



Disability Equality Scheme  
2010-2013

Challenging Discrimination: Promoting Equality and  
Diversity

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## 1. Foreword by Principal

Welcome to Newbattle Abbey College's second Disability Equality Scheme.

Over the past three years we have reviewed our Equalities and Inclusiveness Policy and Procedures to move forward our commitment to challenging discrimination and promoting diversity. However, we are not complacent and this revised scheme aims to demonstrate that we continue to be serious about making disability equality issues a priority and making sure that they are linked to our other equality initiatives.

We are very pleased to continue to involve students, staff and Forward Mid in contributing to our disability equality developments. We continue to involve Forward Mid, a local disability rights campaign, in our Equalities Committee. We have also listened to staff and students who have participated in questionnaires and workshops. We are committed to continuing to involve disabled people in developing all aspects of this new scheme and welcome advice on improvements.

This Disability Equality Scheme sets out the plans of Newbattle Abbey College for making equality happen for disabled people who are potential or actual students or staff and members of the public who use our facilities. The Scheme also includes a number of things we must consider under the specific duty e.g. measurements of progress for disabled people in the areas of employment, access to services and education.

If you have any comments or have a disability and want to tell us what you think of our new Scheme and Action Plan we will be very pleased to hear from you.

**Ann Southwood**  
Principal

## 2 Introduction

### Disability Equality Duty

The Disability Equality Duty, under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005, came in to force on 4 December 2006. This requires public authorities, including Further and Higher Education providers to have due regard to the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
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- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and subsequent acts and include appropriate anticipatory action;
- eliminate disability-related harassment;
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life; and
- take action to meet disabled people's needs, even if that means treating them more favourably.

The general duty builds upon the duties of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995; including the duty to make reasonable adjustments to make sure that disabled people can access employment, goods, facilities, functions, services and premises.

### Specific Duties

- Publish a Disability Equality Scheme (DES)
- Prepare and regularly review an Action Plan that will detail the steps taken to meet the new duty
- Review, revise and publish the scheme every three years

### The Disability Equality Duty Definition of Disability

The DDA 2005 covers people with a variety of impairments such as:

- mobility impairments
- mental health conditions

- learning disabilities
- blind and partially sighted people
- Deaf and hearing impaired people
- progressive long term health conditions such as multiple sclerosis and HIV
- people with hidden impairments e.g. people with long term health conditions such as diabetes
- people who do not consider themselves to be disabled such as some older people with acquired visual or hearing impairments

Newbattle Abbey College has had a Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan since 2006 and we are now reviewing and publishing our revised scheme and action plan for a further three years. Our revised scheme sets out our priorities for the next three years, taking into account all the information we have gathered and any relevant changes to our service and business. We have a new action plan to deliver those priorities over the next three years, ensuring that our Disability Equality Scheme is kept up to date and relevant to the college.

The Disability Equality Scheme builds on the existing equality schemes, equality and inclusiveness policies and procedures framework, policy statement on discrimination and harassment and equality annual reports.

It also provides a context for the new requirements set out in the Equality Bill, namely the requirement for a single equality duty, due to come into force in 2011.

### Values

The values and social model of disability on which this Disability Equality Scheme are based are:

- Social justice
- The worth and dignity of each individual
- Accessibility
- Quality services
- The right to respect, privacy and confidentiality
- The right to protection from abuse and exploitation
- The right to information
- Balancing responsibilities of the organisation and individuals
- Addressing institutional and avert prejudice

- Promoting equality and inclusiveness within policies, procedures, practices and spending plans
- Learning to respond to individuals based on his/her needs
- Recognition that disabled people may also be affected by other equalities matters such as race, gender, sexual orientation, age and religion or belief.

### 3 Context

#### Newbattle Abbey College

Located one mile south of Dalkeith in Midlothian, Newbattle Abbey College operates from a 16th century house which occupies the site of a 12th century abbey. Newbattle Abbey is listed Category A by Historic Scotland as a building of national historic and architectural interest. The College, therefore, operates within the limitations of a Class A listed building and a countryside designated park area.

The College operates under a Governing Deed of Trust set up by Philip Kerr, 11th Marquis of Lothian in 1937, when he gifted Newbattle and its estate to the Scottish nation, to be used as an adult education residential college. The Trustees are the Principals of the four Ancient Scottish Universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and St Andrews.

As Scotland's Life-Changing College, located within a heritage site, Newbattle is uniquely positioned to provide a challenging curriculum to adult learners. In line with our mission to be residential learning community which focuses on the transformative power of adult education and supports the learner in transition, the College provides educational opportunities for adults with few or no qualifications and has a desire to improve their life opportunities through education.

The Strategic Plan 2007-2012 presents an overall 5-year strategy for the College and is supported by an Operational Plan 2009-2010, detailing how this will be implemented.

**The College Vision statement is:**

Scotland's Life Changing College

**The College Mission is:**

To be a residential learning community which focuses on the transformative power of adult education and supports the learner in transition

## College Values and Principles are:

- Developing potential
- Learner focussed
- Empowering individuals
- Promoting inclusiveness and diversity
- Quality enhancement
- Promoting success
- Working collaboratively
- Facilitating lifelong learning
- Promoting culture and heritage
- Developing commercial activity to support the core activity of the College

## National and Local Context

The Scottish Government state that there are over a million disabled people in Scotland. 48% of disabled people are in employment compared to 82.4% of non-disabled people.<sup>1</sup>

Midlothian Council acknowledges that it is difficult to gather accurate data about disabled people resident in the area, as it changes depending on the definition of disability used, but it estimates that Midlothian has 16,000 disabled people.<sup>2</sup> Scottish Government statistics also state that the employment rate of disabled people in Midlothian is 56.5% compared to 86.8% for non-disabled people. In addition, 36.5% of disabled people are classed as economically inactive in Midlothian compared to 10.3% for non-disabled people.<sup>3</sup>

In the 2003 Survey on Attitudes to Discrimination in Scotland, very few people expressed prejudicial views towards disabled people. However, while no one took a discriminatory view, positive promotion of disability equality was less clear cut. 31% of people surveyed took the view that a wheelchair user was not

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/12/17124941/9>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.midlothian.gov.uk//Article.aspx?TopicId=0&ArticleId=20045>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/12/17124941/9>

suitable for the job of a primary school teacher and 24% did not agree that the main problem facing disabled people at work was other people's prejudice. <sup>4</sup>

The Inclusiveness Agenda set out in 1999 by the Beattie Committee in its report entitled "Implementing Inclusiveness; Realising Potential" has had a significant influence in Scotland's Colleges since its publication. A review by HMIE in 2004, resulting in the publication of "Implementing Inclusiveness in Further Education", showed that almost all colleges had undertaken significant developments to promote inclusiveness in terms of the Beattie Agenda. Since 2000 a raft of new legislation has had an impact on education and on provision for students with additional learning and support needs:

- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- Disability Discrimination Act Part IV 2005
- Additional Learning Support Act (Scotland) 2004
- Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) 2007

"Partnership Matters", published by the Scottish Executive in 2005 and updated in 2008, sets out the shared responsibility and collaborative activity between public bodies (Education, Health, Social Work and other agencies) when making provision for students with additional needs in Further Education. <sup>5</sup>

In the 7<sup>th</sup> annual set of performance indicators for Scotland's Colleges, 15% of students in FE colleges declared a disability or were categorised by the college as requiring additional support. <sup>6</sup>

The proportion of students declaring a disability has increased in colleges and there continues to be an improvement in disclosure and gathering data of this information in colleges, but the percentage of students for whom this information is recorded as unknown, refused or missing is still large (8.8%). <sup>7</sup>

## 4. The Disability Equality Scheme

### Aims

The purpose of our revised Disability Equality Scheme is to:

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2003/09/18318/27570>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/ReportsandPublications/survey\\_of\\_provision.pdf](http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/ReportsandPublications/survey_of_provision.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Statisticsperformanceindicators/FE\\_Staff\\_and\\_Student\\_Performance\\_Indicators\\_2007-08.pdf](http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Statisticsperformanceindicators/FE_Staff_and_Student_Performance_Indicators_2007-08.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/ReportsandPublications/Learning\\_for\\_all\\_measures\\_of\\_success\\_March\\_09.pdf](http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/ReportsandPublications/Learning_for_all_measures_of_success_March_09.pdf)

- Ensure that we re-focus our priorities and ensure that we are tackling the most relevant and significant issues to bring about disability equality;
- Base these actions on current evidence and the views of disabled staff, students and stakeholders;
- Reflect on what we have achieved, by incorporating how effectively we have met the actions set out in our previous scheme and explain what has changed as a result of those actions;
- Take into account the information we have gathered on the effect of our policies and practices and use this to decide what actions we need to take over the next three years.

### Key Objectives

We want disabled people studying, working and visiting Newbattle Abbey College to be enabled to release their full potential.

We will do this by:

- Removing barriers and changing attitudes that prevent disabled people getting access to employment and education
- Promoting disability equality
- Working together with disabled people, disability organisations and disability access groups to achieve equality of opportunity
- Creating a culture where staff and students feel able to declare their disability so that accurate information is available to help us look at reasonable adjustments, priority areas and to set targets
- Creating a culture where harassment, bullying, victimisation and discrimination is unacceptable and will be stopped

### Leadership and Strategy

One of the strategic aims of the College's Strategic Plan for 2008-2012 is to ensure an ethos of inclusiveness that promotes equality and diversity and challenges discrimination. The Board of Directors has overall responsibility for the Disability Equality Scheme. The Principal is responsible for the

management of the College's Equalities and Inclusiveness Policy and the Race, Gender and Disability Equality Schemes. The Senior Management Team is responsible for ensuring the operation and effectiveness of policies, procedures and schemes.

The Equalities Committee, chaired by the Principal, is responsible for advising the Senior Management Team on the development and implementation of the Disability Equality Scheme, including monitoring and reporting on the scheme. The Administration Manager is responsible for implementing the Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan as it relates to all aspects of Human Resources management.

The Depute Principal is responsible for implementing the Scheme and Action Plan as it relates to:

- Programme design
- Curriculum management
- Academic guidance
- Learning support

The Facilities Manager is responsible for implementing the Disability Equality Scheme as it relates to:

- Contracting/ building works
- Procurement
- Health and Safety

The Equalities Committee has an annual Action Plan and conducts a Disability Discrimination Policy and Procedures audit. These inform the Strategic and Operational Plans of the College. The Disability Equality Scheme is an integral part of all planning and audits within the College.

### **Employment of staff**

Newbattle Abbey College will not discriminate against disabled people:

- In arrangements made for determining who should be offered employment;
- In the terms on which the offer of employment is made;
- By finding or failing to consider reasonable adjustments that could be made to the premises or to the job to allow a disabled person to carry out that job; and
- By failing to take account of the ability of the person to do the job.

Employees are made aware of their responsibilities under the Equalities and Inclusiveness Policy of the College and of the legal requirements of the DDA.

Unlawful acts of discrimination or behaviour inconsistent with the College policy or legislation will be regarded as a breach of the College's Disciplinary Policy and Code of Practice.

Disability is not regarded as a bar to recruitment or promotion, which are based entirely on the ability of the person to do the job.

The College as an employer cannot be regarded as acting contrary to the DDA if it unaware of an employee's disability or could not have reasonable been aware of it. The College welcomes comments from individuals or groups within the College regarding any reasonable adjustments which could be made to assist staff within the workplace.

## Staff Profile

There are currently no staff who have disclosed a disability to the College. However, this does not mean that we have no staff who fall under the protection of disability legislation. However, as the College has only 15 FTE members of staff, to publish any data on staff disability may result in staff being easily identified and would breach confidentiality.

Research by the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) and disability organisations has highlighted factors that can influence an individual's decision on disclosure, including the following:

- Identification with the term "disabled" which, for a number of reasons may not be a term adopted by all those with disabilities;
- Confusion regarding what constitutes a disability; and
- Disabled individuals may feel their disability is not relevant to their job, so may consider there is no reason to disclose it.<sup>8</sup>

## Support for Students

Newbattle Abbey College as a provider of education and training recognises that it has a responsibility to provide, where reasonable and practical, an environment which does not discriminate against disabled people.

The College will strive to maintain and improve its position with regard to access, services and curriculum for disabled students. Accessibility issues and progress in this regard are dealt with under the College Estate.

Students are encouraged to participate fully in College life and study. Support for learning is available to individuals and small groups. The College offers a range of learning support to students. Students who require adjustments to be made in the classroom discuss those with academic staff, who will then make the appropriate adjustments within given resources. The Core Skills and

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/inclusive-practice/disclosure-of-disability>

Learning Support Policy describe support for students and identify what can be put in place for disabled people, including assistive technology.

Access to student counselling and welfare is provided by the College. The College understands that some students may require regular treatment or therapy during College time. Every endeavour is made to accommodate this but the College is not able to supply supervision for, or administration of medication or other treatment.

At the recruitment and interview stage of application, prospective students are given accurate, clear and detailed information about the course and any particular requirements, so that students can make an informed choice.

## Student Profile

In Newbattle Abbey College equalities monitoring between 2005 and 2009 indicated the following:

Learner Status	2005-2006 Enrolled Learners	2006-2007 Enrolled Learners	2007-2008 Enrolled Learners	2008-2009 Enrolled Learners
Disability not listed	3%	0%	5%	4%
Dyslexia	6%	4%	9%	10%
Deaf/Hearing impairment	0%	4%	0%	3%
Mental health difficulties	0%	6%	4%	1%
Unseen disability e.g. diabetes, asthma, epilepsy	3%	10%	10%	3%
Multiple disabilities	6%	0%	0%	0%
No disability stated	82%	72%	72%	77%
Information refused	0%	0%	0%	1%
Wheelchair restricted user/mobility	0%	4%	0%	0%
Blind/partially sighted	0%	0%	0%	1%
Total enrolled learners	33	51	61	78

We have established a data monitoring form to allow us to compare year on year statistics for enquiries, applications, and enrolments. This will enable us

to measure our progress and analyse our student profile in a more rigorous way, so that we can now make plan for improvements to recruitment, interview and enrolment of disabled people.

## **Disclosure**

Newbattle Abbey College is proactive in encouraging people to disclose a disability. This is done in a variety of ways:

### **For students**

- There is an invitation to disclose on application and enrolment forms;
- There are opportunities to discuss any particular needs or requirements at taster days and course interviews; and
- Throughout the course there are also opportunities to disclose a disability in academic guidance sessions

### **For staff**

- There is an invitation to disclose on application and enrolment forms;
- There are opportunities to discuss any particular needs or requirements at the interview stage;
- Once a member of staff has been appointed they are also given the opportunity to disclose a disability at induction; and
- Throughout their employment, when undertaking any CPD they are encouraged to discuss any reasonable adjustments or requirements they may have.

## **Confidentiality**

The College respects each person's right to expect any information relating to health condition or disability, or any support needs they may have to be treated in confidence. The College complies with and has procedures in place for complying with the Data Protection Act.

In order to make arrangements to support individual students or staff, some information may be passed on to others. The disabled person's consent will be obtained before the relevant information is passed to those who require it. In the very rare circumstances where information may have to be passed on e.g. medical emergency, the reasons for the disclosure will be made clear.

All employees are made aware of the Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy. Procedures are in place to ensure that all staff comply.

## Procedures

Publicity, application and enrolment forms acknowledge a right to confidentiality and contain an equalities and inclusiveness statement. The College determines which staff are responsible for collecting, recording, storing and progressing actions stemming from this data.

Any student or staff member who discloses a disability or a learning difficulty is asked to give their permission before any information is passed on.

All personal data is kept in student or employee files and in an electronic database format so that it can only be accessed by responsible members of staff. All staff handling sensitive personal data comply with College policy as informed by the Data Protection Act.

## Impact Assessment

Newbattle Abbey College recognises the importance of examining our activities and services to ensure that there are no disproportionately adverse effects on particular groups and the College further recognises the value of involving disabled people in the impact assessment process.

The College has adopted, reviewed and simplified a toolkit to carry out impact assessment on all our policies and procedures and a calendar of activities was set out in previous action plans. We will continue to carry out impact assessments in a systematic basis and use them to inform future plans.

The College will be carrying out Equality Impact Assessments on all new policies and services as they are developed. Over time all other existing policies and procedures will be carried out. A timetable for screening policies and functions has been established and where a high level of impact is identified a full Impact Assessment is to be carried out. Disability issues will be considered alongside other equality issues such as race and gender.

A summary of the results of the Equality Impact Assessments, Actions Plans and consultation exercises will be reported as part of the annual review of the Disability Equality Scheme and in the College Equalities and Inclusiveness Annual report.

## Monitoring

We will continue to monitor:

- The number of people we interview for employment

- The number of disabled people we employ who declare a disability
- The number of applications of students who declare a disability
- The number of student enrolments who declare a disability
- The retention and achievement rates of students who declare a disability

We will monitor on a yearly basis to ensure that our workforce and student population continues to be representative of the wider community and take positive action to promote representation at all levels within the College. Monitoring will respect confidentiality and protect identity. Where an individual or individuals may be identified, information will only be available in a generalised report.

### **Publishing Results of Assessment, Involvement and Monitoring**

The way we publish the results of assessment, involvement and monitoring will vary. Some will be published within reports to relevant Committees and to the Board of Directors.

The main consultation and involvement of disabled people will be summarised in our yearly report on the Disability Equality Scheme, as well as in an Equalities and Inclusiveness Annual Report. The yearly report for this Disability Equality Scheme will include an update on the Action Plan. We will also show what has changed as a result of involving disabled people.

We will inform staff, students and the public about this information through:

- The College newsletter and website
- Relevant voluntary organisations, community group and national stakeholders
- Project partners and local authority partners

### **Comments and Complaints**

Members of the public who feel they have experienced discrimination in the way the College has treated them may make a complaint through the College complaints procedure.

We have Grievance and Disciplinary Policies and Procedures in place for employees and procedures for dealing with complaints of bullying, harassment and victimisation relating to staff and students.

We will take all complaints seriously and will not tolerate any form of discriminatory behaviour. Monitoring complaints is also another way of gathering information to see whether we are meeting our equalities duties. These will be reported as part of our annual review of the DES.

### **Partnership and Involvement**

The College is a member of SKILL Scotland, the organisation for disabled students in Scotland.

The Depute Principal is a member of the Operational Group of the East of Scotland Staff Development Collaborative Group, which plans joint training on equality and inclusion.

In addition, the Depute Principal attends the South East Forum whose remit is to widen access, increase participation and raise the learning aspirations of learners in the South East of Scotland. This post includes membership of the National Working Group to implement the basket from measures from "Learning for All".

Newbattle Abbey College is committed to involving disabled people and giving disabled people the opportunity to comment on how our provision and employment practices are provided and developed. This Disability Equality Scheme has involved people from Forward Mid, a Midlothian disability rights organisation and has been informed by the Equality Forward commissioned research,<sup>8</sup> Skill Scotland publications and a variety of TechDis and Scottish Disability Team materials. A student and staff questionnaire has identified priority areas and these have been incorporated into the scheme.

We will involve disabled people on our services, provision and employment matters including:

- Finding out what barriers disabled people face and taking steps to remove them
- Asking if disabled people are happy with the services we provide e.g. through surveys and focus groups
- Setting priorities and helping us plan things
- Looking at the impact of existing and proposed policies
- Monitoring how well things are done
- Reviewing and revising the scheme and providing feedback on how disabled people's views have influenced our decisions

## **5. Progress Towards Disability Equality 2006-2009**

### **Equalities Committee**

The College has an Equalities Committee to advise on equalities and inclusiveness matters. Staff and students are represented and there are external advisers, one of whom is from Forward Mid, a disability rights campaigning organisation based in Midlothian.

Using the College Disability Scheme and Action Plan 2006-2009 as a tool to further develop our commitment to disabled students and staff, the College Equalities Committee regularly monitored progress towards achieving actions for improvements. This was then reported to the Board of Directors, the Audit Committee and the Learning and Teaching Committee.

### **All Staff**

All members of staff, committee members and members of college groups and teams carried out annual self evaluation activities as individuals and in groups, in order to reflect on the impact on disability equality of their particular job role and responsibilities. This reflective activity resulted in action planning for improvement with SMART objectives being set and systematic monitoring in place in order to judge progress towards achieving these objectives.

In addition, clear guidance is provided to staff on how to deal with discrimination, or harassment within different learning and teaching situations.

### **All students**

Induction sessions for new students include discussion about equality and anti-discrimination. This explicit reference at induction provides a clear signal to students of how seriously the College takes issues of equality and anti-discrimination. Students are informed about the College equality schemes and policies and the support available to students, including how to report discrimination or harassment. Equality and anti-discrimination provisions are written into learning contracts and classroom etiquette guidelines. In addition guidance tutors are given appropriate information throughout the year to pass on to students. Equality statements are now included in student handbooks.

### **Learning and Teaching**

Guidelines on the quality and equality of learning and teaching materials have informed college staff and ensured the accessibility of learning and teaching materials for disabled learners. All learning and teaching materials currently in use have been audited using the quality and equality of learning toolkit. In addition, the College is continuing to diversify the curriculum and update the

ICT infrastructure and now has most learning and teaching materials in electronic format. Staff have undergone training to ensure that the use of images and the content of learning and teaching materials promote positive attitudes to disabled people.

In session 2008-2009, funding from the Scottish Funding Council enabled the College to establish an ICT infrastructure to support a more flexible inclusive delivery model. A curriculum diversification project is in progress to support a model of blended learning and enable part-time delivery.

A JISC partnership is now in place to help embed an inclusive learning and teaching model, supported by assistive technology.

### The College Estate

The main College premises are an A-listed Historic Building. The main teaching accommodation is in a multi-level site and access is limited for those who have restricted mobility. Appropriate parking is provided and the residential block has a number of rooms which are fully accessible.

Margaret Blackwood Housing Association Technical Services conducted an access and disability audit of the College the recommendations from which were implemented in phases during session 2006-2007 as resources and planning permission became available. In August 2006, work commenced converting the College Residency to enable disabled access. En Suite Bedrooms were converted and a self catering Kitchen created. In addition, College Trustees provided funding for conversions to be carried out in the main house including the installation of a lift and the creation of a toilet which allowed wheelchair access. The College was fully accessible to wheelchair users by September 2007.

A member of "Forward Mid" who is a wheelchair user acted as a "critical friend" of the College during 2006-2007 and again in 2008-2009 by testing all modifications and conversions carried out on the College building and reporting back to Senior Management and the Equalities Committee for improvements. In 2008, the College undertook an "Equalities Walkabout" with a sight impaired student. This resulted in a number of suggestions and recommendations which have now been completed:

- The College reception area has been refurbished and new lights added to improve visibility;
- The ladies toilets in the crypt have been refurbished and the lighting altered to improve visibility;
- Rugs have been removed in the armoury and replaced by vinyl;
- The back stairs to the dining room has been re-carpeted;
- Lighting has been fixed in the residential block.

The College is committed to doing everything it can to improve accessibility without destroying the character of the grade A listed building. The College is at the very early stages of considering refurbishment of the residential block.

### **Involvement and Consultation**

Student representation is in place on most College Committees including the Board of Directors, the Equalities Committee, the Marketing Group and the Health and Safety Committee. Student representatives meet with Senior Management at least three times per year and are invited to attend most other groups and committees on an ad hoc basis. Feedback from disabled learners and staff has been obtained following "inclusiveness" workshops and was generated in a way that guaranteed confidentiality and encouraged transparency of response and a high level of participation.

The College website currently contains two questionnaires relating to disability equality: one for staff and students and one targeted at staff in relation to staff development. Stakeholders and members of the public can also access these questionnaires and take the opportunity to inform our practice and procedure.

In addition, staff and students are encouraged to submit questions anonymously to Senior Management and these are discussed at monthly focus groups meetings.

A student focus group met in March 2009 to review the College Equalities and Inclusiveness in relation to the student learning experience.

Concerns raised by students and responded to by staff have included:

- Magnification of materials on ICT equipment;
- Use of coloured paper and handouts for students with dyslexia;
- Support for students with mental health difficulties; and
- The role of staff in challenging discrimination.

### **Staff Development**

The College has provided a range of CPD/Staff Development opportunities to support the targets identified in the DES Action Plan throughout 2006-2009. College staff have continued to attend seminars and conferences on disability matters and continue to use resources provided by SKILL, Scotland's Colleges, JISC and TechDis in order to promote disability equality and keep up to date with the latest in learning and teaching materials.

Internal staff development activities have continued throughout 2006-2009. During Quality Weeks in August 2008 and February 2009, staff development

workshops focused on disability equality and did much to raise awareness of staff and promote positive attitudes to disabled learners. Particular emphasis has been placed on the new HMle quality framework introduced in September 2008 which prioritises equality and diversity in terms of three core areas:

- High quality learning;
- Learner engagement; and
- Quality culture.

The Learner Support Tutor has successfully completed BRITE training to better support students with specific needs and has actively disseminated good practice throughout the college. This has resulted in a change to recruitment and interview procedures so that learner needs are identified early and assistive technology is in place prior to enrolment. In addition, all academic staff are informed of individual learner needs regarding the style and format of learning and teaching material.

The Administration Manager attended a two-day training course in Mental Health First Aid during session 2008-2009.

The College made a successful application to Skills Scotland to participate in training on "creating an accessible institution", which took place in October 2009. The College focused on:

- Inclusive learning and teaching (academic staff)
- Residential services (all support staff and sub wardens)
- Frontline services (all support staff and sub wardens)

We would wish to further refine the College induction programme for all new staff to ensure that staff from the outset are aware of the importance of disability equality at Newbattle Abbey College.

## **Equalities Data**

Data collection for students is taken from the student enrolment form at the start of the course. Feedback has informed us, however, that this is not a true reflection of disabled student numbers as disability can be disclosed once a student is on course and enrolment forms are completed. Although students are encouraged to disclose a disability at various times throughout their course and college life, this may not always feed back into the college statistics.

The College continues to work towards improving the monitoring systems of employment data to enable us to judge the impact of disability on recruitment and selection. We are working towards benchmarking the College Staff Profile against local and national profiles in order to look at the impact of any discrepancies.

In addition, we want to promote the benefits for staff of disclosing a disability. Monitoring of staff usually requires that they indicate a disability, rather than indicate the access or other requirements that they may need to support them in working effectively.

The College will seek to further improve the collection and analysis of future equalities data.

### **College Website**

The College is currently looking at how to improve the website and ensure it is both inclusive and promotes equality and diversity. Consultants have been commissioned to look at the website and the Marketing Committee have been tasked with collecting any statistical feedback from the website. External stakeholders, such as "Forward Mid" and a cross college group have also been asked for their views.

### **College Library**

An accessibility audit of the College Library was undertaken in February 2009 by Philip Wark, Head of Libraries, Midlothian Council and a paper presented to the Equalities Committee. It was agreed to set up a Focus Group with the Academic Team to look at recommendations. Academic and support staff have volunteered to be part of this group.

### **Recruitment and Human Resources**

In 2008 the College reviewed the employment application form for people with visual impairment or learning difficulties.

### **Student Recruitment, Selection, Retention and Educational Attainment**

In 2008 the student application form was revised, particularly for students with visual impairments or learning difficulties. Revised recruitment and selection procedures are now followed and improvements in preparation for support identified.

The Award programme now comprises two levels to meet learner progression preferences whether for HE, FE or employment.

### **Impact Assessment**

A robust system has been set up to ensure impact assessment is carried out on all College policies and procedures and improvements have been made to these as a result. Impact assessment has been carried out on key policies relating to staff and students and a timetable is in place for the remainder. Between 2007

and 2009 the College undertook equality impact assessments on the following policies and procedures and functions:

- Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Student Admissions Policy
- Student Interview Pack
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure (Staff)
- Student Accommodation Lease Policy
- Business Park Tenant Lease Policy
- Draft Procurement Policy
- Absence from Work and Ill Health Policy
- Staff Development Policy
- Staff Induction Handbook
- Staff Induction Policy
- Academic Handbook
- A-Z Guide for Students; and
- Student Residential Policy.

In particular we plan to look at our procurement policies and procedures in order to ensure that our procurement activity addresses disability equality. There is training and support to all staff involved in the impact assessment process. As a College we continue to address the challenge of meaningful involvement of disabled staff and students within this process. This is being addressed in our Action Plan for 2010-2013 and will continue to be evaluated on an annual basis, over the three years of the scheme.

### **Moving Forward**

The last three years have seen significant progress in both the College environment and internal systems and processes that have resulted in a very active and busy time with regard to equality.

The Senior Management Team and the Equalities Committee are reviewing the college's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Procedures to reflect the changes to legislation which now include the other equality strands:- sexual orientation, age and religion or belief. This we feel emphasises holistic inclusiveness and we are therefore looking towards developing a Single Equality Scheme during 2010. This Single Equality Scheme will still identify actions specific to particular equality strands where this is deemed appropriate.

## 6. Action Plan

The Newbattle Abbey College DES Action Plan for 2010-2013 is approved by the Senior Management Team. It indicates:

- How we will implement the Scheme
- What people have prioritised as key actions
- Relevant objectives, targets and priorities of the Strategic and Operational Plan of the College

There are four key areas of the plan:

- Implementing the scheme (making sure it is put into practice)
- Scrutiny, monitoring, evaluation and review
- Making sure recruitment and human resources practices enable disabled people to get in, stay in and get on
- Disability Equality in educational attainment and contribution to College life

## DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME ACTION PLAN 2010-2013

### Priority 1: Implementing the Scheme

Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Timescale	Progress/How
1. Publish and promote Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan	Scheme is widely publicised and reflects commitment of College to disability equality	Equalities Committee Depute Principal	30 June 2010	Via College website
2. Review, update and report annually on the Disability Equality Scheme, involving disabled people in the process	Effective involvement and feedback from disabled people on how the scheme and its actions are working for them.	Equalities Committee Depute Principal Student Reps. Senior Management Team	May 2010 - 2013	Ongoing on annual basis through meetings
3. Prioritise improvements in services and functions for disabled people	Staff, students and stakeholders are involved in the process	Equalities Committee Senior Management Team All staff teams	End of each semester	Through student focus groups; equalities meeting; staff training

Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe	Progress/How
4. Ensure that procurement activity addresses disability and other equality areas by undertaking Equality Impact Assessment of procurement policies and practices.	External providers of services meet statutory equalities requirements and College policies and practices.	Administration Manager Estates and Facilities Manager Depute Principal	3 year timeframe	
5. Maintain and develop partnership arrangements with Forward Mid and other organisations to improve access and inclusion of disabled staff and members of the public.	Partnership arrangements result in improved access and inclusion of disabled people to College services and functions.	Equalities Committee Depute Principal Administration Manager	Ongoing	Via Equalities Committee

Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Timescale	Progress/How
6. Ensure that maintenance and up keep of facilities includes signage, emergency and evacuation procedures, health and safety and ICT access for disabled people.	Access to buildings and facilities is improved and maintained and is safe for disabled people.	Senior Management Team Facilities Manager ICT Co-ordinator	Ongoing	Through Health & Safety Committee
7. Investigate refurbishment of residential block subject to resources.	Residential block is refurbished and upgraded.	Senior Management Team Facilities Manager	July 2011	
8. Encourage a culture of inclusiveness and promotion of equality through implementing a staff development and training programme, particularly in relation to challenging discrimination, mental health awareness and support and use of reasonable adjustments and assistive technologies.	Training programme results in raised awareness of legal obligations and building of a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion.	Equalities Committee Administration Manager Depute Principal Curriculum Manager Guidance Tutors Teaching Staff	Annual review	

Priority 2: Scrutiny, monitoring, evaluation and review

Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Timescale	Progress/How
1. Ensure that the access and inclusion elements of HMle's quality framework as it relates to high quality learning, learners engagement and quality culture are monitored and actions for improvement carried out.	Access and inclusion, particularly relating to disability requirements are monitored and met through self-evaluation activities and impact assessments.	Depute Principal Administration Manager Curriculum Manager Equalities Committee	Annually from September 2010	Followed up by self evaluation from October 2010 onwards
2. Produce a timetabled programme for Equality Impact Assessments yet to be carried out and publish and maintain	Equality Impact Assessments take place systematically and are used to inform future plans.	Depute Principal Administration Manager	By 2011	

<p>records of those assessments which have been completed.</p> <p>3. Continue to monitor systems for collecting student disability and other equalities data to ensure they are effective and provide the information we need, particularly in relation to the impact of disability on recruitment, retention and achievement.</p>	<p>Monitoring system is evaluated and reviewed. Results included in Annual Course Review, with areas for improvement.</p>	<p>Equalities Committee Depute Principal Admin. Team Marketing Group</p>	<p>Annually</p>	<p>Reporting to Equalities Committee</p>
<p>4. Conduct an annual review</p>	<p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusiveness</p>	<p>Depute Principal Equalities Committee</p>	<p>Reviewed annually</p>	<p>Via Equalities Committee</p>

of and report on the new DES and publish findings as part of a combined Equality, Diversity and Inclusiveness Annual Report.	Annual Review and Report informs progress and identifies areas for improvement.			
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**Priority 3: Making sure that the recruitment and Human Resources practices enable disabled people to get into employment and stay in employment.**

Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Timescale	Progress/How
<p>1. Continue to monitor systems for collecting student disability and other equalities data to ensure they are effective and provide the information we need, particularly in relation to the impact of disability on recruitment and retention.</p>	<p>College staff profile is benchmarked against local and national priorities and impacts of any discrepancies understood and acted upon.</p>	<p>Marketing Committee</p>	<p>Annually</p>	
<p>2. Encourage disability disclosure by staff by providing information on</p>	<p>Staff are made aware of wide definition of disability and encouraged to disclose any support needs they may have.</p>	<p>Administration Manager</p>	<p>February/October</p>	<p>During Quality Week</p>

definitions of disability and support available. This is to be made widely available within the College.				
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**Priority 4: Disability equality in relation to student recruitment, selection, retention, learning and teaching, educational attainment and contribution to College life**

Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Timescale	Progress/How
1. Equality issues are considered in learning and teaching and in areas concerning employability for students.	Equality issues are explored from an employability perspective at different phases in the student life-cycle.	Guidance Tutors + Academic Team		Through Academic Team meetings and related training throughout the year
2. Appropriate CPD for staff that support and work with students on matters related to equality and diversity.	Staff who provide support services for students are provided with continuing opportunities to consider how equality issues impact on those services.	Depute Principal + Curriculum Manager	Ongoing	Through PDPs
3. Consider how the Library could play a more proactive role in supporting equality in learning and	Recommendations of the accessibility audit of the Library are considered and acted upon.	Admin Team Academic Team	Six monthly	Through Library meetings

<p>teaching and curriculum design.</p> <p>4. Student involvement and consultation are considered as part of the College's quality improvement and enhancement process.</p> <p>5. To review College website for equality, diversity and inclusion, using external consultants and stakeholders and internal committees and groups.</p>	<p>Student Representatives on College committees are able to feed in the views of their fellow students in relation to disability issues.</p> <p>College website is both inclusive and accessible and promotes equality and diversity.</p>	<p>Senior Management Team Student Representatives Equalities Committee Curriculum Manager</p> <p>Equalities Committee Marketing Committee Forward Mid</p>	<p>Annually</p> <p>To be reviewed annually</p>	<p>Annual appointments to the various Board and internal committees</p> <p>Through Equalities Committee, Marketing Committee and Forward Mid</p>
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