

HARROW COLLEGE DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME

Part 1 – Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Scheme

The Disability Equality Scheme sets out the College's overall objectives, principles and commitment to disabled people. Harrow College recognises its responsibility to anticipate and respond to disabled staff and students. We are committed to the active promotion of disability equality.

1.2 Context and Culture of the College

Harrow College places equality of opportunity at the heart of the College and was rated 'Outstanding' for its approach to social and educational inclusion in an inspection by Ofsted in 2006. Aspects of the College's approach particularly highlighted were

- 'A strong commitment to meeting the diverse needs of learners'
- 'Support for learners with disabilities is good'
- 'The response to ...the Special Needs and Disability act 2002 has been good'
- 'Trained staff with a good knowledge of equality and diversity issues'

The College has a long and successful track record of working with a number of groups of disabled people. Its work has recently been recognised by the award of Centre of Excellence for the support of the deaf by the Learning & Skills Council.

1.3 Current Disability Policy

The College has an existing Disability Policy, Code of Practice and Disability Statement which comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Our policy states that:

'We aim to ensure that all groups and individuals within the community are given full opportunity to benefit from the services and job opportunities we provide.'

'Harrow College is committed to ensuring that people with disabilities are supported and encouraged to enrol as students or apply for employment with the College.'

The policy sets out our provisions and support for staff with regard to recruitment, selection, training and development and other human resource procedures. It also clarifies provision for students in terms of access to an appropriate curriculum and support.

Much progress has been made in improving physical access to the campuses and specialist facilities. Staff and Governors have been trained in the provisions of Part 4 of the Act with reference to the disclosure of information and the need to make reasonable adjustments in order that staff, students and prospective students may access the services of the College.

1.4 Legal Context of the Disability Equality Scheme

The Disability Discrimination act (DDA) 2005 introduces a **new duty to promote disability equality** on all public sector bodies including colleges. This requires colleges to become proactive agents of change and to make disability equality central to their work. There are six aspects to the general duty:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment;
- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and others;
- Take account of disabled people's disabilities, even where that involves treating them more favourably than others;
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;

- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

In addition there are specific duties which require colleges to:

- Publish a Disability Equality Scheme by December 2006;
- Prepare and regularly review an action plan to meet the new duties;
- Review and publish the scheme every three years.

1.5 Staff and Student Profile

There are currently seven members of staff who have declared a disability. This number includes four business support staff and three members of the lecturing staff.

This year there are 500 students enrolled in the College or its Collegiate who, during enrolment, were identified as having a disability or learning difficulty. Of these, 7 are wheelchair users, 35 have a hearing impairment, 11 a visual impairment, and 4 have multiple disabilities. One student with multiple disabilities is taking 4 AS Levels in a Collegiate high school.

There are 293 students in mainstream classes who receive additional learning support from the Learning Support team. Some of these have support on a 1-1 basis, some receive support in the classroom for a few hours a week, while others have small group support.

Integrated into mainstream classes are 16 students with emotional and behavioural difficulties, 9 with a mental illness, such as depression or bi-polar disorder. There are also 6 students with Asperger's syndrome, 2 with autism, and 4 with ADHD, 133 students with a specific learning difficulty, and 89 with a moderate learning difficulty. There are 51 students with dyslexia, and 3 with dyscalculia. There are also a number of students with medical conditions which mean they need support while at College – these include epilepsy, diabetes, ulcerative colitis, haemophilia and sickle cell disease.

36 students with moderate or severe learning difficulties are taught in small groups by the Learning Links Team. The College also runs classes both on and off-site for adults with severe or moderate learning difficulties who attend local Day Centres. These include art, pottery, horticulture and music.

Part 2 – Disability Equality Vision, Values and Principles

2.1 Harrow College's Mission, Vision and Values

Mission

We provide choice and opportunity. Your success is our priority.

Vision

We strive for excellence in all we do. We seek to develop new learning opportunities for the community.

Values

- We welcome diversity
- We positively promote educational and social inclusion
- Equality of opportunity is at the heart of the College
- We work in partnership
- We are flexible and responsive
- We encourage openness and freedom of expression

2.2 Our Commitment to Disabled People

In line with its values above, Harrow College will work to reduce disadvantage, discrimination and inequality, and promote diversity in terms of our students, our staff, our partners and the services we deliver.

2.3 Our Objectives

Our objective is to enable disabled people studying, working and visiting Harrow College to participate fully in College life and access its services and to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities. In order to fulfill this objective, we will:

- Actively promote disability equality at all levels within Harrow College;
- Work together with disabled staff, students and partners to achieve equality of opportunity;
- Remove barriers that prevent disabled people from accessing education, employment and other services at the College;
- Continue to develop our staff so that they are aware of their responsibilities in implementing the disability equality scheme;
- Create a culture where harassment and discrimination against disabled people is unacceptable and where students and staff feel able to declare their disability so that appropriate support is made available.

2.4 The Social Model of Disability

Disability is a social issue and impairment causes individuals to be disabled by social, attitudinal and environmental barriers. Our scheme focuses on the removal of these barriers and is guided by the following principles.

- Inclusion – all College provision is accessible and offers choice.
- Equality of opportunity with other users of our services.
- Anti-discrimination – eliminating discrimination arising from poor practice.
- Increasing and promoting the independence of disabled people.
- Involvement and consultation about issues that affect disabled people in the College.

2.5 Our Priorities

▪ For our students

Nationally 40% of people with disabilities have no qualification and disabled people are underrepresented in Further Education. In that context Harrow College will be a model of good practice. We will:

- Provide equal access to education and training for disabled students, where necessary making special arrangements to achieve this.
- Focus on the progression and employability of disabled students
- Involve disabled students in decisions about the services the College provides.
- Provide clear information in appropriate format about the College's services.
- Provide appropriate learning support to enable disabled students to access the curriculum.
- Provide an accessible physical environment.
- Monitor and report our performance against agreed measures of success.
- Develop further current excellent practice in the support of the deaf.

▪ For our staff

Disabled people are underrepresented in our staff establishment and that by employing more disabled people we would be increasing the talent available in our workforce. We recognize the challenge in ensuring maximum disclosure of disabilities among staff. To

double the percentage of the staffing establishment with a declared disability is a priority.

We will:

- Encourage applications from disabled people
- Ensure that application, short-listing and interviewing processes provide equality of opportunity
- Ensure equal access to training and development
- Ensure that reasonable steps are taken to create a suitable working environment
- Make every effort to enable staff who become disabled to stay in employment
- Involve disabled staff in decision-making to improve provision and support
- Monitor and report on staff appointments, promotion and training opportunities to ensure equality for disabled staff and applicants

Part 3 - Actively Engaging with Disabled People

3.1 Why Involve Disabled People?

The college is committed to involving disabled people in a genuine and meaningful way in implementing the duty to promote disability equality. It recognises that active involvement is a significant and important step beyond traditional consultation.

Involving disabled people is crucial specifically in order to:

- Gain a clearer understanding of how to improve the college's service to disabled staff and students
- Identify and prioritise equality initiatives
- Identify barriers that should be dismantled and changes that should be made to ensure greater inclusion and equality for disabled staff and students
- Increase effectiveness in identifying and prioritising disability equality initiatives
- Improve staff morale
- Improved student satisfaction and success rates

Thus disabled people will play a key role in setting the priorities for the Action Plan.

People with different impairments can face fundamentally different barriers and 70% of disabilities are invisible. The College is committed to ensuring the involvement of the full diversity of disabled people in terms of types of impairment.

3.2 How Do We Involve Disabled People?

The College implements the following to ensure the involvement of disabled people on a systematic and routine basis.

- Focus groups meeting on an annual basis drawn from the range of disabled students studying in the college, feeding in to and updating the Action Plan on an annual basis.
- Student surveys and questionnaires, both paper based and on line.
- One to one discussion between students and their tutors.
- Consultation with lecturers working with disabled students and student support assistants to feed back any concerns raised by disabled students.
- Consultation with parents as part of the student review process.
- A staff focus group drawn from staff who themselves have a disability and those interested in disability issues.

- Representation of disabled staff and students on the Disability Sub - Group of the Equal Opportunities Committee.
- Contacting prospective students as well as disabled students who drop out of courses and disabled applicants who are unsuccessful in staff recruitment and selection processes.
- Developing partnerships with external agencies able to provide a specialist input.
- Involving disabled staff and students in the Impact Assessments carried out in relation to established college policies, programmes and practices as well as those carried out in relation to all new major college initiatives.
- Ensuring the inclusion of disabled people within any mainstream consultation strategies undertaken by the College.

In carrying out each of the above the college recognises the need to use a wide range of mechanisms in order to ensure that certain groups of disabled people are not excluded. The college will regularly seek the advice of disabled people on the effectiveness of the processes established for their involvement.

3.3 Monitoring the Impact of Involving Disabled People

Through the Action Plan and the reporting process to the Equal Opportunities Committee and its Disability Sub-Group the College will ensure that there are defined outcomes arising from the active involvement of disabled people and will monitor the impact on policy and practice. The College further recognises the need to provide feedback to disabled people on the outcomes of their involvement and what has changed as a result.

Disabled people will continue to be involved in monitoring the Action Plan and specifically those new initiatives identified in the Plan, as well as the long term evaluation of the Disability Equality Scheme.

Part 4 – Leadership and Management

4.1 Commitment

The Corporation Board has the responsibility to set the strategic direction of the College and this is encapsulated in the College's Mission and Vision statements. Consideration should be given to representation of disabled people at Corporation Board level. These clarify the commitment, not only of Governors but also of the Principal and Senior Staff, to achieving excellence in all aspects of the College's work, including the wholehearted implementation of the Disability Equality Duty (DED). The College had already developed a Disability code of practice and an associated action plan two years before the DED was announced and works in close partnership with a number of local organisations to support disabled people, for example, the Shaw Trust, Choices 4 All, MIND and MENCAP.

4.2 Responsibility

The Principal, together with the Director of Human Resources, has led the development of the College's Disability Equality Scheme through a task group, which includes representatives of staff, managers and external partners, acting as the advisory and steering group for the development. Other senior staff will have specific responsibilities for different aspects of monitoring the efficacy of the Scheme and the responsibilities of other staff are detailed in the Action Plan. Progress on implementing the Scheme and its impact will be monitored by the Equal Opportunities Committee, Chaired by the Principal. Specific reports will be made to the Corporation Board over and above the annual report on Equal Opportunities.

Disability Equality will be central to the college's planning and review process.

4.3 Awareness Raising

The College recognizes that the involvement of everyone is the key to success in implementing disability equality. It is important that all staff and students have a better understanding of disabilities – visible or invisible. Awareness raising is being achieved through specific briefings and training in the promotion of disability equality for all staff and for individual or groups of staff with particular roles, for example, Heads of Faculty, Learning Support Manager. Awareness raising and relevant training for Governors is achieved through briefings prior to meetings and through workshops which form part of the Governors' annual residential weekend.

Following the completion of the awareness raising training programme, Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) will be conducted to inform the whole College self-assessment process.

Part 5 – Carrying out Impact Assessments

5.1 Policies and Procedures

Assessment of the impact of current policies, procedures, plans and practice that impact on disabled people will be carried out during the period of the current and subsequent action plans. Priority will be given to those policies for the following.

- The admission, recruitment and management of students.
- The delivery and assessment of the curriculum.
- The recruitment, employment and training of staff.
- Health, safety and the physical environment.

The Vice Principal will have overall responsibility for the process and the Directors of Students, Curriculum, Human Resources and Estates will have specific responsibilities for the areas listed above.

The College's plans for moving to a single new campus in 2010 provide a unique opportunity to incorporate the outcomes of the EIAs. This will ensure a building that fits the highest standards in promoting disability equality.

The College will explore mechanisms, strategies and processes to enable disabled people to participate effectively in impact assessment.

5.2 Embedding Good Practice

The Vice Principal will ensure that all new policies to be drawn up will be assessed for their impact on disabled people as part of the approval process.

The College will identify and publish examples of solutions and good practice both in terms of the impact assessment process – highlighting what has changed as a result of the process - and the active involvement of disabled people.

Part 6 – Gathering Information

6.1 Student Monitoring

The College collects systematic data on students that enable the monitoring of disability equality.

The Equal Opportunities Committee is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the College's promotion of disability equality in relation to students. The Committee receives regular reports regarding students on the basis of disability with reference to the point of enquiry, entry and all stages of progression.

The Committee monitors all stages of the student admissions process, the curriculum provision as well as student achievement and progress. The reports identified below all provide information relevant to the educational opportunities available to and the achievements of disabled learners. In particular the Committee receives the following.

- Bi-annual reports on student applications, offers and enrolments by qualification, level of qualification and department.
- An annual report on student qualification, enrolments, retention (transfers and withdrawals) and achievement by course.
- An annual report on student discipline and exclusion.
- An annual report on the use of Additional Learning Support funds.
- An annual report on the use of the College's Learner Support Fund.
- Reports on student work placements.
- Reports to every meeting on any complaints of harassment on grounds of disability.

The Disability Equality Group specifically receives the following information on an annual basis:

- Retention /achievement /success of learners with disabilities and learning difficulties (comparison with non-disabled learners /college benchmarks)
- Recruitment and progression of disabled learners
- Annual report on student assessment and examination arrangements (including special arrangements)
- Impact of Additional Learning Support on success rates
- Evidence from student satisfaction surveys and evaluation forms completed by disabled learners
- Evidence from focus groups of disabled learners
- Evidence from one to one interviews / tutor reviews with disabled learners

6.2 Staff Monitoring

The College is committed to achieving equality of opportunity for all people who work at the College, and this includes people who are applying for a role within the College. As a major local employer we aim to ensure that all groups and individuals within the community are given full opportunity to benefit from the job opportunities that we provide.

We are committed to maintaining good practice in the recruitment and selection of College staff. In particular the College recognised its requirements under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, together with associated codes of practice.

In order that all applicants may have an equal opportunity of being recruited the College will strictly apply the Equal Opportunities Policy and the Recruitment and Selection Policy.

The college recognises that its staff complement does not fully reflect the makeup of the local area and that disabled people are under-represented in the College's staff. We are committed to overcoming barriers to diversity and working towards the recruitment of a more representative workforce.

In order to forward that aim we carry out the following.

- Review recruitment and selection guidelines on an annual basis.
- Examine and review job descriptions and person specifications in order to ensure that the recruitment criteria for each job is ability based.
- Examine procedures for advertising to secure a range of applicants and to encourage underrepresented groups to apply for vacancies.
- Examine selection tests to ensure that they are non-discriminatory in their application.
- Ensure that regular recruitment and selection training is provided for those staff involved in recruitment together with mandatory refreshment courses after three years and that the training addresses issues relating to disability.
- Collate statistical information on all stages of the recruitment and selection process to inform the College's Equal Opportunities Committee of performance.

Relevant employment monitoring systems have been introduced to provide information that is relevant and timely. The College collects systematic data on the staff to inform policies and procedures and to enable the monitoring of disability equality. Such information is used to develop the human resources strategy.

In particular the Equal Opportunities Committee receives the following reports that all provide information relevant to the recruitment and progress of disabled staff.

- Quarterly recruitment monitoring reports identifying applications, short-listed applicants and successful applicants enabling comparison of the success of disabled applicants in comparison with non-disabled applicants.
- Bi-annual staff profiles by race, age, disability and length of service, identifying the management, lecturer, business support and casual staff profile.
- Annual staff development / training reports identifying application and selection for training courses as well as staff take up and outcomes.
- An annual report on proportions of staff involved in disciplinary and grievance procedures.

Part 7 – Putting the Scheme into Practice

7.1 Publication and Reporting

The College's Disability Equality Scheme will be published on the College website, and student and staff intranets. A summary of the scheme will also be made available in hard copy on request. Progress and performance in implementing the scheme will be monitored by the College's Equal Opportunities Committee, from which reports will go to the Corporation Board. Agendas and minutes of all Corporation meetings are available in the College Learning Centres and upon request to the Clerk to the Corporation. Monitoring information will be included in the College's Annual Report and be made available on the College website.

7.2 Disability Equality Action Plan

Annex A contains an Action Plan which sets out the steps we will take to implement the Disability Equality Scheme.

Part 8 – Monitoring and Evaluation

8.1 Monitoring and Evaluation

Harrow College recognises that the publication of its Disability Equality Scheme marks the beginning, not the end of activities designed to embed disability equality into all functions and activities across the organisation and is committed to critically reflecting on the process of taking

forward disability equality within the college. The Disability Equality Duty is about achieving improved outcomes for disabled people.

Progress in implementing the Disability Equality Scheme will be monitored by the Equal Opportunities Committee which is chaired by the Principal and meets termly. The action plan will be reviewed and updated, at least annually, by the Committee. Reports from the Committee will be considered by Governors in meetings of the Resources and the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committees of the Corporation and an annual report on progress will be reviewed by the Corporation Board.

8.2 Planning and Self Assessment

Implementation of the scheme will also be embedded in the College's development planning and self-assessment procedures, at College, Faculty and departmental levels.