



# **Disability Equality Scheme 2006 – 2009**

**The Journey Towards Disability Equality.....**

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## Glossary of Terms

Disability Discrimination Act 2005	-	DDA
Disability Equality Scheme	-	DES
Senior Management Team	-	SMT
Learning & Skills Council	-	LSC
Virtual Learning Environment	-	VLE / Blackboard
Self Assessment Report	-	SAR
Special Educational Needs Act	-	SENDA
Further Education	-	FE
Joint Consultation & Negotiation Committee	-	JCNC
Investors in People	-	IIP
Vice Principal	-	VP
Skills for Life	-	SfL
Learners with learning difficulties and disabilities	-	LLDD

## Forward

Middlesbrough College, although obliged statutorily to commit to a Disability Equality Scheme, is, notwithstanding, committed to pursuance of enabling all members of its community to realise their full potential. The underlying value system of the College is such that we will strive not only to meet minimum requirements, but create a wholly inclusive environment where all staff and learners are signatories to the same.



John Hogg  
Principal & Chief Executive



Hazel Pearson O.B.E.  
Chair of Governors

## **Part 1 Introduction – Promoting Disability Equality**

### **1.1 Principles of Middlesbrough College’s Disability Equality Scheme**

A disabled person is defined in the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005 as someone with a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term impact on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

The College welcomes the opportunity to present its Disability Equality Scheme (DES) both in the context of its duty under the (DDA) and the good practice that has been developed in relation to disability equality. It is recognised that it is a journey towards absolute equality and the scheme and the accompanying action plan reflects that position.

The DES is set within the College’s holistic approach, enunciated in the Mission Statement: ‘We will enable members of our community to realise their full potential by providing outstanding learning opportunities in a supportive and positive environment’.

The DES and the Action Plan are endorsed by the Principal and Chief Executive and Chair of Governors. The Senior Management Team (SMT) and the Governing Body will monitor progress towards a refined DES and Action Plan over the next three years. Operating objectives relating to the DES will be set for all departments and services areas.

### **1.2 Aims: Learners / Staff / Accessible Buildings / Procurement**

The College is committed to providing an environment in which there is equality of opportunity for all members of its community. It is recognised that every member of that community has a role to play in creating a climate which supports equality, diversity and opportunity. This commitment applies both to learners and staff, able and disabled.

The College’s DDA Task Force has spent considerable time in the process of analysing the ‘learner journey’ through the College, from application to achievement and progression. The Action Plan (Appendix A) which accompanies this scheme assesses the current position and details plans to address issues and consolidate good practice.

The College takes positive action both as an employer and as a provider of education and training in respect of:

- Access to and participation in education and training;
- Selection, recruitment, promotion and staff training and personal development;
- The curriculum;
- The College environment;
- Resources

- Support systems.

The Accessibility Action Plan (Appendix B) has been in operation for three years having been based on an 'Independent Access' audit commissioned by the College in 2003. The plan is regularly reviewed and updated within the context of the College's operational planning process as described above. Funding for the purchases and other actions within the plan has been found from College capital investment and funds made available by the Learning & Skills Council (LSC) and other sources.

A transparent tendering process is laid down within the College's Financial Regulations for purchases in excess of £25,000.00.

The College maintains a list of preferred suppliers but uses specialist suppliers when goods and services are required to facilitate learner and staff functions.

Managers at Head of Department / Service level, and above have a company credit card which can be used to purchase goods and services direct.

### **1.3 Strengths / Issues Not Yet Addressed – Current Position**

As mentioned above an analysis of what are regarded as current strengths and issues that need to be addressed are detailed in the DES Action Plan which accompanies this scheme.

Headline strengths are:

- A significant number of disabled learners with a wide range of disabilities following a range of College courses;
- Significant adaptations to old and inaccessible buildings on four campuses;
- Disability Equality targets set within the College operational planning process with outcomes monitored by SMT and Governors;
- A Virtual Learning Environment (VLE or Blackboard) which allows internet access to learning from within the College and from home;
- A detailed Equality and Diversity Annual Report.
- Disability issues have been on the College 'agenda' for many years;
- A cross-College approach to Equality and Diversity;
- The College is entitled to use the 'Positive About Disabled People' logo;

Major issues to be addressed include:

- Inconsistencies in accessibility to courses;
- Inconsistent transition planning processes;
- Inconsistent levels of engagement with disabled individuals and groups;
- Inconsistent interviewing practices;
- Insufficient pro-activity in formally seeking views and feedback from disabled learners.

## **1.4 Staff and Learner Profile in Relation to Impairments**

The College continues to collect and analyse data by learner profile. In doing so the College is monitoring enrolment, retention, achievement and success rates by a range of categories including disability and learning difficulties. Outcomes are published within the Equality & Diversity Annual Report and the College Self Assessment Report (SAR).

## **1.5 Context and Culture of the Organisation**

The Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2005 / 2006 (Appendix C) sets the context within which our organisation views its commitment to equality and diversity and exhibits by the breadth and scope of its coverage, how the culture of the College has been nurtured upon the diversity of its members and their positive attitudes towards equality of opportunity.

Equality and Diversity action planning has been a whole College matter for some years and the format and content of the report reflects this. In addition to a detailed descriptive commentary the report includes: staff data, learner data and a detailed commentary, action by action, against the Equality & Diversity Action Plan for 2005 / 2006 (Appendix D).

At the transition stages of application, interview and enrolment the vast majority of disabled learners make a full and frank disclosure. They are happy to do so and realise that this is greatly to their advantage so that sufficient support can be planned in advance for the start of their courses. Year by year the college has increased the percentage of enrolling learners who make a disclosure of disability or learning difficulty at or prior to enrolment. This is apparent because fewer 'emergency' cases have to be dealt with when courses start. However, there are still a significant number of learners who are reluctant to make a formal disclosure.

## **1.6 Links to Equality & Diversity Policy, Self Assessment Reports, Quality Improvement and Operating Plans**

The College's Disability Statement (Appendix E) is regularly reviewed by the Equality & Diversity Committee and learners. Following the most recent review alterations were made to include a section in relation to the College's commitment as an employer, alongside other amendments, prior to referral to the Governing Body for formal approval. The updated statement is available in a number of formats; A4, large print on A5, Braille, audio; and also on the College website.

Other relevant documents are:

- Equality & Diversity Policy (Appendix F);
- Additional Learning Support Policy (Appendix G);
- Investors in People Report (Appendix H);
- Self Assessment Report;
- Quality Improvement Plan.

## Part 2 Context – Disability Equality Vision, Values & Principles

### 2.1 Legislative Framework

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 brought in measures to prevent discrimination against disabled people in employment and services. The Special Educational Needs Act (SENDA) 2001 amended the DDA 1995 to cover education and has been further amended, effective from 1 September 2006, under the DDA 1995 (Amendment) Act (Further and Higher Education) Regulations 2006.

Discrimination against disabled people can take place by treating them 'less favourably' than other people and by failing to make a 'reasonable adjustment' where they are placed at a 'substantial disadvantage' compared with other people for a reason relating to their disability. The DDA introduced a wide definition of a disabled person as having a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day duties.

The DDA 2005 introduced a new disability equality duty on education providers and other public sector bodies to promote disability equality across all functions. This new duty will come into force from December 2006 and will build on the progress already made in improving disability equality in education. It will extend the DDA 1995 requirements of anticipating and responding to the individual needs of disabled people to a duty under which organisations are expected to embed disability equality into all decisions and activities. This means that disability equality becomes central and integral to all that the College does. The duties will move the focus away from the needs of the individual and onto the policies, procedures, plans and practice of the organisation. This means that the College needs to ensure that it continues to build disability equality into every aspect of its activity. The DDA 2005 places a number of general and specific duties on the College to promote disability equality.

The general duty requires that every Public Authority shall, in carrying out its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons;
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act;
- Eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities;
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons;
- Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life;
- Take steps to take account of disabled persons more favourably than other persons (this principle has always been recognised in the DDA, particularly through the duty to make reasonable adjustments, and, for example, in the provision of dedicated services to enable disabled persons to access mainstream activities on equitable terms).

Under the specific duties, there is a requirement to:

- Publish a Disability Equality Scheme (DES) by 4 December 2006 as a means of delivering the equality duty and to involve disabled people in the development of the Scheme;
- Prepare and review regularly an Action Plan detailing the steps the organisation plans to take to meet the new duties;
- Review, revise and publish Middlesbrough College's DES every three years.

Middlesbrough College's DES has been developed in line with the requirements of this disability legislation and the associated Disability Rights Commission Statutory Codes of Practice on 'The Duty to promote disability equality'.

We recognise our legal obligations and duties under the DDA Part 4 1995 (as updated) including the new duty to promote disability equality. The Governing Body of the College accepts its duties under this legislation. By doing so it recognises that it is legally liable for the actions of the institution as a whole and also for the actions of all individual employees.

## **2.2 Social Model of Disability**

The social model of disability was developed in the 1970s by disabled people who used their personal experiences to show that the disadvantage and social exclusion experienced by many disabled people is not the inevitable result of their impairments or medical conditions, but stems from attitudinal and environmental barriers. The social model recognises that while some people may have impairments which affect how they function physically or mentally, they are actually disabled by the barriers in society that fail to take appropriate account of their needs.

The College policy, practice, attitude and vision are based on the social model of disability which we interpret simply as meeting the individual needs of the disabled learner by removing barriers to participation in learning and employment, and being full members of the College community.

The College's Disability Statement is attached as Appendix E.

## **2.3 College Mission & Strategic Plans**

The College's DES is set within an holistic approach enunciated in the Mission Statement 'We will enable members of our community to realise their full potential by providing outstanding learning opportunities in a supportive and positive environment'.

SMT and the Governing Body will monitor progress towards a refined DES and Action Plan over the next three years. Operating objectives relating to the DES will be set for all departments and services areas..

## **2.4 College Distinctive Characteristics**

Middlesbrough College is a large general further education (FE) tertiary college formed from the merger in August 2002 of the former Middlesbrough College with Teesside Tertiary College. It is now the largest provider of education and training in the Tees Valley and one of its largest employers. The College has four campuses within a radius of a few miles of the town centre. The Kirby campus accommodates the Catering, Hospitality, Travel & Tourism, Hairdressing & Beauty Therapy and Health & Care departments. The Marton campus accommodates the Skills for Life, Business, Visual & Performing Arts and Sport & Recreation departments. There is a dedicated Sixth Form Centre at the Acklam campus providing mainly academic courses. The Engineering and Construction departments are accommodated at the Longlands campus.

As part of the '14-19 Agenda' over 600 14-16 year old pupils from local secondary schools attend a range of vocational courses under the aegis of the Increased Flexibility or Alternative Curriculum projects.

The College serves a population in Middlesbrough of more than 145,000 but attracts many learners from other parts of the Tees Valley. Over 40% of wards in the Tees Valley are ranked amongst the 10% most deprived in England and Wales. The proportion of school leavers with 5 or more GCSE grades A\* to C in Middlesbrough is significantly lower than the national average.

In August 2008 the College will move to a new single site, purpose built College building in the Middlehaven area of the town. Marketing material is anticipating the move. The planned curriculum offer reflects the benefits of single-site working, especially the benefits that a newly designed building brings from the perspective of accessibility.

## **2.5 Benefits of Improving Disability Equality to the College**

The College perceives that by improving disability equality it will reap the benefit of:

- Increasing success rates for all individual learners;
- Enriching the experience of all learners and staff;
- Raising the esteem of the College within disabled communities;
- Raising the profile of disability equality;
- Responding to the needs of the local community.

## **2.6 Commitment to Improving Disability Equality, Eliminating all Forms of Discrimination**

The College's commitment to improving disability equality is evident in a number of ways:

- The College's strategic stance;
- The monitoring of DES and its Action Plan at SMT and Governor level;
- DES reviewed termly at the Equality & Diversity Committee;

- Action Plan reviewed annually;
- Active support of staff with training opportunities;
- Policies which lay down College practice in a formal way;
- Statements of the College position vis à vis disability equality;
- Practices and protocols which encourage disability equality;
- Marketing material which encourages disabled learners to enrol;
- The level and scale of support available and applied, which enable disabled learners to remain on course and succeed;
- Recruitment advertising which encourages disabled persons to apply for jobs;
- The process of constructing the DES and the DES Action Plan;
- The process of impact assessment.
- Active support given to disabled staff whilst at work.
- Effective links with external agencies such as The Shaw Trust and Access to Work;
- Staff who are in our employment who become disabled are supported so that they may maintain their position;
- Support of all staff with health issues through Occupational Health, Back Care Clinics, Counselling Services;
- The recognition of Staff Wellbeing as an important part of the employment contract supported by a College Wellbeing Officer and on-line Staff Wellbeing Zone.

## **2.7 Priorities in Terms of Staff, Learners and the Wider Community**

- To be pro-active in the recruitment of disabled persons to staff vacancies;
- To progress towards the staff disability profile reflecting the disability profile of the employed cohort of the locality;
- To be pro-active in the recruitment of disabled learners;
- To ensure that all disabled learners who wish to access, and are qualified for courses, receive the appropriate support, from the College and other agencies, to enable them to enrol, learn and achieve;
- To promote work experience and employment opportunities for disabled College learners;
- To consolidate the process of impact assessment into all College activities;
- To address issues identified in Part 1 of this document.

## **Part 3 Development of the Disability Equality Scheme – Actively Engaging with Disabled People**

### **3.1 Planning & Organisation**

An initial Action Plan designed to steer the College towards the writing of the College's DES was presented to the Community & Standards Committee of the Governing Body on 17 May 2006.

Within the College structure, the Equality & Diversity Coordinator works as part of the Quality Department with cross College responsibility for steering forward equality and diversity.

The DDA Task Force was formed and key tasks assigned. DDA Task Force members include key people within various areas of the College such as business support staff, curriculum staff, Estates staff, Exams staff, Registry and Governor Services staff and management, LRC staff and management, Marketing staff and management, Personnel staff and management, Quality staff and management, Student Support staff and the VP Strategic Development. The purpose of the DDA Task Force is to ensure compliance with the new duty and to produce, monitor and review the College's DES and Action Plan.

A number of DDA Task Force sub groups have been established to examine the learner experience throughout their journey within the College, from initial enquiry to progression. These sub groups are meeting specifically to focus on the learner progression experience in relation to:

- external website;
- admissions;
- induction;
- independent learning;
- resources for learners;
- career / progression guidance and assessment.

Two further sub groups have been set up, one to consider college documents and the other to look at system wide accessibility issues on the College IT networks. These sub groups aim to establish the College's current position in terms of disability equality and identify any potential actions for improvement. Findings will inform the College's forthcoming DES Action Plan.

### **3.2 Involvement of Staff & Learners**

The right of disabled people to be actively involved is acknowledged and welcomed by the College. The College further recognises that the users of its services and facilities are best placed to:

- Identify the barriers faced by disabled people;
- Assist in the identification of priorities for action planning.

Staff from across the College, curriculum departments, service areas, business support and SMT have been co-opted onto the DDA Task Force, including staff with disabilities. Staff and learner focus groups have been formed, by invitation, to consider different aspects of the implications of the duty. Feedback from focus groups and individual disabled members of the College community will inform planning at the drafting stage and as the plan progresses through its processes of review and refinement.

The College is committed to working in partnership with the disabled community in the development, implementation and ongoing review of its DES. Communication and involvement has focussed on identifying what is working well, what is not working well, where there are barriers to equal opportunities and access and where there are gaps. We have recognised that different methods allow people to participate to varying extents and we plan to use discussion groups, questionnaires, telephone, face-to-face interviews and e-communications.

Representatives from groups which represent disabled people are being formally consulted for their views on both the DES and its action plan.

The College sought to engage actively with staff and learners to inform this DES and Action Plan. A series of structured questionnaires were established to use in focus groups.

Within the Skills for Life (SfL) department staff engaged with a number of learners, in most instances as a group exercise, to ensure that learners were able to participate in the task and express their views fluently.

Feedback from one to one interviews with learners who completed the questionnaire 'Disability Equality – Have Your Say':

- Learners who had disclosed a need were invited to complete the questionnaire;
- The interviews were carried out at the campus of the learner's choice, at a time and venue to suite the learner's needs;
- The interviews were carried out by the Student Support Coordinator and learners were offered the option of completing the questionnaire at home, or with a member of staff of their choice;
- The Equality & Diversity Coordinator monitored and provided feedback for one interview;
- The learners were provided with verbal information regarding the importance of learner feedback for the development of the DES, as well as information about its publication;
- Learners were offered the choice of the interviewer reading the questions and acting as scribe. Help was given with spelling as requested;
- Learners were encouraged to ask for clarification of any terms or wording;
- Learners had the option to sign the completed questionnaire;
- The learners with learning difficulties and disabilities (LLDD) who agreed to complete the questionnaire reflected a range of disabilities, including learners with physical support needs, partial vision, Asperger's Syndrome, Tourette's Syndrome, dyslexia, mental health needs.

Feedback from interviewer:

- Redesign questionnaire;
- Provide guidance notes / checklist for interviewer to ensure consistency;
- Questionnaire available on Blackboard;
- Seek agreement from learner to use Dictaphone to record answers for one to one interviews;
- Use smaller rooms with access to refreshments.

### **3.3 Barriers That Disabled People Have Identified for the College to Address**

Barriers that learners and their advocates have identified include:

- The cost of travel to and from College;
- The cost and management of personal care while at College;
- Too few accessible toilets;
- The term 'disability';
- Language and terminology on some College forms;
- Privacy to disclose and discuss needs;
- Lift access to enable access to all areas.

and from a staff perspective:

- Development of questionnaire specifically aimed at staff to encourage disability disclosure at all stages of employment in order to improve two way communication and support;
- Sharing the development of the Scheme with outside agencies, such as The Shaw Trust and Access to Work;
- Misuse of car parking facilities;
- Interpretation of disability declarations;
- Interface between specific disability adjustments, requirements and building regulations.

### **3.4 How Will Disabled People be Involved in Implementing, Monitoring and Evaluating the Scheme**

Via:

- Focus groups – sharing of the scheme with the College community;
- Impact assessment of policies and procedures;
- Questionnaires specifically aimed at disabled learners (the College employs a well known, national, specialist company, QDP Services Ltd, to administer questionnaires and analyse and report on data gathered);
- Tutorial discussion;
- Investors in People (IIP);

- The staff performance review process;
- Disability equality leaflets and posters;
- Other methods that emerge during the process.

### **3.5 How Will the College Seek the Advice of Disabled People on the Process to Ensure Involvement is Genuine and Active?**

The College will employ a range of mechanisms to gather advice and suggestions from disabled learners including: focus groups, 1:1 interviews, general invitations to proffer views and opinions to, for example, tutors, targeted questionnaires, message boards and BLOGS on the College VLE.

Disabled and able bodied governors, staff and learners will be approached as to their willingness to be involved in one or more of the formal feedback mechanism.

Disabled and able bodied learners and staff will be represented on the committees which have responsibility for assessing the impact of the DDA duty on all College policies and procedures. This part of the process is coordinated by the Head of Registry & Governor Services.

## **Part 4 Where We Are Now**

### **4.1 Disabled Staff & Learners**

For up-to-date data on our current position please see the Equality & Diversity Annual Report 2005 / 2006 attached as Appendix C.

### **4.2 Accessible Buildings**

To meet our obligations under the DDA 1995, the College commissioned an Independent Access Audit in 2003. The resulting Audit Report provided a comprehensive list of modifications that could be implemented to improve accessibility for people with mobility and sensory disabilities and provided the basis of an Accessibility Action Plan that prioritised the recommendations to satisfy health and safety requirements and make the maximum impact in improving accessibility, taking into account the College's overall strategic plans with respect to accommodation. A consultant has been involved in the planning of the new build at Middlehaven. The Accessibility Action Plan can be seen at Appendix B.

### **4.3 Re-Invigorating the Brand**

In August 2008 the College will move to a new single site, purpose built College in the Middlehaven area of the town. Marketing material, including the College website, is already anticipating the move. The planned curriculum offer reflects the benefits of single-site working especially the benefits that a newly designed building brings from the point of view of accessibility. SMT and the Governors are confident that the College will become a flagship for disability and the preferred choice for disabled learners and staff.

### **4.4 Key Findings**

See DES Action Plan (Appendix A).

## **Part 5 – Leadership & Management**

### **5.1 Support, Commitment and Involvement of Senior Staff in the Development of the DES**

The College is committed to providing an environment in which there is equality of opportunity for all and recognises that every member of the College community has a role to play to ensure this.

As mentioned above, in section 2.3 and elsewhere, the support, commitment and involvement of senior staff is fundamental to the development of the DES. The DDA Task Force has been formed and key tasks assigned. DDA Task Force members include key people who represent all areas of the College and a cross-section of levels of responsibility. The purpose of the DDA Task Force is to ensure compliance with the new duty and to produce, monitor and review the College's DES and Action Plan from a whole College perspective.

DDA Task Force members include:

- Vice Principal, Strategic Planning;
- Director of Quality;
- Director of Student Services & Marketing;
- Director of Estates;
- Head of Department SfL;
- Head of Department Construction;
- Head of Teaching & Learning;
- Head of Personnel;
- Head of Information Services;
- Head of Registry and Governor Services;
- LRC Manager;
- Equality & Diversity Coordinator.

The Equality & Diversity Coordinator is part of the Quality Team and line managed by the Director of Quality. The Equality & Diversity Coordinator's role has been pivotal to the development of the College's DES and Action Plan and includes chairing of the Equality & Diversity Committee at which progress will be reviewed and reported.

### **5.2 Responsibilities of Governors**

The Governing Body has accepted its legal responsibility and recognises its potential liability under the Act. As mentioned earlier, Governors regularly review operating objectives as part of the standing reporting arrangements.

### **5.3 Responsibilities of Key Staff**

The College has established the DDA Task Force. This group, chaired by the Equality & Diversity Coordinator, consists of key staff from a range of levels across

the College; curriculum departments, service areas, business support and SMT, including staff with disabilities.

#### **5.4 Responsibilities of all Staff in Eliminating Discrimination and Promoting Disability Equality**

In order to make staff aware of their responsibilities under the Act, all have received basic awareness raising training on SENDA delivered by the Equality and Diversity Coordinator. Future training will include awareness raising for new staff and refresher and update training for current staff.

#### **5.5 Raise Awareness of the DES and the Benefits it will bring to the College**

A leaflet entitled 'Disability Equality – Have Your Say' produced by the Equality & Diversity Coordinator, has been a vehicle for promoting the DES, and the benefits it will bring to the College and the College's response to the new legislation.

The College recognises staff training in relation to the DDA 2005 legislation is important. A series of DDA 2005 training events were made available to all staff during October 2006 to inform them of the new duties. 247 staff attended this training. A schedule for further training has been established. The Staff Training Annual Report 2005 / 2006 is available at Appendix J.

It has become College practice to deliver specific training to staff teams and learner groups where disabled learners are joining a course and where teaching and learning methods may have to be adapted. Staff welcome these workforce development initiatives and both disabled learners and their peers benefit from both the social interaction and the awareness raising, respectively.

The College's Disability Awareness Day has become an established annual event. Local and regional disability support groups are invited to set up stands for the day and learners and staff visit the stands throughout the day. Feedback has proved very positive both from exhibitors and those attending.

From time to time individual organisations promote awareness by displaying information in the reception areas of the various campuses. For example, on National Mental Awareness Day, MIND held such a display.

#### **5.6 Ensure all Staff Understand and Embrace Their Role and Responsibility Under the DDA and Ensure all Staff are Aware of the DES**

Training continues to be offered to enable all staff to have an awareness of their duties under the DDA and staff receive a certificate in recognition of their attendance.

The Equality & Diversity Action Plan reflects the whole College approach with action points feeding directly into operating statements for all curriculum and service areas.

Objectives relating to the DES set for faculties and service areas, will be regularly monitored, reviewed and reported upon. The Equality & Diversity Annual Report details progress.

Disability Equality is a standing item on the Equality & Diversity Committee from which the Equality & Diversity Coordinator reports regularly to SMT and the Governors Community & Standards Committee.

## **5.8 Train Staff to Ensure They Have the Skills Required to Promote Disability Equality and to Carry Out the Requirements of the DES and Action Plan**

The College recognises that staff training in relation to the DDA 2005 legislation is important. A series of DDA 2005 training events were made available to all staff during October 2006 to inform them of the new duties.

## **5.9 Improve and Expand Partnership Working**

The Equality & Diversity Coordinator will work with relevant managers to audit the extent and detail of our current involvement with disabled groups and partnerships. This 'partnership working audit' will form the basis for improving and expanding partnership working, where necessary.

## **5.10 Embed Disability Equality across the Whole Organisation**

The College endeavours to develop and embed a culture of disability equality through activities already outlined including:

- Disability Awareness events;
- College calendar;
- Tutorial topics;
- Staff training and development;
- Committee representation;
- Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

## **Part 6 Carrying Out Equality Impact Assessment**

### **6.1 Policies, Procedures, Plans and Practice Identified that will be assessed Over the Life Span of the DES**

The process of gaining approval for policies and procedures by SMT has recently been reviewed to ensure the College's compliance with the new disability duty. A Disability Impact Assessment Panel has been established to carry out impact assessments on all new and existing policies and practices within the College. The panel includes the Equality & Diversity Coordinator, the Head of Registry and Governor Services, the member of staff responsible for the policy, disabled people and a number of other key staff. All new policies will now be impact assessed prior to formal SMT approval and all existing policies will be impact assessed at the point of review throughout the lifespan of this DES.

In carrying out impact assessments the College ensures that disabled people are participants on an equal basis. This process will also demonstrate how the College is improving its service, ensuring that the workforce and learner population reflects the College culture and values and helps the College celebrate equality and diversity.

The Equality & Diversity Co-ordinator will work with the Head of Registry and Governor Services to review systematically existing policies and procedures and to agree and formalise the impact assessment process as a procedure in its own right.

### **6.2 How Have These Been Prioritised?**

The Equality & Diversity Co-ordinator will work with the Head of Registry & Governor Services to judge existing policies for priority for impact assessment. Priority will be given to those policies and procedures that are most likely to have the potential to impact on individuals who have a disability.

### **6.3 Timescales for Carrying Out Impact Assessments on the Policies, Procedures, Plans and Practice.**

All new policies will now be impact assessed prior to formal SMT approval and all existing policies will be impact assessed either at their annual review or as above, whichever is earlier.

### **6.4 Who In The Organisation Will Take Overall Responsibility For The Process?**

The Head of Registry and Governor Services has direct responsibility for the impact assessment process. He will convene the Disability Impact Assessment Panel which will be constituted as described above.

## **Part 7 Gathering Information – Implementation**

### **7.1 Recruitment, Development and Retention of Disabled Staff.**

The Personnel Services Department will continue to keep records vis à vis disabled applicants and staff. This data is regularly reported to SMT, Joint Consultation & Negotiation Committee (JCNC) and the Equality & Diversity Committee. The details may be found in the Equality & Diversity Annual Report 2005 / 2006. (Appendix C). The College has consistently maintained its IIP status and holds the Positive About Disabled People badge.

### **7.2 Educational Opportunities Available To Disabled Learners.**

Departments gather data in relation to their learner profile against individual courses. Based on analysis of profile, departments will target disabled learners via their marketing, course and programme design, and recruitment strategies.

### **7.3 Range Of Information Currently Gathered On Disability Equality And What The Information Has Revealed.**

The full range of data gathered on disability equality and an analysis of it can be found in the Equality & Diversity Annual Report 2005 / 2006. (Appendix C)

### **7.4 Further Information That College Plans To Gather.**

VP Curriculum and programme managers are actively involved in liaising with local Special Schools and local authority SEN representatives in order to lower barriers and smooth the transition for younger disabled learners from school to the College environment. A true partnership approach is being promoted within the borough and the Tees Valley.

### **7.5 Arrangements to Ensure Monitoring Takes Place At Organisational and Department Level.**

As described above, the strategic aims of the College are formulated into operating objectives for each faculty and service area, the detail of these objectives is further broken down and set for departments. Achievement of objectives is monitored by the Vice Principal (VP) Strategic Planning who also sits on the DDA Task Force and is therefore ideally placed to keep an eagle eye on the progress towards achieving the detailed objectives relating to disability equality.

## **7.6 How Information Gathered Will Inform Planning And Decision Making Processes.**

College strategic and development planning relies on a range of information from a range of sources. Planning decisions on recruitment for both staff and learners, teaching and learning strategies, resource issues and accommodation are all dependent on relevant data, including equality and diversity related information.

## **7.7 Arrangements for Making Use of Information to Improve Performance in Disability Equality Continually and the Responsibilities of Staff in This Process.**

The DDA Task Force has prioritised key action points within the DES Action Plan which will focus specifically on the learner journey in relation to, for example, marketing, the external website, admissions, induction, independent learning, resources for learners, teaching and learning, career / progression guidance and assessment. Each action is assigned to a specific job role with target dates.

Progress against this plan will be reported to a range of cross-college committees including the Governors, and will be an integral part of the SAR and development planning processes.

## **Part 8 Monitoring, Publishing and Review Arrangements – Putting the Scheme Into Practice**

### **8.1 How And Where The Disability Equality Scheme Will Be Published.**

The DES and Action Plan will be made available to all staff on the College intranet, to learners via the VLE and in a range of more traditional formats, on request. The DES and Action Plan will also be published on the College website. It will also be signposted to shortlisted job applicants as part of their application pack. References to the DES and Action Plan will be included in the learner handbook, the disability statement and during the learner induction process. It will become part of the electronic staff handbook.

Learner and staff focus groups, which have hitherto been ad hoc, will be formally instituted across the College.

There will be ongoing involvement with disabled staff and students to identify the effectiveness of our DES and Action plan, for example, what is working well, where can improvements be made and further priorities for action.

We welcome feedback on this Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan and the way it operates. We are interested to know of any possible or actual adverse impact that this scheme may have on any groups. We would also like to know how effective this scheme and Action Plan are in promoting and delivering disability equality. Feedback can be sent by email to [e.clare@mbro.ac.uk](mailto:e.clare@mbro.ac.uk), or Emma Clare, Equality & Diversity Coordinator, may be contacted by telephone on 01642 298885.

### **8.2 Reporting Mechanisms That Will Be Used To Communicate Annual Progress.**

This Scheme will be reviewed in its entirety at least every three years. Progress against targets and objectives in the Action Plan will be reviewed annually and a report published, which will include the results of information gathering and the use made of this information. Reviews will be coordinated by the Equality & Diversity Coordinator and at department / service area level through the self assessment review process. The Equality and Diversity Committee will consider regular monitoring reports of quantitative and qualitative, staff and student, data. Where monitoring shows that people are not accessing our services or that policies and practices are not working effectively we will make changes to mitigate these issues and where effective monitoring systems are not in place we will obtain base-line data with which to work and improve the efficacy of practices.

### **8.3 Action Plan**

The DES and Action Plan will be published, once approved by SMT and Governors on the College website and the VLE and will be available in a range of alternate formats on request.

## **8.4 Who Is Covered By the DDA – The Meaning of Disability**

A disabled person is defined in the DDA 2005 as someone with a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term impact on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

This definition includes people with cancer, diabetes, HIV, multiple sclerosis and heart conditions and people who have a hearing or sight impairment (except where the person's sight can be corrected by glasses or contact lenses) or a significant mobility difficulty. It also includes people with hidden disabilities such as diabetes, epilepsy and dyslexia and people who have mental health conditions or learning difficulties.

## Appendix A – DES Action Plan

Please access the document via the link below:

<H:\Equality & Diversity\2006\DDA Task Force\DES & Action Plan - Final Documents Dec 2006\DES Action Plan as at 7.12.6.doc>

## Appendix B – Accessibility Action Plan

Please access the document via the link below:

<H:\Equality & Diversity\2006\Papers\May 2006\Accessibility Review 2006.doc>

## Appendix C – Equality & Diversity Annual Report

Please access the document via the link below:

<H:\Equality & Diversity\2005\Annual Report\E&D Annual Report 05-06 8 Nov 06.doc>

## Appendix D – Equality & Diversity Action Plan

Please access the document via the link below:

<H:\Equality & Diversity\ED college wide action plan 200607 - 31.10.6.doc>

## Appendix E – Disability Statement

Please access the document via the link below:

<H:\Equality & Diversity\2006\Disability%20Statement%200607.pdf>

## Appendix F – Equality & Diversity Policy

Please access the document via the link below:

<H:\Policies\ED Policy 0607.doc>

## Appendix G – Additional Learning Support Policy

Please access the document via the link below:

<H:\Policies\ALS Policy3 Feb 2006.doc>

## Appendix H – Investors in People Report

Please access the document via the link below:

<H:\Equality & Diversity\2006\IIP Report>

## Appendix J – Staff Training Annual Report

Please access the document via the link below:

<H:\Equality & Diversity\2006\Workforce Development Report.doc>