

**“Progressing from the DDA to the Equality Bill:
New Ways Forward for Disability Equality”**

The House Magazine, written for and by Parliamentarians is to hold one of its regular *Westminster Briefings* which aims to provide a forum for practitioners, local policy makers and civil servants to debate key issues with leading figures from within Westminster, Whitehall and Local Government.

Date: Thursday, 27th August 2009
Time: 10.40 – 14.00
Venue: London, Westminster

“Though we have ensured new rights and opportunities for disabled people....there is still unfairness and discrimination to tackle, and this Bill will take the action necessary to tackle it”.
Rt. Hon. Harriet Harman QC MP, Minister for Women and Equality, April 2009

“Legislating now won’t just benefit disabled people who find the current law full of holes and difficult to use, it will help give UK businesses a stronger competitive advantage and help us emerge stronger from recession”.
Liz Sayce, Chief Executive, RADAR, April 2009

“Disabled people and their organisations need to be ever vigilant that a Bill that is broadly welcomed is not allowed to move disability rights backwards”.
Sir Bert Massie, former Chair of the Disability Rights Commission, April 2009

The 1995 and 2005 Disability and Discrimination Acts (DDA) underline the fact that the rights of disabled people have remained high on the equality and diversity legislation agenda. The parliamentary introduction of the Equality Bill in April of this year builds on these Acts to set out new ways forward in delivering greater equality for all disabled people. Understanding and adapting to these new measures will mean significant transformation for disability services and provision in all public, private and third sector organisations.

This *Westminster Briefing* will provide delegates with the opportunity to consider the Bill and its implications for all disability practitioners and disabled people. In addition, participants will not only examine the measures that organisations have and need to put in place to ensure they will meet their new disability equality obligations but discuss the way ahead for all disabled people. Participants will engage with the panel on a number of important issues including:

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the new Bill for disability equality? How will the new public sector duty help to promote disability equality?
- What examples are there of organisations and disability practitioners adapting service practices and provisions to adhere to the forthcoming legislation?
- Does the Bill address the gaps in existing law to ensure disabled people have redress for discriminatory treatment? Is a new definition of disability needed?
- How can barriers to disabled people enforcing their rights and securing real change be better overcome?
- Does the Bill address the disability pay gap? What does the Bill mean for disabled children?
- What are the views of a potential Conservative Government to the changes for disability equality proposed in the Bill? What are the implications of the recession in implementing the new disability legislation?

Delegates will be drawn from a wide range of stakeholders, including all equality and diversity practitioners and professionals from public, private and third sector organisations, central government departments and relevant bodies; academia; the voluntary sector, disability NGOs and community groups; and all those that have an interest in the Equality Bill and its implications for disability equality.

Morning refreshments will be served upon arrival with a networking lunch and afternoon tea to follow. Any special needs or dietary requirements should be notified to us upon booking.

Places on our briefings are strictly limited; I advise you, therefore, to book as early as possible to secure your delegate place(s).