

House Committee

Annual Report of Arrangements to Promote Equality of Opportunity within the Assembly Parliamentary Service – Financial Year 2005-06

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Introduction by the Clerk to the National Assembly for Wales		

This report outlines the work undertaken in APS between April 2005 to March 2006 to ensure that the business of the Assembly is conducted with due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people. In response to the suggestions of Members of the Equality of Opportunity Committee last year we have attempted to distinguish more clearly between the processes we have implemented in order to ensure equality of opportunity within our work and the outcomes which have resulted from these processes. We have also provided some information on work undertaken since the end of March 2006 and our future plans.

Processes in themselves are meaningless if they do not lead to real and positive change for the people who work in APS and those we serve – Assembly Members and the people of Wales. In order to ensure that the fulfilment of our statutory equality responsibilities is about real change and not just a paper exercise we have attempted to build our capacity to promote equality across APS by involving more staff in the promotion of equality in their own work areas. I am particularly grateful to Denise Rogers in her role as equality development officer and Christine Morgan, the APS access officer, in driving this forward. It's our aim that eventually all staff in APS will understand the role they can have in the establishment of a National Assembly for Wales which truly reflects the diversity of our nation.

This is the last report for which I shall have responsibility as Clerk to the Assembly. I am proud of what has been achieved in APS in fulfilling the Assembly's statutory equality duty. But I am under no illusion as to how much further we must go.

Paul Silk

Clerk and Deputy Clerk's Office

Key Objectives	Processes implemented in order to promote equality opportunity	Positive outcomes	Progress made since March 2006 and future plans

<p>Development of robust arrangements to ensure that progress in the development and implementation of APS equality action plans is monitored and actions taken to address any problems.</p>	<p>Establishment of an APS Equality Steering Group, chaired by the Clerk.</p> <p>Equality is a standing agenda item at SMT meetings.</p>	<p>The APS Equality Steering Group has met 5 times since October 2006. Key outcomes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> .1 Establishment of a network of branch equality champions .1 Development of a draft minority language policy .2 Commencement of work on an APS Faith and Belief policy .3 Agreed action to prepare for Disability Equality Duty .4 Production and review of equality action plans and reports with SMT informed where actions has slipped <p>SMT have received presentations and information about equality legislation and have directed action within divisions as regards statutory equality duties. SMT supported recommendation that APS join Stonewall Diversity Champions Network which was agreed by House Committee.</p>	<p>All members of SMT attended an awareness raising session on gender and sexual orientation equality legislation delivered by Alison Parken, Director of Stonewall Cymru</p> <p>All members of SMT have met with the consultant hired to develop an interactive impact assessment process to discuss the promotion of disability equality in APS, either individually, as a group or both.</p> <p>The Disability Equality Scheme will be structured to focus on customers: AMs and their staff; the public and APS staff and clearly differentiate between processes and outcomes so that the report is easier to understand and</p>
<p>Ensure members of the APS senior management</p>	<p>Equality awareness raising sessions</p>	<p>Key outcomes of the capacity building</p>	

<p>team (SMT) are aware of equality legislation and the related responsibilities of APS</p>	<p>delivered to members of SMT</p>	<p>project include:</p>	<p>monitor and more accessible to the general public</p>
<p>Develop the capacity of staff in APS to promote equality through their work</p>	<p>Establishment of an equality capacity building project between November 2005 and November 2006 led by a full time seconded member of staff – the APS equality development officer.</p>	<p>.1 Development of expertise through advanced study</p> <p>.2 Work undertaken with research and committee staff to increase support offered to Members in their consideration of equality issues in their work</p> <p>.3 Establishment of APS equality champions network</p> <p>.4 Joined up working between APS equality leads in a number of areas which has resulted in the identification of gaps in current procedures which have now been addressed (e.g. the accommodation booking form now asks for more detailed information about special requirements</p> <p>.5 Short placement with the Equal Opportunities Commission with the potential to develop links between experts there and APS researcher and committee staff, for example, in relation to support offered to Members though the budget scrutiny cycle.</p> <p>.6 Increased publicizing of equality related issues across APS, e.g. disability equality duty and work of Stonewall Cymru.</p>	<p>SMT agreed to recommendations of equality development officer to support involvement events and independent production of an impact assessment tool involving as many APS staff as possible in the process</p>
			<p>The Clerk has liaised with representatives of Operation Black Vote and the possibility of an AM shadowing scheme is currently being explored.</p>
			<p>Increased focus on organisational opportunities associated with membership of Stonewall Diversity Champions Network.</p>

Corporate Services

Human Resources Branch

Key Equality Objectives	Processes implemented in order to promote equality opportunity	Positive outcomes	Progress made since March 2006 and future plans
Recruitment and retention			
Develop an outreach programme for minority ethnic communities and raise awareness of APS recruitment procedures and competency framework.	Partnership programme with Cardiff South Enterprise Centre.	2 members of staff recruited via the programme	The HR equality champion has recently met with members of the Cardiff race equality network to discuss ways of developing the programme.
To ensure that APS recruitment policy is fair and effective and fit for purpose	A review of recruitment policies was commenced in 2006. Equality of opportunity was a consideration in relation to the various stages of recruitment. The HR equality champion and APS equality development officer were both members of the steering group	The review was completed in 2006-07	Recommendations agreed by SMT and will be discussed with TUC.

<p>Target children and young people from diverse backgrounds to offer work placements and opportunities to shadow senior members of staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·1 Cabinet office development placement schemes ·2 Schools outreach programme ·3 Work shadowing opportunities 	<p>2 students worked in the MRS as part of the disability and ethnic minority cabinet office schemes in summer 2005</p> <p>Students from BME backgrounds amongst those who have undertaken work experience placements in APS</p>	<p>A further 2 students worked in MRS in summer 2006</p> <p>The school outreach programme will be evaluated in 2006-07</p>
<p>Attraction, retention, development and motivation of staff so as to ensure a professional delivery of services</p>	<p>Staff who wish to work part time accommodated.</p>	<p>Examples:</p> <p>The Fees Office staff group is diverse in relation to all equality strands. 2 members of the 6 member finance team have changed to part time working at their request.</p> <p>Home working arrangements have been developed in the Parliamentary Translation and Reporting Service</p>	
<p>Training and development</p>			
<p>Ensure training and development policy addresses the need for APS staff to play a role in the promotion of equal opportunities within the organisation</p>	<p>Delivery of in house equality awareness training</p> <p>Staff with specific equality roles supported to undertake advanced training and development.</p>	<p>Equality awareness training delivered to all new staff, all front line staff and any other member of staff who requests it. Feedback questionnaires generally positive.</p> <p>Equality development officer and access officers are undertaking MScs in</p>	<p>Exploration of ways of gaining feedback from visitors which can be used to evaluate training needs and effectiveness</p> <p>Equality impact assessment undertaken in</p>

		<p>Equality related subjects on courses designed for people working to promote equality within the public, voluntary and private sectors.</p> <p>Other staff have attended a range of awareness raising and training events relating to equality legislation which has been cascaded to staff via SMT and internal communication systems.</p> <p>Equality issues integrated into general training such as that relating to grievance and attendance.</p>	<p>relation to the various equality duties will be used to inform specific equality training provision.</p> <p>HR equality champion has delivered awareness raising sessions on age discrimination legislation to SMT and staff from a range of divisions across APS</p>
Information management			
Provision of management information on recruitment and staffing	<p>Statistical information relating to race, disability and gender is provided to the senior management team on a monthly basis to enable them to monitor APS recruitment and promotion from an equality perspective.</p> <p>A disability questionnaire was circulated to all staff in order</p>	<p>The following issues identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·1 There is a gender balance amongst APS staff at middle and senior levels ·2 Proportion of non white members of staff has increased to 4.5% (with 8.9% of staff not providing this 	<p>The U-Access IT package will enable staff to provide information about themselves relating to all equality strands.</p>

		<p>information)</p> <p>·3 People from BME backgrounds are under-represented at senior level. Actions to address this undertaken and planned</p> <p>·4 Need to collect more robust data in relation to disability and sexual orientation</p>	
Monitor and address alleged race harassment incidents	Assembly policy	1 case raised in 2005-06 which was dealt with in line with the policy. Although any case is regrettable, the fact that staff feel that allegations will be dealt with is a positive outcome of our management approach	

Fees Office			
Key Objectives	Processes implemented in order to promote equality opportunity	Positive outcomes	Progress made since March 2006 and future plans

<p>Provision of timely and accurate advice to Members on pay, allowances, expenses and pensions</p>	<p>Rules on Members' allowances take account of needs of disabled Members and public</p> <p>Services provided bilingually where practicable.</p> <p>AM Support Staff encouraged to join stakeholder pension scheme</p>	<p>Additional funding of up to £10,000 is available to disabled Members who require adaptations to fulfil their role. A small number of Members have utilised this.</p> <p>Additional funding of up to £2000 is available to Members to ensure that their constituency offices are accessible to disabled members of the public. A few Members have utilised this funding.</p> <p>All general advice, guidance and application forms are available bilingually</p> <p>The proportion of AM support staff who have joined the stakeholder pension scheme had risen from around 30% to over 90%.</p> <p>This work is on-going. No outcomes to date</p> <p>Pay band system implemented to ensure fairer application of fairer terms and conditions for support staff.</p>	<p>On-going schemes. Scope for awareness raising amongst Members and their staff given the relatively low number of Members' who have requested funding to make their constituency offices accessible. A possible reason for this is the lack of accessibility advice and assessment services available to Members on a constituency basis.</p>
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	<p>Involvement in Assembly Government gender fair pay review</p> <p>Advice and support provided in order to establish a pay band system for Assembly Member support staff</p>		<p>Work will be undertaken both in partnership with the Assembly Government and by APS individually as appropriate in order to ensure that the new Assembly organisation will be in a position to launch its own Gender Equality Scheme when it is established in May 2007.</p> <p>Planned childcare voucher scheme for AMSS.</p>
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Office Services and Facilities Management (OSFM)

OSFM is responsible for building maintenance and accommodation services for the National Assembly for Wales' buildings and the management of all domestic contracts. OFM is also responsible for the physical relocation of staff, the co-ordination of re-cycling and 'green' transport and housekeeping.

Key Objectives	Processes implemented in order to promote equality opportunity	Positive outcomes	Progress made since March 2006 and future plans
Management and maintenance of buildings	DDA compliance is a feature of all OFM project planning.	E.g. All water-coolers are DDA compliant.	Improved signage in the Senedd

<p>Provision of accessible accommodation for Members and visitors</p>	<p>Provision of induction loops</p> <p>Room and parking booking procedures take account of any special needs (e.g. physical access and dietary requirements).</p> <p>All front line staff receive equality awareness training.</p>	<p>Loops installed in all key meeting rooms.</p> <p>A member of staff recruited to OFM through the ethnic minority outreach programme</p> <p>Earlier in the year, a meeting held as part of preparations of the Disability Equality Duty had to be postponed due to a number of accessibility problems. A lack of information about the needs of those attending was identified as a key factor and in response the booking form has been amended and staff trained so that anyone booking a room is prompted to provide information about particular needs. The meeting was successfully rescheduled.</p>	<p>A portable loop system is on order.</p> <p>We are aware that the 12 disabled parking spaces are not used to the extent we might expect given the proportion of the population with mobility problems. There is scope for a review of disabled parking space use with a view to identify ways in which disabled people with mobility issues might be encouraged and enabled to make more use of them.</p>
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<p>Ensuring that APS is compliant with Health and Safety legislation and the Disability Discrimination Act where it applies to the provision of accommodation and equipment</p>	<p>Assessments are carried out in a 2 stage process. All staff are regularly assessed by trained APS staff. The needs of those requiring specialist equipment or adaptations are then assessed by 'Access to Work' specialists who also provide the necessary equipment.</p>	<p>The needs of staff are assessed on an on-going cycle. A significant proportion of staff have adaptations and equipment to enable them to carry out their jobs.</p>	

Chamber Services

Key Objectives	Processes implemented in order to promote equality opportunity	Positive outcomes	Progress made since March 2006 and future plans
<p>To provide clerking services for the Assembly in Plenary and support the Clerk and Presiding Officer during meetings</p>			
<p>To provide advice to all Members and staff on matters relating to Plenary business</p>			
<p>To publish information about tabled business to the internet and intranet within agreed deadlines</p>			

To provide a high quality secretariat service to the Deputy Presiding Officer and Members of the Business Committee and the Chair and Members of the Committee on Standards of Conduct

Assembly Communication Service

Information and Communication Technology

Key Branch Objectives	Processes implemented in order to promote equality opportunity	Positive outcomes	Progress made since March 2006 and future plans
<p>To ensure the ICT / AV and Broadcasting needs of Members and officials are met</p>	<p>Linked with colleagues in OFM to ensure that the needs of all staff were assessed over the transformation period.</p> <p>Welsh language version of Windows available to all staff</p> <p>Broadband introduced to constituency offices</p>	<p>Equipment adjustments and adaptations made as required</p> <p>Development of bilingual environment</p> <p>Enhanced IT services available to Members previously restricted due to location. Most Members welcomed the improvements</p> <p>DDA compliance facilitates access to Intranet and Internet</p>	<p>Exploration of new technologies, such as voice recognition programmes, which could increase the potential for people to access ICT services and employment opportunities for disabled people.</p>

	<p>Internet DDA compliant</p> <p>Broadcasting contract includes subtitling and BSL requirements</p>	<p>services</p> <p>Televised plenary meetings subtitled and some programmes BSL interpreted</p>	
<p>To develop the Assembly Internet to meet the needs of Members and the Assembly as a separate legislative body, whilst improving public satisfaction when using the Assembly Internet</p>	<p>The tendering process included criteria relating to DDA compliance, innovation relating to accessibility and experience in the provision of bi- and multilingual sites.</p>	<p>The tendering exercise continued into 2006-07</p>	<p>Tender awarded to provider who has a proven track record in these areas.</p>
<p>Visit Members and their support staff to assess whether they are receiving the appropriate level of ICT services, including support staff in constituency offices.</p>	<p>On-going process which includes adaptation and adjustment needs assessment</p>	<p>A number of adjustments and adaptations made as a result of the assessment process</p>	<p>On-going</p>

<p>To support the Assembly e-Forum</p>	<p>The forum aims to encourage further public engagement with the Assembly through public discussion. An opportunity for the public to comment on line (through an "e-forum")</p>	<p>The forum provided useful information for the Education & Lifelong Learning Committee in their policy review of Special Educational Needs and has facilitated the identification of accessibility issues which were fed into the post-separation APS internet project.</p>	
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Media Relations

<p>Key Branch Objectives</p>	<p>Processes implemented in order to promote equality opportunity</p>	<p>Positive outcomes</p>	<p>Progress made since March 2006 and future plans</p>
<p>To improve public engagement by raising the profile of the Assembly in the media.</p>	<p>Raising the profile of the Equality of Opportunity Committee</p> <p>Raising awareness of Assembly business to particular sections of the community, for example, minority ethnic</p>	<p>Press releases issued to publicise EOC meetings and meetings for other Committees which held equality focused meetings (which were well attended)</p> <p>Positive media coverage of EOC – nine positive pieces appeared in the media during the year,</p>	<p>Follow up meetings with Race Equality Councils</p> <p>A Directory of national press / media aimed at</p>

<p>groups</p> <p>Publicising visits and events involving people from particular groups or communities</p> <p>Engaging with the media on behalf of Committees who wish to address specific equality issues</p> <p>Services delivered bilingually</p>	<p>including coverage for the review of services for disabled young people, the gypsy-traveller review and the Committee's discussion of civil partnerships.</p> <p>Press releases targeted at particular publications including Welsh language, minority ethnic (on the advice of Race Equality Councils)</p>	<p>minority ethnic groups was completed during summer recess 2006. This will facilitate the targeting of press releases.</p> <p>Details of the language line facility have been sent to all media in the directory.</p> <p>Information on relevant EOC meetings/ business will be sent in the future.</p>
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	<p>Provision of photographs on request to organisations including those who represent particular groups and communities, for example, charities acting on behalf of disabled people.</p>	<p>Letter from Chair of EOC challenging Western Mail decision to publish the Lowri Turner article "So, would I want a gay Prime Minister?" cited positively in a number of media reports including several within the gay press.</p> <p>Media enquiries dealt with in Welsh when appropriate. All press releases issues in English and Welsh</p>	
<p>To increase the effectiveness of internal communications through media such as the APS Newspaper and The Slate</p>	<p>Need to consider the diversity of APS Staff in terms of the content and accessibility of these publications</p> <p>Both publications are vehicles for informing staff about equality matters, including those relating to their needs, for example, adaptations, and APS statutory duties.</p>	<p>The preparatory work relating to both publications was undertaken in 2006-6 but they were launched in 2006-07. Positive equality outcomes will be reported in the Annual Equality Report for 2006-07.</p>	<p>Newspaper and The Slate available bilingually</p> <p>Consideration of the implications of the forthcoming Disability Equality Duty on these publications (e.g. in terms of alternative formats)</p> <p>The Slate and Newspaper have been used to publicise the forthcoming Disability Equality Duty and equality training and awareness raising opportunities.</p> <p>An article was recently published in The Slate which raised awareness of a scheme for disabled students and those from minority ethnic backgrounds who are considering applications to the civil service fast stream.</p>

Parliamentary Translation and Reporting Service

Key Branch Objectives	Processes implemented in order to promote equality opportunity	Positive outcomes	Progress made since March 2006 and future plans
<p>To deliver a translation, interpretation, editing and reporting service in English and Welsh,</p>	<p>Bilingual Services Statement provides a framework for the provision of bilingual services</p> <p>All internet published material is DDA compliant</p> <p>Flexible home working arrangements for staff</p> <p>Non Welsh speaking staff within this branch are encouraged to learn Welsh</p>	<p>A bilingual service is available to Assembly Members, their staff, APS staff and the public in all key areas.</p> <p>6 home workers employed</p> <p>Non Welsh speaking staff within the branch given the opportunity to learn Welsh</p>	<p>Voice Recognition technology piloted. This could have potential benefits for existing staff and enable people with particular impairments to consider work in this area.</p>

Public Information and Education

Key Objectives	Processes implemented in order to promote equality opportunity	Positive outcomes	Progress made since March 2006 and future plans

<p>To produce the leaflet "Your guide to the Assembly" in BSL.</p>	<p>The tendering exercise followed a feasibility study which involved consultation with BSL users.</p>	<p>The contract has been awarded to the Wales Association for the Deaf.</p>	<p>Once available, the BSL version will be sent out to representatives of the BSL using community in Wales to obtain feedback and to ascertain possible future demand for other publications in this format.</p>
<p>To further the All Wales approach to the delivery of information and education services.</p>	<p>The Regional Public Information Service delivers presentations and information about the Assembly to groups within their communities and at events across Wales including a number of BME and disability groups.</p> <p>The APS access officer provides advice to regional teams to ensure that any barriers and potential barriers are addressed.</p>	<p>Geographical and physical access to information and education about the Assembly enhanced. Links made with democratically under-represented groups.</p>	<p>On-going process</p>
<p>To ensure that changes and updates to Assembly exhibitions take account of the equality audit which was carried out in 2004-05</p>	<p>The access officer involved in ensuring that all updated displays are accessible and visually representative of the diverse population of Wales</p>	<p>Several panels and publication's have been updated accordingly.</p>	<p>On-going process.</p>

<p>To make contact with race equality councils in order to raise awareness of the Assembly and ethnic minority language services; in particular the translated publications and the Information Line National Interpretation Service</p>	<p>All race equality councils contacted and asked to promote services amongst members. Letters and leaflets distributed.</p> <p>Regional teams have been pro-active in approaching BME groups</p>	<p>The number of requests for information in minority languages is low. Marketing activity to continue in 2006-07</p> <p>3 visits arranged through Cardiff County Council language school</p> <p>Dinner held for representatives of the Muslim Council of Great Britain at the end of Ramadan in 2005</p>	<p>Networking with the Bangladeshi community – currently looking at ways in which Assembly accommodation might be utilised for community purposes.</p>
<p>Provision of information about the Assembly to people with visual impairments and those who's first language is neither English nor Welsh</p>	<p>Development of an audio tour of the Assembly Exhibition Centre in a range of minority languages, English and Welsh</p> <p>BSL interpretation, lip-speakers, Palantypists, Maketon and language translators are available on request for Senedd, Exhibition and Visitor Centres</p>	<p>The tendering exercise is about to commence</p> <p>Services delivered on request with 15 days notice (due to translator availability)</p>	<p>The time table on this progress has been extended due to competing resource demands.</p>

Members' Research and Committee Services

<p>Key Objectives</p>	<p>Processes implemented in order to promote equality opportunity</p>	<p>Positive outcomes</p>	<p>Progress made since March 2006 and future plans</p>
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<p>To provide the best possible research and committees services to Assembly Members</p>	<p>APS equality development officer to work with clerks and researchers to increase the support offered to Members in fulfilment of their equality responsibilities</p> <p>Provision of BSL BSL interpretation, lip-speakers, Palantypists, Maketon and language translators are available on request (with 15 days notice)</p> <p>Database of equality related organisations</p>	<p>In 2005-06 the LGPS and EPC Committees have both held meetings which have focused entirely on equality issues which included input from standing invitees. The issues raised during these meetings will be used to inform the briefing provided to Members to support the scrutiny of the WAG Annual Equality Report 2005-06. All other Committees have focused on a number of equality related items. Briefing provided to Members by MRS includes suggested areas of questioning from an equality perspective.</p> <p>Communication services provided at several meetings</p> <p>Database used to inform policy review consultation process targeting</p> <p>Young people have contributes to X EOC policy review meetings. Innovative</p>	<p>Subject Committees will be supported to scrutinise the relevant section of the WAG annual equality report 2005-6 before it goes to the Equality of Opportunity Committee in October 2006. Clerks have commissioned a WAG paper from each relevant department.</p> <p>Draft guidance on the provision of BSL services in Committee meetings has been drawn up</p> <p>2 BSL users spoke to EOC about their experiences of accessing public services.</p>
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	<p>Establishment of young disabled people's reference group to assist EOC in policy review.</p>	<p>communication methods, such as video and puppetry, have been used. The young people have provided feedback on their experiences which will be incorporated into the APS Disability Equality Scheme.</p>	
<p>To improve communication within the division and with our customers and partners</p>	<p>Building links with external equality organisations</p>	<p>Equality Development Officer undertook a short placement with the EOC. Improved understanding of key gender issues, sources of information and the gender equality duty. This has been called upon in the provision of support to Members and colleagues.</p>	<p>Student from ethnic minority civil service fast stream scheme who worked in MRS over summer 2006 undertook some joint work with the Equal Opportunities Commission and Stonewall including the delivery of an awareness raising session for APS SMT on gender and sexual orientation equality legislation.</p> <p>Potential for work focusing on gender budgeting with EOC and MRS in 2006-07.</p>
<p>To support the development and training of staff</p>	<p>Staff encouraged and enabled to attend equality related training and development activities</p>	<p>In addition to in-house awareness raising provided by the equality development officer, all new staff in the division have attended equality awareness training sessions. 2 members of staff are being supported to study for equality related MScs.</p>	<p>Equality impact assessment undertaken in relation to the various equality duties will be used to inform specific equality training provision.</p>

		Staff have also attended sessions on age discrimination and management courses which incorporate equality training.	
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Legal Division			
Key Objectives	Processes implemented in order to promote equality opportunity	Positive outcomes	Progress made since March 2006 and future plans
To contribute legal expertise, both directly and indirectly, to the Assembly's duty under section 48 of the Government of Wales Act.	<p>Scrutiny and preparation of reports to the Legislation Committee on all draft subordinate legislation to be made by the Assembly under the Accelerated and Standard Procedures and that made under the Executive Procedure to ensure compliance with sections 120 and 66(4) of the Government of Wales Act 1998.</p> <p>Availability to give advice on equality related issues at Subject and Standing Committees</p> <p>Provision of advice to Assembly Members</p>	<p>Advice provided on a broad range of issues to support scrutiny (e.g. of the Equality Bill) and to inform AMs and staff on the implications of legislation (e.g. the Equality Act 2005, Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and associated Orders)</p> <p>The Legal advice team have also provided advice in relation to the likely statutory equality responsibilities of the Assembly Commission.</p>	

and officials on equality related matters.		
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