west lothian college

Access & Inclusion Strategy 2017-2018

Opening Doors | **Fair Access for All**

Strategy: Access & Inclusion

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Vision, Aims and Values

Our Vision is to be a College which delivers a highly skilled and enterprising workforce of the future.

We aim to achieve this by Opening Doors for our learners to high quality learning and skills opportunities and to workplace experiences and apprenticeships or support their progression on to university, ultimately secure positive and rewarding careers with potential for lifelong learning.

We will welcome all learners to our College and ensure that we provide fair access for individuals from our communities. We will value and respect the strengths and experiences that our learners bring and will build on those for confident and successful outcomes.

Future Challenges

- Continued need to combat poverty and deprivation for inclusive growth
- Building a skilled workforce for a successful economy
- Increasing the capacity for enterprise and innovation for future benefit

Access and Inclusion Services will include:-

Advice and Guidance
ICT Support
Group Support
Adapted Learning and Teaching
One to One Support and Coaching (extended learning support)

The College is committed to providing positive learning experiences and to supporting learners to access the College, remain at College and achieve qualifications. Students will be encouraged to declare "additional needs" at several points in the learner journey and the College will respond as quickly as possible. Work is being undertaken to identify risk factors and to offer service/support proactivity in anticipation of articulated need or experienced.

Experience would suggest that support is most effective when provided in small groups within NC classes and on a one to one basis outwith class within a learning Centre. Approximately 13% of full time students engage with support and it is acknowledged that there is a need to drive up engagement particularly among young male fragile learners who are often reluctant to accept support.

Most of the resource allocation will be directed towards group and one to one support/coaching depending on evaluation of PIs for 2016-17.

Introduction to Access & Inclusion

The Access and Inclusion Strategy supports the College Regional Outcome Agreement targets, realising the targets within this and widening access for potential and existing learners.

The College is committed to achieving its Public Sector Equalities outcomes and as such will ensure that reasonable adjustments (as noted in the Equalities Act) are made so that the learner journey is adapted without compromise of academic standards.

The Strategy will ensure that recruitment and selection of learners is inclusive and does not represent a barrier to securing a College place or to attainment.

The Strategy will ensure that learners are supported at pre-application and at application stage and that the processes are fair and equitable.

The College is committed to supporting learners throughout their learning journey and providing a range of learning and teaching practices which are inclusive and respond to a range of learning styles and individual needs.

The Strategy will ensure a parity of intake and outcome so that all learners and potential learners have an equal chance of successfully completing their course.

This Strategy aligns with the College Corporate Parenting Plan, the Equalities Action Plan and the Support for Learning Policy. It is directly related to Measures 1 and 2 from the Regional Outcome Agreement (ROA). This Strategy has been constructed around the learner journey.

The Strategy covers access and inclusion for:-

- Full and part time learners, existing and potential
- Learners in the most deprived 10% postcode areas
- Learners from protected characteristic groups
- Learners who have disclosed they are care experienced
- Learners who have disclosed they are young carers or who have significant caring responsibilities
- School pupils
- Learners who have declared a disability
- Learners who have declared an educational need including literacy and numeracy

In 2017-18 we aim to offer every student (who declared an additional need at application) a support/assessment interview before the start of their course. The intention is to customise the learning experience and to avoid founding planning on assumptions of homogenous requirements.

It should be noted that demands for support generally have increased in recent years. In 2006-07 guidance took 63 referrals, in 2015-16 this number was 135. In

2006-07 support staff dealt with 385 attendance reports and in 2015-16 this number was 1,967.

It is also noteworthy that the College has attracted a higher percentage of younger students in recent years and a higher percentage of young learners who have been significantly alienated from education and who are difficult to engage.

Pre-application Stage

The College will advertise programmes in keeping with principles of equality and diversity to encourage applications from a wide range of potential students. This activity will be informed by our Marketing and Communication Strategy and Plan. Advertising and advice will promote non-traditional gender career choices in keeping with the Gender Action Plan.

We will aim to facilitate access to the College and to support individuals prior to and during the application stage. In specific terms:-

- The College will offer all individuals the opportunity to discuss any aspect of learning before coming to College when considering a course of study.
- We will offer a visit to College (or staff to meet potential learners at school or transition meeting), to facilitate a discussion of need, and/or options for study.
- Schools will be encouraged to contact us when individuals are considering College if there are additional needs.
- The College Marketing Plan and our schools liaison staff will focus on attracting applications from SIMD 10% postcodes and from Schools for Higher Education Programme East (SHEP East) schools.
- The College is in discussion with the local authority as to how care experienced young people can be best supported.

Application Stage

The College will strive to remove barriers (and perceived barriers) within the application process. Selection will be fair and equitable and selection decisions will be informed by clear objective selection criteria. Work in this area is informed by the College's Admission and Enrolment Policy and Procedure.

Principles of reasonable adjustment will be applied on interview when requested. In specific terms:-

- The College will encourage learners to declare additional support needs at application stage.
- The College will continue to offer supportive early intervention at application and interview following disclosure of any additional need.
- The College will ask schools for transitional information for applicants who require additional support.
- Appropriate support will be offered to all applicants and will be available at interview.

- We will establish before or at interview if a student has additional support needs and/or if a needs-assessment is required.
- All students who identify an additional need at application stage will be offered an assessment interview, following offer of place, and before the start of the course.

Induction

Induction is an important introduction to study and College life. Staff will encourage learners to seek out support proactively and to access College services. In particular:-

- Learners will be encouraged to declare any support needs at induction, through enrolment form and through discussion with lecturers and/or Support Team.
- Staff will see every full time group as part of induction to promote services and encourage discussion/disclosure.
- Staff will promote availability of support to all learners, as will the Student Association.
- Students will be encouraged to provide data on protected characteristics (with an acknowledgement that they have a right not to provide data).

On Course

The College will deliver an inclusive and supportive curriculum in keeping with the Curriculum Strategy. A range of learning and teaching methods will be deployed to meet a range of individual learning requirements. Academic staff will provide adaptive teaching methods and materials and to engage students with more specialist support. In particular:-

- All students who have disclosed an additional support need at induction will be written to with the offer of a meeting to discuss extra support.
- We will provide drop-in guidance support for any learner needing extra help or access to information, advice or support services.
- We will ensure availability of one-to-one and small group support in all NC programmes.
- We provide study skills support for all learners to help with areas like – using ICT, preparing for assessments, essay and report writing, referencing, numeracy and mathematics.
- Provision of additional specific support needs through the use of assistive technologies.
- We will create a more inclusive environment for all students through ICT.
- We plan to make appropriate referrals to external agencies and specialists for additional support.
- In some cases, additional risk assessments will be required.
- All students who declare themselves as carers or care experienced will be offered an interview to establish if they have additional support requirements.

(The College has a Corporate Parenting Plan and works closely with the local authority).

- The Student Association will encourage learners to access support and promote availability.

It should be noted that there has been a recent shift to segregate SFC and SDS funded education to the exclusion of a dual funded learning experience. The College is working to establish processes through which learning support (in the widest sense) can be available to all learners.

CPD

Staff development will be provided to all staff in relation to promoting equality and diversity. Academic staff will be supported to gain teaching qualifications and to develop their skills in adapting classroom practice. Staff development needs are revised annually. CPD activity will include:-

- specific support for teaching staff and frontline staff in relation to specific areas – autism, dyslexia, mental health.
- the participation of relevant staff in on-going staff development through CDN (College Development Network).

Bespoke Programmes

The College provides a range of "group 5" programmes within the College, in various community venues, and in conjunction with a large scale employer. These programmes cater for the needs of students who experience a range of mental health issues and/or issues of cognitive processing. Current provision is at a level of approximately 180 places and we envisage this level of provision continuing.

Partnerships

The College works in close partnership with the local authority and schools and is well represented within the CPP at operational and strategic levels. The College also collaborated with the NHS in relation to Mental Health Services.

ICT Support

It is acknowledged that ICT supportive technology can play a role in improving the learner experience. The College is reviewing provision of this in 2016-17 with the intention of improving availability into 2017-18.

Monitoring and Review

The following monitoring and review processes will be addressed:-

- The Strategy will be reviewed annually in relation to protected characteristics and disadvantaged groups and key performance indicators within the ROA.
- Student satisfaction surveys will be taken as a measure of success.
- Use of distance travelled as a measure of success.
- Liaison and communication with the Student Association.
- Use of programme team reviews and SOCE (Student On Course Evaluation).
- Data on ROA measures 1 and 2 and the related ROA targets.
- The College will analyse data on protected characteristics and adapt services for optimal success.

The College has been improving information gathering and tagging within the MIS system, this will support:

- Better quality analysis of data
- Identification of risk factors to inform proactive interventions
- Identification of correlations between life circumstances and withdrawal/partial success.

Data from 2015-16 indicates that students who engaged with Extended Learning Support (ELS) remained on courses and achieved success in keeping with their peers. This would appear to evidence that additional support is at least providing a level playing field through reasonable adjustment.

The College is undertaking deeper level analysis of data for 2015-16 and will use this to inform planning of proactive and targeted services for 2017-18. The data analysis will seek to identify causal factors underpinning withdrawal from programmes and factors which lead to partial success. It is intended that the interrogation of data will seek to explore the interplay between a range of factors such as age, gender, socioeconomic background, disengagement from education and experienced poverty of aspiration.