

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

1 Mission

- 1.1 Meeting Learners needs and aspiring to excellence.

2 Context

- 2.1 The College's Equality and Diversity Policy should be viewed in the context of the College Mission, its Strategic Equality and Diversity Action Plan and Corporate Strategy 2011-14, in particular strategic objective 1:

'Ensure access to, and promote progression within, a range of personalised learning opportunities in a culture that listens to learners, values and celebrates diversity and learner success, and where staff and students feel and are safe'.

- 2.2 This policy has been developed in the context of current legislation, primarily, The Equality Act (2010) and Public Sector Duty 2011.
- 2.3 This policy should be read in conjunction with the College's Strategic Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2011-14 and its associated policies and procedures, as follows:
- Equality and Diversity Framework: Charter for Staff
 - Doncaster College: What we are about
 - Equality and Diversity Framework: An Ethical Framework
 - Widening Participation Strategy
 - Anti Harassment and Anti Bullying Policy and Procedure (Students)
 - Age Equality Policy Statement
 - Race Equality Policy Statement
 - Gender Reassignment Policy Statement
 - Marriage and Civil Partnership Policy Statement
 - Religion/Belief (or lack of Belief) Policy Statement
 - Sex/Gender Equality Policy Statement
 - Sexual Orientation Policy Statement
 - Disability Policy Statement.

3 Our Commitment

- 3.1 The College is committed to providing equal opportunities and celebrating diversity in all aspects of its work and to avoiding unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation to staff, students and customers. The College is committed to advancing equality of opportunity between people from different groups. This involves considering the need to:

- Equality means ensuring that everyone is treated equally i.e. that all students have the same right of access to resources. Consequently to ensure equality of opportunity, individuals / groups may be treated differently.
- Diversity is recognising that individuals and groups of people are different and that it is important to value and celebrate difference.
- Direct Discrimination is treating someone less favourably than he/she would treat others because of a protected characteristic.
[The individual does not need to possess the protected characteristic]

- Indirect Discrimination is where an employer/provider has a condition, rule, policy or practice that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who have a protected characteristic. [It can be justified if it is proportionate means of achieving legitimate reason]
- Associative Discrimination is discrimination directed against someone who associates with another person that possesses a protected characteristic.
- Perspective Discrimination is direct discrimination against someone because they are thought (wrongly) to possess a protected characteristic.
- Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating an employee's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.
- Victimisation is where an individual is subjected to a detriment because they make, or are suspected of making, or supporting a complaint or grievance under the Equality Act 2010. [No protection if a complaint has been maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint].
- Third Party Discrimination protects employees who are harassed by clients, contractors of the employer/provider. An employer is liable if the conduct has occurred on at least two previous occasions, is aware it had taken place and had not taken reasonable steps to prevent it occurring.

3.2 The policy is intended to assist the College to put this commitment into practice. Compliance with this policy should also ensure that employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.

3.3 The College strives to ensure that the work and learning environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect. The College has a separate Anti Harassment and Anti Bullying Policy for staff and students which deal with these issues.

3.4 Wherever possible the College will use Association of Colleges (AoC) good practice guidelines.

4 Guiding Principles

4.1 The College has a set of core values which informs its culture and ethos. The core values are:

- Striving for Continuous Improvement and Excellence; education means progress
- Focus on the Customer; the customer is our business
- Trust and Integrity; we respect one another
- Professionalism and Responsibility; we care about our customers and quality
- Teamwork and Collaboration; relationships and connections create meaning and context for learning and work
- Mutual Understanding and Support; we value and invest in our staff.

- 4.2 Doncaster College does not tolerate any prejudicial behaviour by any member of the College. The College is committed to ensuring that it does not discriminate either directly or indirectly in the provision of goods, facilities or services to students, staff or customers on grounds of the protected characteristics as outlined in the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Duty 2011.
- 4.3 Discrimination affects the ability of groups and individuals to take part on an equal basis with others, at work, in education and training, and in all aspects of everyday life. Such discrimination dismisses the opportunity available to these groups and goes against the principles of the College's Mission.
- 4.4 The College is totally opposed to any form of victimisation, bullying and discrimination and if any member of the College community considers that they have been treated unfairly, they may have grounds for a complaint which will be dealt with through the complaints procedure. Any form of discrimination may be treated as a disciplinary offence resulting, if appropriate, in disciplinary action under the College's Disciplinary Procedure for both staff and students.
- 4.5 The College strongly believes that the diversity of our local communities is one of our greatest strengths and our most valuable asset. The College is fully committed to equality of opportunity and we believe that all individuals have an equal right to develop and achieve their full potential. Our strategic aims reflect this, taking full account of the Government priorities for the UK economy and the skilled workforce needed to deliver future prosperity at local and regional level.
- 4.6 Equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination are fundamental rights and Doncaster College has a legal and moral duty to exercise leadership in the promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity. We will promote equality and diversity and challenge all forms of discrimination through our role as a service provider, community leader and local employer.
- 4.7 Our goal is to foster an environment that offers people inclusivity and in which they feel safe and secure, achieving an improvement in the quality of life for all who learn or work at the College. Our commitment to equality and diversity is intrinsic to the way we think and is therefore central to everything that we do. Doncaster College takes a strategic approach to the delivery of services which is supported by our Performance Management Framework.
- 4.8 We firmly believe that our work within the College, with local communities, partners and other agencies, will assist in pulling together a means to promote a culture that celebrates and welcomes diversity.
- 4.9 We will follow best practice in all of the equality areas and work towards:
- Eliminating unlawful discrimination
 - Eliminating bullying and harassment
 - Promoting equality of opportunity
 - Promoting good relations between different groups in the community
 - Celebrating and taking account of people's differences.

5 Definition

- 5.1 Equality of opportunity means more than embracing differences such as gender/sex, disability, ethnicity, sexuality, age, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, maternity and pregnancy and gender reassignment (Protected Characteristics). It means ensuring that different people receive services,

consultation and employment opportunities in a fair and equal way. This means recognising, accommodating and valuing diversity across the College and the community with which we work.

6 Scope

6.1 This policy covers all aspects of College business and relates to both staff and student activity including:

- Employment and selection procedures for staff;
- Induction and probation for staff
- Staff Appraisal;
- Staff Remuneration;
- Staff Promotion and Training;
- Staff Disciplinary and Grievances.
- Recruitment, selection and enrolment of students;
- Curriculum content and development;
- Course delivery and assessment;
- Teaching and learning materials and methods;
- External contracts;
- Self Assessment;
- Student Disciplinary.

6.2 This Policy will set out how Doncaster College will work towards the promotion of equality of opportunity in all of its service delivery. It sets out how Doncaster College will ensure that discrimination is challenged and eliminated through compliance with legislation and positive action. This Policy will also set out the responsibilities of Governors, staff members and others, and actions that the organisation will take to ensure full compliance with this policy.

6.3 All of these documents outline the College's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and celebrating diversity. They recognise, accommodate and value diversity across the College. They are designed to address any inequalities identified within service delivery and eradicate any such inequality. There are numerous links between these policies, strategy and plans and this Comprehensive Equality and Diversity Policy as they form the basis of the equality framework enabling us to deliver our commitment to equality and diversity with an emphasis on the elimination of any forms of harassment or unlawful discrimination.

7 Policy

7.1 The College's Equality and Diversity Strategy and Single Equality Scheme has translated this policy into key strategic objectives:

- To actively promote an ethos and culture that positively reflects the College's commitment to Equality and Diversity thereby advancing educational and social inclusion and equality of opportunity
- To ensure that all students and potential students are aware of, and comply with, Equality and Diversity Policies and Procedures, in accordance with The Equality Act (2010)/Public Sector Equality Duty (2011)

- To ensure that all staff and potential staff are aware of, and comply with the College Equality and Diversity Policies and Procedures, including all protected characteristics*, in accordance with The Equality Act (2010)
- To ensure all external partnerships and employer engagement provision complies with the legislation, including all the protected characteristics *, in accordance with The Equality Act (2010) and thereby close the equalities and achievement gap
- To provide an accessible and inclusive physical environment and facilities which positively reflect the College's commitment to Equality and Diversity and to ensure that external contractors comply with the requirements of The Equality Act (2010)
- To take proactive steps to eliminate unlawful discrimination, bullying, harassment and victimisation across the protected characteristics* in accordance with The Equality Act (2010) and take proactive steps to promote good relations for and between all social groups
- To ensure that the College's quality assurance framework, including curriculum content and design, materials and delivery is underpinned by and reflects the College's commitment to Equality and Diversity, across all protected characteristics* thereby promoting inclusion
- To provide learner support services which are inclusive and take proactive steps to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations among all groups of people
- To provide the appropriate financial resources to effectively implement the College's Equality and Diversity Policies and to ensure that the College procurement policy and associated activities are in accordance with The Equality Act (2010)
- To ensure there is effective monitoring in all aspects of the College's student reporting mechanisms to close the equalities gap and actively promote equality of opportunity across all the protected characteristics*
- To ensure there is effective monitoring in all aspects of the College's staff reporting mechanisms to close the equalities gap and actively promote equality of opportunity across the protected characteristics*.

7.2 Protected characteristics* include:

- Gender
- Disability
- Ethnicity
- Sexuality
- Age
- Religion or Belief
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Maternity and Pregnancy
- Gender Reassignment.

7.3 The Equality Objectives are owned at a strategic level by members of the College Executive, updated yearly and published on the College's website.

7.4 **The College as a Service Provider**

The College will:

- Ensure that all our services are accessible
- Provide clear, meaningful information about College services in ways that are fully accessible and meet the community's diverse needs
- Monitor take-up and evaluate services to ensure that they do not discriminate or exclude
- Ensure our buildings are as accessible as possible by making all necessary reasonable adjustments
- Ensure equal access to the College's complaints procedure
- Ensure that all publicity materials present appropriate, positive and inclusive
- Encourage (and, where legally possible, require) others to adopt this Policy and, associated action plans including those who provide goods and services on behalf of the College.

7.4 **The College as an Employer**

The College will:

- Follow its approved recruitment and selection specification and procedure
- Provide training on equality and diversity issues to all employees involved in recruitment and selection
- Review job descriptions regularly and remove any requirements that are unnecessarily restrictive or which might exclude particular groups
- Use only selection criteria that are relevant to the job and do not contain unjustifiable elements, including those relating to, gender, race, disability, age or personal circumstances
- Advertise all vacancies externally (except in exceptional circumstances to be agreed by the Head of Human Resources) and make sure that advertisements do not contain any wording or conditions which might be discriminatory in the context of this Policy
- Encourage applications from under represented groups, including using ethnic or special groups press for job advertisements where appropriate
- Ensure full job details, employment information and the Equality and Diversity Policy are available to all applicants, and make arrangements to have information available in alternative formats
- Interview all disabled applicants who meet the selection criteria for a job vacancy
- Ask interview candidates if they require special facilities at interview because of any disability they may have
- Keep full details of decisions about each applicant at each stage of the selection process.
- Promote equality and diversity through induction, probation and in-service training

7.5 **The College as a Community Leader**

The College will:

- Listen and respond to the views of our learners and staff through appropriate consultation and participation
- Celebrate, respect and make known the variety of identities, lifestyles, culture and religions within our communities
- Work with others to provide an environment that is free from discrimination, harassment and violence
- Encourage and support local people to be active in public and community life

7.6 Consequently, the College is committed to ensuring that it does not discriminate either directly or indirectly in the provision of goods and facilities, services or employment in line with the protected characteristics.

8 Legal Responsibilities

8.1 The College operates within the legislative framework of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Duty 2011 and other relevant legislation i.e. The EU Framework for Equal Treatment in Employment Directive 2000 and The Work and Families Act.

Equality Act 2010

8.2 In keeping with the College's commitment to equality and diversity for all, and the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, this College will ensure that no individual or group is discriminated against, or receives less favourable treatment and thereby provide protection to the following groups:

- Age
- Gender Reassignment
- Disability
- Sex
- Religion or Belief
- Sexual Orientation
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Marriage and Civil Partnership.

8.3 The Equality Act 2010 has general and specific duties. The General Duties requires public authorities to have due regards for the need to:

- Take proactive steps to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation in relation to the protected characteristics
- Promote positive steps to promote good relations for and between all social groups
- Advance equality of opportunity.

The Specific Duties Regulation 2011 obliges the College to:

- Publish information to demonstrate the compliance with Equality Duty at least annually
- Set equality objectives at least every four years.

Other Legal Responsibilities

8.3 The Human Rights Act 1998 makes it unlawful for public authorities to act in a way that is incompatible with a Convention Right. There are 14 Articles in the HRA covering Convention Rights. Article 14 - Prohibition of the Convention Rights - states that a person has the right not to be treated differently because of their race, religion, sex, political views or any other personal status, unless this can be objectively justified. Everyone must have equal access to convention

rights, whatever their status. The principal effect of the HRA is to enable people to enforce their human rights in the domestic courts. This should mean that people across society are treated with respect for their human rights, promoting values such as dignity, fairness, equality and respect. The Doncaster College Comprehensive Equality and Diversity Policy embraces these values and ensures that every member of staff and students' human rights are protected and promoted.

- Further details on The Human Rights Act 1998 can be found at www.hms.gov.uk/acts/acts1998/19980042.htm

9 Responsibility

- 9.1 Under legislation and this Policy all members of staff and service users have a responsibility to listen to what others say and respect different points of view. All staff must also report all incidents of bullying and harassment and discrimination.
- 9.2 The overall responsibility for the development of a culture and policies to actively promote equality and diversity tackling discrimination and narrow the achievement gap is vested in the Governing Body. The members of the Governing Body are responsible for agreeing the policy content and monitoring, at least twice a year, its implementation.
- 9.3 The Principal and Executive Team are responsible for the strategic ownership and delivery of this Policy and associated equality schemes.
- 9.4 The Head of Inclusion is responsible for the design and delivery of equality and diversity training.
- 9.5 Managers have responsibility for the day-to-day operation of this Policy and associated equality targets. They are also responsible for ensuring that all staff are aware of their legal responsibilities under equal opportunity legislation, reviewing and monitoring the operation of this Policy and associated equality schemes.
- 9.6 Line managers are responsible for ensuring that their staff understand equal opportunities and that they report all incidents of harassment and discrimination. They are also responsible for ensuring that all staff have equality of access and resources.
- 9.7 The overall responsibility for the monitoring of the effectiveness of this policy and for the implementation of action to make the policy fully operational is vested in the Assistant Principal Learner Support and Inclusion and Head of Inclusion.
- 9.8 The Vice Principal Resources is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy in relation to recruitment, selection and employment. The Head of Inclusion is responsible for via CPD ensuring that staff are familiar with their roles and responsibilities around equality and diversity.
- 9.9 The Equality and Diversity Committee has the responsibility to approve and monitor the Strategic Equality and Diversity Action Plan.

Your Responsibilities

- 9.10 All members of staff are responsible for demonstrating that the equality of opportunity is promoted. They should ensure an ongoing dialogue about equality of opportunity issues and priorities take place with learners, partners and organisations, contractors and other service users.
- 9.11 Every employee is required to assist the College to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination.
- 9.12 Under the legislation of this policy every member of staff and every student has a responsibility to:
- Listen to what others say and respect this point of view;
 - Speak out, or report it, if they witness or are aware of bullying, harassment, verbal or physical aggressions;
 - Question their own prejudices and assumptions;
 - Familiarise themselves with the responsibilities that equalities legislation places on them and ensure that they are sensitive to the issues of cultural diversity
- 9.13 Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the College for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.
- 9.14 Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees, students or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the Company's disciplinary procedure.
- 9.15 Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

10 Monitoring, Review and Dissemination

- 10.1 This Equality and Diversity Policy will be published on our website and on our staff intranet. We will also provide paper copies and other alternate formats upon request.
- 10.2 We will report annually on the progress we have made towards promoting equality in accordance with the College's equality objectives. To help us do this effectively, we will ask all members of our learner community for their feedback. As part of these reviews, we will consider the information we collect on how our communities, learners and staff are accessing our services and employment opportunities to ensure that we are making progress.
- 10.3 The College's Equality and Diversity Committee will meet at least once every six weeks to review the College's progress on promoting and achieving race, disability, gender and age equality. Progress will also be monitored and managed across the organisation through our performance management framework.
- 10.4 This Equality and Diversity Policy will be subject to annual review.
- 10.5 Doncaster College will implement the Equality and Diversity Policy through its Strategic Equality and Diversity Action Plan and monitor its effectiveness against specific objectives, performance targets.

- 10.6 The Senior Manager with responsibility for the implementation of an identified strategic objective will provide a termly progress report to the Equality and Diversity Committee.
- 10.7 An annual report will be provided by the Assistant Principal Learner Support and Inclusion to Senior Management and Governors.
- 10.8 The Equality and Diversity Statement, Policy, and Procedures will be reviewed yearly by the Equality and Diversity Committee and approved by Governors.
- 10.9 The College will collect equality and diversity data at all stages of a student's and employee's College career and where appropriate establish targets for improvement (equality impact assessments):

Students – Data relating to:

- applications
- take-up of guidance and additional support service
- retention
- suspensions and exclusions
- admissions
- achievement/success
- complaints

Staff – Data relating to:

- job applications
- appointments
- type of employment (grade)
- take-up of staff development and training opportunities
- use of disciplinary and grievance procedures
- staff promotion
- staff absences

11 Due Regard

- 11.1 In line with the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Duty 2011 the College supports good decision making by encouraging staff to understand how different people will be affected by their activities so that our policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet the needs of different people. In line with legislation the College has to demonstrate 'due regard' in relation to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups - this involves considering the need to:
 - remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
 - meet the needs of people with protected characteristics
 - encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low
- foster good relations between people from different groups - this involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups.

Due regard comprises two linked elements, proportionality and relevance. To demonstrate due regard as employers, education and service providers, the College needs to consider the relevance of the three aims of the equality duty when:

- developing, evaluating and reviewing policies (including, for example, those relating to recruitment and selection)
- designing, delivering and evaluating services, including education provisions
- commissioning and procuring services from others.

To consider proportionality, the College should determine:

- the relevance of the policy to protected groups
- the relevance of the policy to the public sector equality duty
- any concern previously raised about policy or practice
- any information indicating an adverse impact on a protected group.

Consequently, the College needs a process/procedure to identify where a policy or procedure:

- is likely to result in discrimination against a protected group
- needs development to ensure that it adequately caters for the requirements of different protected groups
- positively contributes to the participation of underrepresented groups in the College activities.

There is no prescribed process to achieve this, though mechanisms developed need to replicate, extend or replace current equality impact assessment tools. Where a particular policy or practice is found to have a discriminatory impact on a protected group, the College would need to explore alternative policies or practices or justify their actions within the constraints of the law. The College would need to be able to justify its decision and subsequent actions to demonstrate due regard. Such justifications will be required if a legal challenge is made. To demonstrate due regard, it would where appropriate, be necessary to involve staff and students in the process.

The College will operate a strategic approach to assessing due regard in relation to requirements of the Equality Act 2010, as opposed to reviewing the operational detail of each policy in isolation from its strategic context. An operational approach limits the opportunity for managers to understand the strategic importance of equality and diversity in relation to their scope of responsibility.

Strategically the starting point will be the College's Corporate Strategy 2011-14, which is underpinned by the Equality Framework, followed by a programme of assessments

covering all the management aspects of the College. Appendix 1 outlines the managerial frameworks to be utilised. The assessment will be conducted by a panel comprising of the Vice Principal Resources, Assistant Principal Learner Support and Inclusion and Head of Inclusion. The panel will evaluate how in the context of management there is 'due regard' to:

- eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advancing equality of opportunity between different groups
- fostering good relations between people of different groups.

The process will be underpinned by the two linked elements of proportionality and relevance.

Managers will need to provide evidence and documentation to support their presentation. Each Academy will be reviewed under the Curriculum Planning, Delivery and Outcomes Framework.

Equal Opportunities and Diversity Impact Assessment and Monitoring

The College's services are delivered through its Business Support Areas and its Academy Structure

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) 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 maximised.

Where does an EqIA come from?

Equality Impact Assessments originate from the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, which place obligations on local authorities and public sector organisations to carry out impact assessments. In Doncaster College we will use these to mainstream gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief into our policy and practice at all levels.

The College's process is therefore aimed at assessing the impact of policies, strategies, functions or projects across the six equality groups.

What is meant by "Impact"?

The College will look at two possible impacts in its assessment:

- A negative or adverse impact:

This is an impact that could disadvantage one or more equality groups. This disadvantage may be differential, where the negative impact on one particular group of individuals or one equality group is likely to be greater than on another. The Equality Impact Assessment provides an opportunity to assess this.

For example: an event that was held in a building with no hearing enhancement system would have a negative or adverse impact on some attendees with a hearing impairment.

- A positive impact:

An impact that could have a positive impact on one or more equality target groups, or improve equal opportunities and/or relationships between groups. This positive impact may be differential, where the positive impact on one particular group of individuals or one equality group is likely to be greater than on another.

For example: A targeted training programme for black and minority ethnic women would have a positive differential impact on black and minority ethnic women compared with its impact on white women and all men. It would not, however, necessarily have an adverse impact on white women or men.

When should an Equality Impact Assessment be carried out?

An equality impact assessment should be carried out when:

- Developing a new policy, service, strategy, procedure or function
- Reviewing existing policies, procedures, or functions
- A policy, procedure, function or strategy has been identified as requiring an EqlA by partnership working, directorates, Executive, or elected members

All managers are responsible for incorporating equalities into their policies, procedures, functions or strategies, and for assessing the equalities impacts. This should be a continuous cycle, starting at the very beginning of the process. If there is any doubt as to whether a policy, strategy or function requires initial screening, managers should contact a member of the Equalities Group.

The Equality Impact Assessment consists of two parts:

- The initial screening process
- The more thorough full assessment if the initial screening has identified an adverse / negative impact

Initial Screening

This part of the Equality Impact Assessment form should be completed during the development or review stage before approval for the policy, service, strategy, procedure or function. Once initial screening has been completed, a full assessment is only required if:

- Any equality group was identified as being disadvantaged or negatively impacted by the policy / strategy / project
- The impact was assessed as of high significance
- The impact was not intentional and/or illegal, i.e. discriminatory under anti- discrimination legislation

Completing an EqlA is similar to a risk assessment as it involves predicting and assessing the implications of a policy, service, strategy, procedure or function on a wide range of people with different needs. Furthermore, this should not be carried out in isolation, but with the support and advice of others. Effective consultation with stakeholders is a key ingredient in conducting Equality Impact Assessments. At the preliminary screening stage, it should become obvious whether there is a negative or positive impact or gaps in knowledge about likely impacts. It should be a relatively short process which makes use of previous consultation results, personal knowledge and experience, research and reports, internet searches, internal and external specialist advice, staff with previous experience of similar strategies or projects etc. If there is a lack of data or information concerning a particular area, this should not be a reason to stop the process. If the likely impact on a particular group is unknown, then action needs to be taken to acquire this information.

Full Impact Assessment

This part provides an opportunity to assess the evidence for a possible negative impact. It ensures that research and consultation with the equality target groups has been carried out and leads to an improvement plan aiming to minimise the negative impact and, where possible, maximise the positive impact.

Consultation involves engaging with representatives from equality groups who are likely to be affected by the policy, strategy or project. This could include engaging with staff and learners, trade unions, other organisations, public bodies or voluntary and community groups. It is important to ensure sufficient time and resources are dedicated to the consultation process to encourage full participation, particularly by those we have traditionally failed to reach.

The public will be able to examine completed EqlAs if they request to see them and summary information about EqlAs should be available on the College's website.

Publishing the results of EqlAs is key to establishing accountability and maintaining public confidence. It will demonstrate that the College is committed to promoting equality, monitoring, assessing and consulting on the effects of its policy, service, strategy, procedure or function.

Each main strategy and function will be assessed as being of high, medium or low priority. Apart from the main corporate strategies and policies, the service areas managed by service Heads will be the basic units for the assessment of functions and policies. More detailed work, following the preliminary screening, will be carried out in two phases, thus validating the degree of relevance, if any, and hence priority, and identify the work that needs to be done on functions and policies in order to comply with the duty.

An inter-departmental Equality and Diversity Committee will co-ordinate the process, develop internal guidance and otherwise support service heads and strategy review teams in their work. The Equality and Diversity Committee will produce a detailed timetable and ensure it is adhered to and that action plans are drawn up and implemented. It will be chaired by the Assistant Principal Learner Services and Inclusion.

Monitoring, Review and Dissemination

This Comprehensive Equality and Diversity Policy will be published on our website and on our staff intranet. We will also provide paper copies and other alternate formats upon request.

We will report annually on the progress we have made towards promoting Disability, Gender, Race and Age equality. To help us do this effectively, we will ask all members of our learner community and relevant stakeholder organisations for their feedback. As part of these reviews, we will consider the information we collect on how our communities, learners and staff are accessing our services and employment opportunities to ensure that we are making progress.

The College's Equality and Diversity Committee will meet at least one every two months to review the College's progress on promoting and achieving race, disability, gender and age equality. Progress will also be monitored and managed across the organisation through our performance management framework.

This Comprehensive Equality and Diversity Policy will be subject to on-going review.