

Introducing the Office for Disability Issues

Working for equality for disabled people



Office for Disability Issues

HM Government



‘The job of the Office for Disability Issues – and my job as the lead Minister – is to bring government departments together to ensure that the disadvantage and exclusion faced by many disabled people is made a thing of the past...’

Anne McGuire, Minister for Disabled People

We aim to make sure that:

- the Government takes action to support disabled people and improve their quality of life;
- disabled people's needs and views are at the centre of the Government's work on disability; and
- disabled people are respected as equal members of society.



Website: www.officefordisability.gov.uk



About the Office for Disability Issues (ODI)

We are a new organisation at the heart of government whose aim is to make sure we achieve, by 2025, the Government's goal of equality for disabled people.

We will work with all government departments to develop and improve services for disabled people, and in particular with the departments responsible for health, transport, education and skills, work and pensions, trade and industry, and with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

As a central co-ordinating office, we will:

- make sure that government departments work together on disability issues;
- make sure that disabled people's views and needs are at the centre of any decisions when developing policies;
- support government departments in taking action on the recommendations in the report 'Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People'; and
- report on progress and provide advice to government departments and to the Minister for Disabled People.



For more information about the 'Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People' report, see: www.officefordisability.gov.uk/report

Working with disabled people and disability organisations

We will work closely with people outside government to make sure that the Government takes disabled people's views and needs into account.

During 2006, we will set up the National Forum for Organisations of Disabled People so that disabled people can communicate directly with the Government.

By asking disabled people about their experiences, we will be able to:

- identify barriers to equality and living independently; and
- work with public and private organisations to overcome these issues.

We will run seminars, events and consultation exercises on specific topics.



You can find out more about the National Forum for Organisations of Disabled People from:

www.officefordisability.gov.uk/national

Examples of current projects

Individual Budgets

The aim of Individual Budgets is to give people more choice and control over the services they use.

Individual Budgets will give people:

- a budget to use for their care or support package;
- the ability to use the budget in a way that best suits their needs; and
- the choice to be supported in managing their budget by a broker (someone who acts on their behalf), an advocate (someone to represent their interests if they are not able to do so themselves), or a family member or friend.

The budgets included in this project will cover disability equipment and adaptations, adult social care services, Supporting People funding, the Independent Living Fund and Access to Work.

This cross-government project is led by the Department of Health, working closely with the Department for Work and Pensions, the ODI and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Individual Budgets will be tested out in 13 local authorities in England in 2006/2007.

Depending on how the testing goes, the Government will decide whether or not to introduce Individual Budgets nationally.

The 'Information needs of disabled people' project

The 'Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People' report found that accessing clear and consistent information from central and local government is an important and sometimes frustrating issue for disabled people.

As a result, a research project involving people from the voluntary sector and government departments was set up in 2005 to find out what information disabled people want from the Government and what information is currently provided.

We will use the findings from the research to improve information for disabled people from local and central government.



To find out more about these projects, visit:

www.officefordisability.gov.uk/projects



Some questions and answers

Q: Who works for you?

A: We have a mix of civil servants and people from outside government, including disabled people.

Q: How will you make sure you represent the views of disabled people more widely?

A: We are committed to involving disabled people in every aspect of our work, and will work closely with the new National Forum for Organisations of Disabled People.

Q: Who makes sure you meet your aims?

A: We report to a group of ministers from the main departments that support our work.

Q: Why are you part of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)?

A: DWP is the department which leads on rights, benefits and employment programmes for disabled people. We also support the Minister for Disabled People, who currently works in DWP.

Q: How will we know the Government is meeting its commitments to disabled people?

A: We will produce a report each year for the Prime Minister on progress in improving support and equality for disabled people.

Q: What is your relationship with local government services?

A: We will support the development of new programmes and work with departments on projects to improve services for disabled people. Individual departments will still be responsible for policy and programmes for disabled people at a local level.

Q: What's the difference between you and the Disability Rights Commission (DRC)?

A: The DRC is an independent organisation working to prevent discrimination and promote equality for disabled people through existing anti-discrimination law. The ODI will be working within government to improve policies and services for the future.

Q: Where should I go if I need information on disabilities and services from the Government?

A: Directgov is the Government's website for information and services for disabled people on employment, independent living, financial support, disability rights and more.



To find out more about Directgov visit:

www.direct.gov.uk/disability

Keeping up to date with the Office for Disability Issues

There will be opportunities to get involved and have your say, such as consultation events and surveys.



If you want to take part in future consultation work on particular topics, you can e-mail:

office-for-disability-issues@dwp.gsi.gov.uk



Our website is the place to find all our latest information, reports and research: www.officefordisability.gov.uk

Annual report

We will produce an annual report on the Government's progress on disability projects. We will publish the first one in the summer of 2006 and it will be available on our website, in print, and in other accessible formats.



Contacting us

You can contact us by e-mail, or you can write to the team.
We are not able to advise you on personal issues.



You can e-mail:

office-for-disability-issues@dwp.gsi.gov.uk



Or you can write to:

Office for Disability Issues

The Adelphi

1-11 John Adam Street

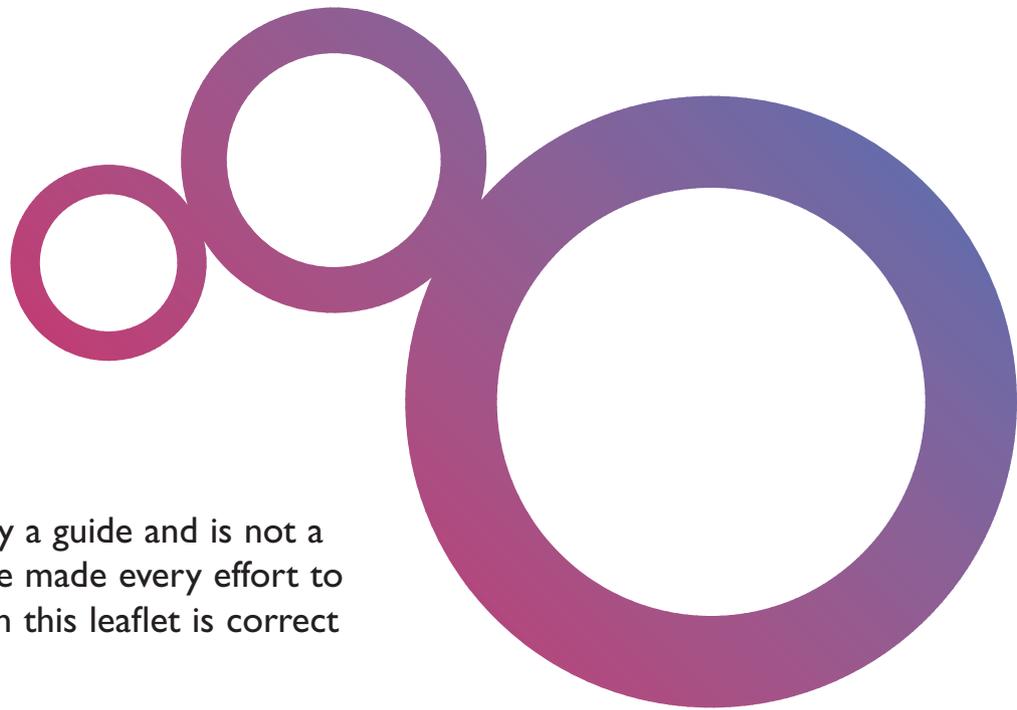
London

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Other formats

If you need material – including this brochure – in Braille, on audio cassette, in an Easy-Read version, in large print or in Welsh, please contact us at the address shown above.





Remember that this leaflet is only a guide and is not a full statement of the law. We have made every effort to make sure that the information in this leaflet is correct at the date shown on this page.

ISBN: 1-84388-972-2

Produced by the Office for Disability Issues

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Printed in the UK, March 2006

ODI 1/1