

Disability Equality Scheme Annual Report on Progress and Objectives and Action Plan for 2011/12

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Author: Susan Bald

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Introduction

Our second Disability Equality Scheme 2009 – 2012 re-affirms our commitment to the principles of disability equality and to encouraging all staff and students to reach their potential. As a College and employer, we aim to ensure that all our policies, procedures and practices do not unlawfully discriminate and that action is taken to redress any inequalities in employment practices, provision of services to students and customers or the way in which the College manages its business. Our Disability Equality Scheme and its associated action plan are intended to be 'living' documents, driven forward and further developed as part of our commitment to equality across all diversity strands.

Our Disability Equality Scheme sets out an ambitious agenda for action, ensuring that we meet not only our general and specific duties for disability equality as required by legislation but work to best meet the needs of our diverse workforce, student population and the community. This document presents an update on our activities, and our plans for moving forward in 2012 with our Single Equality Scheme and equality outcomes.

We are confident that, through time, with the engagement of our staff, students, stakeholders and relevant national and local groups and representatives, we will achieve our equality and diversity goals, embedding disability equality, eliminating unlawful disability discrimination and harassment, promoting equality of opportunity and positive attitudes towards people with disabilities. Your views, comments and suggestions are vital to our work. If you would like to comment on our disability equality documents, or have any questions, please contact Susan Bald, Director of HR, on 01738 877229, or by email at susan.bald@perth.uhi.ac.uk

Our Strategic Context

Perth College UHI values people – our staff, students, stakeholders and service users – recognising diversity in our community, promoting equality of opportunity, enabling access and inclusion in our employment, course provision and activities, and challenging stereotyping and discrimination. Our long term aim is to ensure that equality issues become part of mainstream thinking and delivery.

Our vision states:

We will be internationally recognised and known for our ambition and achievements. We will be acknowledged for our inspirational staff and our highly successful learners, who move on to become associated with the best organisations. We will teach at all levels and across the widest range of learners. We will support our teaching by carrying out international-quality research in specialist subject areas. Our staff will be leaders in innovative learning, expertly using new technology to develop the workforce of the future. We will create pride in our environment and prepare for and anticipate and exceed the needs of our learners.

In our strategic plan 2010 – 2013, we recognise the importance of actively promoting, delivering and reviewing equality, diversity and inclusion in all our activities. Our approach to equality and diversity is all-encompassing and focuses not just on the need to comply with the wide ranging legislation but also on identifying best practice and applying this flexibly across all our services.

Through activities co-ordinated by EDIT (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team) and the Human Resources and Organisational Development Directorate, we aim to provide:

- High quality, responsive services which are flexible but take into account people's different needs and respond positively in meeting them.
- Equal access to services so that people are better able to outline their needs and are not disadvantaged in any way.
- Equality in employment opportunities to people from minority groups.
- Learning and development opportunities for all staff; and
- Improving awareness, understanding and ownership of the equalities agenda by improving communication and creating a culture which values people and the differences between them.

We are consulting with our students, staff, stakeholders and members of the community we serve on our priorities for our future work on equality, diversity and inclusion to help shape our Single Equality Scheme.

As part of the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI), we link with our academic partners and research institutions, sharing best practice and moving forward equality and diversity activities through a wider network.

Our Disability Equality Commitments

Perth College UHI is committed to being both a college and employer of choice. We are committed to the promotion of equality and diversity and believe there is no place for unlawful discrimination in any of our services and activities. We aim to ensure that all of our policies, procedures and practices do not unfairly discriminate and that positive measures are taken to redress any inequalities in employment practices, provision of services to students and customers or the way in which we manage our business.

We are committed to carrying through our statutory duties to:

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

We will demonstrate our commitment to disability equality by:

- Monitoring the impact of our policies on people with disabilities.
- Removing barriers to maximise participation, retention and achievement of our disabled students and staff.
- Fostering respect for people with different disabilities.
- Promoting positive non-discriminatory behaviour.
- Ensuring appropriate support for our staff and students.
- Encouraging links with the wider community.

Our Operating Environment

Our catchment area is aligned with the boundaries of Perth and Kinross Council, an area of 5,286 square kilometres with a total population of 145,910 (Source General Register Office for Scotland Mid-Year population estimates for July 2009).

Perthshire is at the crossroads of Scotland, with 90% of Scotland's inhabitants living within 90 minutes of Perth. In addition to the City of Perth, the main towns include Aberfeldy, Auchterarder, Blairgowrie, Crieff, Kinross, and Pitlochry. The area is very diverse and includes many small rural villages.

According to statistics from the Equality and Human Rights Commission, one in 5 people of working age in the UK has a disability or long-term health condition. Around 3.5 million disabled people are in employment – approximately one in 8 of all working-age people in employment. This represents an employment rate for disabled people of 50% whereas the working-age population as a whole has an employment rate of about 80% (Source: Talent not Tokenism, Equality and Human Rights Commission/TUC/CBI). It is estimated that 35% of people with a disability have no qualifications.

1.7% of the population in Scotland is estimated to be visually impaired. 18% are estimated to have some form of hearing loss or impairment. 4% of the population are estimated to have learning disabilities. Over 2% are wheelchair users. It is estimated that 25% of people in Scotland are affected by a mental health issue.

There does not appear to be a single count of all 'disabled' people in the Perth and Kinross area and estimates can be made from analysis of data from the Scottish Census 2001 which indicates that there are approximately 81,000 people of working age in the Perth and Kinross area. Data from the Department of Work and Pensions Information Directorate suggests that around 6,200 of the working age population of Perth and Kinross claims Disability Living Allowance. It cannot be assumed that all disabled people claim Disability Living Allowance, so the actual number of disabled people in the Perth and Kinross area is likely to be higher. Based on the estimate that one in 5 people of working age in the UK has a disability or long-term health condition, the number of disabled people of working age in Perth and Kinross might be estimated at around 16,000 – around 11% of the total population of Perth and Kinross.

Our Staff

At the end of October 2011, we had a headcount of 542 staff, a figure which includes staff in our Air Service Training Group, a wholly-owned subsidiary.

Overall, 3.69% have declared that they have a disability and in the main we have information recorded (not for publication) on the nature of their disability.

The number of staff who have advised and are recorded on our HR database as having a disability is below the national statistical estimates. This may reflect reluctance on the part of some staff to identify themselves as having a disability and we will continue to work towards a culture where staff feel more confident in declaring that they have a disability.

In the last year, we received over 1,000 applications for employment. Applications can be made in paper format or using our recruitment on-line module, and contact details are

provided for applicants who require support in completing their application form. In both instances, we ask for completion of an equal opportunities monitoring form which asks for self-disclosure of a disability. Analysis of completed monitoring forms indicates that in the last year 3.98% of our applicants have declared that they have a disability. This is slightly higher than the number of applicants declaring a disability in 2009/10 (3.08%). Of our 42 applicants who declared a disability, one was appointed to post.

For each vacancy advertised, the equal opportunities monitoring forms of applicants are reviewed by the Human Resources Department to ensure that disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria are invited for interview. We circulate our vacancies to Remploy, an organisation supporting disabled people.

Following an external audit, we retained the Disability Symbol and continue to meet its five commitments. Our work on our Disability Equality Scheme and our Disability Equality Action Plan is a vital part in meeting our commitments.



Our disabled staff work in a variety of roles across the College and in both full-time and part-time roles. The majority of our disabled staff have over 10 years service.

In our turnover during 2010/11, 2 people with a disability left our employment, representing 2.53% of all turnover. Again, this is comparable with our figure of 2.58% for the previous year.

76% of all staff have received awareness training in equality and diversity, which included disability awareness and information on our disability equality duties. We have an action plan in place to train the remainder of our staff and to ensure we deliver refresher training on a bi-annual basis through an on-line equality and diversity awareness training tool. This is an accessible training media for all staff and reasonable adjustments have been made to facilitate and support disabled members of staff undertaking this on-line module. In addition, our Staff Conference in November 2011 included a Workshop on Diversity so that staff could complete the Equality and Diversity section of their department's annual Self Evaluation document in the afternoon.

90% of our disabled staff undertook training and development opportunities during the year. Our staff training and development programme is given in induction packs and published on the staff Intranet to ensure accessibility to all.

Our Annual Professional Review Process has recently been revised and all Professional Reviews will be recorded on our HR system which will enable effective monitoring for equality and diversity purposes.

During the year, there were no issues addressed through the disciplinary or grievance procedures that related to disability, disability discrimination or harassment on the grounds of disability.

Our Students

Each year, we provide learning and teaching to approximately 9,000 students on a full-time, part-time, leisure and distance/open learning basis. Data is gathered on disability by student self-declaration at the time of enrolment and withdrawals, retention and achievement are monitored by reference to this data.

Of our student population, in the last academic year (2010/11), 17.7% of FE students and 9.77% of HE students declared that they had a disability. This is a static position in FE from the 09/10 academic year – 17.6% - and a slight decrease in HE students (10.96%).

On FE courses, 23.33% of all students who left during the 10/11 academic year were disabled, and on HE courses, 13.68% of all students who left were disabled. Compared with the previous academic year (09/10), the figure for HE remains relatively static (13.23% in 09/10). The figure for FE shows an increase from 09/10 (from 19.54%).

On FE courses, there is a retention rate of 87.74% of disabled students compared with a rate of 91.29% for non-disabled students. The retention rate of disabled students on HE courses is 78.8%, compared with 85.53% for non-disabled students. See table below for comparison purposes:

	FE Retention Rate					HE Retention Rate				
	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11
Disabled Students	93.9%	89.91%	88.27%	89.94%	87.74%	83%	83.33%	86.09%	81.15%	78.8%
Non-Disabled Students	81.7%	92.93%	90.79%	91.75%	91.29%	88.6%	85.61%	86.16%	85.47%	85.53%

Withdrawal and retention rates for FE and HE are discussed regularly in curriculum teams, at course review meetings and academic review meetings.

Achievement data indicates that achievement rates of disabled students are lower than that of non-disabled students for FE.

During 2010/11, our Student Services staff supported around 278 students with additional support needs and Personal Learning Support Plans were put in place. The support needs included visual impairments, dyslexia, mental health difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder and physical disabilities. We made reasonable adjustments by providing readers and scribes, providing assistive technologies, providing appropriate furniture, ensuring materials were available in suitable formats, and providing one-to-one tailored and on-going support sessions.

During the year, we had no formal complaints reported by students related to disability. In the annual student survey 2010/11, 97% of respondents agreed that they are treated with respect by staff and 91% agreed that lecturers treat all students fairly and equally.

Our Progress to Date

Our progress against our previous action plan 2010/11 is summarised in Appendix 1.

Our Next Steps

The College will continue towards its aim of eliminating unlawful disability discrimination and harassment and promoting disability equality. Over the coming months our Disability Equality Scheme will be reviewed and incorporated into our Single Equality Scheme and equality outcomes. Until that time, we have published Disability Equality Objectives and Action Plan for 2011/12 – Appendix 2.

More Information

We need the support and commitment of all members of the College and local community to be involved in identifying opportunities to promote disability equality within the College. Please contact Susan Bald, Director of HIR on 01738 877229, or by email at susan.bald@perth.uhi.ac.uk if you would like to get involved in any way.

Appendix 1: Perth College UHI Disability Equality Action Plan and Progress Report 2010/11

1 Promote equality of opportunity between people with disabilities and others.		
	Activity	Update on Progress 2010/11
1.1	Provide equality and diversity training and awareness material to new and existing staff, with all existing staff completing mandatory equality and diversity training by end of January 2011.	76% of staff trained and action plan in place to train the remainder.
1.2	Provide additional training on the new disability provisions within the Equality Act 2010 to relevant staff as appropriate to their role.	Equality session at November 2010 Staff Conference covered Equality Act and Disability.
1.3	Provide information on our Disability Equality Scheme and action plan activities at student events and in the student induction material.	Contained in student diary distributed at induction.
1.4	Involve staff and students from different backgrounds in the work of EDIT to ensure an understanding of diverse needs and the barriers and opportunities faced by different groups in accessing employment and the services of the College.	On-going through work of EDIT.
1.5	Work with staff, students and community groups to ensure and promote an understanding of different disabilities.	Community Engagement and Student Survey to be incorporated into SES/outcomes.
1.6	Embed and promote QELTA to systematically review learning and teaching materials to promote equality.	Ongoing systematic review and updating of materials.
2 Eliminate discrimination which is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act.		
	Activity	Update on Progress 2010/11
2.1	Provide information to our managers to confirm their responsibilities in dealing with inappropriate language and behaviour from staff, students and service users, including contractors.	Employment law update session for Managers and on-going support from HR.
2.2	Undertake equality impact assessments of all new and specifically identified policies, procedures and practices, and make appropriate adjustments.	On-going.

2.3	Take a zero tolerance approach to unlawful disability discrimination and harassment.	On-going.
2.4	Involve relevant people and groups in the production, recording, collation, analysis and follow-up of monitoring data for staff and students.	Data analysis in Annual Progress Report and to be carried forward into Equality Outcomes for 2012. Course reviews and Self Evaluations contain equality section and data provided for these reviews.
3 Eliminate disability-related harassment.		
	Activity	Update on Progress 2010/11
3.1	Refresh and re-launch our Dignity in the College Community Policy and Procedure.	To be revised in line with our protected characteristics and re-launched in 2012.
3.2	Take a zero tolerance approach to unlawful disability discrimination and harassment.	This work is on-going.
3.3	Provide support to individuals to ensure differing needs can be considered.	Student needs discussed with Student Advisors and addressed through PDP. Staff needs addressed via Annual Professional Review.
4 Promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities.		
	Activity	Update on Progress 2010/11
4.1	Embed and promote QELTA to systematically review learning and teaching materials to promote equality.	Ongoing systematic review and updating of materials and approaches.
4.2	Build on the findings of our recent community engagement survey to involving relevant people and groups, including partnership groups, in the changes and improvements we make to our practices and procedures.	To be carried forward and to inform development of Equality Outcomes in SES.
4.3	Utilise positive images of people from different groups in our literature, information, posters and other materials.	Prospectus, PerthNet and other publications reviewed to ensure compliance.
4.4	Work with staff, students and community groups to ensure and promote an understanding of different disabilities.	Build on community engagement exercise and take forward with SES.
5 Encourage participation by people with disabilities in public life.		
	Activity	Update on Progress 2010/11
5.1	Provide support for students with disabilities who wish to join College committees, run for election to the Students Association or compete in	All students are appropriately supported to participate in personal and professional development opportunities via PSPs and Student Advisor support.

	external events and competitions related to their College course.	
5.2	Work with former students with disabilities to promote disability equality and encourage current or prospective students to study.	Promote inclusive football tournament and sports day on the intranet and website.
6 Take steps to meet the needs of people with disabilities, even if this requires more favourable treatment.		
	Activity	Update on Progress 2010/11
6.1	Involve staff and students with disabilities before finalising moves of college functions and facilities.	On-going consultation to ensure needs can be met.
6.2	Identify and take action to address access and egress issues.	On-going.
6.3	Identify and make reasonable adjustments to rehabilitate and retain staff who are or become disabled.	All long-term sickness absences successfully supported back to work with Occupational Health support/reasonable adjustments.

Appendix 2: Perth College UHI Disability Equality Objectives and Action Plan 2011/12

1	Objective 1 - Promote equality of opportunity between people with disabilities and others.	
	Activity	Timescale for Completion
1.1	All staff to have completed Equality and Diversity training.	To be completed by 29 February 2012.
1.2	Purchase on-line refresher Equality and Diversity training module and roll-out to staff.	By March 2012 – begin roll-out.
2	Objective 2 – Eliminate discrimination which is unlawful under the Equality Act.	
	Activity	Timescale for Completion
2.1	Undertake equality impact assessments of all new and revised policies, procedures and practices to ensure appropriate adjustments are made to comply with Act.	On-going.
3	Objective 3 – Eliminate disability-related harassment.	
	Activity	Timescale for Completion
3.1	Review and re-launch Dignity in College Community Policy.	By April 2012.
4	Objective 4 – Promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities.	
	Activity	Timescale for Completion
4.1	Embed and promote QELTA to systematically review learning and teaching materials to promote equality.	On-going.
4.2	Utilise positive images of people from different groups in our literature, information, posters and other materials.	On-going.
4.3	Review publication of adverts for staff posts to increase applications and appointments of disabled people.	By June 2012.
5	Objective 5 – Encourage participation by people with disabilities in public life.	
	Activity	Timescale for Completion
5.1	Encourage a diverse range of applications to up-coming Board of Management vacancies and review.	By March 2012.

6	Objective – Take steps to meet the needs of people with disabilities, even if this requires more favourable treatment.	
	Activity	Timescale for Completion
6.1	In depth review of student equality PI trends for applications, retention and attainment to inform equality outcomes for SES, and build on findings of recent community engagement and staff/student surveys.	Initial report by June 2012 and Outcomes developed for December 2012.