Disability Equality Scheme
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We would like to thank all the disabled people, both our staff and learners, who have helped us in making this scheme.

This is an Easy read version of our Disability Equality Scheme.
The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) plans and pays for further education and training for people in England.

The further education system includes anything to do with learning for young people and adults. This includes colleges, schools, voluntary groups, companies and others. It does not include universities. It is often called the FE system.

There are more than 6 million learners in the further education system. By 2010, we want these learners to have the best skills in the world, including disabled people.

This is a big job, but everyone should be able to learn as much as they can. This is why our Disability Equality Scheme is so important.

The number of disabled people in further education has gone up, but nearly half of all disabled people have still not passed any exams. This means we still need to do more for disabled people.
Courses should be better at teaching people what they need. There should be more courses that more disabled people can do.

We want to support disabled people so that they can take part and do well. We want them to get the confidence and skills to take a full part in their community and to get jobs.

We will use the power we have to make things more equal and fair.

We give details of how we will do this in our plan “Learning for Living and Work: Improving Education and Training Opportunities for People with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities”. This plan tells you about the changes we want to make.

We will also make sure that local plans for courses help meet the needs of the people in their area.
We will make sure colleges and others change so that they are meeting the needs of disabled people, and we will also make sure we have very high standards for ourselves.

We will show that we are a good organisation and a good employer that knows the skills that disabled people have to offer and what they can do.

We will tell people what we have done each year in our report. This will say what we have done and what we still have to do.

And we will involve disabled learners and employees in making these plans and checking that things change. Seeing disabled people as the experts is a key to our success.

Mark Haysom
LSC Chief Executive
What is a Disability Equality Scheme?

This is the LSC’s first Disability Equality Scheme.

It says how we will make things more equal and fair for disabled people.

What we have to do is set out in the law, called the Disability Discrimination Act.

The scheme will start on 4 December 2006. From 1 April 2007, the Disability Equality Scheme will be put with our Race Equality Scheme and Gender Equality Scheme to make one Single Equality Scheme.
How we want things to be more fair and equal for everyone

The LSC plans and pays for further education and training for young people and adults in England.

We have always tried to make things more equal and fair for everyone. Our job is to support people to do courses.

We try to do this in a way that gives everyone an equal chance. We have to write a report for government each year about our work.

By 2010, we want people in England to have the best skills possible. At the moment people from poor backgrounds and disabled people do less well in training and exams. We need to make sure everyone can do well.

We want to be an organisation that makes sure disabled people are treated equally. We will be a good example of how to do things well, both as an organisation and as an employer.
We will:

- follow the law about treating people equally and, where we can, do more than we have to;

- reach out to people with low skills who do not go on courses at the moment;

- help people get onto different types of learning;

- make courses and training better;

- make sure learners pass courses and can go on to do the things they want to do;
be an organisation that uses people’s skills, and does not allow people to be treated badly, unfairly or unequally.

We will:

- be **bold** – for everyone involved in the learning and skills system;

- be **clear** – about what success looks like and how we will get there;

- be **true** – to our ideas about working within the LSC and with our partners;

- be **relentless** – this means that if something does not work as we had hoped, we will try to do it another way and not give up.
We will check how well we have done, by:

- having more learners with learning difficulties or disabilities on courses and passing exams;

- checking that our plans in “Learning for Living and Work” do happen;

- making sure colleges and others have plans to make things fairer and more equal for disabled people;

- making sure all our staff work to make things fairer and more equal for disabled people;

- asking what learners think about how well we are doing.
What do we mean by disability?

The law says that a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment or disability, which has a big effect for over a year on how well they can do everyday things.

This plan is based on the social model of disability. It explains that the way society works can stop disabled people from doing things that non-disabled people do.

We need to change the way people think and the way we work, to help take away the problems disabled people face.
Disability equality: where are we now?

This is where we are at the moment:

Our staff:

- 108 members of our staff have a disability;
- more lower grade staff are disabled;
- we plan to have twice as many staff with disabilities by 2010.
Our learners:

- about 1 in 4 people are disabled;

- disabled people are twice as likely as non-disabled people to have not passed exams;

- last year, 641,000 people on courses said that they had a learning difficulty or disability. That is about 1 in every 10 people;

- 9 out of 10 learners with learning difficulties or disabilities said they were “happy” with their courses. 3 out of 10 were “very happy”;

- we want to have better information about how many learners are disabled.
What do we want to work on in learning and skills?

Our work is set out in plans from the Government. Each year a letter from the Minister tells us about anything else we should be doing.

There are 4 main jobs we want to do:

1. make courses better and have more choices for learning for all young people. This is to give young people the skills they need to get a job or to go to university and to take part in their communities;

2. help lots of people to learn the things they need to know to get jobs and do them well, and to work together in communities;

3. help colleges become some of the best in the world, with a lot of choice;

4. work with others locally to make sure people have the skills that are needed for jobs in their area.
We have plans about how to make the further education system better. These are in our report “Agenda for Change”.

“Agenda for Change” says how we want:

- to get colleges and others to work better with companies;
- to get people to want to learn;
- to make paying for courses simpler;
- to collect better information about learners;
• to help companies get better;

• to let people know how good a company is.

What the law says

The law says we have to make things fairer and more equal for disabled people. This is called our Disability Equality Duty.

We will do the things below and the other things in our action plan:

• help make sure disabled people have the same chances as anybody else. We will think about how to do this in all our planning and when we make decisions;

• stop disabled learners and staff being treated unfairly or badly and tell colleges to do the same;
- stop abuse of disabled people just because they have a disability. This includes the things people say or do that make disabled people feel uncomfortable, scared or not worth much;

- show what disabled people can do and not what they can’t do;

- support and involve disabled people on our Council and in other meetings, and tell the Minister about this;

- make sure that disabled people have the same chances as anybody else, by sorting out the right support and changing things to meet access needs where we can.

These things are called the “general duties”.
We pay colleges and others to run courses. Some of these will need to have their own plans to make things fairer for disabled people. These plans are called Disability Equality Schemes.

When we are paying for courses, we will:

- help colleges and others to make their own plans and to follow the law;
- check they are doing well.

And we will make sure that our staff can do these things.

Involving disabled people

We want to hear from learners, to make sure the changes we are making are good.
We will do this by:

- starting a new National Panel of Learners with Disabilities in 2007. This will be the main way to involve people in making our plans and checking how well our plans are going;

- it will work with our main National Learner Panel and the Equality and Diversity Committee;

- involving service users in our national Task Group, which is making courses better for learners with mental health difficulties;

- working with the National Union of Students Disabled Students’ Committee to find out more about meeting any access needs;

- asking our staff about what we do as an employer;
• asking disabled people about some of our other plans and needs for information. We will make sure we pay for things like costs and support;

• making plans about how disabled people will be involved in checking what we do.

We have made a plan about how disabled people will be involved in what we think and decide. It gives details about what people should do to make it happen. This plan is called our Involvement Framework.

We would like to know what people think about it. You can see our Involvement Framework on our website: www.lsc.gov.uk

We have already used the plan to help us to talk with lots of disabled people about this Disability Equality Scheme.
We asked them:

- Are the things we thought of the most important things for us to work on?

- What gets in the way of things not being equal, for both staff and learners?

- What are the most important things that should go to the top of our action plan list?

- What do people think about our plans on how to involve people?
We did these things to involve disabled people:

- worked with groups and individual disabled people;

- worked together with partners, organisations of disabled people, organisations for disabled people, and others who came to events;

- talked with the National Union of Students (NUS) Disabled Students’ Committee who were really helpful;

- on the internet, we talked to people through our “Talk to Des” campaign. This way, disabled people and others were able to send us emails, use a forum and ask some questions;

- talked with staff. We sent our staff information about the scheme and asked what they thought. We also asked them to answer questions using their computers.
The most important things they said we should do more work on are as follows.

From learners:

- paying for courses: sometimes, when money is short, disabled learners are affected more than other people;

- paying for courses for younger learners (14–19-year-olds): can affect disabled learners more, as they often start courses after the age of 19;

- support for disabled learners can be difficult to get or does not meet the disabled learner’s needs;

- make sure the checks that are used really look at how well disabled learners do;
• “Leisure” courses: some courses that are really important for disabled people, like lip-reading, are seen as “Leisure” courses and so not paid for;

• disabled learners may not have passed the exams they need to go on to other courses.

From staff:

• staff need training about treating people fairly and equally.
Issues that we will send to others to think about

- money and job issues will be sent to the Department for Education and Skills;

- transport cost issues will be sent to the Department for Transport;

- rules about supporting disabled learners will be sent to the Quality Improvement Agency;

- knowing about disability and support issues will be sent to the people who run courses.
How our work and plans affect disabled people

The information we have about disabled people having fair and equal chances is in the chapter on disability equality information on page 42. We will get more information and look at how to use it.

We will:

- get better information about disabled learners;

- look at our information about disabled staff;

- find out about why people choose to say they have a disability or not;

- get information from colleges and others about how they are making things fairer and more equal for disabled people;
• think about the information we need to check how our plans are going;

• make sure that our staff are trained in how we get information and how they should use it.

We will use our information to:

• find out what gets in people’s way;

• find out about the problems for disabled people in getting onto courses and passing exams, which people without disabilities do not face;

• look at these differences in more detail and find out what to do about them;
● make our plans;

● check how our action plan is going and that the most important things are at the top of the list.

We will look at how our work and rules affect disabled people. We tell you about how we will do this is in the chapter called How we check how our work and rules affect disabled people on page 34.
Who is in charge of our work?

The LSC’s National Council is in charge of making sure we do the things we are meant to do. There is a group that looks at equality issues.

They do these things:

- make sure that our work includes all groups of people equally;
- help people have more choice and control so that everyone can have equal chances and choices in learning, training and work;
- work on changes that will make sure being treated fairly and equally happens all the time.
The group will:

- look at what they do each year;
- check what has been done on the action plan and say what they think should be in the yearly report;
- tell the LSC what the group has done.

We also have Directors whose job it is to make sure our plans happen.

Action plans

The action plan says what we want to do.
Reports on what we have done

Each year we will write about what we have done. This will be part of our main report to government.

We will also put details on our website about how we are doing. We will ask disabled people about how we should make this information accessible.

Each year we will look at our Single Equality Scheme (this Disability Equality Scheme will be a part of the single scheme) to see how well we have done. Every 3 years we will look at it all again.

Disabled people will be involved in all of this, helping us get better as well as asking about what has happened.
What the different parts of the LSC do

Human Resources

Human Resources looks after staff. They make sure that staff are paid and trained, and that rules are followed.

They help make the LSC a good place to work.

The Learning Group

The Learning Group make sure that people get the learning they need to be ready for work or to go on to more learning.

They make it easier to take part in learning, help people be more successful in learning, and make learning better.
The Resources Group

The Resources Group looks after our money, information and buildings. They make sure this is done in the best way for the organisation.

They also work with others to get good value for money.

The Skills Group

The Skills Group mainly works with companies to make sure staff can learn the skills they need to do their work better.

The Strategy and Communications Group

The Strategy and Communications Group does 2 main things.

It makes plans for the LSC that follow what the Government wants and tells people about them.

It also works on issues that are coming up and works on plans for these.
How we check how our work and rules affect disabled people

We will use these rules for checking how our work and plans affect disabled people:

Getting ready

• we will list each area of the organisation (see the chapter called What the different parts of the LSC do on page 32) and then decide which person in each area will do this work;

• we will list all the rules and ways of working.

First steps

We will:

• look to see if the rules or the way we work affect disabled people and our Disability Equality Duty. Our Disability Equality Duty is what the law says we have to do to make things fairer and more equal for disabled people.
• decide how important the rules are to disabled people and to our Disability Equality Duty. Decide if the rules are:

  – important in terms of what we do;

  – or not so important to what we do, but likely to affect disabled people. If something has a very big effect on a few disabled People, it is very important and needs to be checked.

• where a rule is important, a full check will probably be needed. Where it is not so important, we will write down why we think a full check is not needed;
• we will also write down any changes made, even when a full check was not done;

• before we make final decisions about whether a check is needed, we will ask disabled people, staff or learners, depending on the rule;

they will also be involved in deciding what is most important for each area of the LSC;

• the list of checks will be included in our main plans;

• we will tell others if we find an issue is more to do with them.
Checking how our rules affect disabled people

We will:

- use all the information we have;

- get any other information we need;

- look at how the rules affect disabled people;

- include other things such as male or female, age or any ethnic issues;

- use the general duties as a checklist for each rule;
• find other ways to make the effect on disabled people less, and involve disabled people in helping us do this;

• think of different rules that might make things more equal for disabled people;

• think about whether changes are reasonable;

• find other areas that might need checking out.
Actions

- we will decide what changes need to be made and put these in the action plan;

- if we decide not to make a change because it would not be reasonable, we will write down why. We will still look at whether there are other ways of doing something;

- tell others if issues are more to do with them;

- find out about how something is going that will help other checks.
Writing about the checks

We will:

- tell disabled people who have been involved what has happened;

- have a list of checks for each area of work, with the details of what happened;

- keep the main information about disability equality up to date.
Things to be done in the future

We will:

- look at how the checks are going;

- look at what changes are being made;

- think about the rules for checking with disabled people;

- write down what has happened for the reports which are written each year;

- look at the whole way we check and put any changes in reports written each year and the next Disability Equality Scheme.
Disability equality information

This chapter looks at how we get information about how our rules and ways of working affect disabled people.

To get information we will:

- look at what we do at the LSC (see the chapter called *What the different parts of the LSC do on page 32*);

- look at information we have already, and information we can get easily;

- involve disabled people in finding any gaps in our information and saying how important the gaps are;

- look at the information we have got and see if any areas are not clear;
• take action to fill any gaps or get clearer information;

• write down and tell people what we know;

• find out what the information means and involve disabled people in deciding what we should do with it to make things more equal;

• include these actions in the main action plan and in future plans.
We have this information about learners already:

- the numbers of disabled people nationally and locally;

- the different impairments or disabilities they have;

- their ages;

- information about learners from their records about finishing courses, exams passed and support needed;

- how happy learners are, from our surveys.
We have this information about staff, members of the LSC Council and its committees:

- the numbers and grades of disabled staff;

- information about people’s ways of living and their culture;

- information from people wanting and getting jobs;

- who goes on training and how well they do, and how happy staff are;

- staff training in disability issues;
● what extra things staff get when working for the LSC;

● information on being treated badly or unfairly;

● how long people work for the LSC and why they leave;

● how we make reasonable changes.
We will check information about how things affect people who are not disabled so that we can find out any areas where disabled people are not treated equally.

This will help us do checks, change our action plan and make other changes to our plans and rules.

Where we need to, we will bring information together from other areas in education.

Our rules on getting and using information will also be looked at again and sent to our delivery partners when they need it.
LSC action plan

Introduction

This is our action plan. It says what we will do so that we treat people fairly and equally. It gives more detail about what the LSC is going to do over the next 3 years.

What action will we take and who will make sure it happens?

We have listed below the things we are going to do under each area.

We have said when each piece of work should be finished by, and who is in charge of making it happen.
1. Involvement

What will be done:
Set up a National Panel of Learners with Disabilities.

Who by:
Director of Young People’s Learning.

When:
June 2007.

What will be done:
Support disabled people to be involved in the regions.

Who by:
Director of Equality and Diversity.

When:
What will be done:

Make sure there are twice as many disabled people involved in the LSC. Write about how this is done.

Who by:

Director of Equality and Diversity.

When:

December 2009.

What will be done:

Set up a task group and regional networks involving learners with mental health difficulties.

Who by:

Director of Young People’s Learning.

When:

From now.
What will be done:

Finish a review of “Learning for Living and Work”.

Who by:

Director of Young People’s Learning.

When:

2009.

What will be done:

Ask staff with disabilities about setting up a Network.

Who by:

Director of Human Resources.

When:

April 2007.
What will be done:

Look at our rules for accessible information. This includes rules for websites and surveys.

Who by:

Director of Communications.

When:

June 2007.

What will be done:

Involve disabled people in making regional action plans that look at what is needed locally.

Who by:

Regional Directors of Learning, Planning and Performance.

When:

December 2007.
2. Reporting

What will be done:

Have a set way of checking what is being done.

Who by:

Director of Equality and Diversity.

When:

June 2007.

What will be done:

Write a report each year on what we have done on disability equality.

Who by:

Director of Learning.

When:

Each year.
Look at the action plan each year and say what has been done. Put this in the new Single Equality Scheme.

Who by:

Director of Equality and Diversity.

When:

Each year.
3. Help people to be more positive about what disabled people can do

What will be done:

Look at all our information to make sure it includes good examples of disabled people. Keep records of good stories in the news.

Who by:

Director of Communications.

When:

From December 2007.
4. Encouraging disabled people to take part in public life

What will be done:

Make sure our councils and committees include 15% disabled people.

Who by:

LSC Chairman.

When:

December 2007.
5. Paying for courses

What will be done:

Regions will have plans about involving disabled people.

Who by:

Director of Planning and Performance.

When:

Each year.

What will be done:

Check that people who deliver training have plans that are good enough.

Who by:

Director of Planning and Performance.

When:

Each year.
What will be done:

Make sure courses meet the needs of disabled people.

Who by:

Director of Young People’s Learning.

When:

2010.

What will be done:

Make sure courses are better for adults with mental health difficulties.

Who by:

Director of Young People’s Learning.

When:

2008.
What will be done:

Make sure any new buildings are accessible.

Who by:

Director of Resources.

When:


What will be done:

People we pay to do things will need to show they treat disabled people fairly and equally.

Who by:

Director of Resources.

When:

6. The LSC as an employer

What will be done:

Do what we have said we would do. This will be working in a good way.

Who by:

Director of Human Resources.

When:

February 2007.

What will be done:

Have twice the number of staff with disabilities working for us.

Who by:

Director of Human Resources.

When:

2010.
7. Training

What will be done:

All staff will have training on disability issues.

Who by:

Director of Human Resources.

When:

June 2007 to 2008.

What will be done:

Train staff in checking how well colleges and others are doing.

Who by:

Director of Learning.

When:

From 2007.
8. How our work and rules affect disabled people

What will be done:

Have new rules for buying services.

Who by:

Director of Equality and Diversity.

When:

June 2007.

What will be done:

Get all the different information we need about disabled people so we can understand what effect our rules will have on disabled people.

Who by:

Director of Equality and Diversity.

When:

June 2008.
What will be done:

Report each year on rating and support for workers to help them get better at what they do.

Who by:

Director of Human Resources.

When:

Each year from 2007.

What will be done:

Keep better records of staff and learners who say they have a disability.

Who by:

Directors of Learning, Human Resources.

When:

Between 2008 and 2009.
What will be done:

Keep records about the backgrounds of staff in colleges.

Who by:

Director of Equality and Diversity.

When:

Each year.

What will be done:

Have rules about checking all new changes to rules on how they might affect disabled people.

Who by:

Director of Equality and Diversity.

When:

June 2007.
What will be done:

Check how rules might affect disabled people, starting with the most important plans.

Who by:

Director of Equality and Diversity.

When:

December 2009.
More information

If you would like more information about the LSC, our Disability Equality Scheme or our action plans, you can:

Write to:

Director of Equality and Diversity
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry CV1 2WT

Telephone the LSC Helpline:

0870 900 6800

Email:

des@lsc.gov.uk

Visit our website:

www.lsc.gov.uk
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