give frontline staff the resources and skills to provide additional housing support to disabled tenants who have difficulty managing their tenancy because of their disability. | Tenant services managers<br><br>Service development managers – housing | January – April 2008 | Home visits and additional support.<br><br>Referrals to relevant support agencies.<br><br>Annual Homecheck visit.<br><br>Up-to-date records on how individuals need to communicate. |
| Make all staff aware of the Disability Equality Scheme and understand its objectives  | Diversity manager<br><br>Induction training                            | January/ March 2008  | Committed staff who recognise the importance of disability equality in our services, so increasing satisfaction among disabled customers.   |
| Arrange disability awareness training for all new staff within 12 months of appointment.  | Diversity manager<br><br>Human resources consultant                    | Ongoing              | 95% of employees will have had disability awareness training.   |
| Arrange disability awareness training for board members and tenants' panel representatives.   | Diversity manager<br><br>Assistant company secretary                   | May 2008             | 95% of board members and tenants' panel members will have received disability awareness training.   |

# DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2007–10

## Access to services and communication

### objective:

To ensure that disabled people can get information and take part in the activities of the Trust.

| specific task   | responsible  | timescale      | outcomes and measures   |
|---|--|----------------|---|
| Make information on services and service standard leaflets available in formats that meet people's needs. | Communications and marketing manager                     | September 2008 | Service standard leaflets will be available in audio, large print and on the Intranet. Individual communications needs will be recorded and easily available to staff to ensure customers are contacted in a manner that meets their needs. |
| The website will be fully accessible for a range of disabilities.   | New media marketing manager                              | April 2008     | The website will conform to a recognised access standard.   |
| Frontline staff will talk to disabled people about adjusting our services to meet their needs.            | Tenant services managers<br>Service development managers | December 2008  | Disabled people will be able to use our services and get services that meet their needs. We will monitor how satisfied they are.  |
| We will monitor complaints, harassment and antisocial behaviour to do with disability.                    | Service development managers                             | January 2009   | Monitoring our services will ensure that disabled people receive a fair service.  |

# DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2007–10

## Access to premises

**objective:**

To make our buildings as accessible as possible.

| specific task   | responsible   | timescale | outcomes and measures   |
|---|---|-----------|---|
| We will check the accessibility of all our buildings to disabled people, and draw up a programme of works to maximise accessibility to our Colliers Way offices; shops; communal areas of sheltered schemes; and communal areas in blocks of flats. | Head of Asset Management<br><br>Tenant services managers – property | 2007–10   | Public buildings that are as accessible as possible to disabled people.<br><br>Everyone should be able to use shops without a fuss over how they go in and out. |

# DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2007–10

## Policy development

### objective:

To ensure all policies and procedures are non-discriminatory and take account of the needs of disabled people.

| specific task   | responsible                      | timescale       | outcomes and measures  |
|---|----------------------------------|-----------------|--|
| Carry out an equalities impact assessment on all new policies and procedures. | Senior managers                  | Ongoing         | Policies and procedures that do not discriminate unfairly or unlawfully against tenants or housing applicants. |
| Review all existing policies and carry out an equalities impact assessment.   | Policy and regulation consultant | Present to 2010 | Draw up a timetable to review all policies continuously.   |
| Revise and expand the equalities impact assessment.                           | Diversity manager                | January 2009    | Review our impact assessments to consistently update our policies in line with changing legislation.           |

# DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2007–10

## Asset management

### objective:

Asset management policies and strategies aim to make homes more accessible and easier for disabled people to manage.

| specific task   | responsible   | timescale      | outcomes and measures   |
|---|---|----------------|---|
| Take into account the needs of disabled people when planning major works.                   | Head of Asset Management                              | September 2008 | Major repair contractors will have to meet accessibility standards and adapt to individual needs.   |
| Take the needs of individuals into account when prioritising repairs and improvement works. | Executive Director Tenant services manager – property | March 2009     | A policy on prioritising repairs that can be tailored to the needs of our disabled customers. We will achieve this by knowing their needs, and assessing how they might be affected by having to wait for a repair. |
| Take the needs of disabled people into account when undertaking new developments.           | Development consultancy                               | June 2009      | Ongoing consultation on the needs of disabled people in relation to future homes. The results will influence the design of new developments, particularly of lifetime homes.  |
| Show we are committed to developing places where everyone can live on equal terms.          | Development consultancy                               | October 2008   | Set a target for the number of wheelchair-accessible properties.  |
| Build accessibility into criteria for new developments.                                     | Development consultancy                               | July 2009      | Issue access statements outlining accessibility requirements.   |

# DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2007–10

## Aids and adaptations

| <b>objective:</b><br>An effective, timely aids and adaptations service aiming to meet the needs of disabled tenants.           |                                    |                |  |
|--|------------------------------------|----------------|--|
| specific task  | responsible                        | timescale      | outcomes and measures  |
| Reduce the waiting lists for showers to less than six months.  | Housing support services manager   | April 2009     | Improved service to customers. We will monitor targets for waiting times, installation times and customer satisfaction.  |
| Work with partner agencies to improve the quality of life for families with a disabled child or parent through better housing. | CYH manager                        | September 2008 | Through working with families and partner stakeholders we will investigate how to improve the quality of life for the family. This will be measured by reducing waiting times and offering more options. |
| Improve internal monitoring of adaptations as part of 'Homecheck' visits.  | Tenant services manager – property | April 2009     | A full record of adapted properties.   |
| Monitor satisfaction with the adaptations service.   | Housing support services manager   | Ongoing        | An efficient and effective aids and adaptations service that meets the needs of disabled people. Measured through satisfaction levels and against targets.   |

# DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2007–10

## Harassment

**objective:**

To eliminate harassment on the grounds of disability.

| specific task  | responsible       | timescale     | outcomes and measures   |
|--|-------------------|---------------|---|
| Raise awareness of harassment on the grounds of disability through working in partnership with stakeholders. | Diversity manager | June 2008     | All partner agencies will deal consistently with the reporting of hate crime and harassment on the grounds of disability. Victims will be encouraged and supported to report incidents. |
| To increase reporting of harassment on the grounds of disability.  | Diversity manager | December 2008 | We will use a victim-centred approach to recording and dealing with incidents of harassment on the grounds of disability.   |

# DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2007–10

## Allocations and lettings (chooseyourhome)

| <b>objective:</b><br>Meet the needs of disabled people when they are trying to find a home.            |   |                |  |
|--|---|----------------|--|
| specific task  | responsible   | timescale      | outcomes and measures  |
| Analyse the needs of disabled applicants to offer an equal chance of finding a home.                   | CYH manager   | September 2008 | Meet the needs of disabled people and families through CYH, or discuss other housing options.                              |
| Work in partnership with all stakeholders to meet individual families' needs.                          | Housing support services manager<br><br>CYH manager         | May 2009       | With partners, work to meet the particular housing needs of disabled families who have explored all other housing options. |
| Influence planning and development to provide disabled people with future homes that meet their needs. | Director of Development<br><br>Director of Housing Services | October 2010   | Influence the long-term regional strategy to meet the housing needs of disabled people. Influence partners' strategies.    |

# DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2007–10

## Employment

### objective:

Disabled employees and prospective employees view the Trust as their employer choice.

| specific task   | responsible                       | timescale      | outcomes and measures   |
|---|-----------------------------------|----------------|---|
| Set up a forum of disabled staff on disability practices and policies.  | Diversity manager<br>HR manager   | April 2009     | Disabled employees have a forum to express views on how we meet their needs.  |
| Increase the number of disabled staff within the workforce.   | Diversity manager<br>HR manager   | September 2008 | A diverse workforce including disabled people, who view the Trust as their employer of choice. Measured through monitoring and aspirational target setting. |
| Ensure a supportive working and learning environment, which enables disabled employees to reach their full potential. | HR consultant (health and safety) | January 2009   | Monitoring training and development activities every year to ensure there is no discrimination against disabled employees.                                  |
| Where possible, retain employees who become disabled during their employment.   | Diversity manager<br>HR manager   | May 2009       | Monitor ill-health retirements and redeployment opportunities for employees who become disabled during their employment. Set targets and monitor outcomes.  |



This leaflet is also available in other languages and on audio tape.

W razie problemów z przeczytaniem tego dokumentu prosimy zadzwoniæ pod numer 01952 217100.

如果你不明白這份文件的內容，請致電 01952 217100 求助

ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ, ਜੋ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਹਾਊਸਿੰਗ ਟ੍ਰਸਟ ਦੀ ਲੋਕਲ ਸ਼ੌਪ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ ਜਾਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਮੁੱਖ ਦਫਤਰ ਦੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਨੰਬਰ 01952 217100 ਉੱਤੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ کو اس خبر نامے کا ترجمہ اردو میں درکار ہو تو برائے مہربانی اپنے کسی ایسے دوست سے ہمیں 01952 217100 پر رابطہ کرنے کو کہئے جو انگریزی بولتا ہو۔ ہم آپ کیلئے ترجمے کا انتظام کریں گے۔

### The Wrekin Housing Trust Ltd

Registered Offices  
Colliers Way  
Old Park  
Telford  
Shropshire  
TF3 4AW

tel **01952 217100**  
email **enquiries@wrekinhousingtrust.org.uk**  
internet **www.wrekinhousingtrust.org.uk**

Registered in England No. 3558717  
Housing Corporation Registration No. LH4220  
Registered Charity No. 1074701

Published May 2008

This document has been  
**TENANT READ**  
and passed for Clear English



**The Wrekin**  
Housing Trust