

**MORAY EQUALITIES FORUM
TUESDAY 20 DECEMBER 2011 AT 11.00 AM
MORAY RESOURCE CENTRE**

PRESENT: Judith Franklin (Chair), Irena Paterson, Cathy Coverley, Andy Watson, Lansana Bangura, May McGarvie, Don Toonen

Item

1. PREVIOUS MINUTE – 25 October 2011

There were no minutes of the previous meeting, but the forum agreed that the main action points were:

Members will take turns to chair the meetings;

The forum would like to view the training module that is being developed by the Moray Council;

There is a subgroup working on the Holocaust Memorial Day activity which focuses on bullying;

The forum was informed of the Equality and Human Rights Commission's inquiry into disability-related harassment: Hidden in plain sight. The forum agrees that tackling bullying and harassment on the basis of any protected characteristic should be one of the main focuses for the next year.

There was no feedback on the council's policy regarding overpayment of benefits.

2. HOUSING OPTIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The forum had a lengthy discussion about the brochure outlining the housing options for people with disabilities. There followed a discussion which went beyond just the brochure and took into account the changes in the benefit system proposed by the UK government. The issues were:

- Timescales for assessment by occupational therapists.
- The assessment should take account not only of the physical needs but also of additional needs arising out of different circumstances, eg abuse.
- Lack of consultation in deciding on adaptations, even where individuals pay a contribution towards the adaptations.
- What happens to the alterations to council houses after disabled people move out and non-disabled people move in?
- There was some discussion about the changes in the benefit system regarding underoccupancy of social housing. It was suggested that the council may want to look at the underoccupancy policy in

Aberdeen which offers financial assistance to families if they want to move to smaller accommodation.

It was agreed that Don would contact various members individually to discuss some of the issues in more detail and that he would pass the comments on to Housing.

Don

3. UPDATE DISABILITY RELATED HARASSMENT

Don reported that he has had a meeting with the corporate director for Education and Social Work who has taken a keen interest in the subject. Don will keep the forum informed.

4. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

Don urged all members to encourage their groups to submit entries for the HMD event. All contributions, long or short, are welcome.

5. TRAINING (DEMONSTRATION)

Don gave a demonstration of the training module on equalities that has been developed for the Moray Council. He will explore if the module can be made available to the general public.

Don

6. AOCB