



YMCA **Wales** Community College



Equal Opportunities Policy





Statement of Intent

The College is committed to equal opportunities. It is committed to ensuring that it provides equal opportunity in all aspects of employment and further education and that no job applicant, employee or learner is discriminated against on the grounds of sex, marital and parental status, religious or political beliefs, colour, race, ethnic origins, creed, trade union activities, being lesbian or gay, age, disability, spent criminal convictions, employment status or any other criterion not relevant to the point at issue. This principle applies to all aspects of employment, including pay, hours of work, holiday entitlement, work allocation, sick pay, pensions, recruitment, training, promotion and redundancy and all Further Education learning opportunities provided by the institution. This policy has therefore been prepared to set out the main consequences of this commitment and as a statement of the College's intent.

Definition of Terms as Used in this Policy

Direct discrimination means treating a person less favourably than others would or would not be treated in the same circumstances. Indirect discrimination means applying a requirement or condition which, whether intentionally or not, has an adverse effect on one particular group.

Harassment and Bullying are any behaviour, deliberate or otherwise, which is unwanted, unwelcome, found to be offensive, objectionable, intimidating, upsetting or embarrassing to the recipient, and which might threaten **a)** an employee's job security or create a stressful or intimidating work environment. **b)** a learner's opportunity to learn or create a stressful or intimidating learning environment. Victimisation is treating a person less favourably than others because s/he has exercised her/his right under this policy or the relevant legislation

General Principles

It is the responsibility of all employees at whatever level of the College to ensure that this policy is effective. The overall responsibility for this policy rests with the Governing Body. The Head of College is, with the support of the Senior Management Team (SMT), responsible for the monitoring and the implementation of the policy.

This policy will be reviewed regularly not less than once every two years.

The Head of College will bring to the attention of all employees, whether full or part-time, regardless of length of service, the provisions in this policy.

Training will be made available to all staff covering equal opportunity issues.

To comply with the requirements of the Acts, training on the Sex and Race Discrimination Acts will be arranged by the Head of College for staff who are involved in selection procedures.

All employees as part of their terms of employment will adhere to the College's Equal Opportunities Policy and failure to do so shall be cause for disciplinary procedures to be instituted which could lead to dismissal. In addition any employee/learner who considers that he or she is suffering from unequal treatment on any grounds may implement the Complaints procedure.

Harassment / Bullying

It is the responsibility of the Head of College to investigate all formal complaints of discrimination, victimisation, bullying or harassment. Wherever such complaints arise they should immediately be referred to her/him, and any member of staff wishing to make a formal complaint may do so directly to her/him. The Head of College will report such incidences to the Governing Body.

However, the College recognises that individuals may feel inhibited about making a complaint regarding bullying, racial or sexual harassment. This can be for many reasons, such as fear of retaliation; humiliation; that others will consider the behaviour trivial; that the complaint will not be taken seriously and that no action will be taken against the harasser, or unfamiliarity with the appropriate procedures. Therefore, apart from the right of people to involve their recognised union, the College is giving serious consideration to additional ways through which staff/students may raise problems of this nature.

It will be the decision of the individual both as to what is harassment and bullying and as to whether to make a formal complaint.

If the Head of College is satisfied that harassment has taken place action may be taken in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure.

Recruitment

The College will ensure that job descriptions and person specifications reflect the job and do not incorporate any stereotyping. When a new post is created or the job description for any existing post is radically changed, the job description will be checked by the Head of College to ensure that it does not contain inbuilt prejudice. Requirements as to length of service, physical characteristics, mobility, or other qualifications which could be in breach of this policy will be excluded.

All advertisements will state that the College is committed to equal opportunities. The College is taking positive steps to redress imbalances in its work force. This includes careful consideration of where and how it may be most effective to advertise vacant posts.

All applicants will be required to fill in the College's application form. Application forms will contain only questions relevant to the job applied for and will not ask unnecessary personal questions. Application forms will seek to enable people to

emphasise the positive aspects of their application, and will make it clear that life experience as well as formal qualification and previous work experience is valid. A brief statement of the College's Equal Opportunities policy will form part of all job application forms.

Whenever applicants receive an application form they will also receive an Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form and a Job Description. Job descriptions will include a person specification which will indicate the work experience, personal attributes, education qualifications and any other factors that are essential for the performance of the job. The College will provide job descriptions on tape when asked, and will do whatever else it can to facilitate applications from disabled people.

The College is committed to taking positive action to ensure that groups who are oppressed or discriminated against are equally represented at all levels of employment within the organisation.

Training

Employees will be encouraged to undertake training relevant to their present job or personal development. Where payment by the College is required or the training is to take place in the College's time, consideration will have to be given to both the need to get the job done and the availability of finance.

Training courses should be non residential and in working hours whenever possible. In those circumstances where residential are unavoidable or positively desirable, efforts will be made to ensure that staff are not prevented from attending because of the need to support dependants, poor access, or any other discriminatory factors.

Records of training undertaken will be kept so that it will be possible to establish if any discrimination in access to training appears to be occurring, and for remedial action to be taken.

Conditions of Service

Adherence to the College's Equal Opportunities Policy is a condition of employment. The College recognises that pregnant women may need changes to their work conditions and will do whatever it can to make those changes.

Time off with pay will be given to both full and part-time pregnant women employees to attend antenatal classes, incurring medical checks and relaxation/childbirth classes. Similar provision will be made for partners sharing responsibility for childcare to attend antenatal classes where necessary.

Working hours and arrangements will, whenever possible, be flexible for both full and part-time employees regardless of length of service, to facilitate caring for children and other dependants. Requests for part-time working, job sharing and flexitime will receive fair and equal consideration subject to operational requirements.

The College will endeavour to ensure that the office base and venues contracted are accessible to disabled people.

Staff have a right to be open about all their views unless those views conflict with the aims and objectives of the College's Equal Opportunities policy.

The College believes that men and women should be treated equally in terms of retirement age and benefits. The retirement age in the College for both men and women is 65.

Monitoring

The College is committed to monitoring to ensure effective implementation of the policy. All information collected for monitoring will be treated as confidential and will be clearly separated from the process of selection of staff.

Annual monitoring will show the current staff profile with a breakdown by grade, programme, race, sex, age and disability.

Monitoring results will be presented to the Governing Body and be available to all staff.

Implementation of Policy

Access to the services provided by the College can be ensured by:

- making the environment equally welcoming and physically accessible to all staff/learner.
- using publicity materials that are attractive, positively reflect the cultures and values of, and are usable by, target groups
- working with staff to ensure they understand the culture and values of learners and are able to make them feel welcome
- broadening, the range of provision in the community.
- effectively communicating to all staff/learners, what is on offer by the College, e.g. using appropriate languages, signing, not using jargon
- holding meetings at times and in places that people can attend
- distributing information about services as widely as possible
- ensuring that any information held about staff/learners is available to them.

Diversity, identity and choice can be promoted by:

- offering a variety of flexible learning programmes
- using materials and resources which reflect variety and diversity with positive images of e.g. different family structures, different cultures, disability
- creating opportunities to learn about and benefit from a knowledge of different cultures, religions, and experiences
- ensuring staff value each other, and respect the variety of contributions each can make to the work
- ensuring that management structures are responsive and accessible to both staff and learners.

- being aware of the full range of facilities in the geographical area and, if appropriate, building links.

Quality, relevance and flexibility can be ensured by:

- clarifying aims, objectives, staff roles and responsibilities - so that all concerned are clear about the boundaries of what can be offered by the institution.
- developing work in partnership with other organisations and continuing to seek information to check the appropriateness of what is being offered for all communities with whom the institution works
- operating staffing arrangements which maximise the flexibility of working practices e.g. extended opening, rotas, flexible hours
- supporting and supervising staff to ensure they are able to respond positively to change and development
- ensuring that there are systems in place to ensure ongoing evaluation, monitoring and review.

Challenging discrimination will be achieved by:

- challenging as individuals or as a group, all discriminatory and/or sectarian attitudes, remarks and behaviour
- ensuring there are both formal and informal frameworks for regular dialogue on issues of discrimination which allows for an exchange of views, thoughts, feelings and information
- making the institution's values explicit in all negotiation, in particular, making explicit the values and purposes of the work and its relationship to providing equal opportunities for all – and including this in all partnership agreements
- acknowledging the discrimination and inequalities which may exist within and around the office or within partnerships and identifying and examining aspects of the work which may have colluded with the e.g. checking our assumptions about groups/needs etc. Take steps to redress this situation by re-assessing the overall purpose of the work
- by ensuring that where the primary focus of the work is addressing one particular area of discrimination, that: groups are not marginalised by the way we work and the quality of practice is consistent with other areas of work e.g. we do not condone gender stereotyping in a piece of work where the main focus is disability or race.

(N.B. There may be occasions when all attempts to explain the College's policy and practice, on this issue, fail and we are unable to work with particular individuals, groups, organisations and may have to state publicly our reasons).

Protection from abuse, bullying and harassment can be achieved by:

- ensuring that all staff understand and are able to implement the College's complaints procedures.
- ensuring that vulnerable people are not harassed by peers, in groups.
- responding positively and clearly to victims of abuse or harassment through:
 - a) direct support
 - b) ensuring back-up systems of support for all staff/learners
 - c) increasing our knowledge of support networks from which our learners and staff may benefit.

Full potential can be developed by:

- supporting initiatives to achieve co-ordinated national and local approaches to provision that meet the needs of staff and learners in an integrated way
- involving more women and men whose linguistic and cultural background would reflect minority communities with whom we work
- supporting and developing initiatives which respond to the diverse needs of students in the community.
- supporting research, publications, as well as the production of materials highlighting and advocating good practice.

Structural inequality can be reduced by:

- striving, in partnership with other organisations to increase awareness amongst local and national policy makers and resource providers.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES LEGISLATION

The main acts concerned with Equal Opportunities are as follows:-

- **Equal Pay Act 1970** (as amended 1983)
- **Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and 1986** (and as amended by the Employment Acts 1989 and 1990)
- **Race Relations Act 1976** (and as amended by the Employment Acts 1989 and 1990)
- **Disability Discrimination Act 1995**
- **Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**
- **The Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000***

In addition

Although not legislation, the Government has published a voluntary **Code of Practice for Age Diversity in Employment**. This code calls on employers to tackle age discrimination and promote age diversity in the workplace.