

# Disability Equality Scheme 2009-2012

Easy Read Version



If you would like help to understand this document, or would prefer a summary, please call the Diversity Team on 01432 260216.

# 1. Introduction

This document is about how Herefordshire Council, NHS Herefordshire (the primary care trust or PCT) and Hereford Hospitals Trust (HHT) are going to make sure that disabled people in Herefordshire get fair treatment. It is also about how these organisations are going to think about disabled people in everything that they do.



In this document you will find out about what the Council, PCT and HHT already do to support disabled people, and what they will do to try to make things better.

# 2. Why have a Disability Equality Scheme?

Because of the Disability Discrimination Act, all councils, PCTs and Hospitals Trusts need to write a Disability Equality Scheme. And there are other good reasons why it helps us to write one, for example a Disability Equality Scheme will make it really clear how we plan to meet our targets for disability and make things better for the people who live in Herefordshire.



When we wrote this Disability Equality Scheme, we spoke to lots of disabled people in Herefordshire to ask them what was important to them. To do this, we sent out questionnaires and held meetings.

# 3. Useful information about disability

## What is disability?

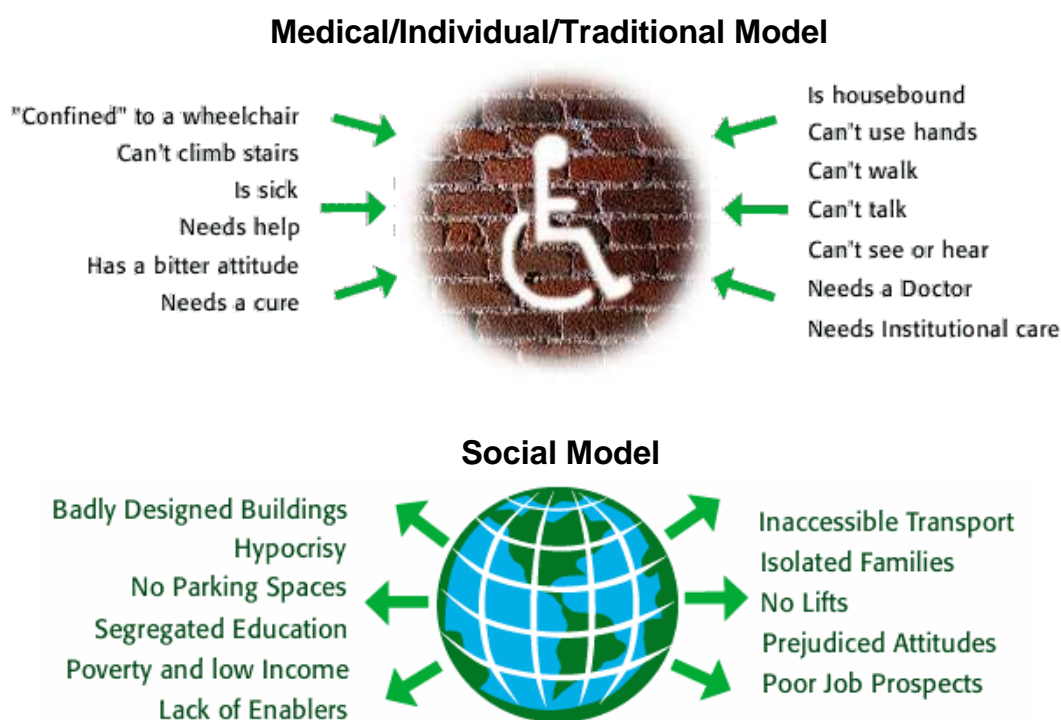
The organisations think of disability in the same way as the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). In the DDA, a disabled person is someone with a physical or mental impairment that has a big impact on their day-to-day life, and lasts for more than one year.

## The Social Model of Disability

The Council, PCT and HHT use the “Social Model of Disability”. This means that we believe it is the world around us which disables people, rather than their medical condition or impairment. For example:

- Buildings are built that disabled people cannot get into
- Information is produced in ways that disabled people cannot use

The organisations are trying to find out what makes things difficult for disabled people, and change them to make them easier.



## How many disabled people are there in Herefordshire?

It is very difficult to say exactly how many people in Herefordshire are disabled. That is because some people are not registered disabled and some don't consider themselves disabled. Also, there are so many different types of disability that no one organisation has a clear record.

However we do know that:

- When people filled in the 2001 Census, 26,200 people said that they were disabled.
- In 2008, 7,850 people in Herefordshire were claiming Disability Living Allowance.
- In July 2009, there were 9,207 Blue Badges being used in Herefordshire.

## 4. How many disabled people work for the Council, PCT and HHT?

Like the section above, this figure is difficult to get right. But our records tell us that in March 2009, the following numbers of employees were disabled:

	Number of disabled employees	Total people in workforce
Herefordshire Council	52	6,030
NHS Herefordshire (PCT)	7	1,557
Hereford Hospitals Trust	44	1,812

## 5. The Priorities

When we talked to disabled people in Herefordshire, we were told that there are certain things that are particularly important to get right. So these things are the priorities of this Scheme. The 5 priorities are listed below.

### 1 Transport

When we say transport we mean:

- Buses, taxis and trains
- Roads and car parking
- Community transport
- Pavements and kerbs
- Hospital and school transport



Transport and getting out and about is important. A lot of people told us that they were not very happy with the state of roads and pavements. A lot of people also told us that they were not happy with school transport or hospital transport. However, lots of people are happy with taxis and Shopmobility.

## 2 Accessible Toilets

Good toilet facilities can make the difference between a disabled person going out or staying at home. So it is really important to have good facilities, to allow disabled people to have choice and independence.



## 3 Training and Attitudes

It is really important to our customers and patients that the staff who help them understand their needs, and treat them with dignity. They want the Council, PCT and HHT to train staff so that they are better at working with disabled people.



## 4 Inclusive Communities and Services

Disabled people want to be a real part of their community. They don't want to feel like they are a problem which needs solving. For the Council, PCT and HHT, it means we need to think about disability equality in everything that we do.



## 5 Advice and Support for Disabled Employees

Our disabled employees told us that they needed better advice and support about work. The Council, PCT and HHT do not employ very many disabled people. So it is important that we help those we do have to stay in their jobs and work to the best of their ability.



## 6. What the Council, PCT and HHT already do

The list below shows just some of the things that the organisations already do to support disabled people.

- **Bus Travel:** Herefordshire Council provides free bus travel for disabled people at any time of day and across county borders.
- **Complaints Procedure:** Customers can complain by telephone, by writing, e-mail or face-to-face.
- **Swimming:** Carers of disabled people (who cannot swim on their own) can swim at Halo pools for free when they are with a disabled person.
- **“Two Ticks” Disability Symbol:** All three organisations are allowed to use the “Two Ticks” symbol which means that we support disabled people in training, employment and promotion.
- **Disabled Car Parking:** Herefordshire Council is one of very few authorities in the UK to offer 3 hours free parking in its Council car parks to Blue Badge holders.
- **Interview Letters:** All letters encourage applicants to let us know if they have any special requirements to enable them to come for interviews.
- **RADAR Keys:** Keys are now available at a reduced price from all Herefordshire Tourist Information Centres and Info Shops.
- **Monitoring:** When people use our services, we ask them if they are disabled. We can then make sure that disabled people are being treated fairly and getting the services that they need.



## 7. The things we are going to do

Below are just some of the things the organisations are planning to do over the next three years to make things better for disabled people:

### 1 Transport

- Find out how to make sure there are accessible taxis across the county.
- Look at using loading bays as disabled parking bays as well.
- Carry on with the Baywatch campaign to try to make sure that disabled parking bays are used by the people who need them most.
- Make sure that all taxi drivers who have an accessible taxi have wheelchair access training.

### 2 Accessible Toilets

- Improve the accessible toilet at Blackfriars Education Centre.
- Try to get a Changing Places toilet when we do building work at St Katherine's in Ledbury, Hereford Leisure Pool, the Hereford Centre and Maylord Orchards.
- Try to improve the toilet facilities at Hereford County Hospital.

### 3 Training and Attitudes

- Give good quality disability equality training for our employees.
- Print Two Ticks disability symbol on all information that we produce.
- Make sure that all health and adult social care providers have to listen to service user/patient feedback and use it to improve services.

#### **4 Inclusive Communities & Services**

- Help all our staff to use simple language, or Plain English, so that people can understand them better.
- Meet with people from the Disabled community to talk about ways to make county fairs more accessible.
- Make the internal doors at Gaol Street Clinic easier to open.
- Produce and promote a “Care Directory” listing services available for disabled people
- Deliver training to teachers to raise their awareness of their school’s disability duties.

#### **5 Advice and Support for Disabled Employees**

- Provide better information for our employees about Disability Leave.
- Install an induction loop at the Castle Green training centre.
- Provide “Equality and Diversity” training to all HR Officers, Assistant HR Officers, and HR Advisers and higher level training for HR managers.

The full version of the Disability Equality Scheme and its Action Plan are available from:

Herefordshire Council Corporate Diversity Team  
01432 260216 • [diversity@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:diversity@herefordshire.gov.uk)  
PO Box 4, Plough Lane, Hereford, HR4 0XH  
[www.herefordshire.gov.uk/disability](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/disability)