

Yeovil College Gender Equality Scheme Annual Report April 2009

Context

Yeovil College is pleased to proactively respond to its legal and moral duty and responsibilities towards anti-discriminatory practice.

As part of the General Duty placed on all public authorities by the Equality Act 2006 (which amended the Sex Discrimination Act 1975) the College produced its first Gender Equality Scheme in April 2007. The scheme clearly demonstrates the college's commitment to the Gender Equality Duty and its purpose to create a positive, whole college, non-discriminatory ethos which underlines its practice.

This annual report (2009) reviews the college's progress during the last year and identifies the steps we have taken to fulfil our general duty related to gender equality, 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 Gender Equality Scheme. The overall scheme comprises a commitment which has a number of actions under the following headings:

Our Commitment – to treat all employees with respect and dignity

The college operates a Respect at Work Policy in order to eliminate harassment, victimisation and bullying. The Marketing Department continues to ensure that all publications, materials and web-based facilities provide a diverse, non-stereotypical representation which promotes a positively inclusive ethos.

Recruitment and Selection

The Human Resources Department continues to ensure that it does not discriminate on the grounds of gender in the advertisement/selection and recruitment of staff.

Career Development and Occupational Segregation

Yeovil College actively supports the promotion of opportunity and encourages staff to apply for jobs outside the constraints of gender stereotype. The college has more female staff than male staff and the number of female managers now exceeds that of male managers. All staff and governors have received equality and diversity training which includes discussion on gender stereotyping.

Harassment

The Respect at Work Policy is now in its second year of operation. This includes clear disciplinary procedures for all staff for dealing with harassment on the grounds of gender, gender reassignment or sexual orientation.

Dismissal/ Redundancy

The college has up-dated its redundancy policy to ensure there is no discrimination on the grounds of gender in the selection of those being made redundant.

Work Life Balance

The policy on Work Life Balance ensure maternity rights and parental rights are met.

Ensuring Equality

A new pay spine structure for all business support and lecturing staff was introduced during 2007 in order to ensure a more equitable pay, remuneration and progression system. A new contract for Business and Learner Responsive staff was introduced in 2009 to further promote equity.

Provision for those with Dependants

The Work Life Balance Policy sets out provision for staff with dependants. In conjunction with the Head of Occupational Health, the college works towards ensuring that requests for flexible working are considered in a manner that ensures genuine equality of access for all affected staff.

Gender Equality Scheme

Yeovil College has drawn up an action plan within the GES and will monitor progress towards achieving equality of opportunity between women and men. The annual report has been published and is available on the web-site.

Monitoring and Positive Action

The following information is now collected by the Human Resources Department:

The gender of employees by:

- type of employment
- ethnicity
- disability
- age
- race
- type of contract

It also analyses and provides information on:

- Rates of requests for flexible working
- Promotion
- Return rates from maternity leave and the return roles
- Pay levels
- Grievances, disciplinary and capability proceedings
- Satisfaction surveys and exit interviews gender and equality issues are raised

The HR Department are working towards providing gender information on the following aspects of recruitment, selection and on-going employment:

- Training/staff development
- Profile of those staff who have requested flexible working due to caring responsibilities for dependants and others
-

All of the above information is treated confidentially and made anonymous. No pressure is exerted on staff to disclose information about sexual orientation, religion etc.

Impact Assessment

All new college policies and procedures are impact assessed as a matter of course. A new monitoring group has been set up to review all existing policies and ensure that they are up-dated and impact assessed in a timely manner.

Division of Responsibilities

Women and men have equal opportunity to be recruited to the Corporation. The Corporation elected a female Chair for the first time in 2008.

The College's strategic plan includes statements about gender equality.

There is a lead Governor on the Equality and Diversity Group as well as a representative from the Student Union.

All members of staff, including new entrants, receive training on Equality and Diversity which includes gender equality and covers the legislation on sex discrimination and gender equality.

Lesson observations include statements about the inclusion of equality and diversity within schemes of work, session plans and delivery. Candidate interview records, reviews and internal verification of assessment/assignment brief for apprentices now include questions about equality and diversity.

Publicising Yeovil College's Policy and Progress

The college's commitment to gender equality is highlighted in the prospectus, annual report and recruitment material. The Gender Equality Scheme is available on the College web-site.

All new entrants are given information about equality and diversity, including gender equality. Each staff room has a copy of an Equality and Diversity file

which gives information about the college's commitment and current legislation.

Complaints

The Respect at Work policy now ensures that there is a clear procedure for staff to report acts of harassment, victimisation or abuse together with a related disciplinary procedure.

Actions still to be carried out (by April 2010)

An action plan is in place to address areas within the Gender Equality Scheme which require further work and improvement. Progress is monitored on a regular basis by the Equality and Diversity Group.

Conclusion

Yeovil College feels that progress has already been made under the Gender Equality Duty. There are still issues and action points to be addressed in order to further improve our understanding and practice across the College. These are defined in a clear Action Plan for 09/10. This shows that we aim to offer the very best opportunities for all our learners, prospective learners, staff and users of the College.