

2015/17

Single Equality Scheme



Single Equality Scheme 2012-2015

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Introduction

This Single Equality Scheme is the College's response to the statutory general and specific duties outlined in the Race Relations Act 1976, the Amendment Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), the Amendment Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2010.

The Single Equality Scheme outlines Nelson and Colne College's longstanding commitment to ensuring that equality and diversity is placed at the heart of what we do and works actively towards eliminating discrimination, harassment and bullying because of race, ethnic origin, disability, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, age, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity. We will ensure that staff, learners and their sponsors (including work placement providers) are aware of the value placed upon equality and diversity and will address disadvantage, and raise the aspirations of both present and potential learners.

Equality is about treating individuals fairly, supported by legislation designed to address unfair discrimination. Diversity is about the recognition and valuing of difference for the benefit of the organisation and the individual. Equality and diversity are not interchangeable, but are dependent. There is no equality of opportunity if difference is not recognised and valued.

Nelson and Colne College has a diverse catchment. The College is proud of its diversity and welcomes the way in which diversity enriches the life of the College and the experience of all learners, staff and visitors.

We aim high to deliver excellence in all aspects of our work and recognise that the effective promotion and implementation of the Single Equality Scheme do more than comply with the present legislation for equal opportunities.

The Scheme will act as a framework for compliance with legislation and policy guidance outlawing discrimination on the grounds of age, religion or belief or sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.

Leadership and commitment at all levels are central to the success of the Scheme.

The Scheme is very much a living document and should be read in conjunction with the action plans. We seek and welcome the views of interested stakeholders as part of feedback and to influence its development over time.

Equality Legislative Framework

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- The Race Relations Act 1976
- Sex Discrimination Act 1986
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2000 (SENDA)
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulation 2003
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulation 2003
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Equality Act 2010
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

The Single Equality Scheme covers 9 protected characteristics, they are:

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

Our Values

Expanding horizons

We..

- ..seek new experiences to broaden our horizons and build confidence
- ..encourage the seizing of new opportunities and removal of barriers
- ..innovate and think creatively about situations
- ..challenge ourselves, asking 'Why not?' and 'What if?'

We excel together

We..

- ..have the very highest of standards and expectations for everyone
- ..unlock greater potential by working together
- ..add enormous value and make an exceptional difference
- ..take pride in our achievements and celebrate these together

Always learning

We..

- ..are curious and seek to learn from everyone and everywhere
- ..try new things and learn from our experiences
- ..work to make learning accessible anytime and anywhere
- ..understand that we always have more to learn

You matter

We..

- ..put people at our centre
- ..take care to understand each other's individual qualities and needs
- ..make sure that every single member of our College family knows they matter
- ..celebrate individuality and recognize the strength of diversity

Our aim is to create an environment that is open to all and enables everyone to achieve their full potential. In doing so, we seek to evolve a culture where all staff and learners take responsibility for eliminating discrimination and promoting equality.

We aspire to develop a learning and working environment that surpasses the minimum legal requirements of both DDA and SENDA legislation, the Race Relations Act 1976, the Amendment Act 2000 and the Equality Act 2010, working on applications that are tangible and intangible. Our policies and processes support and embed inclusivity into all that we do.

Our Commitment to Equality and Diversity

We will:

- Actively promote and embed equality and diversity throughout all functions
- Ensure all members and prospective members of the College's community are treated equally and with respect and dignity
- Be pro-active in providing all our learners and staff with the equal opportunity to achieve their full potential
- Actively identify and eliminate all forms of discrimination, whether overt, covert, or by omission
- Use equality and diversity data to narrow any achievement gaps in learners' overall success
- Recognise the hard work of staff and learners in creating an environment that promotes and embeds equality and diversity
- Comply with all current relevant legislation
- Work with all of our community to identify and remove barriers to learning and progression through the provision of high quality Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)
- Work with learners and staff to create an environment that promotes and embeds equality of opportunity and is free from unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation of any kind
- Ensure teaching and learning takes individual needs into account
- Value and support our learners so that they achieve their full potential
- Embed good practice that will allow learners to achieve their full potential through individual action
- Ensure staff are effectively trained to address and actively promote equality and diversity with sensitivity
- Promote a culture of integrity and honesty, which encourages the College community to identify and tackle institutional barriers, without blame and to the benefit of all.

Alignment with strategic priorities

Equality and Diversity is an integral part of the College's thorough and rigorous quality assurance and strategic planning processes. Staff analyse student participation and success by gender, age, ethnic group and learning disability support need. Any significant issues that arise from this data will be included in Divisional Self Assessment Reports (SARs). The SARs and associated action plans are updated throughout the year. This data will also be used to set targets for narrowing achievement gaps.

There is a clear expectation that all resulting equality and diversity action plans will become embedded within Divisional plans. These plans will be monitored and updated continuously throughout the year.

Leadership and management

The equality and diversity agenda across college has the full support of the College management team (both senior and middle managers). The College has an equality and diversity working group, chaired by the Assistant Principal – Corporate Services which meets termly. This group has wide cross-college representation and focuses on putting strategic plans into operational actions / targets and monitors their achievement. Reports are presented to Governors annually.

Summary of Responsibilities

The **Board of Corporation** is responsible for ensuring that the Single Equality Scheme is in place and that the College meets its obligations.

The **Principal** is responsible for providing overall direction and leadership in promoting and monitoring the Single Equality Scheme.

The **Senior Management Team** are responsible for ensuring the Equality Action Plan is monitored and becomes embedded within the college's self-assessment and strategic planning processes.

The **Senior Management Team** are responsible for ensuring learners are enabled to declare their disabilities and discuss their support needs in a positive environment. There is also a responsibility to work within the business planning process to seek to ensure that sufficient funding is available to meet agreed needs including making reasonable adjustments to the overall environment. Learners will be actively involved in identifying and monitoring their support.

The **College Management Team** are responsible for ensuring that the Equality Action Plan is embedded within their Divisional Planning process by identifying specific targets for each team. This will include identifying and providing for the training needs of all staff and being proactive in meeting the needs of staff.

The **Equality and Diversity Working Group** are responsible for driving the equality and diversity strategy for the College; updating and monitoring the Equality Action Plan; completing some equality impact assessments and monitoring progress against a 3-year schedule and determining the staff development needs from an equality and diversity perspective.

All staff are responsible for eliminating discrimination and promoting equality in all aspects of their work. The College recognises that all of its staff and learners have a duty to support and uphold the principles contained in its Single Equality Scheme and supporting policies. The commitment of all members of the College's community is required to make the scheme a success.

Involvement and consultation of stakeholders

Nelson and Colne College recognises the importance of consultation in all aspects of the development and implementation of its responsibilities for equality.

Involvement and consultation will give all groups a meaningful voice in the provision of their education and training, ensure higher satisfaction with service levels and help make best use of resources.

The College is committed to consultation on the on-going development of the Scheme's action plan and during impact assessments of relevant policies and procedures.

The College will take steps to actively engage with key groups as below:

Development of the Equality Scheme

The College has consulted with:

- Learners at the College, through the learner voice, meetings of the tutor group representatives who then consulted with and reported on the views of all members of their tutor group
- Staff at the college through the Equality and Diversity group, cross-college meetings, team meetings and briefings
- The wider community, through active involvement of stakeholders bodies involving the local community, National Health Trust, the local Council and Leisure Trust.

The Equality action plan is fully integrated into all College areas / processes. The plan is updated throughout the year; progress is monitored by the Equality and Diversity Group chaired by the

Assistant Principal – Corporate Services, the Senior Management Team and the Governing Board.

Equality Impact Assessments

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment is to improve the work of the College by making

sure it does not discriminate and that, where possible, it promotes equality. It is a way to make sure individuals and teams think carefully about the likely impact of their work on equality target groups and take action to improve policies,

services, strategies, procedures and functions. It involves anticipating the consequences of policies and projects on the target groups and making sure that, as far as possible, any negative consequences are eliminated or minimised and opportunities for promoting equality are maximized.

The College has a separate Equality Impact Assessment procedure and a three-year schedule of assessments. The Equality and Diversity working group have responsibility for co-ordinating all impact assessments of the College's policies, services, strategies, procedures and functions.

Publication of the Equality Scheme and reporting mechanisms

The Single Equality Scheme 2015-2017 will be monitored regularly and reviewed annually. An annual action plan including race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity will be drawn up and monitored to ensure identified areas for improvement are addressed and strengths celebrated. Staff responsibilities will be clearly identified and it is anticipated that staff at all levels will be involved in the delivery of the action plans.

The Single Equality Scheme and the Action Plan will be published on the college web-site and staff extranet and will be available, on request, in a wide variety of alternative formats.