

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2005

## **Call for response to consultation to help eradicate discrimination against disabled people.**

Public body chiefs are being urged to respond to a consultation launched today on new legislation which is set to bring about a seismic shift in the way the public sector works.

Changes to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) being introduced by the Government next year will mean that public sector bodies will have a duty to promote disability equality in all aspects of their work - similar to the Race Relations Amendment Act. From the police to health services, schools, local authorities, NHS trusts, central government, the entire public sector will have a duty to promote the equalisation of opportunities for disabled people.

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) is calling for responses from heads of public sector bodies which will be affected by changes to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) which come into force next year. The Disability Rights Commission has drawn up a draft Code of Practice to support the amended legislation. It's consultation on the draft Code will last for three months (from 21<sup>st</sup> January 2005 until 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2005) and will be a vital opportunity for chief executives in the public sector to influence public policy.

Chairman of the Disability Rights Commission, Bert Massie said:

"The DRC's Code of Practice will help people understand major changes to duties on the public sector. It is hard to overstate just how big a deal the new duty will be for disabled people.

"If you will be affected by the new laws and have a contribution to make, now is the time to respond to the DRC's consultation. We are appealing to public sector chiefs to help us get the Code right".

Copies of the consultation are available from the DRC's website at [www.drc-gb.org](http://www.drc-gb.org) or from the DRC Helpline on 08457 622 633.