

Lewisham College

Equality
Information

January 2012

Introduction

Welcome to Lewisham College's Equality Information Document. In this document we tell you about our work on Equality and Diversity up to now and how we will meet the requirements of Equality Act and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Equality and Diversity at Lewisham College

Lewisham College is a diverse Further Education College whose mission is "Creating Successful Futures". Our firm and active commitment to equality and diversity was recognised by Ofsted at our last inspection in 2006:

"Equalities are the lifeblood of Lewisham College".

In 2008, Lewisham College won the Association of Colleges Beacon Award for our work on Equality and Diversity

Single Equality Scheme 2009/12 and Equality Action Plans

In 2009 we published our first Single Equality Scheme. In it we set out **our commitment** to equality and diversity:

We promise that equality and diversity will remain the lifeblood of Lewisham College. There is no aspect of the College's mission and purpose more important or more fully achieved in practice than our commitment to provide excellent learning and employment opportunities for all in our region. In the midst of so much social change, we will redouble our efforts to break down barriers and combat unfairness wherever we find it. We will continue to tackle discrimination directly and to sustain a culture that does not tolerate it in any form

and the **focus** for our work for three years to 2012.

We will secure **opportunity** through excellent teaching and learning in order to promote success and prosperity among our learners and their families, extending our work to meet the needs of all people from our community

We will make **outcomes** for learners more equal so that all benefit from the excellence of the College's provision

We will improve our **organisation** to make it increasingly equal, always compliant and ready to combat unfair and unlawful discrimination wherever it arises

We also stated our priorities for action across seven equality areas or "strands" – Age, Race, Gender, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Faith and Class and appointed Champions to lead on the work in these strands. In 2010/11 the work on Class was included within the work of the other strands.

The academic year 2011/12 is the final year of the current Single Equality Scheme. We are working to achieve the actions set out in each of the Equality Strand Action Plans. These plans are published on our website. The College is currently developing a new Single Equality Scheme for 2012/15 which will build on our good practice, set our new Equality Objectives to make improvements and ensure that we meet the requirements of Equality law.

Equality Law now -The Equality Act and Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act, which came into force in 2011, brought together several pieces of equality law to streamline, simplify and strengthen them. The Act set out nine “protected characteristics:

Race

Age

Disability

Gender

Sexual Orientation

Religion and belief

Gender Reassignment

Pregnancy and maternity

Marriage and Civil partnerships

It is against the law to discriminate (directly or indirectly) harass, or victimise someone because they have or are thought to have a protected characteristic or because they associate with a person who has a protected characteristic

The Public Sector Equality Duty contained within the Equality Act means that public sector organisations including Colleges have to work to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relationships

This Duty fully covers eight of the protected characteristics. Only the first aim – elimination of harassment and victimisation – applies to the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnerships.

The Equality Duty also requires organisations to

- Publish information
- To set and publish equality objectives

Equality Information

This document and the attached Appendices

Appendix 1 Student Information

Appendix 2 Staff information

show the profile of our staff and students. This information will be added to over the next week as more analysis is done on our student and staff profile and the effect of our policies.

Equality Objectives

The College is currently implementing the equality action plans for the final year of the current Single Equality Scheme. A new Single Equality Scheme is being developed and new Equality Objectives for the College will be set based on:

- Analysis of our current equality information –staff and student – to identify equality gaps and areas for development
- Our commitment to meet our responsibilities under the Equality Act and Public Sector Equality Duty
- Our mission and values
- Feedback from stakeholders

We will publish our new Equality Objectives by 6 April 2012.

College Policies

The College has a range of policies covering staff and students. These are revised regularly and as they are reviewed will be checked to ensure that they not only meet the requirements of the law, but also are examples of good practice.

Equality Working Groups and Engagement

The College has working groups for Race, Gender/Identity, Sexual Orientation, Faith and Belief, Age and Disability. Each group is led by a Champion who is responsible for ensuring the action plan is implemented. The equality working groups are made up from staff across the College and feedback is gained from students on equality work through consultation at the College Student Forum and/or focus groups with staff/students who share a protected characteristic. In addition, the College has LGB staff and student networks.

Each year the College celebrates Black History Month, LGBT History month and holds a Faith Fair.

Equality Assessments

The College carries out equality assessments to identify the impact of College policies on staff and students.

31 January 2012