

Equality and Diversity Scheme

(including Equality Objectives 2020-24)

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1. Introduction

Wigan and Leigh College is committed to creating an environment where learners, staff, governors, visitors and other stakeholders actively promote equality and diversity, tackle bullying and discrimination and narrow the achievement gap. The college wants to ensure learners have excellent experiences that ensure they are well equipped for the next stage of their education, training and/or employment.

The College is committed to:

- Upholding its values
- Focusing on learning which encourages high aspirations and success
- Applying excellence and integrity in all we do
- Respecting all learners and staff
- Ensuring staff are appropriately trained, supported and valued
- Maintaining financial stability for the benefit of learners
- Being responsive to individuals, employers, the community and the Government

The College seeks to provide a safe, supportive environment for all its staff and students in which everyone is treated with dignity and respect. The College welcomes individuals and groups from local, regional and international communities. The promotion of equality and diversity enables learners to reach their potential. The College will value difference and diversity and will strive to create positive working relationships so that everyone can work and study to the best of their abilities, free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

All staff employed by the College (including those working for the College in a voluntary capacity), will seek to eliminate prejudice of any kind, and to promote equality and diversity. This includes general activities such as challenging the use of discriminatory language or behaviour by staff and by students, and challenging any College policies or procedures which they believe may be discriminatory, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Employees and students are expected to work with the College towards these aims. In certain circumstances, an employee or learner can be personally liable for discrimination against a fellow employee, learner or a job applicant. All employees have personal responsibility for the practical application of the College's equality and diversity scheme, which extends to the treatment of job applicants, employees (including former employees), customers clients, students and visitors.

2. Related Policies

Disciplinary action will be taken against any employee or learner who is found to have committed an act of unlawful discrimination. Serious breaches of this scheme and serious incidents of harassment and bullying will be treated as gross misconduct. Unwarranted allegations that are not made in good faith may also be considered as a disciplinary matter. The College's Grievance Procedure is available to any employee and the Complaints Procedure for any learner who believes that they may have been unfairly discriminated against.

Further Education colleges are major education and training providers for the age group 16 plus, and in particular young people from ethnically diverse, and socially and economically disadvantaged areas. The age and profile of our students makes it crucial to be involved in the Prevent strategy. Wigan and Leigh College has a part to play in fostering shared values and promoting cohesion.

Our Prevent Strategy has five key objectives:

1. To promote and reinforce shared values; to create space for free and open debate; and to listen and support the learner voice.
2. To break down segregation among different student communities including by supporting inter-faith and inter-cultural dialogue and understanding, and to engage all students in playing a full and active role in wider engagement in society
3. To ensure student safety and that the College is free from bullying, harassment and discrimination
4. To provide support for students who may be at risk and appropriate sources of advice and guidance
5. To ensure that students and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in preventing violent extremism.

These and all our other policies and procedures which work in conjunction with Wigan and Leigh's Equality and Diversity Scheme are listed in Appendix 1.

3. The Public Sector Equality Duty

The General Equality Duty:

- We will eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- We will advance the equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic*.
- We will foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Specific Equality Duties:

- We will provide sufficient information to demonstrate compliance with the general duties.
- We will provide evidence to show that analysis of all information has been undertaken.
- We will provide details of the engagement and consultation that has taken place and publish annual equality information.

***Protected Characteristics under the Law:**

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage / Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy / Maternity
- Race

- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

To meet these priorities, the college will:

- Raise the awareness and skills of staff to promote fairness, equality and diversity and good relations
- Raise the awareness of learners to promote understanding and good relations between diverse groups
- Provide a hospitable and multi-cultural environment that welcomes, respects and protects diverse persons
- Monitor learner representation and success, take action to promote equality and ensure that all learners achieve excellent outcomes, whatever their background
- Monitor representation amongst all staff types and take action to promote equality
- Consult and involve representative staff, learners and outside organisations
- Embed the actions arising from equality impact evidence into policy development, business planning and quality assurance processes
- Ensure that partner organisations meet the College's standards and requirements for equality community. Our aim is to be inclusive and to provide high-quality learning opportunities and working environment, which meet the needs of students and staff fairly, equitably and consistently.

4. Our Vision and Values

The College's vision is:

To be a centre of educational excellence which transforms the lives of the individuals and the communities we serve

The College's values are identified below:

1. **We are learner centred** – our students, their learning experience and their safety is our first priority
2. **We are ambitious** – we strive for excellence through creativity and innovation and believe we can always improve
3. **We are partners in the success of the organisation** – supporting each other to develop and to always be individually and collectively responsible for our results
4. **We believe in honest and open communication** - we treat each other with respect, trust and consideration. We listen to students and colleagues and celebrate their success

5. **We are collaborative and inclusive** – we work in partnership so we can positively contribute to local, regional and national economic development and we value equality and celebrate the diversity of our community

5. Equality and Diversity Objectives 2020-2024

In 2020, the College set six new Equality and Diversity objectives as part of the Equality duty. These Equality Objectives will remain in place until April 2024.

1. To reduce participation gaps in H.E by 75% for full-time disabled entrants, part-time mature entrants, and full-time and part-time most deprived entrants (as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation, Quintile 1 and 2);
2. To improve H.E data collection, reporting and analysis in relation to access, continuation and progression by September 2020, evaluating the data in relation to POLAR4, IMD, disability, BAME and care leavers, and to take action if any gaps arise by 2024;
3. Improve satisfaction rating for how confident teaching staff feel in relation to advancing equality and diversity and inclusion into their teaching practice (in excess of 90% in 2022 and over 95% in 2024);
4. Increase female enrolments in Construction and Engineering at Pagefield to at least 10%;
5. Decrease the volume of staff who have not specified whether they have a disability to less than 10% and to increase the proportion of staff declaring their ethnicity to over 90%;
6. To increase the proportion of males accessing College Support Services to support their Mental Health by 5% on a yearly basis.

Equality policy and practice is monitored by the Equality and Diversity Committee which is chaired by the Vice Principal. The college completes an annual equality and diversity report. This document describes how the College will continue to fulfil its statutory duties to promote equality and diversity as well as tackling and eliminating discrimination. It also reports on progress in relation to the College's Equality Objectives.

6. Valuing Staff and Learners

Our Learners:

We will provide an outstanding environment for teaching and learning and ensure that we work to ensure equality of access by:

- Using marketing strategies that target underrepresented groups to attract learners from a variety of backgrounds.
- Providing guidance for learners is sensitive to equality and diversity issues.
- Ensuring that the college offers a wide range of programmes that cater for all potential students.
- Delivering a curriculum that meets the needs and reflects the diversity of our student body and community.
- Acting in a robust manner to challenge and eliminate prejudice, bullying or harassment.
- Making reasonable adjustments for learners with particular needs.
- Complying with all equalities related legislation.
- Providing accommodation that creates an accessible, safe and secure environment for all learners.
- Providing a wide range of forums for learners to ensure that their voice is heard and issues raised are acted on.
- Encouraging open and frank discussions around issues that support learning, educational attainment and aspiration.

We will also ensure all learners have access to appropriate assessment opportunities by:

- Using the Additional Learning Support Team to carry out assessments and/or collate a comprehensive and compelling body of evidence to demonstrate the appropriateness of any arrangement so as not to place a student at a substantial disadvantage on account of their disability or learning difficulty.
- Agreeing all access arrangement prior to an assessment to allow candidates with disabilities, learning difficulties or temporary injuries to access the assessment and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment.
- Providing access arrangements as listed in JCQ regulations (chapter 5 and 6 of the adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties).
- Meeting a range of access arrangements for candidates who are likely to have a number of required adjustments as outlined in JCQ regulations (chapter 4 of the adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties).
- Making reasonable adjustments that may be unique to an individual and may not be included on any prescribed list of available access arrangements. Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on a number of factors which will include, but are not limited, the needs of the disabled candidate, the effectiveness of the adjustment, the cost of the adjustment and the likely impact of the adjustment upon the candidate and other candidates.

Our Staff:

To ensure that we are an employer of first choice for talented and innovative staff the college is committed to investment in its employees. To recruit and retain a motivated workforce which reflects the local community we will:

- Have a swift, robust response in terms of challenging and eliminating bullying or harassment.
- Ensure that all new staff undertake a robust induction that includes the college equality and diversity ethos.
- Regularly review and report on workforce monitoring for equality and diversity and take action where needed.
- Use a variety of recruitment methods to ensure that we attract and retain staff from a wide range of backgrounds.
- Comply with all equalities related employment legislation.
- Train staff in equality and diversity issues to enable them to carry out their role that reflects the ethos of the organisation.
- Make reasonable adjustment for staff with particular needs.
- Work to develop a workforce that is reflective of our local community.

7. Actively engaging with Staff and Students

Our methods for consultation and involvement are:

- Surveys, forums and informal dialogue with learners and customers
- Communication within and between staff teams
- Liaison with Student Union/Council Representatives
- Advocacy through the Student Union/Council, Heads of Studies, Student Services and the Additional Learning Support Team.
- Mandatory Equality and Diversity Staff Development programme for all staff, managers and governors (see appendix 2)

Consultation and involvement is fundamental to the success of the scheme and we are committed to embedding this in our business processes. We will consider the views of people with the full range of protected characteristics in further development of this scheme and in the review of progress. Staff, learners and customers are well placed to tell us how we can improve our approach. We also welcome views from external organisations and the general public. We have made provision in the action plan to ensure that arrangements for routinely listening to people are developed, as appropriate, to better understand needs associated with protected characteristics.

8. Leadership and Management

Equality and Diversity management is led by the Vice Principal and the Head of Quality via the Executive Management Team which reports to Governors. A whole organisational approach to the Equality Scheme is achieved by its integration into strategic planning and Equality and Diversity is an integral part of the self-assessment process. All staff of the College contractually commits to take responsibility for eliminating discrimination and promoting equality. (Please also see Appendix 3 – Roles and Responsibilities)

Materials on equality and diversity are available from a variety of sources for staff to use at induction, in tutorials and staff development. These include interactive Blended Learning Consortium materials. Equality policy and procedures are a compulsory

component in all learner and staff induction programmes. Equality and Diversity are a part of the tutorial programme.

9. The Equality Scheme in Action

The College's Equality Scheme is published on the College's website and intranet. The scheme is made available to staff, learners, and stakeholders in accessible formats and is cross referenced in the Self-Assessment Report.

Our Equality Action Plan demonstrates the steps we take to implement the Equality and Diversity Scheme.

The action plan reflects:

- Strategic priorities of our organisation
- Priorities for each protected characteristic
- Measurable indicators of progress towards outcomes
- Lines of accountability and commitment at all levels

10. Monitoring

The College has in place arrangements to monitor the selection and recruitment of members of staff and the admission of students. This monitoring will enable the College to identify possible improvements in its practices in relation to:

- Teaching, learning and assessment;
- Management and governance;
- Admissions, access and participation;
- Students' support and guidance;
- Behaviour and discipline;
- Staff recruitment, training and career development; and
- Service delivery.

Monitoring in relation to the Equality Action Plan will continue to be aligned with the annual business cycle to ensure progress. In order to exercise responsibility under this scheme, governors and senior managers will be provided with a range of monitoring information. This will include data on the protected characteristics and other relevant information about staff, learners and customers. This is purely for the purpose of ensuring the maximum effect of this scheme; data will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and security over data will be adhered to at all times. Each part of the College will take action locally to support progress towards the equality objectives. Progress towards the equality objectives will continue to be reported annually to Wigan and Leigh College Governing Board. The Equality Objectives will be reviewed on a 4 year cycle.

The Equality and Diversity Group includes representatives from a range of areas including: Curriculum Managers, Human Resources, Quality, Marketing, Additional Learning Support, and teaching, learning and assessment coaches.

The Equality and Diversity Group will:

- be pro-active in promoting, recognising and celebrating diversity,
- develop practices to ensure the removal of prejudice and discrimination from all aspects of marketing, recruitment, teaching and learning,
- set targets, develop action plans, and monitor and evaluate all College activity in relation to equality and diversity,
- assess the impact of the Scheme,
- publish results.

11. Review

This scheme will be reviewed every 12 months, or whenever new legislation comes into force, whichever is sooner.

12. Complaints and Breaches

The College will seek to provide a supportive environment for staff or learners who make claims of discrimination or harassment.

Acts of discrimination (direct or indirect) or harassment on grounds of the protected characteristics, or of victimisation or abuse, will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence, and the appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed (according to whether the accusation relates to a learner or a member of staff).

13. Publicising the College's Equality and Diversity Scheme and Progress

Wigan & Leigh College has ensured the accessibility of information. Information provided via the internet has been reviewed to ensure that content is non-discriminatory. Alternative formats have been made available when appropriate. Advertising and publicity materials have highlighted the commitment to equality.

14. Appendix 1 Related Policies

Equality and diversity is an issue that pervades the entire business of the College and is, therefore, related to every other policy and procedure to a greater or lesser extent.

College policies that work in conjunction with the Equality and Diversity Scheme are the:

- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Grievance Procedure
- Safeguarding Children
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults
- Prevent Strategy
- Human Resources Policy
- Student Disciplinary Procedures

Wigan and Leigh College information is available via its website and staff intranet pages, or can be made available upon request.

Appendix 2

Equality & Diversity Training –

All staff employed by Wigan and Leigh College are required to undertake mandatory training within their probationary period which includes induction training relating to Equality & Diversity. The College is active with a range of external partners including membership of Equality and Diversity UK. Below are examples of the training undertaken to promote our policies and practices and to embed our equality and diversity intentions.

- Inclusive Curriculum
- Use of terminology to remove barriers
- Approaches and Language when supporting LGBTQ learners and topics
- Resilience & Mental Health – Charlie Waller
- Podcasts regarding Young Carers, Employability and aspirations
- 42nd Street focus groups – mental health services
- AoC Learning Week – access to unconscious bias training

Safeguarding Training –

The online Safeguarding training is accessed through the Wigan Safeguarding Children's Board and these are updated on a three year cycle

- Safeguarding Adults
- Safeguarding Children
- Safer Recruitment (*for Managers only*)

Prevent Training –

The training is accessed through Foundation Online Learning, <http://www.foundationonline.org.uk/>

Appendix 3

Role and Responsibilities

All staff will comply with the general duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Particular responsibilities in the organisation are listed below.

The Board of Governors

The Board is responsible for ensuring that the Equality and Diversity Scheme is in place, and that the College meets its obligations including the general duty and the specific duty.

The Principal

The Principal is responsible for providing overall direction and leadership in advancing and monitoring the Equality and Diversity Scheme

Vice Principal

Is responsible for giving a consistent and high profile lead, and ensuring the Equality Objectives are set in relation to the Strategic Objectives, devising and implementing the annual action plan. They are also responsible for ensuring that the action plans are monitored and are embedded within the college's self-assessment and strategic planning processes, and providing reports to the Executive team and the Board of Governors.

Head of Quality

The Head of Quality is responsible for ensuring that the Equality Objectives are embedded with the Teaching, Learning and Assessment strategy and monitored through the cross college quality processes.

They are also responsible for assisting the Vice Principal to ensure the action plans are monitored and are embedded within the college's self-assessment and strategic planning processes, and providing reports to the Executive team and the Board of Governors.

Assistant Principal MIS & IT

The Vice Principal is responsible for ensuring curriculum data is recorded and reported effectively to identify any areas of under achievement relating to protected characteristics so that appropriate and effective interventions can be made.

The Equality and Diversity group

The Equality and Diversity Group is responsible for adopting a proactive and participative approach to the promotion and implementation of Equality and Diversity and ensure that the principles of Equality pervade all of our work. The Equality and Diversity group is supported by sub groups and task and finish groups, that work towards the targets set within the Equality Objectives.

All managers

All managers are responsible for ensuring that identified objectives, where appropriate, are embedded within their functional or curriculum action plans and for putting the scheme

and related policies and procedures into practice. They are also responsible for ensuring that their staff know and understand their responsibilities with regard to this.

All teaching and learning staff:

All Teaching and Learning Staff are responsible for embedding the principles of Equality and Diversity into their professional practice and using naturally occurring opportunities to promote and development our learners understanding of equality and diversity issues.

All staff:

All college staff are responsible for ensuring that equality of opportunity and respect for diversity is at the heart of all we do. They are also responsible for working to eliminate discrimination and promoting the right of every individual to be treated with respect and dignity.

All contractors and service providers:

All contractors and service providers are required to be aware of our Equality and Diversity Scheme and to follow this in any contracts or agreements.