



Learning Development Unit (Quality)

Stafford College Disability Equality Scheme

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APPROVED BY	Equality & Diversity Committee
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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

1. Introduction

1.1 Stafford College has a policy for promoting Equality and Diversity (POL/007/000). Within this is contained the following equality and diversity statement:

“Stafford College is committed to the implementation of a policy to achieve equality of opportunity for all staff, students and members of the community it serves. Therefore, the College will actively work to achieve equality regardless of, for example age, race or ethnic origin, disability, gender, marital status, sexual orientation and faith”.

1.2 Ultimately, responsibility for ensuring that the college has effective policies and procedures for disability equality and that it complies with relevant legislation lies with the Corporation. However, staff and learners are involved fully in managing progress towards Disability Equality (see Appendix 1 for the terms of reference for the relevant committees and groups).

2. Definition

2.1 The Disability Equality Scheme (DES) is the link between the overarching Equality and Diversity Policy and the consultative arrangements and procedures involved in meeting the college’s legal obligations.

3. Scope

3.1 The DES is applicable to staff, learners, governors and visitors.

4. Legal Context

4.1 The legal context of the DES is the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005, which requires the College to meet general and specific duties.

5. Consultation

5.1 Stafford College adopts the social model towards disability equality, rather than the medical model. This is used in the consultation process with its learners, staff and organisations that represent people with disabilities and this model will be adopted throughout the organisation.

5.2 Members of the Disability Consultative Forum (DCF), which includes staff and learner representatives (see appendix 1), have all contributed to the development of the DES, and will be involved in monitoring the effectiveness and impact of the scheme.

5.3 In addition to the consultation groups mentioned in section 5.2 any learners, staff or others wishing to comment on this scheme can do so at any time by contacting the Quality Manager at the College.

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6. Disability equality vision, values and principles

6.1 Stafford College currently collects statistical data on applicants for posts from people with disabilities. This is presented annually by the Personnel Manager to SMT and the Governors.

6.2 The current college learner application form collects disability data on learners enrolling onto courses and separates them into categories. Learner data is kept on an electronic system called EBS. This records data under the following categories which are determined by the LSC:-

- Visual Impairment
- Hearing Impairment
- Disability affecting mobility
- Other Physical disability
- Other medical condition (eg epilepsy, asthma and diabetes)
- Emotional/behavioural disability
- Mental Ill health
- Temporary disability after illness
- Profound complex disabilities
- Multiple disabilities
- Other

This information is analysed for take up of Additional Learning Support, and for retention and achievement compared to learners that have not declared a disability.

6.3 Equality and diversity is regarded as the responsibility of all employees within the College and this is stated on job descriptions and advertisements. The college has been awarded the 'Positive about Disability' quality mark.

6.4 The college website is now fully compliant with the DDA and the front page of the prospectus is in Braille. The Disability Statement is available in audio format.

6.5 Accommodation work has been undertaken to ensure compliance with the DDA since 2006 and includes:

- Creation of lifts in Tenterbanks Building and the Workshop building to all floors.
- Creation of physiotherapy/stretch room for physically disabled learners
- Construction of DDA compliant Broad Eye Building.
- Construction of DDA compliant Skills Centre.
- Refurbishment and creation of six disabled toilet facilities.
- Installation of our 'short run' stair lifts in Tenterbanks Building
- Installation of 'high-grip' stairwell banisters to four stairways
- Installation of automatic opening doors to main access areas and thoroughfares
- Installation of 'hold open' devices to other fire doors
- Installation of Braille signage on all room doors
- Installation of hand rails to external ramps
- Installation of tactile paving around campus

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- Refurbishment of three existing lifts to providing high visibility controls and auditory feedback
- Replacement of existing ramps to provide shallower incline
- Purchase of portable induction loops
- Improvements in directional signage and font usage
- A ramp and dedicated DDA compliant toilet facilities installed at the Chetwynd Centre electrical workshop

6.6 The following are the most recent developments in relation to disability and can be found in the college's Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2009/10:

- The College Accessibility Statement is available on CD Rom, on the web-site and in leaflet form to explain the entitlement for learners who may have additional needs
- The college web-site has recently been redesigned and is now fully DDA compliant and provides a higher-profile service for learners with disabilities, customers have the facility to view the text on the college web-site in large print
- All college presentations to prospective learners address the needs of those people with additional learning needs/support and highlight the role of the Disability Health Condition Advisor (DHCA)
- The College prospectuses includes a Braille message on the front cover
- A revised procedure is in place from January 2009 for the disclosure of learner disability and health conditions during the application/ enrolment process
- The enrolment/application forms were updated from January 2009 to include a clearer section to support learner disclosure of disability
- The role of the DHCA has been developed and is supported by the Cross-College Working Group on Disclosure
- 348 learners were referred to the DHCA in 07/08, 355 in 08/09 and 340 (as of Oct 2009) in 09/10
- 227 learners (78%) who were referred to the DHCA in 08/09 achieved their Primary Learning Goals compared to the overall College success rate of 80%
- Additional Learning Support (ALS) 'credit card' has been distributed widely at induction to ensure learners awareness of ALS support and support for mobility, sensory impairment, specific learning needs etc and a range of media are used for contacting learners
- Learner Questionnaire outcomes for 08/09 show 96% of learners with learning difficulties know the kind of support they can get from College, and they are aware of help for Learners with Learning Difficulties or Disabilities (LLDD)
- Dyslexia awareness week 2009 saw an exhibition and staff presence in reception Oct 09
- Two residential courses were organised by LLDD staff to meet the needs of learners with varying physical disabilities
- An extensive range of accessible equipment and software are now available in libraries to enable learners with specific needs to access learning as well as in additional support
- Additional accessibility toilet installed in Broad Street
- Positive about disability reaccredited in Oct 09
- The number of employees with declared disability increased from 2% to 3.2% since 2006
- DDA training has been provided for examinations staff and invigilators and a guidance booklet produced
- The introduction of sign language staff development for Front of House staff

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Further work will be undertaken as determined by the Equality and Diversity Action Plan and as a result of impact assessment and feedback from learners or staff.

7. Actively engaging with disabled people

7.1 The duty requires that disabled people are involved in developing the scheme. To this end a consultation process was established for staff and learners. Questionnaires were distributed to staff and learners in 2006, with 149 and 513 returned respectively. This survey has recently been updated and a new series of consultative arrangements are being introduced to ensure that the scheme is subject to continuous improvement. In addition to this the induction questionnaire for learners asks questions specifically about the induction process for disabled learners. Information gathered at this stage is used in developing the equality and diversity action plan.

Barriers highlighted during the consultation process are knowledge of the services available to disabled learners, issues with the physical environment such as heavy doors and lift access, staff communication and staff development on how to deal with disabled learners at both interview and on-programme stages.

The college will encourage learners and members of staff to use the Disability Consultative Forum (DCF) as a forum for promoting the opportunities for disabled learners and staff at Stafford College. In addition, there has been improvement in the capturing and analysis of meaningful data from a learner's or staff member's commencement at college through their time here and in promoting the support that is available for people with disabilities.

7.2 Stafford College contributes to a county-wide consultation with disability partnerships and organisations for disabled people in the community.

7.3 As a result of the consultation process a disability consultative forum involving both learners and staff has been established, rather than the separate groups set up 3 years ago during the introduction of the first Disability Equality Scheme. (See Appendix 1).

The Forum will meet once per term. Any recommendations that arise from these meetings will be considered by the Equality and Diversity Committee for inclusion in the college's Equality and Diversity Action Plan (incorporating all the College's equality duties).

7.4 An annual report will be produced by the Skills for Life Manager detailing the consultation process, involvement of disabled people, actions and progress made towards disability equality.

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8. Carrying out Impact Assessments

8.1 All policies and procedures will receive an impact assessment by their authors or by designated co-ordinators to ensure that the College effectively considers the rights of disabled people (see the Equality and Diversity Policy, POL/007/000).

9. Gathering Information

9.1 Information gathered in the form of statistical and anecdotal evidence will be used to develop the action plan, and analyse whether people with disabilities progress in terms of employment and their learning at the same rate as people without disabilities. If disadvantages are identified actions will be put in place to improve outcomes.

9.2 The college will gather information on any barriers affecting the declaration of disability. Information gathered on particular barriers will help identify appropriate actions. The information gathering will be an ongoing process, facilitated by the DCF. Appendix 1 gives details of the other College groups and committees involved in this process.

10. Monitoring and Review

10.1 The scheme will be monitored termly by the Equality and Diversity Committee and reviewed annually by the Senior Management Team (SMT) and the Corporation.

11. Related Documents

11.1 Equality and Diversity Policy (POL/007/000)

11.2 Equality and Diversity Code of Practice and Action Plan (QAL/033/000)

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Appendix 1

Terms of Reference of Groups and Committees involved in the College's Disability Equality Scheme (DES)

Corporation

- Annually reviews the operation and impact of the DES
- Annually approves the DES and associated action plan (part of the College's single Equality & Diversity Action Plan)

Senior Management Team (SMT)

- Executive management of the DES
- Termly monitoring of the role of the Equality and Diversity Committee and the disability action plan and its impact
- Annually presenting a disability impact assessment to the Corporation
- Annually presenting the DES and action plan to the Corporation for discussion and approval, including any recommendations for changes

Equality and Diversity Committee (comprising staff members representing all curriculum and support areas of college, trade unions, a governor and 2 learners)

- Co-ordinates the operation of the DES, and implementation and monitoring of the action plan
- Presents a termly report to SMT on the impact of the disability action plan
- Annually presents a report to SMT on the effectiveness of the DES and action plan and any recommendations for changes
- Promotes the Disability Consultative Forum to learners and staff
- Receives and considers feedback and recommendations from the Disability Consultative Forum
- Reports progress on disability equality to staff and learners
- Commissions equality and diversity development work as deemed necessary

Disability Consultative Forum (membership open to any learner or member of staff with a disability or interest in disability equality) (*note: replaces 2 separate groups for learners and staff*)

- Advises the Equality and Diversity Committee on matters related to staff and learner disability equality and reports on the experience of disabled learners and staff at college

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