



# **DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME**

Approved by Capel Manor Governing Body 14<sup>th</sup> December 2006

# CAPEL MANOR COLLEGE – DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Capel Manor College is Greater London's specialist college for land-based studies. The Enfield campus is situated in 30 acres of gardens and the college's other centres across Greater London are also beautiful places to study.

### 1.1 The Legal Duty

The duty to promote disability equality is an extension to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 which is in force from December 2006. There are six inter-related parts to this duty, also known as the "general duty" or disability equality duty (DED):

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
- eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- eliminate disability-related harassment;
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life;
- take account of disabled people's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than others.

### 1.2. The College's culture

The college strives towards having a diverse workforce and student population at all its centres as well as supporting visits from disabled groups and disabled members of the public. Support is provided through effective use of resources and by making adjustments to college buildings, the gardens and estates. As part of the college's ethos of promoting equality for its staff and learners those people who have a disability when they come to the college to work or study are encouraged to share information about their needs. Staff who acquire a disability during their employment are given the fullest support to maintain or return to a role appropriate to their experience and abilities within the organisation. For staff this is achieved with the support of the Occupational Health Service. Learners who acquire a disability are actively supported to complete their course of study where reasonable adjustment and support can be provided.

The term "disabled person" covers people with a wide range of impairments and health conditions. A person's impairment must have a "substantial", "adverse" and "long-term" effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. "Substantial" refers to the difficulty or time demand in carrying out an activity compared with a non-disabled person. "Long-term" means that a person's impairment has lasted or is likely to last for more than twelve months. Normal day-to-day activities include mobility, manual dexterity, physical co-ordination, continence, ability to lift and carry everyday objects, ability to learn or understand and perception of the risk of physical dangers.

The term “disabled person” includes people who:

- are hard of hearing;
- have visual impairments;
- have medical conditions such as epilepsy, diabetes, heart disease or arthritis;
- have progressive conditions such as HIV, cancer or multiple sclerosis;
- have mental health difficulties such as depression;
- have specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia;
- are wheelchair users.

The college recognises and respects that each individual who has an impairment or health condition could require support specific to their needs.

### **1.3 Staff, student and visitor profiles**

#### **Staff profile**

Of its 300 staff the college is aware of only 2.5% of its staffing profile that have an impairment or health condition that comes under the term “disabled”. As there are currently around 3.3 million disabled people in employment, making up around 12% of all people of working age in employment, the college’s profile is significantly below this.

#### **Student profile**

In 2005-2006 the college registered 3558 students. 6% disclosed a disability on enrolment. A number of undisclosed disabilities, particularly in respect of mental health, emerged in the course of the year.

6.5% of registered students notified the college of an identified learning difficulty. Following diagnostic screening and tutorial meetings, more than 9% of the college’s students received additional support with learning difficulties.

#### **Visitor profile**

No detailed up-to-date information on the number of disabled groups or wheelchair users visiting the gardens is available. This will be addressed as part of the college’s action plan.

## 1.4 Current Position regarding DDA implementation – the college’s strengths and areas for development

Area	Strengths	Areas for development
<b>New staff</b>	As part of the recruitment process disabled applicants that meet the criteria detailed in the person specification are automatically invited for interview. Applicants are encouraged to talk to personnel if they have any special requirements.	Identify barriers to employment at the college
	Application forms are available in large print and applications can be submitted on-line.	Be anticipatory in overcoming barriers.
	Liaison with Occupational Health – staff that have a health condition/impairment which could effect their ability to carry out normal day to day duties are encouraged to share this with personnel and other staff as appropriate if they have not already done so.	
	Risk Assessments – support identified and implemented.	
<b>Existing staff</b>	Staff Development is available to all staff.	Have a better appreciation of the number of staff with a disability that the college employs.
	Training sessions for staff on areas such as mental health issues, dyslexia etc.	Identify barriers to staff that become disabled whilst working at the college.
	An ethos in which staff feel able to approach personnel in confidence.	Strive towards changing attitudes away from an approach based on what a person with a disability can’t do, to one based on the approach of what he or she can do.
	Occupational Health support and counselling service	
	Risk Assessments – support identified and implemented.	Impact assessments for college personnel policies.

<b>Area</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Areas for development</b>
<b>Learners</b>	Supportive approach at interview and enrolment to encourage sharing of information on any aspect of health or ability which might impact on learning.	Development and dissemination of policy and practice guidelines for sharing information on a need to know basis complying with the provision of the Data Protection Act.
	Adaptive technology available for supporting learning.	Increased range of adaptive technology to be available at all centres.
	Highly-regarded college counselling service.	Service extension to meet needs at all centres.
	Contract with Occupational health Service open to students referred by college in response to need.	Development of a network of links with Social Services and charitable agencies active in communities across London.
	Course information available in alternative formats on request.	Catalogue of CD and tape recordings of course information to be compiled and updated routinely.
	Provision, via additional staffing contracts, of specialist support tailored to specific learning difficulty.	
	Assessments conducted to secure appropriate examination concessions: amanuenses, additional time, private space.	
	Dedicated provision for students with specific learning difficulties and disabilities.	

<b>Area</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Areas for development</b>
<b>Visitors</b>	The majority of the gardens are accessible to those with disabilities	Need for better research into use of the gardens by visitors with a disability.
	Several gardens have been designed to provide special interest for disabled or visually impaired visitors.	Promotion of current facilities and range of gardens which are easily accessible to disabled visitor
	The college actively seeks to engage with visiting disabled groups, societies and members of the public.	Review of signage and exploration of use of audio and other interpretive technologies
	Concession rates for visitors to the gardens with a disability. Helpers/support workers are admitted free of charge.	
	Availability of motorised wheelchairs.	

## **1.5 How the Disability Equality Scheme links with other important documents**

- Self-Assessment Report (SAR) – as part of the college’s SAR Heads of School annually profile students with learning difficulties and disabilities. Annual monitoring.
- Joint Agreement on Guidance for Disability Equality in Employment in Further Education Colleges – this policy was adopted in November 2004 and the updated Joint Agreement (which focuses on the new Disability Equality Duty introduced by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005) will be considered by the Personnel Committee at the March 2007 meeting.
- Quality Improvement Plan is generated from action points identified in Self Assessment Reports and Service Standard review. A focus on inclusive approaches for diversity and disability equality is integral – in line with the provision of *Every Child Matters*, with legislation and with good practice guidelines.
- A three-year Development Plan is updated annually in consultation and negotiation with LSC officers. The plan incorporates quality and funding review informing performance targets and financial allocations. The college’s active engagement with disability equality is a key performance indicator in the consultation process.
- Disability Statement – the College’s Disability is regularly reviewed and updated.
- Equal Opportunities and Racial Equality Policy – sent to all job applications as part of the recruitment process. The accompanying action plan is regularly reviewed and updated by the Equal Opportunities sub-group.
- Personnel policies e.g. harassment, grievance, disciplinary.

## **2. DISABILITY EQUALITY VISION, VALUES AND PRINCIPLES**

### **2.1 The college’s values and mission and how they relate to disability equality**

The college’s mission is:

*“to promote lifelong learning through the understanding and enjoyment of flowers, trees, plants and animals for career, business, educational and leisure purposes”*

The college actively wishes to build on its existing approach to develop a culture that welcomes and supports disabled staff who wish to join the organisation; disabled students who seek to benefit from the learning opportunities; and disabled visitors using the facilities of the college and its estates. The college will continue to make every effort where employees or learners become disabled to make sure their continued employment or studies are supported by reasonable adjustments to working practices and physical adjustments.

In order to be able to achieve this the college will:

- improve its disclosure processes and records of staff who have a disability or become disabled whilst employed at the college;
- review the college's approach to recruitment and actively seek year on year improvement in the number of people with disabilities employed by the college;
- work closely with the college's Occupational Health Service;
- raise awareness amongst all academic and student support staff on means of meeting the needs of learners with mental health difficulties;
- strive towards gaining the "two ticks" symbol – Positive about Disabled People – which has been developed in conjunction with Jobcentre Plus as a means of identifying employers who are positive about employing disabled people, and who want to demonstrate that commitment by displaying the symbol on advertisements;
- promote positive role models for people with disabilities contributing to land based industries;
- design, implement and maintain gardens and horticultural features which provide imaginative and stimulating access and experience for people with a variety of disabilities and special needs;
- incorporate diversity, equality and accessibility principles in student project activity and work assignments;
- encourage and welcome individuals and groups with disabilities to enjoy all facilities open to the general public.

## **2.2 How the Disability Equality Scheme aligns to the college's strategic priorities and quality improvement plan**

The college addresses equality and diversity through specific action plans which are incorporated into the college's overall annual development plan. See item 1.5 for the full listing.

The college's record of compliance with provision of the Disability Discrimination Act is good. This combines with visible and active leadership from senior staff to give credibility to the development of the Disability Equality Scheme.

## **2.3 The college's attitude towards disability equality**

The college embraces the importance of adopting a socially inclusive approach to disability as the key to the successful understanding and implementation of the disability and equality duty.

The college is determined not to discriminate against disabled people. It is determined to dissolve barriers and provide bridges for maximum access to a diverse community of users. It is anticipated that the involvement of those with

disabilities or who have an interest in disability issues will be actively involved in taking steps towards best practice.

## **2.4 The benefits that improving disability equality will bring to the college**

### Employment

The college strives to employ a workforce that is representative of the community that it serves. The recruitment and continued employment of disabled people helps to create a positive atmosphere and demonstrates that all staff are valued and treated fairly. Where staff acquire a disability during their employment the college is positive in making adjustments to ensure that experienced and skilled members of staff are retained.

### Learners

College students will progress to careers in land based industries. A clear commitment to diversity and disability equality communicated throughout their learning experience will inform their working life. This will benefit the industry, therefore strengthening the college.

### Visitors

The college will have greater engagement with the wider community. Provide learners with an opportunity to understand the issues associated with actively seeking to engage and meet the needs of groups and visitors with disabilities.

## **2.5 The college's commitment to improving disability equality, eliminating all forms of discrimination, proactively promoting disability equality and creating an inclusive environment for all who learn and work in the college.**

The college will actively take steps to involve people with disabilities or those who have an interest in disability issues to inform the college's three-year action plan and be actively involved in achieving the actions/targets set.

## **2.6 The college's vision of disability equality and where it the college wants to be in three years' time.**

Tangible, specific outcomes and challenges are identified in the three-year action plan which will be reviewed and monitored on an annual basis by the focus group.

## 2.7 The college's priorities

### Employment

- Increase the number of disabled staff employed by the college
- Actively take steps to involve people with disabilities or those who have an interest in disability issues
- Have a better appreciation of the number of staff with a disability that the college employs.
- Carry out disability equality impact assessments on college policies
- Strive towards gaining the “two ticks” symbol – Positive about Disabled People – which has been developed in conjunction with Jobcentre Plus as a means of identifying employers who are positive about employing disabled people, and who want to demonstrate that commitment by displaying the symbol on advertisements.
- Ensure that staff are trained so that they have the understanding and skills required to promote disability equality, to carry out the requirements of the Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan and achieve identified improvements in disability equality.

### Learners

- Develop and disseminate policy and practice guidelines for sharing information on a need to know basis complying with the provision of the Data Protection Act.
- Increased range of adaptive technology to be available at all centres.
- Service extension to meet needs at all centres.
- Develop of a network of links with Social Services and charitable agencies active in communities across London.
- Catalogue CD and tape recordings of course information. Compile and update routinely.
- promote positive role models for people with disabilities contributing to land based industries;
- design, implement and maintain gardens and horticultural features which provide imaginative and stimulating access and experience for people with a variety of disabilities and special needs;
- incorporate diversity, equality and accessibility principles in student project activity and work assignments;
- encourage and welcome individuals and groups with disabilities to enjoy all facilities open to the general public.

## Visitors

- Actively take steps to involve user groups and individuals who have a disability or an interest in disability issues to visit/use the college's gardens and estates.
- Encourage more visits to the gardens by people with disabilities.
- Improve interpretation within the gardens for those with disabilities so that they are able to have a full understanding and enjoyment of the gardens.
- Survey groups and individuals with disabilities visiting the gardens to gather feedback on improvements to presentation in the gardens.
- Register the number of visits by wheelchair users to the garden.

### **3. ACTIVELY ENGAGING WITH DISABLED PEOPLE**

#### **3.1 Different groups that have been involved**

- Staff with a disability or an interest in disability issues
- Learners with a disability and learners who have some contact with friends or family with a disability

#### **3.2 Different ways disabled people have been actively involved in developing the Disability Equality Scheme**

- Staff and students with a disability or learning difficulty invited to join a Focus Group.
- The Disability Equality Scheme will be an evolving document to be continually developed and reviewed by the Focus Group

#### **3.3 The barriers that disabled people have identified for the college to address**

- Remit of the Focus Group

#### **3.4 How disabled people will be involved in implementing, monitoring and evaluating the Scheme**

- Focus Group

#### **3.5 How the college will regularly seek the advice of disabled people on the process of the involvement to ensure that it is genuine and active.**

- Focus Group
- Annual review of membership of Focus Group

## **4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **4.1 Support and commitment of senior staff**

The Disability Equality Focus Group will include senior staff (Head of College, Personnel Manager and Director of Estates and Buildings).

### **4.2 How senior staff have been involved in the development of the Disability Equality Scheme**

- To take a lead in challenging discriminatory behaviour and creating a positive, inclusive ethos
- Be aware of the College's statutory duties in relation to disability legislation.
- Membership of the focus group
- Consultation and involvement of staff working within their area of responsibility.
- Reporting to governing body sub-committees (Personnel, Health and Safety, Curriculum and Quality) on progress and in-depth discussion.
- Consideration of targets relating to the recruitment and promotion of staff based upon the analysis of disability monitoring information and best practice.
- Consideration of targets relating to learners based upon the analysis of disability monitoring information and best practice
- Ensuring that staff are trained so that they have the skills required to promote disability equality, to carry out the requirements of the Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan and achieve identified improvements in disability equality.
- Improve and expand partnership working.

### **4.3 The responsibilities of governors**

- Ensure the college's strategic plan includes a commitment to disability equality. (Equalities training features as part of the college's strategic plan)
- Be aware of the Corporation's statutory responsibilities in relation to disability legislation as an employer
- Receive and respond to the disability monitoring information on staff and learners.
- Ensure that the college's Disability Statement includes reference to employment matters.

#### **4.4 The responsibilities of key staff such as support managers and Heads of Curriculum Areas**

- Challenge prejudiced and discriminatory behaviour, whether witting or unwitting, by learners, work placement providers, outside contractors or other members of staff whenever practicable.
- Respond positively to the needs of disabled staff, students, members of the public and disabled groups who they come in contact with in the course of their work.
- Be aware of the College's statutory duties in relation to disability legislation and the benefits it will bring to the college.
- The work and roles of their School/Department are sensitive to disability issues
- Schemes of work, lesson content and teaching resources demonstrate sensitivity to issues of diversity.
- Build disability equality into course reviews, self-assessment and quality improvement processes.
- Embed disability equality across the whole organisation.

#### **4.5 The responsibilities of all staff in eliminating discrimination and promoting disability equality**

- Challenge prejudiced and discriminatory behaviour, whether witting or unwitting, by learners, work placement providers, outside contractors or other members of staff whenever practicable.
- Respond positively to the needs of disabled staff, students, members of the public and disabled groups who they come in contact with in the course of their work.
- Be aware of the College's statutory duties in relation to disability legislation and that they are aware of the college's vision for disability and the Disability Equality Scheme.

### **5. CARRYING OUT IMPACT ASSESSMENTS**

#### **5.1 Policies, procedures, plans and practice the college has identified that will be assessed over the life span of the DES**

It is anticipated that the Disability Focus Group be involved in undertaking impact assessments on college policies and procedures. This process will be undertaken over the next three years with the Disability Focus Group deciding priorities. As part of the process of carrying out impact assessments, the Disability Focus Group will:

- map all policies, procedures, plans and practice;
- screen to determine priority;
- consider evidence;
- assess the likely impact of policies and practice on disability equality;
- explore options and make decisions;
- identify monitoring processes;
- publish results.

## **5.2 How policies, procedures and plans will be prioritised**

The role of the Disability Focus Group will be to assess priority as either high, medium or low. The Disability Focus Group will need to consider each area of the college's work, for example Human Resources, Estates, Curriculum Planning, Student Services, Marketing, Admissions, Quality.

As part of this process, consideration will need to be given to:

- the aim of the policy, procedure or practice;
- who is responsible for developing and implementing it;
- who is affected by it;
- what the information already held suggests;
- agreement on the need for further information before making any decisions;
- scope for improving disability equality.

## **5.3 The timescales involved for carrying out impact assessments on the policies, procedures, plans and practice**

Timescales will be agreed by the Disability Focus Group and a more detailed timescale will be developed and incorporated in college action plans as an on-going process.

## **5.4 Who in the organisation will take overall responsibility for this process**

The Disability Focus Group will work together to prioritise the policies, procedures, plans, practice and associated impact assessment. As the Disability Focus Group will include the members of the Senior Management Team responsible for the areas of work identified in 5.2 above, the lead will be taken by these members of staff with work being delegated to other individuals/groups as appropriate. The views of other staff/students will be sought as part of the process. It may be that sub-groups are convened to look at specifics.

## **5.5 How the process will be embedded across the organisation for the impact assessment of policy development, new plans and decision-making activities**

All college policies are routinely reviewed on a three year staggered cycle. An explicit focus on assessing the impact of current procedures and proposed development will be included in policy reviews undertaken from January 2007.

Revised procedures which incorporate anticipation of diverse needs of staff, students and visitors with disabilities will be actively promoted throughout the organisation. Specific changes which extend good practice for disability equality will be actively promoted,

As a general guiding principle, review will be steered towards inculcating and encouraging a culture of heightened consciousness in considering everyone's needs.

## **6. GATHERING INFORMATION**

### **6.1 Information currently gathered on disability equality and what this existing information has revealed**

#### **Recruitment, development and retention of disabled staff**

Statistics in respect of job application and selection success rates for people with a disability are gathered, presented to the Personnel Committee and monitored annually. The college was disappointed that only 2.5% of job applicants (6 in total) declared a disability during 2004/05, although this was a considerable improvement on statistics for 2003-04 (1%). The increase, though small, was welcome as an indication of some success in taking positive action to redress under-representation of disabled people.

Staff development, career development and promotional opportunities are made accessible to all staff.

#### **The educational opportunities available to and the achievements of disabled learners**

The greatest number of learners declaring a disability report some degree of hearing loss. Student satisfaction and success is high for these learners. Evidently the mix of a practical curriculum delivered with frequent demonstrations and support by well-produced written material is meeting most needs satisfactorily.

As noted in 1.3 above, 6.5% of students acknowledge a learning difficulty at the start of their course. A further 2.5% show a need for basic skills support following screening tests. The majority of full-time students with specific learning difficulties do access and benefit from support. A lower proportion of part-time learners choose to access additional support out of vocational class

time. (In-class support may be offered as an alternative to meet identified individual need.)

Where needs are identified and confirmed through individual assessment, examination concessions are negotiated with awarding bodies. The practical nature of training courses at Capel Manor College may be a factor in lower representation of people with limited mobility than in the general population. However, individual access courses in many disciplines. For example a young woman with a spinal injury as a consequence of a riding accident has completed a two year saddlery technology course - and has now become a member of staff. Her agility in getting around the grounds is legend.

Social, medical and psychiatric service staff sometimes perceive horticultural education as helpful therapy for people socially or psychologically troubled. The number of learners with mental health problems is therefore probably higher than the general population – although this is difficult to judge as mental health issues are less likely than other conditions to be disclosed. The college's courses are externally accredited and can be demanding. This is not therapeutic for all. However, letters from successful students show that the college's provision does provide superb support for many individuals.

## **6.2 Further information the college plans to gather**

Further information about disability for applicants for college posts, for interviewees, new appointments and existing staff will be collected with an initial focus on improving the college's disclosure processes and records of staff who have a disability or become disabled whilst employed at the college.

Other areas where the college's Personnel team will collect and analyse information about disability will include:

- disability profile of employees by grade/salary scale and type of work, for example management, teaching, support;
- type of contract;
- grievances, disciplinary and capability proceedings initiated;
- satisfaction surveys and exit interviews.

Comprehensive records on disclosed disability are in place for student applicants and enrolees. Sustained efforts will be made to increase the rate of early disclosure – in particular in disclosure of mental health issues.

## **6.3 Responsibility for gathering information and how often information will be used**

Gathering and monitoring of information about staff is the responsibility of the Personnel Manager. Statistics relating to the recruitment of staff with a disability are presented and discussed by the Equal Opportunities Sub Group and by the Governing Body Personnel Committee annually as part of the report on Equal Opportunities monitoring.

It is anticipated that the Disability Focus Group will review whether the information provided and the format could be improved.

Information on learners is gathered electronically at the point of application, at enrolment and at interview. Confidential discussions follow any disclosure or diagnostic screening results identifying a specific need. Anonymised data is used frequently through the year as various internal quality processes unfold and external agencies explore the data direct or request customised reports.

#### **6.4 Arrangements to ensure monitoring takes place at organisational and departmental level**

Recording of equal opportunities monitoring statistics for staffing is an on-going process within the Personnel Section. The Personnel Section liaises closely with the Occupational Health Service and Line Managers as appropriate.

Student profile monitoring is conducted routinely via the college's MIS at course, school and college level. The annual Self Assessment Report reflects on strengths, progress and areas for development including for disability access. Termly student satisfaction surveys are analysed by respondents' self identification: sex, age, mode of study, ethnicity, disability and learning difficulty. Action plans and improvement plans drawing from these surveys and reports are drawn up, then reviewed by managers and governors biannually.

#### **6.5 How the information gathered will inform planning and decision-making**

Information gathered will assist with planning priorities for undertaking impact assessments; with curriculum review and with accommodation strategy.

#### **6.6 Arrangements for making use of such information to improve performance in disability equality continually and the responsibilities of staff in this process.**

- Discussion at Disability Focus Group and with other interested parties to enable action to be taken to remedy equality gaps and barriers.
- On-going monitoring to identify where improvements have been made.
- Rolling staff development programme to raise and maintain awareness.
- Focus on the need for inter-disciplinary collaboration and excellent communication across curriculum and support functions.

## **7. PUTTING THE SCHEME INTO PRACTICE**

### **7.1 How the Scheme will be published**

The Scheme will be:

- circulated to all staff
- placed on Capella – the college’s VLE – for reference and downloading by students;
- placed on the college intranet for reference and downloading by staff
- placed as a link on the college website for download and reference by potential applicants and visitors.

Reference to the Scheme will be made in key documents

### **7.2 Reporting mechanisms to communicate annual progress and performance to governors, staff, learners and other interested stakeholders. (The results of impact assessments, gathering and using information and the improved outcomes for disabled people that have been achieved.)**

- Minutes of Focus Group meetings to be circulated to staff
- Personnel Committee
- Curriculum and Quality Committee
- Health and Safety Committee

## **8. Monitoring and evaluation**

### **8.1 Arrangements for updating the Action Plan regularly in the light of information and gathering**

- Regular review by the Focus Group
- Annual Report to governors through appropriate sub committees
- Annual updating on web-based sites as listed in 7.1 above.

### **8.2 Arrangements for regular monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan**

- Focus Group

