

Disability Equality Scheme

Easy read summary

Publication date:

November 2006

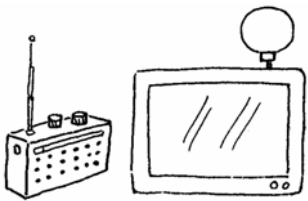
Who is this plan by?

We are called **Ofcom** (Office of Communications).

Our job is to check certain services to make sure they are working well for the people that use them.

We check services that are run by other groups of people.

Here are the services we check:



- television
- radio
- telecommunications. This is things like telephones
- wireless. This is things like the internet and Broadband internet



We want to make sure that:

- people are able to use the services
- the services are good
- the services are right for the people that use them
- there are enough services for people



A law called the **Communications Act 2003** says we have to do these things.

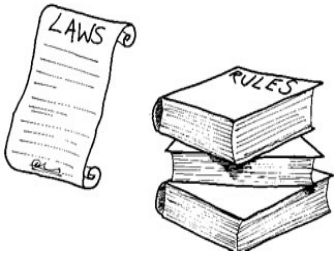


We are not part of the Government but we have to tell the Government about the work that we do.



What is this plan about?

This plan is called a **Disability Equality Scheme**.



A law called the **Disability Discrimination Act 2005** says that we have to do what we can to make sure people with disabilities can use the services as easily as everyone else.

The law also says that we must treat our disabled staff fairly.

This plan tells you about how we will make sure that:



- the services we check are easy for disabled people to use.



- the people that run services think about what disabled people want and need when they make new plans or services.

It tells you what we have done already and what we plan to do next.

What does Ofcom do for people with disabilities?

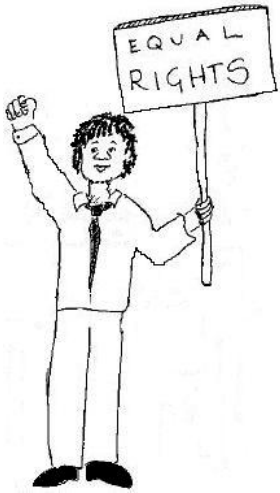


Here are some of the things we have done already to make sure that people with disabilities get equal access to the media and make Ofcom a better place for disabled people to work.

- We have put someone in charge of equal opportunities and disability at Ofcom. This person is called a **Diversity Champion**.

The Diversity Champion is a member of our Executive Committee.

This group makes sure Ofcom is working well and doing the work we are responsible for.



- We have set up a group of people called a **Diversity Working Group**.

This group will help make sure that we do the things we need to do to make disability and other equality central to the work Ofcom does. It also helps make Ofcom a better place for people with disabilities to work.



- Another group called the **Advisory Committee on Older and Disabled People** (ACOD for short) give us advice about what people with disabilities think about things.

- We have joined a group called the **Employers Forum on Disability**. This group will help us know what to do to make things better for people with disabilities that work at Ofcom.



More about what we have done



- We have made a plan like this one about our work for people from different groups including those with disabilities in Northern Ireland. This is called the **Equality Scheme for Northern Ireland**.

- There is a guide for businesses that provide television services to use called the **Code on Television Access Services**.



This tells broadcasters about:

- subtitles – words along the bottom of the TV screen
- sign language for TV shows
- audio description – a voice talking about what is happening on the screen to help people who are blind or can not see very well.



They have to make sure that disabled people know which services they can get to help them when they watch TV.



- **Universal service review** – this about making sure that everyone is able to get a telephone if they want one. There is a section in the review that looks at the needs of people with a disability.



- **Working in Europe** – Ofcom is working with other countries in Europe to make sure that we all look at communications in the same way. During this work, we pointed out the link between disabled people being able to get at communications services and the need for equipment that is easy to use.

More about what we have done



- **Research** - we have researched (looked into):
 - what people with disabilities know about the different media services
 - how people with disabilities are shown on television
 - how text relay services are provided for people who are deaf or can't hear very well.



- The **Code on Electronic Programme Guides** – this is about public service channels (like the BBC, Channel 4, ITV and Five).

This is about how electronic programme guides need to work so they can be used by people with sight and hearing disabilities

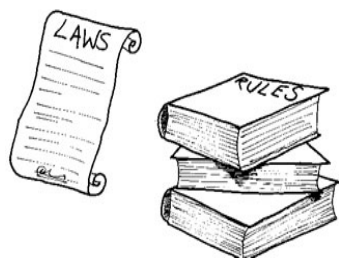
- The **Equal Opportunities Toolkit for Broadcasters**.



This toolkit gives broadcasters (like the BBC, Channel 4, ITV and Five) ideas about how they can make sure that there are equal opportunities and disability equality in employing and training their staff.

Ofcom as an employer

Under the law, we must make sure that disabled staff are treated as well as other staff.



At the moment, we do not have a lot of disabled staff and would like to have more people with disabilities working for us.



There are also not a lot of people with disabilities working in broadcasting (television and radio).

We will try to help broadcasters make sure that there are equal opportunities and disability equality in the way they employ and train their staff.

Our staff also need to know what disability equality is about.



We will train our staff so that they know what they have to do to make things better for people with disabilities.

Involving people with disabilities in making this plan



We asked people with disabilities what they thought needed to be in our Disability Equality Scheme

We did this by working with:

- the Advisory Committee on Older and Disabled People
- staff with disabilities
- advertising in Disability Now magazine and on their website
- holding focus (discussion) groups in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.



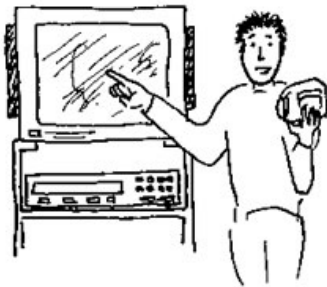
What we are going to do in the next 3 years



The disabled people we worked with to write the Disability Equality Scheme helped us to choose 7 main things that we will work on over the next 3 years.

These 7 things are:

1. Access

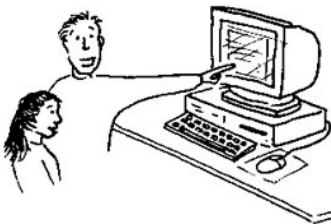


Making sure people with disabilities can get at television and other communication services.

This is really important with the big change that is happening called digital switchover. Digital is the new way all television programmes will be broadcast (sent to your television).

The way communications equipment is made and how easy it is to use is also an important issue for disabled people.

2. Media literacy



This is about what you understand about how to use the television, radio, internet and mobile phones.

It is about making sure people with disabilities have the same chance to understand and use these things as everyone else.

3. Content and standards



This is about how people with disabilities are shown on television and talked about in radio programmes.

More about what we are going to do in the next 3 years

4. Information services and complaints



This is about making sure that people with disabilities know about our work and how to make complaints about what is on TV and radio and telephone and internet services.

5. Participation and consultation



This is about making sure that people with disabilities are part of our committees that make decisions.

6. Employment and training



It is sometimes difficult to get disabled people to work for us and the companies we check as part of our work.

We will try to find new ways of getting more staff with disabilities and make sure that everyone at Ofcom knows about disability equality.

7. Procurement

Procurement is another word for buying.



This is about making sure that we get our goods and services from companies that have equal opportunities policies that include disability equality.

- goods - things we use like computers, paper and so on.
- services - like companies who look after our buildings or people who make sure our equipment is looked after.

The disability action plan

This is a plan that will help us:

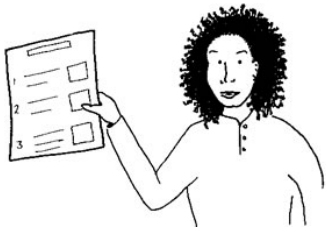


- to make sure the needs and rights of people with disabilities are included in our work
- to be a better employer of people with disabilities

This plan will need to be checked every year.

It may also need to change to make sure we are working well with and for people with disabilities.

Gathering and using information



To make sure our Disability Equality Scheme and action plan are working well we will need to check them often.

To do this, we need to gather information about what is working well and what is not working well.

We will use the information we get to check:

- how well we are doing against how well we said we would be doing
- what effect the scheme and plan are having on equality for people with disabilities
- what is stopping us from doing well and what we can do to change this
- if we need to change the way we work
- that we have set targets to get things done by and if we are sticking to them
- how well we are doing against other authorities like us



Impact assessments



An impact assessment is a way of checking that the decisions we make do not have a bad effect on people with disabilities. It is about checking what happens when we make changes or do new things.

We will think about how our plans will affect people with disabilities when we are making decisions.

Who makes sure the Disability Equality Scheme is used well?



The Ofcom Board is responsible for making sure the Scheme is done well.

Other parts of Ofcom, like the advisory committees, will also help.



The Diversity Champion will be responsible for making sure that Ofcom does what it says it will do in this Disability Equality Scheme.

