

Single Equality Scheme



2010 - 2013

Why we need a Single Equality Scheme

Public sector organisations like the College are legally required to tackle discrimination and harassment and to promote equality and good relations between different races, people with disabilities and for men and women.

The Single Equality Scheme replaces the College's existing equality schemes covering Disability, Gender and Race. People of different ages, religions or beliefs, sexual and gender orientation can suffer unfair treatment, as can people from different socio-economic groups.

The Single Equality Bill is currently going through parliament and additional equality legislation is imminent and is likely to require further action on the part of the College to promote equality and protect many of these groups from discrimination. We will therefore keep this scheme under review and incorporate any legislative changes as and when they occur.

Adult Education College Bexley Our vision for equality and diversity

The Adult Education College Bexley believes firmly in the implementation of Equal Opportunities. We believe that all staff and learners should be treated as the individuals they are, with different needs regardless of age, gender (including pregnancy & maternity), sexual orientation & civil partnerships, race, colour, religion or disability. All persons attending or working for the College should be given the potential, having equal access and choice.

The Way Forward

Adult Education College Bexley is developing a new Single Equality Scheme, supported by detailed Quality Improvement and Equalities Action Plans.

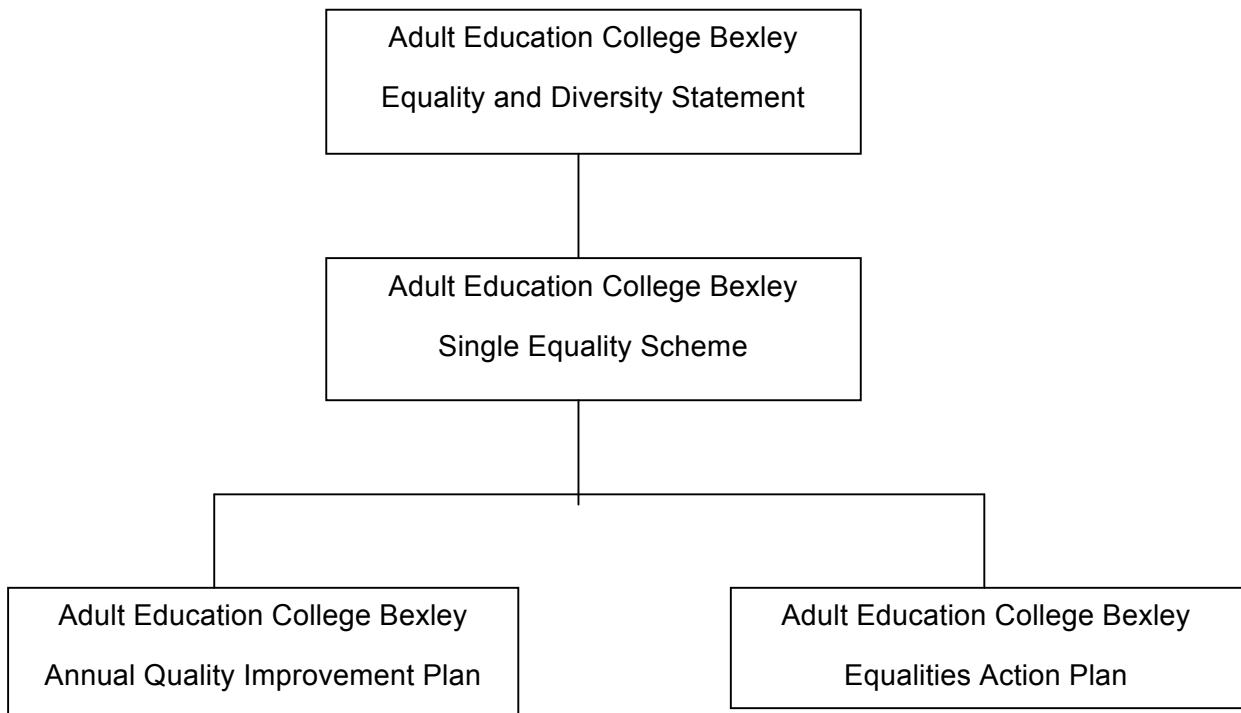
The College will address unequal experiences for people across all the equality strands, namely:

- Age
- Race
- Gender
- Disability
- Sex and sexual orientation
- Values, beliefs and faith
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership

To deliver a more equal and diverse College to the community of Bexley we will focus on key dimensions:

- Excellent teaching and learning in order to promote success and prosperity among our learners and their families, extending our work to meet the needs of all people from our community.
- Improving our organisation to make it increasingly equal, always compliant and will challenge unfair and unlawful discrimination wherever it arises.

Adult Education College Bexley Equalities documents will be published and we will report annually on our progress against them.



Context

In the 2009 Ofsted Inspection as Equality & Diversity was not fully reflected in all of the teaching observed, the College was given a grade 3

The College's profile of staff and students - **See appendix 1 (staff)**
See appendix 2 (learners)

We will measure the make-up of the College's population for both staff and students on an ongoing basis.

Process of Scheme Development

This Single Equality Scheme is being developed through assessment of the Equalities paperwork and general College policies and procedures having an Equalities Impact Assessment carried out. The College will also consult with learners and stakeholders through surveys, focus groups and collation of information for the overall College self assessment process.

Equalities information will be discussed at the internal Equal Opportunities & Diversity committee. Links with Bexley Council Single Equality Scheme strengthen and support the College Scheme.

Compliance and legislation

Adult Education College Bexley is mindful of our obligations under law and will discharge these, reporting publicly where necessary, auditing and reviewing our work and openly tackling discrimination wherever it arises. The College will challenge unacceptable behaviour and use disciplinary procedures as well as policies on bullying and harassment to protect our staff and students from any disadvantage.

The development of the Single Equality Scheme takes account of provisions within the law as it stands in October 2009 - **See appendix 3**

Governance

The College's governance arrangements pay close attention not only to the duties of the College to act fairly and tackle discrimination at all times, but also seek to promote better practice in support of success for all College students and employees.

Governors will:

- Approve and monitor the annual Equality Action Plan
- Self-assess their practice in respect of equality and diversity each year through the SAR process
- Monitor the overall improvement of the College's equality and diversity practice in terms of compliance and culture
- Be responsible for any safe-guarding and similar duties especially where vulnerable people are affected

Senior management and delivery responsibilities

The College's Strategic Management team will monitor progress through the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Steering Group which meets every term, totalling 3 meetings a year. This group is chaired by the Principal. Reports will also be brought to College management and governance groups as necessary in order to scrutinise the work of College officers in respect of equality and diversity.

Adult Education College Bexley supports the view that the curriculum is our principal instrument in tackling discrimination and inequality; an explicit duty will remain with Curriculum Mangers to deliver an inclusive and progressive programme of learning. Resources will be devoted to the development of classroom, tutoring and enrichment practices and materials that equip our learners well for life in a diverse and often unequal society. We will continue to promote very high standards of behaviour and uncompromising attitudes to equalities issues among our learners and will measure our success in doing this through internal inspection and self-assessment.

Curriculum Managers will have clear duties to cultivate successful equalities practices in their areas of responsibility and will be expected to tackle discrimination in any form should it arise or be alleged.

Partnership and Stakeholders

The College will continue to draw on a supportive network of partners. The current set of partners assisting the College is – **See appendix 4**

They will be involved formally through a number of College structures and processes:

- Membership of the Governing Body
- Direct involvement in specific development activities and projects

Comments, Compliments & Complaints

The College will continue to welcome challenges to its equalities practice and will operate an open and accountable approach to its responsibilities. Our student charter and staff codes of practice outline the standards of behaviour in respect of equalities and all acts of discrimination will be investigated with rigour; unacceptable behaviour will be addressed directly, explicitly and, where justified, disciplinary action will be taken.

Management capability

College managers take responsibility for the development of best practice as well as ensuring behaviour is compliant with legislation and College policy and procedure. Separate bullying and harassment procedures will be used to tackle behaviour among staff and students where justified.

The Learner Support Manager will strengthen the capability and confidence of College managers in tackling discrimination and promoting best practice.

Staff grievances and disciplinary

The Strategic Manager Finance & Administration which includes HR will ensure that all incidents that may involve discrimination among staff will be investigated thoroughly and dealt with firmly.

Student behaviour

The Strategic Manager Student & College Services has responsibility for outlining the correct standards of behaviour among our students and will ensure that all incidents that may involve discrimination are investigated thoroughly.

Reporting

Reports on the progress made against our equalities plans will be published through the Governing Body committees and also through the College's VLE

We will make the following information available to the public:

- Our equalities action plan, annually
- A progress report on our equalities action plan, Termly
- A self-assessment report that identifies equalities performance issues and plans improvements against them, annually
- Our equalities schemes and related procedures, annually
- Equalities Impact Assessments

Key Priorities for 2010 – 2013

The priority actions for the College over the lifespan of the Single Equality Scheme will be:

- The identification and progressive elimination of all equalities gaps in learner recruitment, success and satisfaction rates.
- Improved curriculum practice to strengthen teaching and learning, course content and classroom practice
- The development of a staff strategy to promote more proportionate representation of all equalities groups across the College.
- Strengthened College procedures and practices to tackle all aspects of discrimination and address barriers to opportunity
- The development of robust equalities forums to feed practice and promote debate and accountability

Equalities strands

The London Borough of Bexley has demographic data related to diversity.

Resident Population and Age Structure

According to the Office of National Statistics (ONS) the London Borough of Bexley has a population of just over 222,000. There are more females (52%) than males (48%) in the Borough. In 2001, the census showed that just over 63% of the Borough's population were of working age (16 to 64) and in line with Britain's ageing population, 16% are aged 65 or over, which is higher than the Greater London average of 12%. Around 15% of Bexley's population is of school age (5 to 15), which is again in line with the national average but slightly higher than in London (13%).

At the time of the 2001 Census, residents in Bexley age 65 years or over made up 16% of the population. Projections based on these figures suggest that the total population of older people (aged 65 years and over) in Bexley will decrease by 4.4% between 2001 and 2011, but the population over 85 will increase by 11.9% during the same period.

Age

Adult Education College Bexley is committed to equality of opportunity for both our students and our staff. We recognise that learners and staff can face discrimination because of their age.

All students should be able to access learning, succeed at their studies and progress in their lives without discrimination on account of their age. The College will work to close any equality gaps in success. For our students the next steps beyond College are critical to improving their life chances and therefore the College continues to ensure that we work to break down barriers that may prevent our students from moving into employment.

As a major employer in the area Adult Education College Bexley will ensure that recruitment and working methods reflect best practice. Staff should be able to contribute fully to the development of the College and their own careers irrespective of their age. We will promote best practice in age equality and we will act firmly to eliminate any unfair behaviour arising from differences in age. Our staff range from teenagers to those over the age of sixty-five – see **Appendix 5** for the age profile of our staff.

The College has a duty under the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 to ensure that staff are treated fairly irrespective of age.

Context

Adult Education College Bexley welcomes students of all ages. We have 84 learners aged under 16*; the average age of our students is 47, and we have students who have reached retirement age and beyond. However, government funding agendas clearly differentiate between the needs of young people and those over the age of 19 and this does lead to different levels of provision and support for different age groups.

* This figure does not include the College's Family Learning enrolments. For 2010-2011 these totalled 586

Outcomes

Within the context of legislation, government funding and priorities, we aim to break down barriers associated with age both as a provider of education and as an employer.

As a provider of education and training, we aim to ensure

- That our curriculum offer, facilities and support services cater for the different needs of our students

- That achievement gaps between different age groups are addressed and closed
- That all students are given the support they need to progress into work

As an employer, we aim to ensure

- That younger entrants to the workforce are given the support they need to succeed and progress
- That older employees do not face discrimination on account of their age

We will do this by reviewing our recruitment arrangement and flexible working arrangements to ensure that our employment policies are as flexible as possible to reflect the changing needs of the service and our staff at the different stages of their working lives.

Race

Adult Education College Bexley recognises that learners and staff are often discriminated against because of their colour, race, ethnicity and religion. Racism is in our society and requires decisive and specific action to eradicate it.

Our Equality & Diversity policy includes an explicit commitment to valuing people's differences. This commitment is central to all that we do and how we go about it. We will promote best practice in race equality and we will identify and combat discrimination and disadvantage. We will take positive action to eliminate racism and its effects. Racial harassment will not be tolerated in any area of College life.

We will continue to take positive action to encourage the recruitment and increased success of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups of learners on all courses. We will implement active anti-racist strategies which challenge racial stereotyping and promotes high levels of achievement. We will ensure that the curriculum addresses anti-racism and that curriculum modes are personalised. We will continue to pay particular attention to learners' needs and aspirations, to ensure that success is attainable.

We will seek to increase the number of staff, from BME groups. We will work to secure the fullest participation of BME learners and staff in College life, including the College's planning and decision-making processes.

We will listen carefully to what learners and staff from different racial groups and backgrounds tell us and act upon those views to shape our work.

Context

Adult Education College Bexley serves a diverse community in the London Borough of Bexley. The demographic information is as follows:

The 2001 census showed that the London Borough of Bexley had a minority ethnic population of 8.6% (including White Irish and White Other), which is slightly lower than the national average (9.08%) and significantly lower than the average for London (29%). There are 13 main ethnic groups, the largest of which was Asian/Asian British, Indian. Over 42 different languages are spoken in the Borough.

The College recognises the need to challenge racial discrimination and to promote race equality as central to its mission and to the achievement of its educational goals.

The College has also increased the diversity of its staff but the over-representation of white managers needs to be addressed.

Outcomes

In further developing and strengthening our work around race equality so that we can maximise the positive impact we have on learners and staff from different racial groups, we aim to achieve the following:

- Close the gap in success rates for all BME learners
- Improve the levels of learner satisfaction and College experience
- Increase the profile of Black and minority ethnic staff to achieve a workforce that is representative of the local community at every level of the organisation

Gender (including pregnancy & maternity)

According to the Office of National Statistics, there are 115,100 females in Bexley. Of the 135,700 people of working age in the Borough, 51% are male and 49% are female. Of people of working age, 106,000 were in employment at the end of 2008 and women accounted for 48% of employees.

Adult Education College Bexley welcomes people of all genders at all levels in all College departments and curriculum areas. We will remove barriers and actively encourage inclusive participation in traditionally gender specific job roles, job levels and curriculum areas and levels.

We will operate a zero tolerance policy against all forms of transphobic behaviour and promote the needs and profile of transgender staff and students.

We will further consult with staff and students to ensure that gender barriers are removed and develop a culture of respect for self and others regardless of gender.

Context

Adult Education College Bexley needs more robust data concerning the gender of our staff, both established and temporary and will analyse data to try and represent the demographic.

In addition, legislation and impending legislation means that we must revisit our current practices and ensure that we address any remaining issues and promote a culture of gender equality in all areas and levels of the workforce.

Legislation and impending legislation include:

- Equal Pay Act
- Equal Pay for temporary workers (legislation expected in 2010)
- Equal employment rights of part-time workers
- Maternity leave, parental leave, right to request part-time work after maternity leave

Adult Education College Bexley needs to promote the interests of transgender staff and students and to raise awareness about transgender issues.

Outcomes

- Learner recruitment that actively encourages student to access careers of their choice regardless of traditional gender under representation.
- A well-developed curriculum that positively reflects different gender contributions in the workplace and promotes them equally and effectively.
- Facilities that enhance and support the experience of men and women equally in using the College's service or as College employees.
- A robust approach to gender-based discrimination and harassment that tackles unwanted attention and unfair behaviours directly and decisively at all levels and promotes a culture of respect.
- A fully developed approach to equality in employment and career progression based on secure evidence relating to pay, opportunities, role and position across all genders and with due regard to physiological differences.
- An approach to transgender issues that promotes understanding and welcome for those involved in any kind of change to their gender.

Disability

The 2001 census showed that just over 34,000 (15.6%) of people living in Bexley have a limiting long-term illness, which is in line with the London average and slightly below the national average. The 2001 census also shows that of the 34,000 residents who have a limiting long-term illness, the majority are over the age of 55 (52%) with only 5% of school age of 0 to 15.

Adult Education College Bexley is committed to the development of new and better opportunities for disabled people and aim to develop both practice and delivery options in order to promote success for those with an impairment studying at the College.

We will assist disabled staff and establish programmes that allow staff with support needs to succeed in their employment.

Context

The legislative framework is given to organisations in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the new DDA of 2005. We recognise that it covers a broad spectrum of requirements.

There appears to be an unwillingness to disclose information regarding disability on the enrolment form.

Outcomes

- Investigate the profile of our staff and students to achieve a clear understanding of their needs. Support 'hidden' disability issues, such as mental health and developmental disorders
- Describe existing identified needs from staff and students.
- Raise awareness and build confidence that the College is a safe place to declare an impairment and discuss challenges faced by disabled learners and staff
- Collect data to acquire information on the physical or learning disabilities of employees
- Celebrate successes more readily of those students who have overcome disadvantage to succeed in the learning of their choice
- Invites views from a mixed advisory group of students and staff on physical and practical improvements that could be made in the College
- Deliver programmes/interventions that will impact on these objectives
- Based on intelligence from staff and learners deliver a 12 month action plan
- Monitor success in improving the conditions and success of disabled staff and students within the College
- Ensure that the cross-College SAR reflects desired improvements
- Monitor, through focus groups, data and other feedback

Sexual Orientation & Civil Partnerships

There is no accurate data on the number of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in either the UK or Bexley, as the national census has never asked people to define their sexuality. However, the 2001 Census recorded 192 people living in a same sex couple relationship in Bexley. Records from the Registry Office in Bexley, showed 28 same sex Civil ceremonies were conducted in 2006, 20 in 2007, 16 in 2008 and 17 in 2009. There are three LGBT representative groups operating in the Borough that are known to the Council. One is solely for lesbians, another is for young people and the other is open to all age groups.

Adult Education College Bexley will adopt a zero tolerance stance to homophobia and will actively challenge these when they arise.

We will consult our staff, students and partners to ensure that the service and support we provide meets the needs of LGB staff and learners.

Context

The data relating to the sexual orientation is currently scarce. To date, no data on the sexual orientation of students has been collected and, therefore, we have not been able to monitor the satisfaction levels and success rates for LGB learners. We have no data relating to transgender staff and students.

Legislation (Employment Equality (sexual orientation) Regulations 2003, the Equality Act (sexual orientation) Regulations 2007) requires us to ensure that staff and students are not discriminated against on the grounds of their sexual orientation.

Outcomes

Adult Education College Bexley will strive to achieve

- A comfortable, welcoming place for all and an environment where LGB staff and students feel confident and free to be open about their sexuality if they choose
- A College where the rights of LGB students and staff are respected and recognised
- A student community where LGB learners feel comfortable, supported, actively involved in College life and whose voice is heard
- A community of staff which is confident and able to respond to the needs of LGB colleagues and learners
- A zero tolerance stance on homophobia with a workforce that is trained and confident to challenge homophobia when it arises
- Stonewall Diversity Champion has been achieved by the London Borough of Bexley and the College is part of this
- More comprehensive data on the sexual orientation of learners and staff to help us improve and develop our services

Values, beliefs and faith

According to 2001 census figures, 72.94% of Bexley residents state their religion as Christian, 1.41% as Muslim, 1.35% as Sikh, 0.895 as Hindu, 0.4% as Buddhist and 0.13% as Jewish. There is a Sikh Temple and a mosque in the Borough.

Adult Education College Bexley will act firmly to eliminate any discriminatory behaviour arising from difference in belief.

Adult Education College Bexley is not a place of one faith. The College will work to secure respect for beliefs, faiths and religions and welcome all equally into our community.

We will provide opportunities for people to express their beliefs through consulting our staff, students and partners fully in organising our arrangements to support religious celebration.

Context

The Law (Equality Act, 2006 and Human Rights Act, 1998) require us to protect service-users and employees against unfair treatment on the grounds of their religion.

Outcomes

In working with people of all faiths and none, we aim to achieve:

- A secure climate of understanding in which religious discrimination is rare, brief and promptly addressed if it ever arises
- Strong College forums involving students staff and partners to recognise the needs of people of all faiths and none
- A clear and equal message of welcome for people of all faiths and none
- Well-managed facilities available to all faiths for religious practice
- A respectful and values-based curriculum that promotes social and moral development
- Improved data on the profile of religious declaration by students and staff to help us develop our services, with a distinction between cultural identity and actual religious practice

These impact measures will form the basis of an annual action plan designed to improve the experiences of people partnering, working at or studying in Adult Education College Bexley.