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DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME ANNUAL REPORT 3

DECEMBER 2009

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1. Introduction

As part of our commitment to the provision of a positively focused and inclusive learning and teaching service, the undernoted report has been developed to outline steps taken by the College to deliver upon the commitments outlined within our Disability Equality Scheme of December 2006.

This is the college's third annual update report on progress made and the undernoted report outlines achievements against the various points outlined within our disability action plan of 2006 and the updates made to this in the 2007 and 2008 annual reports. The undernoted report also details other developments which have taken place since the introduction of the disability equality duty in December 2006.

2. Key Developments

Over the past year, the College has continued to develop and promote the services it provides to learners, potential learners, staff, and others with disabilities. Key developments in respect of these activities include the following:

- Embedding of disability awareness training and activities across the College.

In addition to all staff training and development, the range of short induction development sessions provided to all new staff has been extended to include a session with a specific focus on equality and diversity issues, including information and awareness raising in respect of disability equality and the new harassment priorities.
- Review of College inclusiveness and equalities practice was a key element of the College review undertaken by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in February 2009. This Review commented very favourably on College practice in these areas, with no recommendations for action.
- The success of the approach taken through the work of the College Disability Focus group has encouraged the College to adopt this as a template for the development of other equalities focus groups with the objective of creating a single equalities focus group designed to seek feedback and ideas, but also to support the cross-fertilisation of ideas and services across all strands of the College's equalities agenda.
- The College has invested significantly in enhancing its arrangements for student engagement over the past 18 months through the creation of a post of Learner Engagement Officer. This role has been very successful in supporting and encouraging engagement across the College's equalities agenda, including the organisation and development of awareness activities and campaigns for students and staff around issues such as: disability awareness; bullying and harassment; cultural awareness; and positive inclusion. All of these activities have made a significant contribution to the development of a positive equalities ethos within the College and have promoted understanding of disability and inclusion issues for students and staff.

As a central theme within these activities, a range of students are involved in the promotion of all strands of the equalities agenda, with a clear focus on issues of disability, harassment awareness and inclusion through a wide range of activities led by the Student Representative Council Disability Officer.

These activities include the positive promotion of disability equality, the development of sports activities for students with disabilities, and fundraising activities to support the purchase of support aids.

- The College has continued to invest in facilities to ensure that these are fully accessible for those with disabilities. The College has moved into its new and fully accessible Vocational Learning Centre in Brechin (January 2009).
- The College is in on-going discussions with Angus Council regarding the possible partnership development of our Montrose Learning Centre. This development will also ensure that any new centre is fully accessible.
- To support transition and integration into College life, the College had developed a successful “Get Ready for College”. This short course focuses on support for those younger learners that are most at risk, a significant proportion of whom have disabilities. This provision has proven to be very successful in supporting transition for very vulnerable learners. In addition to this provision, the College has undertaken significant work in the past year through the “Moving Forward” course, developing support for learners with mental health issues and other barriers consider work, College and training.
- Equalities impact assessment activities and monitoring data has highlighted that no College policies have had a disproportionate negative effect on the services the College provides for current or potential users with disabilities. This assessment includes review of complaints around discrimination and harassment of disabled people.
- As a critical annual outcome, the retention, attainment and achievement figures for students with a disclosed disability remain directly comparable with those for students with no disclosed disability (see appendix 1).

These performance indicators highlight that students with a declared disability make up c19% of all College enrolments and perform at a level that is equal to that of the College as a whole. These PI figures are improved on the equivalent 2007/8 figures in each case and represent a very strongly positive performance by the College and individual students.

3. Progress Against Disability Action Plan Targets

Progress in respect of the various targets outlined within the 2006 Disability Equality Scheme is detailed below.

DISABILITY ACTION PLAN

Area 1	Staff Recruitment and Selection
Issue	Need to encourage greater disclosure of disability information from current staff and post applicants
Context	<p>Angus College is a “Positive about Disability” employer. Information, including application forms, for prospective staff is available in varying accessible formats. Prospective staff who are disabled are welcome to request adjustments or adaptations to the interview process to meet individual needs.</p> <p>All staff are encouraged to disclose disability at any time during their period of employment in order that their needs can be accommodated fully, but to date a relatively small number (c 2.79%) have done so.</p>
Action 1.1	The College will continue to monitor and review recruitment and induction procedures including; advertising posts, application forms and the interview process.
Responsibility	Director of Quality and Human Resources
Timescale/Deadline	Ongoing
Progress Nov 07	2006/7 monitoring completed, with slight increase (0.97%) in those disclosing disability. Additional information encouraging disclosure added to information for applicants.
Progress Nov 08	Annual monitoring arrangements fully embedded. Numbers disclosing a disability remain relatively low.
Progress Dec 09	Points noted as above. Use of Positive about Disability Symbol to be further reviewed and promoted for January 2010
Action 1.2	Further encouragement will be provided to current staff to disclose disability information if appropriate.
Responsibility	Director of Quality and Human Resources
Timescale/Deadline	End March 2007
Progress Nov 07	Encouragement provided March 2007. Additional information provided by staff,
Progress Nov 08	Further update sought from Staff Oct 08.
Progress Dec 09	Annual update on disclosed information to be sought for all staff as part of embedded HR Team practice.

Area 2	Student Recruitment and Induction
Issue	Need to raise awareness within the wider community of the service provision available within Angus College for students with a disability
Context	The Student Services Team at Angus College takes a proactive stance in liaising with schools and external organisations to publicise the services which we can provide to disabled students. Staff work closely with local schools and other organisations to promote the services and support available for students and course applicants with disabilities. Disability disclosure and referral opportunities and encouragements are in place within our student recruitment, admissions, guidance, interview processes and Student induction at College includes a campus tour and talks on additional support available during a student's course of study.
Action 2.1	The College will continue to monitor and review the effectiveness of its publicity and awareness raising strategy on a regular basis.
Responsibility	Student Services Team and Marketing Team
Timescale/Deadline	On-going
Progress Nov 07	On-going review has resulted in the 2007 Prospectus containing updated information on services available for disabled students and the format of this has been developed to make information of this type more prominent.
Progress Nov 08	Short-life working group formed to look at the identification and sharing of good practice in student recruitment. Working group will report back to inform student selection arrangements for session 2009/10.
Progress Dec 09	Staff training developed to incorporate specific disabilities awareness. Annual update training provided to all staff involved in student recruitment process.

Action 2.2	Feedback from focus groups has suggested that raising the profile of the Student Services Team amongst Community Health Professionals should be regarded as a priority.
Responsibility	Student Services Team
Timescale/Deadline	June 2007
Progress Nov 07	Links with a wide range of groups and support service providers - including community health groups and providers – have been developed through project and partnership working led by the College Student Services Team.
Progress Nov 08	Team profile continues to be developed, with further partnership working evident across the full range of stakeholders.
Progress Dec 09	Progress as above. Closer partnership working evident.

Action 2.3	Prospectuses and other publicity material including the student intranet will be updated and available in varied and accessible formats.
Responsibility	Student Services Team and Marketing Team
Timescale/Deadline	Publications to be updated on a planned rolling basis as each is replaced, commencing March 2007
Progress Nov 07	All current publications are available in word format and can be adapted to suit individual needs. This includes large type provision and transfer into Braille.
Progress Dec 09	Practice embedded as part of Marketing team activity.

Action 2.4	The inclusion of additional disability focussed information in the College's main prospectus publications will increase awareness of the help available.
Responsibility	Student Services Team and Marketing Team
Timescale/Deadline	Publications to be updated on a planned rolling basis as each is replaced, commencing March 2007
Progress Nov 07	2007 Prospectus contains updated information on services available for disabled students and the format of this has been developed to make information of this type more prominent. Additional information on support available has been developed on an on-line format for inclusion within student induction information.
Progress Dec 09	Practice embedded as part of Marketing team activity.

Area 3	Student Recruitment and Induction
Issue	Need to encourage students to provide early disclosure of any disability to ensure that any required support needs can be identified and met
Context	The College provides a welcoming, supportive environment for disabled students. However, feedback from student interviews and focus groups highlighted that students may be reluctant to disclose a disability due to fear of stigmatisation. College application forms permit the recording and monitoring of disabilities. Students are positively encouraged and supported to disclose disabilities at any stage (application, enrolment and during the course). Feedback provided through interview and focus group activities on the support and services provided for students was overwhelmingly positive and endorsed the strong professional approaches adopted. Issues were, however, highlighted where disclosure had not taken place and the individual student was disadvantaged as a result.
Action 3.1	The College will continue to build a safe, welcoming environment in which the disabled student feels comfortable and relaxed in disclosing their disability. Student admissions and induction procedures will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that mechanisms are in place which maximise disclosure and help and support those who wish to disclose.
Responsibility	Student Services Manager, Admissions Officer
Timescale/Deadline	Ongoing annual review

Progress Nov 07	Development for staff undertaking student recruitment interviewing has been developed to enhance staff skills in encouraging/supporting disclosure of support needs. Good practice approaches in encouraging and achieving disclosure have been shared across the College. Prompts to seek student disclosure have been built into a range of different student recruitment and support activities.
Progress Dec 09	Earlier disclosure evident, allowing for additional and better matched support to be identified and enacted.

Area 4	Student Recruitment and Induction
Issue	Need to ensure that information relating to student support needs is effectively shared between staff providing different elements of the service to the student
Context	Procedures are in place for Student Services to arrange interviews with disabled students in order to discuss the provision of additional support once a disability has been disclosed. Information is shared between support services and academic teams to ensure that a disabled student receives the level of support which matches their need. However, as disclosure can take place at any time during the student's time at Angus College, on a few occasions information on a student's disability has not been passed to the appropriate staff.
Action 4.1	A more integrated approach across College teams to the sharing and dissemination of information will be developed. Closer links between Student Services and academic teams will be developed through the implementation of a key worker system to be piloted by the student development team. This will ensure the provision of the best possible support package for the disabled student prior to and during their period of study.
Responsibility	Student Services Manager, Student Development Co-ordinator, Course Leaders
Timescale/Deadline	August 2007
Progress Nov 07	Revised student development structure and procedures introduced in August 2007 to enhance the links between student development staff and designated curricular areas. Feedback on developments has identified significant improvement in service provision and communication. Full review to be completed September 2008.
Progress Nov 08	Review of structure and arrangements has highlighted strongly positive feedback on changes made. Approach adopted as normal operating approach for Team.
Progress Dec 09	Practice embedded as part of Student Services team activity.

Area 5	Physical Environment – Access to College campus and facilities
Issue	Need to ensure that physical environment of the College campus is safe, secure, welcoming and accessible for students with disabilities
Context	<p>Significant planning and development has been undertaken over the recent past to ensure that all areas of the College are compliant with disability access regulations and good practice. This has included significant expenditure in some areas and has incorporated expert consultancy support to review and assess access to the College estate. It is recognised that this is, however, an area which required continuous review and action to ensure that all facilities meet the needs of staff, students and others with disabilities and extensive work is on-going as part of our planned maintenance programmes.</p> <p>It is noted that – contrary to expectation – there were very few points raised by disabled staff, students or other groups regarding physical access issues in respect of the overall College campus.</p> <p>A number of points raised covered general issues in respect of student behaviour on College transport, smoking within the College environment and traffic and parking issues on the main road dividing the college campus. Whilst in each case there were particular issues faced by disabled students in respect of these points, the actions arising from these are generic College issues and will be picked up through a range of routine College processes. The following specific access action points were, however, picked up</p>

Action 5.1	Full physical access audit of College campus to be undertaken by Disability Go.
Responsibility	Estates Manager, Student Services Manager, Director of Curriculum Support and Development
Timescale/Deadline	August 2007
Progress Nov 07	Disability Audit not yet undertaken. Timescale and arrangements in discussion with Angus Council as organisers of audit process.
Progress Nov 08	Audit not progressed at whole Angus level. Disability audit completed by Estates Team on annual basis and outcomes fed into planned maintenance programme and future estates strategy.
Progress Dec 09	Audit not undertaken due to changes outwith College control. College staff undertaken own audit and points for action identified as noted above.

Action 5.2	Fire alarm system to be developed to fully meet the needs of sensory impaired students
Responsibility	Estates Manager
Timescale/Deadline	September 2007
Progress Nov 07	Fire alarm system changes discounted on grounds of cost/practicality. Revise individual student notification procedure introduced in September 2007 to meet needs instead.

Progress Nov 08	Revised arrangements tested during fire drills and found to be working effectively.
Progress Dec 09	Practice embedded as part of College activity.

Action 5.3	Contrast painting/colouring on external steps to be enhanced
Responsibility	Estates Manager
Timescale/Deadline	May 2007
Progress Nov 07	Work completed May 2007

Action 5.4	No smoking message around College entrances to be further reinforced to include information on the access implications crowds around doors can cause for disabled students.
Responsibility	Estates Manager, Executive Team
Timescale/Deadline	March 2007 and on-going
Progress Nov 07	Message reinforced on regular basis.

Action 5.5	Need to publicise transport availability and eligibility options more widely for disabled students to avoid deterring initial application
Responsibility	Student Services Manager, Depute Principal, Student Funding Team
Timescale/Deadline	April 2007 and on-going
Progress Nov 07	Clearer information on entitlements developed. New Student Funding Support Worker postholder appointed with a greater understanding of disability support needs.

Action 5.6	Need to enhance College signage and colour coding to fully meet the needs of sensory impaired students
Responsibility	Estates Manager
Timescale/Deadline	August 2007
Progress Nov 07	No progress to date due to funding constraints and other estates priorities. Action to be progressed as part of planned maintenance activity.
Progress Nov 08	Issue related to identification of floors when leaving lifts. Alternative approach – audio floor indication – installed in lifts. Feedback on system is positive.

Action 5.7	Need to ensure that College lifts are fully accessible for sensory impaired students
Responsibility	Estates Manager
Timescale/Deadline	August 2007

Progress Nov 07	No progress to date due to funding constraints and other estates priorities. Action to be progressed as part of planned maintenance activity.
Progress Nov 08	Telephones and audio floor indicators installed in all lifts. Replacement of Esk building lift with a new fire safe lift approved for 2009 capital works programme.
Progress Dec 09	Works completed.

Area 6	Learning and Teaching
Issue	Need to ensure that appropriate modifications and adaptations to learning, teaching and assessment strategies are occurring in order to meet the needs of disabled students.
Context	Feedback from student interviews and focus groups has provided strong evidence that individual learning and curricular needs are well met at Angus College if disability has been disclosed.
Action 6.1	All academic and support teams to evaluate the inclusiveness of their services on an annual basis. This will ensure that modification and adaptation of learning, teaching and assessment strategies is an ongoing process.
Responsibility	Directors of Learning and Teaching, Director of Quality and Human Resources
Timescale/Deadline	September 2007 and on-going
Progress Nov 07	Requirement strengthened within Team Evaluation and Operational Planning (TEOP) process for September 2007. On-going development to ensure that all evaluations are effective in meeting requirements.
Progress Nov 08	All teams utilising Quality & Equality in Learning and Teaching Materials (QELTM) project materials to inform curriculum modification and developments. Extensive evidence of individual adjustment to teaching materials, methodologies and organisation to meet the learning needs of students. Performance indicator data highlights that student achievement (PSO) and attainment (SARU) are directly comparable for students with declared disabilities. The effectiveness of the disability equality strategies and approaches adopted by the College was subject to review by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in November 2008 as part of the HMIE Annual Engagement review process with the College. Feedback from this review was strongly positive of the approaches adopted and the effectiveness of these in supporting high quality learning by College students.
Progress Dec 09	Practice embedded as part of Academic Team approaches.

Area 7	Learning and Teaching
Issue	Feedback from staff and student interviews and focus groups has highlighted that a small number of staff within the College are unsure of how to accommodate students with disabilities.
Context	<p>Feedback from the vast majority of student interviews and focus groups has provided strong evidence that staff demonstrate positive and professional values and approaches in supporting students with disabilities and in leading and developing the integration of student support and social needs within the classroom setting. A small number of respondents noted, however, that this was not always the case, and that the learning and teaching service received suffered as a result.</p> <p>Staff are encouraged and supported to attend regular equalities and disabilities awareness training sessions, and the Teaching Qualification in Further Education contains mandatory elements on working with disabled students.</p> <p>Progress on raising awareness of disability issues has been made with College staff attending training sessions on; deaf awareness, mental health first aid, mental health awareness (including self harm and anxiety), dealing with partially sighted blind people, online resources for deaf students, fire safety for the deaf and hard of hearing, matching technology to the needs (with the main focus on Dyslexia), and a best practice day focussing on hidden disabilities. It is recognised, however, that development and supporting professional practice in respect of all aspects of equality and diversity should be on-going.</p>
Action 7.1	The College will develop and deliver compulsory disability and equality awareness training on a scheduled basis for all staff.
Responsibility	Director of Quality and Human Resources, Student Services Manager.
Timescale/Deadline	December 2007
Progress Nov 07	Extensive development provided to all staff June and August 2007. Development sessions to continue on programmed basis.
Progress Dec 09	Development activity on-going and reinforced through a range of events/activities each year.

Area 8	Learning and Teaching
Issue	Feedback from staff and student interviews and focus groups has highlighted that a small number of students within the College demonstrate inappropriate attitudes and behaviours in respect of students with disabilities.
Context	The current College student handbook incorporates elements from the College equality and diversity policy and the student induction process includes information on expected behaviours and developments in respect of good equality and diversity practice. Good equality and diversity practice is embedded within learning and teaching activity across all areas of the College.
Action 8.1	Behavioural expectations (and the consequences of failing to meet required behavioural standards) to be reinforced with the student group. Student Association to be included within developments.
Responsibility	Directors of Learning and Teaching, Student Services Manager, Student Association President
Timescale/Deadline	September 2007 and on-going
Progress Nov 07	Behavioural requirements and standards reinforced with all student groups. Quieter bus stop made available for students where preferred. Enhanced feedback arrangement developed to alert staff to student behavioural issues.
Progress Nov 08	Extensive investment in development of student engagement arrangements will further underpin developments within this area. The Student Representative council has already run a very successful anti bullying campaign. Further awareness campaigns will be developed throughout session 2008/9.
Progress Dec 09	Behaviour requirements identified and developed through revised Behaviour Management policy and approaches and built into respect theme within whole College "Take 5" values and campaign.

Area 9	Learning and Teaching
Issue	Feedback from staff and students has highlighted a need to expand and develop the transition and progression arrangements and opportunities available within the College for students with additional learning support needs.
Context	The College currently provides a range of learning and development programmes specifically focused on meeting the needs of individual students with learning disabilities. A number of programmes are also provided at an introductory level to aid progression of students into full national certificate programmes. Whilst there is a level of progression between programmes and services of this type, it is recognised that further work needs to be done to encourage progression opportunities and to support progression arrangements for individual students as necessary.
Action 9.1	Transition and progression opportunities and arrangements within College for students with learning disabilities to be publicised and barriers to progression investigated and removed as appropriate.
Responsibility	Directors of Learning and Teaching, Student Services Manager, Team Leader in Community Programmes
Timescale/Deadline	June 2007 and on-going
Progress Nov 07	Additional Student Support Worker post created September 2007 with a specific focus on student transition support.

Progress Nov 08	Further student transition support provided in September/October 2008 – the stick with it campaign. Performance indicator data highlights comparability between student retention rates with and without disabilities.
Progress Dec 09	Practice embedded as part of Support Services team activity.

Area 10	Review and Evaluation of Services for Disabled Students
Issue	Formulating an impact assessment screening system in order to fulfil the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005.
Context	The College currently undertakes a comprehensive range of evaluation and monitoring activities to assess and evaluate the quality and impact of the services it provides. These evaluations incorporate an evaluation of equality and diversity practice and impact. It is recognised that this impact assessment can be further developed at a College-wide level to ensure that all services and policies are effectively and comprehensively assessed and developed relative to good equality and diversity practice.
Action 10.1	Impact assessment procedures to be further developed and embedded within the college's existing ISO9002 management review procedures.
Responsibility	Director of Quality and Human Resources, Quality Officer
Timescale/Deadline	June 2007
Progress Nov 07	Impact assessment process and procedure developed and introduced in June 2007.
Progress Nov 08	Impact assessment reviews undertaken within the following policy areas: Curriculum Management; Equality and Diversity; Student Behaviour Management; Staff Development; Data Protection; Staff Discipline; Recruitment and Selection; Public Interest Disclosure; Health and Safety; Staff Grievance; Long-Term Absence; Protection of Children & Adults at Risk; Redundancy; Copyright; Management and Employment Values; Student Guidance and Support; Drug and Alcohol Use; Stress Management; E-Mail and Internet use; Anti Bullying, Harassment and Victimisation; and Assessment. In all cases, the outcome of impact assessment activities has been reported through the Colleges ISO9002:2000 management review process. No disproportionate impact in respect of disability related issues have been highlighted through these reviews.
Progress Dec 09	Impact Assessment embedded as part of College activity and ISO9001:2000 quality system.

Area 11	Review and Evaluation of Services for Disabled Students
Issue	No comprehensive system is in place to track or monitor the first destination/post course success of students with disabilities.
Context	The College currently tracks first destination information for higher education students and undertakes a post course success survey with all students. These arrangements do not, however, link into disability information in respect of the individual students providing information.
Action 11.1	First Destination/Post Course Success measures will be developed to match data received with previously declared information on student disability.

Responsibility	Director of Quality and Human Resources, Quality Officer, Student Records Team Leader
Timescale/Deadline	Nov 2007
Progress Nov 07	Revised arrangements developed, November 2007.
Progress Dec 09	Practice embedded as part of survey activity.

Area 12	Review and Evaluation of Services for Disabled Students
Issue	Ensuring the on-going involvement of disabled staff, students and other organisations within the evaluation and development of College services
Context	The College currently undertakes a comprehensive range of client and stakeholder feedback activities, including survey activities and direct involvement of students, employers and other stakeholders as members of individual Course teams. The College also maintains and develops extensive partnerships with key organisations providing services for disabled staff and students, including Angus Council Education and Social Work departments, and national and local charities and voluntary organisation. To enhance these activities, the following action is proposed.
Action 12.1	Members of the Focus Groups previously held are to be invited to form the Angus College Disability Advisory Group. This group will meet twice a year (minimum) to discuss, monitor and review disability related issues and services. Outcomes from this group will be fed through the College equality and diversity group and through to the Personnel and Quality Committee of the Board of Management.
Responsibility	Director of Quality and Human Resources
Timescale/Deadline	June 2007 and on-going. Composition and effectiveness of group to be reviewed on an annual basis.
Progress Nov 07	Focus group established to meet on an annual basis.
Progress Nov 08	Focus group established and operating effectively. As part of wider equalities developments it has been agreed to develop a generic equalities focus group comprised of staff, student and stakeholder representatives and individuals with experience of and an interests across the range of equality and diversity strands. Outcomes from this group will inform the annual reports developed from this equality scheme through the work of the College Equality and Diversity group.
Progress Dec 09	Practice embedded as part of College activity.

Area 13	Review and Evaluation of Services for Disabled Students
Issue	Ensuring the on-going development, monitoring and review of equality and diversity activity and practice across the College.

Context	The College currently operates an equality and diversity group which monitors activity, development and impact in respect of College activities and practice across the full equality and diversity agenda. This group includes a mixture of academic and front-line support staff, alongside senior staff with responsibilities for developing the equality and diversity agenda and practice. This group is led by a member of the College Executive team and reports into the Personnel and Quality Committee of the Board of Management.
Action 13.1	The role and remit of this group will be developed to incorporate annual review of the Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan, alongside comments and points arising from the Disability advisory Group.
Responsibility	Director of Quality and Human Resources, Equality and Diversity Group
Timescale/Deadline	June 2007 and on-going.
Progress Nov 07	Role and remit developed May 2007.
Progress Dec 09	Practice embedded as part of Equality and Diversity Group activity.

Appendix 1 – Performance Indicator Comparison

2008/9 Student Activity

Performance Indicator	Students with Declared Disability %	Whole College %
Early Retention SRR1	97.86	97.15
Retention (SRR2)	95.39	95.89
Positive Student Outcome (PSO)	95.78	95.53
Successful Completion (SCR)	98.58	98.49
SARU	92.69	93.08
Total Student Numbers	2107	13276
% Students with Declared Disability	18.86%	

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