

# Disability Equality Scheme

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Please contact the HR Manager. ■

# Disability Equality Scheme

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## 1 Introduction

The purpose of North Lindsey College's Disability Equality Scheme (DES) is to make sure that we are taking the needs of disabled people into account in everything that we do – whether that is providing services, employing people, developing policies or communicating with people, and to meet the specific requirements under the Disability Equality Duty of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 amended (Dec 2006).

This Disability Equality Scheme sets out the overall objectives for improving and addressing disability inequalities, the five focus areas that we are concentrating on improving, and our action plan for improvement.

The five focus areas to be incorporated into the action plan framework are:

- Building – access and environment
- Communication
- Employment
- Service delivery
- Training

North Lindsey College recognises that to be effective the Disability Equality Scheme has to be constantly reviewed and regularly monitored to ensure change is woven into the culture of the college. The college intends to review the Scheme on an annual basis and ensure that all action plans, guidance and standards set out in the scheme are monitored and assessed.

## 2 Context

The college produced its Race Equality Scheme 2001, and following on from this, the DES has been developed to help us achieve the following:

- To meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act and set out our plan to improve disability access to employment and service
- Make sure that we are taking the needs and views of disabled people into account
- Continuous monitoring and improvement of the ways in which we deliver services to disabled people
- Adoption of the Social Model of Disability

### Social Model of Disability

The social model of disability means the college recognises disabled and non-disabled people as equal. This means North Lindsey College will adopt the principles of inclusion wherever possible in terms of design, management and monitoring the built environment and service delivery. This should result in an improved environment, access and services for all.

Legal requirements:

- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- The Building Regulations 2000
- Part 'M' Requirements (Building Regulation amendments 2003)
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Equality Act 2010 ►

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## 3 Policy Framework

To address possible inequality towards disabled people North Lindsey College will:

- Define clear objectives for improving disability access, and set out priorities in an Annual Plan, and Improvement plans.
- Ensure that an equality impact assessment is carried out on existing policies, practices and procedures to identify where action needs to be taken to make improvements or changes, and to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people. We will promote equality of opportunity, and highlight examples of good practice.
- Ensure disabled people can access all services in a safe and dignified manner.
- Seek to ensure that when we commission services, work in partnership or buy goods and services from others, that the organisations we work with understand, adhere to, and practice equal opportunity principles.
- Ensure that there are ongoing resources and support available at a corporate level to support disability equality objectives.
- Ensure an effective complaints procedure is followed.
- Ensure that wherever possible we seek to exceed the statutory minimum standards set out in the Disability Discrimination Act.
- Identify, support and prioritise improvements to make college buildings and services accessible to disabled people.

In addition to the above framework objectives, the Disability Equality Scheme also sets out the standards that the college will abide by, including compliance with building standards and minimum access facilities.

North Lindsey College's Disability Equality Scheme is built on five focus areas and these are incorporated into the action plan. The Equality and Diversity Group meets regularly to ensure targets and action set out in the Disability Equality Scheme are met. The Action Plan is regularly reviewed, and updated following discussion at Senior Management Team meetings.

Five Focus Areas:

- Buildings – Access and Environment

An Access audit was carried out 2003 to identify physical barriers to access and determine what reasonable adjustments were required to buildings and equipment. From the audit plans were drawn up and short, medium and long term targets identified. This is overseen by Head of Premises.

All new buildings will comply with Part M of the Building Regulations Act 2000, as amended in 2003. All leased buildings, used by NLC, will comply with current guidelines.

- Communication

All printed information for the public should have the following statement in a prominent position;

"This information can be made available in other languages and formats upon request, such as large print, Braille, and electronic formats".

This should be followed by a contact number relevant to the service area issuing the material. The message should be printed in Arial and of a minimum font size of 12pt.

When writing to the public (using Arial 12pt minimum) the following sentence should be added; Are we contacting you in an appropriate format? If not, please let us know what the most suitable method is for you.

All other materials e.g. course materials will be reviewed to ensure they are accessible to all or can be produced in accessible formats.

Public documents are checked by the DAT Committee to ensure that disability equality is prompted and an inclusive environment for all who learn and work at the College. ►

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- Employment

North Lindsey College aspires to work towards a position where disabled people are represented at all levels of the workforce in proportion to the actual number of disabled people of working age in our catchment area.

We will:

- Keep and interrogate data on our employee profile and work to increase equal opportunities for disabled people.
- Apply the double tick symbol to appear on all job adverts. The double tick symbol means that organisations meet national minimum standards for the recruitment of disabled people.
- Make application forms available in Braille and large print, on disc and tape by request.
- Guarantee disabled people an interview if they meet the essential minimum requirements for the post.
- Monitor trends in the type/number of applicants and act on this information.
- Make reasonable adjustments to the working environment to allow disabled applicants to be appointed.
- Ensure that every support is given to employees who develop a disability, and that all employees have access to the Employee and Disability Service (EADS).
- Support the 'Access to Work Scheme' for disabled people who are starting work or in existing employment.
- Develop a list of services available to disabled staff.
- Investigate the need for a support plus action group for disabled employees.

- Service Delivery

All service areas of college from teaching and learning to catering facilities are to develop their own plans for service delivery which take into account the requirements of disabled users.

They will:

- Take part in impact assessments on policies and procedures to allow for the promotion of equality and opportunity.
- Consult with disabled users and potential users about their requirements and access needs.
- Develop mechanisms to facilitate flow of information gained in frontline service delivery areas to service planning areas.
- Ensure the content of the Intranet and Internet sites conforms to the double A standard of the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI).
- Ensure that requirements of the DDA are part of all contracts and commissioning arrangements.
- Promote access within services it commissions as well as those it delivers directly. Having minimum standards for all receptions and other service areas where users visit on an ad hoc basis.
- Identify areas where service users are enabled to access information, communicate or complete transactions through effective web access. ►

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## Training

Personnel/ Teaching and Learning has responsibilities for our organisational approach to all equality training.

We will consider:

- The social model of disability as the foundation for all training/learning and development.
- Disability equality training to be a consistent and mandatory part of induction for all staff.
- Customer care training includes disability awareness elements. Training/learning to encompass all staff irrespective of hierarchy, contracted hours or nature of contract. All employees to receive the same training.
- Management training ensures that staff meets required standards. To establish clear links to other diversity elements and in areas of health and safety, customer care, and human resources.
- Disability awareness or learning and development needs are considered through the Performance Appraisal and Personal Development scheme

## 4 Consultation

The College met with representatives from a number of groups. These included:- Arthritis Care, Dare for You (Mobility Impaired Group), The Mental Health Early Intervention Team, MIND, Hearing Support Services, Social Services Sensory Impairment Team (Visual) and the North Lincolnshire Primary Care Trust (NLPCT) Community Team for Learning Disabilities was also represented.

Feedback on the draft scheme was given on the day and some attendees' e-mailed feedback at a later date.

For the second meeting the College met with The Hearing Support Service, VIMAC (visually impairment), Mental Health Early Intervention team and Dare for You and Arthritis Care to discuss any further developments or ideas.

### Summary

Methods of involvement have included:

- Consultation at a number of stages with local groups and professional bodies that represent disability.
- Drafts of the DES and action plan discussed at the Equality and Diversity group meetings, Disability Advisory Team (DAT), Governors meetings, SMT meetings and Quality meetings.
- Learner representatives who attend the DAT meetings have been consulted.
- The Colleges Disability Advisor has delivered training to approx 70% of staff in the college on the DED. This enabled staff to give input to the development process. ►

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## 5 Impact Assessment

The College will carry out a systematic impact assessment of the effects of all current or proposed, policies, procedures, plans or practices to ascertain whether it will have a differential impact on disabled people.

A copy of the impact assessment form is contained in Appendix 1.

All policies, plans and processes will be prioritised for action. Where they may have a fundamental impact on disabled people, the disabled groups and individuals will be involved in carrying out the impact assessments and action planning.

The completion of an impact assessment is carried out as an integral part of all policy development and decision making processes.

## 6 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

North Lindsey College's Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan will be the subject of continuous monitoring via the Equality and Diversity Group and continuous consultation. The individual actions on the action plans have monitoring systems attached so they can be measured for effectiveness.

The scheme itself will be evaluated and reviewed in its entirety at least every two years. This will allow for changes or refinements to the scheme to ensure its continued effectiveness and ability to improve North Lindsey College's approach as an organisation committed to disability access and equality. ►

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## 7 Glossary and References

### **The Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 comes into force from 1 October 2010, This is an important piece of new legislation particularly for public bodies including colleges. An important aspect of the Act is the new public sector Equality Duty.

The Act replaces all anti discrimination laws (race, disability, gender) and includes them in the public sector Equality Duty.

This is one single duty which also covers age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment.

There are general duties in the Act and more specific duties imposed through regulations.

### **General**

It removes the original 3 pieces of legislation and replaces them with a single streamlined one. Section 149 imposes this general duty on public bodies which includes colleges.

They should pay due regard to:-

Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization  
Advance equality of opportunity for different groups  
Foster good relations between different groups

To comply with the duty might mean treating some people more favourably than others where this is permitted eg reasonable adjustment for the disabled.

### **The Disability Discrimination Act**

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 is the key piece of legislation which requires access for disabled people to buildings and services. Additional legislation and guidance resulting from it includes: the Disability (Employment) Regulations 1996, the Disability Discrimination (Services and Premises) Regulations 1999, and the Associated Codes of Practice.

### **Special Educational Needs and Disability Act**

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), sections 28D and 28E, amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, Colleges must prepare an Accessibility Strategy.

The aims are to improve disabled access and increase the extent to which disabled learners are able to take advantage of education and associated services provided by the college. The plan covers an initial period of three years and will be kept under review and revised regularly.

In addition, the Governing Body of each college must prepare an Accessibility Plan for improving the physical environment of the college. Again, the plan will be kept under review and revised as appropriate.

### **Disability Discrimination Bill**

The Government promised in its manifesto to create basic rights for disabled people and implement the recommendations of the Disability Rights Task Force and as a result of which a draft Disability Discrimination Bill was introduced in December 2003. ►

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## **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order, 2005**

From April 2005 a new regulation (the Regulatory Reform) will replace both pieces of fire safety legislation. Conflict can occur with access issues because these pieces of legislation and guidance are concerned, amongst other things with means of escape and raising an alarm.

## **REFERENCES**

1. Disability Discrimination Act 1995
2. Draft Discrimination Bill 2003
3. Fairness For all: a new commission for equality and human rights. DTI White Paper 2004
4. Valuing People: a new strategy for learning disability for the 21st century. Department of Health 2001
5. The Building Regulations 2000
6. Part 'M' Requirements (Building regulation amendments 2003)
7. Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
8. The Equality Act 2010

If you want some more information about the Disability Equality Scheme, please contact:

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## Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form

Section 1: Screening For Impact		
Name of strategy, project, policy or decision:		
Person completing assessment:		
Position:		
Area:		
1. What is the main purpose of the strategy/project/policy?		
2. List the main activities of the project/policy. For strategies list the main policy areas.		
3. Who will be the main stakeholders/users of the strategy/project/policy?		
4. Does this piece of work result in any of the following?		
Written information being provided to the public or staff – either in paper or electronic format.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
People contacting North Lindsey College	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
People visiting North Lindsey College's premises	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
A service being delivered to staff/the public at set days/times each week.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Staff being required to wear a uniform or adhere to a dress code.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
North Lindsey College staff holding face to face meetings with people.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
5. Have you already consulted with people about this work? If yes, briefly describe what you did and with whom.		

6. Use the table to tick:

- a) Where you think that the strategy/project/policy could have a negative impact on any of the equality strands, that is, it could disadvantage them
- b) Where you think that the strategy/project/policy could have a positive impact on any of the groups or contribute to promoting equality, equal opportunities or improving relations within equality strands.

	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No Impact	Reason and Evidence (provide details of specific groups affected)
Age				
Gender				
Sexual Orientation				
Race				
Religion or Belief				
Disability				

7. If you have indicated there is a negative impact on any group, is that impact:

<b>Legal?</b> (not discriminatory under anti-discriminatory legislation)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Intended?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Level of Impact?</b>	High <input type="checkbox"/>	Low <input type="checkbox"/>

If the negative impact is possibly discriminatory and not intended and/or of high impact you must complete section two of this form. If not, complete the rest of section one below and consider if completing section two would be helpful in making a thorough assessment.

8. a) Could you minimise or remove any negative impact that is of low significance?

b) Could you improve the strategy, project or policy's positive impact? If so, explain how.  
You may wish to use the action sheet at the end of section two.

9. If there is no evidence that the strategy, project or policy promotes equality, equal opportunities or improved relations – could it be adapted so that it does? If so, explain how.

Please sign and date this form, keep one copy and send one copy to Michele Stokes Drop 1

Signed:

Date: