

CHALLENGING INEQUALITY
& CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

Fair for All Programme
Annual Report to April 2008



Foreword

It's been a busy year for equality with the Bicentenary of the Abolition of Slavery. I was involved in the Council's resolution in July 2007 (see more details further into this report) and was both proud and pleased to see Devon formally recognise its part in the slave trade.

Although events marking the Bicentenary were probably the biggest of the year, I've been lucky enough to be involved in a number of other, equally important projects. I particularly enjoyed going along to the Sign Vision annual conference – a day to bring together Deaf people and services to discuss how information dissemination could be improved and the use of modern technologies such as web cams.

A large part of my time was taken up with the reviewing and refreshing the Council's equality policy and scheme – Fair for All. We now have 60 objectives to carry us forward to 2011, up from 48 previously.

Only by working together we will achieve equality and this report highlights how services and staff from across the county have been doing this. So thank you everyone for your contribution and here's to another busy year.

Councillor Brenda Taylor
Member Equality Champion

Further Information and alternative formats

For further information or to request a different format please contact:
Corporate Equality Officer, Devon County Council, County Hall, Topsham
Road, Exeter EX24QU. Telephone 01392 382260. Email
equality@devon.gov.uk SMS 0789 610 3530.

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Executive Summary

This executive summary highlights activities in the Fair for All Programme during 2007-2008. Further details of the Council's activities and achievements can be found in the full report.

Delivering on our priorities

This year has seen a review and refreshment of the Fair for All Programme (equality scheme) and Equality Policy. A clear Vision for Equality and Fairness has also been developed and will be used in all promotional materials.

Progress and Achievements

The new programme (2008-2011) contains 60 objectives, which take into account the new equality duties relating to Gender and Disability and the timescales for the programme are dovetailed to the cycle of Equality Impact and Needs Assessments.

Achievements of the past year include:

A slavery abolition exhibition at the Council Committee Suites took place on the day marking the Abolition of Slavery Bicentenary, with Councillors receiving an information pack and time to reflect through poignant readings.

The third Sign Vision conference worked on previous successful events, exploring new avenues to include information to Deaf people in addition to discussion and feedback on progress relating to service provision.

The 'Women's Lives in Devon' conference held in July 2007 was considered to be a key step to addressing the under-representation of women in Devon, with the 120 available places being quickly filled.

Working in partnership

The continued success of the Council's programme requires partnership working with other agencies – public and voluntary sector. The strength of these relationships can be seen particularly with the successful development of a Welcome Pack for new arrivals by the Migrant Worker Multi-agency Task Group and the support given to the Devon Racial Equality Council in the form of a rescue package in the face of a funding crisis.

A developed workforce and positive working environment

The first Equality Awards were held by the Council as an innovative and positive way of raising awareness of equality issues and applauding best practice within the Council.

Resources and Structures

The restructuring of the Equality Strategy Group and the involvement of the Equality Reference Group has been embedded through the year. The reference group has also been widened to include a young people's representative, Ben Jones to whom we would all like to offer a warm welcome and thank him for his contributions to date.

The equality budget is used for consultation and external scrutiny, community development activities, community engagement and events, training, promotional work and strategy development. Individual

directorates also contribute to the overall costs through their own budgets, as well as contributions being made by other public sector partners and grant making trusts.

Next Steps

Devon County Council is currently working towards achievement of level 3 of the Equality Standard, the formal accreditation assessment for which will be taking place in October 2008. The Equality Standard for Local Government is the national benchmark which councils are assessed against every year, having 5 levels which demonstrate how far councils have mainstreamed equality and diversity practice.

By Ben Jones and Emma Treby

On behalf of the Devon County Council Equality Reference Group:

Peter Boeuff, Devon Racial Equality Council?

Angela Clinch, FairPlay South West

Janet Crocker, Senior Council

Michael Halls, Intercom Trust: lesbian gay bisexual and trans community resources

Ben Jones, Young person's representative, Devon County Council

Emma Treby, Living Options Devon

Progress and achievements







Corporate equality policy and scheme

2007 to 2008 was a year of change in which we reviewed and refreshed our Fair for All Programme (equality scheme) and Equality Policy.

The previous programme (2004 to 2007) had 47 objectives and the new programme (2008 to 2011) contains 60, taking into account the new equality duties relating to Gender and Disability.

To develop the objectives, an Evidence Base was produced. This is a collection of community feedback and information from consultation and research across the six equality strands race/ethnicity, gender, religion/belief, age, disability and sexual orientation.

A new Vision for Equality and Fairness was developed¹:

-  **People achieve their own potential and a good quality of life.**
-  **Everyone can use or access our services, facilities or information. Different needs are always taken into account.**
-  **There is public influence over decision making, planning, policy and service delivery. There is wide and fair representation and 'loud minority voice'. People feel involved and influential – forums for participating are supported in a sustainable way and have real impact. Diversity is reflected in governance arrangements. No community is considered 'hard to reach'. There is a strong understanding of the diverse range of needs in Devon's communities, their make up and changing nature.**
-  **Devon is a stronger, safer and inclusive community. There are good relations between different communities. People are treated with dignity and respect at work, as a customer, and in the community.**
-  **People have trust and confidence in us to report incidents or abuse or discrimination and are happy with the process when they do.**
-  **Across all levels, our workforce is supported and reflects the community. There is fair pay and employment practice, equal opportunities to progress and develop, and access to flexible working and 'family friendly' arrangements.**

The timescale for the new programme has been brought in line with the cycle of Equality Impact and Needs Assessments which are carried out on relevant services, functions and policies over a three - year period.

Marking the Abolition of Slavery Bicentenary

Although Devon's involvement with slavery was relatively small, the Bicentenary provided the Council the opportunity to explore issues of racism and diversity through an historical context. It was an opportunity to oppose slavery – past or present - and encourage people across Devon to open their hearts and minds to the horrors of slavery and racism.

A following resolution was considered and accepted at the Full Council Meeting on Thursday 19th July:

¹ Text in bold will be used in a promotional postcard

Resolution

Devon County Council welcomes the theme of reflecting on the past as well as looking to the future. We believe that recognising the history of the Slave Trade and those who opposed it deepens our understanding of our heritage, celebrates our diverse cultures and increases our commitment to address inequalities and oppose all forms of contemporary slavery and exploitation. Devon County Council acknowledges the historical involvement of Devon - its ports, its people, its land owners, and the industries in the Atlantic Slave Trade and the arrival of slaves and former slaves who settled and became part of our communities. We will support activities which mark the Bicentenary and encourage our staff, elected members and residents of Devon to engage in them.

On the day there was a slavery abolition exhibition in the Ante-Chamber of the Council Committee Suites which included:

- The Gale-Morant Slavery Exhibition (on loan from Exeter University)
- A Devon Records Office display on slavery (on loan from the Devon Records Office)
- A short film 'Hell on Earth: Slavery Today' - from Anti-Slavery International
- A series of images on the history of the Slave Trade - from Anti-Slavery International

Each Councillor received an information pack on the Slave Trade including the Whitbread Book of the Year 'Small Island', free copies of which have been distributed by County Libraries. The book explores post-war migration to Britain.

The start of the Council meeting was preceded by a 10 minute reflection on the Slave Trade with readings led by Lucy MacKeith, Historian of Local Black History, Chukumeka Maxwell (reading extracts from the Narrative of former slave Olaudah Equiano and a speech by John Henry Naimbana, son of King Naimbana of Sierra Leone who came to London and was present at the House of Commons during a debate on the Slave Trade), Tony Simpson (covering information about the Abolition movement) and local poet Louisa Parker (who read an extract of her own poetry which reflected upon a young slave woman working at a house in Lyme Bay).



Devon County Council Leader Brian Greenslade said "I am glad we have had the opportunity to reflect on this period from our history and also to think about the part our county of Devon played in it. Devon County Council's response is to help build and safeguard a fair, free and open society, in which we seek to balance the fundamental values of liberty, equality and community and in which no-one shall be enslaved by poverty, ignorance or conformity. This resolution will help us to do so".

Council Chairman and Equality Champion Brenda Taylor said "As champion for Equality and Diversity I am pleased to support this notice of motion. It is only right that we remember that our country has not always been blameless in its past activities."

Executive Member for Culture, Councillor Sheila Hobden said "The transatlantic slave trade is one of the more shameful aspects of our history, and Devon participated in it as much as other counties.

However, Devonians were also vocal in calling for its abolition, and we remember, along with all the suffering caused by the trade, the tireless efforts of those who strove for justice”.

The Council also sponsored the organising, promotion and running of a range of talks, films, readings, plays and exhibitions on the Abolition in partnership with Exeter University. The Chief Executive led one of those discussions on 31st October 2007. Cultural Services provided financial support to local history writer Todd Gray to complete his research on Devon and the Slave Trade. His book was launched in September at the Devon Records Office.

Migrant Worker Welcome Pack

Devon County Council contributed £40,000 to the Migrant Worker multi-agency work which included the development of a Welcome Pack for new arrivals. www.devonsp.org.uk/migrantworkers.

Sign Vision 3 – Consultation event with Deaf people

Deaf people of all ages were invited to the third Sign Vision conference. Again, the aim of the annual conference was to bring together Deaf people and service providers for a day of information, entertainment and discussion. Sign Vision 3 aimed to explore new avenues. Still with the Charter in mind, it looked at some wider issues of public information and emerging technologies. There was a greater emphasis on providing information to Deaf people whilst still enabling an opportunity for discussion and feedback on progress and service provision.

The programme for the conference included workshops about environmental awareness, information communication technology (use of webcams and free ‘video call’ services to communicate), healthy living and general access to services. There were also informative sessions dedicated to youth and leisure services, adult learning and interpreting services.

Living Options Deaf Project consulted with Deaf clubs on which subject areas to cover.

Outside, Devon County Council’s Information bus (with PC connections/webcams) and Exeter City Council’s recycling truck ‘Denis’ were available for demonstrations. ‘Freebies’ on the day included toilet ‘hippos’ (for saving water) and re-usable shopping bags.

Younger people were invited and a crèche was provided to enable wider participation of people with young dependants.

In January the Sign Vision Conferences Report was published: www.devon.gov.uk/bslcharter.

Thanks to feedback from Sign Vision events to recognise British Sign Language as a language in its own right, all BSL courses are now advertised in the Devon Adult and Community Learning brochure in the Languages and Communications sections and not Other/General Interests. This may seem like a small change, but it sends out a powerful message about the importance of BSL.

We have also worked closely with *Deafinite* Interpreters, the new local BSL Interpreting Agency to set up an Interpreting Contract that will help build the capacity and availability of interpreters in the area.

Youth Participation Strategy

Devon County Council was one of the first authorities in the country to have its work in engaging young people acclaimed by the National Youth Agency - six months ahead of schedule.

In its report, the National Youth Agency said “Devon County Council has achieved the advanced level required for the commitment it has shown to the full participation of children and young people at all

levels within its organisation and for the changes this has made to the lives of children and young people across Devon.”

The Council's Youth Participation Strategy *Bigger Voices... Better World!* underpins the Council's aim to involve young people in every level of decision making on services that affect them. It is reviewed every six months to assess progress against the challenging targets it sets itself, and within the Children's Trust partnership. It is part of *Hear by Right* - the national standards framework for organisations across the statutory and voluntary sectors to ensure young people are involved in decision making.

Earlier this year the council collaborated with the National Youth Agency, which has monitored the way it involves young people across Devon. In its report the agency says:

“Devon County Council has made significant progress in embedding the participation of children and young people across the whole organisation and is developing excellent work with key partners and organisations to ensure that this can be sustained throughout the changes taking place within Children's Trust arrangements.”

The Council's participation strategy was inspected across the seven key areas: Shared values; strategies; structures; systems; staff; skills and knowledge; and style of leadership.

The report says: “Managing the participation of children and young people relies on commitment not only of the young people but also the staff who support them.”

Devon County Council's Deputy Leader, and Executive Member for children and Young People's Services, Councillor John Smith, said: “The accreditation from the National Youth Agency is a tribute to the many staff who have worked so hard to ensure that our participation strategy makes a real difference to young people's lives. Young people feel involved in decision making, and we are able to provide services that meet their needs through their involvement. We have been able to achieve this level six months ahead of target, which is further testament to the success of those involved.”

The report pays tribute to the commitment to children and young people led by the Chief Executive and reinforced through a network of champions at all levels including members.

The report praises the careful auditing of resources and skills within each directorate in contributing to the strategy, the active involvement of children and young people and the very positive leadership, which has enabled the Council to embed participation into its culture.

Neal Skinner, a young person who has been involved in Devon's Young Person's Shadow Executive, a group set up to ensure young people have a voice in the decisions made in Devon, said: “Hear by Right is a way to make the concept of youth participation real, and way to measure the outcome of it. My involvement has meant a great deal to me, young people have a great and innovative contribution to make to decisions, especially decisions that affect them. It has been great to work on helping young people to impact decision making. The biggest change I have noticed is a cultural shift - adults seem to be willing and eager to engage with us, and it is great that they now have a better understanding on how to do that. It is fantastic to hear that Devon has met its target. It seems like only yesterday I was sat in one of the first YPSE meetings, and hearing that our target was to reach advanced status by 2008. I remember thinking at the time, we might be lucky to scrape by. But here we are 2007 and ahead of schedule!”

Women's conference – July 2007

Women are under-represented in Devon's business, social and political life, and at senior levels in our County's major employers. This makes it hard to address ongoing inequalities between women and men.

But after a hugely successful conference entitled 'Women's Lives In Devon', the Gender Issues Group, part of the Devon Strategic Partnership, have a more informed sense of direction and renewed sense of purpose in their gender advisory role to all of Devon's local authorities.

Charlotte Benson, Assistant Chief Executive of the Community Council of Devon and Chair (at that time) of the Gender Issues Group said "The Conference was key to our starting from a firm foundation. Devon's women and men need a structure in which to discuss how current inequalities can be tackled. The Conference helped us understand what structure might work best and what its priority aims should be."

Ms Benson said it was significant that last April the Government had introduced the Gender Equality Duty, under which all local authorities, such as the police, the NHS, and county, district and city councils, now have a duty to promote gender equality.

"Local authorities are taking this duty very seriously," she said. "It was good to see them sending delegates to this Conference, which was open to women and men who were representative of the business, social and political life of Devon."

"And the 120 places went extremely rapidly, so we knew we had pitched the theme of the Conference just right."

On the day delegates responded enthusiastically to Bea Campbell, nationally respected journalist, author and feminist and Tania Phouware of the Women's Research Council as keynote speakers. Their combined message was strongly that yes, women have made great strides, but are nowhere near equality yet. The statistics and research quoted showed that much remains to be tackled.

The conference workshops were designed to let participants share their knowledge and feed back their views on Climate Change; Transport & Rural Isolation; Women Do Business; Involving Women in Politics; Being Modern Mothers; Developing Ourselves As Women and Applying the Gender Equality Duty.

It was also an innovative conference. Participant feedback at the plenary session was translated into gripping enactments by the extra-ordinary ability of Tarte Noir, a women's theatre group skilled at instant and very effective translation of words into action.

"We are extremely grateful to Defra for funding such a vital conference," Ms Benson said, "and to the variety of organisations such as Devon County Council and Fawcett Southwest who supported it."

"We can now hope, with confidence, to advise the Devon Strategic Partnership of ways in which they might make Devon a fairer place for women and men to live."

Integrated service for people with sensory impairment

From November 2007 *Care Direct* began managing all telephone enquiries and requests for information for our Adult and Community Services Sensory Teams.

Our Sensory Team, which have three bases in Barnstaple, Dartington and Exeter, provide assistance to people with visual and hearing impairments across the county supporting thousands of people each year to live as normal lives as possible. They provide everything from practical advice to

rehabilitation and equipment. Team members in the three locations also respond to around 12,000 calls each year. For each location, there has been a different telephone number.

Routing the calls to *Care Direct* will mean not only that there will be one single number for the whole county, but callers will also benefit from access to the great many other Council services. Callers, for example, could be helped with Blue Badge applications, or receive free benefits checks to ensure that they are receiving all the benefits that they are entitled to.

Care Direct, which is part of the Council's *My Devon* customer service centre, is the main contact for all enquiries or access to the Council's social services. It can also help people access other services, such as library services, highways or children and family services. *Care Direct* is open 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 1pm on Saturdays, and callers can use the telephone, fax, textphone, email or SMS. A combination of extended opening hours, new methods of contacting the council such as text messaging and a reduction in contact numbers provides disabled residents easier access to services.

Councillor Des Hannon, Devon County Council's Executive Member for Corporate Performance, said "This is great news for people using the service. Instead of multiple telephone numbers, we'll have a single number that will also give access to the full range of Council services. This first class telephone service will also support the invaluable work of our Sensory Teams in helping people with visual or hearing impairments."

Mindful Employer Charter

Devon County Council has signed the *Mindful Employer Charter* for Employers who are positive about Mental Health. Stress, anxiety and depression cause more days off sick than any other health problem and this initiative, through the Wellbeing at Work team, aims to make working life take account of mental health conditions.

Access all areas - praise for bus and train pass scheme

The *Devon Access Wallet* has been receiving a positive response since its introduction last year.

Developed by Devon County Council, in partnership with First Devon & Cornwall and Stagecoach Devon, the *Devon Access Wallet* is designed to make travel by bus and train easier for anyone with communication difficulties, people with disabilities, deaf people and those whose first language is not English.

The scheme, which is based on an idea by Warrington Borough Council, consists of a wallet that has been carefully designed with a fluorescent orange cover to alert staff that they need to give extra care and attention to the passenger.

Since the launch of the scheme in April 2006, Devon County Council has worked hard to deliver and demonstrate the scheme at conferences and forums. Councillor Margaret Rogers, Devon County Council Executive Member for Environment, said: "The *Devon Access Wallet* has had a very successful start and is proving of real benefit to those who may otherwise find communication difficult. The scheme is giving many people the freedom to travel independently, which they may not otherwise have had the confidence to do without the wallet."

Each wallet contains plastic inserts containing information which the passenger wishes to convey to the driver. Examples of this could include a description of where the passenger wants to travel, and a picture or photo to help both the driver and the passenger know where they need to get off.

Additional information to help the passenger with their journey can also be placed inside the wallet, such as return fare please or emergency contact details.

The use of the wallet is becoming more widespread and individuals and groups across the county have been impressed by the scheme. *Beach Hut* in Exmouth, which organises and runs courses for adults with learning difficulties, said: "The learners took a great deal away with them today including a greater confidence and understanding....now I am aware of what is being done I will be able to speak to groups in the future about the new ideas and in particular the access wallet."

Disability Centre for Devon supported

Two Devon wide organisations come together under one roof in Exeter so that people with a disability can meet, share, and make changes in their lives. A 'one stop shop' for equipment information and campaigning for people with disabilities was created in Exeter when Living Options and the Independent Living Centre moved in together under one roof.

Living Options Devon supports disabled people to help themselves. In 2006, the charity helped over 120 people with disabilities change their lives for the better by providing training in assertiveness, confidence building and other skills. During the same year, Living Options also helped 50 different organisations to comply with the Disabilities Discrimination Act - many of whom made improvements that cost nothing.

The Independent Living Centre (ILC) in Exeter is jointly funded by Devon County Council and Devon Primary Care Trust. The service offers free and impartial assessment and information to anyone in Devon who is looking for equipment to enhance their independence. It helps over 500 people per month.

Both organisations work Devon-wide, providing information, independent advice, practical help and options to support people with physical disabilities. They also train professionals and members of the public, and consult with service users on a campaigning level.

Devon County Council's Champion for Older People, Cllr Eileen Wragg said:

"This is a great move for people, which opens up a far wider range of services for people visiting the Independent Living Centre and Living Options Devon. Both services are very highly respected, and this collaboration makes a perfect match."

Sally Slade, Health and Social Care Manager, said: "The Independent Living centre has provided an equipment advice and information service in Devon for over 20 years and many local people have benefited from their support. Working together with Living Options will enable both organisations to move forward and bring the benefits of their services to an even wider group of people living with a disability in Devon."

Equality Awards 2007

Over three dozen areas of Equality Good Practice were identified across the County Council. We were sure that this was just the tip of the iceberg! Of these, eight were selected to go forward to a staff vote for our very first and finest Equality Best Practice Award 2007/8.

The winner was presented with their award at the Customer Service and Equality Award Ceremony in January.

The nominations were:

1. Devon Link working closely with Living Options
2. Devon Music Service
3. English as an Additional Language service
4. Equality Impact Needs Assessment Tracking Database
5. Apprenticeship Programme
6. Citizenship Ceremony
7. Devon's Information Service for Children with Special Needs
8. Disability Information Service

The winning initiative was the Apprenticeship Programme which provides young people with the opportunity to develop skills, gain national qualifications and secure permanent employment.



Domestic Violence Manager awarded by Oguntê Women's Social Leadership Awards

Rachel Martin, Against Domestic Violence and Abuse (ADVA) Manager, won the Women's Social Leadership 'Social Campaign' award in 2008.

The awards commend women who make a great impact everyday in their social business, their unincorporated association, or their campaign. Set up in 2007, the awards aim to encourage and reward extraordinary vision, ethical business practice and social responsibility. They showcase women in businesses and organisations that offer innovative and sustainable solutions to social problems.

ADVA 'Against Domestic Violence and Abuse' partnership in Devon was established to unite agencies to tackle a pernicious crime that harms the lives of thousands of families in the county every year. Domestic abuse is not a crime that is effectively addressed by one agency alone; it affects women, men and children from birth to death and knows no social, cultural, religious or age boundaries. To tackle it effectively agencies have to work together. In 6 years ADVA has spear-headed wholesale change and introduced sustainability to core support services within the voluntary sector. Its common vision: to increase the safety of victims and children who live with domestic violence and abuse.

Help for Devon Racial Equality Council

Devon County Council stepped in with a rescue package to keep the Devon Race Equality Council (DREC) running in the short term after fears that DREC would be forced to close.

DREC is a voluntary organisation with charitable status, which relies on funding from government bodies and local authorities. It represents ethnic minority communities across the county, providing mediation services and help for people to access local services.

However DREC learned that their bids to the Big Lottery and the Commission for Equality and Human Rights for essential funding were unsuccessful, throwing the racial equality council's future into question.

Without more funding DREC's Chairman Peter Boeuf said that they may be forced to close, leaving ethnic minority communities across the county unrepresented.

But Devon County Council, already one of DREC's regular funding providers, stepped in with a rescue package to keep it running for another three months in which time it is hoped that the racial equality council can turn its position around.

As part of the package, the County Council is dedicating a Principal Finance Manager to join DREC's Board as Treasurer to provide practical advice and support to help the charity become sustainable again.

DREC Chairman Peter Boeuf, said: "Without Devon County Council's support the future for DREC would have been bleak indeed. The limited funding made available together with the professional help promised by the Council gives us a lifeline and will enable us to make realistic plans for the future. It is important to note however that unless other organisations especially in Devon and Exeter rise to the challenge of matching the generosity of the County Council the comprehensive range of services currently provided for and frankly urgently required on a day to day basis by our clients may have to be reduced even further."

Councillor Des Hannon, the County Council's Executive Member for Corporate Performance said: "The Devon Racial Equality Council provides an important service supporting a great many people. Our job is to help them over this hurdle with the financial skills and support to get them back on their feet. They are crucial in helping us reach out to everyone in Devon. Their work complements the County Council's aims and sometimes challenges us, and other public bodies, to do better. We are proud to help, and we are clear that the Racial Equality Council must continue as a strong independent voice for people from all our minority communities."

The Plain English and Easy Read Project launched

Being able to write clearly is a valuable skill to get your message across, and now we are making it easier for staff to improve their skills or learn how it's done. The Plain English and Easy Read Project was launched in 2007 to offer Plain English training, an easy-to-access Plain English guide, a network of Plain English experts on-hand to offer advice, and awards for those people who do it well.

Selected Plain English experts from across the council will also audit the web pages, leaflets and other frequently used information – firstly for Plain English, then to identify the documents which need to be produced in Easy Read format.

Project manager Jo White, said: "We've all been on the receiving end of complicated English – whether it's a badly-written email, or a form that hasn't been thought through properly. But by writing clearly with the reader in mind – whether it's a customer or a colleague – we can spend less time explaining our information, and give a better impression."

The project evolved from recent consultations with people with physical and sensory disabilities. Nearly 50 per cent said that communications was one of the main problems when accessing public services, and nearly 70 per cent said that 'promoting Plain English' should be a priority for us.

Apprentice of the Year develops Young People's Website

Devon County Council recruits young people on to its Apprenticeship Programme in order to increase the number of young people working for the Council.

This year, Nathan Grimes beat off strong competition from IT whizzes from top UK companies to win the *ESkills UK's* Apprentice of the Year title.

Nathan, who has just turned 19, works part time in finance and for the corporate web team and won the prize for his work in putting together the section of the County Council's website designed specifically for young people, *URDevon*.

Nathan worked with young people to create *URDevon* and has helped to change the way young people regard the authority by enabling them to access information relevant to them. The section has won praise from young users, Connexions, the Youth Participation Service, and other agencies.

Nathan has been studying for an ITQ Level 3 which he has achieved with the help of Academy of Training in Plymouth.

ESkills UK said he won the award because of his contribution to the County Council, the wider community, and by demonstrating to others the value of an Apprenticeship programme. Nathan said: "It is incredible to have the chance to get involved with such interesting projects that really do make a difference to the people of Devon. The recognition I have received for my hard work whilst on the Apprenticeship Programme has been enormously motivating and feeds my desire to succeed and move up the ladder within the organisation.

"It also highlights how Devon County Council values its apprentices, and for young people like me starting their careers it makes the experience a lot more enjoyable knowing you are valued. Winning this award has topped off my apprenticeship and proves just how much of a success it has been for me and at Devon County Council."

Transport Coordination Service

In January the Transport Coordination Services received a taster session in Makaton which is a system of communication that uses a vocabulary of "key word", manual signs and gestures to support speech, as well as graphic symbols to support the written word. It is used by and with people who have communication, language or learning difficulties.

The Devon Disability Forum put on an "Active Independent Living" exhibition in Plymouth with the aim of providing families, carers and professionals with the latest information on services, equipment and support available. Transport Coordination Services shared space with the Customer Service Centre to advertise the Access Wallet Scheme launched in 2007.

The 16th January saw the official launch of the Travel Training Scheme which took place at Southbrook College, Exeter. The scheme has been set up to help young people learn how to develop the skills for safe independent travel. The College agreed to pilot the project in Devon and the eventual aim is for the scheme to be rolled out to all schools across the county.

The Express & Echo is being monitored for issues affecting people in our community. There have been a couple of instances involving disabled people travelling



Picture by Theo Moye/apexnewsapix.com 16.01.08 Devon County Council launch the Independent Travel Training Scheme for children with learning difficulties at Southbrook College, Southbrook Road, Exeter. Pups are pictured on a bus.

or attempting to travel on buses. Work is being done to improve accessibility and independent living in Devon from a transport perspective and when incidents such as this have occurred, staff have been advised on how these issues are being addressed.

Devon Driver's Centre



Staff at the Devon Driver's Centre introduced the Chairman of Devon County Council, Brenda Taylor to the team, to an Advanced Driving Instructor and to a new Polish trainer, Magda. The Centre showed Councillor Taylor some of their activities including the older drivers' project, work to raise road safety awareness among Eastern European drivers and addressing a problem of anti-social driving among young people in Exmouth.

As Equality Champion for the Council, Councillor Taylor was very interested to hear about these initiatives.

Devon Records Office – LGBT History Month

The Devon Record Office exists to collect and preserve the historical records of Devon and to make them available to all who wish to study them. During February, the Devon Records Office worked with The Intercom Trust, Royal Albert Memorial Museum and the University of Exeter, with a grant from the Museums Libraries and Archives, to bring Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender History Month to Exeter.

LGBT History Month raised awareness of the difficulties surrounding the research of Lesbian, Gay, Bi and Transgender history in Devon and offered ways of accessing information and records held at the Devon Records Office.

The Devon Record Office celebrated after receiving its first LGBT archive – a collection of love letters. Records of the recent past, especially those created by individuals or small organisations, are particularly at risk of loss or destruction, and part of the Record Office's function is to collect the raw material for tomorrow's history. The story of the LGBT community in Devon is part of the story of the county, and the aim of this project has been to promote the Devon Record Office as a place where LGBT records can be stored safely for the benefit of future generations.

Events included drop in sessions with Devon Record Office staff, who offered advice regarding how to search the online catalogues for LGBT heritage and explained how archives can be a valuable source of information for LGBT researchers. A teaching resource has also been produced to help teachers plan their lessons around LGBT issues.

The archive is a first for the Southwest Peninsula and it is hoped that it will become a valuable resource in the future for researchers interested in LGBT heritage.

On Saturday 2nd February, the Devon Record Office teamed up with the Intercom Trust - supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bi and Transgender communities, for their first joint event in celebration of LGBT History Month. The event, on the Community Roadshow bus, took place at Cowick Street in Exeter. Also on hand were staff from the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter, who were undertaking a project to record people's memories, West of the Exe www.livinghere.org.uk.



On Saturday 9th February, a lunchtime lecture took place in Exeter Central Library, exploring LGBT heritage and the difficulties of researching them through archives.

On Saturday 23rd February at the Real Mcoy Café, Fore Street, Exeter an informal evening event was held to give people the opportunity to have a coffee and meet other people interested in accessing and discussing LGBT history. Again, people could find out how to access the archives to research LGBT heritage with staff from the Devon Record Office and the Intercom Trust. The evening included a

reading by author Caeia Marsh and a talk from staff at the Intercom Trust, entitled 'The way forward for LGBT History Month here in the South West Peninsula'.

On Saturday 28th February, the Devon Record Office teamed up with the Intercom Trust for an evening workshop at the Intercom Trust headquarters in Exeter. Younger members from the local LGBT community group Xplore were able to find out how to access the archives and research LGBT history.

Devon County Council Executive Member for Culture, Councillor Sheila Hobden, said: "Because lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people can be, have to be, or are made invisible, theirs is a secret history. Devon County Council will be playing a part in ensuring this history is now documented."

Further information on the events was available at: www.24hourmuseum.org.uk

Deaf Awareness Group – Signing Circle

The Deaf Awareness Group arranged their first "Signing Circle" meeting with students of the Royal Academy for the Deaf. The group spend a lunch hour learning words and phrases in Sign Language. The group was set up in response to the Devon British Sign Language Charter, to promote BSL and Deaf awareness.

Accessible guide for all visitors to the Exe Estuary - the Exe Explorer

The Exe Explorer 2008 includes all the latest routes around the estuary including the recently opened Lypstone to Exmouth cycle trail. All the paths are shown on a large colour-coded map which can be used to plan walking or cycling routes which reveal amazing views of the estuary. Whether planning a short stroll or a day's adventure, the Exe Explorer is an invaluable guide covering transport information, such as ferry, train and bus routes as well as accessibility guidance for wheelchair and pushchair users.

Resources and Structures

We continue to work in close partnership with our external stakeholders, the Equality Reference Group and our main vehicle for equality issues is the Equality Strategy Group, made up of the Member and Officer Champions for Equality, Corporate Equality Officer, Directorate Equality and Customer Service Champions, Equality Reference Group and Trade Union representative.

Our Equality Reference Group now has a young people's representative who is on the Apprenticeship Programme at the Council.

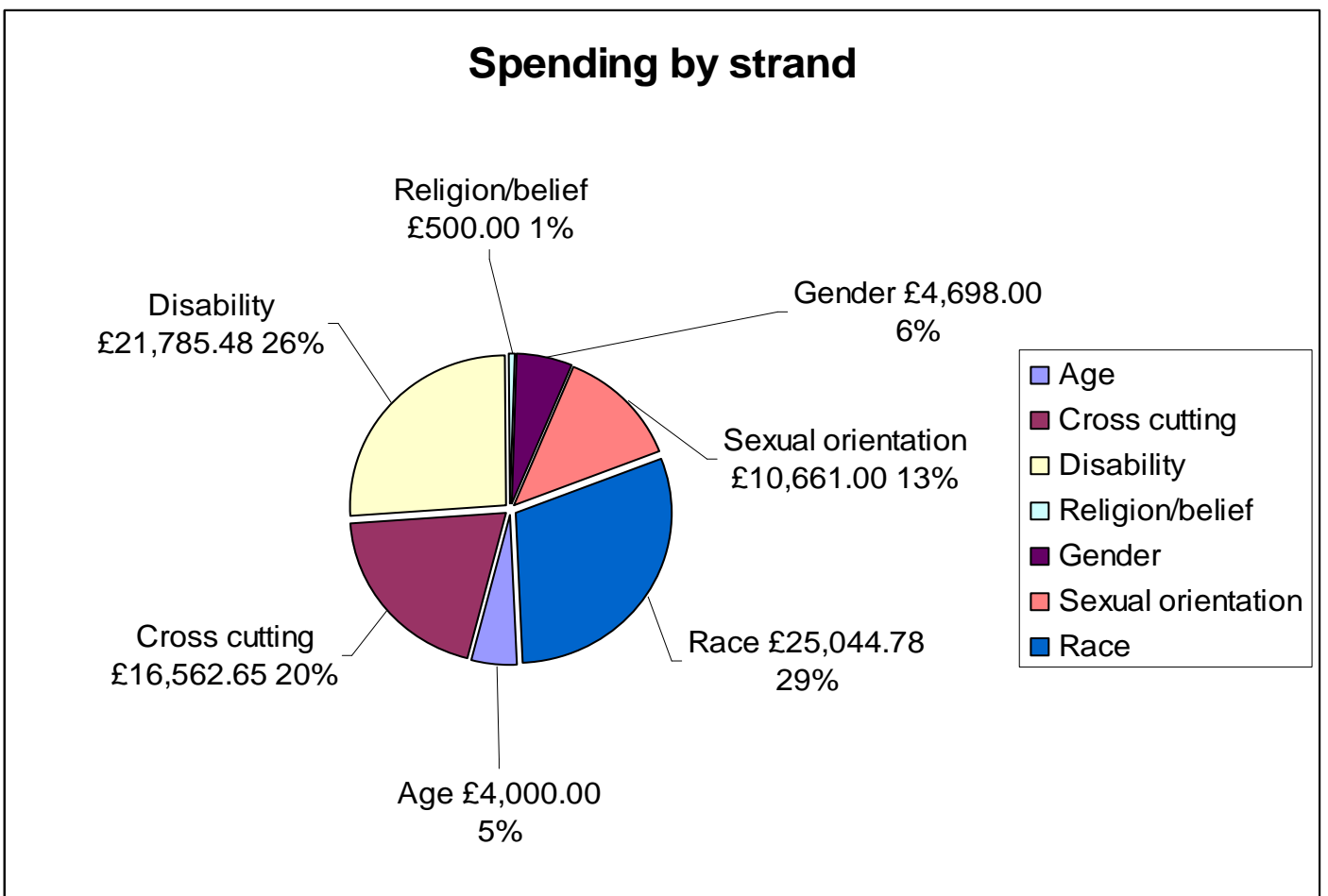
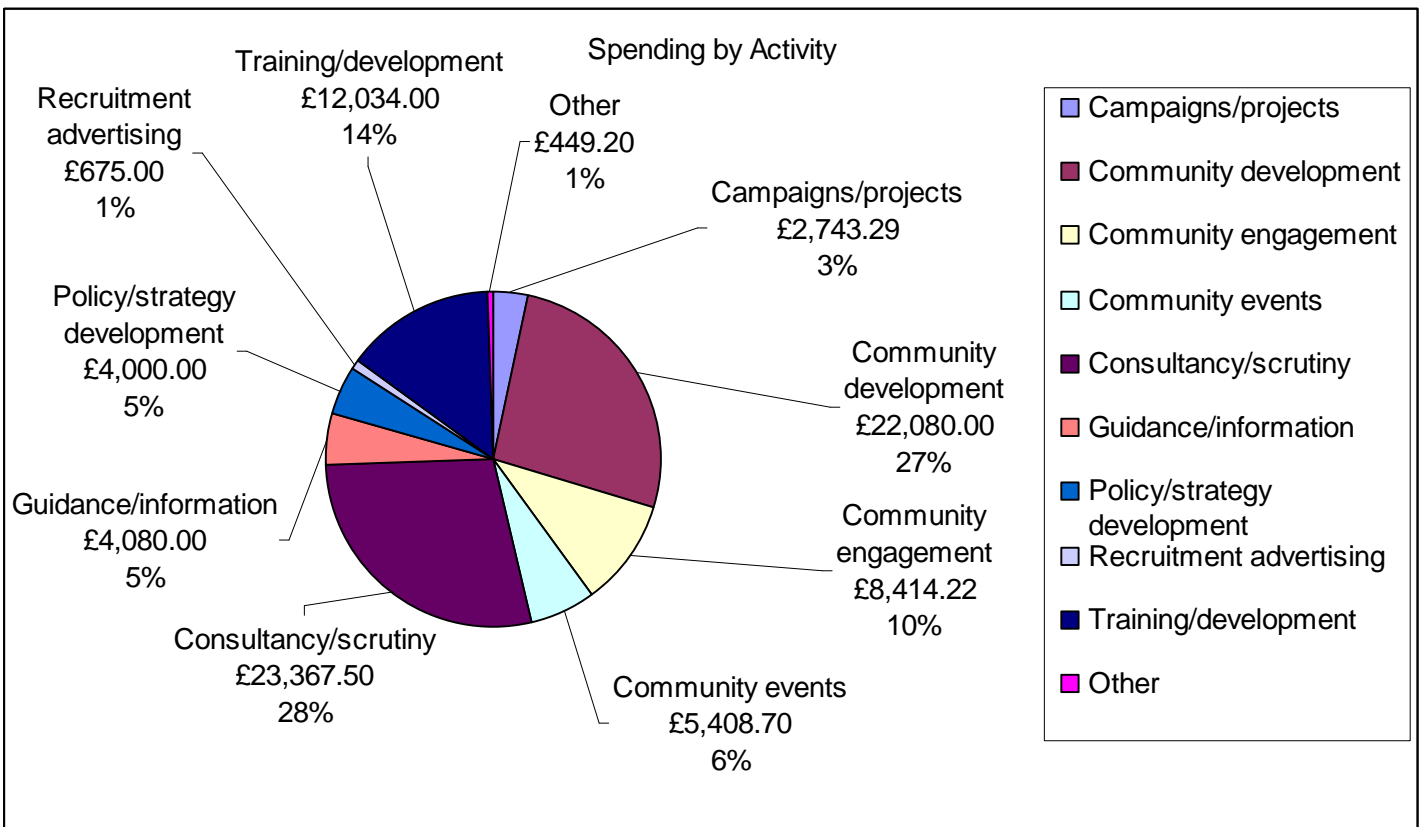
Budget 2007-8

The Council has a dedicated 'Corporate Equality Budget' of around £80,000 per year which is used for:

- Consultancy and scrutiny
- Community development activities (with minority and disadvantaged communities, including capacity building voluntary/community sector with equality interests)
- Community engagement (with minority and disadvantaged communities, including staff networks)
- Community events (with challenging inequality and celebrating diversity themes)
- Staff training and awareness raising of equality and diversity
- Guidance, campaigns and communications
- Policy and strategy development
- Recruitment advertising
- Subscriptions and other aspects such as funding meetings

In addition, funding for equality based initiatives may be provided from budgets within directorates and services, there is also a separate Social Inclusion budget.

There is a separate budget for equality training activities.



Projects

British Sign Language Charter Group	£4,297.34
Capacity building grant - Ujima Project (Exeter Community Initiatives)	£5,000.00
Chinese Community - Sunday Group meetings	£3,500.00
Chinese New Year Festival event sponsorship	£1,000.00
Commemorating the Abolition of Slavery Bicentenary	£2,138.70
Devon Racial Equality Council capacity building	£6,300.00
Equality Reference Group (Service Level Agreements)	£20,000.00
Equality training programme contribution	£10,300.00
Excellence not Excuses staff forum (racial equality)	£1,306.08
Holocaust Memorial Day event sponsorship	£70.00
Intercom Event support - Sexual Orientation Goods & Services Regs	£100.00
Intercom Trust capacity building	£4,000.00
Kick Racism Out of Football event sponsorship	£400.00
LGBT staff network promotion (new rainbow leaves logo)	£86.00
Living Options Devon capacity building	£3,000.00
Meet the World event (Newton Abbot) sponsorship	£500.00
Meeting/venue costs	£458.50
North Devon Respect event sponsorship	£1,000.00
Other	£652.20
Plain English and Easy Read Project	£5,445.95
Policy development	£4,000.00
Recruitment advertising (positive action)	£675.00
Sign Vision	£6,458.14
Stonewall Diversity Champion membership	£1,500.00
Support launch event - Multilingua community interpreting agency	£200.00
Support launch event - SW Transgender Network	£300.00
Women's Conference	£564.00

Total spend **£83,251.91**

Income

Contributions for Sign Vision event:

Teignbridge District Council	100
Devon and Cornwall Constabulary	500
Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue	500
Exeter City Council	500
Clare Milne Trust	2000
	£3,600.00

Monitoring Information

Staff monitoring information is available from: www.devon.gov.uk/staff_profile

Performance Data: www.devon.gov.uk/annualreport2008

A graphic consisting of three overlapping, stylized leaf shapes. The top leaf is light blue, the middle leaf is light green, and the bottom leaf is a slightly darker shade of green. The leaves are arranged in a fan-like pattern, pointing towards the right.

www.devon.gov.uk/diversity

CHALLENGING INEQUALITY
& CELEBRATING DIVERSITY