

WIDENING PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

1 Context

Widening Participation is extending and enhancing access to Further and Higher Education to people in under-represented groups and communities, particularly people in lower socio-economic groups.

It has been informed by the Doncaster Borough Profile such as:

- In May 2013 6.6% of young people aged between 16 and 18 in Doncaster are classified as NEET. This compares with 7.1% in the Yorkshire and Humber region and 6.6% nationally.
- Measures of deprivation which are particularly high across Doncaster include crime, living environment and education. 29450 of the population of Doncaster claim Key out of work benefits. Life expectancy for males and females is lower than the national average. In 2012 51.8 in 1000 of women aged between 15 and 17 conceived in Doncaster. This was higher than the national rate of 38.2 in 1000. The 2011 Census data shows the Doncaster population by broad ethnic group at 95.2% White as compared to 85.5% White for the whole of England. The proportion of children in poverty in Doncaster in 2012 is 22%. This was lower than in the Yorkshire and Humber Region (29%).
- The incidence of skills gaps in Doncaster in 2009 was recorded at 17.5%. In Yorkshire and Humber the figure was 17.1%. Both figures are lower than the then national average of 19%. In addition there were 74119 people in Doncaster with no qualifications in 2011. This accounted for 30.3% of the population aged 16 and above. The proportion of the population aged 16 and above with no qualifications in 2011 was 25.8% in the Yorkshire and Humber Region and 22.5% in England.
- 54% of all pupils in Doncaster achieved 5 or more A*-C grade passes, including English and Maths, at GCSE or equivalent in 2011-12 compared to the national average of 59%. 49% of male pupils achieved 5 or more A*-C grade passes, including English and Maths, at GCSE or equivalent in 2011-12 as compared to the national average of 54%. 60% of female pupils achieved 5 or more A*-C grade passes, including English and Maths, at GCSE or equivalent, 2011-12 as compared to the national average of 64%.
- In 2011 17% of the Doncaster population aged 16 and above had a Level 4 qualification as their highest qualification. In comparison over the same period in Yorkshire and Humber the figure was 23.3% and 27.4% in England. In addition 10.7% of people living in Doncaster aged 16 and above had a Level 3 qualification as their highest qualification. In comparison over the same time in Yorkshire and Humber the figure was 12.8% and 12.4% in England. 17% of people aged 16 and above resident in Doncaster had a Level 2 qualification as their highest qualification. In comparison over the same time in Yorkshire and Humber the figure was 15.5% and 15.2% in England.

The College's Widening Participation Strategy should be viewed in the context of the College Mission, and Corporate Strategy 2013-2016, in particular Objective 2:

'We will provide a range of individual learning opportunities within further and higher education provision that:

- *ensure appropriate access*
- *reflect the views of students*
- *are inspiring, engaging and fun*
- *value and celebrate diversity and student success*
- *are delivered in a safe learning and working environment'*

This strategy has been developed in the context of current legislation, primarily, The Equality Act (2010) and Public Sector Duty 2011.

This strategy should be read in conjunction with the College's Equality and Diversity Strategy and Action Plan (2011-2014), Community Involvement Strategy, Equality Objectives and HE Widening Participation Strategy.

2 Mission Statement

The mission of Doncaster College is:

'Realising student potential and achieving excellence'

In line with the College's Equality and Diversity Strategy it is important to note that:

Education promotes social change by combating exclusion and, in this regard all staff are committed to promoting learning amongst those who have traditionally been excluded from education.

3 Rationale

The document sets the strategy for widening participation and informs and continues to be informed by the wider strategic planning process. It is recognised that the Widening Participation Strategy underpins the College's Equality and Diversity Strategy as a key enabling strategy to move the organisation to one that promotes and facilitates social and educational inclusion.

4 Fundamental Principles

The promotion of educational and social inclusion and access is of paramount importance and so we believe that:

- The College is at the heart of the local community. Therefore we need to understand the diverse nature of the communities we service
- Learning is the common foundation for social, economic and cultural cohesion

- The College has a duty to ensure all students are protected from bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination
- The College has a responsibility to develop the students' knowledge and understanding of Equality and Diversity and preparation for living and working in a culturally diverse society
- It is important to be active in the promotion of inclusivity by providing a learning and working environment which actively widens participation and improves the chances of success
- All students should be given the opportunity to participate including those with learning difficulties/disabilities who should also be given the chance to express their views on provision and services.

5 A College Strategy

The strategy will need to be responsive to the changing profile of the community and will fully embrace national developments.

Within its Equality and Diversity Action Plan the College will set challenging targets for widening participation particularly as it relates to social inclusion. As such targets will be set in the context of the local community profile and local priorities such as the NEETs agenda and those excluded from school.

Senior managers will be responsible for setting such targets within the context of closing the achievement gap through curriculum planning.

All College stakeholders will be responsible for promoting a culture and ethos which is socially and educationally inclusive.

The College's commitment to widening participation will be reflected and monitored in all aspects of the College's work, with a particular emphasis on:

- 14-19 students
- Lower Socio-Economic Groups as measured through postcodes and bursary allocation
- Ex-Offenders
- Looked after Young People and Care Leavers
- Young Carers
- Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- Black and minority ethnic students
- Students of different religion or beliefs
- Ex-offenders
- Those not in education, employment or training
- Young people who have been excluded from school
- Those for whom their English is their second language

- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Students
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender students.

The scope of this strategy covers all aspects of College business as it relates to student activities:

- Partnership working
- Curriculum Planning
- Initial Advice and Guidance, recruitment, selection, enrolment , initial and diagnostic assessment of students
- Teaching and learning methods and resources
- Student Support Services.

6 Structures and Systems

The College operates this strategy through its Equality and Diversity Action Plan, which is developed and monitored by the Equality and Diversity Committee. Equality Objectives will be set in the context of Widening Participation.

Widening participation (demographic) data will be analysed and monitored by the Assistant Principal Inclusion and Learner Experience, Head of Inclusion and Academy Directors.

7 Critical Success Factors

- The development of effective partnerships with other agencies that lead to demonstrable benefits for students such as:
 - Local Schools
 - Special Schools
 - Employers
 - Community Groups
 - Higher Education Institutions
 - Local Authority
 - Children Services
 - NHS
 - Training Providers
 - Probation Service
 - National Apprenticeship Service
 - Job Centre Plus.
- Integration of Equality Objectives in relation to participation and admissions.
- Provision of effective support structures for students within the context of widening participation and promoting inclusion.
- Visible commitment of senior management and governors to widening participation in particular a culture and ethos of social and educational inclusion.

- Effective labour market intelligence data to ensure that the college understands the community it serves.
- The setting of challenging targets and using data to monitor, analyse and improve engagement and performance by different groups of students
- Provision of an effective initial assessment and induction process linked to the development of an Individual Learning Plan.
- Accessibility of learning programmes in relation to timing, location, modes of delivery and duration.
- Additional Learning Support as an enabling resource, so that, where appropriate, an individual gains greater autonomy and decreases dependence on others.
- Individual students' additional learning support needs are accurately identified early in the programme and are met quickly through the provision of appropriate resources and support throughout a student's programme.
- Access to inclusive resources that enable all students to participate fully regardless of their protected characteristics*.

8 Next Steps

The College has strategically linked its Widening Participation Strategy to its Equality and Diversity Strategic Objectives and thereby its Equality and Diversity Strategic Action Plan in particular:

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 facilitate a student experience which is inclusive and widen participation underpinned by proactive steps to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations all social groups.

These objectives will be underpinned by Equality Objectives at College and Academy Level.

*Protected characteristics:

Age
Disability
Race
Sex
Sexual Orientation
Religion or Belief
Marriage and Civil Partnership
Maternity and Pregnancy



Gender Reassignment.