



## **Single Equality Scheme 2010-2014**

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## 1 Foreword and introduction

Welcome to the NCG Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan 2010-14.

Our approach aims to respond to the existing legal duties and new duties under the Equality Act 2010. We will update the Scheme, as appropriate, on the introduction of new regulations and codes of practice.

NCG is committed to valuing diversity. The approach presented in this Scheme gives specific responsibilities to governors, managers, staff, participants, customers and learners.

The Single Equality Scheme replaces our Valuing Diversity Policy, Disability Equality Scheme, Gender Equality Scheme and Race Equality Statement. This provides simplification and fulfils the legal duty to review and revise the earlier Schemes.

We completed consultation in 2010-11 and the results of that process, presented at Annex 1, have influenced the development of this Single Equality Scheme. We believe that moving to a Single Equality Scheme achieves better overall communication with learners, customers, staff, employers, partners and communities. Although the formal consultation process has closed, feedback about the needs of those with protected characteristics is always welcome.

I hope this Scheme gives you the information you require about NCG's approach to equality and diversity.

Yours sincerely

Jackie Fisher  
Chief Executive

**If you would like this information in audio, DAISY, large print, Braille or in a language other than English, please contact us.  
Contact details are shown on page 24.**

## 2 Executive summary

NCG comprises Newcastle College, West Lancashire College, The Intraining Group Limited and Group Services.

The mission of NCG is "to develop people through learning and achievement for the benefit of themselves, society and the economy" and a key objective underpinning this mission is to "promote diversity and social mobility".

NCG is pleased to embrace the general equality duty presented by the Equality Act 2010 which is consistent with our mission and this aim. NCG's equality objectives are designed to support the mission and achieve legal compliance.

This Scheme identifies a responsibility for all individuals within NCG including staff, learners, customers and governors to ensure that the environment in which we operate is, as much as possible, free from prejudice and discrimination. Management responsibilities to ensure equality are also presented.

The Scheme presents: evidence of NCG's strong commitment to equality and diversity, progress the organisation has made, equality objectives and an action plan. NCG's equality objectives are:

- (a) Raise the awareness and skills of staff to promote fairness, equality and good relations
- (b) Raise the awareness of learners to promote understanding and good relations between diverse groups
- (c) Provide a hospitable and multi-cultural environment that welcomes, respects and protects diverse people
- (d) Monitor learner representation and success and take action to promote equality
- (e) Ensure that all learners achieve good outcomes, whatever their background
- (f) Monitor representation amongst all staff types and take action to promote equality
- (g) Consult and involve representative staff, learners and outside organisations
- (h) Embed the evaluation of equality impact evidence into policy development, business planning and quality assurance processes
- (i) Ensure that partner organisations meet NCG's standards and requirements for equality

Targets arising from these equality objectives are to increase the proportion of disabled learners at Newcastle College and West Lancashire College by 2%, the proportion of disabled people amongst managers by 0.5% and the proportion of minority ethnic people amongst each staff type by 0.5% during the life of the Scheme.

### 3 NCG

NCG comprises:

- **Newcastle College:** a Further and Higher Education College based in Newcastle upon Tyne. It comprises several academic and vocational schools and substantial provision in higher education.
- **West Lancashire College:** a Further Education College with campuses in Skelmersdale and Ormskirk. These operations became part of NCG on merger of Newcastle College with Skelmersdale & Ormskirk College in August 2007.
- **The Intraining Group Limited:** a wholly owned subsidiary company which operates a wide range of skills and employability programmes. The Intraining Group Limited was launched in March 2008 with assets acquired from the former Carter and Carter plc in administration. The Corporation acquired TWL Training Ltd in December 2007; the Intraining Group Limited now incorporates TWL in Northern Ireland.
- **Group Services** which provide a range of support services across NCG.

### 4 Mission and equality objectives

The mission of NCG is "to develop people through learning and achievement for the benefit of themselves, society and the economy" and a business objective underpinning this mission is to "promote diversity and social mobility".

This Scheme outlines NCG's commitment to achieving an organisation which values diversity, promotes equality and eliminates bias and discrimination from the way it operates. NCG aims, through the implementation of the Scheme, to increase the satisfaction of its customers, enhance its reputation, strengthen its roots within communities, meet the wider needs of learners and customers, become an employer of choice, enhance partnerships and match or exceed the requirements of legislation and external funding agencies.

NCG recognises and celebrates diversity in its staff, learner and customer community. This diversity reflects visible and non-visible differences, which include factors such as age, disability, physical and mental health, marital status, national origin including language ability, political affiliation, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, social background and trade union membership. This is an indicative list and is not intended to be exhaustive. Harnessing these differences will support a positive and cohesive culture in which all individuals are valued, where their potential is maximised and through which NCG's mission can be achieved.

We endorse the "social model" of disability and encourage participation in learning where the programme or course and progression route are meaningful and purposeful.

NCG is also committed to avoiding harassment and has policies and procedures in place regarding respect and consideration for others which address this issue. We will take action to remind staff, learners and customers that we do not tolerate bullying and harassment and that we have appropriate policies and procedures in place to address it.

NCG will approach managing diversity by recognising the diverse needs of staff, learners and customers (both actual and prospective) and by ensuring that barriers to diversity are removed in relation to:

- understanding the concept of diversity and NCG's approach
- enhancing each individual's commitment to equality
- promoting the recognition of individual differences
- ensuring objective and fair policies and processes are in place
- ensuring that policies, practices and procedures promote equality
- managing in a way which makes all individuals feel valued and harnesses their potential
- encouraging a culture of empowerment through an environment characterised by open communication, participation and consultation and an absence of prejudice and discrimination
- ensuring that on-line materials adhere, wherever practicable, to World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) accessibility standards and guidelines

NCG's equality objectives are:

- (a) Raise the awareness and skills of staff to promote fairness, equality and good relations
- (b) Raise the awareness of learners to promote understanding and good relations between diverse groups
- (c) Provide a hospitable and multi-cultural environment that welcomes, respects and protects diverse people
- (d) Monitor learner representation and success and take action to promote equality.
- (e) Ensure that all learners achieve good outcomes, whatever their background
- (f) Monitor representation amongst all staff types and take action to promote equality
- (g) Consult and involve representative staff, learners and outside organisations
- (h) Embed the evaluation of equality impact evidence into policy development, business planning and quality assurance processes
- (i) Ensure that partner organisations meet NCG's standards and requirements for equality

Section 149(1) of the Equality Act places a General Equality Duty on public authorities. The relationship between the General Equality Duty and NCG's equality objectives is shown at Annex 2. NCG is pleased to embrace the General Equality Duty which is consistent with our mission and aims. Our formal processes will focus on the protected characteristics identified in the Act to provide evidence of compliance.

## **5 Roles and responsibilities**

- All individuals within NCG, including staff, learners, customers and governors are responsible to ensure the proper observation of the principles of this Scheme. In particular, this relates to the treatment of others so that the environment in which we operate is, as much as possible, free from prejudice and discrimination;
- The Board of Governors is responsible for: compliance with equality legislation in its own processes; overseeing the response by the Executive to equality legislation; approving this Scheme and overseeing progress
- The Chief Executive of NCG, supported by the Executive Board, is responsible for ensuring the organisation and its divisions take action to comply with equality legislation.
- The Group Director HR and Corporate Services, supported by the Group Head of Equality and Diversity, is responsible for
  - Policy development, implementation and monitoring to ensure compliance with equal opportunities legislation
  - ensuring the formal monitoring and review of this Scheme in line with relevant research, legislation, Codes of Practice and good practice
  - monitoring to ensure progress in meeting the equality objectives
- Divisional Heads, supported by their staff, are responsible for implementation of NCG's equality objectives at the operational level.
- All managers are responsible to ensure the effectiveness of the Scheme by giving their support and ensuring that staff, learners and customers in their area understand NCG's expectations for each person under the Scheme. Human Resources will advise managers on their responsibilities under this Scheme, particularly regarding employment matters.

## **6 Progress and current position**

### **6.1 Commitment and Track Record**

NCG has demonstrated a sustained commitment to promote equality. Newcastle College was the winner in the 2007 North East Equality Awards in the category for Learning Providers and Colleges of over 50 staff and was highly commended in the 2009 AoC Beacon Awards for its entry to the RNIB/Mencap Award for students with learning difficulties and disabilities.

In July 2008, Ofsted Inspectors graded Equal Opportunities at Newcastle College and West Lancashire College as Grade 1 – Outstanding. In July 2009, Ofsted graded Equal Opportunities at Intraining as Grade 2 – Good for Work Based Learning provision and Highly Effective for employability provision. These indicators of overall performance are very pleasing and signal a strong foundation for further improvement.

## **6.2 Equality for Learners and Customers**

We aim to ensure all learners and customers are able to fully participate in all aspects of provision.

We gather data for monitoring purposes on enrolment. This includes details of race, sex, details of any disability or learning difficulty and the relevance of any Widening Participation category. The Equality Act 2010 has identified a wider range of protected characteristics and these are listed at Annex 3. We will review our monitoring process in the light of this development.

Newcastle College implemented marketing initiatives to attract Asian or Asian British learners who are underrepresented at the college; the proportion from this group rose from 3.75% in 2008-09 to 4.04% in 2009-10.

West Lancashire College has aimed to improve the gender balance of its learner population; although male learners still account for only 40% of all learners, an almost exact balance was achieved for learners aged 16-18 in 2009-10.

Intraining has many contracts which aim to widen participation and has adopted a range of strategies to support the achievement of learners and entry to employment, as appropriate.

The Student Services functions at Newcastle College and West Lancashire College have monitored the learner recruitment process and assisted with the identification of adjustments to ensure learners were not rejected on the grounds of disability. The Learning Support Service has led and will continue to lead improvements in practice for disabled learners in College and on work placements.

The proportion of learners with declared disabilities at Newcastle College and West Lancashire College has fluctuated. The proportion of learners with declared disabilities at Newcastle College moved from 4.8% in 2006-07 to 5.28% in 2007-08 to 4.42% in 2008-09 and to 4.99% in 2009-10. The proportion of learners with declared disabilities at West Lancashire College moved from 8.23% in 2007-08 to 5.36% in 2008-09 and to 6.69% in 2009-10. These changes in the proportion of disabled learners did not arise from decisions made by the colleges about provision and we will monitor trends during the life of this Scheme. At Intraining, 28.71% of learners in 2009-10 had disabilities, this relatively high proportion being associated with the nature of the services provided. The data for Newcastle College and West Lancashire College suggests a need for continued focus on encouraging learners to declare disabilities and ensuring the accessibility of all programmes. We believe a target to increase the proportion of disabled learners at Newcastle College and West Lancashire College by 2% over the life of the Scheme is both realistic and challenging.

An annual Diversity Awards has been held at Newcastle College and, in 2008-09, this was extended to West Lancashire College. The Awards engages staff

and learners in thinking about diversity, promotes positive attitudes and fosters good relations. We plan to continue to hold annual Diversity Awards at Newcastle College and West Lancashire College over the life of the Scheme.

We aim to ensure that learners with protected characteristics are just as likely to achieve a good qualification in their studies as other learners. Support arrangements have been effective. Whilst there has been some variation in the retention, achievement and success of learners between programmes, we have not detected adverse performance due to diversity of learners. We will review progression from our Further Education provision to our Higher Education provision to ensure that learners from underrepresented groups are encouraged and supported to progress.

We aim to support learners into sustainable careers, including facilitating opportunities for work placements and experience, as appropriate to their programme. When we present candidates for work placement and work experience, we emphasise ability rather than disability to encourage a fair selection decision by the employer. When arranging a work placement or work experience for a disabled learner we will, as appropriate and with the permission of the learner, advise the employer about how to make adjustments based on our experience of working with the learner.

### **6.3 Equality in Employment**

We aim to ensure equality through the employment cycle including recruitment, selection, staff development, discipline and grievances. The relevant policies are subject to our Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process and an EIA will be carried out at each review.

Monitoring data is gathered as part of recruitment and selection process. We will review our monitoring process in the light of the Equality Act 2010.

All disabled applicants who met the essential criteria for posts were guaranteed an interview. The overall proportion of staff with a declared disability moved from 2.65% in July 2006 to 4.72% in April 2010. The need to encourage members of staff to declare disabilities is ongoing.

We aim to consider whether there are opportunities for disabled people to work at different grades or parts of the organisation. The proportion of disabled people amongst the staff types at NCG in 2009-10 was as follows.

<b>Staff Type</b>	<b>Disabled</b>
Lecturer	4.33%
Learning Support	6.41%
Business Support	3.83%
Management	2.99%
Hourly Paid	3.53%
All	4.72%

The proportion of disabled people amongst management is lower than amongst other staff types. The opportunity for improvement is constrained by staff turnover, the overall proportion of disabled people and the need to avoid positive discrimination. Whilst we may encourage disabled people to apply for management roles and provide more favourable treatment in the selection process to ensure disabled people have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their suitability, selection decisions must be made entirely on merit. We therefore believe that a target to increase the proportion of disabled people amongst management by 0.5% over the life of the scheme would be both realistic and challenging.

The overall proportion of staff with ethnic minority backgrounds moved from 2.81% in 2005-06 to 5.04% in 2009-10. Some of this growth is associated with the development of a national organisation. The proportion of staff with ethnic minority backgrounds amongst the staff types at NCG in 2009-10 was:

<b>Staff Type</b>	<b>BME</b>
Lecturer	2.71%
Learning Support	7.74%
Business Support	4.95%
Management	1.99%
Hourly Paid	3.14%
All	5.04%

According to the 2001 census, 8% of the UK population and 7% of the population in Newcastle upon Tyne was BME. Although these reference points are now aging, we can conclude there is underrepresentation. This underrepresentation is evident in the organisation as a whole and particularly in lecturer and management roles; we will take action for each staff type. We believe that a target to increase the proportion of people with ethnic minority backgrounds amongst each staff type by 0.5% over the life of the scheme would be both realistic and challenging.

In recent years, women have been well represented at all levels in the organisation. Around 3 in 5 of all staff are women.

The HR function has provided support to line managers in attracting underrepresented groups and in arranging adjustments for disabled staff. Positive action has been taken with targeted recruitment for vacancies via the Network for Black Professionals, Equality Britain, Equality North East, and DisabledGo. The organisation aims to ensure that its employees reflect the ethnicity of the communities it serves.

#### **6.4 Staff Training and Development**

Staff training in requirements of equality legislation has been made mandatory across the Group. There is an on going need for staff training and development to increase awareness and sensitivity to needs associated with

all the protected characteristics and to develop the capacity of each member of staff to fulfil the responsibilities associated with their role.

## **6.5 Consultation and Involvement**

Our methods for consultation and involvement are:

- Consultation questions accompanying the Scheme
- Surveys, forums and informal dialogue with learners and customers
- Communication within and between staff teams
- Liaison with Student Union Representatives
- Advocacy through the Student Union, Mentoring Services, Student Services and the Learning Support Service

There have been very few customer complaints relating to equality and, where made, these have been thoroughly investigated and resolved in accordance with our complaints policy and procedures. The majority of feedback from customers has been very positive.

We completed consultation in 2010-11 and the results of that process, presented at Annex 1, have influenced the development of this Single Equality Scheme.

We believe that moving to a Single Equality Scheme achieves better overall communication with learners, customers, staff, employers, partners and communities. Consultation and involvement is fundamental to the success of the Scheme and we are committed to embedding this in our business processes.

We will consider the views of people with the full range protected characteristics in further development of this Scheme and in the review of progress. Staff, learners and customers are well placed to tell us how we can improve our approach. We also welcome views from external organisations and the general public. We have made provision in the action plan to ensure that arrangements for routinely listening to people are developed, as appropriate, to better understand needs associated with protected characteristics.

## **6.6 Management Arrangements**

Equality monitoring and action planning is aligned with the annual business cycle. Newcastle College Corporation receives an annual report on equality and diversity. This report includes representation by race, disability, gender and age amongst learners and different categories of staff across the organisation. The report in October 2010 presented progress in relation to the equality objectives listed in Section 4 of this Scheme and is available through the Publication Scheme. Interim reporting is to NCG's Executive Board.

## **6.7 Procurement and Contracting**

NCG has promoted equality through its procurement and contracting arrangements. Those delivering education or training services on behalf of NCG have been monitored by NCG staff to ensure equality. For all large contracts we have required potential suppliers to have an equal opportunities policy in place. We will develop the relationship with such suppliers by using equality related award criteria and using and incorporating equality related contract conditions, where relevant and proportionate.

## **6.8 Equality Impact Assessment**

The purpose of Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is to ensure that the impact of proposed changes is considered before implementation.

Our policies have been subject to EIA with particular concern for promoting equality in relation to race, disability and gender; this reflected the legal requirement.

We have developed our EIA process to harmonise the approach across the Group and reflect the wider range of protected characteristics identified by the Equality Act (listed at Annex 3). The approach provides for an initial review to determine whether full impact assessment is necessary.

Since it is not practicable or desirable to apply a formal process to every day to day decision, members of staff are expected to cultivate sensitivity to needs and show consideration for colleagues, visitors, learners and customers. We believe that this consideration is as important as operation of the formal process and therefore have given high priority to on going staff training and development in relation to equality and diversity.

As stated in section 6.5, our action plan will include arrangements for routinely listening to people to better understand needs associated with protected characteristics.

We will also consider the views of staff representatives. In particular, when conducting EIAs, we will consider relevant sections of joint agreements on equality in further education colleges between the Association of Colleges (AoC) and trades unions.

## **6.9 Accessibility of Information**

NCG has ensured the accessibility of information. Information provided via the internet has been reviewed to ensure that content is non-discriminatory. The production of on-line learning resources and publicity materials has adhered, wherever practicable, to World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) accessibility standards and guidelines. Alternative formats have been made available when appropriate. Advertising and publicity materials have highlighted the commitment to equality.

## **6.10 Accessibility of Buildings and other areas**

Commitment to accessibility has been and remains a feature of the work undertaken on NCG building projects, IT Services and the development of general site arrangements. The Estates Management function aims to achieve compliance with Part M of the Building Regulations.

For all new building projects a qualified disability registered access consultant is employed who works with the design teams from inception to completion. We have aimed to achieve full DDA compliance in our major building projects, to continue to revitalise the estate, with the involvement of disabled staff, learners and customers to shape our thoughts and assist the development of building design. Since the advent of the DDA, the interpretation of accessibility has developed and the solutions available have led to better design and the offer of a greater range of options. This has meant that some accessibility work has had to be re-visited and where necessary replaced or altered. We embrace the challenge of change to continually improve accessibility to all groups, involving disabled staff, learners and customers wherever possible to seek best solutions to access problems prior to physical alterations to premises. Major development projects that, to-date, account for 26,800 square metres of new space are built with accessibility by design as part of the overall design philosophy.

Disability organisations and disabled people will be consulted in the planning of all new builds and major refurbishments. An example of this is the organisation's ongoing partnership with Action for Blind People representatives whom we will continue to involve in accessibility development and audit issues.

## **7. Requirements of Sector Bodies**

### **7.1 Funding Body Requirements and Guidance**

In preparing this Scheme, we took account of the good practice that was required by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). With closure of the LSC, responsibility for funding moved to the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) from 1 April 2010. The new funding agencies have signalled that responsibility for the approach to compliance with equality law rests with providers.

The LSC set as a condition of funding that each provider 'shall ensure that equality of opportunity is built into all aspects of provision; the business planning process; the self-assessment process; and that its strategic plan identifies SMART [specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timebound] priorities in this area (Education and Training Funding Agreement, schedule 3 to version 9, 2009/10). The contract also required compliance with the principles set out in the LSC's Single Equality Scheme, published in 2007. The SES Action Plan presents our SMART actions.

The LSC's Single Equality Scheme encouraged providers to

- identify needs and challenges relating to all protected characteristics and to identify cross cutting issues
- develop single equality schemes because of the benefits of coherence and synergy

NCG has taken this approach.

### **7.2 Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) Guidance**

The QAA has published a "Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education". Equity and fairness is a guiding precept. The section of the code relating to learners with disabilities provides relevant guidance on how HE institutions should operate. We will consider this in relation to development of our HE provision.

### **7.3 Ofsted Requirements**

We have taken into account the approach to grading providers described in the Common Inspection Framework. Inspectors will consider how effectively a provider actively promotes equality and diversity, tackles discrimination and narrows any achievement gap.

The action plan describes the steps NCG will take to promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow any achievement gap.

## **8. Action Plan**

### **8.1 Format and Presentation**

The action plan is presented in relation to the equality objectives. It describes the steps NCG will take to comply with the general equality duty and includes SMART targets.

### **8.2 Arrangements for Monitoring, Review and Publication**

Monitoring in relation to the SES Action Plan will continue to be aligned with the annual business cycle to ensure progress.

In order to exercise responsibility under this Scheme, governors and senior managers will be provided with a range of monitoring information. This will include data on the protected characteristics and other relevant information about staff, learners and customers. This is purely for the purpose of ensuring the maximum effect of this Scheme; data will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and security over data will be adhered to at all times.

Each part of NCG will take action locally to support progress towards the equality objectives.

Progress towards the equality objectives will continue to be reported annually to Newcastle College Corporation. The Single Equality Scheme and these annual reports are made available under NCG's publication scheme and are accessible on-line in electronic form and are also available in hard copy.

The Single Equality Scheme will be reviewed on a 4 year cycle.

## Single Equality Scheme Action Plan

**Objective 1 - Raise the awareness and skills of staff to promote fairness, equality and good relations in the context of their roles.**

Action	Relevant aspects of general equality duty	How	Lead responsibility	Timescale	Planned outcomes and output
<p>Ensure staff are competent to incorporate equality issues into their work including sensitivity to needs and consideration for differences relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age</li> <li>• Disability</li> <li>• Gender reassignment</li> <li>• Marriage and civil partnership</li> <li>• Pregnancy and maternity</li> <li>• Race</li> <li>• Religion or belief</li> <li>• Sex</li> <li>• Sexual orientation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unlawful conduct</li> <li>• Advance equality</li> <li>• Foster good relations</li> </ul>	<p>Staff training and development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness raising and role-specific training</li> <li>• Induction</li> <li>• Refresher</li> <li>• Recruitment &amp; selection training</li> </ul>	<p>Divisional and Group Services HR Leads</p>	<p>Annual monitoring of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff training and development</li> <li>• Feedback from staff, learners and customers</li> </ul>	<p>Feedback from staff, learners and customers confirms there is appropriate consideration of diverse needs in day to day activities</p>

Ensure there is accountability for promoting equality in relation to the protected characteristics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote equality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal monitoring</li> </ul>	Group Head of Equality and Diversity supported by Divisional Equality leads	Monitoring of NCG Divisions in relation to the equality objectives on an annual cycle	Evidence of initiative to promote equality across the organisation
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**Objective 2 – Raise the awareness of learners to promote understanding and good relations between diverse groups.**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Meets legal duty</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Lead responsibility</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Planned outcomes and output</b>
Develop learners' and customers' awareness and sensitivity to needs and positive attitudes towards differences relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Age</li> <li>Disability</li> <li>Gender reassignment</li> <li>Marriage and civil partnership</li> <li>Pregnancy and maternity</li> <li>Race</li> <li>Religion or belief</li> <li>Sex</li> <li>Sexual orientation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foster good relations</li> </ul>	Annual Diversity Awards at Newcastle College and West Lancashire College  Learner/customer induction, reviews and tutorials  Publicity via noticeboards	Divisional Equality leads	Annual monitoring of feedback from staff, learners and customers	Feedback from staff, learners and customers confirms there is appropriate consideration of diverse needs in day to day activities

**Objective 3 – Provide a hospitable and multi-cultural environment that welcomes, respects and protects diverse people.**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Meets legal duty</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Lead responsibility</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Planned outcomes and output</b>
Brief and remind staff, learners and customers about policy and procedures on respect and consideration for all, including those with protected characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unlawful conduct</li> <li>• Foster good relations</li> </ul>	<p>Learner/customer induction and use of notices/posters</p> <p>Staff induction, training and development</p>	<p>Divisional Equality leads</p> <p>Divisional and Group Services HR Leads</p>	Annual monitoring of feedback from staff, learners and customers	Feedback from staff, learners and customers signals freedom from harassment and victimisation
Take reasonable steps to avoid substantial disadvantage for disabled persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unlawful conduct</li> </ul>	<p>Make adjustments for disabled staff</p> <p>Make adjustments for disabled learners and customers</p>	<p>Divisional and Group Services HR Leads</p> <p>Divisional Equality leads</p>	<p>Annual review</p> <p>Annual review</p>	Substantial disadvantage for disabled persons is avoided
Support staff, learners and customers with gender reassignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote equality</li> </ul>	Develop guidance for staff on how to meet needs arising from gender reassignment:	<p>Group Head of Equality and Diversity</p> <p>HR Directors; Group Services HR Manager</p> <p>Divisional Equality leads</p>	Completed	A good experience is facilitated for staff, learners and customers with gender reassignment
Encourage appropriate treatment of women when breast-feeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unlawful conduct</li> </ul>	Staff training and development	Divisional and Group Services HR Leads	Annual review	Unlawful behaviour towards women when breast-feeding is avoided

Communicate a welcome to diverse communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote equality</li> </ul>	<p>Publicise support to meet diverse needs associated with protected characteristics via the Internet</p> <p>Use positive multi-racial, multi-cultural images to promote the organisation</p>	<p>Divisional Equality leads</p> <p>Group Director of Business Development</p>	Annual review	Staff, learners and customers are attracted from diverse communities
Accommodate diverse religious practices and cultural differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote equality</li> </ul>	<p>Provision of prayer spaces and tailoring of the catering offer to meet demand</p> <p>Referral to local faith groups</p>	Divisional Equality leads	Annual review	Staff, learners and customers have access to facilities for practising religion
Ensure there is respect for an individual's choice about being open about their identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminate unlawful conduct</li> </ul>	Staff training and development	Divisional and Group Services HR Leads	Annual review	There is a safe environment for people to be open about their identity

**Objective 4 - Monitor learner representation and success and take action to promote equality.**

Action	Meets legal duty	How	Lead responsibility	Timescale	Planned outcomes and output
<p>Monitor the admission and progress of learners and act to address underrepresentation and underperformance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unlawful conduct</li> <li>• Promote equality</li> <li>• Foster good relations</li> </ul>	<p>Record age, disability, ethnicity and gender of learners</p> <p>Review data gathering processes on-entry and on-programme</p> <p>Monitor performance at NCG Divisions</p> <p>Encourage participation by diverse local communities</p> <p>Encourage declaration of disabilities</p> <p>Ensure the accessibility of programmes</p> <p>Provide reasonable adjustments and support, as appropriate.</p>	<p>Group Director, Planning and Performance</p> <p>Divisional Equality leads supported by Group Head of Equality and Diversity</p> <p>Group Head of Equality and Diversity</p> <p>Divisional Equality leads</p> <p>Divisional Equality leads</p> <p>Divisional Equality leads</p> <p>Divisional Equality leads</p>	<p>2010-14</p>	<p>Alignment of the diversity of learners with the diversity of communities served</p> <p>Parity of success between learners with and without the protected characteristics</p> <p>The proportion of disabled learners to increase by 2% during operation of the Scheme</p>

Respond to underrepresentation in Higher Education by encouraging progression from our Further Education provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote equality</li> </ul>	Publicise progression opportunities and encourage applications from underrepresented groups	Director of Higher Education	2010-14	Strong progression from FE to HE in relation to the sector
Seek support from external bodies for ways to avoid disadvantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote equality</li> </ul>	Communication with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employers</li> <li>Specialist providers</li> <li>Contractors</li> <li>Awarding bodies</li> <li>Funding bodies</li> </ul>	Divisional Equality leads	2010-14	Successful completion of work placements and work experience; opportunities for partnership working; associates commit to advance equality; accessible qualifications and learning support

**Objective 5 - Monitor representation amongst all staff types and take action to promote equality.**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Meets legal duty</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Lead responsibility</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Planned outcomes and output</b>
Record staff diversity, encourage participation in management roles by disabled people and in roles at all levels by Black and minority ethnic people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote equality</li> </ul>	<p>Record staff diversity to meet legal and regulatory requirements in HR information systems</p> <p>Target advertising of vacancies to address underrepresentation</p> <p>Encourage declaration of disabilities</p>	Divisional and Group Services HR Leads	2010-2014	<p>The proportion of disabled people amongst management to be increased by 0.5%.</p> <p>Proportion of BME staff increased by 0.5% for each staff type: management, teaching, learning support and business support.</p>

**Objective 6 - Consult and involve representative staff, learners and outside organisations in assessing the suitability of these equality objectives, in identifying priority areas for action, in taking action (where practicable) and in reviewing progress.**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Meets legal duty</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Lead responsibility</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Outcomes and output</b>
Ensure arrangements for involving people in determining the response to equality legislation, and in reviewing the effectiveness of that response, are continual and are developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote equality</li> <li>Foster good relations</li> </ul>	Establish routine involvement of staff, learners and customers with the protected characteristics	Divisional Equality leads	2010 - 14	Developments show consideration for protected characteristics

Meet needs of disabled people in the planning of all new builds and major refurbishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminate unlawful conduct</li> </ul>	Consult disabled people and disability organisations	Director of Group Property Services	2010 - 14	Accessible buildings
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**Objective 7 - Embed the evaluation of equality impact evidence into policy development, business planning and quality assurance processes so as to identify how this evidence supports proposed developments.**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Meets legal duty</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Lead responsibility</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Outcomes and output</b>
Implement the Single Equality Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminate unlawful conduct</li> <li>Promote equality</li> <li>Foster good relations</li> </ul>	Local action plans	Group Head of Equality and Diversity	Annual cycle with interim review	Local action plans developed as part of business planning and budget setting.  Annual report to Corporation
Develop the approach to equality impact assessment (EIA) in response to legal and business developments		Review the EIA tool and staff guidance	Group Head of Equality and Diversity	Annual review	Group process was implemented from 2010
Assess impact of policy developments on equality in relation to protected characteristics	Promote equality	Process provided by EIA tool. Use of monitoring data, involvement of people with the protected characteristics and reference to relevant guidance	Policy Developers	2010-14	Policies justified in terms of equality in relation to protected characteristics

**Objective 8 - Ensure that partner organisations meet NCG's standards and requirements for equality.**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Meets aspects of general duty</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Lead responsibility</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Outcomes and output</b>
Promote equality in relation to protected characteristics amongst suppliers		Award criteria and contract conditions relating to protected characteristics, where relevant and proportionate	Financial Controller	2010-14	Equality related award criteria and contract conditions to be introduced, where appropriate, from 2010

## **Alternative Formats**

**If you would like this information in audio, DAISY, large print, Braille or in a language other than English, please contact:**

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NE4 7SA**

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## **Sharing your view on the Scheme**

To provide feedback or suggestions about the Scheme, please contact:

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## **Copies of the Scheme**

The Scheme can be downloaded from the Newcastle College Group website at:

[www.ncgrp.co.uk](http://www.ncgrp.co.uk)

The Scheme is also available internally as follows:

- Newcastle College on dtc: College Information: College Policies
- West Lancashire College on dtc: College Information: Policies and Procedures
- Intraining (incorporating TWL) on company intranet.

### **Involvement activities and results**

We completed consultation exercises in 2010 and 2011. Views were gathered from staff, learners, customers and external organisations.

Draft documents were disseminated externally via the Network for Black Professionals, RADAR, Equality North East and our website. Invitations to comment on the draft Scheme were made to our recognised trade unions as well as to individual managers and members of staff.

Generally the feedback showed strong support for the approach. Suggestions for development were on the following themes:

- to highlight work done with external bodies (such as funding bodies, awarding bodies, contractors, and specialist providers) to avoid disadvantage
- to mention our commitment to the social model of disability and explain whether we would support a disabled persons' choice of course
- to improve the balance of information about each division
- to make greater use of appendices
- to ensure that references to job titles in the action plan are relevant to all parts of the organisation
- to remove references to "disclosure" of gender reassignment – we will simply offer support when it is required and our activities to raise awareness about gender reassignment will not identify an individual unless it is the wish of that individual
- to clarify our commitment to address underrepresentation of BME people amongst lecturer and management roles as well as for the organisation as a whole
- to state a commitment to ensure that partner organisations, rather than just potential suppliers, meet NCG's standards and requirements for equality – this includes contractors, employers of apprentices and work placement providers

Generally the suggestions people made were accepted and incorporated.

In view of our funding regime, our support for a disabled person's choice of course is limited to where the course and progression route are meaningful and purposeful.

It is not feasible for us to provide a standard list of entitlements to specific adjustments. When providing adjustments and support, our approach is to consider the needs and circumstances of individuals on a case by case basis and we encourage dialogue with individuals about their needs.

### How our equality objectives meet the general equality duty

<b>General duty:</b>	Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct	Advance equality of opportunity	Foster good relations
<b>NCG objectives:</b>			
Raise the awareness and skills of staff to promote fairness, equality and good relations	X	X	X
Raise the awareness of learners to promote understanding and good relations between diverse groups	X		X
Provide a hospitable and multi-cultural environment that welcomes, respects and protects diverse people	X	X	X
Monitor learner representation and success and take action to promote equality		X	
Ensure that all learners achieve good outcomes, whatever their background		X	
Monitor representation amongst all staff types and take action to promote equality		X	
Consult and involve representative staff, learners and outside organisations	X	X	X
Embed the evaluation of equality impact evidence into policy development, business planning and quality assurance processes	X	X	
For all large contracts ensure that potential suppliers meet NCG's equal opportunities standards and requirements	X	X	X

## **Protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010**

### **Age**

Someone of a particular age or in a range of ages

### **Disability**

Someone who has, or has had, a physical or mental impairment with a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities

### **Gender reassignment**

A transsexual person, i.e. someone who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex (No requirement for medical supervision is specified)

### **Marriage and Civil Partnership**

Someone who is married or is a civil partner

### **Pregnancy and maternity**

Someone who is pregnant or within 26 weeks following the date of giving birth or taking maternity leave

### **Race**

Someone of a particular racial group defined by colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins

### **Religion or belief**

Someone of any religion or philosophical belief, including a lack of religion or belief

### **Sex**

Whether someone is a man or a woman

### **Sexual orientation**

Someone's sexual orientation towards persons of the same sex, opposite sex or either sex

## **Complaints**

Any complaint of unfair treatment under the Single Equality Scheme must be treated as a serious matter and does not need to be in writing from the individual nor submitted under a formal procedure. If the complaint is not in writing the person receiving the complaint will produce a written record of the details of the complaint and request that the individual agrees that the record is an accurate reflection of the interview.

In the event that an individual does not wish to access a formal procedure, and provided that the individual does not specifically request otherwise, the person receiving the complaint has responsibility for taking action about the matter, which may involve referring it to an appropriate senior manager within NCG if it is outside his/her scope of control.

If a member of staff wishes to make a complaint under a formal procedure about a matter relating to their employment regarding their treatment in relation to this policy, he/she may submit a complaint under the Grievance procedure.

If a learner, customer or member of the public wishes to make a complaint under a formal procedure regarding their treatment in relation to this policy, he/she may submit a complaint under the Complaints procedure.

A separate policy concerning 'Respect and Consideration for Others' provides additional support for recipients of harassment beyond that offered in the Grievance or Complaints Procedures.