

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

For completion by The Executive

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1. Purpose

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy sets out the values and strategic aims of the Heart of Worcestershire College with regard to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. It outlines the commitments and responsibilities of all College members to fulfil its statutory duties to promote equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination in line with the requirements of the Equality Act, and how the College will further improve the service it offers to all to be truly inclusive.

This policy is published on the Heart of Worcestershire College website.

Alternative formats of the policy can be made available. Please email sfriel@howcollege.ac.uk to request these or ask at Reception.

Introduction and Context

Heart of Worcestershire College is committed to providing a learning environment which respects all individuals and celebrates diversity. Our mission statement to improve lives through learning demonstrates our College values and our commitment to ensuring that we transform the life chances for all. As a college, we value social and cultural diversity and seek to promote equality of opportunity and respect amongst all learners, staff, governors, visitors, partners and other stakeholders.

This policy describes the Heart of Worcestershire College's:

- Vision, commitment, values and approach to British Values in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion;
- General and Specific Duties regarding the Equality Act 2010 and how these inform practice;
- Strategies and objectives for generating a positive and fair environment;
- The actions and strategies the College will employ to generate a positive and inclusive environment (*please refer to our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan*).

Our Vision, Values and British Values

Heart of Worcestershire College strives to be an outstanding inclusive college where all staff and learners feel valued and respected, having a fair and equal chance to reach their potential. We aim to respond to the diverse profile of needs expressed by our learners, staff and stakeholders and celebrate the diversity of the College community. We aim to go beyond statutory requirements to ensure our learners, staff and partners have the best experience possible. Through our Equality Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, we will work with the College community and beyond to make the College a truly inclusive organisation. We believe that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is an essential ingredient for overall quality improvement.

The College ethos to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion includes:

- **Involvement of the various communities of interest** - so that their priorities and concerns can be identified and inform College practice and policy.
- **Data gathering for analysis and monitoring** - to establish what different groups experience in terms of recruitment, retention and success as a student or as a member of staff. Any significant differentials will be further explored, and actions agreed accordingly.

- **Raising awareness** - through staff and learners induction, bespoke training and by having thematic weeks to celebrate diversity.
- **Action planning** - The College will set equality objectives at least every 4 years. These objectives will be translated into action plan which will be agreed every year and monitored on a regular basis.
- **Publicise the scheme** - to ensure transparency in our approach and practice regarding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. This will enable learners, staff and the College's community to be informed of progress and give stakeholders the opportunity to respond.

Our Values

Honesty

We are open and transparent and recognise, accept and take action when things aren't working or would benefit from change. We are confident to respectfully challenge others.

Optimistic

We see opportunities in challenge. We are positive and passionate about our College and the communities we serve and are aspirational for our students.

Welcoming

We create positive first impressions and foster loyalty.

Collaborative

We work as a team and leverage diverse skills and perspectives. We pursue partnerships to benefit the communities we serve.

Ambitious

We seek to improve, build on our strengths and expand. We are innovative and consistently encourage and inspire our colleagues and students to achieve their best.

Respectful

We value all contributors, acknowledge diverse opinions and foster inclusion.

Empowering

We delegate authority and encourage decision-making and initiative, to increase engagement and productivity. Through fostering a culture of accountability, we promote resilience in a no-blame culture.

Supportive

We help others with empathy and kindness at our core. We are responsive, enabling colleagues, students and stakeholders to find solutions and achieve.

British Values

British values are of paramount importance to Heart of Worcestershire College. We see British values as underpinning what it is to be a citizen in a modern and diverse community.

Ofsted evaluate how well colleges actively promote British Values and prepare learners for life in modern Britain. This requirement is reiterated within guidance on the Prevent Duty, a statutory duty on colleges to have due regard to prevent people being drawn into terrorism

and to challenge extremist ideas.

British values relate to four aspects; democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

The College will seek to promote these values recognising they will be underpinned under the College's own values.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All students, staff, contractors, and visitors.
- On-campus, off-campus, online environments.

3. Policy Statement

The College is committed to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment that promotes equal opportunities for all.

4. Definitions

DfE	Department for Education
EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
EDIM	Equality and Diversity Impact Measures
EHCP	Education Health and Care Plan
EIA	Equality Impact Assessment
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HE	Higher Education
HR	Human Resources
KCSIE	Keeping Children Safe in Education
LLDD	Learner with Learning Difficulties or Disabilities
LSA	Learning Support Assistant
PSED	Public Section Equality Duty
SEND	Special Education Needs and Disabilities

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Governing Body

The Department for Education (DfE) expects Governing Boards to have a Governor, that takes a strategic lead for SEN and for disability.

The Governing Body should:

- Have a significant role in creating and maintaining an inclusive organisation where all can learn, work and reach their full potential;
- Agree and monitor Equality Objectives;
- Instruct the Executive Management team to:
 - Ensure that relevant policies are in place up to date and effectively implemented.
 - Listen to the voice of learners and make changes accordingly to improve the inclusivity of the College
 - Ensure that the College upholds its legal obligations in relation to Equality and

Diversity.

- Promote Equality and celebrate Diversity.

5.2 Principal and Senior Leaders

- Lead by example through implementing the EDI Policy;
- Promote a culture of mutual respect and tolerance;
- Monitor Equality and Diversity through the self- assessment process and quality reviews;
- Include EDI awareness training in the induction process and thereafter in staff development and performance reviews;
- Ensuring EDI is fully embraced by staff within their area.

5.3 Staff

Individuals will:

- Inform an appropriate person if inappropriate or discriminatory practice occurs;
- Be responsible for engaging in staff development opportunities that address equality and diversity issues;
- Ensure that curriculum content includes equality and diversity to raise awareness in students;
- Challenge any inappropriate language or behaviour and promote a culture of mutual respect and tolerance;
- Embrace and embed British Values into their working practise.

5.4 Students

Meeting the Needs of Learners

The College is committed to inclusive learning by working with our learners, their carers or advocates and College staff to create an environment in which learners are not disadvantaged because of their Special Educational Needs (SEN) and are supported to achieve their full potential. The College is committed to creating an inclusive learning environment where needs and circumstances are anticipated and responded to positively to support the learner.

Support is provided in order to enable equality of access to students who have a learning difficulty or disability that may affect their ability to access a course or programme within the College, and to ensure learners are motivated, engaged and provided with opportunities to stretch and challenge their capabilities in the learning they undertake at the College.

Students with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) who study on a vocational or technical course will receive in class support from a Learning support Assistant (LSA).

Students studying on a vocational or technical course, who have a learning disability or difficulty, but do not have an EHCP can refer themselves for support from the Academic Skills Support Mentor team.

Supported students on discrete SEN courses or Progressions will be supported by a range of staff who will set and monitor targets and progress including the course teacher, Personal Learning Coach, Learning Support Assistant and specialist agency staff e.g. speech and language therapists.

An essential part of the College experience for a learner is to be prepared for working

and living in a diverse society. Therefore:

- All teaching and training resources will reflect and promote EDI as appropriate to raise awareness and understanding.
- Staff will actively promote British Values throughout College life and empower students to challenge stereotypes, assumptions and discrimination within a culture of mutual respect and tolerance for others.
- Admission processes and initial assessment will be used to ensure that the correct support is available to learners at the beginning of their course. Learners are continuously given opportunities throughout the year to disclose any disabilities or other protected characteristic they may have.
- Information, guidance and support will be delivered in ways accessible to different groups with protected characteristics and in ways that challenge stereotypes.
- The T H R I V E tutorial programme will include group tutorial sessions to promote EDI, British Values and social awareness to develop a culture of respect and tolerance. Personal Tutors will work closely with learners to develop learner's personal, social and employability skills.
- Wellbeing services support learners who have a wellbeing or mental health need or deemed to be at a disadvantage, to safeguard and support them and give them the skills to develop coping strategies, resilience and problem-solving strategies.
- Financial support is available to assist learners who may have difficulties in completing their course due to financial reasons.
- Learner Voice continues to be a crucial mechanism for understanding and responding to the learner experience to ensure that the College is inclusive in all aspects of the service it delivers.
- Disadvantaged and/or vulnerable learners are identified, supported and monitored by curriculum and support teams. Discrete badges on ProMonitor (visible to staff only) flag that the learner may have a disadvantage or vulnerability.

Disadvantaged is defined

- Eligible for Free School Meals
- Bursary for low-income family.

- Vulnerable learners are defined as
 - Known to social care, such as those who are under the age of 18 and in care, and care leavers.
 - Youth-justice services (CC)
 - Child in need
 - Child protection
 - Young carer
 - In year safeguarding concern
 - Mental health
 - Asylum seeker - Unaccompanied child
 - Living independently
 - Homeschooled
 - Experienced significant bereavement

- Young parent
- Other barriers
- Previously (NEET) Not collected systematically i.e. no report
- Those without level 2 English and/or maths

6. Procedures

Recruitment and Employment of Staff

Positive employment and recruitment practices are promoted through practices and legislation contained within the College's Recruitment and Selection Policy and Remuneration Policy.

All applicants are asked to advise the College of any adjustments that may be required for the purpose of the interview or if they were to be employed by the College.

Procurement

The College ensures that any external organisations with which it works or contracts with are made aware of and encouraged and supported to adhere to the core EDI principles of the College. The College will also seek to identify the equality and diversity policies and practices of any external organisations it may work with and to give information to partners regarding their obligations of working with a public sector organisation.

Complaints

The College has a transparent and responsive complaints procedure for all stakeholders. Complaints relating to EDI should initially be addressed to quality@howcollege.ac.uk. Complaints data is analysed by the Vice Principal Quality on a regular basis to ensure that there are no trends.

Heart Of Worcestershire College seeks to provide a supportive environment for those who make claims of discrimination or harassment on the grounds of age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership.

Acts of discrimination (direct, indirect, by association or by perception), harassment, victimisation or abuse will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence.

Staff who feel they are being discriminated against by other members of staff should raise the matter with HR under the Grievance Procedure.

If, in the course of their work, members of staff suffer discrimination from members of the public, Heart of Worcestershire College will take appropriate action and provide appropriate support.

Any discriminatory behaviour directed against staff by learners, or by learners against other learners, will be dealt with under the Student Standards Procedure and in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy.

Involve ment and Consultation

The College continues to elicit feedback from its community by having effective communication channels in a variety of formats such as:

- Student satisfaction surveys at induction and on-programme;
- Student Ambassadors;
- EDI Strategic meetings;
- Tutorials;

Partnerships with outside agencies.

Informing others

The EDI Policy will be relevant to many people, not just in terms of responsibilities under the policy, but also in terms of how students, staff and visitors can expect College life to change and improve.

The College will make the policy available on its website and ensure that it is available in a variety of formats to meet the diverse needs of our student and staff population.

7. Monitoring and Review

Termly monitoring of EDI action plan and EDIMs by EDI subgroups and via the Corporation.

Measuring Our Progress and Monitoring Improvements

Equality and Diversity feedback is encouraged from a broad spectrum of sources to inform planning, decision making and actions to further improve the service offered by the College. To inform the setting of goals and the measurement of our progress in achieving them, we will collect and analyse the following information by the protected characteristics of race, sex, disability, and age and those who are classified as disadvantaged or vulnerable. The College collects and keeps records pertaining to Equality and Diversity in a systematic and coordinated way to enable efficient analysis and review.

For Students

- Learner surveys;
- Student Ambassadors;
- Focus Groups
- Learning walks ;
- Statistical monitoring - retention and achievement of learners by protected characteristics; comparative reports on 16-18 and 19+, ethnic minority groups, LLDD, male and female achievement rates;
- Applications and progression rates for admission to courses;
- Disciplinary action;
- Complaints.

For Staff

- An annual report is produced by HR to statistically monitor:

- Gender pay gap
- Workforce profile
- Flexible working
- Apprentices
- Staff recruitment
- Staff turnover
- Performance management
- Staff sickness absence

Overall

- EDI meetings;
- Meetings with external partners and groups to elicit feedback about the service the College delivers.

The EDI Strategic Group

Heart of Worcestershire College has an established EDI Strategic Group to lead on the organisation's strategic approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Each EDI action plan objective has a team of staff allocated to achieving said objective.

These groups will:

- Ensure the College meets its responsibilities with regard to its public sector general and specific duties;
- Ensure EDI is promoted effectively through teaching and learning;
- Ensure that information regarding EDI is communicated effectively to the College community;
- Monitor, review and contribute to the College's Equality and Diversity Objectives and Action Plan;
- Monitor, review and contribute to the College's Access and Participation plan, in particular monitoring outcomes for cohorts of learners in HE where there is an identified achievement gap
- Make recommendations as to how the promotion of the equality duties can be further enhanced and improved through the curriculum and service provision;
- Monitor Equality and Diversity meetings to share and develop best practice and ensure whole organisation 'buy in';
- Review and revise the College's EDI Policy annually;
- Contribute to the College's annual Equality and Diversity Report, published in January;
- Monitor the progress made against College EDIMS;
- Monitor any complaints pertaining to Equality and Diversity;
- Champion inclusive practice;

8. Legal and Regulatory Framework

- The Equality Act 2010.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) Guidance.

9. Training and Awareness

All staff must complete EDI training during their probation period, and every 3 years as part of their mandatory training. The College will also, when appropriate, deliver training on specific topics linked to EDI.

10. Environmental Impact/Sustainability Considerations (if applicable)

11. Legal Requirements/Issues outside of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Meeting our Legal Duties

The Equality Act 2010 imposes both general and specific duties upon the College. The legislation applies not only to the College as an organisation but also to anyone working or studying with us and any partners, contractors and stakeholders. The general duties are to:

Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010. The act introduces the concept of “protected characteristics” of which there are nine. The definition of discrimination has been extended to include associative and perceptive discrimination.

Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not. Reasonable adjustments will be provided for learners, staff and customers who may be experiencing barriers due to their disability. The recruitment, retention and achievement of learners will be monitored by protected characteristics to identify any trends enabling the College to respond effectively.

Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not. The College will ensure that Equality and Diversity is a natural part of the curriculum to raise awareness and understanding. All College processes will be continually reviewed to ensure that the College is accessible and fair in all of its functions. Our customer service will be unbiased and welcoming to all.

The specific duties of the Equality Act 2010 are to:

Publish information to demonstrate compliance with the general equality duty - This will include information relating to learners, employees, and other individuals who share a relevant protected characteristic who will be affected by our policies and practices. A report for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is published annually to inform our College community of our progress and to celebrate our diversity.

Prepare and publish equality objectives at least every four years which are accessible to the public - The objectives will form the basis of the Equality Action Plan which can be found on our website.

The Equality Action Plan

The Equality Action Plan sets out the strategy for establishing how the College intends to ensure equality for all and build upon existing practice. It is intended to be flexible to respond to new developments and changes in legislation and will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis, with the continuing involvement of College learners, staff, partners and community groups. Progress will be reported termly to Corporation and monitored through

the EDI action plan group meetings taking place each term.

The College strives to ensure that all learners enjoy an excellent experience whilst at college and monitors this by analysing data regarding people with a protected characteristic and those classed as vulnerable. The EDIMS [Equality and Diversity Impact Measures] are incorporated into the College's Equality Objectives and are approved by the Executive Leadership Team and College Corporation.

The Principal of the College has overall responsibility for EDI, while the day to day management rests with the Head of Student Support and Wellbeing. However, to be successful, the implementation of the EDI Policy must be a shared responsibility amongst all staff employed by the College.

We will provide equality of opportunity for all of our learners and staff by:

- Taking effective action to prevent discrimination, harassment or bullying;
- Listening to our learners and staff;
- Providing flexible learning and working opportunities to support differing aspirations and goals;
- Promoting equality of access to all college services;
- Taking all reasonable steps to provide a safe, accessible, inclusive and equitable learning and work environment.
- Make reasonable adjustments to remove barriers to achievement.

12. Equality Impact Assessment Statement

The Equality Act 2010 does not require public authorities to carry out EIAs by law. The College does however, carefully consider the impact, when creating or amending its policies, on all concerned parties regarding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and records this at ELT meetings in order to demonstrate compliance with Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

13. Related Policies and Documents

- Student Standards
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Disciplinary Policy & Procedure
- Data Protection & GDPR Policy
- SEND policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Tutorial Strategy
- Health and Safety Policy

13. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Student disclosure of HIV

Appendix 2 - Monitored inclusion categories

Appendix 1

Student disclosure of HIV

Confidentiality and Disclosure

Students are not required to disclose their HIV status to anyone at college, but doing so can help facilitate support and reasonable adjustments. Disclosure should always be voluntary and handled with strict confidentiality, in line with GDPR and safeguarding policies.

Staff who are informed must treat this information sensitively and only share it with relevant personnel with the student's explicit consent.

Legal Protections and Equality

Under the Equality Act 2010, anyone diagnosed with HIV is protected from discrimination and harassment. The college must ensure the student is not treated less favourably and has the right to request reasonable adjustments.

Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments are considered on an individual basis, in consultation with the student and relevant support services. These may include:

Flexible deadlines or attendance for medical appointments

Adjustments to exam conditions (e.g., extra time, rest breaks)

On-campus accommodation changes (e.g., fridge for medication)

Support for managing side effects of medication (e.g., fatigue, nausea)

Wellbeing and Support Services

The student should be encouraged to engage with the college's wellbeing services, who can offer advice, and support, signpost to external organisations such as the Terrence Higgins Trust, which provides specialist support, counselling, and helplines for people living with HIV

Appendix 2

Monitored Inclusion Groups

1. Disadvantage (demographic / financial)

Disadvantaged learners and apprentices who face challenges that hinder their educational progress; the term 'disadvantaged' refers to learners and apprentices who have been eligible for free school meals in the past 6 years and those from low-income families

- FSM
- Bursary for low income

2. SEND

Learners and apprentices with SEND and learners who receive high needs funding; this includes learners and apprentices who receive additional support with their learning and those with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

3. Protected factor (vulnerability)

- Learners and apprentices who are known (or previously known) to social care, such as those who are under the age of 18 and in care, and care leavers.
- Youth-justice services (CC)
- Child in need
- Child protection
- Young carer
- Safeguarding concern
- Mental health
- Asylum seeker
- Living independently
- Homeschooled
- Experienced significant bereavement
- Young parent

4. Additional Groups

- Previously (NEET)
- those without level 2 English and/or maths