



DISABILITY

EQUALITY

DUTY

ANNUAL REPORT

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**(Please note this publication is available in Various Formats
upon request**

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FOREWORD

Welcome to the Hull College Group's third annual Disability Equality Scheme (DES) report. We are pleased to demonstrate the progress we have made against the six key themes. Learner feedback is very important to the College. We ensure that we listen to our learners and adapt and react to their comments. This gives us the opportunity to improve our service year on year.

The Hull College Group has invested significant resources, working with staff, learners and stake-holders to achieve our inclusive approach which demonstrates College values and support all current and potential learners. We strive for excellence in our work, providing appropriate and stimulating teaching, within suitable and learning environments which are underpinned in the quality of our support services.

You will see within this comprehensive report, a huge range of improvements in the past year. Our communication facilities, in particular a range of Moodle services and our information and learning technologies (ILT) have vastly improved with new websites for Hull, Harrogate and Goole, which were designed with the help of disabled learners. This means that all staff and learners in the College can now access useful software to aid their studies. The Group's accommodation facilities have also seen development in the past year with improvements at all of the College sites.

I hope that you will agree that this publication demonstrates the initiatives and approaches we have used to ensure parity for all of our College community. Our vision is to be seen as a champion of equality. If you would like to participate in the development of our journey, please contact the College. We would be delighted to hear from you.

Dr. Elaine McMahon CBE
Chief Executive and Principal

INTRODUCTION

The Hull College Group mission statement: 'To inspire and enable outstanding, life-changing education and training to learners, employers and diverse communities' demonstrates a genuine commitment to all of its disabled learners.

Since 'The Tomlinson' report, in 1996 'Inclusive Learning', the College has worked steadily towards becoming a leader in social inclusion. Evidence of this journey and the forward thinking of the Group can clearly be found in the commissioning a specialist centre for Visually and Hearing Impaired Learners. In 2008 Hull & Goole College (prior to the merger with Harrogate College) was graded as outstanding by Ofsted for its work in supporting learners and in Equal Opportunities. The Group continues to improve its environment and operating procedures for disabled people.

The College consulted widely and involved disabled people in the 12 months prior to the design of the Disability Equality Scheme and action plan involving learners, staff, external partners and local communities. Within the plan, challenging targets were set and this report details the progress that has been accomplished during the three years. It also describes the way ahead for the next three-year period.

This report should be reviewed within the context of a rapidly changing Further Education environment. This is not a static plan; it is alive and responsive to the changing requirements of learners, employers and the diverse communities we serve. The philosophy of disability equality underpins the Group values:

- Excellence
- Respect (Integrity)
- Innovation
- Celebration

Action Plan and Scheme

The Action Plan was constructed around six themes:

- Participation
- Employment
- Service Delivery
- Staff and Learner Development
- Communication
- Access

The Scheme and Plan were originally devised during August 2007. With external support, and reference to the guidance from the Disability Rights Commission (DRC), further changes have been made to scheme, which continually evolves to reflect our changing environment.

The Group has also revised its approach to disability in light of the Single Equality Duty. Strategic planning and Equality Impact Assessments take place across all areas of the college. The further development of this process will further embed the individual rights of all members of the Group community.

Key Theme One

Participation – encouraging and supporting disabled people to take part in and have meaningful impact on Group planning and development processes.

The College promotes participation throughout all working processes using a learner – centred approach. The Group has a strong pastoral system and this was used as a model to develop and expand the successful established Learner Voice groups. The group operates several Learner Voice groups to gather feedback on pertinent issues. These are Learner Voice (FE learners) Hull, the Hull HE Learner Group, Boss Ambassador Group and the Hull Disabled Learner Forum which is chaired by a disabled member of staff. In developing learner groups, care has been taken to ensure that the diverse geography is reflected, along differentiation between further and higher education learners. The Group also employs two Equality and Diversity Officers, who have a key role in influencing this work.

The cross-college Disability Equality Group receives information from learners across the organisation. It is chaired by a senior manager who has overall responsibility for disabled people support across the College. In many cases it directly resolves issues raised by learners as it has independent, human and financial resources at its disposal for this specific purpose. Any matters of a more strategic significance are raised at senior level. In many cases the process of resolution is quick and effective. The Group uses ‘You said, we did’ posters to update College communities on progress.

All groups meet regularly and/or ensure issues are addressed by the relevant individual staff members and committees. In 2009 disabled learners have been invited to participate in the FE learner voice group alongside their Disabled Learner Forum group.

Learners are also encouraged to use the Course Consultative Groups to raise issues. Arising issues are actioned and reported back accordingly.

There is an established external forum of local post-16 providers, and other strategic groups and advocacy organisations in Hull & East Riding. This forum adopts a ‘critical friend’ approach to support the Group focus on continual improvement of services. The forum has its own section on the Group Moodle¹ site. Relevant events are communicated via the site; for example Moodle was used to promote the Hull ‘Futures III’ event which took place in November 2008 at the KC Stadium for those learners with learning difficulties who were progressing from school.

Strong links across other relevant networks have been established to further develop sign-posting support.

¹ Moodle – the Group’s virtual learning environment

A representative from Harrogate College's senior management team attends the Vulnerable Learners' Forum which includes schools, colleges and specialist educational institutions within the Harrogate district. This promotes the sharing of knowledge, experience and different approaches. Harrogate College is also represented on the North Yorkshire Disability Network; an open forum which looks at topical issues within the region and the FE sector.

The Group uses an annual 'Learner Perception of College' survey, which has been adapted for disabled people to monitor Group performance. A new version of the learner perception survey was designed and piloted in December 2008 with learners who receive additional learning support. The results were very positive with 95% of learners rating the support they received as 'good/excellent'. This model is being further developed by the Learner Support Services Team.

The College uses an observation process that monitors Equality and Diversity related to the curriculum and all College services. Led by the Quality Team, Equality & Diversity issues are considered during the observation process. This process is monitored and reported at regular points during the quality cycle of the Group. There is scope to further develop this approach.

Interactive presentations are used as part of the learner induction to ensure that learners have disability awareness. Disabled learners have been involved in discussions with tutorial groups on their experience of College life. Learner feedback is very positive and there are plans to expand the scheme.

Key Theme Two

Employment – annually reviewing and changing recruitment and selection processes to demonstrate that the Group is an employer of choice for people with disabilities.

Access to work support has been revised in 2009 and a new procedure is now in place. The Human Resources staff using their professional experience utilise this procedure, working alongside colleagues to ease the transition process.

The Group is sensitive to support requirements and makes reasonable adjustments where appropriate. One of the Human Resource Team's Performance Indicators is focussed on maintaining support for disabled staff members who work at the College. The Group retains the Disability 'Two Ticks' recognition, as a result of the work it does to support colleagues with disabilities. The Group signed up to the 'Disabled Go' website facility in 2008/2009.² There has been good progress in increasing the numbers of applications from people with disabilities, year on year.

² This site is designed to enable people with disabilities to view an assessment of the Group's centres' physical environment and available support. This is a nationally recognised facility designed to assist disabled people to use to find out more about prospective employers.

To meet the objective of the DES action plan for 2006-2009, advocacy arrangements have been developed with a team of named staff in this role, supported by the Group's internal Counselling Service. This arrangement is reviewed regularly and has been highly successful and productive in helping to raise awareness of relevant issues.

The Group sets annual targets to maintain the number of employees with disabilities. The combination of measures outlined above have helped to encourage staff who have disabilities to declare their disabilities, if they have not already done so at point of joining the organisation.

The Group has a benchmark of 3% for employees declaring a disability. The outturn for 06/07 was 3%; 3.5% was achieved in 07/08 and a challenging target of 5% was set for 08/09. The actual result was 4.6%. The target figure for 09/10 is 7%.

Key Theme Three

Service Delivery – to further improve Learner access to all College services.

The Group has a vast range of academic, vocational, business and learner support services and was awarded the embedded Matrix accreditation during 2009 for its Information, Advice and Guidance services. The recent report stated:

'Evaluation across the whole Group is robust and challenges staff and learners to contribute to the continuous improvement of the (IAG) service. The breadth of evaluation enables effective strategic decisions to be made with clarity and operations decisions to be made based on detailed evaluation of the views of learners, partners and staff.'

There is a clear indication of the inclusive nature of the College illustrated by the diverse range of learners using the facilities and the additional methods of offering support to learners with specific disabilities.

The main assessment report also noted:

'The Hull College Group has responded positively to creating resources and information on key areas such as equality and diversity, learner support and careers services. These have been carefully produced taking on board previous learner feedback.'

The Learner Support Services based at the Hull & Goole sites have recently been reviewed. The new structure has brought together the IAG, Finance, Counselling, and Pastoral care teams with the Additional Learner Support teams³. Specialised training been provided for the wider team which has had positive effects and increased understanding. To complement the Matrix Standard Learner Support Services have also received accreditation through the achievement of the Connexions Gold standard for Information, Advice and

³ The Additional Learner Support Team (ADLS) was formally managed by a discreet curriculum area

Guidance in 2008. The positive support and inclusive nature of the College was noted in the Ofsted report (May 2008) and assisted in maintaining the 'Outstanding support for learners' result.

The Group offers a comprehensive range of individual and group support activities. During 2007/2008 over 3,000 learners across a mix of ages received additional learning support; this represented 11% of the total learner population. 2008/2009 saw an increase to 13% (Hull and Goole 13%; Harrogate 15%) with over 4,000 learners accessing support across the Group.

Specialist support for Learners includes the following:

- Visual Impairment
- Hearing Impairment
- Dyslexia
- Medical Conditions
- Behavioural Difficulties
- Learning Difficulties
- Physical Disabilities
- Mental Health Difficulties
- Hidden Disabilities
- Literacy / Numeracy / ESOL support

The Learner Support Services Team has well established links with external agencies including Connexions, Social Services, Charities, Health Trusts, other private providers, and the Local Learning Disability Partnerships. There are also established partnerships with local schools, across Hull, East Riding and North Yorkshire.

The deployment of support for disabled learners is overseen by a Group director. There are dedicated managers serving Hull, Goole, and Harrogate. Across the Group, in excess of 150 staff are engaged in providing specific and specialist support to learners.

As the Group continues to expand into new learning routes for young people 14-16 and into Higher Education, the support teams have been strengthened to include specialists for these areas.

In order to support HE learners the Group utilises a specialist team to assess and implement procedures for learners to a smooth access the Disabled Learner's Student's Allowance (DSA) funding support. This ensures transition from FE to HE. The College employs an Additional Learner Support Administrator to monitor the financial processes.

The Group uses performance indicators and learner feedback to measure the impact of all policies. A rigorous self-assessment process is in place and disabled people are fully involved in the processes of assessment. All academic areas have a range of targets agreed at business reviews. Retention and Achievement are closely monitored for all learners. Comparisons are made for learners who receive additional support with those that receive no support.

Analysis for those learners with disabilities indicates continued improvement.

The key measures used are:

- Recruitment
- Retention
- Achievement
- Progression

Recruitment

Hull & Goole College FE Participation by Disability

	2006 - 2007	2007 – 2008	2008 - 2009	2009 – 2010**
Number of Learners with a Disability	2127	1995	2381	1943
Percentage of Learners with a Disability	12%	12%	15%	16%

** Inc Harrogate College

The number of learners who did not declared if they have a disability remained at 3% for the period of 2006 – 2008; however, this area has decreased in 2009 – 2010 by 1%.

Retention

Hull & Goole College Retention for Disabled Learners

	Entry Level	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
2006 / 2007	90%	94%	91%	91%
2007 / 2008	93%	91%	93%	90%
2008 / 2009**	93%	96%	96%	91%

** Includes Harrogate College

Achievement

In 2006/2007 the Achievement rates for learners receiving Additional Learning Support compared with those who did not was higher in 83% in the main curriculum areas. The overall result in success rates for these learners is higher at every level, this clearly supports the notion that support for disabled learners is highly effective. The total number of learners receiving some form of Additional Learning Support was 4,182.

In 2007/2008 the achievement figures dipped; a key factor was the increase in the number of learners and consequently the number of learners requiring support to 4,612 in FE and 249 in HE. The development of more robust systems for assessments and support has been implemented an increase has occurred in learners are accessing Disability Living Allowance or Disabled Student's Allowance for support.

In 2008/09 achievement figures for the Group were higher at every level for those learners who accessed additional learning support.

	Entry Level	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Success Rates with Support	93%	85%	77%	82%
Success Rates without Support	89%	82%	74%	73%

Progression of Learners with a Recorded a Disability

	Number of Learners Progressing in Mainstream	Number of Disabled Learners Progressing in Mainstream	Percentage of Disabled Learners Progressing in Mainstream
2006 - 2007	1655	266	16
2007 – 2008	2072	388	19
2008 – 2009	2039	365	17

Key Theme Four

Training – to raise staff and learner awareness of the Disability Equality Scheme, and the support available for disabled learners.

College Staff

The Group has adopted a strategic approach to underpin the Disability Discrimination Act which includes mandatory staff development. Staff Development is an essential part of the Disability Equality Duty action plan significant training is carried out 'in-house'. Any additional external delivery costs are met via the Learner Support fund for this purpose.

The Group offers staff a comprehensive package of personal development which includes disability support procedures. Disability and related staff development issues are overseen by the Director of Learner Experience and Organisational Development.

A cross college rolling programme has been introduced to update staff on the major changes to the Disability Discrimination Act. The programme is managed by the Learner Support Services Team and the Equality and Diversity Officer. It is designed to include flexible delivery at all sites and at various times to suit staff working patterns.

DED Staff Development Hull & Goole College 2006 - 2009

Year	Number of Staff Participating
2006 - 2007	630
2007 – 2008	274
2008 - 2009	535

A monthly training programme is planned to begin in 2010 incorporating Disability Equality and to provide a briefing for staff on how the Group proposes to move towards a single equality scheme.

The following areas are covered in the programme:

- Mental Health Difficulties and Mental Health First Aid Training
- DED Awareness
- Equality & Diversity
- Dyspraxia Awareness
- Dyslexia Awareness
- Aspergers Syndrome Training
- ADHD Training
- Braille Training
- VI Awareness
- Personal Care Training
- Lifting and Handling

College staff also access external courses on a range of disabilities, disseminating the information across the Group.

During 2006/2007 the College communicated with all staff via the payroll section, to ensure that employees were signposted to disability awareness staff development. Over 100 service area staff received reference materials on how they could support disabled people in their role. One publication was particularly aimed at 'front of house' staff at all centres, who received further training in 2007/2008 on Deaf awareness and use of loop systems/text phones to assist in answering any queries.

Additional briefings on policies and guidelines have taken place in essential areas including:

- Medication Policy and Procedures regarding refrigerated Medical Cabinets.
- Mental Health Guidelines.
- Revised Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans for all persons with Disability/Mobility issues, including temporary disability.
- The Development of the Vulnerable Adult Policy and Procedure in partnership with the Hull & East Riding Safeguarding Adults Committee.

A Training pilot will be delivered with 35 Staff in Mental Health First Aid. (Further training will take place during 2010).

Learners

Learners are offered disability awareness sessions which include the Group's values promoting dignity and respect of others. These sessions are embedded within the tutorial system and increasingly within curriculum delivery. These awareness sessions were further developed during 2007/08 with the production of an interactive power point on disability awareness. This was presented to all full-time learners during induction in September 2008/09. Disabled learners present information sessions as part of the wider tutorial programme. This approach has had very positive results and will continue annually.

Learner induction material is available on Moodle within the equality & diversity area including a full range of information and materials for learners and staff. The tutorial programme promotes equality & diversity and citizenship. The Disabled Learner Forum produces a quarterly newsletter filled with learner stories on access and inclusion.

As part of its integration into the Group, Harrogate College is adopting the Group approach to raising the awareness of staff and learners to disability issues through induction, staff development sessions and the tutorial programme.

Key Theme Five

Communication – with learners, staff and key partners, ensuring that information is accessible in a range of appropriate formats.

The Group has a proactive marketing team which is led by a senior manager. The promotion and marketing of the Group is well planned and delivered. The accuracy of Information is regularly reviewed and publications and campaigns are provided in appropriate languages and formats to potential learners, staff and partners.

Marketing materials are evaluated by learners, potential learners and staff to ensure that quality is maintained. Marketing materials contain appropriate images and levels of text, which are designed to encourage inclusive participation. Positive learner testimonials are sought from the whole learner body to illustrate equality of opportunity and for use in marketing activities, for example, learners' story boards, positive press releases and learner voice comments within general publications.

The Matrix accreditation report 2007 states, "Promotion and marketing was particularly well planned and delivered. Much care was taken to ensure the correct information was provided on a targeted basis and evaluation of materials was systematically carried out using learners and potential learners to feedback."

Learners and staff with a disability are regularly involved in meetings and contribute to college policies. Members of the Group community are asked to contribute to the wider Marketing Strategy. Marketing materials include information on site facilities and additional support. Publications are available at all centres and in a range of formats. Group promotional materials are distributed in local areas by a team of Community Representatives. The Community Representatives provide local feedback on Group activities.

Disability equality scheme information is also available through Moodle, from the Learner Support Services/Learner Entitlement teams and on the Group web-sites. Learners and staff contribute to the production of the Equality and Diversity Handbook and the Disability Statement.

External partners contribute to staff development, learner tutorials and visits. These include examples such as Mind, Disability Choices and Rights, Guide Dogs for the Blind, Hearing Dogs and Deaf Awareness agencies, who contribute to the Group annual Equality & Diversity Celebration week.

Communications for disabled learners include:

- Independent Learner Newsletters
- Promotional events

- Forums/discussion groups
- Learner Voice groups
- Links / signposting to organisations
- Electronic Communications
- Learner Inductions/tutorials
- Visits to other Establishments / Agencies
- Transition Networks

Significant effort is made to ensure that information is provided to learners in a format that gives them equal opportunities to access opportunities. The Group is constantly seeking ways to improve its communications.

A significant area of development is the information and learning technologies (ILT) focus for the Group. Developments have included evolvement of the Portal (the internal internet), which provides access across the desktop network. The Marketing Team have launched three site specific websites, which have been redesigned working with disabled learners to act in an advisory capacity. The sites have a range of features that improve access and further revisions are considered on a regular basis.

The ILT strategy considers good practice recommendations such as those promoted by Joint Information System Committee (JISC). The whole Group network has features including:

- Narrator
- Magnifier
- Accessibility Wizard
- On-Screen Keyboard

These are available on all PCs for staff and learner use and are helpful to those with Visual Impairments. Additional facilities such as Jaws and Zoom text are available at all centres, libraries and in the specialist Visual Impairment centre in the Maxwell Bird Building at the Hull site.

The Group ICT team uses e-Learning surveys in curriculum areas to review appropriate hardware and infrastructure and to introduce and manage future digital developments. The ILT Strategy contains the Group e-Maturity plan. New applications have been added to the network. An example is the Textic Accessibility application which been introduced as a versatile tool to assist learners with visual impairments and/or dyslexia. Further work is planned to install 'mind mapping' and Basic Skills technologies to the network.

The Portal and Moodle contain a comprehensive set of Disability Equality Duty information for all staff and learners including:

- The Scheme and Action Plan
- Training Videos
- Medication Policy

- Vulnerable Adults Policy
- Mental Health Difficulties Guidelines
- Fire Evacuation Procedures for Wheelchair Users or those Learners with Mobility Difficulties
- Articles and Guidelines from the DRC/EHRC

This information is reviewed and updated regularly to ensure it is appropriate by individual staff members and/or committees.

Key Theme Six

Physical Access and the built environment, including physical access to premises and facilities and services.

Estates management is an integral part of Group strategic planning. The requirements for Learners with disabilities are incorporated into any estates works, new builds and maintenance programmes. The estates department produces an annual self-assessment report which includes any changes to the physical access of sites.

Improvements to access have been made to all buildings and services. The Hull site, for example, has specialised centres for learners who are Visually or Hearing Impaired and several designated curriculum areas for learners who have a learning disability or Mental Health difficulty.

The estates team works closely with the cross-college Disability Group and is represented on the disabled learner forum and the Learner Voice Committee. All estates work complies with DDA standards.

A strategic review of the Group estate is currently under way and any future developments will take account of DDA issues. The establishment of safety refuges and two-way communications is presently under review at Harrogate, A review of access to the first floor of the Hull School of Art and Design buildings is currently underway, and locations for the position of an additional lift are being investigated.

Projects 2008/2009

- Refurbishment of Charterhouse has been completed with new access ramps , Accessible toilets , Automatic and hold open door fittings
- Assisted door openers have been fitted to the Chester's library at first floor level
- Additional door hold opens have been fitted at Goole
- A new ground floor "Quiet room" has been created in the Tower block
- A replacement stair lift has been fitted at Harrogate in B block

Moving Forward 2009 – 2010 and Beyond

The Group has made considerable progress in many areas through implementing its disability equality scheme. It continues to develop relationships with external bodies and user groups and is sensitive and responsive to the needs of disabled staff and learners. In progressing to a

Single Equality Scheme the Group fully acknowledges and embraces the principles of the Disability Equality Duty and the individual needs of our learners and staff.

This report demonstrates a continued drive for inclusiveness throughout the organisation.

During the next three-year cycle the following areas have been identified as areas for development:

- The further development of impact measures in a number of areas – this has been implemented and is evident in the 2007/2008 and the 2008/2009 impact measures reports.
- The continued development of staff and learner to broaden the understanding of disability.
- The focus on curriculum delivery and differentiation in teaching and learning.
- The increased use of technology relating to the diversity of delivery within the curriculum. This is underpinned by the e-Learning strategy.
- Building on the successes of 2007/08 extended training is to be offered in the following areas:
 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults
 - Mental Health Difficulties – Mental Health First Aid training
 - Hidden Disabilities
- Increased learner and staff Involvement to encourage participation, inclusion and empowerment for disabled people.
- Further development of the Disabled Learner newsletter.
- The further development and maintenance of external networks.
- The further review of the Learner Support infrastructure to improve the internal reporting mechanisms.
- Further work on implementing and producing high quality information for disabled people.

The Hull College Group has travelled a significant distance in the last three years. The Group values reflect the organisation's support of college internal communities. The College⁴ was recognised as 'Outstanding' in all areas by Ofsted in May 2008 and will continue to focus efforts for the benefit of all staff and learners.

⁴ Hull & Goole College (prior to merger with Harrogate College in August 2008)

