

# **Buxton and Leek College**

## **Equality and Diversity Strategy Statement**

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At Buxton and Leek College, we are committed to providing an environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation. This is reflected in our values and behaviours where we respect the rights and dignity of all members of our community.

Equality means everyone having a fair chance. Diversity means respecting people's differences. We aim to create a culture of equality & diversity within our community, providing a dynamic working and learning environment, where all members are valued for their contribution and individuality.

By consistently living our values we seek to eliminate those things that undermine or are harmful to anyone involved in the activities of our college. We therefore believe that discrimination, intimidation or harassment of anyone connected with the college, but specifically related to their race, religion or belief, age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability, marital or partnership status or maternity and pregnancy, cannot be tolerated.

As a learning organisation we will provide an environment where people can address and debate differences and constantly reflect on practices, in order to develop a deeper understanding of "Equality Matters".

### **The Aims Of The Equality Duty**

As a Further Education College, we are subject to the public sector equality duty and have a legal responsibility to demonstrate that we are taking action in policymaking, the delivery of services and in employment. We will take steps to eliminate discrimination and harassment, but also to actively advance equality and to foster good relations.

There are three aims which the college must work towards as part of the equality duty:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
3. Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Act explains that having due regard to advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their relevant protected characteristics.

- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other groups.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.
- Take steps to meet the different needs of disabled people.

The Equality Scheme and objectives will be reviewed annually as a minimum.

### **The Protected Characteristics**

The equality duty covers the characteristics of:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion and belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- marriage and civil partnership (*this is a protected characteristic but is not considered to be a “relevant” one and so is only considered against the first aim of the Equality Duty*)

People can also be protected by association, i.e. they do not have a protected characteristic but have a close link with someone who does.

### **Responsibilities**

All members of the college community are personally responsible for applying the college’s duty and ensuring they are aware of the college’s other statutory duties.

Specific responsibilities lie with:

**Governors** who are responsible for ensuring that:

- the membership of the corporation tries to reflect the diversity of the communities served by the college
- they are aware of the corporation’s statutory responsibilities in relation to equalities legislation as an employer and service provider
- they receive and respond to the under-represented monitoring information in relation to learners and staff.

**The Director for FE and Skills and the Senior Leadership Team** who are responsible for:

- taking the lead in creating a positive, inclusive ethos that challenges inappropriate behaviour on the part of managers, staff or learners
- ensuring all aspects of college policy and activity are sensitive to discriminatory issues
- ensuring all monitoring information is collected and analysed
- ensuring targets are set for the recruitment, retention and achievement of learners and staff based upon the analysis of monitoring information
- ensuring individual lesson observation records and summary reports will include reference to the race, gender and disability issues where they arise
- curriculum areas which are required to assess performance in relation to race, gender and disability issues and take action as appropriate
- support areas, including learning support, advice, guidance and marketing to ensure maximum access to learners.

**Staff** who are responsible for ensuring that:

- their schemes of work, lesson content and teaching resources demonstrate sensitivity to issues of cultural diversity and meet the individual needs of learners
- they challenge inappropriate behaviour by learners, work placement providers, outside contractors or other members of staff
- the college and each of its individual staff confront discriminatory behaviour, whether witting or unwitting, whenever it occurs.

### **Support**

The college has informal and formal processes in place to assist any person in raising a complaint of discrimination, harassment or victimisation in accordance with the Grievance Procedure.

No individual will be penalised for raising such a complaint unless the substance of the complaint is untrue or the complaint is made in bad faith, for example out of malice in which case false accusation following an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action.

### **Breaches**

Any member of staff or learner who harasses any other member of staff or learner on any grounds will be subject to the college's disciplinary procedures.

### **Learners**

The Learner Voice Strategy outlines the college's commitment to hearing the learner voice and ensuring that learners feel valued and an integral part of the college community. The strategy includes existing and potential learners.

### **Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

The teaching and learning strategy will ensure effective teaching and learning is planned and delivered in a safe environment free from prejudice and discrimination, where the values and ethos of equality and diversity inform all college activities.

We will ensure zero tolerance to discrimination on grounds of any of the Protected Characteristics outlined in the Equalities Act 2010.

We will work to be an example of best practice as an organisation and employer promoting equality, diversity and inclusion by reaching out to groups of people who are not currently involved in learning, improving access to different types of learning and improving learners' experience.

### **Publication, Compliments And Complaints**

#### **Publication**

The response to the duty will be published electronically. Copies will be available on request in Braille, Large Print or Audio Tape. This strategy statement will also be available on the college website and intranet.

#### **Compliments and Complaints**

We are strongly committed to promoting equality and diversity across the college. We will ensure concerns can be addressed within our current policy and procedure. We will ensure compliments and complaints are used to improve practice.

#### **Implementation**

Staff Development sessions will be organised to ensure that all staff are fully briefed and familiar with the duty. There is an expectation that staff will then cascade this to learners and existing partnerships.

Progress will be monitored by the equalities group, executive and corporation.

### **Workforce**

Through our inclusive culture and career opportunities we aim to attract and retain people from a diverse range of communities in our College workforce.

Our training and CPD opportunities ensure that:

- Staff are equipped to recognise, support, and drive our shared values with regards to Equality and Diversity
- No colleagues are left behind in their understanding of our values or their EDI duty

We continually analyse the college staff profile in terms of management seniority with regard to gender, ethnicity and disability.

We will analyse data as follows

- Profile of employees by grade, type of work, contract

- Profile of Management Recruitment and Selection by application, short listing, interview and appointment
- Type of contract (permanent, temporary)
- Numbers taking flexible working
- Maternity/paternity/adoption numbers
- Promotion application and success rates
- Disciplinary proceedings
- Grievances
- Satisfaction levels (through surveys, forums etc.)

### **Students and Apprentices**

Our educational opportunities ensure that:

- No student or Apprentice is left behind
- Students and Apprentices develop their understanding of our shared values with regards to Equality and Diversity and how modelling them enables positive change in their communities
- Students and Apprentices develop their knowledge and understanding of contemporary 'Equality Matters'

A significant amount of work is carried out each year to analyse the retention, attendance, achievement and pass rates of different equality groups in the College, and to address any gaps.

All curriculum areas look at their outcome data in detail each year and agree action plans to address identified gaps where possible.

The College will ensure that training, conferences and other staff development initiatives address equality, diversity and inclusion particularly in relation to teaching, learning and assessment.

On a college wide basis and at curriculum level, Buxton and Leek College will use and analyse the following information regarding our students in relation to ensuring promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion:

- Profiles of learners
- Applications, achievement and pass rates of admission to programmes
- Retention, attendance, achievement and pass rates
- Internal progression rates and positive destinations data
- Work placements including achievement rates, satisfaction levels and job offers
- Disciplinary action
- Complaints by learners and their response
- Satisfaction levels (through surveys, learner voice etc.)

### **Building Action Into Our Annual Business Planning Cycle**

Equality and Diversity will play a full and integral part in the observation of teaching, learning and support, staff development, course and student review and the self-assessment process. We will assess the impact on equality of opportunity when designing, implementing and reviewing policies and priorities.

### **Equality Objectives**

These are set out in the “Buxton and Leek College Equality Objectives” and is available on request.

This Equality and Diversity Strategy Statement has been adjusted in line with FE requirements and is in conjunction with the University EDI Strategy.