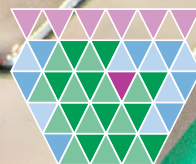


# Connect

monthly

June  
2016



the **MORAY** council



The focus of this month's *Connect* is equalities and this is a huge topic which we will not be able to cover in any great depth in any single issue of this magazine. It is at times a complex area, but sadly one which is often misunderstood or indeed one which people can tend to shy away from for fear of doing or saying the wrong thing. This really need not be the case at all and it is unfortunate that there are so many myths which surround equalities legislation, at times exacerbated by certain quarters of the media.

In essence, equalities as a concept is very straightforward and is simply about ensuring that all people have the right to have their needs considered and their voices heard regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation. These are known as 'Protected Characteristics'.

It is about valuing people and valuing the diversity which exists across our society. In our work, as in our lives outside work, we need to be mindful of others and the needs of others and ensure we do not discriminate negatively in any way against anybody in relation to the protected characteristics previously mentioned.

When reports are submitted to the council and its committees there is an equalities section which must be completed to ensure any potential impact a policy may have on people's equalities is highlighted. If it is felt that there may well be a potential impact then an equalities impact assessment (EIA) can be undertaken to ensure that the full extent of this can be considered by elected members of the council prior to taking any decisions on future policy direction.

On an operational day-to-day level, equalities can be as straightforward as ensuring someone who needs special assistance to give them the same chances as everyone else gets that special assistance. In schools, for example, youngsters with additional support needs may be entitled to extra time in an exam or be entitled to a scribe or reader to ensure they do

not have a disadvantage compared to other students. In short, this is ensuring that they are equal to their peers in terms of their opportunity to succeed in that particular exam, so their additional support need is not a barrier to success. There will be plenty of other examples you will be able to think of from your own work in the council.

Good practice would suggest that all staff and teams in the council should be mindful of equalities legislation when carrying out their work. If in doubt, the council's equalities officer, Don Toonen, is always more than happy to help.

Later in this month's *Connect* you will read about the national Prevent strategy which I am the lead officer for on behalf of Moray Council. This strategy has come in for some criticism nationally from the press in certain areas where it has been perceived as a vehicle for asking managers to spy on staff and service users who may be at risk of radicalisation. However, nothing could be further from the truth. Like equalities, there are many myths which surround Prevent. In some ways, they are both very similar agendas where we are asked to be informed, to be considerate and most importantly where we are asked to be alert to what is going on around us.

**Laurence Findlay**  
**Corporate Director**  
(Education & Social Care)



## Inside story

### Editorial

June is here, bringing with it midsummer, sunshine and hopefully a few barbecues... speaking of food, this month we're catching up with the catering team to see how they keep all of those hungry students fed and watered for peak performance during exam time! Find out more on [pages 3-5](#).

Our theme this month is equalities, so make sure you check out the Moray Management Methods section on [page 14](#) and the new bullying and harassment policy on [page 6](#).

'Welcome Aboard!' is special this month as we are literally welcoming our new colleagues – the crew of the council's newly-launched dredger, the *MV Selkie* – aboard it, and there have been lots of milestone birthdays too! See who's another year younger at heart and who's new to our crew on [page 12](#).

## The team at Elgin High



Anne Davidson,  
Unit Supervisor (Elgin High)

With 254 cooks and catering assistants working out of all 53 school locations, nearly 6% of the council's workforce is involved in catering. Overseen by Susan May, Operational Support Officer, Pearl Gray, Catering Officer and Elaine McRae, Assistant Catering Officer, the teams are responsible for preparing over a million meals every year, designing menus based on scientific nutritional data to ensure a balanced diet. *"We don't use ready-meals,"* says Susan. *"Trying to make it varied and balanced is quite a task. A lot of people still see school meals as convenience food; they're surprised we cook all meals fresh on site!"*

*"We don't use  
ready-meals"*

Susan

All school meals are prepared using produce from the local area: bread from Huntly, milk from Nairn, meat from a butcher in Forres, eggs from Allarburn and vegetables from outside Elgin.

There is a six-week menu programme in primary schools, offering three hot selections each day, and a similar four-week menu operates in secondary schools, which also offer soup-and-sandwich, build-a-baguette and salad bar options.





Perennial favourites are sausage rolls – homemade with sausage meat from the local butcher – fish goujons (prepared on site,) and macaroni and cheese.

*"The butcher says he has children coming in asking for 'school sausages'!" laughs Susan.*

*"The butcher says he has children coming in asking for 'school sausages'!"*

Susan



The team at Greenwards Primary

The most popular dishes at each school vary across Moray: fish dishes top the list in areas with a fishing tradition like Buckie; soup and a hot main are most popular in Speyside with its agricultural background; and children at schools in towns prefer snack-based meals, though *"the queue is out the door on 'chicken pie day' at Elgin High School! It's by far the most popular dish,"* says Pearl.

*"Since the 'Hungry for Success' programme came in in 2007, the benefits to the primary children now entering secondary schools are clear; their choices are much healthier,"* Susan says. *"School meals are good value for money, and the uptake speaks for itself."* In P1, P2 and P3, in which all pupils are offered free school meals, the uptake is 78%, and overall nearly two-thirds of all schoolchildren in Moray partake in school meals.



The catering teams did a splendid job providing lunches at the launch of the M.V. Selkie



The team at Elgin High in 'theme' for Shakespeare's birthday

The catering teams also prepare buffets for special events, such as the recent launch of the council's new dredger, in the commercial kitchen at Elgin Academy. They do all of their own daily home baking for school and office locations, and provide a friendly face at lunchtime to 11,951 schoolchildren. Working in groups from one to fifteen, the catering teams create special menus to celebrate events such as Chinese New Year and the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth. *"The kids like seeing us join in,"* says Anne Davidson, Unit Supervisor at Elgin High School.





The hot servery at Elgin High

"Seeing the children enjoying the food we've made is so rewarding"

Aileen

Cooks and catering assistants generally need a bit of experience, but all undergo in-house training on nutrition and achieve their food hygiene and food-handling certificates. Developing transferable skills can be rewarding outside of the kitchen: several catering staff do cake decoration as a hobby and help out family and friends to celebrate special occasions.

Anne says: "Every day is different. It's a great career to get into because you can do so many things. In the schools, you get the interaction with the children; it's so rewarding seeing them growing up."

The team at Greenwards Primary echoes this, saying "all the children love their dinner ladies!" "Seeing the children enjoying the food we've made is so rewarding," notes Aileen



The build-a-baguettes bar at Elgin High is very popular

"the queue is out the door on 'chicken pie day'"

Pearl

Raffin, Unit Supervisor. "The kids tell you all sorts of funny things, and ask you all sorts of questions; if they need something cut up, that's when you chat and get to know them," adds Assistant Cook Marie Flett.

Career development and staff retention is a strong thread – the team at Greenwards Primary School in Elgin alone has 90 years of catering experience between them! A trainee post only open to in-house catering assistants was set up two years ago, and Lorraine Nicol is its first success story: having started as a catering assistant, she is now supervisor at

"all the children love their dinner ladies!"

Aileen

Keith Grammar School. Relief staff are always required, and many catering assistants who start out as relief join the teams permanently. Getting the school holidays makes catering an attractive choice for parents and the variety and friendly, bustling atmosphere in the kitchens keeps the catering teams serving up the smiles.





# HR Noticeboard

## Employee Conference 2016

Invitations for this year's conference have been issued so if you are one of the lucky ones who receive an invite please remember to RSVP so we can keep track of numbers!

It is well worth making the effort to attend as the event gives you the chance to join in with discussions with senior management and talk about issues that are important to you as well as providing an opportunity to meet and talk with colleagues from other services within the Council.



Feedback from colleagues who have attended previous conferences has always been positive and has helped give management a better understanding of the issues that matter to staff at all levels within the organisation.

This year's conference is about us shaping the future of public services by discussing the priorities, financial pressures and opportunities for change over the coming years.

The full programme is taking shape to provide an interesting event and will be issued to attendees nearer the time.

**SHAPING THE  
FUTURE**  
bridging the gap

## Policy Revisions

The revisions made to the following policies have been agreed at the Policy and Resources Committee –

Key changes are:

### Travel and Subsistence

The policy has been amended to make it clearer on the procedures for booking travel and accommodation, i.e. there is no need to book your own travel / accommodation.

Subsistence rates have been increased and the guidance is clearer as to what can be claimed.

### Time Off for Trade Union Duties

The council's policy continues to be in line with ACAS guidelines there are no significant changes made.

Guidance has been clarified regarding TU reps being given time for duties where short notice meetings have been arranged and/or their support/advice is required by means of ad hoc phone calls.

### Maternity / Paternity Leave

Removal of Additional Paternity Rights for employees whose baby was due before 05/04/2015 – this has now

been replaced by Shared Parental Leave. This has been in place for employees whose baby was due on or after 05/04/2015 since the end of 2014.

### Bullying and Harassment

Following the 2013 and 2015 opinion surveys and work by the Workforce Culture Group there has been an increased profile of Bullying and Harassment & it was considered appropriate to enhance the policy. The principles underpinning the current policy remain sound and are incorporated into the revision.



# Carbon Connect

Temperatures are up!  
Heating is off!  
We've got a long hot summer ahead!

Here are some energy saving tips to keep you cool and save you pennies all summer long.

## Solar power your laundry

Skip the tumble dryer and go for an old-fashioned clothes line. You can't beat free energy from the sun and wind – just make sure there is no rain in the forecast.

Few things gobble up electricity like a tumble dryer. Cutting down on just one load a week, using the line or a clothes horse instead, could take up to £30 off your electricity bill a year. If you need to use your dryer, give your clothes a quick extra spin in the washing machine beforehand – they'll dry much quicker.

## It's curtains for you

Curtains, blinds and shades keep the sun's hot rays out of your house. Keep them closed on sunny days during the summer season.

## Cool your jets

When taking a shower in your home, turn down the temperature of the hot water to save energy. Decrease the duration of how long you stay in the shower to save on your hot water tank usage.

## Take the strain off your fridge and freezer

Keep the refrigerator doors closed whenever possible. Also, avoid placing hot items in the fridge – let them cool to room temperature first. Try not to overfill the fridge. If cold air hasn't got room to circulate, your fridge will have to work harder to keep food cool, using more electricity. Keeping the backs of your fridge and freezer clear means they can work more efficiently and use less energy. If possible, keep your fridge/freezer away from cookers, heaters and direct sunlight. If they get warm, they'll use more energy trying to keep cool. Try to keep your freezer at least three quarters full – the more that's in it, the less energy you'll waste.

## Heat up food, not the house

A microwave is much more efficient (and quicker!) at heating things up than an oven. Also, the oven can raise your kitchen's temperature as much as 5 to 10 degrees. Of course, great weather means break out the BBQ and cook outside to keep the kitchen even cooler.

## Lettuce make the most of the Summer

Don't spend those sunny days sweating in the kitchen. A nutritious cold salad can help you save on running multiple cooking appliances.

## Sun's Out, Lights Out

Lighting accounts for around 7% of a typical household's bill. Using natural light can save pennies that add up. Switch off just eight 50W halogen lights for one hour each day could save you over £20 a year.

If you're thinking of buying outside lights, it's well worth buying ones with sensors, so they're only on when you need them. Even better, why not get solar-powered ones – they work all year round and won't cost you a penny in energy.

## The Energy Team

A little  makes a big difference





# EDRMS

## what's the [share]point?

An Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) is a computer system that allows the organisation to electronically create, file and store the documents created every day as part of our jobs. The application we use for this is Microsoft SharePoint. SharePoint was chosen because it connects to other Microsoft Office applications like Word and Excel really well. It can also be developed to meet the needs of the different Services across the organisation.

So, other than saving a tree or two, what is the point of having an EDRMS? One of the key benefits is the management of documents after they are no longer in use: they become records. Securely managing records, ensuring they can be easily accessed and are kept for the correct length of time, is automated in SharePoint – no manual tracking, shredding or deleting required.

Other benefits include:

- ✓ Search function makes finding documents quick and easy
- ✓ Documents held centrally so they can be accessed by multiple people – not one file on a desk or left in a bag
- ✓ Documents can be easily shared – no need for duplicates or email attachments

- ✓ One document can store multiple versions without having to make copies – you don't lose earlier versions and can find them in one place
- ✓ Permissions ensure only the right people can access the document.

These are just a few of the benefits! For more details on SharePoint and which areas in the organisation are currently using it: <http://spcomms.moray.gov.uk/sitepages/spinfoafpage.aspx>

## Going the distance



A huge 'well done' to three footsore colleagues who joined nearly 40,000 other runners in this year's London Marathon.

Special congratulations to Paul Rogan who finished 340th overall in a time of 2hours 41mins 2secs, knocking a full nine minutes off his personal best. Paul is now ranked first in Scotland in the men's 45 to 50 age group.

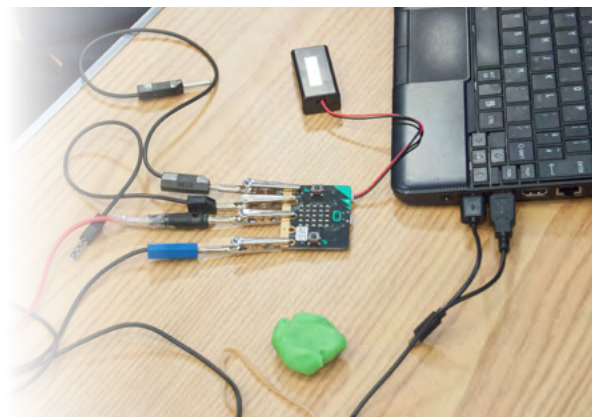


The council's sports development officer, Kim Paterson, completed the marathon course in 3hours 56mins 13 secs. It was Kim's second marathon and her best time.



Running in his first ever marathon and cheered on by his wife and children, Allan Duncan, from the council's revenues section, clocked a very creditable 5hours 3mins 5secs.





In celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Micro computer, the BBC has given all S1 and Year 7 students across the UK a free micro:bit mini-computer to develop their science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills. Here in Moray, staff have been working together to support the BBC's 'Make it Digital' initiative by organising special events at secondary schools to launch the micro:bit project. **Connect** visited Keith Grammar School to watch the fun as students received their micro:bits and used them to compete for the top gaming prize.



Stuart McQuaker, Education Support Officer ICT, has been overseeing the roll-out of the micro:bit programme here in Moray, and worked with Caroline McFarlane, Principal Teacher of Design and Technology, and Steven Tubbs, Teacher of Design and Technology, at Keith Grammar School to develop a micro:bit programming competition that would play on teenagers' love of computer gaming. *"It's about linking it to 'real world' technology,"* says Steven.

The gaming industry is growing in the local area, and the competition was designed to engage Year S1 pupils at Keith Grammar with coding and gaming to help introduce them to STEM as a career option. It also developed practical skills such as coding and teamwork. *"Our subject area is growing in demand from employers, and the competition is about growing links between school and outside,"* says Caroline. *"It's a department that pupils are keen to be*

*part of – they were down practicing at lunchtime before the competition began,"* says Stewart McLauchlan, Deputy Head Teacher of Keith Grammar School. *"Caroline, Steven and Stuart are real ambassadors for STEM."*

The pocket-sized, code-able computers measure just 20 cm square and are designed to be fun and easy to use. They can be coded with something simple – like lighting up or flashing their 25 red LED lights – in seconds, with no prior knowledge of computing. Each of the mini-computers can be connected by clips to other micro:bits, mobile phones, electronic devices, cameras – even everyday objects such as plant pots – using sensors. Pupils can use the mini-computers as a games controller, to pause or skip songs on a playlist, for motion-activated games, to power and control devices such as robots – even as a spirit level or a step counter!

The 70 students were split into 18 teams, and all were given the same brief and resources. They then had one hour to work together and make a game using the micro:bit. Three samples were given as prompts to follow, but the teams were encouraged to challenge themselves and come up with their own design. Moray College UHI sponsored the prizes for Best Teamwork, which went to the team that created a football scoring game, and Best Project, which went to the team that created tinfoil golf. Each member of the winning team received a Kitronik Inventor's Kit with accessories that will allow them to develop their micro:bit coding ability at home. Stuart says: *"It's great that we've got schools like Keith Grammar that are willing to embrace this. They've worked with us to create a project to inspire their first years to enter the world of technology."* For more information, visit [www.microbit.co.uk](http://www.microbit.co.uk).



# Welcome Aboard!

June is here and summer is near, bringing sunshine and new colleagues – 10 new recruits at our latest induction, plus another three join as the crew of the council's newly-launched dredger, the *MV Selkie* (see [page 12](#)).

If you're new to the council team, don't forget to sign up for your induction to get an overview of the council, its structure and how it works – plus it's a great chance to meet other new employees as well. Just log into [CLIVE](#), search for 'Corporate Induction' and click on the button to sign up for the next session on 27 June.

[Ve Butler](#) is joining us in the Shared Lives team, having come from the Royal Air Force.



[Caroline Van der Heiden](#) has joined us in sports development from Moray College and Ardach Health Centre.



[Lynn Strachan](#) has joined us as Relief Library Assistant at Buckie Library.



[Mark Atherton](#) brings us his experience from Bolton Council in Direct Services – Environmental.



[Colin Bell](#) joins us from West Lothian Council in Direct Services, Environmental Protection.



[Charlotte Watt](#) joins us in Financial Services from Johnston Carmichael.



[Terri Greene](#) is joining us in Housing and Property from Aberdeenshire Council.



[Garry Macdonald](#) has come all the way from London to join us in Education and Social Care.



[Aimee Alexander](#) has joined us in Financial Services from a chartered accountancy firm.



[Pauline Rennie](#) is joining us from Keith to be part of Housing and Property.





## Birthday Bonanza

'Milestone May' was a birthday bonanza, with a host of our colleagues celebrating important dates – and *Connect* was there to share in the fun. (Did someone say 'cake?!') Happy birthday everyone!

Sheila said, "I'd like to thank everyone who signed my card and contributed to my gifts and presentation."



## \$ Legal Highs

Party time in the legal section as no fewer than four of its staff celebrate milestone birthdays within the space of a few weeks.

Sonia Campbell and Fiona McQuillan have both just turned 30, while Georgina Anderson will be the big Four-O in early July. In between, Hilary Locker will celebrate her 60th.

The birthday girls were joined by colleagues on a night out on the town to mark their respective big days.



As usual each month we aim to feature our new starts, colleagues who are leaving us and special life events – new additions to the family, weddings, milestone birthdays or special anniversaries – so keep your news and photos coming in to: [connectnews@moray.gov.uk](mailto:connectnews@moray.gov.uk).





Crew  
of the

# MV Selkie

Three of the council's newest recruits will be taking on a unique floating role. They will be operating the council-owned dredger *Selkie*, which has just completed her sea trials off Buckie.

The master of the £2.5million vessel is former deep sea fisherman and ship's captain Brian Wilson who is joined by engineer Paul Robertson and excavator operator Keith Maver.

They are all delighted to have been selected as crew for the *Selkie*, which will dredge the six harbours owned by Moray Council as well as being available for dredging operations elsewhere around the coast.

Brian, 61, originally from Grimsby, spent more than 30 years fishing the waters of the North Atlantic before becoming master of an oil exploration vessel in the Gulf of Mexico and the Middle East.

*At the sharp end, Keith Maver, Brian Wilson and Paul Robertson*



He worked on oil-related supply and standby boats in the North Sea before applying for the master's post.

*"I knew the Moray Firth coastline from my fishing days and taking charge of a smaller vessel than I had been used to really appealed to me,"* said Brian.

Paul, 23, is from Findochty and is looking forward to getting home for his tea every night after several years as an engineer aboard supply boats.

A former pupil of Buckie High School who served a Merchant Navy cadetship at South Shields, he said: *"I have the best of both worlds now. I'm an engineer aboard a ship – and I can go home to my own bed every night."*

Keith, 35, will also see more of his wife and two young sons, having spent most of his working life on the high seas, mainly on supply boats and diving support vessels from Brazil to Israel. He lives in Keith and is looking forward to working closer to home.

*"It is going to be a brilliant job,"* he said.

*Selkie*, which was built at the Macduff Shipyard facility in Buckie, is the only council-owned dredger in Scotland and is a replacement for the *Shearwater* which was sold off after many years of sterling service.







# PREVENT

Protect – Prepare – Pursue

The world in which we live faces threats from an increasingly complex range of violent extremist and terrorist ideologies, groups and individuals. While we think that life in an area such as Moray shelters us from all this, the reality is that the threat is very much out there and nobody can afford to be complacent.

The national **CONTEST** strategy has been developed to tackle such threats and **Prevent** is one of four key aspects of the overall strategy, the others being **Protect, Prepare and Pursue**.

The **Prevent** strategy focuses activity on three aims:

- ✓ Ideologies – responding to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it
- ✓ Individuals – preventing individuals from being drawn into terrorism, ensuring they are given appropriate advice and are supported
- ✓ Institutions – working with institutions where there are risks from radicalisation

There is a statutory duty on certain public bodies, including local authorities, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. Moray Council, as a local authority, has this duty. In essence the **Prevent** strategy is a safeguarding public protection process like many others deployed in local authorities, such as Getting

It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) or Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).

*One of our key roles as an authority is to raise awareness within communities and key public and third sector organisations of the causal factors and signs of vulnerability to radicalisation and possible involvement in or support for terrorism.*

All council employees need to know about **Prevent** and training will be delivered to all first, second and third tier managers at June's Leadership Forum. Thereafter managers will be asked to identify which staff would benefit from face-to-face training and which staff could receive training via an e-learning package currently being developed. For staff with safeguarding and caring roles, more bespoke training may also be required. Further information will be provided by managers in due course.

The aim of the **Prevent** strategy is to intervene at the earliest possible stage and proactively support individuals or groups to prevent them from becoming or supporting terrorists. To that end the primary focus of the strategy is on intervening before a person engages in any criminal behaviour.

Each local authority must appoint a single point of contact (SPOC) to manage, lead and evaluate **Prevent** activity in a co-ordinated way and the SPOC for Moray Council is the corporate director of education and social care, Laurence Findlay.

The SPOC has a key role in engaging with other key partners such as Police Scotland as part of the divisional **CONTEST** group. In addition, the SPOC oversees the development of the **Prevent** Professional Concerns conferencing process and agrees a suitable chair for case conferences should they arise. These case conferences would support and manage any individuals who are at risk of becoming or supporting terrorists.

In the meantime, if you have any further queries please contact Laurence who will happily provide any support he can.





**Hot  
Topic**

# 5 Equalities

**As a council we are committed to the principles of equality and diversity. This means eliminating unlawful practices or procedures that impact directly or indirectly on employees, services or service users.**

This includes removing any prejudices or misconceptions. To do this effectively the principles of equality have to be embedded within service practices and procedures and managers, and employees, must be prepared to take any appropriate remedial action required to eradicate non-compliance.

Equalities is not about treating everyone the same, it is about treating people as individuals and ensuring that everyone, regardless of their differences, has the same chances.

Whilst there are many ways to ensure the principles of equality and diversity are allowed to flourish, for managers there are two overriding responsibilities:

- ✓ Promoting fair and equal treatment of all employees and service users, and
- ✓ Undertaking equality impact assessments for relevant work to ensure that equalities-related information is available for monitoring requirements and to inform decision makers of any potential unwanted consequences of their decisions.

In order to do this managers should make sure they review practices and procedures for all service activities for any direct or indirect impact under each equality strand and ensure that all employees in their services receive regular updates and refresher training on equality issues. A mandatory

introduction to equality legislation is available on CLIVE. For staff who don't have access to online training alternative arrangements can be made by contacting the Equal Opportunities Officer. The Equal Opportunities Officer can also arrange for additional training to be made available, tailored to the specific needs of a service.

Managers should also ensure sufficient information is gathered to inform them on the effects that policies and activities have on equality groups, making sure that equality impact assessments are in-depth, comply with the Equality and Human Rights Commission and recommend mitigating actions to improve access to services and service delivery.

Under the Equality Act 2010 there are nine defined protected characteristics:

- ✓ Age
- ✓ Disability
- ✓ Gender reassignment
- ✓ Marriage and civil partnership
- ✓ Pregnancy and maternity
- ✓ Race
- ✓ Religion or belief
- ✓ Sex
- ✓ Sexual orientation

In relation to these protected characteristics, the Equality Act defines various types of unwanted conduct: direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation. In relation to disability, the Equality Act also imposes a duty to make reasonable adjustments in order to enable service users with a disability to access services and to ensure that disabled staff can do their job. All these are explained in detail in the online equalities training module and in the relevant HR policies. Here, we will leave you with an example that illustrates how treating everyone the same can lead to indirect discrimination.





# ANDY

## Taekwon-does it again



Globe-trotter Andy Adam has returned home with yet another world taekwon-do title under his black belt.

For the second year in a row, Andy won gold in the 73kg sparring competition at the European championships in Thessaloniki, Greece.

He defeated opponents from Slovenia, Spain and Greece before winning the final against a Latvian.

A senior ICT officer with the council, Andy also came within a whisker of retaining the patterns gold medal which he won last year.

More than 800 competitors from 32 countries took part in this year's championships.

Andy has competed all over the world and this was his third visit to Thessaloniki where he also took part in the world championships in 2003 and the 2006 European championships.

Next up for Andy, who has been competing at international level since 1995, are the world championships in Italy in September. Best of luck!

## Moray library hosts defence talks

Staff at Lossiemouth library have helped an American visitor with his research into the role that Moray played in repelling a German invasion from the sea in the early years of the Second World War.



The libraries service was contacted by freelance journalist David Brown, from Baltimore, who wanted to find out more about the coastal defences – in the form of massive concrete blocks – which were installed during 1940 and many of which still survive on the shoreline between Lossiemouth and Kingston.

Mr Brown, who worked for the *Washington Post* for 22 years, was visiting Moray as part of a trek across Scotland from Torridon in the west to Fraserburgh in the east.

He was keen not only to see the defences for himself but also to talk to anyone with information about them.

Local knowledge enabled staff at the library to make contact with Lossiemouth historian Donnie Stewart, 84, and arrange for the two to meet at the library where they chatted for nearly two hours, following which Mr Brown continued on his way a great deal more knowledgeable about the wartime defences.

Community librarian Jane Thomas, who facilitated the visit along with colleague Meriol Rattray, said: "We were only too delighted to put Mr Brown in touch with Donnie Stewart who has forgotten more about Lossiemouth and its history than most people learn in a lifetime.

"I know that Mr Brown was very grateful and that he went away knowing a great deal more about the wartime defences than when he arrived."





Colleagues across the council have been familiarising themselves with the range of new printers and multi-function devices which will be rolled out over the coming weeks and months.

The contract was awarded to Xerox at the start of the year and during the first three weeks of April the training rooms in the HQ Annexe were transformed into a 'proof of concept' lab where examples of each type of MFD were set up to test the new software on the corporate and education networks.

Xerox worked closely with the council's ICT section prior to budget holders and staff reps from locations across the council being invited to a demonstration of the new devices in action and to make a final decision on which model best suited their needs.

All eight secondary schools and 38 out of 45 primary schools attended over a two-week period, as did 99% of corporate locations.

The 20 demonstration models are now in the process of being installed in their work locations, with most of the other machines being installed from June to October.

Sandy Forsyth, who has overseen the project with the help of Amanda Walker, said the new contract, which will run for five years with an additional two-year option, represented a major investment for the council.

*"As well as providing staff with state-of-the-art printers and multi-function devices, it will help deliver cost savings as well as enhancing print quality and print security."*

Sandy also praised the efforts of the ICT staff involved in the project – Aaron Casey, Craig Simpson, Andy McBean and Mark Richardson.

*"They work closely with Julian Gibson, the Xerox systems analyst, to fully test the software. Julian has said that although he does this sort of work all the time with many different organisations, our ICT people were among the most enthusiastic, well trained and easy to work with teams he has known."*

