



Huddersfield New College

The Disability Equality scheme (DES)  
&  
Action Plan

December 2006

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## The context

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 was extended to include three pieces of planned equality legislation. The first – the duty to promote race equality came into force with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. The duty to promote disability equality is the second and is designed to ensure that colleges and other public sector bodies adopt an approach to disability that focuses on actively promoting equality of opportunity for disabled people and celebrating diversity. The disability equality duty comes into force in December 2006. The gender equality duty will come into force in April 2007.

The Act sets out general and specific duties. The general duty means the college must work to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equal opportunities for disabled people. We must also work to eliminate the harassment of disabled people, to promote positive attitudes and to encourage the participation of disabled people in the life of the college.

Reflecting the specific duty the college has produced a disability equality scheme. The scheme focuses the college's attention on areas of our activity of most relevance to disabled staff and students and on areas where the potential impact on disabled staff and students is most significant.

Using previous guidance, current college documents refer to '*students with learning difficulties and disabilities*'. The DDA (2005) refers to '*disabled people*' and they are defined under the DDA as people with a wide range of impairments including:

- physical or sensory impairments
- mental health difficulties such as depression
- specific learning difficulties such as Dyslexia
- medical conditions such as Alzheimer's, arthritis and cancer

The impairment must have a substantial effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day duties and be likely to last for more than 12 months.

This Disability Equality Scheme outlines the college's current position and the process by which the college generates continuous improvement.

## The College Mission

Huddersfield New College is a sixth form college committed to enabling individual students to achieve their potential in a supportive and inclusive environment.

In 2004, Ofsted stated that support for students at the college was "*outstanding*". Whilst not complacent we feel this forms a firm foundation on which to build.

The college is fully committed to equality of opportunity for both staff and students, following the practices outlined in our Equal opportunities Policy. (Equal Opportunities Policy appendix 1). Over the last 12 years the college has continuously improved the quality of the accommodation and central resources; during this time serious consideration has been given to access for students with disabilities and this resulted in the college being fully compliant on physical access issues well within prescribed deadlines. Ongoing developments have taken the college from a point where there were no students with disabilities to the current situation where the flexible learning environment and support arrangements enable

students with a wide range of physical and learning difficulties to seek out the college.

The college fully supports the DDA 2005 and the new duty to promote disability equality; the college will have due regard to continuing to

- eliminate unlawful discrimination
- eliminate disability related harassment
- promote equality of opportunity between disabled and other people
- take steps to take account of disabilities, even where this may lead to more favourable treatment for some
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life

### **The scheme**

The DES will be managed by a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT) to ensure disability equality continues to contribute to all college policies and procedures.

Whilst being a successful sixth form college, we have a strong commitment to social inclusion – “*The college’s response to education and social inclusion is outstanding*” (Ofsted 2004). The college prides itself as a provider of courses at levels 1 and 2 whilst retaining the high standards of a traditional sixth form college with the majority of provision at level 3. Students with physical or learning disabilities are supported to enable access to the most appropriate level of course; currently 78% of students with a disability are on level 3 courses.

The commitment to social inclusion has led to increased numbers of students with disabilities joining the college and the employment of at least one member of staff with a physical disability (within the past 3 years). Appropriate resources have increased accordingly and are provided to support both disabled staff and students; the college currently employs seven student support assistants to help students with both physical and learning difficulties. Whilst the college is aware of the vast majority of students with learning difficulties or disabilities, the situation is more limited for staff. Most staff have been at the college for some time. A survey in 1999 requesting information about any difficulty or disability resulted in no member of staff providing a positive response. As part of the DES the college will undertake a further survey.

Students are asked if they have a disability or learning difficulty on three separate occasions. The application form includes a tick-box; during the initial interview the question is also asked by the interviewer and they are also asked during the enrolment interview by the interviewer. Evidence from students with a range of disabilities clearly indicated in a recent questionnaire that the response to disclosure about their disability was at least OK (100%) with 73% indicating it was excellent. The responses came from a wide range of staff including initial interviewers, study centre staff tutors and subject teachers. Although information was requested, students may not be asked to the same standard by all interviewers. This will need to be addressed in the DES action plan. Staff are asked if they have a disability on the monitoring document attached to the application form; whilst this information is

not provided to the short-listing/interview panel sufficient information is provided to ensure disabled candidates who meet the criteria are interviewed. The information provided is monitored through an annual report to the Senior Management Team (SMT). The college currently holds the right to use the 'Positive about Disabled People' symbol (✓✓).

Currently there are 6 members of staff (3%) with a known physical or learning disability and 123 students (7%)

To facilitate a smooth transition, college staff who work in support maintain close contact with high schools and parents. Where appropriate, outside agencies are also involved; in 2005-06 and 2006-07 students with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Aspergers Syndrome have been supported post 16 by staff from Kirklees LEA who provide support for pre 16 students only. Their involvement allows us to ensure that, for each individual, the most appropriate support strategies are used. Staff teaching the students are involved at an early stage and peers are involved if appropriate.

To ensure appropriate support is available the college uses a combination of both a medical and social approach to disability. If a student has a mobility problem this is clearly stated to ensure each member of staff coming in contact with this student is aware of the disability. However, this information is supported by further discussion on how best to support the student and resources to ensure the student is not disadvantaged by the disability. Information about students is made available to teaching and support staff through our on-line attendance and review system. A series of icons is used which indicates there is a disability of some form and by hovering over the icon staff will see further information on the best way to support the student.

As a result of information gathered from interview forms and enrolment forms, a medical list is created which records students with medical problems and disabilities. This is shared with senior staff and those providing support in the study centre and is used to ensure support is offered to all who may need it. It is also added to the students' on-line records which have limited access. This provides the opportunity to analyse information on students with disabilities.

Teams analyse the results of students with disabilities within their subject area as part of the self assessment report. Currently, college results are analysed by ethnicity and sex. Although progress is monitored informally by the senior manager with responsibility for students with disabilities, analysis should also be undertaken on-line by disability and this will be addressed in the DES action plan.

### **Involving disabled people**

Students with a known difficulty or disability were asked to complete a questionnaire. Initial analysis of the results of the questionnaire would indicate that there are few areas that are of serious concern. However, the results need further analysis to investigate the results at a detailed level to see if particular disabilities give rise to particular issues.

To involve staff and students further, the questionnaire will be followed up each year, during the second term, by creating a 'focus group' of students and staff with disabilities and those with an interest in improving standards of provision for those with a disability. Involvement will be voluntary but a free lunch will encourage attendance and the process will build on the 'focus group lunch' provided by the study centre and library each year which is very successful.

Students with a disability are the responsibility of a member of the senior management team who works closely with the staff in the study centre who, in turn, provide much of the support. This senior manager also manages the student support assistants. As a result concerns are channelled through this role which can provide opportunities for disabled students to provide feedback and students are often seen for further discussions. However, this is still informal and a more formal approach to seeking feedback from disabled students is currently being discussed. This will be addressed in the DES action plan.

There are only a few staff who have informed management that they have a disability. In preparation for the DES a teacher appointed within the past two years who is visually impaired was interviewed about the interview process and the support available from the college. Feedback is generally very positive; however, feedback indicates that some informal procedures may need to be formalised and some areas can be improved. These will be addressed in the DES action plan.

Within the last few years the college has arranged training on a number of disabilities. In particular, it was clear that in September 2005 the college would have increased numbers of students with Aspergers Syndrome / Autistic Spectrum Disorder and ADD / ADHD. AS a result training was arranged for all teaching staff and some support staff. The study centre creates a disability handbook which is distributed to all teaching areas; this includes information on a range of medical conditions and disabilities. Further training will be arranged as appropriate and this will form part of the college's training and development plan and the DES action plan.

### **Impact assessment**

All policies, procedures and plans are monitored SMT, College Board and the Corporation (Governors). As these are monitored on a regular basis the college will use the review procedure to investigate further opportunities to promote a more positive attitude towards disabled people. Actual practice is monitored by senior managers in the college and is reviewed regularly.

In the first instance the recruitment and selection procedures and the application and interview processes have been reviewed by working closely with disabled staff and students. Whilst feedback is positive, proposals have been made to An action plan to help improve these procedures is being drawn up. The DES action plan will work alongside the college Quality Improvement Plan which is monitored by SMT. The DES action plan attached includes realistic targets and timescales

**Publication**

The DES and action plan will be agreed by the Senior Management Team, College Board and the Governing Body of the college.

The DES will be published on the college web site and will be monitored by a DES group chaired by the senior manager with responsibility for the area. This group will feed back to the College Board and the Senior Management Team (SMT).

## Huddersfield New College Disability Equality Scheme

### Action Plan 2006-09

No.	Objective	Action	Success Criteria/ Target	Staff	Timescale and Milestones	Training required	Monitoring, evaluation and reporting arrangements	Impact
	What is the purpose of the action?	Make these specific and detailed. Does each one directly address the issue, and will they bring about the desired improvement?	How will you know the action has been effective? Has it made a difference?	Who leads on each action?	When is the deadline for completion?	What training is required for the actions to be completed?	Monitor dates? How will you monitor progress?	What impact do you think this will have in preventing disability discrimination?
1	To determine the number of staff who have a disability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate clear definitions of what may constitute a disability</li> <li>Use this within a questionnaire to staff to assess numbers who feel they have a disability</li> <li>Allow staff to provide confidential responses if preferred</li> </ul>	100% staff receive the questionnaire At least 80% return	Mwo & Ash	Questionnaire distributed by 31/04/07 Returns requested by 25/05/07	Clarity on definitions should be provided by the questionnaire Further details should be made available from a number of different staff	Results should be available to SMT by 5/06/07	Being aware of staff disabilities will provide an opportunity to give support
<b>Review/Monitoring of objective 1</b>								
2	To improve the consistency of approach to the questions on disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a leaflet on support for use at open evenings</li> <li>Insert an additional comment in letters inviting students for interview</li> <li>Insert an additional comment in the letter</li> </ul>	Students accepting places have provided information about their disability which is passed on to	Mwo Afr	Letters modified before first interviews  Interviewers clear before main interview	Training on definitions and how to ask in a supportive way to encourage students to disclose	Programme complete by Sept 07. Mwo to monitor information received from interviews	Being more aware of student disabilities will provide an opportunity to give support

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>offering a place</li> <li>Undertake further training of interviewers in the first instance and all staff in the longer term</li> </ul>	Mwo		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>block</li> <li>Staff clear before induction interviews</li> </ul>			
<b>Review/Monitoring of objective 2</b>								
3	To ensure regular feedback is received from students with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate with students the most appropriate way to obtain feedback on progress [in addition to the end of year questionnaire] without appearing to discriminate or interfere.</li> <li>Update the DES action plan to address issues raised</li> </ul>	A process agreed between students and Mwo which is then formalised	Mwo	Meeting with students / staff undertaken by 5/4/07 Action in place by Sept 07		Meeting date planned & agreed with SC team Action agreed at SMT	Feedback from students should ensure actions in the college are supportive rather than discriminatory
<b>Review/Monitoring of objective 3</b>								
4	To provide further training on the issue of supporting those with a disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss with the Staff Development Manager opportunities for further training</li> <li>Agree a training plan to involve all appropriate staff</li> <li>Agree a plan to update new staff</li> </ul>	Training plan agreed	Mwo Awn Xgo	Training plan – Jan 08 - includes appropriate activities	As training plan	Plan agreed at SMT	Ensuring all staff are aware of the support & guidance they should provide is essential
<b>Review/Monitoring of objective 4</b>								
5	To ensure that appointment procedure takes into account the DES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the procedures and make minor changes in line with feedback from a disabled teacher</li> <li>Test feedback with other staff</li> </ul>	Procedures reviewed & revised where appropriate	Mwo Afo Afr	Review completed by August 2007		Agreed at SMT	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formalise informal actions where appropriate</li> </ul>						
<b>Review/Monitoring of objective 5</b>								
6	To analyse results by disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss with SMT an approach to analysing results by disability</li> <li>Agree an appropriate format for reporting such analysis</li> </ul>	Analysis of results by disability available	Mwo Afr	First analysis available in August 2007	PLs/Hods to be informed / trained on the updated system	Agreed at SMT Used by PLs / HoDs	
<b>Review/Monitoring of objective 6</b>								
7	To analyse the results of student questionnaires with respect to disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake a more detailed analysis of the questionnaire completed by students with disabilities</li> <li>Assess other questionnaires to determine whether specific reference to disabilities should be included in the questions or the analysis.</li> <li>Update the DES action plan to address issues raised.</li> </ul>	<p>Detailed analysis completed</p> <p>Review of questionnaires undertaken</p>	Mwo Awn	<p>Results available by 8/01/07</p> <p>Questionnaires available at strategic points in the year</p>		Agreed at SMT & College Board	A clear picture of changes required should emerge
<b>Review/Monitoring of objective 7</b>								
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<b>Review/Monitoring of objective 8</b>								