



Working Together

Disability Equality Scheme

2010

**One Year
Interim Scheme**



**INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE**

Introduction

Plans and Consultations 2010

This is the fourth year of the College operating a disability scheme with the College planning to publish this scheme for one year only because of immanent changes in equalities legislation. The Scottish Ministers are consulting on the Single Equalities Bill at present with an expectation that it will become law in 2010.

The principal aims of the Bill are to:

- Harmonise discrimination law; and
- To strengthen the law to support progress on equality.

It will introduce several new measures that will impact on further education colleges as public bodies, these being:

1. Introducing a new public sector duty to consider reducing socioeconomic inequalities;
2. Putting a new Equality Duty on public bodies;
3. Using public procurement to improve equality;
4. Banning age discrimination outside the workplace;
5. Introducing gender pay and equality reports;
6. Extending the scope to use positive action;
7. Strengthening the powers of employment tribunals;
8. Protecting carers from discrimination;
9. Protecting breastfeeding mothers;
10. Strengthening protection from discrimination for people with a disability.

The college will consult on a introducing a single equality scheme during 2010. This will be done with the intention of ensuring that the new scheme complies with the principles of the Single Equalities Bill and will take into account the views of staff, students, special interest groups and other stakeholders as to how the College can ensure fairness in the delivery of its services. In Session 2009/2010 the College will operate with a single equalities action plan which is based on the continuing actions from the current gender, race and disability schemes and on the enhance range of intelligence the College now has on the impact the college services has on people of difference, race, gender and disability.

The 2009/2010 single equalities action plan is published as a separate document on the College's website at:

http://www.borderscollege.ac.uk/downloads/equalities_scheme_2007-2010_annual_plan_2009-10.pdf

The timetable for the creation of a single equalities scheme is as follows:

- Jan/Feb 2010: Prepare consultation documentation
- March 2010: Consult with staff
- April 2010: Consult with students
- May 2010: Consult with focus groups and other stakeholders
- June/Aug 2010: Draft single equalities scheme
- Sept/Oct 2010: Consult internally and externally on draft and involve special interest groups in redrafting and refining
- Nov/Dec 2010: Approval by committees and Board of Management

Disability Equality Scheme

The purpose and application of this Scheme is to create a positive atmosphere in Borders College where there is a shared commitment to value diversity and respect difference. Our aim is to deliver a first class service to learners who have a disability and to support staff with related needs.

The College is committed to enabling more disabled learners to access education and training, to receive improved support and have the best possible experiences and educational outcomes. Our implementation of the disability equality duty has provided a framework to tackle discrimination and institutional barriers before these can impact on the individual. It encourages a whole-organisational approach to disability equality, achieving greater inclusion and accelerating the pace of change.

The key principles of our disability equality scheme are to:

- promote equality of opportunity between people with a disability and other people
- eliminate unlawful discrimination
- eliminate disability – related harassment and victimisation
- promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability
- encourage participation by people with a disability in College life and decision making
- take account of peoples' disabilities, even where that involves treating people with a disability more favourably than others

The ethos of Borders College towards issues of disability rejects the 'medical model' and promotes the 'social model' of disability. In other words we do not accept the proposition that the problems people face are a direct result of their own health or impairment, thus focussing on what is wrong with a person and what they cannot do. Instead, our focus is upon attitudes, systems and barriers which may prevent participation and achievement by people with a disability. This social model of disability promotes the right of a person with a disability to belong, to be valued, to determine choice, to make decisions and be a full and respected participant in the college community.

This College Disability Equality Scheme describes a range of aspects which are central to our commitment. Firstly, there is an explanation of the internal organisation of the College in relation to disability issues – the infrastructure.

There follows a section which explains how people with a disability were involved in informing the Scheme and ensuring it is based on the life experience of people with a disability themselves. It also sets out the wide range of involvements open to people.

Complete and relevant information is essential to proper service planning and the scheme explains how the College gathers and utilises information and data relating both to learners and staff members. The scheme also explains how College policies, procedures and practices will be assessed and monitored so that disability equality is embedded in all the business of the College. Finally, the contact details of key College staff are provided and the services for which they are responsible identified. The complementary Action Plan is published on the College website as a separate document providing a single action plan for race, gender and disability equality.

College Infrastructure

The College is organised internally in order to maintain and develop services to assist people with a disability and to ensure their needs and rights are recognised and met.



Updates on policy, performance and practice developments are presented to the Board of Management biannually.

The Equality and Diversity Committee is the overarching forum which monitors and takes forward strategically all the equality themes, including disability. This group includes student representatives and a spokesperson from the Borders Disability Forum. The Committee is chaired by the Vice Principal, Quality and Innovation and includes another senior manager, the Head of Human Resources, Head of Student Services and the Quality Enhancement Manager. The Committee also has representatives from minority groups. The Equality Committee has one subgroup – the Equality Action Group which is entrusted with driving the implementation of all equalities themes.

Involvement of People with a Disability

This scheme has been developed and informed by the views and input of considerable numbers of people with disabilities. The College, in partnership with the local authority and health board, produced and distributed a joint questionnaire to disability groups throughout the Borders, and to people with a disability themselves and their carers.

The College section in the questionnaire sought views on how accessible were College services and arrangements to people with a disability, how well physical access was organised to buildings and locations, and the extent to which people felt treated fairly and helpfully. The returns from postal questionnaires were supplemented by a number of face to face interviews which took place between members of the College disability working group and a cross section of students and staff representing a spectrum of disability conditions including learning disabilities. Views received were central to compiling the Disability Scheme and also of key influence in determining the accompanying Action Plan. All staff, furthermore, were sent a survey to complete and return in order that the College could obtain information on the number of disabilities present across its staffing, how it could best assist such staff, and also as a general awareness-raising in staff of the Disability Discrimination Act of 2005.

Range of Involvements

People with disabilities are able to involve themselves in the business of Borders College in the following ways. It is important to note that this is not a finite range – further opportunities and activities will be put in place wherever appropriate, especially those proposed by people with a disability themselves.

- serving as a member of the College Disability Working group and/or raising issues for the attention of the group
- responding to staff and student surveys and questionnaires serving as a member of the College Customer Services Committee and/or raising issues for the attention of the group
- contributing to the College Good Practice Newsletter
- membership of the Student Association
- membership of Department Councils
- participation in SPARQS training for student representatives
- influencing the content of staff training on disability awareness and practice
- participation in focus groups
- visiting the college campuses as a prospective student or carer
- carrying out physical access audits, being reimbursed as a consultant to the College, and presenting reports to a variety of recipient groupings including the senior management team and Board of Management
- involvement in Equality Impact Assessments
- delivering Disability Awareness seminars to college staff and colleagues

Information for Improving Disability Equality

Learners with Disabilities

(a) Admissions

The College will record the number of course applications made by applicants who declare a disability and compare this to offers made and the numbers who actually enrol. Patterns in the choice of subject or curriculum area will be monitored. The College in its prospectus will make clear how disabled students will be assisted to participate in particular courses and how perceived barriers will be removed wherever possible. The views of disabled applicants, both those who enrol and those who do not, will be sought and the experiences of the application/recruitment processes noted by the College for future improvement. All applicants are asked to complete, with whatever assistances may be necessary, a questionnaire which asks about types of disability and illustrates the forms of College assistance which are available.

(b) Progress

Data will be collected on the retention, achievement, attainment and progression of disabled learners. The impact of the range of extended learning support services on student success will be evaluated. Attendance patterns will be monitored and the reasons for significant aspects of attendance explored with learners. The College will ensure wherever possible that no barriers will affect access to trips and visits or to work experience. Incidences of bullying and harassment, complaints, disciplinary measures and exclusions will be monitored.

Disabled Staff

(a) Recruitment and Selection

The College will monitor employment applications from people with a disability and relate this to selection for interview and the ratio of appointments made. The types of contracts made (eg. permanent, temporary, full time, fixed term, part-time) will be recorded, as will types of job and salary/seniority levels. The views of disabled applicants, both those who are appointed and those who are not will be sought.

(b) Progress

Appraisals and staff reviews will include a focus on how the College is assisting the staff member in managing his/her disability in the performance of the job. Progression and promotion of disabled staff will be monitored.

Information will be collected on career development aspects such as application levels for training, who is offered training, type of training attended, levels of satisfaction with training and the extent to which access requirements are met.

The College will keep information on aspects of bullying and harassment, complaints, grievances, competence issues, disciplinary matters. The views of disabled staff will be sought in relation to general satisfaction as an employee, reason for leaving and views on improvements in the quality of services such as the prevalence of adjustments, e.g. of accessible toilets and workstations, assistive technology and so on.

Impact Assessment Process

Over the next 3 years Borders College will conduct detailed, systematic analysis of the effects of current or proposed policies, procedures, plans or practices to establish if these have or will have a differential impact on people with a disability. The assessment will aim to find out whether disability equality can be better promoted in the College. We shall ask people with a disability to work alongside senior and key staff during the impact assessment process. The stages are as follows–

Step 1 - Map all policies, procedures, plans and practice

Step 2 - Screen these to determine priority

Step 3 - Consider evidence and information

Step 4 - Assess the likely impact of each

Step 5 - Explore options and make decisions

Step 6 - Identify monitoring processes

Step 7 - Publish results of the impact assessment

The impact assessment process is well underway with a holistic approach being taken to service areas of highest priority. These are Student Service, the curriculum and Human Resources.

The impact assessment is an integral part of all policy development and decision making processes. Impact assessment will then normally be carried out when a new policy, procedure, plan or practice is being considered or when an existing one is reviewed.

The monitoring forum which will ensure the above requirement is observed will normally be the College Joint Consultative Committee (Policy) with approval of all Impact Assessment being the responsibility of the Equality Committee. The College will seek to establish that at least one member and preferably more people on both committees will have a disability.

Access to Information and Representation

- to comment upon or find out about Borders College's services for people with a disability
- to attend or become a member of the College equality Committee

Contact: Vice Principal: Quality and Innovation, Scottish Borders
Campus, Nether Road, Galashiels, TD1 3HE
Tel – 01896 662528

- to receive information in braille or other formats

Contact: Marketing and Publications Manager, Scottish Borders
Campus, Nether Road, Galashiels, TD1 3HE
Tel - 08700-662557

- to access Extended Learning Support assistance

Contact: ELS Manager, Borders College, Scottish Borders Campus,
Nether Road, Galashiels, TD1 3HE
Tel - 08700-505152

- to make a complaint or suggestion in relation to a disability matter
- to discuss a staff development issue

Contact: HR Development Adviser, Borders College, Scottish Borders
Campus, Nether Road, Galashiels, TD1 3HE
Tel - 08700-662503

Rapid Impact Assessment

What Impacts may there be from this Proposal on any Group's ability to use the College services?

Policy: Disability Equality Scheme 2010

Positive Impacts (Groups affected)	Negative Impacts (Groups affected)
<p>The Disability Equality Scheme 2010 is a one-year interim revision of the College's previous three-year Disability Equality Scheme. In the coming year the College will consult on and publish a Single Equality Scheme to cover all six strands of equalities.</p> <p>The scheme describes how the college plans services so that they can be accessed by people with disability, how it involves people with disability in planning these services and how it monitors their effectiveness. It also describes how the college monitors the impact policies and plans to ensure that they do not discriminate against people with disability.</p> <p>Schemes purpose is to ensure that people with disabilities have the same access to services as others and where necessary to adapt the service to ensure that this is the case.</p> <p>The scheme applies to staff, students and any other user of the college's services.</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Actions taken to alleviate any negative Impacts: None required</p>	
<p>Recommendations: n/a</p>	

From the outcome of the Rapid Impact Assessment, have negative impacts been identified for race or other equality groups?

No

Has a full Equalities Impact Assessment been recommended?

Yes

No

Reason for recommendation:

The scheme promotes equality for people with disability there are no negative impacts.

Manager's Signature: _____ **Date:** 8.12.09

Status: Approved JCC January 2010
Policy Dated: December 2009
Author: Vice Principal - Quality and Innovation
Review Date: 1 December 2011
Equality Impact Assessed: December 2009