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| 02 | Full review, re-write new template and logo, | 18.10.07 |
| 03 | Full re-write and modernisation to reflect current practice and title change (Previously Equal Opportunities Policy) | 16.11.10 |
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Key search words for this document

equal opportunities agreements regulations acts equality diversity protected characteristics victimisation discrimination harassment

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It does not form part of this Policy document.



European Union
European
Social Fund



**Skills Funding
Agency**

everyone matters
celebrate individuality



1. Introduction

Gateshead College is fully committed to equality and diversity. We recognise that diversity is a positive attribute which brings many benefits. It is our intent to embed equality and diversity into the heart of the College's culture and to embrace all of the aspects of a diverse workforce and student population. The aim of this policy is to support that intent by providing a framework for continuous improvement and to ensure we work together towards a fairer College and society. We will work to ensure that we move beyond compliance to secure excellence in all areas of our work.

We will continue to enhance our reputation as a courageous, intelligent, responsive and responsible organisation where all flourish. We can only do this by being aware of who we are becoming and recognising our responsibilities to grow citizens and workers of tomorrow.

Within Gateshead, socio-economic inequalities exist as illustrated by the 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation (CLG). Gateshead is ranked 73rd most deprived out of 326 local authorities in England. Within Gateshead there are 15 areas which fall within the 10% most deprived areas in England, equating to almost 23,600 people or 12% of the population of Gateshead. Much of this deprivation is based within the central and eastern urban areas of the borough.

The index is made up of seven themed Domains or groupings of deprivation indicators. Each Domain contributes a different amount (%) to the overall index as follows:

- Income Domain (22.5%)
- Employment Domain (22.5%)
- Health and Disability Domain (13.5%)
- Education, Skills and Training Domain (13.5%)
- Barriers to Housing and Services Domain (9.3%)
- Crime Domain (9.3%)
- Living Environment Domain (9.3%)

Gateshead is ranked 73rd out of 326 local authorities where 1 is the most deprived (rank of average score – overall IMD).

| | IMD 2004 | IMD 2007 | IMD 2010 | IMD 2015 |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Gateshead | 26 | 52 | 43 | 73 |
| Newcastle | 20 | 37 | 40 | 53 |
| North Tyneside | 80 | 102 | 113 | 130 |
| South Tyneside | 27 | 38 | 52 | 32 |
| Sunderland | 22 | 35 | 44 | 37 |

It should be noted that a change in the rank of a local authority does not necessarily mean its level of deprivation has changed. Rather, other local authorities may simply have experienced a change in their level of deprivation, therefore affecting the rank of others. In addition, there are now less local authorities in the index due to the formation of unitary authorities.

Across Tyne and Wear and the North East, Gateshead has seen the largest improvement in its overall deprivation rank relative to other local authorities.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 among Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) based on the proportion of their neighbourhoods in the most deprived decile nationally. Published for the first time in 2015 the North East LEP area is ranked 10th most deprived out of 39 LEP areas.

2. Commitments

A fully inclusive organisation, with equality and diversity embedded in everything we do, we will:

- aim to ensure that no one is treated less favourably than any other and all feel included;
- aim to provide an inclusive and harmonious place to work and study where equality and diversity is promoted, valued and the rights and dignity of individuals are respected;
- not tolerate any form of prejudice, discrimination, victimisation or harassment against employees, learners, or members of the public;
- assure that all policies, procedures and services are free from direct and indirect discrimination;
- be an exemplar employer with equality of opportunity central to the recruitment and development of all of our staff;
- create a working environment where people are engaged and inspired to work together with focus, commitment and passion;
- behave responsibly and ethically as a business, doing the right things in the right way, and shaping students to become good citizens, living sustainable lives
- be adaptable in service provision and design to meet the identified welfare, financial, disability, careers education and employment advice and support delivery for our students and potential students
- support students and potential students to access appropriate support services, appropriate student finance packages, including external support services
- in the spirit of partnership work with a cross section of stakeholders who help us deliver the key success identified in our Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan.

Gateshead College Foundation is an independent charity set up by Gateshead College with the purpose of making sure that young people and adults, living in our region, can access funds to enable them to develop their skills and improve their life chances. The Foundation will provide resources and support not available through other statutory routes, to people who want to study a further education course at Gateshead College; this might be in the form of grants, scholarships, loans, equipment, gifts, bursaries and prizes. It could help towards the payment of fees, pay for specialist equipment or uniforms, help talented athletes to go to competitions or help with travel costs - especially for those who live some distance away.

In addition to financial support, the Foundation will also seek to offer other forms of support, to ensure Gateshead College students experience the very best personal, professional and social development we can offer. This may take the form of mentoring support, volunteering opportunities, work experience programmes and community projects.

3. Legislative framework

The Equality Act 2010, consolidates protection against discrimination on the grounds of:

Age

- Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).

Disability

- A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. There are no impairment categories which were included in the Disability Discrimination Act. Under the Act a claimant does not have to show that their impairment affects a particular capacity such as mobility, speech, hearing or eyesight.

Gender reassignment

- The process of transitioning from one gender to another. The definition has changed so that people no longer have to be under medical supervision to be protected by the law. Gender Reassignment continues to cover those who intend to live permanently in a gender other than the one assigned at birth.

Marriage and civil partnership

- In England and Wales marriage is no longer restricted to a union between a man and a woman but now includes a marriage between a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).

Pregnancy and maternity

- Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

Race

- Refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

Religion and belief

- Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

Sex

- A man or a woman. The word 'gender' is often used in place of the word 'sex' in equality issues. 'Gender' does not appear in legislation (except for 'gender re-assignment' - see above) but 'sex discrimination' and 'gender discrimination' are generally interchangeable.

Sexual orientation

- Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes. Assumptions and perceptions of a person's sexuality are also covered by law.

The Equality Act 2010 also put in place a single public sector equality duty, which gives public authorities a legal responsibility to provide this protection and make decisions which are fair and transparent, including the allocation of public money.

The Equality Act harmonises the previous duties on race, disability and gender into one single duty, which covers all seven equality strands: age, disability, gender, gender re-assignment, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation.

The single public sector equality duty requires the College to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations

It is deemed good practice to have a Single Equality Scheme (the Scheme) in order to identify and focus on key objectives/priorities.

The Scheme describes how we will fulfil our statutory duties to:

- promote equality of opportunity and diversity;
- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- place the advancement of inclusion, equality and diversity at the centre of what we do;
- ensure that the College operates best practice as an employer and service provider in pursuit of equality and diversity.

The Scheme will be supported by our Single Equality Action Plan (SEAP).

4. Scope

This policy relates to:

- members of the Governing Body
- all staff (prospective and current)
- former staff (in some circumstances)
- students (prospective, current)
- former Students (in some circumstances)
- disabled people (who hold or have applied for qualifications conferred by the College)
- contractors, partners and third party providers
- visitors and volunteers

With regard to staff, this policy applies to (but is not limited to) advertising of jobs, recruitment and selection, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service, reward, facilities, health and safety, conduct at work, grievance and disciplinary procedures and termination of employment (and beyond where provision of employment references are required).

With regard to students, this policy applies to (but is not limited to) admissions, teaching and learning, funding awards under the College's control, student support, facilities, health and safety, personal conduct, student references, student complaints and disciplinary procedures.

With regard to contractors, partners and third party providers this policy applies to work and services provided on behalf of Gateshead College.

We expect contractors/sub-contractors that are undertaking building, maintenance or repair work in any of our buildings/estate to comply with this policy.

5. Strategy for Implementation

In order to realise this commitment we will:

- challenge inequality, prejudice and discrimination.
- promote diversity in all its aspects, including employing a workforce and recruiting learners to reflect the community we serve.
- treat all people with respect and dignity.
- provide an environment free from prejudice, harassment, discrimination (direct/indirect), discrimination arising from disability and victimisation.
- where it is reasonable to do so make adjustments to enable equal access to College resources and services ensuring that none are treated less favourably
- ensure that equality and diversity is embedded in all College policies, procedures and Charters.
- ensure that all policies, strategies and procedures have had an analysis on the effect on equality (new documents when written and current documents during review) to ensure that, where appropriate, they promote equality and do not unlawfully discriminate
- work in partnership with recognised trade unions to ensure that staff are committed to the policy and it is fully effective.
- inform all staff and learners about our commitment to equality and diversity.
- ensure that the learner's experience in College makes them more aware of equality issues.
- ensure that staff are working to narrow achievement gaps between different groups of learners
- ensure equality and diversity are promoted through teaching and learning
- promote our commitment to equality and diversity through positive statements and images in marketing and communications activities
- ensure that any organisation that delivers services on behalf of the College (or works in partnership with the College) understands our commitment to equality and diversity and to eliminate discrimination.
- develop, publish and implement a Single Equality Scheme which sets out how we will fulfil our statutory duties regarding promoting equality and tackling discrimination.
- seek to develop partnerships with external groups and organisations to develop best practice and widen the scope of our diversity activities in the community
- staff or learners who are in breach of the Equality and Diversity Policy and/or relevant legislation will be dealt with through formal disciplinary procedures

6. Responsibilities

- a) The Corporation designates the Principal as having overall responsibility for equality and diversity.
- b) The Director of Student Experience and the Director of People and Organisation Development have accountability for setting the equality strategy and for overseeing the implementation of the equality and diversity policy and for ensuring an annual report is made to the Corporation.
- c) The Director of Student Experience and the Director of People and Organisation Development are responsible for implementing the strategies.
- d) All staff have a contractual obligation to be committed to the equality and diversity policy and be proactive in its promotion and implementation.
- e) All students have a responsibility to comply with the Student Code of Conduct.
- f) The Equality & Diversity Steering Group, chaired jointly by the Director of Student Experience and the Director of People and Organisation Development:-
 - drives the implementation of the Single Equality Scheme and action plan by on-going monitoring of performance and achievement of objectives
 - identifies emerging issues and develops remedial actions
 - considers, discusses and implements best practice
- g) The Director of Student Experience and the Director of People and Organisation Development are responsible for ensuring the Equality & Diversity Policy is meeting its commitments by monitoring its implementation strategy.
- h) In addition, the Director of Student Experience and the Director of People and Organisation Development produce and present a report to the Board of Governors as summarised below on an annual basis, highlighting areas of improvement and priorities arising for the following academic year.
 - progress against the objectives identified in the Single Equality Scheme and the delivery of the annual action plan reported by Chair(s) of the Equality & Diversity Steering Group.
 - performance analysis of third party deliverers - Director of Business Development
 - use of positive statements and images across all aspects of College communication in order to promote our commitment to equality and diversity – Director of Marketing and Communications
 - summary of progress to narrow learner equality achievement gaps - Assistant Principal - Standards and Performance
 - summary of issues from recognised trade unions as required (UCU/UNISON) by the Director of People and Organisation Development
 - summary of adjustments made for individuals to enable equal access to college resource and services – Learning Services Manager
 - summary of complaints/grievances received in year from learners and staff Director of Student Experience and the Director of People and Organisation Development
 - staff and learner profiles with comparisons drawn against the local community from the Director of Student Experience and the Director of People and Organisation Development and the Funding and Data Manager.

7. Measuring Impact

The College is committed to the collection and analysis of data in order to assess performance, identify emerging issues, areas of success and measure the impact of corrective actions.

The Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan 2016-19 and any subsequent update will detail how we will implement the Equality & Diversity Policy. Specific targets for improvement will be set, regularly monitored via the Equality & Diversity Steering Group and an annual report on progress, success and key issues presented to the Board of Governors.

8. Positive Action

We will use positive action measures to alleviate disadvantage experienced by people sharing a protected characteristic, reduce their under representation in relation to particular activities or meet their particular needs.

The College will ensure that when using positive action as a strategy, it falls within the law.

The key principles of anti-discrimination will be embedded across the College:

Age equality

Promoted and valued through:

- recognising the benefits of a mixed-age workforce and student community
- challenging age stereotypes

Disability equality

The abilities of disabled people are valued through:

- encouraging staff and students to disclose a disability
- make reasonable adjustments to support staff and students to achieve their full potential
- challenging stereotypes about disabled people

Gender equality

Males and females are fully represented at all levels within the College through:

- challenging gender stereotypes
- supporting staff and students in balancing work and home life

Sexuality orientation and gender identity equality

Promote sexuality and gender identity equality and take positive action to:

- challenge gender identity discrimination
- promotion of equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender staff and learners
- ensure people who plan to start, are undergoing or have completed gender re-assignment are protected against all forms of discrimination and harassment
- respecting different gender identities and lifestyles

Race equality

Racial and cultural diversity is represented at all levels within the College through:

- challenging racial and cultural stereotypes
- understand, value and respect different racial and cultural backgrounds
- embedding equality in our education and training programmes

Religion or belief equality

Students and staff are treated equally irrespective of their religious belief and practice or political opinions by:

- respecting a persons' freedom of belief and right to protection from intolerance and persecution.
- provide an environment where students and staff can raise issues and debate differences

9. Complaints Procedure

If a student or employee believes they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation the College will take this very seriously. All complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the appropriate procedure, i.e. student complaints procedure, student harassment/bullying procedure or grievance procedure.

10. Prevent

There is no place for extremist views of any kind at Gateshead College, whether from internal sources – students, staff or governors, or external sources - community, external agencies or individuals. It is imperative that our students see our college as a safe place where they can discuss and explore controversial issues safely and in an unbiased way and where our staff encourage and facilitate this. As a college we recognise that extremism and exposure to extremist materials and influences can lead to poor outcomes for our students. We also recognise that if we fail to challenge extremist views we are failing to protect our students.

Any prejudice, discrimination or extremist views, including derogatory language, displayed by students, staff, visitors or partners will always be challenged and where appropriate dealt with using the relevant disciplinary procedure. Where deemed necessary the college will alert any concerns about extremism to partner agencies including the Police and local authorities.

11. Related Documents

The following documents form part of this overall Equality and Diversity Policy for both students and employees:

- Complaints Procedures
- Student Harassment/Bullying Procedure (STM-PRO-009)
- Student Code of Conduct (STM-FRM-009/STM-PRO-005)
- Values in Action (HR-GDE-004)
- Grievance Procedure (staff) (HR-PRO-003)
- Harassment Policy (HR-POL-003)
- Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan 2016-19
- Analysis on the Effect of Equality (QTY-QSD-FRM-023)
- Recruitment Policy (HR-POL-005)
- Strategic Plan
- Prevent Policy (GC-POL-007)

12. Review

This policy will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis or in accordance with legislative developments and the need for good practice, using the local consultation/negotiating arrangements within the College

13. Alternative Format

If you require this document in an alternative format please contact the Marketing department or Student Services.