

What are the specific duties?

Most public authorities² have an additional obligation to demonstrate how they have fulfilled the DED. Those bodies subject to the specific duties must identify how they have involved disabled people in the development of a Disability Equality Scheme (including an Action Plan) and demonstrate that they have undertaken the actions set out in the Plan.

These public authorities are also required to report their progress in implementing the DED and to review and revise the Disability Equality Scheme on a regular basis.

Additional resources

The NAS has produced separate guidance for schools and this document can be found on the NAS website:

www.autism.org.uk/DEDSchools

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) has produced a wide range of guidance documents on the DED, including separate guidance for education, health, social care, national and local government.

These documents can be found at the DRC's website:

www.dotheduty.org

² The full list of authorities covered by the specific duty is available at: www.dotheduty.org



The National Autistic Society is the UK's leading charity for people affected by autism.

Autism and the Disability Equality Duty

The National Autistic Society believes that in order to deliver services and support of value to people with autism (including people with Asperger syndrome) public authorities need to involve them in the process of developing those services. For this reason, we have produced a set of guidelines to support public bodies in involving people with autism in the implementation of the Disability Equality Duty.

What is the Disability Equality Duty?

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 contained a new duty - the Disability Equality Duty (DED). This duty requires public bodies to actively explore ways to ensure that disabled people are treated equally. This means including disabled people and disability equality in all decisions and activities from the outset. This duty is not only about making changes to your buildings or specific adjustments for individuals, it's about integrating equality into everything you do for all disabled people, including children and adults with autism. The intention is to bring an end to the discrimination that occurs when public bodies fail to take disabled people into account when developing services or policies.

Involving people with autism

The only way public authorities will meet the challenge of the disability equality duty is by meaningfully and comprehensively involving disabled people, including people with autism.

What is the General duty?

The general duty provides a framework for public authorities to carry out their functions more effectively and to tackle discrimination and its causes in a proactive way. Public authorities are required to

mainstream disability equality into all decisions and activities. This means not only future decisions but also taking action to address the consequences of past decisions which failed to give due regard to disability equality.

The duty requires that, when carrying out its functions, a public authority is to have due regard for the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act
- eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

The DED applies to all public authorities¹. This includes organisations as diverse as the police, health services, schools, local authorities, NHS trusts and central government. It also applies to any organisation which exercises some functions of a public nature. This could include private companies running health services or voluntary sector bodies delivering advice services on behalf of the public sector.

¹ Apart from a small handful which have specific exemptions