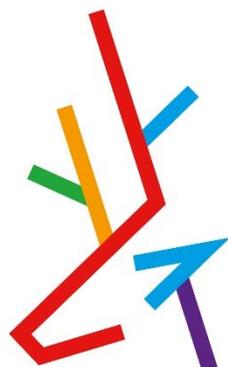


# SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

NOVEMBER 2015



**NORTH  
HERTFORDSHIRE  
COLLEGE**

## CONTEXT

The college's strategic intent in relation to equality and diversity centres around inclusion, equality and safe learning environments, which are key pillars of the mission: To create economic and social value for individuals, businesses and communities through learning.

Our values also reflect the emphasis the college places on the promotion of equality of opportunity and access, and the celebration of our diverse student and staff populations:

- **Quality:** we strive constantly to improve the quality of our teaching and learning. We are intolerant of poor quality and always aim for outstanding.
- **Innovation:** we agitate for new and better ways of doing things. We look within and beyond the education sector for transformational innovations.
- **Accountability:** we set clear, reasonable expectations and we expect people to deliver. We don't make excuses.
- **Integrity:** we have a strong moral compass and we do the right thing for our customers, our colleagues and for the group.
- **Sustainability:** we take decisions that work for the medium and long term. We care about the environment.

In line with the teaching and learning policy, it is important to note that:

- We will promote a culture of shared values and mutual respect, with corporate and social responsibility in order to motivate and inspire both students and staff.
- We will positively challenge prejudice and discriminatory behaviours whilst promoting self-worth, self-reflection, personal effectiveness and problem solving.

## INTRODUCTION

As of September 2015, North Hertfordshire College's strategic priority is to be an Outstanding college by 2018/19. For us this means that:

- Delivering outstanding teaching and learning in all our curriculum areas.
- Delivering programmes that prepare students for the reality of the world of work.
- Supporting students to substantially improve their English and maths while they are with us.
- Working with employers to design, deliver and offer progression routes from our programmes.
- Offering a rich, broadly defined student experience, and keeping our students safe.

The college strongly believes that the diversity of our local communities is one of our greatest strengths and our most valuable asset. The college is fully committed to equality of opportunity and we believe that all individuals have an equal right to develop and achieve their full potential.

Equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination are fundamental rights and North Hertfordshire College has a legal and moral duty to exercise leadership in the promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity. We will promote equality and challenge all forms of discrimination through our role as a service provider, community leader and local employer.

Equality of opportunity means more than disregarding differences such as gender, disability, race or nationality, religious or political belief, sexuality, or age. It means ensuring that different people receive services, consultation and employment opportunities in a fair and equal way. This means recognising, accommodating and valuing diversity across the college and the community with which we work.

Our goal is to foster an environment that offers people inclusivity and security, achieving an improvement in the quality of life for all who learn or work at the college. Our commitment to equality and diversity is intrinsic to the way we think and is therefore central to everything that we do. North Hertfordshire College takes a strategic approach to the delivery of services which is supported by our performance management framework.

We firmly believe that our work within the college, with local communities, partners and other agencies, will assist in pulling together to promote a culture that celebrates and welcomes diversity.

We will follow best practice in all of the equality areas and work towards:

- eliminating unlawful discrimination
- eliminating harassment
- promoting equality of opportunity
- promoting good relations between different groups in the community
- recognising and taking account of people's differences

## **OUR ACTIONS**

In the light of the strategic priorities stated above, we have identified practical priorities and plans of specific action, in order to promote equality across all of the protected characteristics for 2015/16. These specific actions are listed in the 2015/16 Equality & Diversity action plan.

## **PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY**

This policy will set out how North Hertfordshire College will work towards promoting equality of opportunity in all of its service delivery. It sets out how North Hertfordshire College will ensure that discrimination is challenged and eliminated through legislation and positive action. This policy will also set out the responsibilities of governors, staff members and others, and actions that the organisation will take to ensure full compliance with this policy.

## **CURRENT LEGAL REQUIREMENTS**

NHC has a responsibility to comply with the Equality Act 2010 including the public sector equality duty.

## **EQUALITY ACT 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 puts all discrimination legislation in one place in a simpler and more consistent form than previously. It is unlawful to discriminate against an individual because of any of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010. The nine protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Sex equality

- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Sexual orientation
- Religion and belief
- Marriage and civil partnership

*Who is protected - definitions of the protected characteristics:*

- Age: the act protects people of all ages. The age specific protections have not yet been fully implemented and age is still the only protected characteristic that direct or indirect discrimination can be justified (if it can be argued that treating someone differently because of their age is meeting a legitimate aim).
- Disability: the act applies to a range of people that have a condition (physical or mental) that has a significant and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out 'normal' day-to-day activities. This protection also applies to people that have been diagnosed with a progressive illness such as HIV or cancer.
- Gender reassignment: the definition of gender reassignment has been expanded to include people who chose to live in the opposite gender to the gender assigned to them at birth by removing the previously legal requirement for them to undergo medical supervision.
- Pregnancy and maternity (including breastfeeding mothers): a woman is protected against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity. With regard to employment, the woman is protected during the period of her pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which she is entitled. Also, it is unlawful to discriminate against women breastfeeding in a public place.
- Marriage and civil partnership: the act protects employees who are married or in a civil partnership against discrimination. Single people are not protected.
- Race: this includes colour, ethnic/national origin or nationality.
- Religion or belief: the act covers any religion, religious or non-religious beliefs. This also includes philosophical belief or non-belief. To be protected, a belief must satisfy various criteria, including that it is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour. Denominations or sects within a religion can be considered a protected religion or religious belief.
- Sex: previously referred to as gender. Applies to male or female.
- Sexual orientation: the act protects lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual people.

## **EQUALITY DUTY**

The equality duty, as laid out by the Equality Act 2010, extends the equality duties into one public sector equality duty ('the duty'). The duty covers public bodies or functions and private organisations delivering public services and is made up of the general and specific duties.

In summary, those subject to the duty must eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who do and do not share a protected characteristic.

The broad purpose of the general duty is to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into the day-to-day business of public authorities. The requirement for the college is to contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations (Equality & Human Rights Commission, 2011). This should be reflected in the design of policies and the delivery of services.

### **SPECIFIC DUTY**

- Publish sufficient information to demonstrate compliance with the general equality duty across all functions. This includes information on the effect that policies and practices have had on people who share protected characteristics and the extent to which we have furthered the aims of the duty for interested stakeholders.
- Evidence of any analysis undertaken, including the information considered and who we engaged with. It is anticipated that to evidence compliance the college should be collecting and publishing equality information, engaging with stakeholders, undertaking equality analysis, setting equality objectives, business planning and reporting.

## **NEW COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK**

### **GROUPS OF LEARNERS**

Inspectors will assess the college's response to individuals by helping all students to make progress and fulfil their potential. This includes all those in the protected groups in addition to those on low income, differing prior attainment and ex-offenders.

### **OUTCOMES FOR LEARNERS**

Inspectors will evaluate any significant variations in the achievement of different groups of students and students' progress during their programme compared with their starting points, with particular attention to progress by different groups of learners. The college needs to ensure that it is collecting achievement and progression data by different groups and setting targets to improve the performance of underachieving groups.

### **DATA COLLECTED SHOULD INCLUDE**

- Social and economic deprivation, prior attainment, minority groupings and any other identifiable groups.
- Local and national performance data.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Students' understanding of their rights and responsibilities at the provider and at work, and as citizens and consumers in the community.

Though equality and diversity is no longer a limiting grade, it remains a key element of the Ofsted regulations. In particular, inspection will consider the college's response to the following themes:

#### *Quality of teaching and learning*

Equality and diversity are expected to be promoted through teaching and learning and inspectors will assess how well teaching, learning and assessment promote equality, support diversity and tackle discrimination, victimisation, harassment, stereotyping or bullying. In addition, that staff use materials and teaching methods that foster good relations and are sensitive to and promote equality of opportunity as well as being aware of and planning for individual needs in teaching sessions.

#### *Effectiveness of leadership and management*

College managers are required to actively promote equality and diversity, tackle bullying and discrimination, and narrow the achievement gap. Evaluation will be based on the extent to which:

- Equality and diversity aspects are built into the provider's strategic plans, the impact of plans is monitored and follow-up action is taken to address areas for improvement.
- Appropriate policies and procedures are implemented to actively promote equality and diversity among staff, learners, employers and other partners.
- Training in equality and diversity is effective and leaders, managers, governors or supervisory bodies (where appropriate), staff and learners understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity.
- Challenging targets are set, the performance and destinations of different groups of learners are carefully monitored and appropriate action is taken to close any identified gaps.
- Learners and staff are protected from harassment, bullying and discrimination, including those based with employers and at other sites external to the provider.
- Incidents and complaints specifically about equality, diversity and bullying are proactively managed and acted upon, including, where appropriate, providing counselling and support.
- Arrangements to ensure all learners can participate in learning, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, work well and learners have opportunities to give their views on the provision.

### *Outstanding provision*

To achieve an outstanding grade the college needs to evidence that equality and diversity are promoted actively, resulting in a learning environment where bullying and discrimination are not tolerated. Furthermore that there are no achievement gaps between different groups of learners.

### **REVIEWING THE SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME (SES)**

Progress towards meeting the commitments detailed in this scheme and associated plans will be reported annually to the equality and diversity group, senior management team and board of governors as well as being published on the college's website.

The SES will be reviewed annually. Changes may be made in the interim in response to organisational changes, legislative changes or other factors necessitating review.

Information about the SES will be shared with the college's key stakeholders. North Hertfordshire College will continue to seek the views of others about this SES and about the college's progress towards the targets set out in this action plan.

### **INVOLVEMENT AND CONSULTATION**

North Hertfordshire College is building its links with the whole of its community and hopes to work with local agencies concerned with disabilities and with people with disabilities in developing this scheme.

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT ANALYSIS AND MONITORING**

The college's services are delivered through a structure of academies delivering the curriculum, supported by cross-college service departments as follows:

#### *Curriculum:*

- Health and social care, childhood studies

- Supported studies, skills for life and Springboard
- IT
- Construction
- Motor vehicle
- Sport, public services and animal management
- Creative arts
- Community
- Apprenticeships
- Hair, beauty and catering
- English and maths
- Higher education and access to higher education
- Business, travel, management and professional
- ALS

*Corporate services:*

- Data management
- Estates
- Human resources
- Quality and innovation
- Communications
- Finance
- Student services

Each service is headed by a heads of department or head of curriculum with operational responsibility for their area, reporting directly to one of the three directors. The principal, deputy principal and executive directors make up the college's senior management team.

The purpose of an equality impact analysis is to improve the work of the college by making sure it does not discriminate and that, where possible, it promotes equality. It is a way to make sure individuals and teams think carefully about the likely impact of their work on equality target groups and take action to improve policies, services, strategies, procedures and functions, it involves anticipating the consequences of policies and projects on the target groups and making sure that, as far as possible, any negative consequences are eliminated or minimised and opportunities for promoting equality are maximised.

**WHERE DOES AN EQUALITY IMPACT ANALYSIS COME FROM?**

The collection of equality impact analysis originates from the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, which place obligations on local authorities and public sector organisations to carry out impact assessments. The government has now made a move away from

formal paper based impact assessments and instead has suggested that organisations gather analysis to measure impact. This has been demonstrated in the change of name from ‘equality impact assessments’ to ‘equality impact analysis’. At North Hertfordshire College we will use this equality analysis to mainstream all of the protected characteristics into our policy and practice at all levels.

North Hertfordshire College is currently updating its process of collecting equality impact analysis. This process will be added to the SES in due course once the process has been updated.

#### *Monitoring, reviewing and reporting*

The college’s senior leadership team is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the planning and provision of our services meet the needs of all our students and employees. The equality forum is responsible for monitoring the progress we make on promoting equality of opportunity. In addition, all staff and governors have a duty to promote equality and diversity in everything they do, and collectively they are responsible for realising the commitments outlined in this policy.

Some members of staff have specific responsibilities with regards to this policy:

- Accountability for our comprehensive equality and diversity policy rests with the principal and senior leadership team, who are responsible for ensuring that the college has an effective framework in place to deliver the outcomes identified in this policy.
- Heads of academy/service have day-to-day responsibility for ensuring that their teams deliver the outcomes identified in this policy.
- The head of human resources is responsible for coordinating, monitoring and reviewing this policy as it covers all college services.

#### *North Hertfordshire College as an employer*

Currently North Hertfordshire College employs 500 staff. It has established employment-related policies and procedures that reflect the commitment to equality and diversity and that assist in achieving and retaining a diverse workforce.

#### *North Hertfordshire College governance*

This scheme is subject to the approval of the college governors, who will monitor performance.

#### *North Hertfordshire College as a provider of education and training*

North Hertfordshire College is committed to ensuring that teaching and learning are available and accessible to a broad range of students. This will be achieved through diverse marketing, the provision of full and part-time courses, the use of a range of teaching methods and media, the delivery of a diverse curriculum, and the provision of a broad range of student welfare services that cater for students with diverse needs.

#### *North Hertfordshire College as a provider of continuing professional development*

North Hertfordshire College will work with and for a range of other agencies by delivering continuing professional development. It will not undertake any collaborative or commissioned activity that conflicts with the commitment to diversity and equality.

#### *North Hertfordshire College as a partner*

North Hertfordshire College works in partnership with a broad range of other institutions and agencies to provide services and to support others in achieving community cohesion. The college will ensure those partners adopt the same commitment to equality and diversity as North Hertfordshire College does. The college’s concern is to ensure that students enjoy the same positive experience wherever

their place of study. To this end it will work closely with partners to share experiences and learn from each other's best practice.

#### *North Hertfordshire College as a purchaser*

When buying products or services from another provider, North Hertfordshire College will seek to be reassured about that organisation's commitment to equality and diversity. This will be a significant factor in selecting during any tendering process.

#### *North Hertfordshire College facilities*

The college is committed to ensuring that its buildings and the facilities therein are accessible and create an environment where everyone can live, learn and work without unnecessary barriers.

#### *How to make a complaint*

Students wishing to make a complaint about this single equality scheme, or about any aspect of their experience with North Hertfordshire College, should pursue this in accordance with the college's student complaints procedure.

Staff wishing to make a complaint about this single equality scheme, or about any aspect of their working life with North Hertfordshire College, should refer to the grievance procedure.

