

**New College Nottingham**



# **Equality and Diversity Policy**

**2008 – 2011**

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## Statement of Commitment

New College Nottingham (**ncn**) is committed to equality of opportunity for all who learn and work here. We respect and value the diversity of our staff, students, contractors, governors, visitors, and the community we serve, and strive to create a positive working and learning environment where everyone is encouraged to reach their full potential. We will work to remove conditions that place people at a disadvantage and will not tolerate discrimination or harassment on the grounds of ethnicity, nationality, gender, gender identity, marital status, family or caring responsibilities, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, class or social background, political or trade union activity, unrelated criminal convictions or any other criteria that cannot be shown to be justified.

Education plays a key role in overcoming barriers in society, and the College is committed to increasing educational opportunities for all. We serve a diverse community that includes some of the most deprived wards in Nottingham and its surrounding areas, and we strive to widen participation amongst communities, both geographical and societal, that are educationally disadvantaged or where deprivation is more likely to occur.

As a major learning and skills provider we are committed to promoting inclusion, equality and diversity – in the community, in our work with partners, as an employer and as a provider of education and training services to a diverse community.

## Purpose of this Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear principles and guidelines regarding **ncn's** commitment to equality and diversity. The policy states how the College will promote equality and fairness in all areas of its work. It sets out how we will work to promote equality of opportunity, value diversity, eliminate discrimination and promote good relations between different groups of people. It outlines the responsibilities of staff, students and others in achieving this and contributing to this policy.

This policy applies to all staff, students, contractors, governors and visitors.

## Our Vision

The Policy sets out our approach to equality and diversity in all that we do, based on principles arising from our mission statement:

***“To be a world class college, transforming the lives of people and communities.”***

- To promote inclusion, equality and diversity and the opening up of life chances through the realisation of educational potential;
- To aim for higher standards in teaching and learning within the College and the improvement of the social and cultural environment

**We believe that:**

- Everyone has a right to work or study at **ncn** with an equal chance to succeed and realise their potential, free from fear of discrimination or harassment;
- Promoting equality, fairness and diversity in the College benefits everyone and is everyone's responsibility.

**We will:**

- Embrace and celebrate diversity
- Create a welcoming and inclusive environment
- Remove barriers to access
- Raise awareness of equality and diversity issues
- Deal consistently and effectively with all forms of bullying, harassment and discrimination

**We will strive to achieve this by:**

- Working to ensure equality of access and resources for all;
- Providing an environment that promotes equality and diversity and is free from bullying, harassment and discrimination;
- Preparing students to live and work in a multi-cultural society;
- Enabling and encouraging all sections of the local community to take up educational opportunities and activities;
- Working to establish a workforce that broadly reflects the local community;
- Training staff in equality and diversity issues as relevant to staff in their jobs;
- Setting targets, monitoring and evaluating our provision and policies;
- Complying with all current equality legislation in employment and in the provision of education and training;
- Producing action plans with targets for achieving our aims and objectives.

## **Meeting our legal obligations**

### **We will:**

Work within all current and relevant anti-discrimination laws:

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001/2005
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Gender Recognition Act
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Equality Act 2006

Work within the Codes of Practice produced by the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (EHRC) and the three former Commissions for race, gender and disability.

The Codes give recommendations and guidance on how to avoid discrimination in employment, e.g. advice on the policies that are needed to prevent discrimination in the recruitment and treatment of employees. Other Codes suggest steps to promote equality in service delivery. Employment tribunals and others will take the Codes into account when considering relevant cases. Where necessary, our policies, practices and procedures will be revised in line with these Codes of Practice.

### **We believe:**

Our responsibility for equality and diversity is wider than the areas covered by current laws. We are committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and good relations between people from different groups, on the grounds of:

- Race, nationality, national or ethnic origin;
- Gender, gender identity and marital status;
- Disability;
- Age;
- Sexual orientation;
- Religion or belief, including the belief in no religion and non-religious belief;
- Caring responsibilities and family circumstances;
- Social class, income, or housing circumstances;

- Membership or non-membership of trade unions and involvement or non-involvement in trade union activity;
- Any other status as identified within the European Convention of Human Rights.

**We will do this by:**

- Meeting all our responsibilities for equality and diversity in the relevant legislation and codes of practice;
- Working to mainstream equality and diversity considerations into everything we do. This means making sure all aspects of our work, such as our policies, strategies, plans, practices and procedures, structures and systems, reflect and incorporate appropriate equality objectives and targets;
- Dealing effectively and consistently with all forms of bullying, harassment and discrimination;
- Taking positive action in employment where under-representation is shown;
- Taking positive action in our services to address social, economic and geographical disadvantage;

**Supporting policies and procedures**

Other College policies and procedures that reflect our commitment to equality and diversity include:

Disability Statement  
Student Code of Conduct  
HR Strategy  
Whistleblowing Procedure  
Disciplinary Policy and Procedure  
Grievance Procedure  
Safeguarding Children  
Maternity Scheme  
Adoption Leave  
Parental Leave

## Roles and Responsibilities

Under this policy, every student and member of staff has a responsibility to:

- Listen to what other have to say and respect their point of view;
- Understand that it is unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability and that disciplinary action will be taken against those involved in bullying, harassment or discrimination on any grounds;
- Speak out, or report it, if they witness or are aware of bullying, vindictiveness, verbal or physical aggression, and not assume that it is someone else's responsibility;
- Question their own prejudices and assumptions;
- Not allow their own prejudices to affect or interfere with how they carry out their job or relate to others;
- Avoid using language and behaviour that might offend or intimidate others;
- Be sensitive to issues of cultural diversity in their work.

**Governors** - are responsible for approving the policy and monitoring its implementation through receiving regular updates, in addition to the Annual Report.

**The Principal** - is the College's Diversity Champion and chairs the Diversity Directorate – the strategic-level steering group for equality and diversity issues.

**The Diversity Directorate** – have overall responsibility for:

- The implementation and operation of the policy
- Approving the Policy, Action Plans and Annual Report to governors
- Ensuring progress against Action Plans
- Ensuring the College works to widen participation in education and meet the learning needs of students.

**Diversity Task Groups** – are operational-level groups across the College with responsibility for day-to-day delivery of their Action Plans and regular reporting to Diversity Directorate.

**Staff/Student Support Networks** – provide a support mechanism for staff or students with a shared background or experiences, who may be under-represented or who are more likely to experience discrimination. Support networks play a key role in being our 'internal experts' helping with consultation and quality-checking impact assessments.

**Staff** – all staff have a personal responsibility for equality and diversity as part of their job description. Staff have a responsibility to uphold this policy and adhere to its principles. Managers should ensure that staff are aware of the policy and how it applies to them in their job. All staff have a responsibility to challenge and report bullying, harassment and discrimination and to deal with these in a consistent manner. Staff should treat people fairly, with dignity and respect.

**Students** – it is the responsibility of all students to make sure they understand how the policy applies to them. Students are expected to treat others fairly, with dignity and respect, and are encouraged to challenge and report bullying, harassment and discrimination.

**The Head of Inclusion** – is responsible for keeping up-to-date with changes in policy and legislation, developing policy, making recommendations to managers and governors, and advising College staff on matters of equality and diversity generally.

## **Action and Evaluation**

The College's Single Equality Scheme is the means by which this policy will be translated into a detailed action plan. Every year each School/Service will review its progress against its action plan, as part of a review of the entire Scheme. This review forms the Annual Report, which is approved by the Diversity Directorate and by governors prior to publication. The Annual Report states how each School/Service will identify and carry out ways of improving their performance in delivering equality and diversity. The plans cover race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion/belief, in a context appropriate to the work of each area, and taking account of local circumstances. The entire Scheme will be completely revised every three years.

However, equality and diversity cannot be taken in isolation – they must be integrated into everything we do in order to improve our employment practices and the services we deliver. We will ensure this policy is linked to other relevant policies and plans relating to our services, employment practices and partnerships.

We will set measurable equality objectives and targets within our plans, and monitor our performance against these. We will monitor our employment practices and delivery of our services in relation to equality and diversity. This will include ways of identifying whether our policies and plans are improving access to jobs, education and training for all groups, but especially for those who traditionally face discrimination and disadvantage. This information will be reported regularly and used to inform the way we develop our policies and deliver our services.

It is a condition of service that employees comply with and support this policy. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal. The College will make sure that all employees:

- Are fully aware of the Equality and Diversity Policy and how it affects their work;
- Understand any action plans relevant to them and their responsibilities for implementing them.

Responsibility for equality and diversity is written into the job descriptions of all staff. Equality and diversity is included within corporate induction training, which is mandatory for all staff. All staff will attend mandatory diversity training, including legal updates, on a regular basis. We aim to include relevant equality and diversity considerations in all training activities, and are developing our training programme to ensure all staff receive equality and diversity training relevant to their needs.

## **General**

### **Publicising the policy**

The policy will be publicised as widely as possible to include staff, students, governors, contractors, and partners. It will be available in full on the internet and intranet. Summary leaflets will be made available at all campuses. The policy will be available in different languages and formats such as large print, Braille or tape on request.

### **Review**

The policy will be updated as and when required to take account of legislative changes. The entire policy will be reviewed every three years in line with the review of the Single Equality Scheme.

### **Application**

This policy applies to all staff, students, contractors, governors and visitors.

## **Employing people**

### **We will:**

Strive to develop a workforce that broadly reflects the community we serve, by taking steps to make sure that people from groups currently under-represented in our workforce are encouraged to apply for jobs with us.

Consider equality and diversity in all aspects of employment practice, including advertising vacancies, recruitment and selection, terms and conditions of employment, access to training and development, and reasons for ending employment.

### **We will do this by:**

- Including only the skills and experience needed for the job in job descriptions and person specifications;
- Including in all job descriptions a personal responsibility for equality and diversity, and assessing applicants against this requirement at short-listing and interview;
- Advertising jobs using media that reach all communities and where necessary using media that target groups who are currently under-represented in our workforce, including national and specialist media;
- Providing job details and accepting job applications in alternative formats such as large print, tape etc., and publicising this availability. Offering a minicom/text/email service for job queries and providing reasonable adjustments if required during the recruitment and selection process;
- Valuing skills gained through non-traditional or informal work, such as voluntary work and caring responsibilities. The competence gained through this kind of experience being balanced against that gained through more formal routes;
- Making sure that all job applicants, whether redeployment candidates, internal or external applicants, demonstrate their skills, experience and competence for the job.
- Monitoring job applicants, those short-listed and those appointed, by race, gender, disability, age, contract type and by directorate, to make sure this policy is working properly;
- Aiming to develop, implement and review policies and procedures on work-life balance, caring responsibilities and religious/cultural needs of our employees;
- Making sure the working environment is safe and supportive by not tolerating any form of bullying, harassment or discrimination;
- Providing funding for workplace adaptations and aids so disabled people can get or keep jobs with us;

- Specifically addressing disability issues in accordance with the Employment Service's 'Positive about Disabled People scheme', through which we commit to:
  1. Interview all disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria for a job vacancy and consider them on their abilities;
  2. Make sure that there is a mechanism in place to discuss, at any time, but at least once a year, with disabled employees what we and they can do to make sure they can develop and use their abilities;
  3. Make every effort to ensure that employees who become disabled can stay in employment;
  4. Take action to ensure that all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed for their job;
  5. Annually review our commitments and achievements, plan ways to improve on these and let employees and the Employment Service know about progress and future plans;
- Making sure that all managers discuss this policy and any relevant action plans with their staff. Managers should discuss with employees how they can contribute to achieving our equality and diversity aims and objectives and ensure these are put into practice. Managers should deal with any breaches of the policy and with any failure to implement relevant action plans.
- Recognising that the Trade Unions representing employees make a valuable contribution to equality and diversity. We will continue to work with the Unions to develop our equality and diversity work.

## **Training and Development**

### **We will:**

- Recognise and support the potential of all employees by offering opportunities for learning and development to all, in line with the College's business objectives;
- Ensure that training to update skills is offered to all staff returning to work after significant absence, e.g. maternity leave, long-term sickness;
- Ensure that training opportunities are available equally to full-time and part-time staff;
- Make staff aware of their responsibilities for implementing this policy through mandatory training for all staff;
- Provide a range of additional equality and diversity training opportunities to meet the needs of different staff;
- Provide training for governors on equality and diversity issues in relation to their role;
- Consider caring responsibilities, religious holidays, access issues and dietary needs in the timing and location of training events

## **Providing educational and training services**

### **We will:**

Provide our services in line the College mission statement “To be a world class college transforming the lives of people and communities”

### **Access and Recruitment**

- Ensure that prospective students are correctly informed through the recruitment and interview of all facilities that are available to support them;
- Take steps to ensure that students are not disadvantaged through family responsibilities or a break in study;
- Ensure that students have access to support, advice and counselling on financial personal and learning issues;
- Provide non-biased careers guidance and advice to students seeking information on programmes of learning and careers;
- Take steps to ensure that wherever possible students are not prevented or disadvantaged from joining programmes of learning due to disability, gender, race, sexual orientation or any other criteria that cannot be justified.
- Provide students and staff with statements relating to the College’s equality and diversity policies;
- Monitor recruitment, retention and attainment trends by ethnicity, gender and disability to ensure we are meeting the needs of different communities and removing barriers to learning and success.

### **Curriculum content and delivery**

- Seek to ensure that resource materials used to deliver courses are free from racist, sexist or other discriminatory assumptions, images or language;
- Offer single sex programmes of learning where appropriate under section 47 of the Sex Discrimination Act;
- Actively encourage integration of disabled students and those with learning difficulties into mainstream provision;
- Seek to widen horizons and raise expectations of students through the use of positive role models, learning materials and curriculum delivery;
- Promote awareness of equality and diversity within structured tutorial sessions;

- Strive to build an element of raising awareness of equality and diversity into students' programmes of learning;
- Seek to emphasise the relevance of traditionally female subjects to men both in terms of like skills and careers, e.g. in the caring professions, and the relevance of traditional male subjects to women, e.g. in construction, engineering etc.

## **Working with our partners and other organisations**

### **We will:**

- Use our influence as a large employer and provider of educational services to help promote equality and diversity, and to challenge negative stereotypes of young people and of excluded and disadvantaged communities;
- Work with others in the public, private, voluntary and community sectors to make sure that equality and diversity policies and plans similar to our own are adopted and implemented more widely;
- Share information, experience and examples of good practice on equality and diversity through our links with other public, private, voluntary and community organisations;
- Promote equality and diversity within partnerships and other relevant bodies, and in our dealings with the media;
- Work with other organisations to develop joint plans to improve equality and diversity where appropriate;
- Support and learn from organisations promoting equality and diversity, locally, regionally and nationally;
- Work with schools to provide non-biased careers information and publicity materials;
- Work with schools' equality co-ordinators and careers teachers to promote the breakdown of stereotyping in course options and careers advice based on gender, ethnicity or disability;
- Provide all schools linked with the College with a copy or version of this policy.
- Distribute a copy or version of this policy to employers used in work-experience placements and/or who place students on day-release with the College;
- Encourage links with 'good practice' employers;
- Discontinue the use of placements where bullying, harassment and discrimination continues and negotiation with the employer has failed;
- Display information about employment that promotes non-traditional roles and which indicates changing patterns in these areas;
- Encourage employers to visit the College to discuss issues of under-representation in the workplace of disabled people, women and ethnic minority people;

- Ensure that all customers and visitors are treated with respect and in accordance with the principles of this policy.

## **Race/Ethnicity Policy Statement**

**ncn** acknowledges that ethnic minority people, including refugees and asylum seekers, migrant workers and Gypsies and Travellers, face discrimination and disadvantage. This is because of attitudes and actions based on the belief that one race is better than another. This kind of belief is usually called racism. Racism covers these kinds of negative beliefs whether they are based on race, nationality, or national or ethnic origin. It is ethnic minority people who most often experience discrimination or disadvantage because of racism. Racism can mean people from an ethnic minority background are the subject of negative stereotypes and attitudes, treated as inferior and denied the same quality of life as white people. It can also mean they face harassment, hatred and violence.

The College will strive to meet the specific needs of ethnic minority people. In particular we will:

- Carry out our duties under legislation aimed at eliminating racial discrimination, including the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000;
- Challenge racist attitudes, language and behaviour by our staff, students, contractors, governors, visitors and partner organisations;
- Deal effectively and consistently with racial harassment and discrimination;
- Support campaigns and activities for achieving full equality for ethnic minority people;
- Work to make the college environment a safe and welcoming place for ethnic minority people;
- Support ethnic minority staff and students to fully develop their potential;
- Aim to develop a workforce that better reflects the ethnic minority profile of the local area, especially at senior management levels and in areas where ethnic minority people are under-represented;
- Support the formation of groups, networks and services for ethnic minority staff and students;

We understand that ethnic minority people are part of diverse communities and that racism affects these communities in different ways. We will take responsibility for making sure we meet the range of needs that arise from this.

We recognise that ethnic minority people can face other forms of discrimination or disadvantage because of their age, gender or gender identity, marital status, family circumstances, caring responsibilities, because they are disabled or because they are lesbian, gay or bisexual. We will make sure our policies to tackle these issues include ways to address the needs of ethnic minority people.

## Gender and Transgender Policy Statement

**ncn** acknowledges that women, and to a lesser extent, men, face discrimination and disadvantage. This is because of attitudes and actions based on the belief that one gender is better than the other – this kind of belief is usually described as sexism. Women more often experience discrimination or disadvantage because of sexism. Sexism can mean women are the subjects of negative stereotypes and attitudes, treated as inferior and denied the same quality of life as men. It can also mean they face harassment, hatred and violence.

The College accepts that transgender people face disadvantage and discrimination because of similar attitudes and actions based on hatred of transgender people (often described as trans-phobia) or the belief that the lives of transgender people are less valid than others.

The College will strive to meet the specific needs of men and women, including transgender people. In particular, we will:

- Carry out our duties under legislation aimed at eliminating gender discrimination, including the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Equal Pay Act 1970, Gender Recognition Act and Equality Act 2006;
- Challenge sexist attitudes, language and behaviour by our staff, students, contractors, governors, visitors and partner organisations;
- Deal effectively and consistently with sexual harassment and discrimination;
- Support campaigns and activities for achieving full equality for women and men;
- Work to make the college environment a safe and welcoming place for men and women, including transgender people;
- Support male, female and transgender staff and students to fully develop their potential;
- Aim to develop a workforce that better reflects an equal balance of women and men, especially at senior management levels and in areas where men or women are traditionally under-represented;
- Support the formation of groups, networks and services for male, female and transgender staff and students;

We realise that the ways we deal with other forms of discrimination may not be appropriate in dealing with trans-phobia. Because of the nature of this form of discrimination, transgender staff and students may not always feel able to disclose who they are. This can mean that our services are designed or delivered in a way that is inappropriate for this group. We will work with the transgender community to make sure our policies in this area are effective. We will also work to eliminate assumptions that our staff, students and others we work with are not transgender.

We recognise that women, men and transgender people can face other forms of discrimination or disadvantage because of their race, age, marital status, family circumstances, caring responsibilities, because they are disabled or because they are gay, lesbian or bisexual. We will make sure our policies to tackle these issues include ways to address the needs of women, men and transgender people.

## **Disability Policy Statement**

**ncn** acknowledges that disabled people face discrimination and disadvantage. This is because of attitudes and actions based on the belief that disabled people are less able than other people. These kinds of beliefs are based on an idea that disabled people are impaired in some way, rather than recognising that it is other people's attitudes, organisations and systems in society that create barriers which prevent disabled people from having a full quality of life.

This can mean that disabled people are the subject of negative stereotypes or attitudes. They are often patronised by other people and not given the same access to the full range of services and social, work and leisure opportunities as other people. Disabled people can also face harassment, hatred and violence.

The College will strive to meet the specific needs of disabled people. In particular we will:

- Carry out our duties under legislation aimed at eliminating disability discrimination, including the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005;
- Promote positive images of disabled people and challenge attitudes that stereotype, patronise or discriminate;
- Deal effectively and consistently with harassment, discrimination or violence towards disabled people;
- Develop our services and the college environment to remove barriers that prevent disabled people from having equal access to jobs, our premises and to educational opportunities;
- Support campaigns and activities for achieving full equality for disabled people;
- Work to make the college environment a safe and welcoming place for disabled people;
- Provide meaningful pathways for LLDD learners as set out in our LLDD Strategy Statement;
- Carry out, and regularly review, our commitments under the Employment Services' 'Positive about Disabled People' scheme
- Aim to develop a workforce that better reflects the disability profile of the local area, especially at senior management levels and in areas where disabled people are under-represented;
- Support all disabled employees to fully develop their potential;
- Support the formation of groups, networks and services for disabled staff or students.

We recognise that disabled people can face other forms of discrimination or disadvantage because of their race, age, gender or gender identity, marital status, family circumstances, caring responsibilities or because they are lesbian, gay or bisexual. We will make sure our policies to tackle these issues include ways to address the needs of disabled people.

## **Age Policy Statement**

**ncn** acknowledges that younger and older people face discrimination and disadvantage. This is because of attitudes and actions based on certain beliefs, for example that older people are less able to learn new skills, or that younger people are not competent to do some jobs because of their youth, regardless of their experience.

This kind of belief is usually called ageism and applies to both younger and older people. It means that younger and older people are often patronised and are the subject of negative stereotypes or attitudes that limit their opportunities.

The College will strive to meet the specific needs of younger and older people. In particular we will:

- Carry out our duties under legislation aimed at eliminating age discrimination, including the Employment (Equality) Age regulations;
- Promote positive images of younger and older people and challenge attitudes that stereotype, patronise or discriminate;
- Deal effectively and consistently with harassment, discrimination or violence towards younger or older people;
- Develop our services and the college environment to remove barriers that prevent younger or older people from having equal access to jobs, our premises and to educational opportunities;
- Support campaigns and activities for achieving full equality for younger and older people;
- Work to make the college environment a safe and welcoming place for younger and older people;
- Aim to develop a workforce that includes younger and older people at all levels and across all areas of our work;
- Support all employees to fully develop their potential, regardless of age;
- Support the formation of groups, networks and services for younger and older people.

We recognise that younger and older people can face other forms of discrimination or disadvantage because of their race, disability, gender or gender identity, marital status, family circumstances, caring responsibilities or because they are lesbian, gay or bisexual. We will make sure our policies to tackle these issues include ways to address the needs of younger and older people.

## Sexual Orientation Policy Statement

**ncn** acknowledges that lesbians, gay men and bisexual people face disadvantage and discrimination. This is because of attitudes and actions based on hatred of lesbians, gay men and bisexual people (often described as homophobia) or the belief that the lives of heterosexual people are better or more valid (a belief described as heterosexism). We also accept that transgender people face disadvantage and discrimination because of similar attitudes and actions.

The College will strive to meet the specific needs of lesbians, gay men, and bisexual people. In particular we will:

- Challenge heterosexism and homophobia by our staff, students, contractors, governors, visitors and partner organisations;
- Deal effectively and consistently with harassment, discrimination and violence towards lesbians, gay men, and bisexual people;
- Support campaigns and activities for achieving full equality for lesbians, gay men and bisexual people;
- Work to make the college environment a safe place for lesbians, gay men and bisexual people;
- Support the formation of groups, networks and services for lesbians, gay men and bisexual staff and students;
- Support the right of lesbian, gay and bisexual staff, students, contractors, governors and visitors to be open about who they are. We will strive to do this by creating an atmosphere and environment where it is safe for them to do so, by acknowledging that relationships between people of the same gender are equally valid to those between women and men, and by not assuming that everyone is heterosexual.

We recognise that the ways we deal with other forms of discrimination may not be appropriate to deal with homophobia and heterosexism. Because of the nature of these forms of discrimination, lesbians, gay men and bisexual people may not always feel able to disclose who they are. This can mean that services are designed or delivered in a way that is inappropriate for these groups. We will work with the lesbian, gay and bisexual community to make sure our policies in this area are effective. We will also work to eliminate assumptions that all staff, students, contractors, governors and visitors are heterosexual.

We recognise that lesbians, gay men and bisexual people can face other forms of discrimination or disadvantage because of their race, age, gender or gender identity, marital status, family circumstances, caring responsibilities or because they are disabled. We will make sure our policies to tackle these issues include ways to address the needs of lesbians, gay men and bisexual people.

## Religion or Belief Policy Statement

**ncn** acknowledges that people may face discrimination and disadvantage because of their religion or belief. This is because of attitudes and actions based on the belief that one religion is better than another. This kind of belief is usually called religious discrimination or intolerance. Religious discrimination or intolerance covers these kinds of negative beliefs whether they are based on religion, race, nationality, or national or ethnic origin.

Ethnic minority people most often experience discrimination or disadvantage because of religious intolerance, although it can apply to any group. Religious discrimination or intolerance can mean that people of a particular religion are the subjects of negative stereotypes and attitudes, and are consequently denied the same quality of life as others. It can also mean they face harassment, hatred and violence.

The College will strive to meet the specific needs of people of different religions and beliefs, including non-religious beliefs and those based on belief in no religion. In particular we will:

- Carry out our duties under legislation aimed at eliminating discrimination based on religion or belief, including the Race Relations Act 1976, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, and the Employment (Equality) Religion or Belief regulations 2003;
- Challenge discrimination and intolerance by our staff, students, contractors, governors, visitors and partner organisations;
- Deal effectively and consistently with religious harassment, discrimination and violence;
- Work to make the college environment a safe place for people of different religions and beliefs;
- Support all employees to fully develop their potential, regardless of their religion or belief;
- Support the formation of groups, networks and services for staff and students of different religions and beliefs;

We understand that different religions can be found in all communities and that religious discrimination and intolerance affects these communities in different ways. We will take responsibility for making sure we meet the range of needs that arise from this.

We recognise that people with different religions or beliefs can face other forms of discrimination or disadvantage because of their race, age, gender or gender identity, marital status, family circumstances, caring responsibilities, because they are disabled or because they are lesbian, gay or bisexual. We will make sure our policies to tackle these issues include ways to address the needs of different religions and beliefs.

## Glossary of terms

### **Equality/equal opportunities**

Equality - or equal opportunities - is based on a legal framework that aims to protect people from discrimination due to their ethnicity, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or religious or other beliefs. The legislation covers employment and services such as education.

The focus is on fair treatment for all, and not treating someone less favourably than another for any of the above reasons. This does not mean treating everyone the same; people are different and the issues relating to different groups require separate consideration.

### **Diversity**

Diversity goes beyond equality and the groups covered by anti-discrimination legislation. Diversity refers to 'difference' and is about recognising and valuing the differences and individual contribution that people from different backgrounds and with different experiences make, whether at work, in class or within the community. It is about having staff and students who are motivated by being valued and treated with respect, recognising that everyone has something to contribute and encouraging everyone to realise their full potential. For the College, this includes striving for a workforce that is representative of the community we serve, providing educational services that are accessible and relevant to our customers' needs, and creating an inclusive environment. However, diversity is not a replacement for equality or equal opportunities, and both need to be considered together.

### **Discrimination**

Discrimination is about people being thought of as having less worth or value, being treated less favourably than others or given fewer opportunities. Discrimination has its roots in stereotyping and prejudice, and fundamentally between whether a person belongs to the in-group (us) or the out-group (them).

Sometimes discrimination arises because people have decided that some people 'deserve' to be treated less well than others (because they're not part of the in-group). In other cases, people make assumptions that discriminate, for example that older people don't learn as quickly as younger ones, or that disabled people take more sick leave.

Discrimination can be direct or indirect, intentional or unintentional. Individuals, groups or whole organisations can be discriminatory. Perception is just as important as intention. It is important to challenge and report discrimination, and to have robust policies and procedures in place to deal with it effectively.

### **Direct discrimination**

Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than others because of, for example, their ethnicity, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief. It

can also be due to other factors such as their marital status, mental ill health, pregnancy, maternity, class or social background, political beliefs, trades union membership or non membership.

### **Indirect discrimination**

This is where a criterion, provision or practice is applied to equally to all, but which has the effect of disadvantaging people from a particular group, e.g. disabled people, women, ethnic minority people etc., because they are less able to comply with it than other people, and the criterion, provision or practice cannot be objectively justified.

### **Institutional discrimination**

Institutional discrimination, based on the definition of institutional racism from the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report, is defined as *“the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate service to people because of their difference, including race, gender, caring responsibilities, disability, gender reassignment, age, social class, sexual orientation, religion or belief. It can be seen in processes, attitudes, behaviour and power imbalances that discriminate through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping, which disadvantage people.”*

### **Victimisation**

Victimisation is treating a person less favourably because they have brought proceedings of discrimination against their employer, given evidence in relation to a case, or alleged that discrimination has occurred.

### **Positive Action**

Positive action means taking steps to overcome past disadvantage or under-representation in employment, in a way that helps put everyone on an equal footing. This might involve targeted advertising to encourage job applicants from a particular under-represented group to apply for a job, or training to help develop the potential of under-represented groups. Positive action is not the same as positive discrimination, see below.

### **Positive discrimination**

Positive discrimination is illegal. It involves employing someone because they come from a disadvantaged group, regardless of whether they have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to do the job. The only exception to this is that the law now allows for positive discrimination in regard to disabled people. The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA) requires employers to *“take steps to take account of disabled persons’ disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.”*

### **Genuine Occupational Requirement (GOR) or Genuine Occupational Qualification (GOQ)**

In very limited circumstances it can be lawful for an employer to discriminate in favour of someone because of their gender, race, religion/belief or sexual orientation, if the employer can show that it is a genuine occupational requirement for the job holder to be of a particular gender, ethnicity, religion/belief or sexual orientation. This is usually for certain reasons only, for example for reasons of authenticity, such as an actor or model, or where the job-holder is providing personal care or targeted services that are better delivered by someone of the same gender, ethnicity or sexual orientation as the customer. For example, a disabled

person who employs a personal assistant to assist with tasks of a personal nature such as dressing, washing etc., may legally require this person to be of the same sex as themselves.

### **Prejudice**

Prejudice means to pre-judge. It refers to negative attitudes towards the members of a particular group based solely on their membership of that group, e.g. because of their gender, sexual orientation etc. Prejudice often involves stereotyping and acting negatively towards a particular group or treating them less favourably (discrimination).

### **Stereotyping**

This is the belief that all members of a particular group share certain traits or characteristics. It involves over-generalisations and is often linked to prejudice and discrimination.

### **Bullying**

Bullying is defined as offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting or humiliating behaviour, abuse of power or authority, which attempts to undermine an individual or group.

### **Harassment**

Harassment is defined as unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating the victim's dignity, creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It may be related to a particular personal characteristic, e.g. gender, ethnicity, age etc. It may be persistent or an isolated incident. What matters is the effect on the victim, not the intent of the perpetrator.