

**BOURNVILLE COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION
("THE CORPORATION")**

EQUALITY STRATEGY 2011 – 2015

1 Introduction

1.1 The equality strategy for Bournville College sets out our commitment and responsibilities for the next four years. It explains how we intend to continue to show due regard to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations for all of our stakeholders. Bournville college is ambitious for its students, staff and local communities. Our strategy demonstrates commitment to go beyond compliance with equality legislation and to strive towards demonstrating best practice in our approach to equality and diversity across all the college's functions. The college celebrates and values the diversity brought to it by members of the college community and is committed to providing such services and support that enable all members of its community to achieve their full potential. The college aims to ensure that everyone is equally valued and treats one another with respect and dignity. We are seeking to provide a positive working and learning environment that is free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation and place equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of our business by demonstrating the following:

- Being proactive in our response to our equality duties
- Achieving the Investing in Diversity standard
- Creating a learning and working environment for our students and staff that is free from discrimination
- Challenging inequality and discrimination
- Providing high quality responsive provision, services and support that meet the individual needs of staff, students and service users
- Embracing and celebrating the diversity of our students, staff and local communities
- Promoting equality in our policies, procedures, plans and practices
- Making every effort to ensure that our student body and workforce reflect the diverse communities of Birmingham and beyond
- Involving staff, students and service users in securing improvements to our programmes, services and learning and work environment
- Providing an environment where difference is respected and it is safe to disclose equality information relating to protected characteristics
- Providing professional development opportunities that ensure staff have the skills and confidence to respond effectively to the aims of the Equality Act

2 College Vision, Values & Principles

2.1 The college's equality strategy is set within the context of the college's mission which is 'to be the education and training provider of first choice'. This is underpinned by a value framework:

- Welcoming - by putting people first
- Inclusive - by providing an accessible working and learning environment where everyone is valued and treated with respect
- Supportive - to all students, staff, employers, partners and the local community
- Progressive - in the design and delivery of our programmes and services
- Responsive - to the needs of individuals, organisations, partners, communities, regional and national initiatives
- Competitive - by ensuring value for money in the provision of services that contribute to the regeneration of communities and the economic well-being of individuals and organisations
- Collaborative - by working in partnership with the local and wider community to enhance learning, training, skills and employment opportunities for individuals and employers
- Successful - in providing education and training of excellence that enables everyone to reach their full potential
- International - by increasing the participation of overseas students and promoting cultural exchange

2.2 The purpose of the strategy is to ensure that the college complies with equality legislation and adopts a pro-active approach to mainstreaming equality into all decisions and activities. This will ensure that all employees and learners are valued for the skills, attributes and experiences that they bring and that the college works towards removing barriers that prevent employees and learners from fulfilling their potential.

3 Equality Duties

3.1 When carrying out functions, all public sector organisations have a statutory duty to comply with the Equality Act 2011 which sets out a general duty, supplemented by specific duties and regulations.

3.1.2 The General Duty

The general duty is set out in section 149 Equality Act and states, "A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act

- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.”

3.1.3 The General Duty consists of three individual parts. The first part which focuses on having due regard to eliminate discrimination applies to **all** of the protected characteristics, namely:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage & civil partnership
- Pregnancy & maternity
- Race
- Religion & belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

Having due regard means consciously thinking about the three main aims encompassed by the duty as part of the decision making process. We will comply with this duty by conducting equality analysis activity with stakeholders who represent protected characteristics as part of the decision making process. and ensure college functions are represented. This activity will be coordinated by the Equality and Diversity Manager and monitored by the Quality Improvement team.

3.1.4 The second and third parts are limited in their scope to having **due regard** to advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between people who share relevant protected characteristics and those who do not . For these purposes marriage and civil partnership is not a relevant protected characteristic, therefore these parts of the duty do not extend to marriage or civil partnership.

3.1.5 Having due regard to advancing equality of opportunity will include us taking action to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic. We will comply with this by ensuring equality analysis activity is mainstreamed across college functions and will monitor compliance through the self-assessment. We will improve the ways in which we record information to include the extended protected characteristics, where appropriate, so that we are able to identify our progress clearly.
- Where a need is identified, we will take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the

needs of those who do not share it.

- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low

3.1.6 Having due regard to the need to foster good relations.

We will comply with this by ensuring the equality analysis process includes attention to this aspect. We will consider ways of developing understanding between people from different groups as a way of eliminating prejudice and, where deemed appropriate, we will treat some people more favourably than others. A comprehensive programme of training for all staff is prepared annually and best practice and advice and guidance across all college functions is provided by the Equality and Diversity Manager.

Specific Duties

3.1.7 As with former equality duties, the general public sector equality duty is underpinned by specific duties set out in regulations which are intended to operate as a means of better performance of the general duty. The focus is now more on outcomes than process.

3.1.8 The 'specific **duties**' are set out in the Equality Act 2011. The regulations came into force on 10 September 2011.

- Public – bodies listed in the Regulations should publish information to demonstrate their compliance with the equality duty by 31 January 2012.
- Public – bodies listed in the regulations should set themselves equality objectives from 6 April 2012 onwards.

Collecting Equality Information

Engagement Activity

4.1 Engagement activity is critical to the success of an equality strategy. We will continue to consult with stakeholders on our policies, practices and procedures and will regularly seek feedback. We recognise the need to further improve our practice and will develop focus groups to represent the interests of people with protected characteristics. We will also consider how to capture the views and feedback from those whose voice is rarely identified, for example those with mental health difficulties and learning difficulties

4.1.1 Equality Analysis

Equality analysis is a way of considering the effect on different groups protected from discrimination by the Equality Act. We recognise the need to consider if there are any unintended consequences for some groups, and also

to consider if the function or policy will be fully effective for all target groups. We will use equality information, and the results of engagement activity with protected groups and others, to understand the actual effect or the potential effect of our functions, policies or decisions. This will help us to identify practical steps to tackle any negative effects such as discrimination, and to ensure that we are being proactive in advancing equality opportunity and the fostering of good relations. Equality analysis will be conducted across all college functions and will be recorded, monitored and audited by the Quality Improvement team.

- 4.1.2 Outcomes of equality analysis will be reported to the Equality & Diversity Committee and Quality Improvement Board meetings. The Quality Improvement Team will ensure the register of policies and procedures incorporates the recording of equality analysis and their outcomes. Training will be provided for managers involved in equality analysis to ensure a consistent approach is adopted across the college.

5 Monitoring & Evaluation

- 5.1 An Annual Equalities Report will be produced and published on the college's website in line with the Public Sector specific duty. This will include information about the effects of college policies, practices and procedures on people with protected characteristics. Information relating to staff, students and other stakeholders will be addressed. From 2013, the report will include progress made in meeting equality objectives that are required to be set and published by 6 April 2012. The annual equalities report will be reported to the Corporation the Equality & Diversity Committee and the Senior Management Team (SMT).

- 5.1.1 The self-assessment process includes monitoring and evaluation of college functions and includes some attention to equality analysis. A key objective will be to improve the way in which we record and monitor equality information in future. We believe the parameters of current legislation provide a useful framework within which to develop good practice. Current monitoring and reporting is undertaken in respect of age, ethnicity, gender and disability in the following areas:

5.1.2 Learners

- learner enrolment
- achievement, retention and success rates
- applications
- admissions/letters of offer
- conversion rates from admissions to enrolment
- access to student services
- access to student enrichment activities
- disciplinary action, complaints and incidents of harassment/bullying.

Employees

- employee numbers
- grade and category of staff including full and part-time status
- applications for appointment
- shortlisted candidates
- appointments and promotions
- type of contract (permanent, fixed term)
- employee relations – grievance, disciplinary, harassment, capability, complaints
- leavers
- training and staff development opportunities
- requests for flexible working
- return rates from maternity leave and the roles to which staff return
- pay levels
- profile of those with dependants and caring responsibilities.

5.1.3 Collected data will be used to inform management decisions and the review of policies and practices within the college and also within the strategic and business planning processes. It will also be reported upon within the quality assurance processes through the Equality and Diversity Committee, Quality Improvement Board, SMT and the Corporation.

6 Status & Review

- 6.1 This Equality Strategy will be approved by the Corporation in December 2011 following consultation with employees, the recognised trade unions and learners.
- 6.2 The strategy will apply for the period 2011 – 2015. Objectives will be set and published in compliance with the Equality Act, public sector specific duty deadline of 6 April 2012 and will be monitored on a regular basis in accordance with legislative developments and the need for good practice.