

HARROW COMPACT

HARROW CODE OF PRACTICE ON DISABILITY

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of this Code are to ensure that, through support of the voluntary and community sector and their work in Harrow,

- disabled people receive appropriate levels of support and advice and are enabled to play a full and equal role within the community
- stereotypes of disabled people are eliminated
- awareness of issues that affect disabled people is raised
- disabled people are empowered to have equal access to life opportunities and supporting services
- the Disability Discrimination Act is complied with and best practice is adopted.

Definition of Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act defines disability as “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 best practice approach to disability issues is to adopt the social model of disability which considers that it is the environmental, social and attitudinal barriers that society erects that prevent disabled people from taking a full part in activities such as education and employment. This contrasts with outdated medical model of disability which focuses on impairments that a disabled person may have.

Harrow Context

The 2001 census told us that around 15% of Harrow residents consider themselves to have a disability that limits their daily activities or the work that they can do. However this figure may grossly underestimate the number of disabled people as there are many people who will not disclose their disability fearing it will cause them to be treated differently, whilst others do not regard themselves as disabled. Consequently the true number of disabled people in Harrow is likely to be much higher.

Legislative framework

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 was the first piece of legislation that made it unlawful to discriminate against disabled people in the areas of employment, education, the provision of goods, facilities and services and the buying or renting of land or property. The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 extended the rights of disabled people and the obligations on public authorities which now include a duty to have due regard to the promotion of equality of opportunity for disabled people even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people.

This code builds on the legal rights that disabled people now have. The code also recognises that changes in attitudes and raising of awareness are needed to facilitate equality of disabled people.

This Code embraces the following principles and values which will underpin the work of the statutory sector with the voluntary and community sector in supporting disabled people

Principles

- People who use services and their carers should be involved in planning and the delivery of those services
- Information should be produced in a range of formats
- Agencies should publicise the fact that information is available in different formats
- Services need to be appropriate to the needs of users
- Disabled people should not be treated as a homogenous group
- Services need to be responsive and able to adapt to changing individual needs

Values

- We believe that everyone is equal and should have the same chances in life
- We believe in respecting people's cultures, beliefs, traditions and differences
- We believe that people should be treated as unique individuals
- We believe that people who use services should be listened to and involved in all aspects of planning, design and delivery of services
- We believe that all services should be responsive to and able to adapt to changing individual needs

The statutory sector will

- Support the voluntary and community sector where they seek to involve people who use services at the earliest opportunity in the planning, commissioning, development and delivery of new and existing service, and where appropriate, their families, carers and advocates.
- Promote disability equality in relation to all aspects of its work with the voluntary and community sector and the services which that sector provides.
- Insist on the voluntary and community sector complying with the DDA in relation to their own workforce and service provision.
- Where appropriate, undertake monitoring and evaluation of services provided.
- Actively encourage joint working with other organisations to bring about improved access and opportunities for disabled people.
- Support the voluntary and community sector in promoting inclusion and independence to enable disabled people to participate fully in all areas of life.
- Collaborate with partners to enable disabled people to access information quickly and easily in accessible formats.
- Ensure disability equality is fundamental to all decisions and activities concerning the voluntary and community sector and the services which it provides.

- Assist the voluntary sector to support the disabled people they serve
- Buy in the wealth of knowledge and experience held by voluntary organisations to improve statutory services where appropriate.
- Support the voluntary and community sector in promoting choice and assisting disabled people to make informed choices about their lives.
- Work with voluntary and community sector in their efforts to improve career opportunities for disabled people wishing to work or return to work.
- Increase disability awareness amongst those staff involved in supporting the voluntary and community sector.
- Support the voluntary and community sector in undertaking access audits and making reasonable adjustments to remove barriers to access buildings and services.

The voluntary and community sector will

- Support disabled people to gain equality by giving them appropriate information, advice and practical support and through campaigning.
- Work in partnership with the statutory sector and other voluntary organisations in promoting equality of opportunity.
- Inform the statutory sector of community concerns relating to disability based on evidence gained through the local communities.
- Provide a professional service in undertaking Access Audits, for buildings and services, Disability Equality and Awareness Training and Consultancy.
- Campaign, highlight and advise on disability and other relevant issues ensuring that disabled people in Harrow have a strong voice.
- Commit to adopting appropriate quality standards and applying best practice throughout the operations of organisations.
- Work with partners to make use of appropriate training opportunities within the statutory sector.
- Where appropriate, undertake monitoring and evaluation of services provided.
- Ensure those representing people with disabilities seek to be accountable to their members.

February 2009