



## Hillingdon Adult and Community Learning Equality and Diversity Policy

Hillingdon Adult & Community Learning is committed to providing equal opportunities both as a Service and an employer, and seeks to provide high quality learning opportunities free from all forms of discrimination.

Equality of opportunity is an important aspect in working to raise aspirations, self-esteem and learning standards for our residents and in order to achieve this we are committed to meeting the aims and objectives of the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy.

The Service embraces the last 4 decades of legislation and has further embraced the Equality Act 2010 and the new Public Sector Equality Duty which came into force in April 2011.

### **The Equality Act 2010 in brief:**

1) Brings together discrimination law introduced over four decades through legislation and regulations.

2) Includes the following which you may be familiar with:

- Equal Pay Act 1970 (Amended)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999
- Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulation 2003
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulation 2003
- Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulation 2003
- Civil Partnerships Act 2004
- Gender Recognition Act 2004
- The Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005
- Disability Discrimination Amendment Act 2005

The Act covers employment, education, housing, the provision of goods, facilities and services and the exercise of public functions, ultimately everything we do in the organisation.

The majority of the Equality Act 2010 was implemented on the 1st October 2010 with further provisions being introduced over time.

The Act uses the new term "protected characteristic" to replace the former equality

“strands”. These are:

- age – from the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012 this will cover employment, education, public services and functions, goods and facilities.
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership – employment only
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

The London Borough of Hillingdon has a responsibility to fulfil its Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) when delivering services and carrying out public functions. The duty requires a public authority in the exercise of its functions to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity and
- foster good relations.

**For further information**, please see: [http://www.equalities.gov.uk/equality\\_bill.aspx](http://www.equalities.gov.uk/equality_bill.aspx)

The Service recognises that ‘Equality and Diversity’ and ‘Feeling Safe’, sit hand-in-hand and will ensure that the full execution of this policy and associated actions will contribute to learners, staff, visitors and partners feeling safe.

The service believes that the following principles should apply to everyone providing or receiving our services whether they are staff, learners, partners or community groups.

**Principles for achieving equality of opportunity are:**

- Racism, sexism, and other discriminatory practises are demeaning for all and must be challenged.
- The richness of cultural diversity must be recognised and celebrated
- Provision must reflect as far as is possible the particular needs and interests of all with regard to
  - disability
  - gender reassignment
  - pregnancy and maternity
  - race
  - religion or belief
  - sex
  - sexual orientation
  - age
  - marriage and civil partnership – employment only
- Everyone is entitled to access a range of high quality learning opportunities and career choices
- A fully integrated approach to the provision of learning opportunities will benefit everyone by increasing understanding and appreciation of other people’s lives
- Positive attitudes to equal opportunities for all must be developed
- There is fair employment practice in recruitment and professional development of staff

Hillingdon Adult & Community Learning recognises that positive steps towards equal opportunities will be necessary to turn principles into practice. To this end a requirement is in the Job Description of every member to:

*'Adhere to and fully implement the principles and responsibilities of the Equality and Diversity Policy, in all aspects and duties of the role'.*

The Service as a whole will address areas for development through the annual Self-Assessment process and will include Quality Improvement actions within its Operational Plan and Curriculum Quality Improvement Plans.

**The following statements indicate the key areas for development necessary in order to ensure equality and diversity.**

## **KEY STATEMENTS**

- 1. Facilities:** All adult learning centres will ensure the provision of a safe, accessible and welcoming environment for individuals and groups from all sections of the community.
- 2. Access:** Adult & Community Learning will actively engage with and develop productive partnership arrangements with key community groups and agencies, particularly those experiencing disadvantage, in order to identify needs and encourage access.
- 3. Induction:** Learners will be supported by a thorough induction and the Learner Handbook to access information with regard to how we can support them. They will be actively encouraged to complete an initial diagnostic assessment and appropriate support will be put in place should individual needs be identified
- 4. Monitoring:** The Service will monitor recruitment and achievement levels for all communities and ethnic groups of learners, putting actions in place where under-representation or lower success rates are identified.
- 5. Consultation:** The Service will consult with existing and potential students and with representatives of key groups in each locality to ensure that the needs of all sections of the community are met.
- 6. Learner Feedback:** The Service will actively encourage through a range of mechanisms learner and partner feedback and will use this to make improvements in the quality of provision. The Service will ensure an open and fair mechanism for raising comments, compliments and complaints, using both Service and Council systems. These processes will be actively communicated to learners through induction, learner handbook and centre notices.
- 7. Promotion:** Promotional activities, including brochures, will encourage engagement by all sections of the community.
- 8. Partnerships:** The Service will play an active role strategically within the Safer and Stronger Local Strategic Partnership Theme group and will engage in strategic groups to ensure that it can respond appropriately to community cohesion initiatives across the borough. Through effective operational partnerships the Service will develop bespoke projects which will be planned to meet the identified needs of specific groups of residents.
- 9. Staff Training:** An appropriate range of training opportunities will be available to staff to support the development of course planning and delivery, assessment and resources that are relevant to all sections of the community. Information will be provided for staff to support them in supporting learners with disabilities or difficulties.

**A commitment to Equality and Diversity places a responsibility on all who learn or work in this Service. These are examples of things that we should know or do:**

### **LEARNERS AND STAFF:**

- You must respect all other learners and staff and not act in ways that are oppressive or offensive.
- You should not accept any form of discriminatory behaviour from anyone.
- You should report any kind of harassment that you experience.
- You should report any actions or incidents that you consider inappropriate.
- You should challenge any teaching or publicity materials that you find offensive.

### **TUTORS:**

- Sessions must be planned carefully to ensure those resources, materials, methods and language used are appropriate and accessible to all and are not offensive to any individual learner.
- Where possible, you should use examples that challenge stereotypes about groups of people and use materials, which draw upon a range of cultural traditions.
- You should know who to talk to and the appropriate action to take if you find learners or staff acting in contradiction of the Equality and Diversity Policy.
- You must welcome all learners into any course appropriate to their needs and value their participation and contribution.
- You must show sensitivity and respect for the diversity of cultures, beliefs and traditions that learners bring with them.

### **MANAGERS:**

- You must ensure that promotional material is appropriate to all learners and that it reflects the commitment of our Service to equality and diversity.
- You must ensure that recruitment, guidance and enrolment arrangements are fully accessible and appropriate to all sections of the community and that learners are reassured that they will be welcomed into any course appropriate to their needs.
- You must support and advise sessional tutors on the implementation of this Policy, identify training needs and good practice.
- You should ensure that the policy is regularly brought to the attention of staff and learners in a way that supports the development of equality and diversity
- You must be prepared to deal with actions, which contravene this Policy and should know how to respond and who to talk to.
- You should systematically check that the statements outlined in the Equality and Diversity Policy is put into practice.

### **WHO TO TALK TO:**

- If you observe any behaviour that you find unacceptable or if you believe that anything is contravening our Equality and Diversity Policy, you have a responsibility to report this to a member of staff.
- In most cases it will be appropriate for learners to report an equal opportunities issue to a tutor or to a Learner Services Manager.
- If this is not considered appropriate, please report the matter to a member of the curriculum management staff.. If you feel that it is more appropriate, you can refer the matter to the Head of Service.
- Any Hillingdon Adult & Community Learning centre will be able to provide telephone numbers and addresses for the staff listed above.

**The Equality Challenge Unit supports the education sector to realise the potential of all staff and students whatever their race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and believe, or age to the benefit of those individuals, education institutions and society [www.ecu.ac.uk](http://www.ecu.ac.uk)**

## Reasonable Adjustment

Under the Equality Act 2010 an employer has a duty to make reasonable changes for disabled applicants and employees. These are known as 'reasonable adjustments'. Adjustments should be made to avoid you or your learners being put at a disadvantage compared to non-disabled people. The need to make reasonable adjustments can apply to the working arrangements or any physical aspects of the workplace, for example, providing you with an adapted piece of equipment to help you to do the job. Physical adjustments might include replacing steps with a ramp. Also, if it is reasonable, the employer needs to provide an extra aid to ensure the disabled worker is not disadvantaged. This might mean providing special or adapted equipment to do the job.

- Admission, administrative and examination procedures
- Course content, including work placement
- Physical features of premises
- Teaching arrangements

Education providers will also need to consider whether it is reasonable to provide additional equipment and services.

- Additional teaching
- Communication and support services to disabled Learners
- The provision of information in alternative format
- Training of staff

### **STAFF MESSAGE**

**You can get advice and support from Learning Support Team who will:**

- **advise on what is a reasonable adjustment**
- **work with you to provide appropriate support**

**It is essential that there is proper assessment of the individual's abilities and support requirements.**

## Assessing what defines a 'Reasonable Adjustment'

There are a number of factors which in particular education providers will have to consider when assessing whether an adjustment or additional equipment or service is reasonable.

- a) Whether the adjustment would affect the maintenance of academic and other standards
- b) The cost of the adjustment and the financial resources available
- c) Whether making the adjustment or additional provision is practical
- d) The effectiveness of the adjustment or additional provision
- e) The disruption caused to others
- f) Whether the learner or others should provide additional provision or services
- g) The importance of the service to which access is being sought

### **STAFF MESSAGE**

As a member of staff be aware that the emphasis is on 'REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT'.

In some instances adjustments may not be appropriate or feasible and another course or route of action will need to be considered. Every case is determined on individual circumstances and always ask your line manager for support.

## Justification for not accepting a learner on a specific course

Hillingdon Adult & Community Learning must consider reasonable adjustments BUT if treatment is different they MUST be able to justify it with the following justifications:

- The ability of the disabled learner to benefit from the provision
- Effect of the provision on other learners
- The disabled learner would be unable to meet the medical or other health requirements of a profession to which the course leads
- Health and Safety considerations

### STAFF MESSAGE

If a learner does not have the necessary skills and abilities for a specific course, ensure that the learner has access to informed guidance and support in order that they can make a more realistic and appropriate choice. This in the long term is better for the learner and for the Service but always do this with the support of your line manager.

Education providers will be considered to know of a learner's learning difficulty or disability when a member of staff **is told** or where a provider would be reasonably expected to know the learner has a difficulty.

**Otherwise**, if a learner fails to declare a disability or asks a member of staff to keep it confidential, then the education provider cannot be expected to make adjustments to their particular needs.

**It is important for all office staff and tutors to ensure:**

- 1. Learners complete their enrolment form, indicating their disability and any support required.**
- 2. That learners receive support if it is agreed that support is required by the Learning Support Team manager**
- 3. If a learner has been offered support and refuses it, that the Learning Support Team has been informed of the details.**

**These three things together should ensure that Hillingdon Adult & Community Learning is acting in good faith and complying with the law.**

**For further information and advice contact:**

The ALDD and Learning Support PAL  
Brookfield Adult Learning Centre  
Park Road, Uxbridge, Middlesex. UB8 1NP  
Tel: 01895 556455