

## Yeovil College Single Equality Scheme

### Annual Report November 2009

#### Context

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

In January 2009 it produced its first Single Equality Scheme, which describes, in a single document, how the College will fulfil its statutory duties to promote equality of opportunity and actively value diversity within its community. We wish to provide a working and learning environment that acknowledges the richness of diversity as well as valuing and managing each individual's equality of opportunity within the College. We oppose all forms of discrimination or victimisation on any grounds such as age, disability, ethnic origin, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation or marital status.

The Scheme is intended to meet our duty to produce a Disability Equality Scheme, a Race Equality Scheme and a Gender Equality Scheme and to meet the requirements of each of these. It uses the commonality between the three to create a consistent approach, whilst ensuring that the distinctive requirements for the individual duties are included. The Scheme aims to ensure that the College meets or exceeds its statutory general and specific duties in respect of race, disability and gender equality. It also takes account of the requirements of the Employment Equality Regulations relating to religion or belief, sexual orientation and age, together with any other relevant legislation. The action plan shows the pro-active steps the College will take to fulfil these requirements and promote all aspects of equality and 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, (i.e. the action plan), 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 Single Equality Duty and corresponding Action Plan. The overall action plan comprises of five main actions, each with a number of sub-sections, with individual points for action and identified responsibilities across the organisation. The following points offer an overview of progress for each area for the year ended November 2009.

#### Action Plan Review

The Action Plan is divided into the following improvement areas:

##### Annual Report

To prepare a Single Equality Scheme Annual Report which reviews the progress made in 2009.

- This report is produced on an annual basis and will be disseminated to the Corporation and posted on the college web-site.
- A new monitoring group has been set up to ensure that policies are reviewed and impact-assessed in a timely manner.

##### Embedding Equality and Diversity into the Curriculum

To implement a mandatory training programme for curriculum delivery staff which enables them to effectively embed equality and diversity within curriculum delivery

- Training on Equality and Diversity is part of each stage of the teacher training programme

- Sessions are delivered within the New Teachers Forum on embedding equality and diversity within the curriculum.
- Training is to be delivered to curriculum teams within the new Faculty structure.
- Equality and diversity inclusion with teaching practice/ assignments is reviewed as part of the teaching observation process
- Improvements have been made to lesson plans, schemes of work, assignments, internal verification and teaching observation criteria and staff trained accordingly.
- A new tutorial programme (to include equality and diversity issues and awareness raising) was implemented for 2009

### **Staff Training on Equality and Diversity**

#### To implement a mandatory CPD programme for all staff

- Equality and Diversity training is now part of the College staff induction programme during 'New Starters' Training Day'.
- The majority of staff have attended cross-college training events. Training is also offered within the whole College continual professional development programme.
- Trials are underway for on-line Moodle training for staff in Equality and Diversity. This will be rolled out in 2010.
- Information is distributed to staff, on an on-going basis, for inclusion in the Faculty/area Equality and Diversity folder.
- The Equality and Diversity Policy and other policies and duties related to race, gender and disability are available on the college Intranet and web-site.
- 'Equality and Diversity' is a standing item on most cross-college meeting agendas
- The majority of the Corporation have attended Equality and Diversity training.
- A mandatory training programme on Safeguarding, continues to be on-going across College.

### **Recruitment**

#### To improve recruitment and retention of a diverse work-force

During 2009, to develop strategies to pro-actively recruit a diverse work-force and demonstrate best practice in relation to equality and diversity in employment through improved induction, training and support

- Information collected by the H R Dept is much more robust and informative regarding diversity of the work-force. This enables effective analysis of current situation.
- Information is presented on a regular basis to the Equality and Diversity Group and to the Senior Performance and Review Group so necessary actions can be agreed.
- 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. Women and men have equal opportunity to be recruited to the Corporation. The Corporation currently a female Chair.
- 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.
- 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.
- The college has up-dated its redundancy policy to ensure there is no discrimination of the grounds of gender in the selection of those being made redundant.

- The policy on Work Life Balance ensure maternity rights and parental rights are met.
- 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.
- 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.
- The HR Department now collect statistical data, from exit interviews, related to the effect of policies and practices on disabled staff.
- All new job descriptions include expectations regarding Equality and Diversity.
- Staff induction includes training on Equality and Diversity and Learner Protection.
- New staff, who have disclosed a disability, are now offered the opportunity to meet with the Head of Occupational Health at the start of their employment.
- Return-to-work paperwork now includes a section regarding specific support for on-going disabilities, health issues etc.

### **Monitoring of Information**

Information is now collected by the Human Resources Department about the gender of employees by: type of employment, ethnicity, disability, age, race and 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

During satisfaction surveys and exit interviews gender and equality issues are raised

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.

### **Participation, Retention and Achievement**

To monitor current inequalities in curriculum areas and develop an improvement plan

During 2009, to review participation, retention and achievement in curriculum areas where there is currently inequality and develop an action plan for improvement

- Improved data collection to identify opportunities, achievement and progression for students from ethnic minority back-grounds is on-going. Reports are given and the Equality and Diversity Group and the Senior Performance and Review Group. The population is very small, although above the local percentage for ethnic minority groups.
- The Equality and Diversity Group continues to monitor participation, retention and achievement in curriculum areas for students with disabilities and by age and gender. Where there is currently inequality action plans for improvement are developed at course level within Faculties.
- Plans are underway to analyse on-line student surveys by ethnic group.
- Representatives of the Student Union are recruited to the College Equality & Diversity Group on an annual basis to inform the discussion on the analysis of data.
- The College continues to promote events such as 'Women into Construction'

- For the first time students at the University Centre have a Student Voice. Elected course representatives meet with the Director of UCY, Richard Foyle, 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.

## **Actions for 2010**

- To include Gender Equality as a standing agenda item at all Equality and Diversity Group meetings.
- On a termly basis, to provide the Equality and Diversity Group with 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
- Include race equality in equality and diversity events, organised with the co-operation of the Student Union, and in tutorial sessions
- Ensure that opportunities are taken to consider and promote equality issues through the normal curriculum e.g. assignments, discussion, learning materials.
- Include equality and diversity in teaching and learning guidance, review and observation.
- Embed equality and diversity issues (particularly disability awareness) within curriculum delivery
- Include a clear disability and equality focus within the delivery of a tutorial programme
- Produce a six-monthly Equality and Diversity news letter on the Website.
- Invite students with disabilities to be part of the working group to review annually the prospectus/ enrolment, paperwork etc.

## **Equality Bill**

Although Yeovil College has introduced a Single Equality Duty and Action Plan, which encompasses the key Actions from the three equality strands, it is mindful that the Equality Bill will be introduced in 2011 and has plans to incorporate the remaining four equality strands (Age, Gender Identity, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation) into its policies and action plans in the future.

## **Conclusion**

The College aims to offer the very best opportunities for *all* our learners, prospective learners, staff and users of the College. There are still issues and action points to be addressed in order to further improve our understanding and practice across the College. However, Yeovil College feels that significant progress has been made under the Single Equality Duty and the Single 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 equality.