

SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

2009-2012

Owner:	Christina Conroy	Approved by:	Governing Body
Review interval:	3 years	Approved on:	13 th July 2011
Date of next review:	July 2014	Post to website:	Yes

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The words “equality” and “diversity” are widely used but not as widely understood. It is worth, therefore, taking the time to explain what we mean when we use these words throughout this Scheme. “Equality” means ensuring everyone is able to participate in all our activities on an equal footing. “Diversity” acknowledges there are differences between people which should be recognised, respected and celebrated.
- 1.2 Richmond Adult Community College is proud of its diverse community of staff, students and visitors, and is committed to maintaining its excellent record in teaching and learning by ensuring there is equality of opportunity for all, fostered in an environment of mutual respect and dignity.
- 1.3 The promotion of Equality and Diversity concerns all of us and is the responsibility of all members of the College’s community. As members of this community, it is expected that we will contribute to ensuring that the Richmond Adult Community College continues to be a safe, welcoming and productive environment.

2 EQUALITIES LEGISLATION

- 2.1 Domestic discrimination law has developed over more than 40 years since the first Race Relations Act in 1965. Subsequently, other personal characteristics besides race have been protected from discrimination and similar conduct, sometimes as a result of domestic initiatives and sometimes through implementing European Directives.

- 2.2 The domestic law is now mainly contained in the following legislation (where applicable, as amended):

- the Equal Pay Act 1970;
- the Sex Discrimination Act 1975;
- the Race Relations Act 1976;
- the Disability Discrimination Act 1995;
- the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003;
- the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003;
- the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006;
- the Equality Act 2006, Part 2;
- the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007.

The main European Directives affecting domestic discrimination legislation are:

- Council Directive 2000/43/EC implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin;
- Council Directive 2000/78/EC establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation;
- Council Directive 2004/113/EC implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services;
- European Parliament and Council Directive 2006/54/EC on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast).
- Also relevant in this context is Article 157 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

- 2.3 The government has acknowledged that everyone who needs to understand discrimination law would benefit from having it in a Single Equality Act which simplifies the law as far as this can be done. In October 2007 it brought together a number of equality commissions (Disability Rights Commission, Equal Opportunities Commission and the Commission for Racial Equality) into a single commission, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

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- 2.4 In addition, it has begun planning for a Single Equality Act which will bring together equality strands in one harmonised, modernised and simplified piece of legislation. It proposes to “replace the race, disability and gender equality duties with a single duty on public authorities to promote race, disability and gender equality” and also to consider “whether a single public sector equality duty should be extended to cover age, sexual orientation, and/or religion or belief”. The following further documents were published by the Government Equalities Office during the passage of the Bill that became the Equality Act: in April 2009, Equality Bill: Assessing the impact of a multiple discrimination provision (a summary of responses was published in October 2009); in June 2009, Equality Bill: Making it work - Policy proposals for specific duties; and in January 2010 Equality Bill: Making it work - Ending age discrimination in services and public functions.
- 2.5 The Equality Act 2010 received Royal Assent on 8th April 2010 and most of its provisions started to come into force on 1st October 2010. The Act has two main purposes – to harmonise discrimination law, and to strengthen the law to support progress on equality. The Act brings together and re-states all the enactments listed above and a number of other related provisions. It harmonises existing provisions to give a single approach where appropriate. The Equality Act 2010 provides protection against discrimination on the grounds of:
- age;
 - disability;
 - gender reassignment;
 - marriage and civil partnership;
 - pregnancy and maternity;
 - race;
 - religion or belief;
 - sex;
 - sexual orientation.
- 2.6 The Act also strengthens the law in a number of areas. It:
- places a new duty on certain public bodies to consider socio-economic disadvantage when making strategic decisions about how to exercise their functions;
 - extends the circumstances in which a person is protected against discrimination, harassment or victimisation because of a protected characteristic;
 - extends the circumstances in which a person is protected against discrimination by allowing people to make a claim if they are directly discriminated against because of a combination of two relevant protected characteristics;
 - creates a duty on listed public bodies when carrying out their functions and on other persons when carrying out public functions to have due regard when carrying out their functions to: the need to eliminate conduct which the Act prohibits; the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and the need to foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not. The practical effect is that listed public bodies will have to consider how their policies, programmes and service delivery will affect people with the protected characteristics;
 - allows an employer or service provider or other organisation to take positive action so as to enable existing or potential employees or customers to overcome or minimise a disadvantage arising from a protected characteristic;
 - extends the permission for political parties to use women-only shortlists for election candidates to 2030;
 - enables an employment tribunal to make a recommendation to a respondent who has lost a discrimination claim to take certain steps to remedy matters not just for the benefit of the individual claimant (who may have already left the organisation concerned) but also the wider workforce.

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- 2.7 The Act introduces public sector Single Equality Duty which applies to all protected characteristics and enters into force on 4th April 2011. Public authorities when carrying out their functions have to 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 THE COLLEGE'S VALUES AND STRATEGY

- 3.1 The College's core values are laid out in its Strategic Plan 2009-2012 :

The mission of the College is: "To enable adults to unlock their talent and fulfil their potential through learning, skills and enterprise".

The mission of the college was changed in 2007 and was reviewed by the Board again in 2009 and it was determined that it is still fit for purpose. Although the college makes provision for young people 14-19 it is within adult environments and we seek to help them to learn as a young adult. Our vision is that by unlocking adult talent this can enable individuals to change their lives at work, at home or within the community. The mission articulates our vision for learning. Our vision for learning is as follows:

"We believe that learning changes lives and life chances. We, therefore, seek to create a diverse learning community that has no barriers to entry and that supports learners to progress to employment, active citizenship and greater independence and self fulfilment. Through skilled facilitation and teaching and innovative learning programmes we seek to inspire and motivate our learners by giving them the opportunity to achieve their potential. We will use volunteering and enterprise opportunities, learning networks and the creative college community to enable people of all ages, back grounds and abilities to gain the skills and confidence to progress to independence, enter the world of work and become active members of their economic and social communities." (RACC Curriculum Strategy 2009-2012)

- 3.2 The College's Strategy identifies 16 key Strategic Objectives as:

- To develop the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of the identified learner groups that the College serves (Learner Client Groups)
- To maintain Grade 1 status and provide an outstanding quality of provision to inspire and motivate our learners to enable them to fulfil their potential (Teaching and Learning Excellence)
- To personalise and enrich the learning offer to meet the needs of all of our learners so that they can achieve their learning goals and improve their social and economic well-being (Personalisation and Enrichment)
- To develop support for learners at all stages of their learning journey to ensure that social, economic or ability factors do not create barriers to progress and achievement (Supporting Learning Journeys)
- To foster the development of enterprise skills to enable and empower learners to make an important social and economic contribution to the post-recession economy (Enterprise)
- To develop a communication system for entering in to dialogue with our learners and local stakeholders about how they would like us to meet their learning and training needs (Voice)
- To improve accessibility and flexibility of learning by employing effective information technology and digital solutions (Digital Solutions)
- To continue to be a leading proponent and advocate of equal opportunities and diversity and create a diverse learning community that has no barriers to entry and that supports learners to progress to employment, active citizenship and greater independence and self fulfilment (Equality & Diversity)
- To operate from excellent learning environments and develop an accommodation plan that supports the curriculum and the needs of learners on both the Clifden and Parkshot sites (High Quality Learning Environments)

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- To embed strong systems for health and safety and security throughout the organization’s operations (Safe and Secure)
- To develop effective systems for reaching out to employers and community settings to recruit new learners from the identified learner target groups (Employer and Community Engagement)
- To work as an effective strategic partner to help to shape, determine and deliver a civic vision for the locality and explore the potential of local collaboration with other public sector partners to improve local services (Public Service)
- To have an independent and financially successful College in 3 years time that provides an outstanding adult service for Richmond-upon-Thames and surrounding areas and maintain turnover at around £10 million (Financial Viability)
- To achieve greater operational efficiency and effectiveness and improved corporate management to ensure best value for money (Value for Money)
- To build organizational capability in relation to people, quality standards, performance management systems, team working and workforce development to enhance business performance (Organizational Development)
- To contribute to a sustainable green economy within our locality actively promoting sustainability and eco-friendly practices (Sustainable)

3.3 These strategic objectives can only be achieved through people, that is the staff and students who make up our community. These are the people who will reflect the culture, values and ambitions that the College will aim to achieve towards 2012. This Scheme will show how equality and diversity will be promoted in every area of the College’s life, such that all staff and students are fully able to realise their potential and contribute to the achievement of our ambitions.

3.4 The College’s community is already diverse. The College makes a major impact on participation with around 27% of staff, 28% of Governors and 24% of students coming from black or minority ethnic groups compared to a local profile of 9%. The College’s recruitment policies continue to have a positive impact on the black and minority ethnic (BME) profile of College staffing. The proportion of BME staff employed by the College has increased year on year from 8.5% in 2003 to 27.11% (against a benchmark of 12%) in 2008-09 (an increase of 3.11% from 2007-08). The College has increased student participation from local BME residents as well as attracting a number of students from neighbouring boroughs such as Hounslow, Wandsworth and Hammersmith as a result of the good transport links. 27 members of staff (5% against a sector benchmark of 2.74%) have declared disabilities. 7% of students have declared a disability against a sector benchmark of 5%. The College’s gender profile is predominantly female for both the staff and the students (68%) although this is beginning to change as a result of the recession. Female staff – 390 (71%, benchmark of 64%) outnumber males – 156 (29%, benchmark of 36%) however this mirrors the ratio of female to male students at the College.

4 VISION FOR EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY AT THE COLLEGE

4.1 The College is proud of its diverse community. The College’s written Commitment to Equality and Diversity is set out in the College’s Equality and Diversity Policy, distributed to all staff and students which states:

Richmond Adult Community College is committed to the belief that learning changes lives and life chances. Consequently the College aims to create and promote a diverse and successful working and learning environment consistent with an ethos of respect and tolerance. The College aims to be a leading proponent and advocate of equal opportunities and diversity and carry out its functions in such a way as to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equality and tackle any persistent and long-standing issues of disadvantage.

4.2 This Scheme is designed to further articulate the College’s commitment to equality and diversity in a coherent and structured manner, accompanied as it is by a set of objectives and priorities detailed in the Action Plan (see Appendix A). The ambition is to promote equality and diversity in every area of the College’s life.

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5 A SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME FOR RICHMOND ADULT COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- 5.1 In identifying how best to progress, this Scheme has been developed to give further momentum to the equality and diversity agenda by reporting on actions to date, and identifying an overarching action plan which will address all equality strands and take us forward for the period of the Strategic Plan 2009-2012.
- 5.2 The Single Equality Action Plan (Appendix A) has taken into account progress on the existing action plans, Quality Improvement Plan and the College's strategy and vision. The plan has been drawn up in order to try and achieve a holistic approach to equality and diversity at the College, and as such includes actions on all six equality strands (age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation).

6 ONGOING CONSULTATION, INVOLVEMENT, TRAINING

- 6.1 The College will seek to continue consulting and involving staff, students and any other interested parties on this Scheme, and the Single Equality Action Plan and any other equality and diversity initiatives as appropriate. In addition it will continue general awareness training on equality and diversity; specific training initiatives will be included in the Single Equality Action Plan.
- 6.2 The College has a number of methods for consulting with, and involving, Governors and staff:
- Employment and Organisational Development Committee reporting to the Governing Body
 - Equality and Diversity Committee (EDC), which reports to the Principal
 - Equality and Diversity Representatives within each Faculty and Directorate
 - Termly Staff Newsletters from the Principal
 - Termly Staff Meetings with the Principal
 - Staff Intranet with an E& D site
 - Staff surveys
 - Trade Unions and Staff representatives
- 6.3 The College also has a number of methods for consulting with, and involving students, including:
- Membership of Student Governors on the Governing Body
 - Student Membership of the Equality and Diversity Committee
 - Annual Disability Focus Groups on particular Disability Strands
 - Student Forums in each Faculty
 - Student intranet
 - Feedback Cards
 - Course Review and Student Evaluation Surveys
- 6.4 The College is an active member and partner of a number of local stakeholder groups which offer assistance with E&D issues:
- Local Strategic Partnership – Partnership of all the key organizations in Richmond taking forward the Community Plan for the Borough
 - London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Adult Social Services – Partnership of providers for adult with learning difficulties and disabilities
 - Race Equality Partnership of the London Borough of Richmond – Local partnership for promoting community cohesion
 - Network of Black Managers – Career Development network for black managers in Further Education
 - Partnership with Local Charities promoting support on specific equality strands – The college is an active partner with the voluntary sector and works actively with Age Concern, Ethnic Minority Action Group (EMAG), Richmond Council for Voluntary Service, Richmond Mind etc

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7 LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 7.1 The Governing Body and Principal have overall responsibility for Equality and Diversity within the College. The Employment and Organizational Development Committee (a sub-committee of the Board) undertakes monitoring of this responsibility. The Equality and Diversity Committee chaired by the Principal will formulate policy and report progress on this Scheme and associated Action Plan to the Employment and Organizational Development Committee. Membership of the Equality and Diversity Committee is approved by the Governing Body to ensure representation across staff and students.
- 7.2 College Managers and Learning Directors are responsible for monitoring that their staff are complying with the Scheme, for carrying out actions arising from the associated Action Plan and for promoting equality and diversity to their students.
- 7.3 All members of the College are expected to comply with this Scheme, and with the Single Equality Action Plan and with any of the College's equality and diversity initiatives.

8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

- 8.1 The Equality and Diversity Committee is responsible on annual basis for assessing the equality impact of policies, practices and procedures of the College.
- 8.2 In addition, all new policies which are formally approved by the Governing Body will be accompanied with an EIA for consideration by the committee.
- 8.3 The Equality and Diversity Committee will continue to receive an annual report on progress and will make sure that the requirements of the Equality Act will be taken into account to amend practice in this area as appropriate.

9 MONITORING AND ONGOING MAINTENANCE

9.1 A number of activities will continue to be undertaken, as a matter of good practice, and are outlined here rather than separately in the Action Plan:

- monitoring (staff) – applications for vacancies, the staff profile, promotions, training and development activities, grievances and disciplinary procedures, resignations, dismissals and redundancies, incidents of harassment, and participation in training and development.
- monitoring (student) – applications for admissions, the student profile (to include socio-economic factors and destination data), retention, success rates, attendance rates, travel to study patterns, complaints and disciplinary procedures, and incidents of harassment.
- consultation will take place regularly with staff and students and through the variety of methods outlined above. As and when required, consultations on specific topics will be undertaken.
- Equality Impact Assessments – See 8 above.
- Data Cleansing Exercise - will take place regularly to ensure that staff data is as up to date as possible.
- benchmarking against other institutions - Human Resources will continue to benchmark the College's activities in terms of equality and diversity issues to ensure we identify and, where appropriate, utilise best practice.
- closer links will be forged with Faculty Student Forums as a methodology for involving students in the implementation and development of the Scheme.
- the Learning Centre - will continue to ensure that equality and diversity is incorporated throughout its programme and will continue to develop specific programmes either to embed the College's vision for equality and diversity or for specific groups.
- Widening Participation – the College will continue to engage schools, colleges and learners locally and in the surrounding areas through a range of publicly- and privately-funded programmes and activities aimed at widening participation for learners regardless of background.

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- Volunteer Programme - to continue to offer volunteer opportunities for unemployed adults from a variety of backgrounds to access free training and work experience.
- Local community links - maintaining links with local community organisations to publicise the College and opportunities available.
- Maintain membership of local, regional and national partnerships/networks as outlined above to share best practice and engage in project work.

10 1REPORTING ON PROGRESS

- 10.1 Each year the Equality and Diversity Committee will forward reports with appropriate recommendations to the Employment and Organizational Development Committee and the Governing Body
- 10.2 These reports will contain the following:
- a review of this Scheme, including any feedback and proposed revisions
 - a review of progress on the Action Plan
 - a report on the equality enrichment activities of students and community stakeholders
 - a review of any relevant equality and diversity policies, and proposals for any new policies
 - staff profile (see 9.1 above)
 - student profile (see 9.1 above)
 - a report of learning and development activities
 - any other relevant activities which have taken place during the year

11 CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

- 11.1 Further information is available from Anna Labedzka - Clerk to the Equality & Diversity Committee.
- 11.2 If you require this publication in hard copy or in an alternative format please contact Anna Labedzka - Clerk to the Equality & Diversity Committee.

12 FEEDBACK

- 12.1 Any member of staff, student or visitor who wishes to offer feedback on this Scheme and/or the Action Plan, or who believes that the College is not fulfilling its obligations should contact the Principal.

13 REVIEW

- 13.1 The Equality and Diversity Committee will review this Scheme on an annual basis.

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Appendix A SINGLE EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

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