

Single Equality Scheme

2010 - 2013

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Foreword from the Principal

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act, 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, and the Equalities Act 2006 all place responsibilities upon The College and its staff to promote equality. There are a number of additional specific duties which we must implement.

This Single Equality Scheme is intended to ensure that we meet these duties, by bringing together existing equality schemes and action plans into one cohesive plan. The Scheme helps to demonstrate that equality and diversity are at the heart of all that we do here at The College.

Leadership and engagement at every level in every part of The College are essential to ensuring this Scheme is a success. We all need to work positively to reinforce the benefit from having an ever increasing diversity within our student and staff population which helps to enrich the learning process, the educational opportunities we offer, and enhance our international reputation.

I wholeheartedly support this Single Equality Scheme as a means of ensuring our educational provision, services and policies meet the needs of students, staff and other stakeholders.

Lawrence Vincent
Principal

Executive Summary

In response to the spirit and letter of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (RRA) 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005 and the Equality Act (EA) 2006, the College has developed its first Single Equality Scheme (SES). It aims to promote all forms and strands of equality and human rights that might be relevant to The College's activities. The SES goes beyond our statutory positive duties to promote race, gender and disability equality and extends to the legislation protecting against discrimination on the grounds of age, sexual orientation and religion or belief. The scheme aims to continue integrating equality and fair treatment issues into our core priorities and functions by incorporating existing action plans within our Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes.

Leadership and commitment at all levels of the organisation are critical to the success of such a scheme. In all activities The College undertakes, consideration will be given to how we can ensure that discrimination against, or disadvantage towards individuals or groups will not take place, and we will seek opportunities to promote equality and diversity wherever possible. It is recognised that the SES must be an evolving document, to be consulted on and refined to remain current and fit for purpose in the light of new developments and equality legislations. The practical steps to be taken are presented as an action plan.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. The Bournemouth and Poole College Vision for Equality and Diversity

- 1.1 The Bournemouth and Poole College is committed to the principles of Equality and Diversity for everyone. This commitment underpins and impacts on every area of activity and influences how the College works and what it does, and is integral to the delivery of its mission. The College is opposed to any form of discrimination. It commits itself to the redress of any inequalities by taking positive action wherever appropriate. Moreover, The College views meeting the spirit and letter of the Equality Act (2006) as central to its mission, and aims to respond positively to its duties in this respect.
- 1.2 Mindful of upholding our commitment to the principles of Equality and Diversity, The College has developed its first Single Equality Scheme (SES) to better able us to explain how we will continue to meet our statutory duties to promote race, disability and gender equality. Primarily the SES brings together our race, disability and gender equality schemes and sets out an equality action plan to address these issues, whilst extending to incorporate the four additional equality strands of religion and belief, age, sexual orientation and transgender.
- 1.3 Senior managers within The College will demonstrate their commitment to equality not only through their contact with students and staff, but also through the structures, systems and process they have established to focus on equality.
- 1.4 The College also ensures that any external organisations with which it works are made aware of, and encouraged and supported to adhere to the core Equality & Diversity commitments of the College. The College overtly seeks information on the Equality & Diversity practices of potential contractors when it goes out to tender and takes this into account when making decisions. Moreover, the procurement process includes an assessment for any relevance to equality issues, and ensures that the contractor has measures in place to meet the relevant duties.

2.0 About the Bournemouth & Poole College, our values and strategic aims

2.1 College Mission

2.2 The college's mission is to: *'Aspire, Achieve, Succeed'*.

2.3 College Profile

2.4 The Bournemouth and Poole College is one of the largest general Further Education Colleges in England and is located on eight sites. It is the biggest provider of academic and vocational education in Dorset. The two main sites at Lansdowne, Bournemouth and North Road, Poole deliver over 80% of the curriculum provision and house the central support services and departments. The six other sites are located at Knighton Heath, Lower Constitution Hill, Redlands, the Lansdowne Media Centre, Fulcrum and Richmond Hill. Students are drawn from across Dorset and parts of Hampshire. The college offers a wide range of provision, from pre-entry courses to higher education (HE) courses. Many Train to Gain and short courses are run for industry and commerce. There

is a large provision for work based learning and substantial provision for overseas students.

2.5 Achievement rates are at, or above, national averages at most levels. Governors continue to lead strategically and are effectively involved in the life of the college. The Corporation and staff at the college are continuously reviewing progress in meeting the needs of employers, community and individuals, and the requirements of external bodies including Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS), Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and Ofsted. National and local priorities are being met through the annual Teaching and Learning Plan. Action to improve provision identified through self assessment, and the LSC review of provision, is being implemented through the improvement plans. Bournemouth and Poole College aims to be a responsive college, delivering a quality curriculum, which sets and meets challenging targets year on year.

2.6 During the period, September 2008 and August 2009 the college had 10,850 enrolments across 7 Teaching Faculties. Following a restructure in November 2009 The College curriculum now operates across 6 Teaching Faculties.

- Creative Industries
- Foundation Studies and Skills for Life
- Health Care and Education
- Professional and Academic Studies
- Service Industries
- Technology

2.6 The College also provides for a further approximate 3,500 students in full and part time Higher Education, work based learning, Entry to Employment, Key Stage 4 and International students.

2.8 College Values

2.9 We believe that to be a truly great college we need to foster and share a common set of values on which all actions are based. The values that we are committed to are:

- access and participation in excellent education
- respect, development, safety and support for our staff and students
- fostering success and valuing diverse talents
- innovation, creativity and enterprise
- promoting positive ecological, moral and social values in our students and staff
- provision of appropriate safeguarding and child protection measures
- partnerships with other organisations to meet the needs of community
- individual guidance and support
- efficient use of resources

2.10 College Strategic Aims

2.11 To achieve our mission, we have set out a strategic framework which encompasses all aspects of our college:

- To provide opportunities in education and training at all levels
- To deliver excellence
- To have a highly skilled, highly trained, highly motivated workforce
- To have high quality and up to date buildings and resources
- To be financially solvent
- To comply with statutory legislation and relevant good practice

3.0 Our Approach

3.1 Our Single Equality Scheme (SES) will help us to achieve a framework for action across all equality strands, particularly for the three that have positive duties associated with them: race, disability and gender. We believe that a combined scheme will make us better able to communicate and manage our equality commitments and action. We also believe that publishing one combined scheme, and one consultation, is an appropriate and proportionate approach to equality which should maximise people's opportunities to be involved in our policy making. This SES demonstrates our commitment to go beyond mere compliance with the legislation, and to move towards mainstreaming equality and diversity by bringing together our work into one place, consulting widely on it and putting in place a comprehensive equality action plan to ensure our commitments are carried out.

3.2 The College has chosen to generate a SES to recognise that individuals have multiple identities. Thus, the separate strands in which equality and diversity are considered in law – race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, transgender, age, and religion or belief – converge at an individual level. An individual may experience discrimination on the basis of more than one identity, for example on the basis of their race and gender, or race, gender and disability.

3.3 This scheme is valid for a 3 year period when it will be formally reviewed. However, it will remain an evolving document open to adaptation in light of new developments and legislations and to reflect our growing understanding of both national and local, existing and emerging equality issues.

4.0 The Legislative Context

4.1 The College is committed to providing fair, accessible education and equality of opportunity for staff which is underpinned by equality legislation:

4.2 Three pieces of legislation central to the SES are as follows:

- Race Relations (Amendment) Act (RRA)2000
- Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005
- Equality Act (EA) 2006

4.3 Under these legislations positive duties are imposed on all public bodies to promote race, disability and gender equality in all activities undertaken. The general duties for each are outlined below:

4.4 Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

4.5 Under the RRA 2000, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote good relations between people of different races

4.6 Disability Discrimination Act 2005

4.7 Under the DDA 2005, all public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disabilities
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- Take steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than others

4.8 Equality Act 2006

4.9 Under the EA 2006, all public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment based on gender
- Promote equality of opportunity between men and women

4.10 In recognising that equality and diversity requires more than the promotion of race, disability and gender equality, the College also acknowledges the following legislation as relevant to our SES:

- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Religion or Beliefs) Regulations 2003

4.11 Whilst the latter regulations do not have positive duties associated with them they do apply to employment and to the provision of education. Consequently we must ensure that through our functions, policies and employment practices, we are not discriminating on any of these grounds.

5.0 Responsibility for the Single Equality Scheme

5.1 A robust equality governance structure (The Equality and Diversity Forum) was established within The College at the time of producing the previous equality schemes in 2005. The Equality and Diversity Forum meets four times a year. Membership consists of all members of the Senior Leadership Team and College

Executive, in addition to a member of the Board of the Corporation and the Equality, Diversity and Community Engagement Co-ordinator. The Forum is co-chaired by the Principal and an Equality Consultant. The Equality Forum reports directly to the Board of the Corporation.

5.2 The SES will be managed by The College's Equality and Diversity Forum which will allow for input from across the college. The Equality and Diversity Forum will present an equality and diversity annual report to the Board of the Corporation for consideration. The report will contain equality data; monitoring outcomes and the SES action plan, alongside recommendations for the year ahead.

6.0 Implementation of the Scheme

6.1 The College will manage implementation of this scheme through the accompanying action plan. The action plan will be managed through the Equality and Diversity Forum where progress will be monitored on a termly basis.

6.2 The Board is represented at the forum by a Corporation Member, and the Board to the Corporation receives a full report on an annual basis.

7.0 Background and Summary of work already undertaken

7.1 The College has worked extensively and proactively on issues of equality and diversity, especially in regards to race, disability and gender. Activities include:

- Monitoring and reporting on race, disability & gender inequalities data since 2003
- Our planned diversity training covers all aspects of equality
- The College has introduced a Management Development Programme that incorporates workshops covering equality and diversity in recruitment and employment
- All new staff receive equality and diversity training as part of the induction programme
- A commitment to meet the statutory duties is included in all job descriptions and staff and student handbooks
- An annual staff opinion survey, which includes questions on equality and diversity, is carried out. Any perceived discrimination is taken extremely seriously, and the approach to staff awareness and training reflects this.
- An extensive programme of diversity celebrations and citizenship activities has been developed and includes some of the following, Chinese New Year, World AIDS Day, Mental Health Week, and International Women's Day.
- Reduced non-declaration rates from 5.87% in 04/05 to 0.275 in 07/08
- Working in partnership with other local organisations and Colleges in the South West Region

8.0 Equality Impact Assessments

8.1 Using impact assessment we can assess whether we have fulfilled the general duties as set out in RRA 2000, DDA 2005 and EA 2006.

8.2 Impact assessments involve asking initial questions (stage 1) about:

- **Relevance** – Equality will be more relevant to some services rather than others. Relevance is concerned with how impact a policy has on people
- **Proportionality** – The importance given to equality should be proportionate to the relevance of the service.

8.3 The College introduced a two stage Equality Impact Assessment process which checks for any likely impact in respect of race, disability and gender, as well as religion/belief, sexual orientation, transgender and age. As the College is impact assessing for all diversity strands simultaneously, policies have been prioritised on the basis of the potential impact taken collectively. It is anticipated that all existing policies will be assessed as they are developed.

8.4 The responsibility for stage one impact assessment lies with the policy owner, supported by the Equality, Diversity and Community Engagement Co-ordinator. Stage two impact assessment consultations are managed by the Equality, Diversity and Community Engagement Co-ordinator, and delivered through staff and student impact assessment juries. Responsibility for implementation of action is with the policy owner.

8.5 Policy maintenance is managed through the Quality Department which will notify the policy owner and the Equality, Diversity and Community Engagement Co-ordinator when a new policy is due for renewal.

9.0 Reviewing, Publication and Action Plan

9.1 The Scheme and action plan will be published on the College website and reference will be made to it in key documents aimed at staff and learners. Feedback and involvement will be invited through the College website.

9.2 A comprehensive review of the SES will be carried out after 3 years to ensure that the scheme continues to effectively support The College's Strategic Plan and our Equality and Diversity Strategy and remains relevant to the equality and diversity of all staff and learners.

9.3 Under the specific duties of the RR(A)A 2000, the DDA 2005 and Equality Act 2006, we have statutory duties to report annually on the progress of our Scheme. We will accomplish this by submitting an annual report to our Governors on the SES, which will cover activity across the race, disability and gender schemes as well as other equality activity. Our annual reports to the Corporation will be available on the equality and diversity pages of The College website.

9.4 News about our SES will be shared with our stakeholders and, particularly with those who have helped us to develop our SES. We will continue to seek the views of others about our SES and about our progress towards the targets set out in our action plan.

9.5 The action plan will be monitored and updates on actions and outcomes provided every term to the Equality Forum and updates will be posted on the College website, intranet, and on the shared email system.

9.6 Student and staff consultation mechanisms will be used to obtain input on evaluation of the scheme. Evaluation of the scheme will be completed by the Equality Forum at the last meeting of the academic year, and will be reported on in the annual equality and diversity report to the Board of the Corporation. It will also inform the College Self Evaluation Report (SER). Results of impact assessments, success, retention and achievement data along with workforce monitoring data will be published on the website and stored on the shared drive. Any published information will have due regard for individual confidentiality.

10.0 Consultation and Involvement

10.1 The College is committed to ensuring that our consultation is:

- Meaningful
- Representative
- Effective
- Appropriate

and will achieve this by referring to sector and equality organisations good practice guidance.

10.2 The College actively seeks the involvement from a wide range of representative groups, for example: Student Council; Staff Groups; Equality Action Project Groups, Community Equality Groups; Local Partners; South West Region Peers.

11.0 Gathering Information and Monitoring Arrangements

11.1 Procedures are in place to monitor the make-up of learners and staff groups in terms of race, disability, gender and age. The data derived from these procedures is analysed in terms of the workforce, recruitment and promotions, training and development, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and turnover, alongside the educational opportunities available to, and the achievements of learners across all the equality strands as well as the profile of complainants.

11.2 This data will be reported to Senior Management and the Equality and Diversity Forum and will also be reported on in our annual report.

12.0 Communications

12.1 Being committed to ensuring that our communication methods are accessible we are constantly seeking new ways of engaging with our stakeholders and partner organisations, which may be affected by our SES. We recognise that this may require some creative thinking as some groups are known to be hard to reach or may not be already engaging with us through established methods.

13.0 Complaints

13.1 The College aims to provide a transparent and responsive complaints procedure for all stakeholders. In practice this means that:

- The College will provide a supportive environment for those who make claims of discrimination or harassment on the grounds of any of the equality strands
- Acts of discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation, bullying or abuse whether by employees or students will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence
- Employees who feel they are being discriminated against on any of the seven strands of equality by other employees should raise the matter under the Grievance/Harassment Procedure
- If, in the course of their work or study, College employees or students who suffer discrimination from members of the public, the College will take appropriate action and provide appropriate support
- Any discriminatory behaviour by students directed against employees or other students will be dealt with under the student disciplinary procedure.
- Where any behaviours considered as a Safeguarding and/or Child Protection issue the Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures must be followed

14.0 College Contact

14.1 The College welcomes feedback on our Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan. Please contact Gemma Genco, Equality, Diversity and Community Engagement Co-ordinator on gencog@bpc.ac.uk or phone on 01202 205417 to contribute.

Date Minuted: (please add date of the meeting that the policy was ratified on)

Committee:(please add committee that ratified the policy)

Policy ref/version number (Policy reference to be obtained from Department of Quality and Development if not already known)

This policy is to be reviewed by (enter Committee) by (enter date)

Impact Assessment Completion Date: