



Single Equality Scheme 2011-2013



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I. Introduction

Truro and Penwith College has a commitment to meet the general and specific duties contained in The Equality Act 2010. The college recognises the educational and business benefits of having a diverse community of staff and learners who value one another and contribute to the achievement of the College's mission:

'to provide the best possible learning experience leading to the highest possible level of achievement by our students'.

We aim to create a culture of inclusiveness and to challenge discrimination in order to remove barriers to the educational and personal progression of individual learners. To achieve this aim the college will not tolerate unfair or unlawful discrimination.

In the College's earlier individual equality schemes detail was given both on the legislative framework and on the general and specific statutory duties which apply to all public bodies, including tertiary colleges. This single equality scheme remains compliant with these duties, which cover race, disability and gender, but it also looks forward to the introduction of the single equality duty which will cover additional equality strands.

The Equality Act 2010 came into force on 1st October 2010 with the new single equality duty due to come into force from April 2011 covering the following Protected Characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnerships
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

This Single Equality Scheme sets out the College's equality principles, aims and objectives and associated action plan for implementation for the period 2011-13. The scheme describes how the college will:

- Promote equality of opportunity and avoid discrimination
- Place the advancement of inclusion, equality and diversity at the centre of its work
- Ensure that Truro and Penwith College operates best practice as an employer in pursuit of equality

2. The Context of Truro and Penwith College

History

- In April 1st 2008, Truro and Penwith College came into being following the merger of Truro College and Penwith College.
- Truro College opened in 1993 as a Tertiary College. In September 1993 the College enrolled 742 full-time learners. By the end of the academic year 2009/10, this had grown to over 5,000 full-time further education learners and also approximately 12,500 part-time further education learners.
- The college established a rapidly growing Higher Education provision with part-time and full-time courses at degree and diploma level. In 2009/10 837 full-time HE learners were studying at the College, together with 409 part-time Higher Education learners.
- The college has established a highly successful business centre to meet the needs of employers and learners in the workplace.

Provision

- The college offers a wide range of academic and vocational courses to fulltime and part-time learners including learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- There is provision in thirteen of the fifteen subject sector areas (SSAs). The college has ALR funding and ER funding for Apprenticeships and Train to Gain.

Ofsted

- In its January 2007 Ofsted inspection report the college achieved Grade 1 in every category: Effectiveness of Provision, Capacity to Improve, Achievements and Standards, Quality of Provision, Leadership and Management.
- In consequence it was awarded “designated outstanding” status.
- It is designated as a Beacon College.
- The post merger 2008 Ofsted monitoring visit reported significant progress in all areas for improvement identified in Penwith College’s previous inspection report.
- The college was one of the first in the country to be awarded the Training Quality Standard for Employer Engagement.
- Success Rates for the last 3 years are shown on the Provider Gateway.

Capital

- The main Truro College premises consist of new buildings to the west of Truro. It also has premises in the City for the Business Centre and Open Learning Centres.
- The buildings on the main College site have all been completed since 1993. The most recent projects include completion of the Fal, Gannel and Lynher buildings.
- The College also has a small centre in a rural area to the south of Truro which offers a limited amount of residential accommodation

- The Penwith College campus is being completely re-built on an extended campus at a total project cost of over £30 million. This development will be completed by Easter 2011.

Main strengths

- As a Tertiary College it offers a very wide a range of academic and vocational courses to full and part-time learners.
- The offer includes more than 50 AS/A2 Level subjects and enrolments in many areas are very healthy.
- Learners' achievements have consistently been of an exceptionally high standard. The College was also rated "Outstanding" for A level value added achievement in 2010 (Grade 2 on ALPS, the value added cohort which includes the majority of sixth form colleges nationally).
- In 2006 *The Financial Times* 'Top 1000 Schools' Supplement ranked Truro College in equal first place as the most successful provider of the International Baccalaureate nationally.
- The College, in co-operation with universities and other Higher Education institutions, has extended its involvement in the provision of Higher Education courses through the Combined University for Cornwall initiative.

The Wider Community

- Cornwall has an aging population
- Cornwall has a higher proportion of working age people who are disabled than nationally (Labour Force Survey)
- It is estimated that there are between 3000 and 4000 people in Cornwall with severe learning difficulties (The Plan for people in Cornwall with learning difficulties 2007/10)
- 400 young carers (aged 4-18) have been identified in Cornwall (Cornwall Rural Community Council 2009)
- Lone parents in Cornwall are much more likely to be female
- A higher proportion of lone parents in Cornwall are disabled
- A high proportion of people in Cornwall say they are white British
- There have been increases in the other white, mixed heritage and Asian groups in Cornwall. The increase is due to more people from the 8 European accession countries coming to the area
- Cornish residents in 2007 felt people from different backgrounds get on better
- Around three quarters of people in Cornwall are Christian (Census 2001)
- 2397 people in Cornwall are from the Buddhist, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu and Sikh faiths (Census 2001)
- National survey results show that the majority of lesbians, gay men and bisexual people in the South West would expect to face barriers to selection as a local government candidate or school governor
- 277 civil partnerships took place in Cornwall between 2005 and 2007

3. The Legislative Context

The Equality Act 2010 replaces all existing anti-discrimination laws and includes a new public sector Equality Duty. The main aims of the 2010 Act are to provide protection of the Protected Characteristics from the following prohibited conduct:

- Direct discrimination;
- Indirect discrimination;
- Victimisation; and
- Harassment

The Equality Duty consists of a general duty, which is set out in the Act itself and new specific duties which will be imposed through regulations (currently undergoing consultation).

a. The general duty of Truro and Penwith College

Section 149 of the Act imposes a general duty on Truro and Penwith College, when exercising their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and
- Foster good relations between different groups

The legislation makes it clear that complying with the duty might mean treating some people more favourably than others, where doing so is permitted by the Act, such as taking positive action to promote equality, or making reasonable adjustments for disabled people.

b. The Specific Duties of Truro and Penwith College

Section 153 of the Act enables ministers to make regulations imposing specific duties on public bodies. The specific duties are legal requirements designed to help the public bodies meet the general duty.

The current specific duties currently being consulted upon are:

i. Publication of equality data

Truro and Penwith College (An employer with 150 or more employees) will be required to publish information relating to the protected characteristics of its staff (by 04.04.11 and then at least annually). The EHRC Code of Practice and guidance will set out what workforce data should be published.

Other information that should be published includes impact assessments, information taken into account when making these assessments, and details of any engagement with interested

parties that has been undertaken in relation to these assessments and the implementation of the Equality duty.

ii. Setting equality objectives

Truro and Penwith College must set objectives to achieve in relation to equality and publish these by 02.04.12. The objectives should relate to how the public body intends to further the aims of the Equality Duty. The objectives must be specific and measurable, including how progress will be measured. At least one objective must be set although public bodies may choose to set more than this. New objectives must be set at least every four years.

iii. Publication

Truro and Penwith College must publish the information that is required to be published in a manner which is reasonably accessible to the public (this can be part of another document).

4. Involving people in the development and review of the scheme

The College's previous equality schemes actively involved staff and students in their development, implementation and assessment. To continue this approach the college will actively seek to involve stakeholders by:

- Involving staff in meet individual needs
- Involving staff in reviewing organisational data
- Involving staff in setting priorities for further data gathering and action planning
- Involving staff and students in assessing the impact of policy and procedures
- Involving students through course reviews
- Involving students through learner voice meetings
- Involving Governors in monitoring relevant college complaints
- Involving senior managers in setting strategic objectives to meet the Equality duty
- Involving Governors through the annual Equal Opportunities Monitoring Report

Much of the above work will be undertaken and monitored by the College Equality and Diversity group.

The college will also use information on good practice from organisations such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission and relevant government reports.

5. Principles, Aims and Objectives of our Single Equality Scheme

5.1 Principles

Truro and Penwith College aims to be recognised as a leader of equality and diversity in its work and as an example of good practice. This Single Equality Scheme sets out the framework within which the College intends to promote equality for and prevent discrimination against, our students, staff, governors and visitors. We respect and wish to celebrate the diversity of our students and staff and we recognise the social and intellectual benefits of a diverse student population. As a College we will seek to eliminate direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, victimisation and harassment. Success of the college's Single Equality Scheme will require ownership by Governors, Senior Management, all staff, all students and the college community.

- a) Discrimination, harassment and victimisation, direct or indirect, is unjust. It is the right of all individuals to expect fair treatment.
- b) All members of the College - governor, employee, student or visitor - will be valued equally and treated considerately.
- c) The promotion of excellent practice in equality and diversity will be central to all aspects of College life: learning, teaching, employment, environment, student services.
- d) All students are entitled to an inclusive learning environment and the provision of an accessible curriculum.
- e) Staff and students are entitled to dignity and respect in the workplace and learning environment.
- f) The commitment and involvement of staff and students is essential to the implementation of our Single Equality Scheme.

5.2 Aims

The central aim of the College's Single Equality Scheme is to require action which will remove any existing barriers to all staff, students, governors and visitors, irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

5.3 Objectives

The College has agreed to maintain the following objectives:

A Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

Objective 1 to embed within the College structure coherent and robust planning, management and decision-making processes associated with the provision of services/support for all students and staff

Objective 2 to ensure that the College's commitment to all students and staff is embedded in its strategies and policies

Objective 3 to carry out systematic evaluation of progress towards providing for the needs of all students and staff as an integral part of the College's planning and review cycle

B Pre-enrolment, Enrolment and Induction

Objective 1 to ensure that the College's procedures for pre-enrolment, enrolment and induction are fully accessible to all students

Objective 2 to make specialist information, advice and guidance available to all applicant students and new students complying with the matrix quality standard

Objective 3 to record equality information disclosed about a student at the earliest opportunity on the College's Management Information Systems and to consider the implications of this information for the student's experience with the College

Objective 4 to provide comprehensive support to all applicant students and new students to enable them to access College courses, services and facilities wherever possible

C Teaching and Learning

Objective 1 to provide a clear and coherent learning experience for all students

Objective 2 to maximise the opportunities for all students to achieve the same learning outcomes

Objective 3 to design all teaching and teaching materials to be accessible to all students wherever possible

Objective 4 to provide accessible examination and assessment arrangements for all students wherever possible

D Student Support and Guidance

Objective 1 to provide clear and coherent tutorial support for all students

Objective 2 to ensure accessibility for all students to the full range of Student Services, including Learning Support

E Staff Recruitment, Employment and Development

I Staff Recruitment

Objective 1.1 actively to promote the College as an equality aware employer and an Investor in People

Objective 1.2 to ensure that all applicants receive full and fair treatment and are considered solely on their ability to do the job

Objective 1.3 to ensure that all disabled applicants whose skills and experience meet the essential criteria of the person specification are interviewed

2 Staff Employment Policies and Procedures

Objective 2.1 to review and develop further the College's employment policies and procedures in order to provide a barrier-free environment for all staff

Objective 2.2 to ensure that the work environment and working practices do not constitute unnecessary barriers which may prevent employees participating fully in the life of the College

Objective 2.3 to retain staff who become disabled in their current role wherever possible or to find a suitable alternative role if available (and to provide retraining where reasonable)

3 Staff Development

Objective 3.1 to provide staff development and resources to raise staff awareness of issues relating to equality and diversity

Objective 3.2 to support the development of the skills and potential of all staff through staff development and promotion opportunities

Objective 3.3 to ensure that all staff teaching students with disabilities have access to relevant information and are supported in their work

Objective 3.4 to integrate appropriate forms of on-going training on equality and diversity issues into the College's staff development programme

F Accessible Documentation

Objective 1 to ensure that where practicable all College documentation and publications are accessible to all staff, students, governors and the wider community

G Accessible Site

Objective 1 to ensure that where practicable, all new and existing College buildings are accessible

Objective 2 to ensure that access issues are built into new policies and procedures as these are developed and into new projects whether new build or refurbishment

6. Equality Impact Assessments

Impact assessment is not an end in itself, but is the process which the College must go through in order to:

- identify and act upon the need to modify policies and practices;
- have better regard to the promotion of equality of opportunity;
- eliminate unlawful discrimination (for all aspects of equality, including disability).

Impact assessments of college policies and practices will be undertaken by the College Equality and Diversity Group chaired by the Director of Curriculum, following an agreed schedule. The Senior Management Team and Governors will be updated as appropriate.

Staff development will be undertaken as appropriate regarding equality duties with specific training organised for key staff.

7. Publication and Action Plan

This scheme will be published upon the College website and reference will be made to it in key documents aimed at staff and learners. Feedback will be invited through the College website.

The Action Plan will be updated on an annual basis.