

## **Member Champion – Equalities and Diversity**

**Name: Vivien Duval Steer**

### **Key activities involved with since 2009 annual council/appointment**

As Member Champion for this important work my main task is to liaise with the Officers who are striving to drive forward Equalities & Diversity through all Departments within EDDC, ultimately to improve what is an essential aspect of Customer Service.

Being a service orientated business we have to be seen to ensure that all our customers/residents have equal accessibility to our Services which in simple terms means that all Departments must go through a systems thinking exercise by way of Equality Impact Assessments, and challenge the way we see our customers/residents, whether their contact with us is by telephone, face to face, e-mail etc. Are we as good as we think we are?

The assessments are going ahead very well although there are gaps and this is being addressed by a gentleman from the Voluntary Sector who is being shared with Mid Devon and ourselves, his name is Anderson Jones.

### **Conferences/Workshops - if attended and their benefits**

I was invited to speak to the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 28 October 2009 about my role and work as Member Champion for Equalities. I was able to outline the work with Anderson Jones, Diversity Officer and explained that equalities work meant providing access to services for everyone.

### **Partnership Working:**

I have met with Anderson on several occasions who impressed me with his enthusiasm for the role, even though he has only been in post a short while he has set out a comprehensive Development Plan monitored on a month by month basis which hopefully will result in our reaching our goal of Achieving when we are assessed by IDeA in September.

I am included in the Corporate Equalities meetings the first I was able to attend very recently included senior management and on this occasion chaired by Peter Jeffs. The amount of work involved is significant and some very good ideas came forward on how to ensure that all groups of residents, no matter what their needs, will be able to contact us and vice versa in the correct format for them.

### **Future plans – what are your aims/work programme for the year to come:**

The Council is aiming to reach the next level under the Equalities Assessment.

I am therefore asking for as much support as possible from Members for this work and your consideration given to Equalities leading to Excellent Customer Service, in all Departments within EDDC when carrying out our day to day Council work.