

Yeovil College Race Equality Scheme – Annual Report October 2010

Context

Yeovil College is pleased to proactively respond to its legal and moral duty and responsibilities towards anti-discriminatory practice.

As part of the General Duty placed on all Further Education Institutions by the Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended by the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000) (RRAA) Act (2005) the College produced its first Race Equality Policy in December 2005. This has been reviewed and up-dated on a regular basis and Annual Race Equality Action Plans have been published. The action plans clearly demonstrate the college's commitment to the Race Equality Duty and its purpose to create a positive, whole college, non-discriminatory ethos which underlines its practice.

This annual report (2010) reviews the college's progress during the last year and identifies the steps we have taken to fulfil our general duty related to race equality, (i.e. the action plan), meet our initial targets, eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity.

It is the responsibility of Yeovil College Equality and Diversity Group to monitor and review the Race Equality Policy and corresponding Action Plan. The overall action plan comprises of three main actions, each with a number of sub-sections, with individual points for action and identified responsibilities across the organisation. The following points offer an overview of progress for each area for the year ended September 2010.

Policy Review

A review of the policy was undertaken in October 2010, approved by the Equality and Diversity Group and presented for approval by the Corporation during their first appropriate meeting. This included an equality impact assessment.

Action Plan Review

The Action Plan is divided into the following improvement areas:

Annual Report

To publish a Race Equality Scheme Annual Report.

This is produced on an annual basis in October each year.

Staff Awareness

To ensure that staff are aware of the college's policy and procedures and of their responsibilities.

- Equality and Diversity training is now part of the College induction programme for all new staff. This includes an explanation of the college policies and procedures. Staff receive a certificate of attendance.
- Cross-college training in Equality and Diversity was offered during Staff Development Days.
- Training is also offered within the whole College continual professional development programme. During 2010, fifty-five staff successfully completed the NCFE Level 2 Equality and Diversity qualification.
- On-line training for in Equality and Diversity is available to staff through Moodle.

- During 2010 a representative of the Somerset Racial Equality Group gave a presentation to members of the Equality and Diversity Group.
- South Birmingham College (Grade 1 for Equality and Diversity) attended a meeting of the E and D Group in June 2010, and met with other key staff, in order to share best practice.
- Information is distributed to staff, on an on-going basis, for inclusion in the Faculty/area Equality and Diversity folder.
- The Race Equality Policy and Action Plan and other related policies are available on the college Intranet and web-site.
- 'Equality and Diversity' is a standing item on most cross-college meeting agendas
- A new monitoring group has been set up to ensure that policies are reviewed and impact-assessed in a timely manner.

Governor Awareness

To ensure that Governors are aware of the college's policy and procedures and of their responsibilities

- The majority of the Corporation have attended Equality and Diversity training.
- Members of the Corporation receive a regular up-date on Equality and Diversity from the Vice Principal, Learning and Quality, at full Corporation meetings.
- The Governor with the lead for Equality and Diversity regularly attends E and D Group meetings.
- The Corporation approve any Equality and Diversity related policies and procedures when they are due for renewal.

Learner Awareness

To raise awareness of race equality amongst learners

- Equality and diversity sessions have been delivered within some tutorials by the Head of Learner Support Services and the Chaplaincy Adviser.
- Student Union now has a higher profile within the College and is able to promote events and issues directly to its members across the College. This includes those linked to equality and diversity such as Holocaust Day and Remembrance Day.
- A Diversity Day took place in June 2010 and included participation by students from all Faculties.
- Changes to lesson plans, schemes of work and lesson observations have placed greater emphasis on Equality and Diversity.
- A Race and Belief Equality and Diversity Resource Pack has been developed for use by tutors and other staff.
- The Student Union, including Student Governor, received Safeguarding training in Feb 2010. This included information on how to report cases of racist bullying and abuse.
- A 'Do you need Help?' button has been set up on Moodle, by the Student Support Services Team, which enables students or staff to ask for help or report issues by confidential e-mail. They can also access links to external organisations and web-sites for information about abuse, racism, bullying etc.

Staff and Learner Experience

To improve the monitoring of learner and staff experience relating to race equality and take action as appropriate.

- Improved data collection to identify opportunities, achievement and progression for students from ethnic minority back-grounds is on-going. Reports are given and the Equality and Diversity Group and the Senior Performance and Review Group. Information is discussed at Faculty level. The population is very small, although above the local percentage for ethnic minority groups.
- On-line student surveys include questions about equality and diversity, including race, and can be analysed by ethnic group. Results are discussed at the Equality and Diversity Group, Senior Curriculum and Development Group and at Faculty Level.
- The Student Support Services team have developed new referral systems for analysing support requests by equality strands.

Conclusion

The College aims to offer the very best opportunities for all its learners, prospective learners, staff and users of the College. There are still issues and action points to be addressed in order to further improve our understanding and practice across the College. However, Yeovil College feels that significant progress has been made under the Race Relations Duty and the Race Equality Action Plan. Governor, staff and learner awareness has been raised and improvements have been made to the way in which we monitor the learner and staff experience and thus work together to respond to our general duty in regards to race relations.

The College is delighted to have been asked, by Lifelong Learning UK, to take part in a pilot national initiative, during 2010/11, to develop an Equality Framework. This will provide a structure for working with staff, learners, local communities and partners in the public and third sector. The aim is to improve the services we provide so that they are more representative, relevant and efficient whilst, at the same time, improving satisfaction and trust. It will enable the College to respond to challenges, tackle prejudice and improve the life chances and opportunities of those who face discrimination and disadvantage. We look forward to working with other colleges in the country to take forward this important aspect of work.