

Single Equality Policy

Issue 4

December 2014

Summary of Policy:

The policy sets out the College's commitment to:

- celebrating and valuing diversity among its learners and workforce
- seeking to promote a positive working and learning environment free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- narrowing the achievement gap between different groups of learners
- ensuring compliance with relevant legislation.

Manager Responsible for Policy:

Head of Quality Improvement

1. Introduction

Education is a right for all who can benefit from it. We all have the responsibility to ensure that no learner or potential learner is prevented from enjoying this right. Similarly every employee of the College has rights relating to equality of opportunity and the right to work without harassment or victimisation.

This policy sets out how Tyne Metropolitan College promotes, manages and monitors Equality & Diversity practice in order to ensure that all members of the College community have the chance to fulfil their potential.

1.1 Mission, Vision and Values

The College's Mission Statement describes why the College exists. It provides a useful touchstone for the Governors, managers and staff to judge whether we are doing the right things.

Our Mission Statement is:

Raising aspirations; changing lives

We are a complex organisation with many staff, so getting everyone aligned around a common purpose is crucial to our individual and collective success. Our Vision Statement provides this framework, and it describes a clear position that we believe we can achieve if we harness our energy and endeavours around this common purpose.

Our Vision Statement is:

To excel in everything we do so that more individuals, businesses and communities actively plan their futures in partnership with us

One of the ways of ensuring that we work together and are focused on a common purpose is to embrace and embed a set of shared values and associated behaviours. These values also ensure that our work and contribution to the College is personally rewarding.

Our Values help us to understand and develop the behaviours we need to be an outstanding and high performing College. These values are:

- Aspiration
- Excellence
- Inclusion
- Innovation
- Partnership
- Professionalism

1.2 Our commitment

The College celebrates and values diversity amongst its learners, workforce and community. The College will treat all members of the College community with respect and dignity, and seek to promote a positive working and learning environment free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation. By recognising and valuing difference, we will support a cohesive culture in which the potential of each individual can be maximised.

The College recognises its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the corresponding Public Sector Equality Duty. In accordance with the general equality duty the College will, in carrying out its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic (see section 2 below) and those who do not; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Eliminating discrimination and advancing equality of opportunity involves:

- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
- taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people;
- encouraging people from protected groups to participate in activities where their participation is disproportionately low;
- taking steps to eliminate harassment related to each protected characteristic; and
- promoting positive attitudes towards each protected characteristic.

The College commits to thinking consciously about how existing and proposed policies and practices impact on equality. This includes how employees and learners are treated, the design and delivery of services and how key decisions are made.

In accordance with the specific equality duties, the College will, in summary, publish equality information and prepare and work towards equality objectives. The College will also publish information annually to demonstrate how it is meeting the general equality duty.

The College will seek to eliminate prejudice and discrimination in both direct and indirect forms. No member of the College community will be disadvantaged for reasons associated with any particular characteristic. The College will promote positive, diverse and non-stereotypical images for staff and learners. We aim to create a positive, inclusive ethos, which challenges discrimination in all its aspects. Any discrimination or stereotyping will be challenged. Procedures will be introduced and implemented which prevent any group from being treated less favourably than others.

The Single Equality Policy is underpinned by two operating principles for the College:

- Actively promoting Equality and Diversity and tackling any discrimination
- Narrowing any achievement gap between different groups of learners

A Calendar of Equality and Diversity events/activities has been developed and will be kept up-to-date throughout each academic year.

As part of our commitment to the promotion of Equality and Diversity the College has, as part of the North Tyneside Strategic Partnership, contributed to the production of a Community Cohesion Strategy for North Tyneside and is committed to the delivery of this strategy.

2. Policy statements

No member of the College community shall be prevented from enjoying rights relating to equality of opportunity or be treated less favourably than others for reasons of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race, ethnic or national origin
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Social class
- Transgender (or gender reassignment)

2.1 Age

The College celebrates the value brought to the college community by a wide cross section of ages in its students and staff.

In support of this statement the College will:

- Promote actively and support educational achievement and employment opportunities for people of all ages
- Promote positive images of achievement by people of all ages that recognise and celebrate the knowledge and experience that people bring to their learning throughout life
- Actively tackle discrimination and promote equality
- Raise the awareness of age stereotyping with learners and staff

2.2 Disability¹

Tyne Metropolitan College believes that disabled students are an integral part of the college community. Accessible and appropriate provision is not 'additional', but a core element of the overall service on offer not just to disabled students but to all our students and staff.

¹ "Disability is the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a society which takes little or no account of people who have impairments, and thus excludes them from mainstream activity. Disabled people are those people with impairments who are disabled by society."

In support of this statement the College will:

- Anticipate the possible needs of disabled students and staff and make every possible effort to ensure that the college is a welcoming and accessible environment
- Make reasonable adjustments to enable disabled staff and learners to access all facilities and to work or study safely and in comfort
- Give appropriate opportunities for learners and potential learners to disclose disabilities or learning difficulties
- Assess all potential learners or employees on their individual merits and their ability to undertake employment or education successfully
- Provide accessible information to all learners and staff

2.3 Gender and Transgender (or gender reassignment)

The College aspires to create a supportive and inclusive environment for male, female and transgender² staff and students where all can work and study to achieve their full potential.

In support of this statement the College will:

- Take positive and proactive action to work towards creating equality of opportunity in all areas of college activity for learners, potential learners, employees and potential employees
- Encourage applications from potential learners and employees into non-traditional areas or study or work to help eliminate gender stereotyping
- Work towards addressing gender imbalance in areas of work or study
- Provide diverse images in any material which it produces for learners and staff
- Raise the awareness of learners and staff regarding gender equality and stereotypes

2.4 Marriage and Civil Partnership

The College wishes to be recognised by the community as an organisation which provides good employment and educational opportunities for people who are married or in a civil partnership.

In support of this statement the College will:

- Promote the fact that individuals who apply to us as a student or employee will receive fair treatment and be treated solely on their ability
- Ensure criteria used in person specifications are job-related
- Take positive action to create equality of opportunity in all areas of college activity
- Provide training and support for staff

2.5 Pregnancy and Maternity

The College will seek to create a working and learning environment based on good relations between pregnant and breastfeeding mothers and other groups of people.

² Transgender means that an individual's "gender identity" (self identification as male or female or both) does not match their "assigned gender" (identification by others as male or female based on physical/genetic sex)

In support of this statement the College will:

- Ensure that a full risk assessment is carried out with pregnant and breastfeeding mothers to ensure safety of both the mother and baby
- Encourage learners to bring their babies to open days and recruitment events and to view the on-site childcare facilities
- Provide facilities which are appropriate for breastfeeding mothers
- Take positive action to create equality of opportunity in all areas of college activity
- Provide training and support for staff

Note: Paternity is not a protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act. We will provide equal protection for those taking paternity leave or equivalent.

2.6 Race

Tyne Metropolitan College celebrates and values the diversity brought to its workforce and learners by individuals, and believes that the College will benefit from engaging staff from a variety of racial, ethnic and national backgrounds, thus allowing it to meet the needs of a diverse student population within a multi-cultural society. The College will treat all employees and learners with respect and dignity, and seek to provide a positive working and learning environment free from racial discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

In support of this statement the College will:

- Provide training and support for staff
- Consult with staff /learners from different cultural back grounds about their experience of the working environment
- Actively encourage working alongside local ethnic groups in the surrounding community and within college
- Create a positive inclusive ethos where issues of racism, stereotyping and discrimination can be discussed openly with a shared commitment to challenging and preventing racism and discrimination
- Provide diverse images in any material which it produces for learners and staff
- Raise the awareness of learners and staff of race equality and stereotypes

2.7 Religion or Belief

The College wishes to create a positive and open community where people of all faiths and none are able to work and study comfortably.

In support of this statement the College will:

- Establish and support a multi-faith chaplaincy within the college to provide for the practices of people of faith working or studying in the college
- Publicise the existence of the chaplaincy and promote its work
- Provide opportunities where faith can be explored and discussed in a respectful and open manner
- Provide diverse images in any material which it produces for learners and staff
- Raise the awareness of learners and staff regarding religious stereotypes

2.8 Sexual Orientation

The College believes that a person's sexual orientation does not have any bearing on their ability or suitability for employment or learning opportunities.

In support of this statement the College will:

- Ensure that procedures are in place to avoid sexual orientation being taken into consideration during the application process for a place to study or for employment
- Respect the sexual orientation and right to privacy of all employees and learners
- Raise awareness and understanding of staff and students in relation to sexual orientation
- Actively tackle discrimination, harassment or bullying of any gay or lesbian staff or students

2.9 Social Class

The College is committed to ensuring that all people have access to employment and education, regardless of social background or economic status.

In support of this statement the College will:

- Ensure that all financial support packages are explored and utilised to the benefit of staff and learners who are in need of such support
- Make positive efforts to recruit students from areas where there is not a tradition of post-16 education or employment
- Provide additional learning support to develop the literacy and numeracy skills of learners and staff who are disadvantaged in these skills on order to enhance their employment prospects

3. The Legislation

The following pieces of legislation underpin our Equality Policy:

- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the associated Guidance Codes of Practice
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Pensions Act 1995
- Protection From Harassment Act 1997
- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Crime and Security Act 2001
- Religion and Sexual Orientation Act 2003
- The Gender Recognition Act 2004
- The Civil Partnership Act 2004
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Equal Treatment Directive (75/117)
- Equal Pay Act and The Equal Pay Directive (75/117)
- Maternity and Parental Leave Regulations 1999
- The Employment Act 2002

- Race Relations Act 1996
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Equality Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty 2011

4. Reporting

Tyne Metropolitan College will develop and publish every year an Equality & Diversity report. This report will contain summary information and activity relating to Equality & Diversity practice and specific objectives underpinning the commitments outlined in this policy.

5. Responsibility for the Single Equality Policy

The Board of Governors designates the Principal as having overall responsibility for equality and diversity issues at Tyne Metropolitan College. The Head of Quality Improvement will provide regular reports for the Senior Leadership Team and the Corporation Board and ensure the updating and implementation of the Policy.

There is a College-wide Equality and Diversity Committee which is chaired by the Principal. The remit of the Committee is to promote policies and practices that ensure a college environment in which equality and diversity are apparent. The committee will support the putting into practice of action plans relating to the Equality policy in all areas of College life, including the built environment, the curriculum, teaching and learning, learner services and employment practices. In order to do this the Committee may set up subsidiary task groups.

It is the responsibility of all employees and students to uphold the principles of the Single Equality Policy.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

Since it is neither practicable nor desirable to apply a formal process to every day decision making, members of staff are expected to show consideration and sensitivity of the diverse needs of colleagues, visitors, learners and customers. The College believes that this consideration is of utmost importance and therefore has given priority to ongoing staff training and development in relation to equality and diversity.

The College's Senior Leadership Team systematically evaluates the potential impact on equality of changes to key policies, procedures and decisions. Statistical analysis is prepared where appropriate.

7. Monitoring of Actions

The College undertakes to conduct effective monitoring of all aspects of Equality and Diversity in relation to both staffing and the student body. A review of progress will be made through the monitoring of data, analysis and evaluation of results of impact assessments, reports to the Board and through the college self assessment process. All reports will include an analysis of data relating to staff and students by race, gender, disability and age.

In summary, monitoring and evaluation will be carried out through:

- Collection of data, in accordance with data protection, on race, gender, disability and age
- Analysis of the data
- Data benchmarked against local and national data (from the most recent sources)
- Comparison of data against that of the previous year
- Learner surveys
- Staff surveys
- Data relating to retention and success rates
- Lesson observations
- Quality Improvement Reviews
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment Reviews
- Reviews of formal complaints received
- Self Assessment Reports and Course Review documentation
- Monitoring reports to the Board of Governors

8. Appendix

The College has adopted the *Joint Agreement on Guidance on Equality in Employment in Further Education Colleges, May 2012*, published by the Association of Colleges and recognised Trade Unions. The document is included for reference as an appendix to this policy.

9. Control of this Document

This Policy will be reviewed every three years by the Senior Leadership Team and the Equality and Diversity Committee. Amendments will be presented to the Corporation Board for approval.

Prepared by: Head of Quality Improvement

Validation & Tracking by: Executive Officer

Approval by Corporation Board
Signed:.....
D.W. Midgley

17 December 2014
Date:.....

To be reviewed: December 2017
Date:.....