

Equality Impact Assessments Policy and Procedure

This Policy is available in alternative formats.
Please contact Human Resources for further information on extension 5076 or 5077

1.0 Introduction to equality impact assessments

An equality impact assessment is a tool for identifying the impact, or potential impact, of a College policy, procedure, practice, service and function on different groups of people. It is a systematic way of finding out whether and how College policies, actions or plans impact, or could potentially impact, on its employees and learners. This analysis should also help to identify whether a policy, service or function will contribute to good relations between different groups of people and promote equality of opportunity. This may include obtaining and analysing data, and consulting people, including employees and learners, on the policy. It is important to note that the responsibility for carrying out equality impact assessments does not solely sit with one person or department. It is the responsibility of senior management within College to ensure that:

- All managers are equipped with the knowledge and skills to assess the impact of policies, procedures, practices, services and functions on equality
- All managers are accountable for ensuring equality impact assessments are undertaken both within their departments and in the wider College environment
- Appropriate action is taken to address any negative impact that is identified and to utilise any positive impact that may be found

This guide aims to provide basic, practical advice to assist managers in fulfilling these responsibilities in line with legislation and good practice in the further education (FE) sector.

2.0 Why conduct equality impact assessments?

By carrying out equality impact assessments the College can ensure it is fulfilling the requirements of anti-discrimination law and meeting their legal duties to promote equality. But the impact assessment process is more than this: it places equality at the heart of policy development and service delivery and provides an opportunity for College staff to consider carefully how their work impacts on colleagues and on learners and take action to promote equality for all.

2.1 General duty to promote equality

There is a general legal duty on public sector organisations, including Colleges, to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on grounds of race, disability and gender. Relevant Legislation These legal duties are set out in legislation, as follows:

- **The Race Equality Duty (RED)** - The RED is contained within s.71(1) Race Relations Act 1976, which provides that every public body: “shall, in carrying out its functions, have due regard to the need-
 - to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination; and
 - to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different racial groups.”
- **The Disability Equality Duty (DED)** - The DED is contained within s.49A Disability Discrimination Act 1995, which provides that every public body: “shall, in carrying out its functions have due regard to-
 - the need to eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under this Act;
 - the need to eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities;

- the need to promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons;
 - the need to take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons;
 - the need to promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons; and
 - the need to encourage participation by disabled persons in public life.”
- **The Gender Equality Duty (GED)** - The GED is contained within s.76A Sex Discrimination Act 1975, which provides that every public body: “shall in carrying out its functions have due regard to the need-
 - to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment; and
 - to promote equality of opportunity between men and women.”

2.2 Specific legal duties

In addition to the general duty to promote equality on grounds of race, disability and gender, the College is also required to comply with the following specific duties:

- Prepare and publish equality schemes (or a single equality scheme) showing how the College intends to fulfil its general duty and its specific duties in relation to race, disability and gender equality
- Consult with employees, service users and trade unions when preparing the scheme(s), along with any other parties who appear to have an interest in the way the College carries out its functions
- Actively involve disabled people when preparing the disability equality scheme (or single equality scheme)
- In formulating its overall objectives regarding gender equality, the College must consider the need to include objectives to address the cause of any gender pay gap
- Gather and use information on how the College's policies and practices affect equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services
- Assess the impact of its current and proposed policies and practices on equality
- Implement the actions set out in its scheme(s) within three years of the date of publication, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so
- Report against the scheme(s) every year and review the scheme(s) at least every three years

Relevant Legislation The details of these specific duties are contained within the following legislation:

- The Race Relations Act 1976 (Statutory Duties) Order 2001 - required Colleges to publish a race equality scheme by 31 May 2002
- The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 – required Colleges to publish a disability equality scheme by 4 December 2006

- The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (Public Authorities) (Statutory Duties) Order 2006 – required Colleges to publish a gender equality scheme by 30 April 2007

3.0 The procedure for impact assessments at Lowestoft College

3.1 The introduction of new policies

It will be the responsibility of the author of a new policy to conduct an equality impact assessment using the Equality Impact Assessment Form (QD305a). Help and advice on completing the assessment should be sought from the College's Human Resources Team.

3.2 The impact assessment process for current College policies

The College will on an annual basis publish a schedule for policies to be impact assessed.

The College has a trained panel of impact assessors which comprises of staff, unions, learners and local stakeholders. The panel meets on a monthly basis to review policies and the minutes of the panel meetings will be published annually. The author of the Policy will be invited to attend the panel assessment in order to provide an overview of the policy and answer questions about the policy.