

Report to: Council Functions Committee
Date of Meeting: 30th October, 2007
Report of: Head of Human Resources
Title: Disability in Employment Policy

1. **SUMMARY**

The attached policy is designed to specifically address the issue of employing staff with disabilities and explaining the Council's approach on handling the recruitment, development and retention of staff with disabilities. At present the Council has no written policy on this matter and it is extremely important to fill this policy gap and to ensure that the Council's approach complies with employment law.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

That the policy be adopted.

Contact Officer: Fiona Skene

For further information on this report please contact Fiona Skene
telephone extension 8338, email Fiona.Skene@watford.gov.uk

Report approved by: Tricia Taylor, *Corporate Director*

3.0 DETAILED PROPOSAL

3.1 Introduction

Since the Disability Discrimination Act was passed in 1995, the law has continued to evolve. Not only have the original provisions of the Act been subject to judicial interpretation but major changes have been made to the legislation itself. From October, 2004, the extent of the legislation's coverage was extended to take into account the requirements of the EU Directive relating to equal treatment in employment and occupation. The government is also keen to continue to improve the employment of disabled people. It is in this context that this policy has been developed.

At borough council level, the BVPI on the number of disabled people meeting the DDA definition employed as a percentage of the economically active disabled population in Watford is relatively low at 1.54 %. It is perceived that there is under-reporting of DDA status mainly for privacy reasons. However clearly this is an area of where the Council could improve its performance. It is therefore wise to have a written policy on this matter which will be accompanied by Management Guidelines. The policy covers a range of issues connected with the recruitment, development and retention of staff with disabilities.

Disabled employees have significant employment rights and there will be a need to train managers through "Lunch and Learns" to ensure they fully understand their responsibilities. Heads of Service, CMB and UNISON have been consulted on this policy.

RECOMMENDED that the policy be adopted.

4. IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial

The Director of Finance comments that, in relation to making reasonable adjustments, some assistance is available from the Access to Work programme. However ad hoc costs may be incurred where reasonable adjustments are required.

4.2 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services comments that the legal implications are contained in the policy.

4.3 Staffing

This report creates a policy framework for dealing with staffing issues linked to disability and can only improve the Council's approach on this matter.

4.4 Accommodation

There are no implications in this report.

4.5 Equalities

These are contained in the report.

4.6 Community Safety

There are no implications in the report.

4.7 Sustainability

There are no implications in this report.

Appendices

Disability in Employment Policy

Background papers:

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Code of Practice : Employment and Disability.

The Duty to Promote Disability Equality : Statutory Code of Practice.

If you wish to inspect or take copies of background papers please contact the officer named on the front page of the report.