

South East England Development Agency

Disability Equality Scheme 2006-2009

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What is the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA)?

The South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) is the Government funded agency set up in 1999 responsible for the sustainable economic development and regeneration of the South East of England - the driving force of the UK economy.

The economy of the South East is the 20th largest in the world, bigger than several countries including Denmark, Austria, Sweden, South Africa, Singapore and Greece. Covering the counties of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, Kent, Oxfordshire, Surrey and East and West Sussex. The South East is home to over eight million people, more than any other UK region and more than Scotland and Wales combined.

SEEDA's primary means of leadership is its strategic influencing role, crystallised through its preparation of the region's Regional Economic Strategy. (RES) The RES is prepared in close consultation with its partners region-wide and is reviewed and refreshed every three years. SEEDA has recently undergone a process of review of the South East Regional Economic Strategy. The South East Regional Economic Strategy can be found at www.seeda.co.uk.

SEEDA's aim is to create a prosperous, dynamic and inspirational regions by helping businesses compete more effectively, training a highly skilled workforce, supporting and enabling our communities, while safeguarding our natural resources and cherishing our rich cultural heritage.

We are funded by Government to enable us to invest directly in a range of economic development programmes, and are in a position to help secure European Union and private sector investment for the region.

SEEDA works with businesses, education at all levels, local authorities, Government agencies, voluntary and community organisations and many others, producing clearly recognisable results as a catalyst for change across the whole South East region.

SEEDA is a business-led organisation, accountable to Government, governed by a Board whose Members have a wide ranging experience in industry and commerce (including the rural economy), local government, education, trade unionism and the Third Sector.

Strategic Objectives

SEEDA's work is focused on three main objectives

- ***Sustainable Economic Growth*** - To create high quality jobs and support world class productivity through new products and processes and through effective business support and business driven skills provision.
- ***Sustainable Regeneration*** - To build social, economic and environmental sustainability into all our communities through quality, participation and delivery and through our own area-focused regeneration.
- ***Strategic Influencing*** - Working with all our partners to create comprehensive strategic frameworks and policies to support the Regional Economic Strategy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Equality and Diversity is not an issue that anyone can ignore. The UK is in a time of huge demographic social and economic change which requires proactive action to enable our economy to continue to grow.

The UK has a shrinking tax base. By 2014 there will be more people over 65 than under 16 meaning that our ability as a nation to pay for the infrastructure and public services we require throughout our lives will diminish over time. We also know that;

In just seven years.....

- Only a third of the workforce will be male and under 45.

In the next 10 years.....

- There will be two million more jobs in the UK economy, 80% of which will be filled by women.
- The working age population will increase by one million, with ethnic minorities accounting for over half that increase.

Addressing these challenges and creating long-term sustainability will require a fresh approach to employment. Not only do we have to get used to the idea of working later into our lives, but employers must recognise and enable the potential of the entire population; removing the physical and social barriers to participation in employment for all.

Indeed, embracing diversity has its own benefits to the economy. Diverse workforces have been proven to be more innovative and therefore more competitive. The mix of perspectives brought about in a diverse business often enables the identification of new markets and opportunities that are not open to businesses with homogenous workforces.

In addition, the increasing impact of Globalisation on how and when we work means that the time-bound norms of the nine to five approach to business is becoming less relevant. Businesses now often carry the burden of a 24 hour approach to work. To make this sustainable in the long-term they must adapt their use of communication and travel to be led by customer demands and employee needs through embracing a more flexible approach to work.

This new flexibility brought about by advances in communication and information technology brings about a whole new world of possibility for better integrating personal needs, family life and work. Making the workplace a more equitable and flexible place also increases productivity and helps to retain staff. Employees are more likely to work effectively in an environment where they feel valued, their needs are met and they can take control over their working conditions.

As an Economic Development Agency, Equality and Diversity is therefore our core business. We want to ensure that our own staff are able to reach their potential as our effectiveness as an organisation depends on it. Equally, we want to support all businesses and employers across the South East to embrace these principles so that our region will become more competitive, our communities stronger and our long term development more sustainable.

1.1 The Disability Equality Duty

The new duty on public authorities to produce and implement a Disability Equality Scheme was introduced in the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and will come into force on the 4th December 2006.

It is vital that the DES and associated action plan, is not simply an access audit report, dealing with the DDA 1995 requirements, including the final phase in October 2004, where organisations have to make reasonable adjustments taking into account the physical environment (buildings) as a barrier. Instead, it should be a robust framework creating a genuine cultural change. The best way to achieve this is to ensure that all six elements of the General Duty and the following three additional items are addressed:

- ☐ Eliminate discrimination against disabled people in relation to all service provision and employment practices
- ☐ Work from the Social Model of Disability approach
- ☐ Moving beyond Consultation to Participation, Involvement and Full Engagement with disabled people

The aim of the duty is to enable public authorities to ensure that their functions and activities lead to real outcomes and practical improvements in the day-to day life and experience of disabled people. This process is built around the responsibility of Public Sector Organisations to:

- Promote Equality of Opportunity
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
- Eliminate harassment of disabled persons that relate to their disabilities (*impairments*)
- Promote positive actions towards disabled persons
- Encourage participation of disabled persons in public life; and
- Take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities (*impairments*) even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

Public Authorities listed in the Statutory Code of Practice for Disability Equality are required to outline how they will address the objectives listed above through the publication of a Disability Equality Scheme (DES). The DES is intended to provide a practical and proportionate plan of action to ensure that all functions of an organisation consider Disability Equality in the planning, development and operation of its functions. The Disability Equality Scheme is developed on a three year basis, with the requirement for a clearly outlined methodology of review and monitoring of the scheme.

The basic ingredients of a disability equality scheme, set down by the Disability Rights commission are:

- Ensuring that disabled people participate in the creation and review of the scheme
- An action plan with clear objectives and milestones
- Information outlining how the organisation will gather information on their performance of delivering the scheme.
- Arrangements for assessing the impact of the activities of the authority on disability equality and a process of improving these where necessary.
- A process for using the information gathered to review the schemes effectiveness and preparing subsequent schemes.

1.2 The Social Model of Disability:

In paragraph 1.6 of the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) Codes of Practice: The Duty to Promote Disability Equality, states that;

‘The Social Model of Disability provides a basis for the successful implementation of the duty to promote disability equality.’

The DES and associated action plan will embrace and promote this approach, thereby embedding this cultural change across the organisation.

The DDA 2005 is not about giving individual disabled people rights - it is therefore not relevant whether an individual is covered under the DDA 1995 definition. The 2005 Act is about anticipating the organisational, cultural, attitudinal and environmental (including communication) barriers and being proactive in removing them.

Definitions of Disability

For the purpose of this DES, SEEDA will, in line with the Social Model of Disability, define a disabled person as;

‘Someone who may experience discrimination on grounds of impairment’ – (see Appendix 1 - Understanding Disability.)

The terminology used throughout this document will be language consistent with the Social Model of Disability. However, it is important to note that the present DDA definition of a disabled person is a Traditional Model definition, i.e. something ‘wrong’ with the person. This is likely to change over the next few years. The Disability Rights Commission, following extensive consultation, in July 2006 produced their Recommendations to Government report, that clearly demonstrates the need for anti discrimination legislation to move away from a traditional model definition of disabled people;

“...a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”
Disability Discrimination Act 1995 - Section 1

The DRC report recommends that this should be replaced with a Social Model of Disability definition;

"a person who experiences discrimination on grounds of impairment"
or

“...everyone who has (or has had or is perceived to have) an impairment without requiring the effects of that impairment to be substantial or long-term.”

This will be a major change and will avoid the mixed and confused messages about disability. One consequence is that many disabled people are likely to feel more comfortable to define themselves as a disabled person i.e. someone whom may experience discrimination on grounds of impairment - rather than being seen as the problem itself. In a recent survey by the DRC, 52% of disabled people who would be covered under the present definition, would choose not to self define. The definition of a disabled person, used to monitor staff and service users, has clear implications for the collection of data and gathering evidence.

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 extended the legal definition of a disabled person to include ‘a person who is affected by a long-term health condition including cancer, HIV infection or multiple sclerosis.

It is best practice to consider the needs of all disabled people - rather than focusing on whether the individual may or may not, be covered under the present DDA definition.

SEEDA's Disability Equality Scheme is based on the ‘Social Model of Disability’. It therefore seeks to ensure equality of opportunity and access of people with:

- A physical or sensory impairment
- Difficulties associated with learning, communication or social interaction.
- Emotional, behavioural, or mental health problems
- Long term medical condition or illness

1.3 The Diversity of Disability

SEEDA's DES recognises that disability itself is extremely diverse and that no one persons experience of disability is exactly the same as another. Our DES seeks to ensure that the full spectrum of disability issues are represented in our actions to promote disability equality and remove the social and physical barriers faced by disabled people.

SEEDA also acknowledges that many users of British sign language see themselves as a linguistic minority not as ‘disabled people’. ‘Deaf’ describes a culture with its own language, history and social norms and structures. This cultural model of deafness expresses being deaf as a positive way of experiencing the world visually, rather than the medical model which would define deafness as how far someone’s hearing differs from the ‘norm.’

2. Our Vision for Disability Equality

Our overall vision is that SEEDA ultimately becomes an employer of choice for disabled people, working with our partner organizations to promote best practice in disability equality. We will work to reduce disadvantages, discrimination, and inequalities of opportunity, and promote diversity in terms of the people we serve, our workforce, the partners we work with and the services we deliver.

The policy sets out our commitment to disabled people and builds upon work which has already taken place.

2.1 Our Objectives

We want disabled people living, working and visiting in the South East of England to be enabled to realise their full potential through the achievement of the following targets:

- **An increase in the economic participation rate of disabled people in the South East from 61% in 2006 to 75% in 2016.**
- **A 10% increase in the skills attainment levels of disabled people at all skills levels between 2006 and 2016.**
- **The establishment of a baseline and development strategy for disabled person business ownership and growth by 2009.**

Achieving these targets is a big job and not one that SEEDA can do alone. SEEDA will use its disability equality scheme to support the achievement of these three key targets through two main activities:

- **Leadership by example** -Embedding disability equality throughout SEEDAs activities including seeking to increase the number of disabled people working for the organisation to from 4% to 16%, equivalent to the percentage of the South East population classified as being disabled.
- **Partnership and Collaboration** - Working with disabled people and disability organisations, the public, private and third sectors to create a high level regional agenda for the promotion and adoption of disability equality.

Participation of Disabled People in the Development of the DES

Throughout the process of development of the DES we have sought to enable participation from disabled people both within our own staff team and external stakeholders. This process has included.

- A development event on the 19th July 2006 to develop the draft framework in partnership with disabled people and disabled led organisations.
- Research from Kingston University and the Social Inclusion Partnership South East to identify the experiences of disabled people in the region in relation to employment and childhood disability.
- An internal reference group, led by disabled staff within SEEDA, to advise us during the DES development and ongoing monitoring and review stages.
- An external reference group of disability organisations and individuals. This group has worked with us in the drafting stages, and enabled buy-in to the actions across the region.
- The development of an ongoing web based survey of disabled people to allow them to reflect their experience of disability back to SEEDA.
- The contracting of a disabled consultant, to work closely with us in the final drafting of the document.
- The organisation of four sub-regional focus groups to draw in local disability stakeholders and disabled led organisations into the consultation period.
- The creation of a call off contract with a disabled consultant to act as a critical friend during our ongoing equality impact assessment process.

A list of the people and organisations that participated in the development of the DES is included at Appendix 2.

2.2 Consultation

During the development period of the Disability Equality Scheme we opened up our draft document for a formal period of consultation, advertising the process through a range of media. We also held 4 sub-regional events with disabled people and disability organisations. The key messages that we received from that process included:

- The need for clearer quantitative targets and milestones within the plan.
- The need for SEEDA to support a regional approach to supporting the participation of disabled people in the general policy making process.
- The need to prioritise training of SEEDA staff in Equality issues.
- The need to evidence impact.
- The need to clarify how we would monitor and review the DES.
- The need to make sure that we place responsibility on our deliverers and monitor that responsibility effectively.
- The need to give disabled people real opportunities within SEEDA as an organisation.

We have sought to address these issues in the final draft of the DES through the creation of a headline targets framework and the development of specific actions to support the issues raised above.

In addition a number of recommendations were made to us relating to areas that do not fall within SEEDA's remit as a Regional Development Agency. As such we will seek to take on board these issues as of wider concern to disabled people and will disseminate our wider findings through the publication of the consultation summary report to our wider public sector partners.

The full external consultation report summary can be found at Appendix 3.

2.3 The Scheme

Our Disability Equality Scheme is one of a growing suite of targeted action plans to promote different elements of Equality and Diversity throughout our functions. These other strands include, race, gender, age, religion, belief and sexual orientation. We recognise that all these strands are interconnected and, at a strategic level we want to approach Equality and Diversity from a holistic perspective. As such by December 2007 SEEDA will have an integrated Equality and Diversity Plan, which will not only address the single strand issues of Equality and Diversity but will account for the overlapping considerations of multi equalities issues.

However, these single strand action plans enable us to develop a targeted evaluation and monitoring process for individual elements of Equality and Diversity policy. This approach enables us to see where our interventions are having most impact and improve our performance where necessary.

The purpose of our Disability Equality Scheme is to:

- Show how we have involved disabled people in decisions we have made.
- Find out what barriers are faced by disabled people and take steps to remove them.
- Find out what disabled people need and which of these needs are the most important to them across our remit as a Regional Development Agency.
- Make sure we meet our legal duties.
- Tell people what our responsibilities are. This includes telling: stakeholders, managers, employees, unions, our partners in the public, voluntary and private sectors, as well as residents.
- Explain how we make things fairer for disabled people in planning our services and what we do.
- Show how the Scheme links to other equalities objectives and priorities.
- Provide information about our involvement, assessments and training arrangements.
- Work in partnership with other disability organisations to prevent ignorance and prejudice in the wider community.
- Show what has changed as a result of involvement and set out our three-year disability equality action plan on how we will put the Scheme into practice.
- Monitor and check what we are doing and report each year

2.3.1 Strategic principles of SEEDA's Disability Equality Scheme.

On the 19th July 2006 SEEDA and ID&A held a participation event with approximately 30 key organisations supporting disabled people in the region. This included public sector bodies, disabled led organisations and disabled individuals, plus an internationally renowned Disability Access Consultant and Architect.

The aim of the day was to explain the functions of SEEDA more fully and to hear directly the strategic themes and actions that disabled people felt would be critical to ensuring that the Disability Equality Scheme has the required impact.

The information gathered through that process has led to the development of seven key principles that form the heart of the scheme. They are:

Key Principles of the DES

PRINCIPLE	STRATEGIC ACTIONS
1. Identify desired outcomes for disabled people	• <i>Have a clear evidence base before you make policy decisions.</i> • <i>Make sure your evidence comes from disabled people themselves</i>
2. Provide Leadership by Example	• <i>Proactively support disabled people into employment.</i> • <i>Support disabled people in work</i> • <i>Provide opportunities for job experience</i> • <i>Make sure your communication mechanisms are accessible</i> • <i>Make sure equality and</i>

	<i>diversity is integrated into all your key functions</i>
3. Raise Awareness and Understanding	• <i>Make people aware of the value of disabled people</i> • <i>Promote The Business Case for Diversity</i> • <i>Ensure people understand the barriers</i> • <i>Ensure that people are fully trained in equality & diversity</i> • <i>Make disability relevant to a broad range of stakeholders</i> • <i>Make people understand different parts of disability - particularly the impact of mental illness on unemployment</i>
4. Increase Aspirations	• <i>Promote role models for disabled people</i> • <i>Encourage the development of support networks</i> • <i>Learn from successful organisations and people</i>
5. Influence directly and indirectly	• <i>Procurement - influence supply chains</i> • <i>Employment</i> • <i>Recruitment</i> • <i>Physical accessibility</i> • <i>Monitoring performance i.e. education provision</i> • <i>Influence housing associations to build houses to full standards</i> • <i>Influence professional planning institutes to involve disabled people and train disabled students</i> • <i>Apply conditions to funding</i> • <i>Devolved delivery</i>
6. Add value & reduce duplication	• <i>Use networks to learn from each other</i> • <i>Support networks for entrepreneurs</i> • <i>Get buy in from other organisations that are implicated</i>
7. Be realistic and resource delivery	• <i>Make sure the organisation has high level buy-in and leadership</i> • <i>Provide adequate resources to deliver.</i> • <i>Prioritise and be realistic</i> • <i>Provide clear milestones objectives and targets</i>

3. The Evidence Base

3.1 Disability Demographics

Working with disabled people across the region has given us a wealth of evidence of the barriers and outcomes they experience. This information has reinforced our statistical evidence base gathered through the 2001 Census, the Annual Labour Force Survey and our own regional research into the life experiences of disabled children and their families. We know that:

- There are 6.8 million disabled people of working age in Britain, one fifth of the total working age population. 52% are men and 48% are women.
- 844,000 people of working age in the South East have an impairment.

- In addition, it is estimated that the region also has approximately 59,000 children with an impairment, 19,000 of whom have a severe impairment. This is 4% of the child population of the South East.
- Disability rates also increase with age, only 9% of adults aged between 16-24 have impairment, whereas in the 50 to retirement age category this rises to 44%.
- There has been a gradual increase in the number of disabled people in Britain over time, from six million in 1998 to 6.8 million in spring 2005. This is 14% growth in the disabled population, in comparison the non-disabled population only grew by 0.6% in the same period.
- The South East region has seen the largest net growth in disabled people in the UK in the same period, increasing from 681,000 in 1998 to 844,000 in 2005, an increase of 163,000 people (23%) in seven years.
- The geographical distribution of disabled people in the South East has a higher level of concentration in the Eastern and Coastal Parts of the region. Indeed, Kent and Hampshire alone are home to 35% of all working age disabled people in the region. However, only Kent has a percentage of its population which is higher than the National Average, at 19.9%.
- The analysis at the borough level is however much more stark, 21 local authority areas have higher than national average proportions of working age people that are disabled people. Thanet, Swale and Gravesham all having over 24% of their working age population having some form of impairment.

(From Disability Briefing DRC March 2006)

3.2 Barriers and negative outcomes faced by Disabled People

The South East has a growing and significant disabled population. We also know that disabled people in our region continue to face significant social barriers to economic and social participation these include:

- Physical Barriers - unsuitable housing, inaccessible transport and public facilities.
- One of the most pervading social barriers for disabled people is the impact of stereotypes that limit entry to opportunities in employment and education.
- Lack of accessible information, resources and services.
- Discrimination in employment
- Segregated services.
- Adoption of the Medical / Traditional Model.
- Prejudice.
- Devaluing.

Negative Outcomes

For many disabled people the combination of these factors leads to diminished life chances as social barriers prevent equality of access and opportunity. Negative outcomes being experienced by disabled people in the region as a result of these barriers include:

Unemployment and Underemployment

Unemployment and underemployment is an outcome faced by many disabled people for a wide range of reasons. For some it is as a result of inaccessible education, for others a result of direct discrimination, inflexible working practice and poor support and infrastructure.

Many disabled people want to work. In the UK as a whole 50%, (3.4 million people) are currently in work with a further 1.2 million wanting to work. This rate of employment for disabled people has grown steadily in the last eight years from 43 to 50% however this rate still lags far behind non disabled people who have an economic participation rate of approximately 80% in the UK.

Employment rates vary greatly according to the type of impairment a person has. Disabled people with mental health problems have the lowest employment rate in the UK at only 20%. National research shows that this is often a result of prejudice, inflexibility and lack of understanding on the part of employers rather than a lack of willingness or ability to work.

In addition to the higher likelihood that a disabled person may face unemployment than a non-disabled person, it is also true that disabled people in employment are more likely to be underemployed or to work in manual and lower occupations and less likely to work in managerial and professional occupations.

The South East currently has the highest employment rate for disabled people in the UK at 61%. However, this remains significantly lower than the economic participation rate of non- disabled people which currently stands at 81% for the region. 6.6% of disabled people are unemployed (34,000 people) compared to 3.6% of non-disabled people and 24% are not in work and on state benefits. (206,000 people) (Labour Force Survey 2005)

Economic inactivity rates amongst disabled people at the local level are also highly polarised, for example, in 2004, the employment rate for disabled people in Dover was just 47.4 per cent. The equivalent employment rate in Tandridge was 88.8 per cent.

Figure 1: Economic Inactivity by Disability, South East England (taken from Regional Economic Strategy Evidence Base – SEEDA 2006)

Figure 14: Economic inactivity by Disability
(South East England)

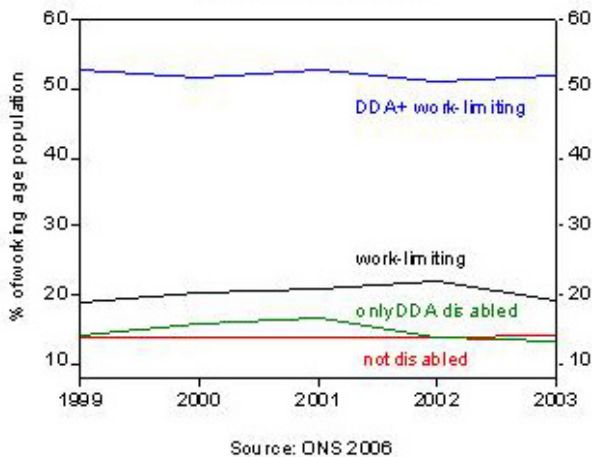
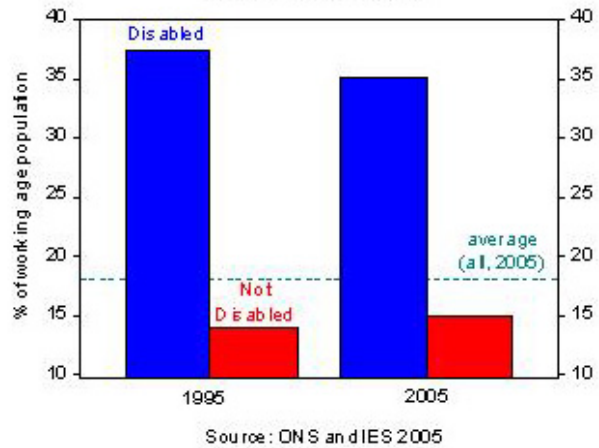


Figure 5.15: Economic inactivity by Disability
(South East England)



Financial hardship & Lower Household Income Levels

Obviously, the result of unemployment and underemployment is often financial hardship. However, financial hardship can be both direct and indirect for the disabled person. For example, the caring responsibilities of families supporting a disabled adult or child (full or part-time) can significantly impact on the economic capacity of the household as a whole.

Indeed, 55% of families with a disabled child are living on or at the margins of poverty. This is often linked to the added financial pressures of supporting a disabled child combined with greater and longer care commitments. This often reduces the ability of parents to engage in full time work, opting for more flexible part time employment with low pay.

In addition financial hardship is often exacerbated by a lack of take up of appropriate benefits for families caring for disabled people. Not accessing benefit is a particular issue for Black and Minority Ethnic households who are less likely to be receiving their full entitlement. This is often as a result of a combination of factors including inaccessible information and a reticence to ask for support from benefit providers.

Lower educational attainment

Disabled people are only half as likely to be qualified to degree level and are twice as likely as non disabled people to have no qualifications at all. This pattern of inequality has not changed since 1998.

Disparities between educational outcomes between disabled and non disabled people are often a result of the social barriers to access and attitudes.

Restricted social participation

The inaccessibility of many social meeting places, transport, leisure facilities and methods of communication often result in physical and social isolation for disabled people. The freedom to develop strong and wide social networks is a key ingredient to developing confidence, learning social skills and accessing information that can support people to progress in education and employment. Barriers that limit the ability to

develop these networks for disabled people can impact on educational, employment and health outcomes for disabled people.

The South East has some specific challenges which add to the inaccessibility of many forms of social interaction for both disabled and non-disabled people in the region including, the large rural geography of the region and over reliance on private transport to travel around the region.

Additional health problems - stress, depression and mental illness

The pressures placed on disabled people as a result of the barriers and the resulting negative outcomes they often experience also has an impact on their wider health. Social isolation, disempowerment and economic hardship can often produce added stress resulting in depression and other forms of mental illness.

3.3 Staff Profile

SEEDA has a total staff population of 320 people, split over three sites, Guildford, Chatham and Hastings. SEEDA carries out an Equality and Diversity Survey every year to help us update our approach to the support of our staff as well as helping us to measure our progress in increasing awareness of Equality and Diversity issues.

Given the personal nature of some of the questions on the survey, the process for completion is entirely voluntary and anonymous. The last survey was completed in August 2006 with a 55% response rate (167 completed surveys).

The survey revealed that approximately:

- 77% (129 people) of respondents do not believe they fulfil the Disability Discrimination Act Definition.
- 3% (five people) of respondents preferred not to say if they fulfilled the definition.
- 14% (24 people) of respondents were unsure as to whether they fulfilled the definition.
- 5% (nine people) of respondents believed they did fulfil the definition.

In addition to this survey we undertook wider consultation with our staff in the preparation of the Disability Equality Scheme. The consultation was designed to help us understand why not all of our staff respond to these kind of questionnaires and to judge whether we are capturing all relevant information in relation to their needs and concerns about disability equality. We found that of those people questioned 33% acknowledged that they have a disability but do not include this information in their staff survey response. The reasons for not completing this information were varied and included issues such as:

- Lack of clarity about what is considered to be a disability.
- Concern that information may impact on their careers in the form of both positive and negative discrimination.

- Staff may be aware that they have a condition classified as a disability but do not see themselves as 'disabled'.

In addition, internal consultation highlighted a number of areas of concern which were felt should be addressed on an organisational level. In particular support for staff dealing with mental health related issues were highlighted as a priority, particularly as it was expressed that this is often a 'hidden' or taboo disability.

In order to address the above issues and create a more supportive environment for staff with a disability, internal consultation made the following key recommendations:

- Provision of high level management and leadership training in relation to equality and diversity for all line managers.
- Greater access to expert advice through advertising the Employee Assistance Programme more widely.
- A focus on developing strategies for supporting and managing people with mental health issues.
- The development of a 'managing disability at work' reference for staff.

3.4 Parameters for Action: Direct and Indirect SEEDA functions

The Disability Act Code of Practice states that Disability Equality Schemes must address all functions of the public authority in question. In order to develop the most effective means of identifying areas for action and implementing our disability equality scheme it is important to clarify the direct and indirect operating mechanisms used by an RDA to achieve its objectives. The mechanisms for delivery can be broadly grouped under the following headings:

Corporate Functions - These are the functions of running the 'day to day business' of being a public agency they include:

- Human Resources
- Procurement
- Performance Management Systems
- Corporate Strategy
- Finance

Direct Delivery - SEEDA delivers a number of projects directly within the region. This means we are responsible for managing the design and implementation stages. This is the smallest proportion of our activity.

Devolved Delivery - The majority of our work is delivered on our behalf by our partners. Our role here is to identify areas of need through evidence building and partnership based strategy development, to commission partners to deliver and to monitor impact via evaluation and output collection.

Strategic Influencing - Another significant area of work is our co-ordination and strategic influencing role with the wider Public, Private and Third Sector. Our functions here focus using our unique position and expertise to communicate and negotiate to achieve our wider policy aims.

These four mechanisms of delivery assist us in delivering our corporate and regional objectives. Our objectives are focused on key thematic areas that form the basic areas of action in the South East Regional Economic Strategy.

They include:

3.5 Thematic Interests.

Global Competitiveness

- Global Businesses and Foreign Direct Investment
- Knowledge transfer and business expenditure on research and development
- Innovation and Creativity
- Infrastructure

Smart Growth

- Enterprise
- Skills
- Competition and Business Regulation
- Transport
- Physical Development
- Employment
- Sustainable Development

Sustainable Prosperity

- Climate change and energy
- Sustainable consumption and production
- Natural Resources and the Environment
- Sustainable communities

At an Operational Level these three objectives are delivered through 5 internal divisions within SEEDA, they are:

- Corporate Services
- Learning and Skills
- Development & Infrastructure
- Business & International
- Strategy and Sustainability

The action plan of the DES will be set against the core functions of each of these divisions and will explain how each division will proactively address disability Equality through its internal and external functions.

4. Current Activities to Address Disability Equality

SEEDA has also been already been undertaking actions to address Disability and Equality. The Disability Equality scheme provides an opportunity to review and improve our current activities. The activities already being undertaken by SEEDA to address disability equality through its functions are tabled at Appendix 4.

5. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Process

SEEDA is committed to embracing a holistic approach to the undertaking of Equality Impact Assessments. This means that any project, policy or function going through and EIA process will consider all strands of Equality and Diversity.

In conducting an EIA SEEDA will adhere to the following key principles:-

- Assessing how the proposed project, policy or function is likely to affect people from relevant groups; this should include collecting and analysing relevant data;
- Consulting people who are likely to be affected by our proposed project, policy or function;
- Reviewing and revising the proposed project, policy or function in light of the assessment and consultation.

To assess the impact of a proposed project, policy or function it is important to have as much knowledge as possible about how the proposed activity will affect people. How this is assessed will depend on the nature of the activity itself but will include some of the following:

- *Demographic data and other statistics, including census findings*
- *Available research findings*
- *Comparisons between similar policies in our Agency and other Agencies.*
- *Survey data*
- *Equality monitoring data*
- *One off data gathering exercises*
- *Specially commissioned research*

SEEDA'S Equality Impact Assessment process is outlined at Appendix 5.

6. Key Targets

Implementing a Disability Equality Scheme is fundamentally about bringing about change for disabled people, enabling them to access education, employment, training and services on a level playing field. Therefore, the success of our scheme must be measured by the impact it has on disabled people across our functions and services in the region. The scheme has therefore adopted a high level target framework which will be the basis of measurement of our progress. These targets relate both to the internal operations of SEEDA which are solely our responsibility and a range of regional targets which we will strive to achieve in partnership.

Internal Quantitative Targets (SEEDA Sole Responsibility)

Targets	By 2009	By 2016
Increase the number of disabled people working for SEEDA to:(%of total workforce)	8%	16%
Increase the number of disabled people employed by SEEDA at Senior Management grades by:	10%	20%
Ensure all SEEDA Buildings/ venues and devolved delivery partner buildings venue are accessible for all	100%	100%
Ensure all New Physical Development overseen by SEEDA in the region complies to the Inclusive by Design Standards by:	100%	100%

External Targets (Working in Partnership) (Baseline 2003 figures)

Target	By 2009	By 2016
Increase the economic participation rate of disabled people in the South East from 61% to:	65%	75%
Increase the skills attainment levels of disabled people at all skills levels by:	2% on 2003 baseline	10%
Reduce the number of disabled people living on or below the poverty line in the South East by:	3%	10%

7. Key Stakeholders

Achieving the external targets of this plan will require extensive partnership working. The key partners we will seek to work with on this agenda will be:

- The Commission for Equalities and Human Rights.
- South East Disability Equality Council.

- Local Government
- Central Government
- The Learning and Skills Councils
- Trade Unions
- Further and Higher Education Institutions
- Regional Action and Involvement South East
- Job Centre Plus
- Strategic Health Authorities

8. Monitoring, evaluation and Review Process

SEEDA recognizes that the Disability Equality Scheme has to be a 'living' policy to be effective, and will therefore keep it constantly under review and regularly monitored. SEEDA will seek to ensure that the Scheme is publically updated on an annual basis and that all action plans, guidance and standards set out in the scheme are subject to monitoring and assessment against the Equality Standard for Local Government. The wider monitoring, evaluation and review process will be as follows:

The Scheme itself will be formally reviewed in its entirety at least every two years. This process will include refinement and changes to the scheme to ensure its continued effectiveness and ability to improve the SEEDA's approach as an organisation to disability access.

The internal process of monitoring will take place on a quarterly basis via updates from each division on the progress of their section of the action plan. Progress updates will be submitted to the Board member responsible for Equalities and Diversity.

The board member will seek advice and support on the continuous development of the DES via the submission of quarterly progress reports to an external reference group of disabled people and disability organizations, paid to support SEEDA in improving its practice. These quarterly meetings will provide the opportunity for these organizations to scrutinize SEEDA's actions and support the organization in improving practice. This group will also be notified of any pending complaints received by SEEDA in relation to the scheme and will provide an independent advice group to assist the organization to effectively deal with these complaints.

In addition, a quarterly meeting of the internal disabled staff reference group will feed back recommendations and matters arising in relation to the implementation of the scheme with SEEDA staff.

The recommendations from these meetings will form the basis of the annual updating of the scheme.

It will be the responsibility of the Board Member with responsibility for equality and diversity to report on progress to the wider board.

In addition, the action plan of the Disability Equality Scheme will be integrated into the corporate planning cycle of the organization, and will be form part of the divisional reporting cycle. By integrating the plan into the wider Corporate Plan enables divisions to build in resources to address Equality and Diversity at an organizational level.

8.1 The Equality Standard for Local Government

In order to deliver our overall commitments on equality and diversity, SEEDA has adopted the Equality Standard for Local Government.

The Equality Standard is not a legal requirement but has been produced to provide a framework through which local authorities can meet their legal obligations under anti-discrimination legislation. It has five levels of achievement:

Level 1 Commitment to a comprehensive Equality Policy

Level 2 Assessment and consultation

Level 3 Setting equality objectives and targets

Level 4 Using information systems and monitoring against equality targets

Level 5 Achieving and reviewing outcomes

The Standard is also about making equalities part of our day to day activities. SEEDA is aiming to reach level 2 of the standard by 2009.

8.2 Action Plan Monitoring

The individual action plans which underpin this scheme will have monitoring systems attached so they can be measured for effectiveness.

Building Access Action Plans

The Access Action Plans that are being developed at service level will include involvement of disabled service users in monitoring access solutions. These plans will need to be produced as evidence in Health and Safety audits and in inspections to provide evidence of compliance with the DDA and impact assessments related to the Equality Standard.

SEEDA'S Performance Plan

SEEDA will aim to be consistent with the following regional standards through showing performance against Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) objectives. These performance targets enable the measurement of improvements for disabled people in accessing services and employment. These include:

- **BVPI 2a** Equality standard for Local Government.
- **BVPI 3** Overall public satisfaction (As part of the public satisfaction survey undertaken every three years, disabled people in the community will be asked how satisfied they are with SEEDA's services.
- **BVPI 15f** Ill health retirements / staff.
- **BVPI 16b*** Working age (18-65) disabled people (The percentage of SEEDA's employees declaring they meet the disability discrimination act's 1995 disability definition, compared with the percentage of economically active disabled people in the authority area.
- **BVPI 156** Buildings and facilities for disabled people

8.3. Service focused performance indicators

Services will have their own performance indicators which will provide information on how well we are serving disabled users. As a minimum all services within SEEDA should know many service users are disabled and what their needs are and provide a proportionate target for improvement.

9. Training

The Human Resources (HR) Team has responsibility for our organisational approach to all equality training. In reviewing and development training the HR Team will take into consideration:

- The social model of disability will be the foundation for all training/learning and development.
- Disability equality training to be a consistent and mandatory part of induction for all staff.
- Customer care training to include disability equality elements.
- Training/learning to encompass all staff irrespective of hierarchy, contracted hours or nature of contract.
- Management training to ensure that staff meets required standards.
- To establish clear links to other diversity elements and in areas of health and safety, customer care, and human resources.
- Disability equality and etiquette learning and development needs to be considered through the Performance Appraisal and Personal Development scheme.
- To enable all frontline staff to achieve the relevant Novice level standard in the National Disability Equality & Etiquette Knowledge and Skills Framework (to be launched by the DRC in Spring 2007)
- To enable all members of the Inclusion Committee to achieve the relevant Competent level standard in the National Disability Equality & Etiquette Knowledge and Skills Framework (to be launched by the DRC in Spring 2007)

10. Leadership within SEEDA

The key driver to the achievement of the actions contained in this Disability Equality Scheme is the leadership and ownership of the scheme at the highest level.

Leadership will be driven primarily by the SEEDA Board and Chief Executive. SEEDA has created a Board position to lead on all aspects of equality and diversity for the Agency with an Executive Director responsible for Equality and Diversity at the operational level.

The drive for the implementation, monitoring and review of the Disability Equality Scheme will come from the Board 'Inclusion' Committee, who deliberate on and advise the central Board of the Agency on all detailed elements of equality and diversity strategy and implementation. This group is chaired by a Board Member, with executive ownership by the Director of Resources and the Director of Strategy & Sustainability.

This committee reports to the Board on progress against the objectives and milestones of the DES through the Board's quarterly 'Agency Report'.

Responsibility for operational delivery of the Disability Equality Scheme rests across all Divisions of SEEDA. Each Executive Director has responsibility to ensure that their staff have appropriate skills and knowledge of Equality and Diversity policy at the corporate level. In addition, SEEDA currently has a specialist Equality and Diversity advisor based within the Strategy and Sustainability Division who advises the rest of the Agency on emergent legislation.

11. Supporting Disability Leadership in the South East

In addition to developing leadership within SEEDA to promote this agenda, we are also committed to giving disabled people in the region a more direct role in influencing and changing policy across our spectrum of activity. We will therefore work with the Commission for Equalities and Human Rights and the South East Disability Equality Council to promote systemic change across the region.

12. Complaints Procedure

Members of the public who feel that they have experienced disability discrimination in the way the SEEDA has treated them may make a complaint through its Complaints Procedure. The complaints procedure is outlined in full at Appendix 6.

We have grievance and disciplinary procedures in place and a policy on dealing with complaints of harassment relating to employees.

We also have a 'whistle-blowing' procedure, which extends the protection for employees who want to report bad practice without fear of being victimised as a result.

We will take all complaints seriously and will not tolerate any form of discriminatory behaviour.

Monitoring complaints is also another way of gathering information to see whether we are meeting our equality duties.

Factsheet 1

Understanding Disability

Definitions:

Impairment is...

Impairment is the loss of function or ability of an individual's body.

The word 'impairment' is used to describe the reasons why people are considered to be disabled. Examples of impairments are physical, sensory conditions, emotional / mental distress, a learning difficulty etc.

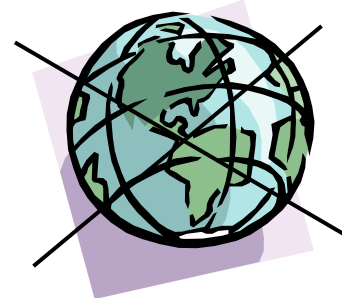
Although impairment is not an ideal word there needs to be a way of describing what it is about Disabled People that forms the basis of their social exclusion and discrimination.



Disability is...

Disability arises from discrimination on grounds of impairment.

Disability can lead to social exclusion, and a negative cycle of low self esteem, dependency and vulnerability.



Disability = Disabilism

Using the Social Model of Disability you are a Disabled Person if:

“you identify as having an impairment, e.g. a physical or sensory impairment, learning difficulty, health issue, or are different from a perceived norm (this can be hidden or visible). As a consequence of this you may experience discrimination (disabilism) – and it is that which disables you.”

Unfortunately the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) part 1, section 1 (1) defines disability using the traditional model approach:

“a person who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

Section (2) In this Act “disabled person means a person who has a disability.”

Organisations committed to using the Social Model should always use a Social Model definition of disability, except when deciding if an individual is protected under the DDA 1995.

Understanding the Models of Disability

Traditional model	Social model
The 'problem' is the individual Disabled Person's impairment	The 'problem' is how society treats or reacts to people who have an impairment
Not preventable	Preventable
The solution is to find a cure (pressure on individuals to be cured), to provide care or to offer charity	The solution is to stop discrimination and enable Disabled People to access their rights and entitlements

Implications of the Models

Traditional model	Social model
<i>Terminology</i>	
"People with disabilities" "the disabled or the impaired" "able bodied or normal people"	"Disabled People or a person with an impairment" "non-disabled people"
<i>Social Services role</i>	
Respite Care, Day Care or Residential Care – institutionalisation	Personal Assistance Scheme, Independent Living Schemes, Direct Payments
<i>Education</i>	
Segregated schools, mainstreaming	Inclusive schools
<i>Confidence of Disabled People</i>	
Low self-esteem, embarrassed about having an impairment, feeling guilty or a burden	Positive identity, able to identify and to challenge discrimination
<i>Who makes the decisions?</i>	
Professionals are seen as the experts	Professionals work for Disabled People giving them information to make choices and have control

Appendix 2

Organisation Participating in the Development of the DES

Regional and Sub Regional Events

South East Regional Trade Union Council
HMP Bronzefield
Unison – South East
Business Boffins
The Life Trainer Trust
Queen Elizabeth's Foundation
ACAS
IDeA
Lewes District Council
Citizen's Advice Southern Region Equal Opportunities & Networking Group
Surrey Chambers of Commerce
Queen Elizabeth Training College
MCCH (Aspirations, Camberley)
Association of Disabled Professionals
Buro Happold Engineering
Disability Rights Commission
Disability Equals Business
Surrey & Borders NHS Trust
LLDD Consultant
RBLI Employment Solutions
SAVAGE
Kent Police
RNID
RNIB Redhill College
Social Information on Disability
Sarah Playforth Ltd
Kent County Council
New Forest District Council
Southampton City Primary Care Trust
STCS
EDDS
Journeyman Training
East Sussex Disability Association
Kingston University
Aim Higher – South East
Southampton Centre for Independent Living
Learning and Skills Council
Surrey Supported Employment
South East Multi Ethnic Development Agency
Ability Net South East
Arts Council South East
Reading Council
RAISE
TUC

TDF
Jubilee Sailing Trust

**SEEDA External Disability Equality Scheme Drafting Reference Group
(Paid Participation)**

Southampton Centre for Independent Living
Association of Disabled Professionals
Portsmouth Disability Forum
Independent Consultants
Queen Elizabeth Foundation's Training College
MCCH Aspirations Camberley
ACAS
Disability Equals Business
Social Information on Disability

Advisory Consultant

Graham Clarke – GB Disability Training & Consultancy.

Appendix 3

External Consultation Summary

SEEDA'S DRAFT DES

2.1 The general view was that the DES was developing well and the Agency was generally commended as a measure in striving to ensure that strategic and holistic approaches to promoting equity, fairness and justice are prioritised in all areas of the Agency's life.

2.1 The critical issue, however, is to ensure that that commitment results in tangible steps to effect measurable outcomes and there were concerns as to whether the action plan and policy are clear enough with the objectives outlined sufficiently coherently and in adequate detail.

'We need to paint a picture of where we'd like to be in 3 years time, and in 2009 we need to be able to demonstrate what we've done, what we've achieved we need to have the evidence of making a difference for example, business link now helping x % more disabled people setting and developing business'

2.3 . Internal Leadership

The key role to play was identified for the SMG, senior officers, board-members in overseeing activities and regular reviewing of progress.

'They need to demonstrate active leadership and genuine commitment to the issues'.

'Responsibility for progress on disability equality given equal status with the responsibility for meeting financial and other corporate targets'.

These to include:

- Seek to refine personal and professional understanding of disability equality.
- Ensure plans to implement disability equality at regional and sub-regional level
- Identify key functions, areas for action, problems, targets and priorities and timescales

'Disability equality is not taken seriously here many people feel that because it doesn't effect as therefore we don't have to really bother and people are going to look at the disability equality scheme, and think that this is just one more thing we've got to do, that it's just more work and more needless effort'.

Internal participant

'Give assurances you will act on the data you have collected and not just give excuses for not being able to do so. Be honest to yourselves and your organisation too many disabled people see little point in

enabling you to just tick your boxes over and over again.....consultation fatigue is all disabled people have come to expect

2.4 To eliminate barriers and promote disability equality by taking swift action in order to;

- Review and revise procedures, structures. Open accountable and fair procedures and processes
- Proactive steps to change attitudes and the organisational culture, to mainstream disability equality into ongoing divisional activities
- Training for all staff.
- Ongoing and highly profiled support for disabled staff
- Regularly review progress
- Promotion and sharing of good practice

'We as an organisation are sending out a very clear message to hen the SEEDA van is frequently parked in the car park spaces reserved for disabled staff and visitors'

Internal participant

2.5 Promotion of the Disability Duty at Divisional level

- Raise purpose and content of Disability Duty and DES with senior staff
- Ensure commitment of divisional directors
- Managers raise within divisional staff meetings
- Ensure all staff are familiar with the DES, and aware of the implications, the benefits, their responsibilities and duties
- Ensure all new staff are familiar with definitions of racism and institutional disability discrimination, have an understanding of how discrimination works and can be challenged
- Build into contracts and job descriptions, induction of new staff, performance appraisals, (especially for managers) training needs.

2.6 Identification of specific Divisional issues/ Identifying Key Functions

- What are the key functions of each division with regard to eliminating discrimination and promoting disability equality?
- What baseline data exists, is needed?
- What qualitative information exists, is needed?
- Review policies, procedures and structures at divisional level to ensure application of general principles of the Duty and DES and that they don't unwittingly act as barriers to progress and achievement.
- Need to review impact of divisional policies and procedures.
- Who are the main stakeholders? With whom managers need to consult to identify objectives, priorities and progress?
- How are team members engaged to share ideas about disability equality and, express constructive criticism?
- What are the disability equality priority issues for Divisions?
- What specific objectives need to be set and how have they been arrived at?
- What actions arise out of these objectives?
- Who specifically will be responsible for implementing these?

- How will they be supported?
- To whom are they accountable?
- What is the timescale?
- How will the objectives be integrated into team/staff work plans, divisional strategic plans, equality action planning?
- How will staff be briefed and trained?
- How will progress be reviewed and monitored? What success indicators should be devised?
- How will the overall impact be assessed?
- How will results be reported?
- How will these be built on?
- What measures will be put in place for sharing good practice with other divisions?

2.7 Plans for an Involvement and Communication Strategy

The DES needs to say more about how SEEDA will involve its disabled internal and external stakeholders in devising and reviewing plans, committing to a set of objectives and targets and monitoring performance in respect of them. This process assists key players in determining how their own actions contribute to SEEDA achieving its goal, but also could give rise to a critical mass of involved, engaged and committed people who could work collectively not only in relation to the Duty but to SEEDA's more strategic agenda.

'My key concern about SEEDA's DES is that most members of staff will not be aware of it, nor will understand what it entails or how it should be implemented. I think all members of staff should be given disability equalities training in a rolling programme, starting from the top (senior management) and then working down. Everyone should own this policy, and for that to happen people need training.'

Internal Participant

2.8 Procedures for analytical target-setting and monitoring

The draft to a degree describes its measures for setting targets and monitoring progress and performance against those targets. The question of what needs to be monitored for impact and for their relevance to the intentions of the Act needs to be addressed more fully.

Procedures for setting targets need to be clearer and more coherently established along with those for monitoring and performance measurement (both for SEEDA and Stakeholders)

'There is insufficient detail about monitoring arrangements for the policy and action plan. Monitoring needs to be active and demonstrate real change on the ground'

Participant

2.9 Procedures for impact assessment and regular review, together with definition of responsibilities for further action, and procedures for publication

SEEDA need to set out clear measures for progress review and impact assessment. The DES needs to demonstrate the means by which progress and outcomes will be measured and the indicators of success it will employ.

2.10 Plans for support and training, including needs-analysis where necessary

The DES has signalled that staff development and training it will provide in order to assist staff in understanding their role in changing the culture, promoting inclusiveness and disability equality. The focus of elements of that training upon the Disability Duty and Disability Equality would benefit from a training needs analysis determining how the Directors, Management Team, Staff and Stakeholders could be enabled to fulfill their responsibilities for satisfying its requirements will make the implementation of the DES and Duty much more effective.

'The training needs to stress the business case in regards to employment; that disabled staff tend to;

- Take less time off from work as a result of ill health*
- Remain with their employers for lengthier periods than their non disabled colleagues'*

2.11 Monitoring

Deciding on actions necessary to realise defined objectives, engaging in those actions and monitoring the impact that they have so as to determine whether different or new actions will be taken are a critical element of the process of policy implementation. The proposals presented relate only to certain areas identified for action. Once having agreed the functions the DES will need to demonstrate what milestones it will set up, i.e.:

- what is to be done
- by whom
- within what time frame
- how will the activity be monitored and reviewed
- who will do this and report upon the process and its results
- to whom will those results be reported
- how and by whom will the impact of the interventions on the agreed
- prioritised function be assessed
- who will be involved in examining the outcomes of the assessment and
- determining consequent actions
- how will the results of the impact assessment be published and shared with key stakeholders

2.12 Additional areas to be addressed, with suggestions for appropriate activities, include:

- Contracting and procurement of services
- Collaboration and partnership
- Consultation and Communication Strategy
- Review SEEDA and Stakeholders publicity, promotional material

2.13 Outcomes:

The above approach is intended not just to provide evidence of additional work to bring the DES to exemplary standard, but to assist leaders and managers in developing a clear understanding of what is now necessary to implement the Policy/Plan, such that:

- a) both could be seen to make a measurable difference to the target groups with whom the Disability Duty is principally concerned
- b) they could be seen to have impacted upon the culture of the Agency through the mainstreaming of disability equality and positive approaches to diversity, as well as a dedicated approach to eliminating institutional discrimination

2.14 The DES as submitted does not yet address issues concerning the procedures for fulfilling disability equality responsibilities within collaborations and partnerships

2.15 SEEDA's Stakeholders' Accountability

- Sanctions or rewards 'incentives' what rewards can be put in contracts to reward stakeholders if and when they meet their stated disability equality targets.
- Producing 'actual' transparent targets re employment accountability of contracting chain

3. Enterprise and Business Support

3.1 Business Link

Disabled participants' personal experiences as clients with Business Link were generally limited and included;

'One of, my friends went there, and was told to 'forget it and stay on benefits'

'To my knowledge I don't think that they have any training and limited experience around disability issues'

A larger number of participants had previous experience through certain aspects of their work and the following recommendations were made;

3.2 Target Setting

SEEDA need to

- **SEEDA in regards to 'achieving parity' need to set Business Link specific disability equality targets, thereby ensuring that they become both proactive and reflective in the delivery of the service of their service in regards to disability equality.**

- At the quarterly contract meeting: during which monitoring statistics are reviewed there is a need to focus on statistics relating to disability equality.
- SEEDA to see how they can 'nail disability equality CSR to it'
- Business Link teams to engage on mandatory 'Disability equality workshops'.
- Business Link websites throughout the region to be reviewed in order to ensure that they are genuinely accessible
- Opportunity should not be missed in incorporating disability equality outcomes in the new 3 years contract that are being compiled.
- Consideration to be given as to how Disability Awareness development sessions can be provided for the 'third parties' who Business Link clients are referred to.
- Business Link could be tasked with supporting disabled people to start up businesses themselves, rather than just making sure the standard SME's meet the disability requirements.
- Small Business concerns about employing disabled people to be addressed through a marketing campaign comprised of;
 - targeted information about the business case and benefits in employing disabled staff,
 - information in regards to the funding and support available in regards to making 'reasonable adjustments
 - examples of case studies

Example of Good Practice

'I am currently developing a guide for Business Links Hertfordshire in regards to working towards disability equality'.

Participant

3.3 Accessible Information

Recommendation

All information and material to be in appropriate and accessible formats

4. Learning and Skills

People with disabilities faced many barriers in regards to accessing learning and training opportunities, and in ensuring progression and achievement on such programmes amongst which are;

4.1 Appropriate / Inappropriate Funding

- Periodic funding cycles resulted with certain programmes at times being available and then disappearing with lost learning opportunities for specific already disadvantaged groups

'We need to look at the large differences in how disabled students in HE and FE get differing additional support and how FE students have far less funding sources available to them making it more difficult to obtain appropriate equipment, for example F.E. students are not eligible for DSA funding'

4.2 Dyslexia

Learners with dyslexia and their needs were an issue often overlooked within the F.E. sector

- *'Quite often dyslexia isn't considered by college staff you frequently see them using green and red marker pens and the same colours in power point presentations which for some it's harder to read. It's so easy just ban those colours, what's wrong with browns, blacks and blues?'*

'Some tutors thinks it's unfair to other students to provide additional time and other reasonable adjustments for us with dyslexia, they see it as us just trying to use the system and gain an unfair advantage'.

'We didn't find out until my daughter reached university that she is dyslexic, if it had been identified earlier she would have got to university probably 2 years earlier and to a better one'.

'Providers need to be provided with the skills of identifying specific conditions i.e. dyslexia and issues around time keeping, short term memory loss etc '

4.3 Learning Providers

- *'Need to increase access to computer based learning'*
- *'Broaden scope and format – through non paper based assignments e.g. video cassette'*
- *'Support systems required to support disabled people when developing skills'*
- *'The skills development sector need to be more effectively linked to networks that can download the funds which focus on disability skills development'*

- *‘What we need is Inclusive Education and Training’*
- *‘They (learning providers) need to stop stereotyping and pigeon holing us’*

4.6 Learning Providers Priorities

Learning Providers

Need to prioritise focusing on the different ways that people learn and ensuring full range of provision and flexible approaches are available. provided

Learning Providers

To ensure that all teaching staff have engaged on a disability equality programme as part of their professional development

More people with disabilities should be delivering learning and training programmes and involved in the interview and selection process.

4.7 Transport provision

Due to the inadequate transport provision in certain parts of the region, this results with many disabled students facing a long, at times uncomfortable journey and hostile journey due to disablist insults.

‘Mum won’t let me travel that far’

Adult Participant with learning difficulties

This long journey alone acts as a major barrier to some disabled people.

Recommendation

SEEDA to be proactive in ensuring that more learning and vocational courses to be delivered in Ashford- to reduce the travelling time that people with learning difficulties and other ‘disabled’ people have to spend travelling on what is at times hostile public transport.

4.8 Learning Opportunities for Older People with Learning Difficulties.

One of the interesting patterns that emerged from the focus groups was the differing experiences of younger and older people with learning difficulties. Whereas the younger adults had far more experiences of college-based learning opportunities, many older participants had not, which was directly related to the more recent focus on inclusive education.

Many of the participants had been on short term courses with all having engaged on informal learning programmes via locally based centres focusing specifically on development needs of people with learning difficulties. 30% of this group had their own computer which they used to differing degrees,

'I never use mine'

I've just written a book which the hospital is publishing'

Learning and training establishments to when marketing programmes for people with learning difficulties to proactively target older learners

4.9 Influencing Further Education Provision Nationally

A consultation process is currently taking place in regards to the '*Framework for Excellence: A Comprehensive Performance Assessment Framework for the Further Education System*'. The proposal includes the development of a scorecard to describe three dimensions of a college or providers performance: responsiveness; effectiveness of provision and finance. The basis of the Framework will be seven Key Performance Indicators. In the interest of retention, progression and achievement of disabled students there is a need for equality and diversity to be properly addressed through the addition of a KPI specifically relating to this issue

Recommendation

SEEDA should take advantage of the consultation phase to comment on 'Framework for Excellence: A Comprehensive Performance Assessment Framework for the Further Education System'.

4.10 Accessible Information

Recommendation

Learning Providers to ensure that all information and learning material is in appropriate and accessible formats

5. Black and Minority Ethnic Disabled People

'From some recent work of our own on disability and BME we have become aware that individuals who fall into both categories are likely to be especially isolated in the predominantly white South East'

5.1 Broadening Services

During the consultation process it was observed that there was not one person who came from a visible minority ethnic community and it must be noted that disability impacts upon all ethnic communities and at times more so with other ethnic communities due to additional cultural barriers.

Recommendation

SEEDA to influence their stakeholders to ensure that;

- **The additional barriers that disabled Black and Minority Ethnic people with and their carers face**
- **The different perspectives about the notion of disability in various ethnic communities.**
- **Finding ways to improve engagement with disabled BME people and their carers**

5.2 Developing Culturally Responsive Enabling Services.

Recommendation

All organisations delivering services to and representing disabled people should focus on the questions as to in regards to services provided for disabled BME people ‘in what ways can our services become more;

- **Available Accessible Affordable Acceptable Appropriate Adaptable**

5.3 Communication information

Recommendation

All information to be in appropriate and accessible formats with language considerations having been made

6. Transport and Logistics

6.1 Accessibility

The fact that the region was comprised of many rural areas with poor public transport impacted upon many disabled people disproportionately. The issues highlighted included;

- The increase in Business parks and their chosen locations frequently located a fair distance from town centres, with inadequate public transport to them, result with many disabled people having problems travelling to them due to the lack of public transport.

- A consistent complaint was space limitations on carriages on trains, buses and on other forms of public transport resulting with additional problems for wheelchair users.

'Inaccessible train stations and platforms and messages not getting through to the stations has meant that I can't get off at certain stations, and at times have been left stranded on a platform, and on a recent group trip to London, 3 of the group missed the connecting train because they were late in putting the ramp across the lines'.

'Trains that only take manual wheelchairs or very small pavement vehicles that do not have sufficient battery range to travel from station to workplace'.

'Busdrivers devoid of disability awareness training who will not leave their cabs to assist disabled travellers onto/off buses'.

'Taxi/private hire drivers who are self employed and will not take disabled fares because it takes up too much of their time to collect them'.

- The transport issues impacted upon access to training and learning opportunities (see section on learning and educational)
- Additional financial problems faced by those who had great difficulty using public transport were discussed.

'We are being doubly discriminated against as we have a limited choice in regards to transport and the fact that I have to use a car and taxis we will soon be having to pay significantly more with planned taxes on carbon emission'

6.2 Hostile Environments

- 75% of the adult participants with learning difficulties had experienced bullying and harassment whilst travelling on the buses.

'People taking 'mickey' on the bus'

'Sometimes people say nasty things to me'

'My Mum and Dad tell me to ignore them when they call me names'

'I wish some way they'd stop doing it we're just people just as them'

- When asked if they would tell the bus driver if they were being called names the majority stated no and when asked why the general response was that they'd been told *'not to speak to strangers'* and that they would tell their parents on getting home.

SEEDA to urge that the bus and other public transport companies prioritise training for all staff around disability equality and to ensure

that ‘recognising and challenging prejudice’ is one of the key components of the programme.

6.3 Regional Inconsistencies

Different council's were found to have differing regulations in regards to permits, parking, travel concessions etc for disabled people what we need is some regional consistency

SEEDA to encourage the various councils to develop consistent measures throughout the region

SEEDA to use influence to pursue the provision of free transport for disabled people as reportedly occurs in London which provided free transport for the visually impaired

Examples of Good Practice

- One organisation funded volunteer drivers who provide people with learning difficulties a home collection and return service for a small fee. This proves to be far more economical than taxis and safer than public transport (small fee)
- Bus passes are able to be used after 9.00am
- Within one region a special contract with a taxi company has been arranged providing cheaper taxi fares

7. COHESIVE COMMUNITIES

‘Nothing about us without us’

7.1 Independent Living

‘Many people believe that independence is about doing everything for yourself, and therefore as disabled people often need assistance in their everyday life, they cannot be independent. Disabled people challenge this assumption. We say that independence is not about doing everything for yourself, no-one lives in isolation from the rest of the world, we all depend on each other; this is why we all live as a society.

It is this fundamental understanding that gave birth to the independent living movement. Choice and control are two of the most important factors denied to

many disabled people. Disabled people refuse to accept that non-disabled people have the right to deny them choice and control over their own lives. Having the finance, and support to enable disabled people to employ their own assistants to assist them with their everyday lives is a good way of facilitating independence. By employing their own staff, disabled people can control how the assistance they need is provided, allowing them to lead the lifestyle of their choice'.

Southampton Independent Living

7.2 Parent Support for Independent Living

For the vast majority of the adults with learning difficulties their key carers were there parents who were the centre of their lives. This quickly emerged as a result of how many of their comments were set in the context of their parents views or what there parents had told them. Having close relations with parents although a valuable commodity can at times be a setback and barrier to independent living, resulting at times with individuals

'Not engaging in certain activities'

'Not able to take risks'

'Parents having the final say in an adults financial spending'

'Parents at times needlessly worrying too much'

'Erosion of individuals' confidence'

SEEDA to influence stakeholders in developing workshop sessions for parents/carers (many of them elders) of people with Learning Difficulties focusing on, 'Moving Forward' and the various ways in which they as parents can help their sons/daughters become more independent.

7.3 Reducing Physical and Verbal Attacks

Whether it was whilst using public transport or when walking on the streets close to their homes, many of the participants with visible conditions had experienced name-calling and some physical assaults. In regards to crimes such as burglary disabled people in the region were at far greater risk than non-disabled people.

- *Near my home there's some boys who are always throwing stones at me every time they see me.*
- *Its awful around here the names they call me*
- *On one occasion (in self defence) I had to run my wheelchair directly at him and it can cause a lot of damage*

Good Practice

After a series of verbal taunts and attacks over a short period of time on the buses to Folkestone the police launched 2 investigations. (the participant was not sure as to whether any charges had been brought)

Good Practice

The need to eliminate disability related harassment

A local mental health charity submits an application for supported accommodation in the community for mental health service users who are leaving hospital. The local planning authority and the local primary care trust work with the charity. They ensure that, when the planning application is advertised to neighbouring properties, the residents are aware of the nature of the accommodation and the need for it, as well as the positive benefits to the community that the residents will bring. The planning authority is acting proactively to prevent potential not in my back yard reaction or harassment of the mental health service users.

The Police and Crown Prosecution Services throughout the region, to record certain crimes as 'disablist' offences in a similar manner that they record 'racist' offences. Similarly new legislation to be canvassed to be bought in place to ensure that such offences carry an additional penalty.

7.4 Disabled People Leading the Agenda

The development and support for user-led organisations, with disabled people defining and prioritising their own agenda is key to identifying and removing the many barriers that disable people throughout the South East.

Good Practice: Equality 2025

Equality 2025 is an important initiative that will help the life chances of disabled people by ensuring that they will have a direct voice to central government helping to design policies and services that disabled people really want. The Office for Disability Issues has recently advertised for disabled people to join them as Members of Equality 2025. Members will need to commit about 20-25 days a year and will be paid for the time they spend doing work for the new organisation. We are looking for as wide a range of disabled people as possible including disabled people from marginalised groups. They do not need to have previous experience in a similar role or working for government.

7.41 South East Disability Council (SEDEC)

The newly launched Council is made up of Disabled People with a proven knowledge of Disability Equality and a clear grasp of the Social Model of Disability, who can represent the interests of Disabled People in the South East, regardless of the nature of their impairment. It has been formed to provide:

- Information, advice and guidance to public bodies regarding Disability Equality;
- Programmes for the recruitment, selection and training of Disabled People seeking to be *involved* in public life.

SEEDA to support the development of SEDEC in a variety of ways including seeking funding for SEDEC through the pilot funding stream of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights.

8. Land and Development

8.1 Key Priorities

Two key priorities were identified within these focus groups:

- **Accessible/adapted Housing**
- **Full Access to the environment**

'People are often parking across dropped curbs they just don't care'

'I've attended meetings called by SEEDA and found poor planning or no planning taken place with meetings held in venues that are not at all accessible'.

'There needs to be more affordable housing specifically for disabled people, as housing is so expensive Disabled People on small benefits and often low incomes, so how can we manage to get onto the property market'

'A Joiner came round and I told him where I wanted the kitchen cupboards putting and he said 'they'd look better higher up' when I said no, he insisted that they would, and when I told him that if he put them at that height I would not be able to reach the second shelf, only then did he reluctantly agree to the height that I'd said I'd like them in my own kitchen, you wouldn't believe that I was paying him, you'd think he was doing me a favour'.

Example of Good Practice

A local highways/roads authority decides to encourage all of its contractors to be Considerate Contractors and offers an annual award for the contractor who

demonstrates consistent good practice with regards to accommodating the needs of disabled people during its operations.

'It's important that when receptionists see us they need to be friendly and approachable otherwise they make us feel uncomfortable'.

'Sometimes toilets doors at times are too heavy'

'At the local sport centre there's no wheelchair access at the rear'

'I have difficulty with numbers in the lifts, why can't they all have the talking device?'

'In some buildings they have escalators and no stairs that are easy to get to what happens if there is a fire for wheelchair users, I've been told that it's safer to be locked in a secure room'.

'The doors with automatic access buttons are great not just for me but also for Mums with pushchairs, people carrying stuff, and when things are made better for us many other people benefit as well.'

Example of Good Practice

An effective local access group/panel must be well supported and resourced by the local authority, while remaining independent. Examples of support required to ensure effective involvement of access groups/panels:
A local planning and highways/roads authority sets up a working group with representatives of the local access group and local disability groups to consider the support they may require in order to be effectively involved in consultations on planning and highways/roads matters. Together they prepare an Action Plan to support and resource the access group to enable them to be as representative as possible. This includes providing information, resources and administrative help so that the group can get input from, and provide feedback to, a wide range of local disability groups.

8.2 Inaccessible SEEDA Venues

SEEDA frequently organises meetings that take place throughout the region at venues which at times are in remote areas, many of which are inaccessible for people with certain conditions.

Action

SEEDA to develop an 'Venues Accessible Checklist' and meeting to be held whenever possible only at venues which become registered as accessible event to publish a list of accessible venues

8.3 Accessibility for SEEDA's Stakeholders

SEEDA to be proactive in ensuring that guests, participants etc are effectively catered for by further developing their registration forms for meetings conferences

'Information about events in accessible formats How many of you employed at SEEDA use BSL or can provide document readers for blind people?'

Action

A standard registration form to be developed for participants planning on attending conferences, meetings etc specifically encouraging people to highlight what their specific accessibility requirements are.

Example of Good Practice

A local authority instructs staff dealing with applications for building works or change of use from businesses providing services to the public to provide information regarding the requirements of the DDA, in particular the need to make reasonable adjustments to premises. Appropriate training is provided for staff dealing with these applications.

8.4 Ensuring Disability Equality: Planning, Buildings and Streets

'Developers who fail to practise the provisions in Part M of the Building Regs or BS 8300. I have heard they use approved inspectors rather than LA Building Control surveyors and appear to get away with flouting some Building Regulations'.

SEEDA to influence their stakeholders in ensuring that they follow the guidance set out in : 'Raise your EQ; Planning, buildings, streets and disability equality'.

Appoint an access officer/specialist

Specific individuals should be employed as advisors/facilitators in relation to access issues for disabled people. They should act as a point of contact for council departments/service areas and provide support to access champions

Identify an access champion in each department

Planning, Conservation, Building Control/Standards and Highways/Roads departments should identify an officer responsible for providing access expertise within their discipline.

A key elected member should champion the interests of disabled people

All elected members involved with building, street, historic and public environment issues should be trained in disability equality. Key selected member(s) should be chosen to promote and champion the interests of disabled people.

Councils and Agencies should value, support and develop the technical expertise and experience of voluntary access groups/panels each department should value the experience of their local access groups/panels and develop effective working protocols with them. The groups/panels should be supported financially and through the provision of training.

All officers should be trained and appraised in disability equality

Every member of staff (professional, administrative or technical) who has a responsibility for the built, street and public environment should undertake Disability Equality training, including the principles and practice of Inclusive Design, in the case of technical staff, by a recognised, reputable organisation.

Consistent application of access requirements must be ensured

Departments/Approved Inspectors could undertake a biannual internal Part M audit. This monitors the application of Part M across the department/company for quality, consistency and takes into account any new technical developments/guidance.

Example of Good Practice

An effective local access group/panel must be well supported and resourced by the local authority, while remaining independent. Examples of support required to ensure effective involvement of access groups/panels:

A local planning and highways/roads authority sets up a working group with representatives of the local access group and local disability groups to consider the support they may require in order to be effectively involved in consultations on planning and highways/roads matters. Together they prepare an Action Plan to support and resource the access group to enable them to be as representative as possible. This includes providing information, resources and administrative help so that the group can get input from, and provide feedback to, a wide range of local disability groups.

9 Procurement

9.1 SEEDA's Influence

As a major contract provider SEEDA can use its influence directly in both the awarding of and the monitoring of contracts.

'Shouldn't we start mainstreaming all contracts to consider diversity and equality issues?'

'I'm sick of organisations asking how do we do it, where do we start? as the DRC rules and guidance provides a useful procurement framework.'

'Why reinvent the wheel there's a good pack produced by 'Diversity Means Business' (Portsmouth)'

Good Practice

A private planning practice has been employed to produce a development brief on behalf of the local authority planning department. The local planning authority ensures that the tender documents include reference to the disability equality duty and in particular ensures the brief considers Inclusive Design principles.

SEEDA to ensure that;

- Pre procurement criteria to include disability equality requirements.
- ESF team have examples of good practice which needs to be cascaded to other divisions, providing examples of how equality of access is included within contracted agreement at the initial stages.

Monitoring of Contracts

Concerns were expressed in regards the lack of contract monitoring and the danger that disability equality may become merely a tick box exercise.

'We need to make sub-contractors supply evidence that they are enabling disability equality otherwise they'll promise us everything and deliver on nothing unless we monitor well'.

'Throughout the monitoring process we need to be always asking the question, 'where is the evidence?'

SEEDA's ESF team can provide other divisions with good practice examples of monitoring of the equality strands and the lessons learnt from this process.

Best Practice

A local authority highways/roads department does not have sufficient staff resources to undertake effective bus shelter renewal within their area. A private maintenance company is contracted to undertake this task. The highways/roads department recognises that it has a duty to ensure that the way in which the renewal work is procured promotes equality of opportunity. It therefore ensures that the maintenance company fully understands disability equality when selecting and awarding the contract. The contract requires the company to comply with the latest good practice guidance in relation to the design of bus stops within the Department for Transport's guidance Inclusive Mobility.

10. Innovative Technologies

10.1 Web Accessibility

Greater web accessibility can reduce the impact of the 'Digital Divide' which is associated with economic and social barriers for people with or without disabilities, in the use of computers and Information and Communication Technologies. Moreover, e-accessibility also provides huge benefit to older people who might experience changes in their vision, hearing and memory abilities at an older stage of their life.

Some of the areas raised were that;

- Accessible web not only increases effective and efficient information access, but also expand the level of opportunities it contributes to employment, interaction and communication.
- For all organisation having a web presence web accessibility is a corporate social responsibility.
- Providing web accessibility is essential for giving equal opportunity to people with disabilities
- Proper accessible website with clear and simple language, navigation system and good design with image maps can provide access to people with learning difficulties, low bandwidth users and new web users.

Good Practice: Free Computer Support for Disabled People.

The ITCH Network is comprised of volunteers who provide free computer support to disabled people. Volunteers visit people in their own homes and at other locations such as residential homes and day centres. There are currently over 250 volunteers, covering over 40 UK counties.

Since its establishment, the Network has been providing disabled people with effective Information Technology solutions. In the past two years alone, ITCH Network has made over 2,000 visits, solving many hardware and software problems, as well as helping people to gain confidence using a computer.

Their service includes the provision of impartial advice on computer hardware and software, installation of new equipment and software, help to get you get connected to the Internet and use e-mail, help with software packages and generally solving technical problems that may arise.

10.2 The Business Case

Disable users who have an estimated spending power of £120bn in UK, usability and accessibility increases potential market share by making web accessible and usable to more users and specifically the inclusion of Disabled People. E-accessible highlights the following business benefits.

- Return-on-Investment (A Positive Impact)

- Reduce website maintenance costs
- Web Accessibility results in increased website usage which leads to increase in audience which will further provide greater e-commerce use since it will allow to process online transactions and provide an opportunity for both users with and without disabilities.
- Improved Search Engine Rankings
- Increased positive image as it will enable the organisation to present good practice in their corporate culture and social responsibility by providing equal opportunity to disable users.
- Organisation social responsiveness and positive image results in financial gain by increased sales and customer loyalty.
- Websites which are accessible contributes to enhanced usability to both people with and without disabilities by providing better design and navigation which in turn provide positive impact and hence, return visitors.
- Improved Findability: since accessible website leads to increased exposure of content both internally and externally to search engines.
- Costs savings and effectiveness as it decreases the cost of maintenance, legal obligations and actions.

10.3 Additional Considerations

- Communication Software
- The symbols and images for people with learning difficulties need to be used more widely by Libraries and public and Local Authorities.
- The access audit of SEEDA's website cites BOBBY standard as its measurement criteria. This has now really been supplanted by WAI (Web Accessibility Initiative) under the W3C (World Wide Web Consortium).
- Quite frequently the accessible software packages are not updated at the same pace as general software.

Monitoring Sheet.

Please complete this form in order for us to record accurately the backgrounds of those engaging in the process.

Full Name	
Address	
Telephone	
E-mail	
Organisation Representing	

Pease also complete the following sections:

Disabled Person	
Non-Disabled Person	
Physical / Mobility	
Hearing / Deaf	
Visual / Blind	
Learning Difficulty	
Mental Distress	
Hidden	
Wheelchair User	
Other	

Gender

Sexuality.....

Ethnicity

In Full-Time Paid Employment

In Part-Time Paid Employment

Not in Paid Employment

Engaged in Voluntary Non-Paid Work

Religion

Appendix 4

CURRENT SEEDA ACTIVITIES TO ADDRESS DISABILITY EQUALITY

CORPORATE FUNCTIONS		
Activity	Aim	Relevance to Disability Equality
Disability Equality staff training programme	To train all SEEDA staff in Equality & Diversity issues	Addresses disability as a distinct strand of equality & diversity
Hot Topics Blog Site	To provide a confidential site to talk about issues relating to equality & diversity	Acts as a forum for confidential discussion on Equality Issues generally and the DES development process
Annual Diversity Week	Raise awareness and engagement amongst SEEDA staff and encourage discussion	Offers specific sessions on overcoming stereotypes and understanding barriers for disabled people.
Diversity Champions	To integrate expert understanding into all functions of SEEDA.	Provides specific expertise on disability equality within individual divisions
Lean	Set up to improve business systems and promote flexible working mechanisms	Integrating equality and diversity considerations across project and programme management systems
Corporate Evaluation Strategy	To create a culture of evaluation throughout all areas of SEEDA's operation	
Disabled staff reference group	To advise on policy areas relating to disability equality	Led by disabled members of staff, provides a forum for input to systems and policy changes

GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS		
Activity	Aim	Relevance to Disability Equality
Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy	To provide a strategic framework of CSR action for South East Businesses in order to enhance their global competitiveness.	Promotion of the business case for diversity is central to the core principles of Corporate Social Responsibility.
Enterprise Hubs and Gateways	To support SME knowledge transfer and start-up.	Enterprise Gateways have a focus on under represented groups.
South East annual	To show case best practice	Equality and Diversity is a

Sustainable Business Awards	examples of businesses in the region operating within a corporate social responsibility framework	key criteria for assessment of winning applications.
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SMART GROWTH		
Activity	Aim	Relevance to Disability Equality
Disability Means Business	To promote the business case for disability equality with SME	Focuses on raising awareness and providing training for businesses in order to improve employment and retention of disabled staff
Quality Built Environment Strategy	To establish regional standards for all aspects of environmental development	Includes inclusive design standards
Dismantling Barriers to employment in the South East research project	To research the barriers faced by excluded groups in the South East	Specific section on the barriers and experiences of disabled people.
Enterprise Gateways	To promote enterprise development and self employment across the region via the targeting of underrepresented groups and the provision business support and advice	Disabled people are a key target group for Enterprise Gateways
Social Enterprise Quality and Impact Pilot	To raise the ability of social enterprises to bid for public sector contracts, and measure economic impact through social audit mechanisms	The Pilot targeted Social Firms supporting disabled people as the initial cohort.
Business Link	To provide a publicly funded regional business support infrastructure systems	All 6 Business Links in the South East have now been through and are compliant with the 'Committed to Equality' accreditation standard. Promotion of the No Nonsense Guide to starting a business which includes advice to SMEs on disability discrimination.
Digital Inclusion	To broaden access to the benefits of ICT to all in the region	Programmes directed at disabled people and their carers, to improve their employability
Access to Learning	To broaden access to	Targeted activities for

Programme	learning for all in the region	people with Dyslexia
Medway Development Projects	Provision of transport infrastructure in Medway	Complies with the Road Crossing standard.
Rochester Riverside	Regeneration of the Industrial landscape of the Rochester Riverside.	Use of design codes in accordance with the 'Lifetime Homes' Standard
Chatham Maritime	Physical Regeneration of area	Use of an 'Access Statement' in the planning application process.
Brownfield Land Assembly Trust	Assembly and remediation of brownfield land	Influence on private developers to include 2 disabled access flats in this small residential development
Woolston Shipyard, Southampton	Physical Regeneration of Woolston Shipyard.	Involved development of an influencing and guidance document for private developers on inclusive design
Ashford Growth Area	The expansion of Ashford	Consultation with disabled groups in the local area to improve disability access to International House.
Art Plus	Promotion of art as a tool for regeneration	Included an award for Diversity
Interreg IIIB: HST4i and HST Connect Websites	Provision of project information on European Funded Infrastructure projects in the region	Both websites are 'BOBBY' Compliant and working towards AAA accreditation
South East Excellence 'Virtual' Centre of Excellence	To promote regeneration skills development across the region	The Virtual centre is BOBBY compliant.

SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY		
Activity	Aim	Relevance to Disability Equality
Your Path to Work	To improve the rates of returning to work for people on Incapacity Benefit in the South East	Works intensively on strategies for disabled people to get off incapacity benefit and back into work
Social Inclusion Partnership South East	To provide a strategic forum for decision making and partnership approaches to tackling social exclusion in the region.	Developed resource pack for strategic planning and decisions makers "Don't Leave me out" Exclusion through disability: A focus on Children and young people in the South East.
RAISE	To develop regional infrastructure for the	Assisted in the creation of the South East Disability

	support of the voluntary and community sector in the South East.	Inclusion Network (SEDIN)
Regional Economic Strategy	To provide the strategic vision for the regions economic development for the next 20 years	Developed strategic actions around health and disability to be owned by all strategic partners throughout the South East.
Financial Exclusion Programme	To map the incidence and determinates of financial exclusion in the South East	Strategic action plan for financial inclusion targets disabled people.
Social Dialogue Forum	To provide an opportunity to discuss key social issues that influence regional policy	Addresses Disability Equality
Cultural Shift South East	Social enterprise programme aimed at increasing accessibility to economic participation for the most excluded	Disabled people are a target group for activities
EXODUS	Programme to support the rehabilitation of exoffenders back into the labour market	Disabled people are a target group for activities.

Appendix 5

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS

SEEDA'S Equality Impact Assessment process has three levels of assessment:

1. • **Initial Assessment/Screening**
2. • **Partial EIA**
3. • **Full EIA**

6.7 The reason for the three levels is that the complexity and diversity of SEEDA's functions means that a full assessment may not be necessary in every case, nor may it be appropriate to conduct a full assessment initially. Using the three levels enables a reasonable, practical and manageable approach to the process of EIA throughout the agencies functions.

6.8 It must be remembered that which ever level is undertaken, it must be **proportionate** to the likely impact of the item under consideration. The more **substantial** the impact on the community the more in-depth the EIA will be.

6.9 The Initial Assessment or screening

6.9.1 This will play a valuable role in new project, policy or function formulation, or when considering changes to an existing project, policy or function and will be carried out in all cases. It is effectively a tool for deciding whether or not the project, policy or function needs a more in depth analysis. The main difference between the initial assessment/screening and a partial EIA is that it is based on what information we already have/what we already know in relation to the policy and will identify where more information is needed.

6.9.2 Before embarking on an EIA, it is important to determine the aims of the project, policy or function. From this point it is possible to determine the EIA's terms of reference and whether a partial or full assessment is necessary.

6.9.3 On those occasions where one or more public authorities share responsibility for a project, policy or function then necessary arrangements will be put in place and they should then co-operate in carrying out an EIA.

6.9.4 Where SEEDA has an involvement in the service delivery of a project, policy or function which is set elsewhere it will not be appropriate to disregard this involvement. As an EIA proceeds it may become apparent that certain activities are associated. Where this is the case then it may be appropriate to link the EIA's of these activities.

6.9.5 The proposed holistic EIA initial assessment proforma is included at Annex 1.

6.10 The Partial Impact Assessment

6.10.1 A Partial Impact Assessment will build on an Initial Assessment, will outline risks and benefits, and will include the advice of experts and interested groups.

6.10.2 The Partial Impact Assessment is very similar to the Initial Assessment of a policy and will be undertaken if the Initial Assessment points to the possibility of unjustifiable differential impact on relevant groups. The Partial Impact Assessment will build on the Initial Assessment and explore the risks and benefits of the project, policy or function taking into account the advice of experts or interested groups.

6.10.3 The Partial Impact Assessment will have to clearly state the risks associated with the project, policy or function in relation to differential impact and weigh these against the benefits that the activities may have.

6.10.4 The partial EIA will invariably be used when there is not much information available on the topic in question and it is felt that more information obtained through informal consultation with relevant groups/experts will lead to a more informed decision about the project, policy or function. This type of assessment will also be of use when much of the activity is outside the control of SEEDA and information needs to be obtained from the other interested parties concerned with the project, policy or function. Should the Partial Impact Assessment point to a real concern about the activities in terms of differential impact which is echoed by the views of the experts/relevant groups, then it will be necessary to undertake a Full EIA.

6.10.5 Inevitably due to the Partial EIA being more involved than the Initial EIA, the information in the Partial EIA should be more comprehensive than that given in the Initial EIA.

6.11 THE FULL EIA

6.11.1 The Full EIA is a natural progression from the Partial EIA and will be undertaken if, after the Partial EIA, there are still real concerns about the project, policy or function in terms of differential/adverse impact which is echoed by the views of the experts/relevant groups.

6.11.2 The full EIA will build on the analysis of the Partial EIA but will be expanded in light of formal consultation, further research and data collection and further analysis. It will also state clear recommendations as to what changes or amendments have occurred to the project, policy or function in light of the EIA.

6.11.3 A full EIA should be undertaken in eight key stages which are listed below:

1. Identify the aims of the project, policy or function and how it is to be implemented (see section 2.)
2. Consideration of relevant data and research (see section 5)
3. Assessment of impacts (see section 6)
4. Consideration of measures (see section 7)
5. Formal consultation on the actual impact of existing projects, policies or functions and the likely impact of proposed activities (see section 8)
6. Make a decision in the light of data, possible alternatives and consultation (see section 9)
7. Monitoring for adverse impact in the future and publication of the results of such monitoring (see section 10).
8. Publication of results of the Equality Impact Assessments (see section 11)

The full SEEDA EIA Guidance can be provided on request post 4th December 2006.

APPENDIX 5

SEEDAs Complaints Procedure

Complaints and Comments Policy

The South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) is always interested in the views of businesses and members of the public about our initiatives and how we develop and manage them. We shall listen carefully to any views that are put forward and if problems are identified we shall take remedial action.

What is a complaint?

A complaint for the purposes of this policy is one that relates to:

Any expression of dissatisfaction with the service provided by an SEEDA staff member or person or body acting on behalf of the Agency, and can be verbal or written.

It does not include:

- Dissatisfaction with general Government
- Third party dissatisfaction with a person or organisation applying for SEEDA funding or contract;
- Dissatisfaction about Board Members - the Agency has a separate Code of Conduct for Board Members;
- Complaints that are currently the subject of legal proceedings

Anyone can make a complaint about:

- The quality of service provided
- You were given the wrong information
- You encountered a delay in receiving information
- You were treated unfairly

Complaints can be made in a number of ways:

- By email
- By phone
- In writing
- By filling in a complaint form which can be:
 - o downloaded from our website
 - o collected from our Reception desk

You may wish to try to resolve the matter immediately by telephone. Please contact the person you have been dealing with at SEEDA. They will try and sort out your enquiry promptly, and do their best to put things right.

If you have a comment or complaint about our telephone/reception service because you feel that a member of staff has been unhelpful or discourteous, you can ask to speak to the Facilities Manager. The Facilities Manager will listen to what you have to say and take any appropriate action, as necessary.

SEEDA's Service Commitment

We are committed to providing high standards of service to everyone we deal with. Complaints as well as feedback and suggestions for improvement are welcomed as they help us to review our service performance and identify where it can be improved.

We aim to provide a complaints service that is:

- easy to use
- keeps you informed about the progress of your complaint
- lets you know the outcome of your complaint and the reasons for it
- deals with complaints as quickly and effectively as possible
- helps us learn from complaints to improve our practice

We will monitor and analyse complaints as part of our review of service performance and will regularly review the effectiveness of our complaints procedure to ensure that it remains relevant, credible and robust in its operation.

We also need to listen when people say things are going well or make suggestions about the way we deliver services. Monitoring this information will highlight any problem areas as well as showing areas of good practice.

Persistent and/or vexatious complaint are becoming an increasing problem for public sector bodies and difficulties in handling such complaints can place strain on time and resources and can be stressful for staff who have to deal with these complex and challenging issues. In order to counter this, SEEDA has introduced a policy that deals with persistent or vexatious complaints.

Complaints about Partnerships

If the complaint is about a Partnership e.g. a Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) Partnership you should contact the Partnership Board in the first instance. They should deal with the complaint in accordance with their complaints procedure. If you are still not satisfied with the outcome you should contact the Accountable Body, which is usually the Local Authority for the area in which the Partnership is situated. SEEDA will only get involved as a last resort, where a very serious complaint/allegation has been made; or where you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint to the accountable body. SEEDA's role will be to mediate between the parties to resolve the complaint.

Stage 1 – Informal

In the first instance, complaints about our services should be dealt with by the SEEDA member of staff who had been dealing with you. Most complaints can be resolved at this early stage.

Complaints can be received via telephone, fax, post, or e-mail.

Our policy is that we aim to acknowledge complaints **within 3-5 working days** and we will aim to resolve the complaint **within 10 working days** from the date of receiving a Stage 1 complaint.

If you remain dissatisfied at the end of the first stage, you can write to the contact person given in the letter you receive. You will have **10 working days** in which to do this, outlining why you are dissatisfied and what outcome you would like to have.

Stage 2 – Formal

If it is not appropriate to contact the staff member direct as referred to in stage 1, or if you are not satisfied with the stage 1 response, you may ask for your request to be reviewed. This will initially be an internal review carried out by officers of SEEDA. A request for a review should be addressed to Robert Crawford, Chief Operating

Officer, email: robertcrawford@seeda.co.uk. You will be notified of the outcome within 20 working days.

Robert Crawford
Chief Operating Officer
SEEDA
Cross Lanes
Guildford Surrey
GU1 1YA
robertcrawford@seeda.co.uk

Performance Targets

We aim to acknowledge complaints within **3-5 working days**. We will provide a full response within **20 working days** of receipt unless further investigation is required, in which case we will advise you of the reasons for a delay and provide an alternative timescale for a full response.

Stage 3 – Independent Review

If you remain dissatisfied following the internal review, you should put your concerns in writing to the Information Commissioner (an independent statutory body which oversees the operation of the FOI Act and EIR) for an independent assessment and decision on the handling of your request. Details are available at the **Information Commissioners Office website**, <http://www.informationcommissioners.gov.uk>.

Procedure for Dealing with Vexatious or Persistent Complaints

SEEDA has introduced Information guidelines to allow staff to be able to make an informed decision on how to assess whether complaints are vexatious or persistent based on the application of relevant criteria.

A vexatious complaint falls into the category of a complaint that has been thoroughly investigated and in such cases the complainant will have received a full and detailed response, but not withstanding that, will remain dissatisfied despite lengthy correspondence and contact from staff within the Agency.

The vexatious or persistent complaint may be referred to the relevant Executive Director, who will then decide how best to deal with the issue.

Where can I get help if I am still not satisfied?

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of our Stage 3 review, you may ask the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (The Parliamentary Ombudsman), through your Member of Parliament, to investigate whether you have suffered injustice caused by maladministration.

Your personal information

If you use our complaints procedure, you are agreeing that we can use any personal information you send us for purposes connected with your complaint. We may also disclose your personal information to other individuals and organisations if we are legally required or permitted to do so under the Data Protection Act 1998 or the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Equal opportunities monitoring

We may use complaints about discrimination to review our policies and procedures to ensure that we offer equality of opportunity and treatment to people of different racial or ethnic origins.

We will monitor the ethnicity of complaints to enable us to ensure that we promote and maintain this commitment. All information will be treated as confidential.

Comments and suggestions

We welcome comments and suggestions as these can help us improve our services. Please send any comments or suggestions via our online form at:
http://www.seeda.co.uk/Contact_Us/Contact_form/

ACTION PLAN

CORPORATE SERVICES

Action and responsibility	Completed by:	Current progress:	Measurement criteria:
<i>Performance Management</i>			
Include where relevant the monitoring of disability equality in the wider RDA tasking framework	Set in place for 07/08 reporting year	Ensure monitoring practice universally consistent	Equality & Diversity numbers stated in ½ year and full year performance report
Build equality and diversity into project development reflected in appraisal documentation	From April 07	Ongoing training to support integration	Project managers proactively thinking about equality & diversity as part of their project development. Survey PM's
Report on Diversity & Equality action plan progress as part of Agency performance reporting	From April 07	Starting from April 07	Equality & Diversity in ½ year and full year performance report
<i>Communication</i>			
Set Disability Access Standards for all SEEDA written communications (internal and external) and ensure all staff are using those standards for publications, letters, e-mail, internet etc	Standards to be in place and operational by June 07	Produce a Communications Disability Access Standards Guidelines booklet In conjunction with internal and external groups	External customer survey registering improved access to SEEDA information (current % find SEEDA communications acceptable for disabled people)
Set Standard processes for finding out what access needs someone has, which should be applied to all situations in an inclusive way which does not single out disabled people.	Proforma developed by April 07		Process developed and operational

Have a range of well advertised ways to contact SEEDA to include both voice, telephone and textphone, e-mail, fax, mobile, phone, SMS.	Disability access audit of SEEDA websites complete and remedial actions addressed by December 07	To be included in the Guidelines	Achievement of the BOBBY standard for all SEEDA web content. Increased number of disabled people showing satisfaction of the SEEDA website and accessing content (shown through annual customer survey)
Develop an accessible venues policy for all SEEDA events.- promotion of this venues list to other regional agencies	Policy to be in place by September 07	To be included in the Guidelines	Event evaluation satisfaction responses
Develop a regional accessible venues directory to encourage the use of these venues for partners events across the region and to encourage other venues to become more accessible.	Initial Directory to be complete by December 07 Updating to take place on a bi - annual basis	To be included in the Guidelines	Increased use of these venues by all stakeholders in the region. Increase numbers of venues entering the directory on a bi-annual basis.
Human Resources			
Develop a flexible working pilot for one division. Once pilot is evaluated, roll out the Work Choice toolkit to the whole of the organisation. Measure the impacts for disabled people	Pilot complete June 07	Flexible working practice pilot being developed within the Strategy & Sustainability Division	Outcomes registered through staff survey. Measurement of increased access to differing work patterns from people with

			DDA recognised disabilities.
Impact assessment of disability employment practice to be carried out Particularly focusing on: Advertising including targeting applications from disabled people Promoting best practice including flexi working, working from home etc. Medical questionnaire process including the number of potential employees excluded through the existing process, the effect of the style of questions and the impact of using the process to identify reasonable adjustments, access to work support etc.	By April 07		Evidence of action on key recommendations – amended policy process
A Managing Disabled Employees Guide to be produced and shared across the organisation, involving disabled employees in its development.	By December 07		Guide produced and staff trained in use
Development of management of sickness absence policy	By April 07		Policy developed and in use
All JDs and personal specifications to include a commitment to the social model of disability	By April 07		Policy developed and in use
Develop disabled employees support group	By June 07		Group operational
Ensure that equality of opportunity part of SEEDA's core values and that all staff is aware of it.	Revision of Core Values statement by September 07		
Development of a culture of trust & confidentiality through:	Ongoing	Employee assistance programme currently up and running, more	Number of staffing issues relating to disability decreasing

- Advertising the Employee Assistance programme to staff and managers for advice on handling issues of Disability Discrimination - Development of a system of divisional advocates (at senior management level) who have knowledge of disability equality and can be approached by anyone in the agency confidentially	Advocates identified and trained by Sept 2007	awareness raising of its services, particularly with managers required.	Increased staff confidence in a culture of trust shown through bi-annual staff survey
Increase understanding of disability issues through compulsory Training for all SEEDA staff in: The definition of disability. Disability Etiquettes SEEDA's statutory obligations.	Ongoing – through the induction programme. Retrospective training complete by December 2007	Current induction programme includes equality and diversity considerations, specific consideration to be given to definitions, and etiquettes	- Number of staff completing training. - Staff survey to increase to 100% awareness of SEEDA's statutory obligations. - Training evaluation assessment by managers and staff
Improve the ability of line managers and senior staff to effectively manage and promote disability equality in	Development of broader line		Post training self assessment evaluation

the agency through: Compulsory line management training in relation to the DDA.	management training programme by March 07 Retrospective training in disability equality for all existing line managers by Dec 2007 Performance criteria developed for use in 2007/08 financial year		by staff. • Staff survey in relation to management capacity to deal and understand with equality and diversity issues increase.
Increase ownership and strategic drive of Disability Equality across the agency through: Appointment of a Board member with responsibility for Disability Equality Creation of a sub committee to advise the board on disability Equality, reporting quarterly on the progress of the DES.	Board member to be appointed by December 06 Sub Committee established to operate from the inception of the DES	Board member selection currently in progress SEEDA Board Sub Committee to take responsibility for monitoring and advising on the Disability Equality Scheme	Minutes of the board and Inclusion Committee Progress against the action plan milestones

Promote Disability Equality internally in a holistic context of wider Equalities and diversity policy through: Development and promotion of SEEDA's dignity at work policy SEEDA 2007 Sustainability Awareness Initiative	Dignity at work policy to be complete by October 06 Promotion to be ongoing through staff training and induction Diversity week to be on an annual basis, next week to take place in February 07	Dignity at work policy currently being finalised Integration of principles of the dignity at work policy needs to be integrated into staff training and induction events Diversity Week 2007 planning currently under way	Awareness of the dignity at work policy through staff survey (to be 100% by March 08) Impact of the annual diversity week to be registered through hits to the SEEDA 'Hot Topics' Blog site, evaluation feedback forms from the week.
Reward and recognise good practice within SEEDA through inclusion on an annual internal magazine during Diversity Week that recognises teams and individuals as case studies that have had most impact on disability Equality	Magazine structure to be established by December 06 Diversity Magazine to be given out during Diversity week, Feb 07.		Heightened awareness amongst divisions of good practice examples, shown by increasing number of submissions in the magazine

Encourage the dissemination of good practice and raise aspirations through the provision of role models within SEEDA.	Ongoing - Role models to be developed and promoted through the annual diversity week, staff training and induction programmes. Criteria of good practice to be set by June 07, first showcase at Diversity Week 08 Included in Diversity Magazine		Increasing adoption of best practice examples for line management to be shown through bi annual staff survey.
Facilities			
Develop internal meetings policy in relation to disability access and ensure that all staff are aware.	Policy to be complete and disseminated by June 06		Staff equality and diversity survey shows heightened awareness of disability access for meetings Increasing number of requests from SEEDA staff to use access equipment (i.e. induction loops, etc)

Ensure all disabled staff and visitors are briefed on the emergency exit procedure.	All meeting rooms and divisions to have individual exit plans by March 07		
Review internal facilities policies to ensure all facilities are fit for purpose including, health and safety etc	Review complete by June 07		
Ensure all SEEDA buildings have had a disability access audit.	All audits complete by December 07 Remedial actions addressed by September 08		Customer satisfaction surveys to show improvement in experience of disability access to SEEDA venues
Ensure that all purchases of décor, furniture, equipment, signage, fixtures and fittings are impact assessed for physical, sensory and intellectual access.	Criteria to be set for purchases by January 07 All purchases over £1000 to provide evidence of assessment against criteria from January 07 onwards		Criteria assessments of purchases over £1000
Procurement			
Build conditions into all tenders and offer letters	Proformas to be agreed and operational by		Amendments made to contracts and offer letters, all staff aware and using

	April 07		templates
Ensure that all new contracts are monitored to ensure they fulfil their contractual obligations in relation to disability equality.	Monitoring framework development and operational		Monitoring requirements conditions met at contract inception and regularly monitored
	December 07		
Set guidelines for performance of devolved delivery partners in relation to addressing equality and diversity and establish a simple monitoring framework to ensure that are delivering their key targets.	Monitoring framework development completed and operational by December 07		Contract monitoring conditions met and evidence produced at contract monitoring stages
Monitoring & Evaluation			
Develop a central repository of evaluation information in relation to equality and diversity.	On-going from April 2007	Research and Evaluation strategy to be launched January 2007 which will include a database of lessons learnt and findings from evaluations that have been undertaken across RES/Corporate Plan themes. An evaluation action plan will also be disseminated to	Related Equality & Diversity findings presented within ½ year and full year performance report from April 2007.

		include equality and diversity issues.	
Develop a standardised evaluation criteria relating to Disability equality impact into standard evaluation frameworks	On-going	Dissemination strategy to reflect and promote equality and diversity aims. All staff template for evaluation specifications adjusted to reflect equality and diversity questions and issues. Equality and diversity issues to be put forward in the first instance within the Strategic Site Evaluation framework for further rollout (within other evaluation frameworks/toolkits) from April 2007. Evaluation Framework Panel informed of equality and diversity policy objectives and evaluation training 2007 to reflect this	Findings promoted within ½ year and full year performance report from April 2007. Data will be readily available within standard toolkit/framework practice once fully developed. In addition to incorporate lessons learnt into bespoke themed evaluation surgeries, using Evaluation Framework Panel members, where required over 2007/08.

		within its agenda.	
Develop a standardised evaluation criteria relating to Disability equality impact into standard evaluation frameworks	Framework completed and operational in all new evaluation frameworks by December 07		Shown by evaluation briefs and impacts measured
Develop an external disabled stakeholder reference group to advise on policy development and progress	First meeting to take place in August 06 Meeting on a quarterly basis thereon	Group currently developing terms of reference	Policy and practice across SEEDA more responsive to the needs of Disabled people, evidenced through staff and customer satisfaction
Undertake an annual external customer survey to measure progress and perceptions of impact in the region in order to inform future policy and implementation	Annual customer survey to take place September to November each year. First survey to take place in September 06		Survey results published on the website annually
Quarterly meeting of the Board Committee to assess progress and evaluation outcomes being delivered across the agency	Ongoing on a quarterly basis		Minutes and papers
Management Systems			
Have a disability champion as a member of the project appraisal board to ensure that every project going for approval has adequately address Disability Equality.	Ongoing	Assistant Director of Strategy & Sustainability	Minutes of PAB, revisions made to Projects coming forward

		appointed to PAB from Autumn 06 to represent Disability Equality	
Develop a sustainable management system which integrates equality and diversity across all SEEDA management systems.	Sustainable Management System developed and implemented by 2008/09	Sustainable Management System currently in Development	Sustainable management system implemented

Learning and Skills

Action and responsibility	Completed by:	Current progress:	Measurement criteria:
Redundancy Support Service. The service provides support to companies and staff downsizing and facing redundancies. ACTION: SEEDA is committed to ensuring that services and support available through the RSS is fully accessible to disabled people, in partnership with our delivery partner Jobcentre Plus.	Spring 2007 Fiona Leggett, Access to Learning Manager.	All brokers have received up to date training in diversity and equality. Aware of adjustments. Services delivered in external venues (employer premises), therefore brokers do not have influence, however no issues to date.	Feedback via employers.
Accelerate the role out of Pathways to Work services in the South East	Spring 2007. Fiona Leggett,	Paper drawn up by Jobcentre Plus to ensure all ESF	Monitor progress against JCP's paper at quarterly review meetings.

This project assists incapacity benefit recipients into work, in partnership with our delivery partner Jobcentre Plus. ACTION: Ensure all ESF funded providers delivering this project adhere to diversity and equality regulations, in line with the DES.	Access to Learning Manager.	funded providers delivering this project adhere to diversity and equality regulations, in line with the DES.	
Train to Gain Train to Gain is a new national service designed to help businesses get the training they need to succeed. SEEDA holds a contract with LSC SE to deliver Train to Gain brokerage services for employers in the SE. ACTION: Skills South East, the delivery body SEEDA sub-contracts to, to deliver Train to Gain skills brokerage is taking forward the following actions: 1) Establishment of links with disability advisory services in the public, voluntary and private sectors to ensure SSE skills brokers are able to refer employers to the appropriate support services; 2) Ensure brokers are aware of support services for individuals with sight or hearing difficulties and deliver suitable advice referrals for employers. 3) Work towards Train to Gain website meeting best practice standards in terms of accessibility for those	Spring 2008 Cheryl Palmer, Head of Train to Gain.	SEEDA was awarded the Train to Gain contract in August 2006. SEEDA's proposal took full account of equality and diversity issues and opportunities.	SEEDA's Head of Train to Gain to work with SSE to agree milestones for taking actions forward. SEEDA's Head of Train to Gain to monitor progress against actions at quarterly review meetings.

with limited sight.			
4) Seek expert advice about the introduction of “a talking website.”			
Training Pools SEEDA Training Pools programme will help contribute to addressing skills gaps for adults in work at the technical, professional and skilled trades level (Level 3 and above) excluding management and leadership. ACTION: Ensure all providers delivering this project adhere to diversity and equality regulations, in line with the DES.	Spring 2007, then on-going. Andrew Adams, Sector Skills Manager.	-	SEEDA to request that participating providers have procedures in place to promote equality, diversity and participation, including a disability statement that gives detail of help and support available.
Skills Festivals The aim of Skills Festivals is to encourage a greater understanding of the opportunities available to young people and adults in training, education and the world of work. ACTION: Further work will be undertaken to encourage more specialist schools to participate at next year’s Skills Festivals, and to promote career pathways for disabled students.	On-going. Mark Thirkell, L&S Policy and Planning Manager.	Surrey Skills Festival confirms that they are in full compliance with disability equality policies designed to ensure that facilities and services available at the Skills Festival are suitable for those with a disability. These have been in place for the previous 3	Ongoing monitoring of facilities at Festival venues to ensure that they are fully accessible. Measuring numbers of specialist schools attending Festival and numbers of disabled students attending.

		events and will continue to be in place for future events. Sussex Skills Festival confirms that they are in full compliance with disability equality policies designed to ensure that facilities and services available at Skills Festivals are suitable for those with a disability. There were representatives from several specialist schools at the event – these included students with disabilities. Connexions South Central (IOW Skills Fair) confirm that equality of access, not only that of physical access but	
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		such that all learning difficulties and disabilities are proactively addressed in order to reduce barriers to participation.	
Labour market Focus E-bulletin and website The bulletins and website and designed for professionals from a wide range of agencies who advise young people and adults across the SE region. ACTION: Ensure website and bulletins comply with Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI)- the guidelines widely regarded as the international standard for Web accessibility	April 2007 Jay Hunt, Senior Learning and Skills Manager.	Need to confirm.	Due to be discussed at next steering group and integrated into e-bulletin requirement for 07/08 publications.
Graduate Placements – STEP, Knowledge Transfer Partnership, SET graduate retention placements ACTION: Projects are delivered as a partnership between HE and businesses. SEEDA to confirm with delivery partners that they have procedures in place to ensure they do not discriminate and provide appropriate support for disabled applicants.	Spring 2007 Christina Hartshorn, Management & Enterprise Skills Manager	On agenda for next project advisory / steering group meeting	SEEDA to seek confirmation from managing organisation that all participating partners have effective equality, diversity and participation policies.
UP for Enterprise ACTION: Ensure that teacher enterprise training,	Spring 2007 Christina	On agenda for next project advisory / steering group	SEEDA seek confirmation that UP for Enterprise website, materials and venues are

classroom delivery materials and web-support to embed enterprising teaching methods across the curriculum have taken into account the needs of disabled participants.	Hartshorn, Management & Enterprise Skills Manager	meeting	accessible to all.
E- Skills Degree ACTION: SEEDA to ensure that contractors, in this instance e-skills UK, have effective equality, diversity and participation policies and procedures, including a disability statement that gives detail of help and support available. SEEDA to seek confirmation from e-skills that student support services are articulated in e-skills degree publicity material.	Spring 2007 Christina Hartshorn, Management & Enterprise Skills Manager	On agenda for next project advisory / steering group meeting	SEEDA to seek confirmation.
STEM support centre. ACTION: Check with SETNET that programmes promoting science in schools are accessible by disabled students. Ensure SETNET/STEM website and bulletins comply with Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI)- the guidelines widely regarded as the international standard for Web accessibility	Spring 2007. Gilly Bartrip, Head of Sector Skills and Adult Learning.	-	SEEDA to seek confirmation.
HEEG (Higher Education Entrepreneurship Group) ACTION: SEEDA to ensure that contractors, in this instance the University of Surrey have effective equality, diversity and participation policies and	Spring 2007 Christina Hartshorn, Management &	On agenda for next project advisory / steering group meeting	SEEDA to seek confirmation.

procedures, including a disability statement that gives detail of help and support available.	Enterprise Skills Manager		
Institute for Urban Renaissance ACTION: SEEDA to ensure that contractors, in this instance the University of Greenwich have effective equality, diversity and participation policies and procedures, including a disability statement that gives detail of help and support available.	Spring 2007 Christina Hartshorn, Management & Enterprise Skills Manager	On agenda for next project advisory / steering group meeting	SEEDA to seek confirmation.
Entrepreneurial Futures Progression ACTION: SEEDA to ensure that contractors, in this instance the University of Portsmouth have effective equality, diversity and participation policies and procedures, including a disability statement that gives detail of help and support available.	Spring 2007 Christina Hartshorn, Management & Enterprise Skills Manager	On agenda for next project advisory / steering group meeting	SEEDA to seek confirmation.
Leadership for Global Competitiveness ACTION: SEEDA to ensure contractors (University of Surrey, Oxford Innovation to date) have effective equality, diversity and participation policies and procedures, including a disability statement. Work towards Leadership Zone website meeting best practice standards in terms of accessibility for those with limited sight.	Spring 2007 Christina Hartshorn, Management & Enterprise Skills Manager	On agenda for first Advisory meeting and project Steering Group meetings	SEEDA to seek confirmation.

Innovation Advisory Service	Spring 2007 Ed Metcalfe, Head of STEM skills	On agenda for next project advisory / steering group meeting	SEEDA to seek confirmation from managing organisation that all participating partners have effective equality, diversity policies.
Technology Calls (private / public collaboration)	Spring 2007 Ed Metcalfe, Head of STEM skills	On agenda for next project advisory / steering group meeting	SEEDA to seek confirmation from managing organisation that all participating partners (companies and universities) have effective equality, diversity policies.
Knowledge Networks	Spring 2007 Ed Metcalfe, Head of STEM skills	On agenda for next project advisory / steering group meeting	All partners and organisations within the networks have effective equality and diversity policies
Research Excellence	Spring 2007 Ed Metcalfe, Head of STEM skills	On agenda for next project advisory / steering group meeting	website meeting best practice standards in terms of accessibility for those with limited sight.
Knowledge Exploitation applications (jointly funded with ESRC)	Spring 2007 Ed Metcalfe, Head of STEM skills	On agenda for next project advisory / steering group meeting	SEEDA to seek confirmation from partners that they both have effective equality and diversity policies.
LTN Business Fellows	Spring 2007	On agenda for next	SEEDA to ensure selection

	Christina Hartshorn, Management & Enterprise Skills Manager	project advisory / steering group meeting	procedures for Fellows do not discriminate. Both contractor and employing organisations to give assurance of policies and practice
Multiversities Ashford Learning campus Folkstone Milton Keynes Hastings Sciences innovation campuses	Spring 2007 Ed Metcalfe, Head of STEM skills	On agenda for next project advisory / steering group meeting	SEEDA to ensure that all statutory requirements are met in terms of the development of the physical spaces, selection of suppliers, recruitment of students and ongoing support for them. Contractors and suppliers to have effective equality and diversity policies.
Sea Space – Skills (Five Point Plan category – Excellence in Education)			
Promote the inclusion of inclusive design into graduate construction, design, architecture courses across the region	Ongoing – strategic influencing of partners and education providers		
Tender briefs for design and construction contracts include a requirement for compliance to all statutory regulations	Standard template for all contracts and briefs in use for all projects	Compliance on buildings completed including: University Centre Hastings, Creative Media Centre. Buildings under construction: Lacuna Place and Marina	Sign off from building control

		Pavilion	
Audit of statutory requirements and identification of further improvements	Audit of completed buildings by August 07	Audit of Creative Media Centre complete. Recommendations being costed. Audit of tea points and common areas at Innovation Centre complete	Endorsement of consultant auditor
Response to specific needs of occupiers	Ongoing requirement	Visually impaired client who has tailored signing in facilities	Requirement of Commercial Manager's work programme
E- Skills Degree	Running at UCH by Greenwich – strategic influencing		
Offer all written material in Braille, large type and audio formats	Within 2 days of request for material	Large type and audio already available, need to locate Braille service	Percentage of materials offered in alternative formats
Use SEEDA's Disability Access Standards for written communications	June 2007		Percentage of communications complying with standards
Ensure websites are accessible and comply with DDA. Follow the WAI Web Content accessibility guidelines www.w3.org/wai	January 2007 for Sea Space corporate website. Immediate incorporation for all new website design brief	New website design underway which is compliant	Percentage of websites which are compliant
Ensure consultations are held at accessible venues (actual building and transport). Involve and target disabled people for consultations.	4 weeks before each event	Already incorporated into consultation planning	DDA guidelines, feedback from consultees, percentage of disabled people involved in consultation – include question on disability in feedback form

Offer sign language at events	1 week before each event	Need to locate local translator – due Dec 06	Percentage of consultation events offering this facility
Ensure the SEEDA wide commitment to build disability accessibility into partnership contracts is applied to learning and skills providers contracted through SEEDA – and monitored on a regular basis	Ongoing	Amendments to standard SEEDA contract in process	Devolved delivery partners evidencing compliance through evaluation and feedback processes
SEEDA to ensure that all sub contracted training provision provides materials in appropriate and accessible formats, via contract agreements and monitoring	Ongoing	Amendments to standard SEEDA contract in process	Devolved delivery partners evidencing compliance through evaluation and feedback processes
All devolved delivery programmes to consider accessibility in the delivery of training and support (SEEDA wide)	Ongoing	Amendments to standard SEEDA contract in process	Devolved delivery partners evidencing accessibility in training and support through evaluation and feedback processes

DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Action and responsibility	Completed by:	Current progress:	Measurement criteria:
Influence partners when discussing strategic infrastructure and travel choice to incorporate appropriate disability guidelines e.g. those of disabled transport advisory committee	Dependent on respective project timetable	Familiarising DID with DPTAC Guidelines	Assessment against DPTAC Guidelines
SEEDA will establish performance standards for its own development projects. These will incorporate mechanisms for addressing diversity. Eg. Adoption of lifetime homes standard, commitment to inclusive design principles.	Subject to board decision on draft standards	Draft standards prepared. Next steps to obtain approval by SEEDA Board and work up implementation plan for SEEDA and external partners effected.	Criteria within standards which will be built into SEEDA's monitoring process as required.

Ensure effective and inclusive consultation as part of strategic projects in line with the SEEDA performance standard for its own development (see above)	March 2008	Draft SEEDA standards prepared and require consultation to follow RTPi guidelines. Establish a new framework panel offering expert advice on consultation approaches including equality and diversity issues. This is to cover all Equality and Diversity strands i.e. age, sexual orientation, disability, race, gender, religion and belief.	Consultancy panel set up and used and standard contract monitoring.
Undertake disability access audits of all major sites	Dependent on individual project timetable	Sample audit undertaken at Chatham Maritime, in October 2006. Audit currently under way at International House in Ashford	Copies of Audits Take up recommendations
Provide appropriate training, guidance and access to advice on inclusive design for all relevant SEEDA teams	December 2007	Build into corporate training plan and into the implementation	Training feedback surveys

		planning for the SEEDA performance standards for its own developments. Introductory element has been incorporated into the Urban design training which will be rolled out to DID in Jan / Feb and April / May. Incorporate training awareness SEEDA standards	
Provide access to advice on inclusive design for all relevant SEEDA teams	March 2008	Establish a new framework panel offering expert advice on inclusive design, including access statements	Consultancy Panel set up and used and standard contract monitoring.
Provide a sign posting resource to organisations that are able to provide advice within the region through the South east Excellence Website	Made once external consultation group known	Building the resource has already begun for example DADA South an arts Disability group is on the site. Seek advice from SEEDA's external	No of organisations listed on the website.

		expert group to pinpoint the relevant groups	
Sea Space – Transport			
Ensure that all infrastructure developments follow the guidelines of the Disabled persons transport advisory committee (DPTAC)	Ongoing - Strategic influencing role only		
Providing access links through design standards for the public realm	Ongoing for all projects	Incorporated into plans for Priory Quarter and Ore Valley	Number of completed schemes. Feedback from consultation with Disability Forum and users
Sea Space – Physical Development – High Importance (Five Point Plan category – Urban Renaissance)			
Use the lifetime homes standard and build it into Sea Space's quality built environment framework.	Standards to be incorporated in design briefs on a project by project basis or included in development agreements	Sea Space is not currently designing houses. The Millennium Communities developer is designing in accordance with the 'Best Practice' principles of English Partnerships	Audit of design and construction for compliance with the 16 design features identified in the Lifetime Homes Standards
Ensure that all physical development involving public consultation targets consultation with disabled people.	4 weeks before each consultation event, contact disabled groups to actively promote event	Already incorporated into consultation planning	DDA guidelines and feedback from consultees
Increase contact with beneficiaries of schemes and projects by face to face contact, discussion and evaluation by project managers.	Implemented through the use of the 'Planning by	Already incorporated into consultation planning on larger	DDA guidelines and feedback from consultees

	Design' process. Ongoing on a project by project basis	schemes	
Undertake flagship projects identified in the RES, to lead the rest of the region	Priory Quarter – Phase 1 construction underway, due for completion Spring 08. Ore Valley Millennium Community Homes – phased development in partnership with private sector	Master planning complete. Phase 1 on site. Master planning complete. Phase 1 infrastructure complete	Project complete and occupied. Dwellings complete and occupied
Disability access audits of all major development sites of over £1million.	Within 6 months of the completion of each project	Audits currently undertaken on CMC and ICH	Endorsement of consultant auditor.
Provide specialist training in physical accessibility issues for Sea Space	Within 6 months. Update every 2 years	Alternative delivery mechanisms to be assessed and appropriate training procured	Number of trained individuals
Ensure that disability equality is a key assessment criteria in the call for proposals for physical development.	Prior to the award of each design appointment	DDA compliance is a standard clause of all briefs. To be supplemented with SEEDA guidance	DDA guidelines and feedback from consultees
Ensure that disability equality is built into the physical	Carry out a	To be implemented at	DDA guidelines and feedback

considerations at master planning stage.	disability audit. Implement 'Planning by Design of larger schemes.	the appropriate stage on a project by project basis	from consultees
Offer all written material in Braille, large type and audio formats	Within 2 days of request for material	Large type and audio already available, need to locate Braille service	Percentage of materials offered in alternative formats
Use SEEDA's Disability Access Standards for written communications	June 2007		Percentage of communications complying with standards
Ensure websites are accessible and comply with DDA. Follow the WAI Web Content accessibility guidelines www.w3.org/wai	January 2007 for Sea Space corporate website. Immediate incorporation for all new website design brief	New website design underway which is compliant	Percentage of websites which are compliant
Ensure consultations are held at accessible venues (actual building and transport). Involve and target disabled people for consultations.	4 weeks before each event	Already incorporated into consultation planning	DDA guidelines, feedback from consultees, percentage of disabled people involved in consultation – include question on disability in feedback form
Offer sign language at events	1 week before each event	Need to locate local translator – due Dec 06	Percentage of consultation events offering this facility

BUSINESS AND INTERNATIONAL

Action and responsibility	Completed by:	Current progress:	Measurement criteria:
Ensure Enterprise Insight addresses the needs of disabled young people through: Providing role models through its activities	Ongoing – two issues of 'The Mark' are produced per year. There are also plans to launch an online version by May 2007	Promoting disabled role models in SEEDA's youth magazine, 'The Mark'. Two disabled role models have been promoted to date – in the May and November issues from 2006.	Aim to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and build this criteria into any supplier's specification Ensure regular features on disabled young people in publications
Ensure Enterprise Insight addresses the needs of disabled young people through: Ensuring all materials and events are accessible to disabled young people	Ongoing Ongoing By April 2007	The Edge competition was promoted to all special learning schools in the SE Every effort will be made to ensure all event venues are accessible to disabled young people The team will discuss making publications	Increased number of entries from disabled young people Build these criteria into the procurement/quotation process for all events organised. Measure the number of enquiries Ensure website is compliant with WCAG guidelines

		accessible to the blind and visually impaired with the RNIB and their 'See it Right' initiative	
Measurement of Business Link engagement with the disabled business sector to be included within the 3 year proposal	Karen Lacey – from April 07	From April 2007 Business Link engagement with the disabled business sector will be measured through the Business Customer Satisfaction Survey	Trends on performance will be reported to SEEDA on a quarterly basis.
Engagement with the disabled business sector to be reviewed during the Business Link Quarterly Performance Reviews	Karen Lacey	Starting financial year 2007-2008	As above
Review of Business Link Websites to ensure compliance to BOBBY Standard	Karen Lacey	To be done during the financial year 2007-2008	Report on each BL website with action plan to support the development of the regional site
Business Link to be task to promote disability awareness and the Business Case for Diversity with its wider client group	ongoing	Awareness raising events ongoing	Businesses and BL stakeholders showing more awareness of the Business case for diversity
Research into needs of disabled business people in the region & the development of action plan to improve the Business Link Service to Disabled People	Completed by 2008/09		

Ensure the Business Link 3 – year proposals (regional and local) have been equality impact assessed.	Ongoing – to be completed in January 2007		EIA publication and monitoring of EIA action plan.
Work with disabled people to understand and create suitable forms of business support for disabled people.	Ongoing – 7 National research projects – SEEDA feeding in regional experience		Minutes of meetings
Promote disability equality good practice in the private sector through the sustainable business awards	Ongoing – Date TBC	The Sustainable Business Awards are currently under review; they may be extended to look more widely at achievements in SEEDA's Business and Enterprise Programmes. Disability equality can be used as a criteria (as a minimum) in the selection process. Options will also be looked at for an award category to recognise good practice in equality.	To be determined through the selection process for the SEEDA awards in consultation with the SEEDA Inclusion Team.

Promote the business case for diversity through SEEDA's Sustainable Business Campaign	Marketing and PR Strategy completed by March 2007; Implementation of the strategy in 2007/2008 Regional advisors scheduled to be in post by March/April 2007	Supplier appointed to compile a Marketing and PR Strategy to raise awareness among SMEs of sustainable business practices, which includes diversity. Development of a regional team of Business Link Sustainable Business Advisors to champion this agenda to the SE Business Community, which will include advice and support on diversity aspects of business practices through CSR	Sustainable Business Strategy Targets, to be achieved by 2008: 1. 75% of the region's companies will recognise that adopting sustainable business practices makes good business sense 2. 75% of the region's companies will know where to go for good quality support if they need help in broadening their sustainable business activity 3. 50% of the region's companies will have implemented at least one new sustainable business activity within their business in the previous 12 months.
Sea Space – Enterprise (Five Point Plan category – Business & Enterprise)			
Ensure eBiz Centre & Enterprise Hub are monitoring all their customers based on age, gender, disability, ethnicity	Ongoing – establish at sign-up of each new client	Number of disabled clients is already recorded and will continue to be	Feedback from disabled clients on tailored assistance/ information given Consultation with disability forum
Ensure eBiz Centre and Enterprise Hub are promoting best practice and Disability Equality legislation to SMEs	Ongoing	Published guide Small Business Guide to	Client website audits undertaken to analyse and highlight DDA

		Accessible Websites Sept 2005 – Conference held for SMEs on Disability Access for Website	issues
eBiz Centre and Enterprise Hub to promote the Small Guide to Accessible Websites	Published	Available to all SMEs at events and in eBiz Centre	Number distributed
eBiz Centre and Enterprise Hub are aware of the business case for diversity.	Ongoing as legislation changes	Venues and publications checked for DDA accessibility and compliance	Feedback from disabled clients attending events or reading publications/material Consultation with disability forum
eBiz Centre and Enterprise Hub to promote the DRC guidance to SMEs 'Making access to goods and services easier for disabled customers'.	Ongoing	Published guide Small Business Guide to Accessible Websites Sept 2005 – Conference held for SMEs on Disability Access for Website	Feedback from disabled clients attending events or reading publications/material Consultation with disability forum
Offer all written material in Braille, large type and audio formats	Within 2 days of request for material	Large type and audio already available, need to locate Braille service	Percentage of materials offered in alternative formats
Use SEEDA's Disability Access Standards for written communications	June 2007	Ongoing	Percentage of communications complying with standards
Ensure websites are accessible and comply with DDA. Follow the WAI Web Content accessibility guidelines www.w3.org/wai	January 2007 for Sea Space corporate website. Immediate incorporation for all new website design brief	New website design underway which is compliant	Percentage of websites which are compliant
Ensure consultations are held at accessible venues (actual	4 weeks before	Already incorporated	DDA guidelines, feedback from

building and transport). Involve and target disabled people for consultations.	each event	into consultation planning	consultees, percentage of disabled people involved in consultation – include question on disability in feedback form
Offer sign language at events	1 week before each event	Need to locate local translator – due Dec 06	Percentage of consultation events offering this facility

STRATEGY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Action and responsibility	Completed by:	Current progress:	Measurement criteria:
Ensure that the RES implementation plan provide adequate resources and partnership capacity to deliver the outcomes required for disabled people.	Resources and actions identified by April 2007	RES Implementation plan in development between September 06 and April 2007	RES implementation plan monitoring External Disabled Stakeholder reference group
Creation of joint equalities plan for the agency	June 07	Single strand equalities plans being merged	Progress monitoring against joint equalities objectives
Ensure that all divisional business plans address how they will include equality and diversity within their core activities	Actions to be included in annual business planning cycle (Feb/March)	Business Planning will begin February 2007	Monitored through progress reports on business plans
Ensure the corporate plan addresses equality and diversity across all its functions.	Revised Corporate Plan to be completed by December 2007	Corporate Planning process will start Summer 2007	Monitored through Annual Reporting
Equality Impact Assess Key policies that have a strategic impact on disabled communities across the region including: Business Advice simplification,	EIA's of all key policies complete by December 07	Process has started and we are continuing to identify	Monitored through Annual Reporting

regional housing strategy etc		areas for priority assessment	
Support for the development of strategic regional voice and representation for disabled people in partnership with the Commission for Equalities and Human Rights	Ongoing from 2007/08	SEDEC launched 4 th December 06	Minutes of meetings, ongoing joint activity monitoring
Championing of and participation of the regional health strategy	Ongoing	SEEDA championing one of 4 key strands and influencing all other strands.	Monitored through implementation plan of regional health strategy
Development of ongoing participation with disabled people in the review and amendment of the DES and wider regional strategy	Ongoing – specifically quarterly review process	External reference group formed – revised terms of reference being developed	Measured through update reports by the group and progress on key actions raised through review process
Creation of regional data resource on disability and the barriers to work and education in the South East.	From 2007/08	To draw together regional research from 2007/08	Publication and updating of research resource
Develop Strategic overview of the interconnections and multiplier effects of disability and other equalities issues ie. Race, gender etc	Ongoing as part of joint equalities plan	To be completed	Multiplier effects of joint equalities issues acknowledged within programme and project design and EIA process
SEEDA to influence local authorities through the Local Area Agreement process to influence local service provision for disabled people especially on issues relating to transport and physical accessibility/ local representation and leadership.	Ongoing through Area Team negotiation		LAA considerations for disabled people across all 4 blocks adopted
Work in partnership to develop a dependent care strategy for the region.	By 2008	High level partnership to be developed	Strategy completed and implementation targets being met.

Ensure regional financial inclusion strategy priorities access for disabled people.	Completed by September 07	Financial Inclusion research already completed and identifying needs of disabled people	Strategy completed and implementation targets being met.
Review practice from current EU Economic Inclusion Programmes to support Sustainable Prosperity and SMART Growth objectives of the regional economic strategy.	By March 2008	Implementation plan for RES sections in development	Evaluation practice reviewed and worked into Economic Inclusion Strategy.