



HADLOW
COLLEGE

Hadlow College

Disability Equality Scheme

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1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of Hadlow College is to establish and maintain a working and learning environment where diversity is celebrated and where equality of opportunity is offered to all.

We believe that any form of discrimination on the grounds of disability is unacceptable. We welcome the duties placed on us by the Disability Equality Duty (DED), and will work to ensure continuous improvement of our performance as an equal opportunities employer and provider.

We are committed to making disability equality a central part of the way we work and we will make sure that we take the needs and views of disabled people into account in everything that we do, whether that be delivering our services, employing people or formulating policy.

This Disability Equality Scheme will provide the policy framework through which the College will ensure compliance with the duty and will, through our Action Plan, lead us into a continued cycle of improvement and progress.

2. CONTEXT

2.1 The Social Model of Disability

Hadlow College follows the 'social' model of disability as standard. We believe that people do not face disadvantage because of their impairments but experience discrimination because of the physical, attitudinal and social barriers that the individual has to face. By accepting the social model we therefore commit to removing any such barriers within our own service, educating both students and staff to ensure full awareness of disability issues and adopting planning and management processes that are fully inclusive.

2.2 The Legal Context

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 has been amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 so that it now places a duty on all public authorities, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act
- Eliminate disability related harassment
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- Take steps to meet disabled peoples needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment

With this comes the specific duty to develop and publish a Disability Scheme and Action Plan showing how the College will fully meet this duty.

2.3 The College: Our Priorities

Hadlow College's mission is:

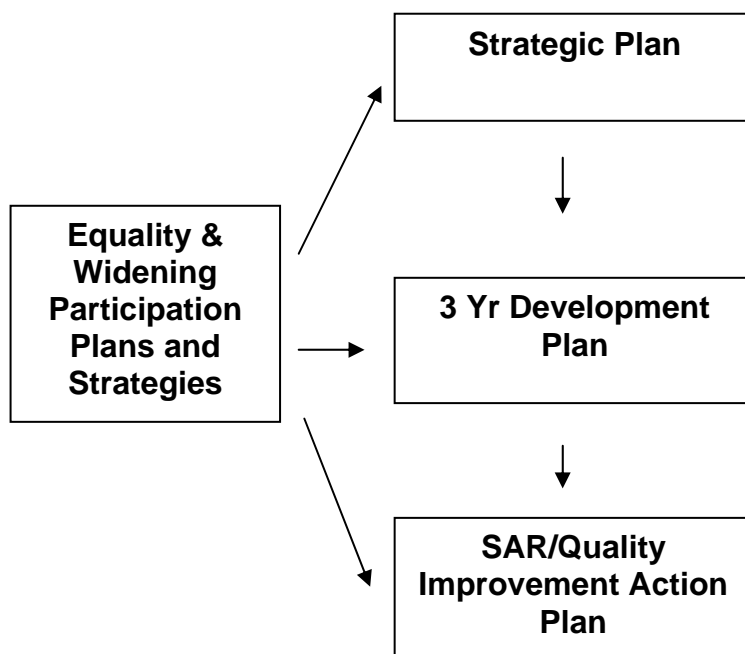
“To be an outstanding land-based college’

The College's Equal Opportunity Policy sets out the College's commitment to equality, and the framework within which it operates. Equality of opportunity and celebration of diversity remains key priorities of the College. Inclusion is a fundamental part of our corporate objectives and is fully reflected in our core values.

With that comes a commitment to mainstream equality so that it becomes core to everything we do.

2.4 Our Approach

We believe that equality is everyone's responsibility. As a College we produce a range of plans and strategies. Our intention is to mainstream equality and diversity throughout the planning process so that all our plans set out how we are going to deliver more accessible services. The diagram below illustrates how this works:



The Strategic Plan: This lays out the strategic direction of the college over a 3-year period. It establishes the corporate objectives and the core values of the organisation. The first of those objectives being:- “to maximise student potential within an inclusive learning environment that promotes diversity and equality of opportunity”.

3 yr Development Plan: This sets out the College’s direction over the same timeframe as the Strategic Plan but incorporates more detailed target setting and in terms of learner participation and achievement and the College’s Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs), SAR and Quality Improvement Action Plan: This is the detailed operational improvement plan reviewed on an annual basis. Each curriculum area will incorporate equality targets and actions to address any area of under-representation or under achievement and how each area will make their curriculum more accessible.

Equality/WP Strategies: These are the strategies and action plans that summarise the equality targets of the College and respond to existing and emerging legislation. Targets within these plans are integrated into relevant Directorate action plans as appropriate.

2.5 Our Aims:

The following objectives support those already identified within the College’s Equal Opportunity Policy but particularly reflect our aims with regard to promoting inclusiveness for disabled people.

Objective 1: We will promote equality for disabled people by:

- Removing barriers to accessibility, particularly in relation to provision of accessible buildings, access to information and guidance and access to employment
- Promoting positive images of disabled people in all publication materials reflecting the diverse nature of the disabled community

- Working in partnership with community groups involved in the pursuance of equal rights and opportunities for disabled people
- Regularly reviewing teaching and learning to ensure that disabled people, their needs and their views are appropriately and adequately reflected in teaching delivery
- Actively participating in events to celebrate and acknowledge the contribution of disabled people

Objective 2: We will tackle discrimination by:

- Challenging stereotyping and discriminatory attitudes and behaviours
- Challenging anti-social or bullying behaviour against, or harassment of, disabled students or staff
- Treating any claim of harassment or discrimination as a serious disciplinary offence
- Regularly reviewing policies and procedures to identify any existing or potential barriers to disability equality and eliminating or removing them

Objective 3: We will work in partnership with disabled people by:

- Enabling disabled peoples active participation in decision making processes
- Involving disabled people in the changes and improvements that we make
- Consulting with disabled staff and students on issues affecting them
- Developing robust consultant processes to ensure the views of disabled students, staff and disability organisations are regularly and routinely taken into account

2.6 Our Commitments

The Curriculum and our Students

- The College will make every effort to provide a programme of learning for individual students that matches their needs, abilities and aspirations.
- Learning materials and the delivery of the curriculum will be free from discriminatory assumptions, images and language that portray disabled people in a negative light.
- The College will provide, wherever possible, opportunities for flexible learning and assessment in order to accommodate people with a variety of requirements.
- Resources will be made available to provide inclusive education for individuals with a wide range of physical, mental or learning difficulties or disabilities.
- The College will provide initial guidance and selection procedures, which comply with the Code of Practice of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act and are sensitive to the needs of individuals. Guidance and advice given to students will be positive, non-discriminatory and timely.
- The College will proactively encourage students to disclose their disabilities and ensure a suitable environment to ensure this can take place.
- The College will provide a range of student support systems that take into account individual need.

- The College will provide suitable mechanisms to ensure that students are able to raise concerns or grievances regarding any form of harassment or bullying.
- The integration of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to mainstream provision will be pursued as far as reasonably practicable and providing that this meets the learning requirements of the individual student.
- The College will continue to improve physical access to provision. This incorporates all forms of learning provision, access to students' social activities, work placements, field study outings and student support services.
- The College will explore all possible reasonable adjustments with disabled students to ensure full engagement of disabled people in the curriculum.

Employment and our Staff

- All staff are required to ensure that their personal conduct conforms to this policy and the College Equal Opportunity Policy and contributes to creating a climate that supports and values diversity.
- The College guarantees to interview applicants with disabilities who meet the minimum required job criteria.
- Recruitment for all positions within the college will be carried out in a manner that accords with equal opportunities legislation and best practice guidelines.
- The selection interview and any pre-selection tests will be fair and free from bias. Selection for interview will be based on suitability against job and person specifications. All steps will be taken prior to the interview

stage to make any necessary reasonable adjustments to selection arrangements in order to ensure that individuals are not disadvantaged in any way when applying for posts.

- The College will set targets for the recruitment and promotion of disabled staff and these will be monitored on a regular basis in accordance with the HR Strategy.
- Internal promotion or redeployment of staff will be undertaken fairly and consistently in line with relevant equal opportunities legislation.
- In designing, reviewing and implementing the Conditions of Service for staff, the college will seek to ensure that disability equality is provided and that these conditions are applied fairly and consistently.
- The College will ensure that all reasonable steps are taken so that the working environment does not prevent suitably qualified disabled people from taking up or remaining in employment with us.
- All staff will receive appropriate training and guidance to assist them to fulfil their obligations under this Scheme.
- The College will regularly seek the views of disabled staff to ensure that their needs are routinely taken into account in the development of organisational policy.

3 WHERE WE ARE NOW

3.1 The Local Context

Nationally there is no one clear measure for equality monitoring of disabled people using the DDA definition and so it is necessary for us to use indicative data as a baseline.

Nationally it is estimated that 10 million adults within Britain are disabled – 17% of the United Kingdom population.

The 2001 Census shows that 17% of the Kent and Medway population have a limiting long-term illness. For those of working age (16-64) this figure decreases to 7%.

3.2 Staff and Students at Hadlow College

Our Staff

Of the 202 Hadlow staff 3% have declared a disability. Disappointingly, the number of staff declaring a disability has shown no significant improvement despite the application of the Two Ticks Standard which the College adopted in 2005/6. The standard highlights our commitment to both recruit and retain disabled staff and the award also carries a commitment to review our HR processes on an annual basis to ensure they remain fully inclusive.

A significant amount of work has already taken place in preparation for the Disability Equality Duty and our detailed action plan identifies specific actions to improve recruitment of disabled people within the college

Our Students

A particular strength of Hadlow College has always been the high proportion of LLDD students studying within the College and it is important that we strive to maintain this position. Many other colleges who have similar participation rates tend to have discrete provision for their LLDD learners. The rather unique selling point of Hadlow is that it offers LLDD learners a fully integrated and inclusive range of provision across all curriculum areas.

There are significant differences between the 16-18 group and the 19+ group in terms of disability. 30% of the 16-18 group have a declared learning disability/difficultly compared to only 7% for 19+ learners.

Some areas of the college do attract higher proportions of LLDD students than others, namely Countryside and Fisheries with 27% of their cohort disclosing some form of learning difficulty or disability and Animal Care with 20%. The reason for this is not clear although certainly in the case of Animal Care a contributory factor may be because of the perception by both students and some referral agencies that looking after animals may be something of a 'soft option' and less academically demanding. The high proportion of student obviously impacts on how teaching is managed in the classroom and the levels of additional support required. It becomes increasing important when, as in the case of Animal Care, class sizes may be large.

Work-based Learning is also particularly successful in providing training opportunities for LLDD students with current participation levels at 17% and they have remained so for the past two years.

It is also worth noting that the number of students unwilling to disclose their disability status has also continued to fall for the fourth year in a row.

The trend to date has been that Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities do not achieve as well as other groups, although still over national benchmarks. In 2005/06 however, success rates for both 16-18 and 19+ groups have improved and success rates are now broadly comparable across the whole cohort. The challenge for the college will be to maintain this current good position.

3.3 Involving Disabled People

The College has, and will continue to involve disabled learners in the continued development and implementation of the scheme.

Learners have been involved in the scheme by means of:

- Student Focus Groups
- Student Survey
- Questionnaires

Staff have been involved through

- Questionnaires
- One-to-one discussions
- Representation on the Equality and Diversity committee

We recognise however that this is only the starting point and we will seek wider representation by establishing a disability advisory group who will comprise of staff, students and external disability organisations. We have identified this as a priority action within our disability Action Plan.

3.4 LLDD Networks

Working in partnership with others has been identified as a key component of widening participation and the college continues to broaden our involvement in a wide range of networks. Staff are involved in a number of specific disability based networks that include:

- The West Kent LLDD Collaborative Group encouraging the development of effective transition arrangements between pre and post 16 providers in Kent.
- The LLDD/Action for Inclusion Group established to develop a southeast regional response to 'Through Inclusion to Excellence'.
- The Equality and Diversity Providers Network sharing good practice across the range of provision

3.5 Monitoring Data

The College already has in place a statistical monitoring framework to identify under-representation or potential barriers to engagement and achievement. The collection of this data informs the setting of annual equality targets and the measurement of progress in achieving them.

The College will collect and analyse the following data:

For Students:

- Student Participation
- Applications for admission to programmes
- Retention rates
- Success rates
- Disciplinary action
- Complaints
- Student satisfaction rates
- Incidents of harassment or bullying

As a minimum, for each of the above, the information collected will be disaggregated by ethnic group, gender and age as well as disability.

Although the data is available, reporting systems do not yet monitor for disability relating to:

- Value added/Distanced travelled
- Destination
- Access to enrichment activities
- Application v enrolment

For Staff:

- Profile of employees
- Employees by grade
- Job application rates

- Interview rates
- Training
- Promotion application and success rates
- Disciplinary proceedings
- Incidents of harassment or bullying
- Grievances

Staff and student information will be regularly monitored and reported to the Equal Opportunities Committee on a quarterly basis.

4. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The College has established an Impact Assessments Framework (IAF); our process for systematically and thoroughly assessing the effects of our proposed or existing policies and their likely affect on different groups.

The IAF enables the College to:

- Take account of the needs, circumstances, and experiences of those who intend to benefit from a policy or project.
- Identify actual and potential inequalities in outcomes
- Consider other ways of achieving the aims of policies and projects
- Increase stakeholder confidence in the fairness of policies and projects.
- Develop better policies and procedures.

Responsibility for Impact Assessment lies with the Equality and Diversity Committee although all members of staff will be expected to contribute to the impact assessment process.

The Equality and Diversity Committee will carry out the initial analysis of college policies and agree the degree to which each of those policies

are relevant to the Disability Equality Duty and other relevant equality legislation.

Following this analysis the Equality and Diversity Committee is responsible for setting the full timetable of Impact Assessments over a three-year period.

Our Disability Impact Assessment Timetable is attached at appendix 1.

5. EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

The College has developed a joint action plan ensuring that we meet the requirements not only of the Disability Equality Duty but also the Gender and the Race Equality Duties. Available as a separate document the Equality Action Plan should be read in conjunction with this scheme.

The Equality and Diversity Committee will be responsible for monitoring the Action Plan and will provide a termly report on progress.

6. REPORTING ON PROGRESS

6.1 Monitoring of Progress

The College will publish an annual review of progress in meeting its responsibilities under the Disability Duty. The report, which will also incorporate other equality objectives, such as the Race Equality Duty will be submitted to the Corporation and a summary of the findings incorporated within the College annual report and self-assessment report.

Cross college responsibility for equal opportunities is delegated to the Principal who chairs the Equal and Diversity Committee. The Committee has responsibility for monitoring updated policies, implementing the Disability Scheme and Action Plan and advising the Board of Governors, through the Senior Management Team, of developments and issues relating to equality of opportunity.

The monitoring of the effectiveness of the Scheme is the responsibility of the Senior Management Team through the Equal Opportunities Committee.

The Equality and Diversity Committee will review the Scheme annually, and recommendations for amendments will be made to Senior Management Team and the Board of Governors.

Disabled people will be actively involved in monitoring progress of the scheme. Both student and staff representation will be sought and maintained on the Equality and Diversity Committee.

We will also continue to take into account the views of all stakeholders through the process of student focus groups, Staff focus groups and local LLDD partnership meetings.

6.2 Publishing Progress

We will publish our commitment to disability equality in our prospectus, annual equality report, and will be displayed prominently around the college.

The full Scheme will be published on our Intranet and a copy will be made available to anyone who requests it.

Copies of the Scheme will be on display in the Library, Learning Resource Centre and Student Association.

Results of monitoring will be published annually through the College's reporting systems, i.e. the annual equality report and the college self-assessment report, and key actions to be implemented will be incorporated into the College development plans.

Learners will be made aware of the Scheme and progress towards it in the following ways:

- All Learners will receive a summary of this scheme in the Student Handbook and copies will be on display in the College
- The induction programme for Learners will highlight the College's commitment to disability equality, the action to be taken by Learners who suffer discrimination and the action to be taken against perpetrators of discrimination
- Student tutors will reinforce this information during tutorials and work-based monitoring visits
- Students will receive disability and equality awareness training through the group tutorial system

Work Placement Providers will be made aware of the policy in the following ways:

- All work placement providers will receive a summary of their responsibilities under the Scheme and will signify their understanding of, and agreement to, these responsibilities
- The College will promote the requirements of disabled students
- A summary of the results of disability monitoring will be included in the appropriate College publication (e.g. newsletter) sent to relevant employers.

Employees will be made aware of the policy and progress in the following ways:

- All staff will receive a full copy of the policy as part of the staff handbook

- The staff induction programme will highlight the College's commitment to disability equality, action to be taken by staff who suffer discrimination and the action to be taken against perpetrators of such discrimination
- A summary of the results of disability monitoring information will be included in the appropriate College publication (e.g. newsletter)
- A summary of progress will be made available in the college intranet, available to all staff.

APPENDIX 1

Disability Impact Assessment Timetable

College Function/Policy	Relevance to DED	Impact Assess
Governance and Management Governance Management Statutory and Legal Duties (EO) Legal Compliance (other) Policy Development and Review Training	High High High Low High High	2007/8 2007/8 2006/7 2008/9 2006/7 2007/8
Students Information and Guidance Marketing Recruitment and Admissions Induction The Learning Environment Support and Guidance Progress performance and Retention Complaints Procedures Discipline Procedures Additional Support Funding Support	High High High High High High High High High High	2006/7 2006/7 2007/8 2007/8 2006/7 2006/7 2007/8 2007/8 2006/7 2007/8
Learning and Teaching Academic Planning and Development Teaching Methods and Materials Teaching Review and Observation Assessment	High High High High	2007/8 2007/8 2007/8 2007/8

Staff		
Staff Recruitment	High	2006/7
Career Progression	High	2006/7
Complaints	High	2007/8
Grievances	High	2007/8
Staff Training and Development	High	2006/7
Induction	High	2006/7
Terms and Conditions	Medium	2008/9
Facilities		
Student Accommodation	High	2007/8
Staffing Accommodation	High	2007/8
College student and staff facilities	High	2007/8
Commercial facilities	High	2007/8
Catering Arrangements	Low	2008/9
Health and Safety/Risk Assessment	High	2006/7
Partnerships/Contractual Arrangements		
Suppliers and Contractors	Medium	2007/8
Community Partnerships	Medium	2008/9
Academic Partnerships	High	2007/8