

EQUALITY

Update.....

Issue 2

Human Resource Department



north west
regional college
Derry/Londonderry • Limavady • Strabane

INTRODUCTION

The Equality Update was developed as a mechanism to inform staff of the progress made throughout the year in relation to the College's commitment to Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the Disability duties under Section 49A and 49B of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended by DD (NI) Order 2006). The update also acts as an important reminder to all staff of their obligation to promote Equality and Good Relations and to promote positive attitudes towards people and encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

PROGRESS MADE IN THE LAST YEAR

During the period 2008/09 the College has made progress in a number of areas in meeting equality and good relations objectives.

- **Travellers' Focus Week**

During Travellers' Focus week, the College, in collaboration with Derry Travellers' Association, launched a 'Promoting Equality' Art & Design project and also advertised Essential Skills provision at the Ballyarnett site with a view to organising classes for the travelling community.



The brief for the art piece was to produce a 3D piece that had connections with the word Equality and that could be displayed in a public area in the College.

A tutor from the School of Art and Design (based in Limavady) along with 3 mature students from the Fine and Applied Art course agreed to undertake the project.

After a 'brain-storming day' and careful consideration to all the ideas presented it was decided that the art piece would be a cart wheel which would have casted hands made of clay (from each member of the group) as the spokes of the wheel.

The significance of the Cart Wheel to the travelling community was that it is a very important symbol as it signifies moving forwards and that of travel. Making things with their hands is also an important aspect to the community.

As said by a member of the group 'we use our hands to make things, clean things and Fight, which is all part of our very important culture" (by fighting they meant for example arranging boxing matches amongst their groups which is legal to them).

Building upon these ideas and thoughts the group decided that the wheel would represent the travel element of their culture and the casted hands from all involved in the project would symbolise that of Equality.



The finalised piece will be displayed in a public area in the College.



of meeting the needs of these students.

- **Equality Working Group**

This group was reconstituted and its aim is to inform, advise and assist the College in all aspects of policy-making and service delivery and to mainstream equality and diversity issues within policy decision-making and implementation. If you have any issues in respect of Equality please feed through this group by contacting the Human Resource Department.

- **Consultation**

In accordance with the Equality Scheme the College has consulted with recognised consultees in respect of policy development and screening. This year the College consulted on a face to face basis with a range of consultees to help establish better networks to offer support particularly to groups representing those with disabilities. This consultation resulted in a number of actions to further promote equality in this area. Consultees included RNIB, Workers Educational Authority, Derry Travellers' Association, MENCAP and Community Groups.

- **Disability Action Plan**

The Action Plan was developed in accordance with the requirements of the statutory duties in respect of disability which are to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and to encourage the participation by disabled people in public life.

The Disability Action Plan is continually monitored and implemented by the Senior Management Team. It is available at www.nwrc.ac.uk/equality.

- **SENDO**

The College SENDO Committee meets regularly to embed processes to support the implementation of SENDO and the DDA. This year the SENDO Committee developed a form for lecturing staff that would be used at pre-enrolment stage by the lecturer to help assess the needs of students with disabilities/learning difficulties

- **Equality Training**

In the last year training in the area of equality has been delivered to staff in respect of the following:

- ❖ Behaviour Management;
- ❖ Child Protection;
- ❖ Disability Awareness;
- ❖ Evacuation Chair;
- ❖ Good Relations;
- ❖ On-line Equality/Cultural Diversity;
- ❖ SENDO;
- ❖ Texthelp Software;
- ❖ Learning Support Centre;
- ❖ Austistic Spectrum Disorder – Implications for FE.

- **Braille Embosser**

The College has purchased a Braille embosser which should allow the College to improve its service to blind and partially sighted people.

- **Mental Health Day**

The College confirmed its commitment to promoting positive mental health among staff by informing staff of the College's objectives in relation to its Mental Health policy. This included encouraging staff to have a self awareness to recognise problems at an early stage. A link to the Mental Health Foundation website was also provided which advised staff on "How to look after your mental health".

- **Breastfeeding Facilities**

The College's Breastfeeding Policy aims to facilitate and support breastfeeding mothers in their workplace.

The College recognises the importance of breastfeeding for both mother and child and supports and promotes breastfeeding by providing a breastfeeding room on the ground floor of the Tower Building, room number C152.



- **Cancer Awareness Event**

The College encouraged staff to attend an event organised through Action Cancer. Staff were advised of the services provided by 'The Big Bus' which included Digital Mammography, a service which offers early detection of breast cancer for women who fall outside NHS screening range (women 40-49 years and over 65 years of age). The Big Bus also considered the general health of staff by providing tests in blood pressure and cholesterol.

- **Online Cultural Diversity/Equality Training**

The College began the roll-out of the online equality/cultural diversity training programme. It was initially rolled out to non-teaching staff this year with a view to rolling out to teaching staff and students in the coming year.

- **Age Awareness Week**

To commemorate Age Awareness Week the College initiated a public relations campaign to help promote the College as being an open and welcoming environment for students of all ages to study. A survey was conducted to determine attitudes and experiences of mature students on full time courses. The outcome of the survey was positive in respect of their experience of College life in a classroom with a predominantly younger age group.

The College also arranged for Posters and Leaflets to be circulated in public areas to raise awareness.

- **Student Equality Survey**

To obtain information from students in respect of their experiences of equality of opportunity in College life, a Student Equality Questionnaire was developed and a random sample of students was surveyed. Further details on the survey can be obtained from the Human Resource Department.

- **Community Relations Week**

A 'Cultural Cocktail'



Sean Breslly, Gareth McGeady from Travel and Tourism with Stacey Graham and Aimee Parsons

Students from the School of Hospitality, Tourism and Sport hosted a special Cultural Diversity Cocktail event. The students teamed up with SEEDS, a multicultural support group based locally. The event was officially opened by the Foyle Multicultural Forum with an aim to raise awareness about multiculturalism in society.



Stuart King, Lee Carlin and Stacey Graham

Building a Learning Community Workshop

During Community Relations week the School of Community Education hosted a workshop titled "Building a Learning Community" at the College's Strabane Campus.



The purpose of this workshop was to identify how to engage community groups with the Strabane Council area and those in East Donegal in co-operating to create a positive learning experience that would improve community relations and promote economic development on a cross community and cross border basis.

Both the College and Donegal VEC provided information on their service provision and participating groups mapped their existing education provision.

In conclusion the groups/providers agreed to meet regularly to develop a model of co-operation, oversee community education provision and explore funding opportunities.

• **New course provision**

The School of Business and Financial Services provided a course entitled 'Introduction to Training' for Hands that Talk, an organisation based locally which supports people with hearing impairments. The course was delivered by one of the College tutors with signers in both BSL and ISL provided by the organisation. The course was successfully delivered and all the students received certification for the level 3 award.

This School also provided a course in 'Managing Personal Finance' to a group of people with visual impairment which had been set up in collaboration with RNIB. The lecturer made reasonable adjustment to ensure learners were provided with learning materials in accessible formats.

• **Get on Board**

The Business and Financial Services School piloted successfully the first programme of its kind in the North West. The course had been operating successfully in the Belfast area for a number of years. The aim of the programme was to encourage and assist people from under-represented groups such as those in the Section 75 categories to apply for positions on the Boards of Public Bodies in order to widen representation. The pilot programme attracted 16 students, 2 of whom had some

• **Women in Construction event**

The School of Crafts hosted a Women in Construction event on behalf of Constructionskills. The event was attended by approximately 150 women. As part of this event the College met with the Workers' Education Authority to discuss women only courses in basic construction.



Joan Crosle (NWRC), Catherine McGeady (CITB), Calum Morrison, Assistant Director – Curriculum (NWRC), Sarah Travers (UTV who hosted the event, Liam Clarke, NWRC



Some of those who were involved in the Constructionskills event

• **Diversity Calendar**

The College continued to contribute to the Diversiton Diversity Calendar. As a partner this year, the College received 50 copies of the calendar which were distributed to nominated staff and a web version of which all staff were notified was accessible on the College internet. Each month of the calendar detailed all the main religious and secular dates.



• **Policies**

The following policies were screened/consulted on for equality purposes:

- ❖ Health and Safety Policy and associated manuals i.e. Risk Assessment; Manual Handling; Control of Contractors; COSHH; First Aid; PPE; DSE; Accident Reporting and RIDDOR; Safe use of Ladders, Step Ladders and Platforms; Asbestos; Guide for New and Expectant Mothers; Blood Borne Viruses.
- ❖ Complaints Policy
- ❖ Child Protection Policy
- ❖ Essential Skills Policy
- ❖ References Policy
- ❖ Residentials within Curriculum Policy
- ❖ Retention Policy
- ❖ Social Events Policy
- ❖ Stress Policy
- ❖ Teaching and Learning Policy

• **Childcare Vouchers**

The College continued to be involved with the Employers for Childcare Scheme that allows members of staff to avail of reduced childcare provision. For further details please contact the Human Resource Department.

• **ESOL Provision**

This year the College offered a wide range of appropriate courses and qualifications that would meet the needs of ESOL students. These classes provided the possibilities for an improved quality of life as the students gain the self-confidence to communicate and relate better to others. In the review period 143 students enrolled on ESOL courses at the College. The languages offered included: Polish; Lithuanian; Portuguese; Czech; and Chinese.

• **Provision of support for College students at examinations**

This year the examinations section of the College has recorded adjustments made for up to 215 students who required support during examinations. This support

ranged from: 25% extra time; separate room; bi-lingual dictionary; support chair and rest breaks, etc.

• **Irish Language Provision**

The School of Community Education in collaboration with Gaelaras and Pobal Mhuileann an Tsiain provided Irish language classes to over 200 students this year.

• **Public Events Proforma**

A public events assessment proforma was developed to be used by staff organising public events in the College. The information requested on the proforma ensures the College is prepared for the needs of attendees that may have a disability or if their first language is not English. This proforma is available from the Human Resource Department and should be used by anyone who is organising a public event in the College.

• **Provision of Learning Support**

The Learning Support Centre has provided learning support to 462 students with learning difficulties during their course of study in the last year. Learning support was provided in the following formats:

- ❖ interpreters;
- ❖ note takers;
- ❖ adjustable furniture;
- ❖ carers;
- ❖ large print handouts;
- ❖ software;
- ❖ study skills support;
- ❖ classroom assistants; and
- ❖ support for Dyslexia students which included one-to-one tuition and small working groups.
