

Yeovil College Disability Equality Scheme 3rd Annual Report December 2009

Context

As part of the Disability Discrimination Act (2005) the College produced its first Disability Equality Scheme (DES) in December 2006. This document included an action plan that clearly demonstrates our commitment to the Disability Equality Duty and its purpose to create positive, non-discriminatory ethos and practice across the whole College.

This 3rd Annual Report (2009) reviews our progress so far and identifies the steps we have taken to fulfil our Disability Equality Duty, (i.e. the action plan), during the third year, in order to meet our initial targets, eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity.

It is the responsibility of Yeovil College Equality and Diversity Group to monitor and review the DES and corresponding Action Plan. The overall action plan comprises of eight sub sections, with individual points for action and identified responsibilities across the whole of the organisation. The following salient points offer an overview of progress against the outstanding actions for each area for the year ended December 2009.

Action Plan Review 2009

(Progress on outstanding actions since last report)

1.) Staff Training

- Learning plans/schemes of work have been revised to improve the E and D focus. Related cross college training was delivered to teaching staff.
- Some tutorial sessions have included delivery by members of the Learner Support Team and Faith Adviser on E and D issues and ethics. A more comprehensive and integrated programme is needed and this will be taken forward by the Faculties, formed as part of the new college structure.
- Equality and Diversity training is offered to all teaching and support staff within the CPD booklet which is up-dated annually.

2.) Resources & Data

- Data collection on retention, achievement and progression for students with disabilities, or in receipt of additional support, is now in place and information is discussed at appropriate College meetings. Trend data is reviewed on an on-going basis.
- An annual HR report is now produced with more comprehensive equality and diversity statistics relating to staff.
- The HR Department continue to collect statistical data, from exit interviews, related to the effect of policies and practices on disabled staff. Trend information will soon be available.

3.) Physical Resources

- New signage, which incorporates a modern logo, has been installed across the campuses at Mudford Road, Lufton, North Dorset Skills Centre and the University Centre (UCY).
- In order to assist people with visual impairment high visibility yellow strips have been installed on all steps and raised pavements on college campuses.
- All disabled toilets have now been re-signed as accessibility toilets so that people with medical conditions or those going through gender re-assignment are able to access the facilities more easily
- Parking for people with disabilities has also been improved at the University Centre and a hand-rail installed on the steps from the car park.
- The front entrance at UCY now has automatic door which provides easy access for disabled users.
- Accommodation at the University Centre has been improved with a lift to the first floor and hearing loops in four classrooms, as well as the lecture theatre.

4.) Marketing

- A twice-yearly Equality and Diversity news letter has been produced. This will be available on the on the Website.
- Students, including those with disabilities are invited to be part of the working group which reviews, on an annual basis, the prospectus/ enrolment, paperwork etc.
- An updated version of the current local and national contact list for disability, health information and advice has been added to the college Intranet and Moodle, to ensure it is easily accessible.
- The Yeovil College web-site has been further improved, with accessibility features and links. This includes on-line access to prospectuses for full-time and part-time courses and university level programmes. The web-site includes current news items, student success stories, details of college facilities and advice about courses and support.

5.) Personnel

- Appraisal systems have been reviewed and up-dated to include the opportunity for disclosure of disability and provision of subsequent support

6.) Policies and Procedures

- A monitoring sub group of the full E & D group was set up in March 09 in order to produce definitive list of policies requiring review and/or equality and diversity impact assessments. Priority policies were identified for immediate review and impact assessment.
- A College Mental Health Policy has been produced, approved by the Corporation and disseminated to staff.
- Risk assessment paperwork for college trips, including those overseas, has been revised to ensure that it includes awareness of all disability issues.
- Disability equality is now included within the assessment procedure for WBL placement providers.

7.) Leadership/Management

- Limited progress has been made so far in the recruitment of disabled people to elected posts, although actions have been put in place to actively address the situation.
- E&D is now an agenda item at most college meetings.

8.) Student/Staff/User Participation

- E&D questions have been included in cross college surveys, the results of which inform the Self Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan.
- A UCY Forum site has been developed for all students.
- For the first time students at the University Centre have a Student Voice. Elected course representatives meet with the Director of UCY to discuss non-course issues. They requested changes to the disabled parking, with hatched areas to give more space, and this has been put in place. Access for students with disabilities will be reviewed at the Student Voice meetings.

Conclusion

The College feels that, during the third year of the Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan, good progress has been made in achieving the actions set. A new plan will be devised for 2010 and we shall continue to work towards the small number of outstanding actions from the previous plan. New actions will be instigated in order to further improve our understanding and practice across the College.

We feel that significant progress has been made, during the last three years, under the Disability Equality Duty and the Disability Equality Action Plan. Governor, staff and learner awareness has been raised and improvements have been made to the way in which we monitor the learner and staff experience and thus work together to respond to our general duty in regards to disability.