

Gender Equality Scheme

2010

(first revision of Scheme originally published in 2007)

Introduction

The Gender Equality Duty (2007) was a new legislative requirement placed on public authorities (including FE colleges) to deliver better gender equality outcomes. The GED required colleges to act proactively on gender equality issues, across the whole institution and to have an anticipatory, social model approach towards gender equality.

As part of the Duty, Yeovil College published its first Gender Equality Scheme and related Action Plan in April 2007. During the last three years it has been proactive in ensuring that people are treated fairly, irrespective of gender, and has built upon identified current good practice and worked towards improving participation, satisfaction, achievement and opportunities for all.

This Scheme replaces the 2007 Scheme and takes into account progress made, as identified in the Annual Reports published during the last three years.

1. General Duty

The Gender Equality Duty emanates from the Equality Act (2006) which amends the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) and places a statutory duty on all public authorities to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment.
- promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

The Duty requires colleges to adopt a proactive approach across the whole institution. Colleges are also required to mainstream gender equality into all decisions and functions.

The Sex Discrimination Act defined unlawful discrimination as:

- Direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of sex.
- Discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity leave.
- Discrimination on the grounds of gender reassignment.
- Direct and indirect discrimination against married persons and civil partners.
- Victimisation.
- Harassment and sexual harassment.

Unlawful discrimination also includes that which is unlawful under the Equal Pay Act 1970.

In addition to the above, the Duty requires colleges to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment against transsexual people. This includes people who intend to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment.

2 The Specific Duties

The specific duties required Yeovil College to:

- prepare and publish a Gender Equality Scheme, by 30th April 2007, showing how the college intended to fulfil the general and specific duties and setting out its objectives.
- Implement the Scheme, including the actions for gathering and using information, within three years of publication i.e. April 2010, unless unreasonable or impractical to do so.
- review and revise the Scheme at least every three years.
- present an annual report on progress on implementation of the Scheme to the College Corporation.

In preparing the Scheme, the college is required to:

- consult employees, unions and other stakeholders.

- take into account any relevant information.
- consider the need to have objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap.

The Scheme sets out the actions the college has taken or intends to take to:

- gather information on the effect of its policies and practices on women and men.
- use the information to review the implementation of the Scheme objectives.
- assess the impact of current and future policies on gender equality.
- consult relevant employees and others.
- ensure implementation of the Scheme objectives.

3. Context

Yeovil College is a tertiary college working towards full inclusiveness for its learners, staff and service users. The college serves communities in South Somerset and North and West Dorset and works closely with Yeovil Federation, University partners and Yeovil Vision. The college has a turnover of approximately £15M and provides learning opportunities for over seven thousand learners. Our core values and behaviours include:

- Valuing and celebrating diversity
- Respecting and supporting each other
- Promoting equality of opportunity
- Communicating openly and honestly
- Treating staff, learners and customers with respect

4. Our Commitment

4.1 Yeovil College celebrates and values the diversity brought to its workforce by individuals, and believes that the College will benefit from employing both women and men at all levels of responsibility, and across all areas of work, thus hoping to provide role models for both female and male students in whatever area of the curriculum they are interested. The College will treat all employees with respect and dignity, and seek to provide a positive working environment free from sex discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

4.2 Yeovil College will seek not only to eliminate sex discrimination, but also to create a working environment based on good relations between women and men. To this end, we undertake to provide diverse, non-stereotypical images of women and men in any material which we produce for learners and staff. The aim is to create a positive inclusive ethos where issues of gender discrimination and stereotyping can be discussed openly, with a shared commitment to challenging and preventing sexism and sex discrimination, to respecting diversity and difference, and to encouraging good relations between women and men.

4.3 Yeovil College will also seek to eliminate unlawful harassment and promote equality of opportunity for employees who intend to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment. As part of the colleges Gender Equality Action Plan, the college will develop a Transgender Policy.

4.4 Yeovil College will work towards the elimination of sexism whether overt or covert.

4.5 Yeovil College acknowledges that the Gender Equality Scheme (GES) must be developed in consultation with employees, recognised trade unions and relevant stakeholders.

5. Recruitment and Selection

5.1 Yeovil College will not discriminate on the grounds of sex in the way it recruits and selects staff.

Details are to be found in the Recruitment Policy and Equality and Diversity Policy.

6. Career Development and Occupational Segregation

6.1 All employees shall have equal rights to training, promotion and other aspects of career development.

6.2 Yeovil College will assess the impact of its policies and practices on the career development opportunities of women and men (see section 14 for further details).

6.3 Yeovil College will analyse monitoring data to assess whether there may be any sex discrimination or adverse impact in terms of recruitment into senior positions and in promotion.

6.4 In order to promote equality of opportunity, we will consider initiatives such as women-only training or coaching in management to take positive action to address any existing inequalities.

6.5 Yeovil College recognises that stereotyped gender roles can be harmful to both women and men, who may feel constrained to behave in ways, and work in areas traditionally considered appropriate for their sex. These constraints can lead to occupational segregation between roles, which limit opportunities available to both sexes. Encouragement and support will be given to staff who try to step outside the constraints of gender stereotypes in any area of the College's work.

6.6 In recognition of the constraints of occupational segregation and in acceptance of the importance of role models for learners, we will also consider the need to take positive action, where monitoring highlights an imbalance, to increase numbers of women teaching staff in male-dominated areas and vice-versa.

6.7 Equality training programmes will include anti-sexist material, and will have due regard to the need to break down traditional gender stereotypes.

7. Harassment

7.1 Harassment on grounds of sex, harassment on grounds of gender reassignment and sexual harassment, are viewed by Yeovil College as very serious offences, which if proven may in certain circumstances lead to the dismissal of a member of staff or, if an employee is harassed by a learner, the learner disciplinary policy should be followed. For details of handling harassment claims, see the Respect at Work Policy and Code of Conduct.

7.2 In line with section 14, Yeovil College will take steps to determine the effectiveness of the Respect at Work Policy and improve it where necessary, by monitoring the number of complaints received and the outcomes, and by reviewing the procedures periodically.

8. Dismissal

8.1 Yeovil College will ensure that there is no sex discrimination in relation to dismissal of staff. In particular, should a redundancy situation occur, it will ensure that gender is not a factor in the selection of those to be made redundant. For more details see the Redundancy Policy.

9. Maternity and Parental Rights

9.1 Yeovil College will ensure that all of women's maternity rights are met, as are parents' rights to parental leave. For details, see the Work Life Balance Policy.

10. Ensuring Equality Between Women and Men

10.1 Yeovil College is committed to working to eliminate gender inequality and harassment, and to promote equality of opportunity. We are also committed to encouraging changes in

individual behaviour and attitudes, and ensuring equality of opportunity and treatment for women and men.

10.2 Yeovil College recognises that, despite the Equal Pay Act 1970, a pay gap still exists in general between women and men. We recognise our obligation to gather information to determine whether a gender pay gap exists in the College, and if a gap is found we will seek to identify the causes of that gap. We recognise that women are underrepresented in management jobs in society generally, which may be a contributory factor to overall gaps in pay.

10.3 Yeovil College recognises that a disproportionate number of its part-time workers are women, for reasons related to the greater burden of caring responsibilities that they bear. We therefore accept that any unequal treatment of part-time workers is likely to have more adverse impact on women than on men. We resolve to adhere closely to the Flexible Working and Maternity Policies.

10.4 Yeovil College will consider the need to provide gender equality training for all staff and learners, in order to foster a learning and work environment free from the limitations of traditional views of gender roles and opportunities.

10.5 Yeovil College believes that a whole-college approach is required to promote gender equality and will therefore ensure that adherence to the ethos of this gender equality policy will feature as part of the procurement process in order that providers of contracted-out services comply with the College's standards as prescribed in this document.

11. Provision for those with Dependants

11.1 Details relating to compassionate, paternity, fertility treatment and dependants leave are set out in the Work Life Balance Policy.

11.2 Yeovil College recognises that staff are at times likely to have special issues in relation to childcare and the care of other dependants, and while this is likely to impact disproportionately on women, men too are sometimes affected. We will make every effort to meet the needs of staff with such responsibilities and to ensure genuine equality of access for all affected staff, for example by adopting a flexible approach to producing timetables and work plans in order to take into account the caring responsibilities of staff.

11.3 Yeovil College will provide support for staff returning after a break caused by caring responsibilities, and will treat sympathetically requests to job share or to move to part-time employment for a specified period.

11.4 Yeovil College will also assess the impact of caring responsibilities on both women and men, and will consider whether any steps are needed to address any relevant issues identified.

12. Gender Equality Scheme

12.1 In line with the SDA 1975 (as amended by the Equality Act 2006), Yeovil College will draw up a GES to set objectives and monitor progress towards achieving equality of opportunity between women and men.

12.2 In the formation of the GES Yeovil College undertakes to gather information to identify action points to address any areas of inequality or adverse impact. We will then prioritise the action points identified.

12.3 Yeovil College will proactively seek to consult with employees, recognised trade unions and other relevant stakeholders when prioritising the objectives in the GES. For example, this may be achieved by establishing a Gender Equality Steering Group as a sub-group of the Equality and Diversity Committee.

12.4 Yeovil College will immediately take steps to begin implementing the objectives set out in the GES with a view to having implemented all objectives by the end of the GES's three-year period.

12.5 The GES will contain monitoring data and positive action targets described in section 13 and any other information considered relevant.

12.6 Yeovil College will publish a report annually on the GES which will be made publicly available.

13. Monitoring and Positive Action

13.1 The monitoring process will be used to analyse the impact of the College's policies and practices, and the extent to which they promote equality of opportunity between women and men. The process will also help to ensure that discrimination and harassment on the grounds of sex do not take place in Yeovil College.

13.2 To inform the setting of objectives for the GES (as describe in section 12 above) and the measurement of progress towards achieving them, we will collect and analyse the following information about gender:

- The sex of employees by grade / salary scale, hours and type of work (e.g. management, teaching, support)
- The sex of employees by ethnicity, disability, age, race, religion and sexual orientation
- Job application and selection success rates
- Type of contract (permanent, temporary agency)
- Rates of requests for flexible working
- Training / staff development
- Promotion
- Return rates from maternity leave, and the roles to which they return
- Pay levels
- Grievances, disciplinary and capability proceedings
- The profile of those with dependants and caring responsibilities
- Satisfaction surveys and exit interviews

13.3 Yeovil College confirms that monitoring data collated from staff will be anonymised and treated in confidence. However, we recognise that transsexual employees may still be unwilling to identify themselves as such due to concerns of privacy. We will not place any obligation on staff to provide monitoring data; however, we will inform staff of the importance of such data for the purpose of further improving equality of opportunity. No information will be published that will enable an individual member of staff to be identified.

13.4 Once the results of the monitoring and analysis are available, we will use the results to inform the setting of objectives for the GES. The results and objectives will be published annually in an action plan.

14. Impact Assessment

14.1 All Colleges are required to carry out impact assessments. All relevant Yeovil College policies, procedures and practices will be assessed for their impact on different groups of men, women and transsexual employees.

14.2 Yeovil College will analyse the information gathered in the monitoring exercise (described above in section 13) and it will be used in the impact assessment to ensure that neither sex is disadvantaged and to identify where equality of opportunity can be promoted actively.

14.3 The purpose of the impact assessment is both to ensure that the College's decisions and activities do not disadvantage any employees on account of their gender, and also to identify opportunities to actively improve equality.

14.4 Yeovil College agrees to set out a timetable for assessing the impact of its existing policies, procedures and practices over the period covered by the GES.

14.5 Priorities for action in the GES stemming from the impact assessments should be established through consultation with employees, recognised trade unions and relevant stakeholders, as described in section 12 above.

15. Division of Responsibilities

15.1 Governors are responsible for ensuring that:

- Women and men are given an equal opportunity to be members of the Corporation, and in the event of significant under-representation of either women or men, the Corporation will consider what steps can properly be taken to address that under-representation.
- The College's strategic plan includes a commitment to gender equality.
- Equality training features as part of the College's strategic plan.
- They are aware of the Corporation's responsibilities in relation to sex legislation as an employer and service provider.
- They receive and respond to the sex monitoring information on staff, impact assessments and the GES objectives.
- The objectives identified in the GES are implemented.

15.2 Managers are responsible for ensuring that:

- The College Principal / Chief Executive and Senior Management Team are responsible for taking the lead in creating a positive, inclusive ethos that challenges sexist attitudes and behaviour on the part of managers, staff or learners.
- They are aware of the College's statutory duties in relation to sex legislation.
- All aspects of the College's policies and activities are sensitive to gender issues.
- Sex monitoring information is collected and analysed.
- The procedures for the recruitment and promotion of staff enshrine best practice in equal opportunities.
- Targets are set in the recruitment and promotion of staff based upon the analysis of sex monitoring information.
- The College's publicity materials present appropriate positive and non-stereotypical messages about gender.
- Staff induction programmes reflect the College's commitment to promote equality of opportunity.
- Appropriate training and development is provided to support the appreciation and understanding of diversity.

15.3 Staff are responsible for ensuring that:

- They are aware of the College's statutory duties in relation to sex legislation.
- Their schemes of work, lesson content and teaching resources demonstrate sensitivity to issues of equality.
- They challenge prejudiced and discriminatory behaviour by learners, work placement providers, outside contractors or other members of staff whenever practicable.
- The College and each of its individual staff confront sexism, whether witting or unwitting, whenever it occurs.

16. Publicising Yeovil College's Policy and Progress

16.1 To the public (including learners, work placement providers and staff):

- Our commitment to gender equality will be highlighted in our prospectus, annual report and annual financial statement.
- The GES and annual reports of progress against the GES.
- A summary of the results of our monitoring information will be included in our annual report and annual financial statements, where this does not breach individual confidentiality.
- A copy of this document will be available to contractors carrying out functions on behalf of the College to ensure that the contractors meet the College's standards and expectations in terms of gender equality.

16.2 To staff:

- All staff will have access to a full copy of the policy as part on the Intranet.
- The staff induction programme will highlight the College's commitment to gender equality, action to be taken by staff who suffer discrimination and the action to be taken against any perpetrators of such discrimination.
- A summary of the results of our monitoring information will be included in the appropriate College publication (e.g. Team Brief). Any published information will have due regard for individual confidentiality.

17. Complaints

17.1 Yeovil College will seek to provide a supportive environment for staff who make claims of discrimination or harassment.

17.2 Acts of sex discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation or abuse will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence.

17.3 Staff who feel they are being discriminated against on the grounds of sex by other members of staff should raise the matter under the Dignity at Work Policy, which will, if the accusation is upheld, be treated as a serious disciplinary offence.

17.4 If, in the course of their work, college staff suffer sex discrimination from members of the public, the College will take appropriate action and provide appropriate support.

17.5 Any discriminatory behaviour directed against staff by students will be dealt with under the learner disciplinary procedure.

18. Implementation

18.1 Yeovil College, working in partnership with the recognised trade unions and employee representatives, will seek to ensure that the College's GES is implemented so that all staffing policies and procedures (e.g. Recruitment and Selection Procedure) are non-discriminatory, and that monitoring and positive action processes are regularly reviewed and monitored.