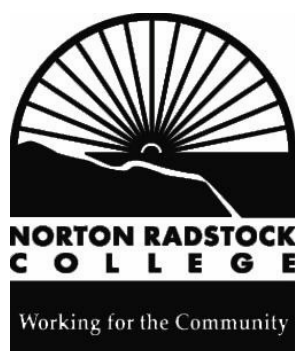


Date Approved: SMT July 2009, (Governors to review Spring 2010)
Procedure Identification Code: S27-1



Single Equality Scheme Policy and Procedure

Single Equality Scheme

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Single Equality Scheme

1. Introduction

Norton Radstock College's Equality Scheme is designed to provide the framework and context to address the statutory duties introduced by the following UK Legislation:

- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Equality Act 2006

In relation to Age, Sexual Orientation, Religion and Belief the college will monitor future law.

It is anticipated that (in 2009), Age, Sexual Orientation, Religion and Belief Duties will be a requirement for public authorities and this Equality Scheme is designed to include these three additional strands.

2. Equality and Diversity Policy Statement

The College affirms that all individuals are entitled to the same equal rights and opportunities and have the same responsibilities regardless of their race, gender, disability, sexuality, religion or age.

The College will seek to treat all those for whom it has responsibility with respect and dignity and seek to provide a positive working and learning environment free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

The College will respect and seek to fully utilise the diverse skills, talents and experiences of all its staff and learners. To this end the College will actively engage with learners and staff in the development of this equality scheme. It will also engage with the public and the community organisations in partnership. The belief in equality and diversity underpins and impacts on all areas of activity and influences

3. How the College works

The College has developed this Equality Scheme to bring together Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes, including an equality action plan to ensure that Equality and Diversity planning, implementation and review process are presented to appropriate stakeholders in a cohesive way

The Equality Scheme Policy statement provides the framework to demonstrate the college's commitment to:

- Pro-actively promoting equality of opportunity for current and prospective learners and staff
- Remove barriers to access, achievement and progression
- Eliminate any discrimination in relation to staff and learners, recruitment and promotion, the purchase of goods and services, and in the content, delivery and management of the curriculum
- Value the diversity and differences of everyone studying and working at Norton Radstock College
- Ensure that all learners, staff and visitors can go about their business in an atmosphere free from intimidation or abuse
- Widen participation to the full range of courses and other educational services for people from all social backgrounds and cultures
- Provide support to enable individual learners of different abilities and needs to progress through the curriculum towards successful achievement, i.e. by meeting individual needs to enable fulfilment of potential
- Provide a high quality learning experience for learners and a supportive working environment for learners and staff
- Recognise and reflect the positive contributions of all genders from different social backgrounds, cultures, religions, abilities, ages and sexual orientation

This Policy applies to all stakeholders, including Corporation members, staff, learners, employers, all visitors and outside contractors actively engaged with the college.

4. College Background

The college strives to ensure that its learner population and workforce profile reflects the gender and ethnic make-up of the local community it serves.

Norton Radstock College is a vibrant and friendly college dedicated to the success of its learners. An exciting range of education and training opportunities is offered to suit individual needs. Each year many full and part-time learners are welcomed, looking for a new challenge.

The College is very proud of the diversity of its learning community and aims to provide the best education and training opportunities to suit everyone.

5. Aims of the Equality Scheme

This Equality Scheme incorporates all the College's existing equality and diversity policies into one document, which will then be reviewed periodically. The process of Equality implementation will be included in the College quality assurance and internal audit process.

The College recognises the existence of discrimination and is committed to making changes in any area of College practice where there is evidence of failure to provide an appropriate and professional service. It is committed to addressing any areas of institutional failure, in relation to issues of racism, sexism, disability, sexual orientation, religion/belief, age or any other inequalities.

The key aim of this Equality Scheme is to ensure that all staff, learners and other college stakeholders are supported as follows:

- To ensure that they are not denied opportunities for access, development and success within all reasonable circumstances.
- To ensure that the college strives to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- To ensure fair and equitable opportunities for training and promotion are provided.
- To promote good relations between people from different 'racial' groups.
- To promote positive attitudes towards disabled people, encouraging their participation in public life and taking steps to meet disabled peoples' needs in relation to age, sexual orientation and religion and belief.
- To monitor future legislation.

6. Management of the Equality Scheme (ES)

The College will establish an Equality and Diversity Committee whose membership will be drawn from across the College Community. The minutes of this Equality and Diversity Committee will be issued to the Senior Management Team; they will also be available on the College intranet.

The College monitors its staff and learners in accordance with LSC and OFSTED requirements, namely:

- race,
- gender,
- disability,
- age.

6A. Key performance indicators shall include:

- Ethnicity, gender and disability profile of College staff.
- Types of jobs being undertaken by staff with disabilities (grade/salary level).
- Ethnicity, gender, disability and postcode profile of learners.
- Learner success rates – achievement and retention by gender, disability and race.
- Numbers of complaints or grievances of harassment and discrimination by gender, disability and race.
- Discipline, grievance and capability proceedings by gender, disability and race.
- Staff attendance at equality and diversity training events by gender, disability and race.
- Training and staff development application rates by gender, disability and race.
- Equality and Diversity Curriculum Audit.

6B. Disability and Ethnicity Disclosure

It should be noted that this data is collected on the basis of self-declaration and whilst the College makes every effort to encourage such disclosure we may not have an accurate disability and ethnicity profile.

6C. Ensuring compliance and quality of provision.

The College will ensure that,

- Governors, staff, learners, partners and all stakeholders (including work placement providers), are aware of our Equality Scheme and the action needed for its implementation.
- Staff, learners, partners and all stakeholders are aware of the value placed on equality of opportunity and diversity and that disciplinary action will be taken in the event of any breach of this policy.
- Governors and staff have access to comprehensive information, and progress reports which will assist them to plan, implement and monitor actions to carry out their responsibilities under this policy
- The College publicity materials present appropriate and positive images that support this policy.
- Schemes of work, lesson content and teaching resources demonstrate sensitivity to issues of diversity.

6D. A programme of quality assurance for tutorial material valuing diversity shall take place.

- Care will be taken to ensure that disabled learners and learners from under-represented groups or from groups who have traditionally experienced unlawful or unfair discrimination have access to appropriate support and facilities.
- Applications for employment are drawn from a wide pool with positive action to encourage applications from under-represented groups.
- Recruitment, selection and promotion procedures are designed to enable people from under-represented and disadvantaged groups to fully participate in the process.
- Staff development schemes are designed to raise awareness and effectively meet the learning needs of all staff including disadvantaged and under-represented groups.
- Action is taken to ensure that individuals will be treated equally and fairly and that decisions on pay, training, career management and selection for termination of employment are based solely on objective, job related criteria.
- Lesson observation reports include criteria on racial, gender and disability issues where appropriate
- Assessment and internal verification procedures include scrutiny of racial groups, gender and disability issues where appropriate
- Curriculum areas are required to assess performance in relation to racial, gender and disability issues and take action as appropriate
- Targets are set on the recruitment and promotion of staff based upon the analysis of racial, gender and disability monitoring information

7. Legislation

Three Acts of Parliament are central to our Equality Scheme and these are:

- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Equality Act 2006

These acts impose positive duties on all public bodies to promote race, disability and gender equality in all activities that the College undertakes.

Race Relations Act 2000 – the college shall have due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote good relations between persons of different racial groups

Disability Discrimination Act 2005 – the College shall have due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination under the Act
- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled and non-disabled people
- Eliminate disability related harassment
- Taking account of disabled peoples' impairments even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than non-disabled people
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encouraging participation by disabled people in public life

Equality Act 2006 – the College shall have due regard to:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination and harassment (including for transsexual people in employment and vocational training, higher and further education) that is unlawful under the Sex Discrimination Act or the Equal Pay Act
- Promoting equality of opportunity between men and women.

We acknowledge that equality and diversity means more than the promotion of race, disability and gender equality. We therefore regard the following legislation as relevant to our Equality Scheme:

- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003

These regulations do not have positive duties to promote equality associated with them but they do apply to employment and the provision of further education. The College will therefore seek to ensure through our functions, policies and employment practices that we do not discriminate on any of these grounds.

8. Responsibilities under the Equality Scheme (ES)

This policy defines the following responsibilities,

- The College Governors promote the Equality Scheme on behalf of the Corporation, and ensure that the Equality Scheme is effectively monitored and applied to assure the continuous improvement of equality and diversity throughout the College.
- The Principal is responsible to the College Corporation for ensuring that the Equality Scheme is continuously promoted and comprehensively implemented in all aspects of the College's operation.
- The Senior Manager for Student Support is responsible for the day to day management of the Equality Scheme provisions.

- The Equality and Diversity Committee is responsible for promoting, monitoring and reviewing the Equality Scheme and for evaluating its effectiveness.
- The Personnel Department is responsible for promoting, monitoring and implementing of all aspects of the Equality Scheme relating to the employment of staff.
- The Senior Manager for Teaching & Learning is responsible for promoting, monitoring and implementing of the Equality Scheme relating to teaching and learning.
- The Senior Manager for Quality Standards is responsible for quality related to both staff and students.
- All managers of the College are responsible for promoting the Equality Scheme and for improving the equality and diversity performance of their individual departments, including the implementation and maintenance of effective monitoring and review systems.
- All employees and learners of the College are responsible for compliance to the Equality Scheme and promoting equality and diversity in all aspects of their work.
- All outside contractors working in the college are responsible for compliance to the Equality Scheme.
- Employers responsible for Work-based Learners are responsible for compliance to the College's Equality Scheme.

9. Definitions of Discrimination/Harassment/Bullying

'Discrimination' is the exertion of power or influence to the detriment of the best interest of another individual or group because of their race, gender, disability (physical or mental impairment), age, sexual orientation, class or religion, family circumstances or political beliefs.

Direct discrimination is the treatment of a person of one group less favourably than others of another group in the same or similar circumstances.

Indirect discrimination is the application of a condition equal in an overt sense but covertly discriminatory in its effect on one particular group or individual.

Harassment is any unwanted conduct that violates people's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment or any acts which affect a person's safety or comfort which demean that person in any way.

Harassment may be:

- Physical: involving direct contact, assault or gestures; intimidation; or aggressive behaviour
- Verbal: including unwelcome and thoughtless remarks, suggestions and propositions; malicious gossip; or jokes and banter involving sexual, racial, religious and other discriminatory forms of innuendo
- Non-verbal: including offensive writing, literature or pictures, graffiti and computer imagery; or deliberate exclusion from social activities.

Sexual harassment is now specially defined in law. It is:

- Comments about the way a person looks which they find demeaning
- Indecent remarks
- Questions about another person's sex life
- Sexual demands by a member of own or the opposite sex
- Any conduct of a sexual nature which creates an intimidating, hostile or humiliating working environment for anyone; this includes displays of pornography and Internet downloading of offensive material at work or work placements.

Bullying is defined as offensive, humiliating, undermining or intimidating behaviour towards an individual or groups of staff, usually amounting to an abuse of power – but which is not defined as a type of discrimination under a range of equality laws. Like harassment, it is the impact of the behaviour on the recipient which constitutes bullying – not its intention.

Bullying may take many forms, including:

- Persistent criticism
- Setting objectives with impossible deadlines or unachievable tasks
- Ignoring or ostracising an individual
- Removing areas of responsibility and substituting menial or trivial tasks
- Constantly undervaluing effort
- Spreading malicious rumours
- Taking credit for other people's work or ideas
- Overbearing or threatening behaviour which intimates future violence
- Actual violence, pushing, using the body to prevent a person's movement or progress.

The list is not exhaustive.

10. Equality Impact Assessments

It is important to understand whether our services are meeting everyone's needs and that people who need our services have access to them.

The College therefore readily accepts its duty to carry out impact assessments across a range of equality concepts and requirements.

Assessments will be carried out on all new policies and services as they are developed and overtime on all our existing policies and services.

11. Training and Development

Norton Radstock College shall deliver diversity awareness training to all members of staff with the aim of developing a culture which supports the principles of our Equality Scheme and our specific obligations.

It will form part of the induction day which is mandatory for all new members of staff to attend.

Further training will be offered to all staff when the Equality Act 2009 is passed by Parliament.

12. Publicity – our Commitment

The College will openly publish our Equality Scheme to learners, staff, public and community partners and other stakeholders via reference to the publication in the full time and part time prospectus, information fact sheets, college notices, the college intranet and internet.

A summary will also be included in the College Annual Report.

The College's commitment to equality across all strands will be highlighted in our prospectus and in our strategic plan.

A summary of the results of monitoring information will be presented to meetings of the Equality and Diversity Committee, Senior Management Team and Board of Governors,

12A. Publication to learners

- Copies of the Equality Scheme shall be available via the College Intranet.
- The induction programme for learners shall highlight the College's commitment to equality and diversity. It will explain the action they can take if they believe they have encountered discrimination and how the College will support them.
- College staff shall reinforce this information during tutorials or work-based mentoring.

12B. Publication to external partners, work placement providers, partners, contractors, associated employers and other stakeholders

- All work placement providers and partners shall receive a summary of their responsibilities under the policy and will be required to signify their understanding and agreement to them.
- Work placement providers shall be offered briefings on equality and diversity issues.
- The College shall promote the requirement of learners from under represented groups to providers.

12C. Publication to staff

- All staff shall have access to a full copy of this scheme via the College intranet
- The induction programme for new staff shall highlight the College's commitment to equality and diversity along with the action to be taken to support staff and learners who face discrimination and harassment.
- A summary of the results of our monitoring shall be included in future staff bulletins.
- Stakeholders - any published information shall have due regard for individual confidentiality.

13. Action Plan

An action plan shall be created with timescales and measures of achievements to ensure that the College meets its requirements and commitments in terms of meeting the targets of the Equality Scheme in relation to gender, race and disability.

14. Review and Consultation

This policy shall be reviewed on a regular basis in accordance with legislative developments and good practice – and at a minimum every three years. As part of the review we will seek and take into account the views of staff, learners and other stakeholders.

The College believes that a combined Equality Scheme will make us better able to communicate and manage our equality commitments and actions and that by publishing one combined scheme, together with one consultation, we should maximise everyone's opportunity to be involved in the scheme and decision making process.

15. Implementation

The College, working in partnership with its employees, will seek to ensure that all staffing policies and procedures (e.g. Recruitment and Selection Procedure) are non-discriminatory, effective, monitored and reviewed, and where required improvements are implemented.

16. Complaints

The College will seek to provide a supportive environment for those who make claims of discrimination or harassment. Acts of racial, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, bullying, victimisation or abuse will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence. Staff who feel they are being harassed or bullied on these grounds by other members of staff should raise the matter through the Personnel Department

If, in the course of their work, College staff suffer discrimination from members of the public, the College will take appropriate action and provide appropriate support. Any discriminatory behaviour related to race, gender or disability, age, religion or belief or sexual orientation directed against staff by learners will be dealt with under the learner disciplinary procedure.

Learners/staff who wish to make a complaint about our Equality Scheme or any aspect of their experience with Norton Radstock College should pursue this in accordance with the learner complaints procedure or the staff grievance procedure.

The following sections support the overall aims of our Equality Scheme and consider particular aspects of equality and diversity.

17. Race and Ethnicity Policy Statement

- Norton Radstock College celebrates and values the diversity brought by engaging staff from a variety of racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The College recognises the benefit that it brings in allowing it to meet the needs of our diverse learner population within a multi-cultural society.
- The College will treat all employees and learners with respect and dignity, and seek to provide a positive working and learning environment free from racial discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
- The terminology 'race' and 'racial group' reflects the law and refer to ethnicity, nationality, national origin, skin colour, or 'perceived race' in cases of discrimination.
- The College will seek not only to eliminate discrimination, but also to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2006 by creating a working and

learning environment based on positive relations between different racial groups.

- The College aims to create a positive inclusive ethos where issues of racism, stereotyping and discrimination can be discussed openly, with a shared commitment to challenging and preventing racism and discrimination, respecting diversity and difference, and encouraging good relations between different racial groups.
- The College will work towards the elimination of racism whether overt, covert or by omission, and will ensure that individuals and communities have equal access to our learning programmes and facilities.

17A. Our Statutory Duties

The College is **obligated to comply** with,

- The Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000)
- The Statutory Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality (31 May 2002)
- The Race Relations Amendment Act (Amendment) Regulations 2003 for employment and vocational learning.
- European Community Race Directive 2000/43/EC
- The Statutory Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Employment (April 2006)
- The Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006
- Equality Act 2006
- To consider any issues which affect a racial group because of that group's religion under the Employment Equality (Religion or belief) Regulations 2003.

The College has a **general duty** to have due regard to,

- Eliminate any unlawful race discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote good relations between people from different racial groups.

The College also has the following **specific duties**,

- Prepare and maintain a written equality policy (incorporated in the College's Equality Scheme) which meets the law and relevant codes of practice.
- Assess the impact of its policies on learners and staff from different racial groups
- Monitor the admission and progress of learners and the recruitment and career progress of staff by racial groups
- Set out the College's arrangements for publishing the results for assessments and monitoring

- Where reasonably practicable publish annually the results of assessments and monitoring.
- Be aware of the link between harassment and discrimination and in so doing provide conciliation.
- Be aware of the link between race and religion.

The College is **committed to**,

- Actively tackle any racial discrimination, and promoting equal opportunities and good race relations;
- Encouraging, supporting, and helping all learners and staff to reach their potential;
- Working with other institutions, local communities, and others to tackle racial discrimination and to encourage and promote good practice in achieving race equality;
- Making sure that the race equality policy and its procedures are followed and assessing the effects of the policy on staff and learners from different racial groups
- Promoting, monitoring and quality assuring the processes to ensure the policy has impact

18. Gender Policy Statement

The College is committed to a Policy of Gender Equality. The aim of the Policy is to ensure that men, women, transgender and transsexual persons receive fair and equal treatment. The College aims to provide a service that, in its teaching, employment, administration and support actively strives to:

- Eliminate unlawful gender discrimination.
- Eliminate harassment based on gender differences.
- Promote positive attitudes towards individuals of all genders.
- Promote equality of opportunity between men, women, trans-gender and transsexual persons.
- Ensure that all employment and support requirements connected with pregnancy, care for children and family life are given close scrutiny to ensure fairness for all.
- Take steps to identify any shortfalls in our policies and practices which may inadvertently lead to gender inequalities.

18A. The College will,

- Work actively to create a supportive and inclusive environment for all that enables full participation and success in learning and employment and will positively challenge discrimination in every area of College life.
- The College will not allow sexual harassment or unfavourable treatment in any form.
- Recognise that people are sometimes treated unfairly in terms of education, training and employment because of their gender.
- The College aims to eradicate gender discrimination.
- Take an organisational wide approach so that tangible outcomes and improvements for all can be achieved.
- Positively encourage learners into non-traditional areas of study and work to minimize gender stereotyping.
- Not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of gender re-assignment towards either trans-gendered or transsexual people.
- Strongly challenge through the College disciplinary procedures any incidents of sexual harassment in any area of College life.
- Ensure where practicable that working-hours adjustments are in place to meet caring responsibilities.
- Ensure that staff who are pregnant and those with caring responsibilities are treated in accordance with the laws which cover their rights to time off.
- Consult with those who are expecting or have children or family responsibilities and other employees and service users to ensure that college policies and procedures are fair to all.

19. Disability Policy Statement

The College affirms that disabled individuals are entitled to the same equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities as non-disabled individuals and will fulfil its requirements under the Disability Discrimination Act. The College is committed to making any reasonable adjustments that will promote equal access and opportunities for learners, staff and members of the public with disabilities/or learning disabilities using college facilities.

19A. The College will,

- Develop an organisational approach which promotes equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons.
- Eliminate discrimination which is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act.
- Eliminate harassment of disabled persons which is related to their disabilities.

- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons.
- Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life.
- Take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities and making considerations into whether this would involve treating disabled people more favourably than other persons.
- Ensure that all learners and employees have appropriate opportunities to disclose their disabilities/learning difficulties throughout their time at the college.
- Ensure that learners have access to flexible and inclusive learning opportunities and that information on support is available.
- Provide learners with individual learning programmes.
- Ensure that disabled staff and learners have access to specialist equipment and technology where appropriate to allow equality of opportunity.
- Provide information in a variety of formats to ensure equal access.
- Maintain strong links with external agencies to ensure the provision of appropriate and effective support for staff and learners with disabilities and/or learning difficulties.
- Ensure that its services and facilities are open to the public and that members of the public have equal treatment when accessing them.

19B. Consultation

The College will adopt a joint approach through actively involving disabled people in the development of its disability policy and procedures.

This will include involvement in,

- Identifying barriers faced by disabled people within Norton Radstock College
- Helping to set priorities for action plans
- Assisting with planning activity

Involvement will include key partner and referral agencies, disabled service users, existing and prospective staff and learners, relevant funding bodies and appropriate outside bodies; the method and process of involvement will vary and opinions will be sought as to the most effective means of involvement.

20. AGE, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE OR BELIEF

Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

The College and any agency it contracts with, will not discriminate against any individual on the basis of age. Criteria will be based on possession of appropriate skills to undertake the course or employment. The College will encourage and support learners and staff to challenge prejudice, stereotyping and intolerance, and will manage the environment so that individuals' dignity and rights are maintained.

The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 (and Civil Partnership Act 2004) and Employment Equality Act 2006

The legislation makes discrimination in employment and vocational training on grounds of sexual orientation illegal and has been amended to take account of the introduction of civil partnerships.

The College strongly opposes discrimination on the grounds of sexuality and is committed to taking positive action to identify and remove any such discrimination from college life. The College actively encourages positive acceptance of gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and heterosexual people. Any discrimination which is upheld will be tackled through College disciplinary procedures.

Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 (and amendments); Race and Religious Hatred Act 2006.

In these Regulations, "religion or belief" means any religion, religious belief, or similar philosophical belief.

The College strives to welcome learners and staff regardless of their religion or belief preferences. Everyone is regarded as an individual, and the College encourages and celebrates the contributions that they bring to the college. The College is a secular organisation and as such will not offer preferential treatment to any faith group.