

Western Health & Social Services Council

Disability Duties

Progress Report to end March 2008

Background

The WHSS Council was given an exemption, by ECNI from producing a 5-year Disability Action Plan, on the grounds that it would:

- Undertake a mapping exercise to identify work that the Council has already carried out to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage their participation in public life.
- Submit by 30th September 2007 and 31st March 2008 a summary progress report.

Mapping Exercise and Progress report

- A mapping exercise and progress report were completed and submitted to the ECNI on 30th September 2007.

Progress to end March 2008

New Policies and Disability Duties

Screening and EQIAs

As expected, and reported in the mapping exercise, no new policies were developed in the period ending 31st March 2008.

Employment

The WHSS Council continues to adhere to all WHSS Board's financial and HR policies and procedures.

Communication

The Council has a small complement of 4 staff who have received Equality and Human Rights training. Staff are reminded of their duties with regard to people with disabilities regularly at staff meetings.

Council staff and members continue to represent the public on various Groups and Committees and ensure that the voice of disadvantaged and minority groups is heard.

Accessibility

The Council continues to advocate for disadvantaged groups and individuals – for example adults and children with disabilities; waiting times for assessment for children with autism.

Council staff continue to work closely with complainants including people with a disability to ensure that their support needs are met.

Having undertaken a review of the the Council's website and adding 'text only' sections, the website is regularly updated.

Consultation

A senior manager of the WHSS Council continues to sit on the Western Equality and Human Rights Forum.

The Western Equality and Human Rights Unit established a working group to help shape the Disability Action Plan of the Western Trust. A senior member of WHSS Council staff contributed to this working group.

The working group also involved Trust staff and representatives from RNIB, RNID, Disability Action, MENCAP, Mind Yourself and Heads Together.

Consultation at a regional level was taken forward in collaboration with the other four Health and Social Care Trusts. At a local level the Western Equality and Human

Rights Unit conducted a comprehensive consultation programme with groups based in the Western Board area.

The WHSS Council continues to hold monthly Council meetings which are open to the public and accessible for disabled people.

The Council continues to involve patients/clients/carers in their work programme through its working groups and consultation events.

The Minister for Health consulted with the public regarding the new HSC organisations including the Patient Client Council. The four Health Councils facilitated consultation workshops with various voluntary and community groups to ensure that the views of the public were heard.

Transition to new Patient Client Council

The WHSS Council is working towards dissolution and looking forward to the establishment of the new Patient Client Council in April 2009. The Council has established valuable links with a range of community and voluntary groups, including people with a disability, and will work to maintain and strengthen these partnerships throughout the transition stage.

The four Health Councils (HSSCs) are undertaking a joint piece of work in conjunction with Disability Action to carry out a scoping exercise on disability issues and the experience of the HSSCs. A report will be produced that will identify current and developing issues and highlight future opportunities. The report will include recommendations for the new Patient Client Council (PCC) and set out some of the areas that the PCC may wish to put in its plan from April 2009.

Contact Person

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