

Disability Equality Duty: Annual Report- December 2008

Introduction

In December 2006 Dundee College published its Disability Equality Scheme as required by Disability Discrimination Act (2005). The college published an annual report in December 2007

This report details, in summary, progress we have made since then in a number of key areas.

Further progress has been made to fully engage with staff and students to ensure that they share the vision, values and principles the college holds towards the disabled: that disabled persons should have equality of opportunity to access and enjoy equality of learning at Dundee College.

Staff Development

To achieve this we have supported staff whereby:

- all new staff to the college receive disability awareness training as part of their induction and are informed of the range and level of support available to these learners
- as part of the college CPD programme ongoing staff development has taken place in the following areas over the last year: Dyslexia, Deaf Awareness, Autism/Asperger's awareness
- A supportive interview checklist has been given to staff interviewing prospective students which has resulted in the early identification of more learners who have additional support needs and consequently learner support is put in place more promptly and responsively

Learner Engagement

We firmly believe that through effective integration of disabled students into all aspects of college life enriches the overall student experience. Our Students' Association has been completely reformed and has resulted in increased learner representation at all levels in the college. We now have a proportionate number of class representative who are disabled or have additional support needs. Some of this group now sits on key strategic committees and working groups in the college including the Board of Management. Consequently, the student voice is being listened to and their ideas acted on.

Equality and Diversity Strategy Group

We stated in the last annual report that our long standing 'Equalities Group' was being replaced by an 'Equality and Diversity Strategy Group' with appropriate student representation. This group has now put in place an ambitious strategy, devised with the support of Equality Forward. The group has developed a single

equality scheme which embraces all aspects of equality and diversity in the college with an action plan which fulfils the requirements of the Disability Equality Duty and other duties. The plan also allows the college to take forward more coherently and pro-actively our strategy to eliminate all forms of discrimination and provide responsive support to those who need it.

Progress reports from the group will be submitted to the executive annually and thereafter to the Board of Management

External Support

A multi agency 'Transitions Group' of representatives from Social Work, Education, NHS Tayside, Dundee College and other agencies in adult care has been established in Dundee. The group is responsible for the identification of support and planning processes for young people with additional needs and to put in place appropriate arrangements for a smooth, supportive and successful transition between school and further/higher education or employment and the adult care system.

The group identified that a one agency approach was required to meet the care and support needs of individuals who wished to access post school education. Previously, care and support was provided by a variety of agencies and organized by each individual's care manager. A more streamlined approach was required which has led to the commissioning of one care agency to deliver a care and enabling service delivering services from August 2008

Learner Retention and Success

The group has been able to produce quantitative data regarding our students with disabilities / supported learning needs using Scottish Funding Council criteria.(This data is attached as an appendix.)

Headline data analysis reveals:

- The number of learners with disabilities and require support is fairly constant year on year.
- The retention rates of these students are high and compare very favourably to those of other students.
- The success rates of learners in discrete programmes for students with support needs are very high
- The success rates of learners with support needs that are integrated into mainstream programmes is less than the college average.

Discussion with HMle regarding the relatively lower success rates of these learners revealed that 'success' for these students using these measures may not be appropriate and the focus should be on success in terms of 'soft indicators' and those identified in the learners' Personal Learning and Support Plans. The Equality and Diversity Group is now establishing success criteria on this basis

This report was submitted to the Quality Enhancement Committee of the Board of Management and noted.

Staff

Gaps have been identified in the quality of HR Management Information; this includes the staff demographic data and equality, diversity and disability data.

The college is rectifying this through the purchase and implementation of an HR system allowing for essential management information reports to be produced and data analysis to be carried out.

Part of the project to move to the HR system will include an extensive data capture exercise to update all staff details – all equal opportunities data will be included in this exercise.

We are currently working through detailed project management plans for the implementation of these new systems to meet the April 2009 timescale.

Conclusions

The college has made significant and ongoing progress to meet the requirements of the Disability Equality Duty.

- Staff are becoming better equipped to support these learners and give them equality of opportunity.
- Disabled learners are increasingly becoming involved in the development of the college and equality strategy.
- Strategy to support disabled learners is now more coherent and more effectively monitored.
- Links to improve access to the college from schools has been enhanced as has the support for these students through effective partnership with Dundee City Council Social Work Department and Gowrie Care support agency.
- Data analysis on student performance is now allowing us to measure and compare performance indicators for these learners and act upon them
- Data on staff with disabilities will be more easily accessed from next session

Attachment.

Updated Action Plan

