



Coatbridge College

Disability Equality Scheme 2006 – 2007

Year One Report on Progress

This document is available in large print or in an alternative format that meets your needs. Please contact Lorraine Sutherland, Head of Human Resources Telephone 01236 707077 or Via Email lsutherland@coatbridge.ac.uk

Section One:

Coatbridge College welcomes you to its first annual report on its Disability Equality Scheme for the period 2006-07. The report is produced to inform our stakeholders of the significant progress we have made in relation to our responsibilities in respect of disability equality.

This annual report reviews the progress we have made in relation to specific targets contained within our Action Plan for this period but it is acknowledged that the College will continue, through its culture of self evaluation, to ensure that disability equality is a key priority for us as an organisation.

Equality of Opportunity

Coatbridge College reaffirms its commitment to a policy of equal opportunity within the College. It aims to create the conditions whereby students, staff and stakeholders are treated on the basis of their relative merits, abilities and potential. The College's policy on this aims to free students and staff from all forms of discrimination, particularly on the grounds of:

- Sex
- Marital Status
- Disability
- Race
- Ethnic Origin
- Political Belief
- Trade Union Activity
- Responsibility for Dependents
- Colour
- Employment Status
- Religion
- Age
- Sexual Orientation
- Or Language
- Nationality

The College is fully committed to Equal Opportunities and is taking positive steps to ensure that Equal Opportunities become integral to the way it carries out its relevant functions.

Commitment to Disability Equality

As part of its overall commitment to equality of opportunity, Coatbridge College is also committed to promoting disability equality and welcomed the introduction of the Disability Equality

Duty. In response, we launched our first Disability Equality Scheme in December 2006 along with a supporting Action Plan. We recognise that disability equality is central to all our activities and we are committed to working in partnership in the positive promotion of disability equality.

We believe that the main aim of our Disability Equality Scheme is to make sure that disability equality is not reliant on the commitment of a few individuals but is core to all aspects of how we conduct our business and at its core is the continual involvement of disabled people.

Senior Management Commitment

The Board of Management, its staff, together with its trade unions, EIS and Unison, are committed to disability equality. The College Management Advisory Committee (CMAC) Chaired by the Principal and Chief Executive consists of the Senior Management Team of the College it provides the strategic steer for the College's Disability Equality Scheme and is responsible to the College's Board of Management for:

- Providing a clear vision for, and shared understanding of disability equality.
- Creating a learning and working environment for staff and students which is free from discrimination.
- Challenging and eradicating inequality and discrimination.
- Providing high quality and responsive provision, services and support that meet the needs of disabled (visible and non visible) staff, students and service users.
- Providing an environment in which it is safe to disclose and difference is respected.
- Embracing and celebrating the diversity of students, staff and local communities.
- Promoting equality for disabled people and people with medical conditions in policies, procedures, plans and practices.

- Ensuring that the student body and workforce reflect the diverse communities of Coatbridge, North Lanarkshire and beyond.
- Involving disabled people and people with medical conditions in securing improvements to programmes, services and learning and work environment.
- Achieving the actions and targets set out in the Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan and ensuring that there are sufficient financial and other resources to support the achievement of the Action Plan.
- Providing a high quality and responsive curriculum, effective services and support arrangements meeting the needs of disabled staff, students, service users and those with medical conditions.

The ongoing Committee structure of the Board of Management provides the necessary checks and balances in measuring progress, against agreed targets. This is supported by a comprehensive Board Evaluation Strategy which has at its heart the Association of Scotland Colleges “2006 Guide for Board Members” in addition to the adoption of the Principles of Good Governance by Board members.

The College’s Access & Inclusion Group has been set up to champion the accessibility of the College curriculum and services and reports on progress associated with disability equality to CMAC on a fortnightly basis and thereafter to the Board of Management.

The group comprises key management, academic and support staff ensuring maximum coverage and representation across the College. An implementation Sub-group of the Access and Inclusion Group has been set up to involve staff and students with disabilities in the action plan linked to disability equalities. In addition the Sub-group collaborates with external stakeholders and organisations supporting disabled people. This Sub-group reports to the Access and Inclusion Group who in turn update the College Management Advisory Committee as noted above.

Now that the Disability Scheme has been established, the Disability Equality Sub-group meet monthly to review the

implementation of the Disability Equality Action Plan. The Sub-group is accessible to students and staff who wish to discuss how a particular policy or its implementation impacts on them.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT IN ESTABLISHING THE DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME

In 2006 the College initiated its consultation strategy, engaging with disabled students, staff and external organisations and stakeholders in the preparation and development of its Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan. The services of an experienced, independent Equality and Diversity consultant were secured to ensure that a thorough and independent process followed. Focus groups and individual interviews with a range of disabled staff, students and stakeholders from external organisations that support disabled people have and will continue to be facilitated by the consultant to foster an open dialogue. The College wishes to be informed by their views on a wide range of College activities, and to identify areas for development and priorities for the Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan.

The College has over many years worked with external organisations for disabled people such as Corner Stone, Enable, The Richmond Fellowship and Turning Point. These partnerships provide specific services to people with disabled needs and mental health issues.

Through ongoing consultation and involvement, the College will continue in its aspiration to establish best practice in this area and get positive outcomes in relation to disability equality. It is recognised that good practice within the College needs to be supported and mainstreamed to enable consistency of approach to disability equality throughout the College.

WHAT OUR DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME AND SUPPORTING ACTION PLAN AIMS TO ACHIEVE

Coatbridge College aims to attract and retain more disabled students and staff, and will work in partnership with internal and external organisations and partners to achieve this. It will work to reduce disadvantages, discrimination, and inequalities of opportunity, and promote diversity in terms of learners, staff, the community it serves and the partners it works with. The College's

Disability Equality Scheme sets out its commitments to disabled people and builds upon the extensive work which has already taken place; The College, in implementing its Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan will fulfill the specific duties of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995.

HOW WILL OUR TARGETS BE MET?

As part of our Disability Equality Scheme 2006-09, the College also compiled a supporting Action Plan that outlined the areas where improvements could be made. These improvements are prioritised over the 3-year period and a summary of these is included in Section 2 of this report.

Targets were established in response to stakeholder consultation and were ratified by senior management as part of their commitment to equality of opportunity in December 2006 when the Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan were published.

The College monitors its progress in relation to disability equality through the Disability Equality Sub-group who report to Access and Inclusion Group. The Access and Inclusion Group thereafter report to the College Management Advisory Committee who report to the Board of Management.

Section Two:

ACHIEVEMENTS IN YEAR ONE 2006-07

In response to feedback from stakeholders, the College has been able to make a number of improvements within the College in relation to disability equality that include the following:

DDA Compliance of College Estate – The College has submitted a Business Case to the Scottish Funding Council and has secured £20million funding that will enable the College estate to be DDA compliant and fit for purpose. Some immediate improvements that have taken place in response to consultation have included:

- Mirrors being placed in lifts.
- Ramps fitted with mirrors at corners to see people coming from other side of ramp.
- Additional disabled car parking spaces.
- Disabled alarm in toilets.
- Hearing loops at Reception areas.

College Publications and Promotional Materials – All College publications are either made DDA compliant or are made available in a number of different formats according to need.

Training & Development – All staff have undergone significant training and development in relation to disability equality that enables them to have awareness of the legislation and how to put this into practice in their day to day work. Training has also been provided in the Quality and Evaluation of Learning & Teaching materials to enable equality to be further embedded into the curriculum.

Access & Inclusion Group – The group has met regularly in the review period and has monitored progress associated with the Disability Action Plan.

College Website – This is now fully DDA compliant and accessible to our stakeholders.

Undeclared Disability – The College actively encourages its staff and students to declare a disability by actively explaining the

definition of disability and illustrating the level of support available to individuals.

College Induction Strategy – The College has launched its revised induction strategy with greater clarity given to the College's equality strategy conveyed to individuals at a very early stage in the process.

Student Enrolment – Identification of support needs is completed for all students at a very early stage in the enrolment process with needs being identified and support in place pre-entry.

Student Induction Process – The student induction process highlights equality in more detail.

Learner Support Staff Training – Staff in the area of learner support have undergone significant focussed training in relation to disability equality. Much of this training has been conducted through BRITE.

Impact Assessment – Initial impact assessment of College policies has been completed but policies require to be prioritised and undergo detailed impact assessment. In the meantime, staff training and development of the train the trainers will take place.

CHALLENGES IN YEAR ONE 2006-07

The College also recognises that there have also been challenges that we have faced or indeed will need to face in the future. These are:

Impact Assessment – The College is in the process of training those individuals who will undertake formal impact assessment. This training will be prioritised in the coming year to enable impact assessment to be completed over the 3-year timescale of our Action Plan.

Section Three:

TARGETS FOR YEAR TWO 2007-08

In setting its targets for year 2, the College will continue to consult and involve disabled staff, students and stakeholders. This exercise continues through the good work of the Disability Sub-Group reporting to the Access and Inclusion Group. Whilst there has been much achieved in 2006-07, it is recognised that there is further work to do in relation to disability equality and in this regard the College has some key objectives and targets to take forward into the period 2007-08 as follows:

Impact Assessment – The College will undertake training on impact assessment with key personnel in the early part of 2008.

Impact Assessment Process – The College will, with the assistance of an external consultant specialising in this field, conduct an initial impact assessment of College policies and procedures. The results of this will then enable the College to prioritise its policies and procedures for full impact assessment.

Monitoring of Progress – Through the Disability Sub-group and Access and Inclusion group, the College will monitor progress associated with its Disability Action Plan and in particular Year 2 to enable an Annual Report on Progress for Year 2 to be compiled for December 2008.

Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan – To progress the Scheme and Action Plan in Year 2 using feedback achieved through the involvement of disabled staff, students and stakeholders.

Disability Equality – Through a brief on Access & Inclusion, ensure that disability equality matters are discussed on a regular basis at College Management Advisory Committee meetings.

Section Four:

Conclusion:

Coatbridge College once again reaffirms its commitment to a policy of equal opportunity within the College.

Through ongoing consultation and involvement, the College will continue in its aspiration to establish best practice in this area and get positive outcomes in relation to disability equality. It is recognised that good practice within the College needs to be supported and mainstreamed to enable consistency of approach to disability equality throughout the College.

The College recognises the importance of stakeholder consultation and involvement and how this is key to the creation of a successful disability equality culture. Our strategy for communicating and involving our stakeholders will continue not just internally but also externally with organisations with an active interest in the needs and rights of the disabled.

In conclusion, it should be noted that underpinning everything we do as an organisation is a very focussed training and development strategy that encompasses equality and diversity.

As part of this strategy, all staff have been involved in mandatory Disability Equality awareness sessions.

The College has also consulted and involved all staff in the development of its Access and Inclusion Strategy building on the expertise and experiences of individuals, and is particularly relevant in the context of informing the content of its Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan.

As part of its commitment to supporting staff either during a period of absence or in the course of their employment, the College takes into account any reasonable adjustments that require to be considered in order to enable any member of staff to fulfill the requirements of their post effectively. This will include not only those staff who have directly disclosed a disability but will also include how it supports staff who are covered by disability legislation for a medical condition that spans a significant period of time.

The training and development strategy will be progressed significantly over the years to come enabling all staff to embrace equalities legislation and ensure that this is embedded comprehensively into the College's curriculum provision and services i.e. mainstreaming equalities matters into all College activity.

4 December 2007